

# TACOMA **ART** MUSEUM

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## ***Chihuly: Northwest Inspirations*** **Curriculum Guide**

# TACOMA ART MUSEUM

## CHIHULY: NORTHWEST INSPIRATIONS

Dale Chihuly is a Tacoma-native and world-renowned glass artist. Join us to explore the museum's permanent collection of his work, including his *Baskets*, *Seaforms*, and *Ikebana*. Students will learn about Chihuly's artistic process and northwest inspirations. A short walk to the nearby Bridge of Glass is included, weather permitting.

## SCHOOL TOUR INTRODUCTION

Thematic guided school tours provide in-depth exploration of one exhibition and relevant art concepts for K–12 students (ages 5 to 18). Two hours in length (90 minutes for K–1), each tour is led by knowledgeable museum volunteer educators who engage students in a conversation-based gallery visit utilizing [Visual Thinking Strategies](#) and introductory hands-on art lesson.

## HOW TO USE THIS CURRICULUM

The curriculum guide includes sample images, pre- and post-visit lessons plans, background information, activities, and other resources to help you integrate the museum experience into your classroom curriculum – lessons may also be modified to be used independently of a museum visit. Grade levels are suggested for each lesson; however, teachers may adapt lessons to other grade levels as appropriate.

## PRE- AND POST-VISIT LESSONS

To ensure a successful and informative museum experience, pre-visit lessons are created to prepare your students for their museum tour. After your museum tour, use the post-visit exercises to help reinforce your students' museum experience and the concepts and information addressed during the tour and art activity. Each lesson is designed to correspond to [Common Core State Standards](#) (CCSS) and [Essential Academic Learning Requirements](#) (EALRs).

## CONFIRMATION PACKET

Please be sure to review the confirmation letter you received when you booked your school tour. The confirmation packet includes directions and parking instructions, and information about obtaining a free museum pass so that you may familiarize yourself with the exhibition content and the layout of the museum prior to your school tour. Also included in the confirmation packet are museum guidelines to share with students and chaperones prior to your visit to help insure a successful and safe museum visit for everyone.

## CONTENT

- Exhibition Introduction
- Exhibition Images (Visual Art Resources)
- Pre- and Post-Visit Lesson Plans
- Glossary and Resources

**Cover Image:** Dale Chihuly, *Black Cylinder*, 2008. Glass, overall 7 x 7 x 7 inches. Gift of Dale Chihuly and Leslie Jackson Chihuly in honor of Tacoma Art Museum's 75th Anniversary.

Tacoma Art Museum School Tour and Curriculum Guide lessons are aligned with Common Core State Standards and Washington State Learning Requirements in the arts and other subject areas.

Additional copies of this curriculum guide can be downloaded for free at [www.TacomaArtMuseum.org/Educators](http://www.TacomaArtMuseum.org/Educators). A paper copy can be purchased for \$10 by contacting [Education@TacomaArtMuseum.org](mailto:Education@TacomaArtMuseum.org).

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## **CHIHULY AT TACOMA ART MUSEUM**

Over the course of his distinguished career, Dale Chihuly has emerged as one of the most prominent American artists of the last century, all the while remaining closely associated with the Pacific Northwest and, especially, Tacoma. Tacoma Art Museum has told his story as it unfolded since the late 1960s.

Tacoma has been a critical source of inspiration, support, and development for Chihuly. He fondly remembers a stained glass window above the front door of his first childhood home, finding beach glass on the shores of Puget Sound, and the city's brilliant neon signs that once illuminated downtown. Other important childhood memories include his collection of colorful marbles and finding glass fishing floats on Pacific Ocean beaches during family vacations.

Chihuly began his relationship with Tacoma Art Museum in 1968 in an exhibition featuring works by artists associated with Seattle's Attica Gallery. This was Chihuly's first museum exhibition. A few years later in 1971, the museum included a blown-glass and argon installation titled *All the Way out to East Cupcake*, a collaboration with James Carpenter, in the *1st National Invitational Hand Blown Glass Exhibition*. Since then, the museum and the artist have presented numerous exhibitions together: *Dale Chihuly: Glass Blowing* in 1981, *Dale Chihuly: Works on Paper* in 1991, *Dale Chihuly: Mille Fiori* in 2003, and to celebrate the museum's 75th anniversary *Dale Chihuly's Northwest* in 2011.

Other major projects in Tacoma include the installation *100,000 Pounds of Neon and Ice* at the Tacoma Dome in 1993, *Chihuly at Union Station* in 1994, the *Chihuly Bridge of Glass* in 2002, and a special installation at the W.W. Seymour Botanical Conservatory in Wright Park to commemorate the conservatory's centennial in 2008. Chihuly has also been a featured artist at the Museum of Glass on repeated occasions.

Most of the works on view in this gallery were donated by Chihuly to provide visitors a retrospective of his career. His gifts represent the artist's recognition of the importance of his hometown as a constant source of inspiration and support throughout his career. A number of additional works by Chihuly are from the 2013 gift by Chihuly's long-time friend and patron Anne Gould Hauberg. These works emphasize the early support by Hauberg for Chihuly's art.

The core of the Dale Chihuly Collection was first installed in 1987 on the third floor of the former Tacoma Art Museum building at South 12th Street and Pacific Avenue. With special cases and dramatic lighting, the collection offered museum visitors a retrospective exhibition of each major phase of the artist's career. The artist donated 31 works to the museum in 1990 in honor of his parents, Viola and George, and his brother, George W. In 2003, when Tacoma Art Museum opened its new building, Chihuly added seven new works to the collection to ensure representation of his more recent series. In 2006, Chihuly first installed the museum's much-loved *Ma Chihuly's Floats* in the central courtyard. Later that year, he gifted them in honor of his mother. These floats are installed each spring and remain on view until late autumn. In total, this collection represents most phases of Chihuly's career: *Baskets*, *Blanket Cylinders*, *Seaforms*, *Macchia*, *Persians*, *Ikebana*, *Putti*, and the *Nijjima Floats*.

*Chihuly at Tacoma Art Museum* brings together for the first time key gifts from the Anne Gould Hauberg Collection with long-time favorites of works from the internationally renowned Tacoma-born artist.

Organized by Tacoma Art Museum.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Dale Chihuly is a world-renowned sculptor, performance artist, and the mastermind behind dramatic glass installations. His use of color, exotic shapes, dramatic scale, and constant evolution of style have kept worldwide audiences enthralled. His exhibitions are visited by thousands of people each year. Much of his inspiration for new work is built on installations he has created in the past and his ongoing fascination with earthly organic forms. Chihuly focuses on the aesthetics of glass rather than the utilitarian aspects of glass design. He is especially known for pushing the boundaries of this medium, and his unique skill for stretching glass to its thinnest is highly celebrated. Chihuly's work has been exhibited in places all over the world such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Louvre in Paris, the canals of Venice, Jerusalem, and of course, Tacoma Art Museum.

Born on September 20, 1941 in Tacoma, Washington, Chihuly is the son of working class parents Viola Magnuson and George S. Chihuly. His father was a butcher and union organizer. In 1957, tragedy struck when Chihuly's brother was killed in a Navy Air force accident and his father passed away a few months later. His mother, Viola, became the guiding force in his life, and after high school encouraged him to enroll in the College of Puget Sound in Tacoma, now known as the University of Puget Sound. Chihuly became the first person in his family to attend college.

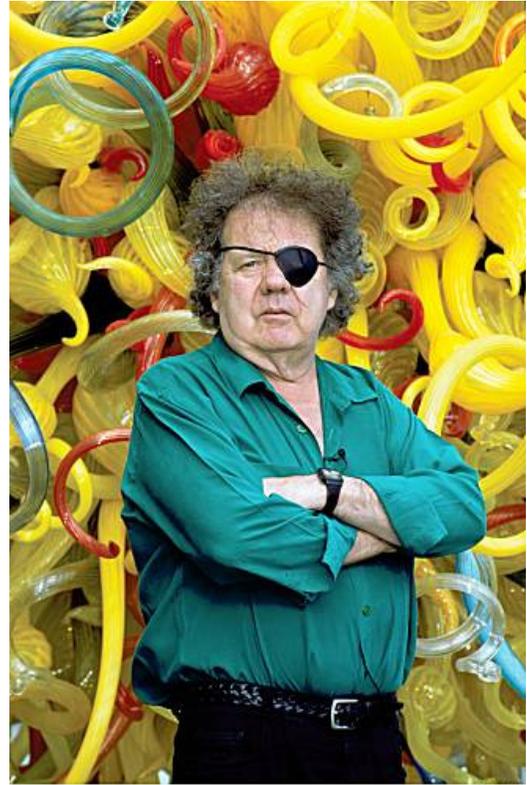
In 1960, Chihuly discovered an interest in art while researching the artist Vincent Van Gogh for a term paper. In the same year, he transferred to the University of Washington to continue his education. While at the University of Washington he decided to travel to Israel. It was on this trip he was exposed to large-scale artwork. After returning to UW he created his first glass art piece which required him to incorporate a "non-fiber" material into weaving. He used glass and was awarded the Weavers Guild Award in 1964.

After graduating in 1965, Chihuly worked for John Graham Architects in Seattle. He assisted with designing shopping malls. During this time he continued to experiment with glass. He blew his first glass bubble using colored glass and a metal pipe. This experience marked the beginning of Chihuly's fascination with glassblowing.

Chihuly eventually enrolled in Harvey Littleton's glass program at the University of Wisconsin. Littleton, the founder of the glass studio movement, encouraged artists to think of glass as art, not only as something functional. He sought to move glassmaking from the factories and into the artists' studios. Dale Chihuly graduated with a M.S. in sculpture in 1967, and continued his exploration of glass at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), which earned him a M.F.A. in 1968.

While at RISD Chihuly received a Fulbright Fellowship and was invited to study at the prestigious Venini Factory, in Venice. It was here that Chihuly had his first opportunity to make a model for a proposed large-scale sculptural installation, the type of installation that he will later become famous for.

In Venice, Chihuly observed master glassblowers working with a team of assistants on a single piece. This collaborative working style was eventually adopted and refined as Chihuly co-founded Pilchuck School of Glass in



Terry Rishel

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1971. Pilchuck is located fifty miles north of Seattle and was the first school to be completely devoted to the study of glass as a media.

In 1976 Chihuly was in an automobile accident that resulted in the loss of sight in his left eye. His right foot and ankle were also permanently damaged. His loss of depth perception made it increasingly difficult to blow glass alone. He continued to work as the lead gaffer for three years, but after a surfboarding accident in 1979, Chihuly relinquished the gaffer position for good. William Morris became his chief gaffer for the next several years. It is at this time Chihuly began to use drawings to communicate his design ideas to his team.

From 1980-2002 Chihuly continued to push his techniques as a glass artist to new heights. In 1981 Chihuly began his *Macchia* series. The richly colored *Macchia* further explored Chihuly's great fascination with color. In 1986 the Chihuly *Persians* began. The exotic forms were covered with "body wraps" and herringbone effects decorated their surfaces. In 1988 Chihuly began the *Venetian* series with Italian glass blower Lino Tagliapietra. The forms are flamboyant, colorful and organic. The *Chandelier* series begins with a large hanging sculpture at the Seattle Art Museum in 1992. From 1995-1996 fourteen *Chandeliers* were created by glassblowing teams all over the world. The completed installation was installed at various sites in Venice. *Chihuly over Venice* marked the creation of his first permanent outdoor installation. In 1999 Jerusalem became the stage for Chihuly's most ambitious work to date. Outside the Tower of David Museum he created a massive wall of ice shipped in from Alaska. Large scale glass sculptures were installed which reflected the beauty of their surroundings. More than one million visitors entered the Tower of David Museum to see *Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem 2000*.

In 2002 the *Chihuly Bridge of Glass* was dedicated in Tacoma, Washington. Chihuly created a magnificent installation entitled *Mille Fiori, a thousand flowers*, to mark the inauguration of Tacoma Art Museum's new building, which opened on May 3, 2003. *Dale Chihuly's Northwest* was exhibited at Tacoma Art Museum in 2011 to honor the importance of Tacoma and this region on Chihuly's art and career. In 2012 Chihuly Garden and Glass opened in Seattle, Washington and it houses the largest collection of his work.

It is difficult to categorize Chihuly's vast body of work. He explores specific concepts using various techniques and many of his works are extensions or evolutions of his previous work. He prefers to work initially with smaller glass objects which are then assembled to create large installations. Each individual glass piece is remarkable in its structure and could easily stand on its own. Color and light play important roles in his artwork, in which glass is used to reflect and refract light. A luminous theatrical effect is created, and color is used in ways much like a painter might. Combinations of color are dripped, flung and caressed into the glass. Dale Chihuly orchestrates a collaborative process in the creation of art, and in doing so finds the perfect balance between control and the beautiful spontaneity in the art of glassblowing.

## INSPIRATION

The artist's fascination with color can be traced to vivid childhood memories of his mother's abundant flower gardens and the spectacular sunsets he and his brother viewed with her. As Viola Chihuly later recalled in a newspaper interview, "I'd be right in the middle of peeling potatoes or something, and I knew just when the sun was about to set because I could see it from our kitchen window. I'd clap my hands, which meant, 'Come on, we're going to run up the hill.' And we'd tear up to the top, one on each side, me holding on to their little hands as they flew up there. All my life I've been crazy for sunsets." The reporter concluded, "She is not alone. Chihuly says that for him, color is always an outgrowth of nature—sunsets, to be sure, the treasures of the sea, the vibrant flower gardens he was always warned not to step on as youth." (Timothy Anglin Burgard quoted in *Dale Chihuly: A Celebration*, page 16.)

As a child, Chihuly collected bright-multicolored marbles and kept his crayons and pencils neatly organized in a small chest. He also went to the Pacific Ocean and gathered glass floats and colorful shards of beach glass. His fascination and love of water including the misty rain of the Pacific Northwest is an ongoing influence and readily shows itself in the artists work.

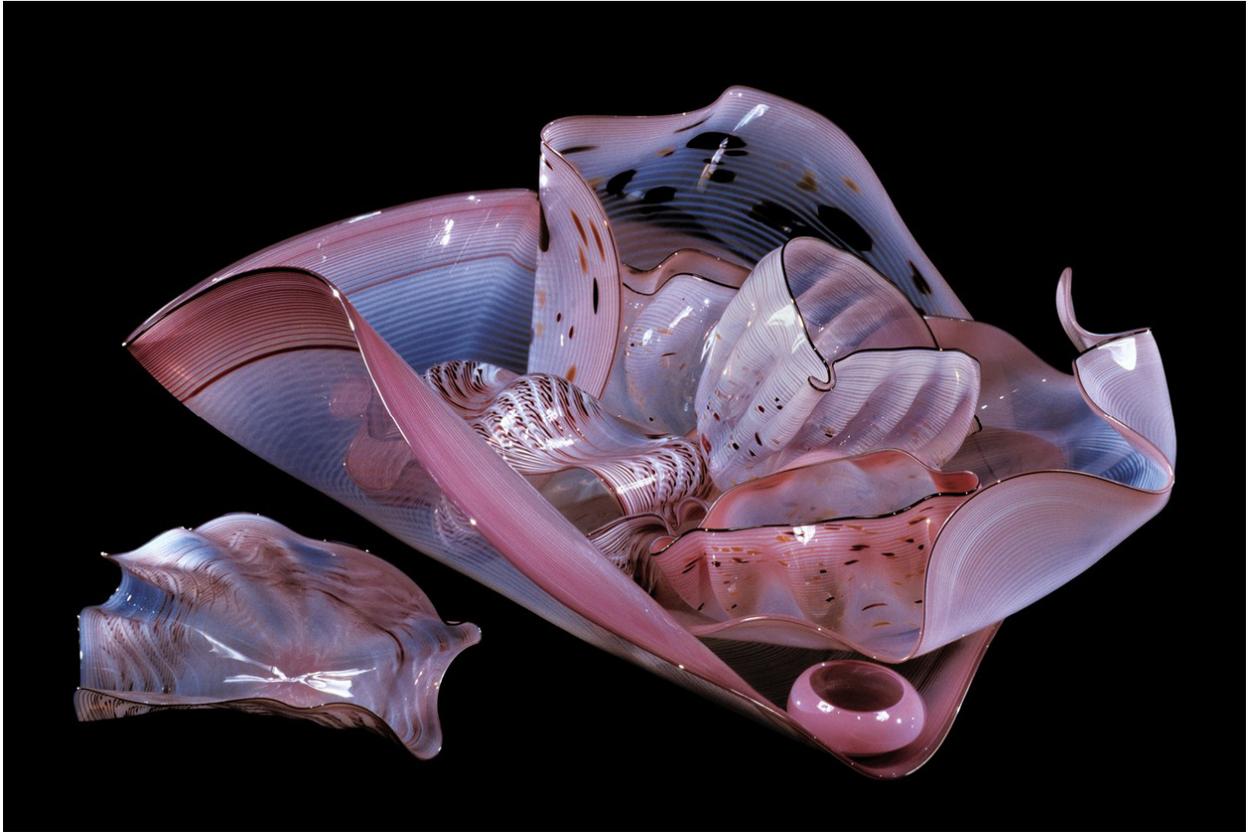
Over the years Chihuly has amassed a wide array of interesting collections from which he finds inspiration: wool trade blankets, Edward S. Curtis American Indian photogravures, classic motorcycles, vintage neon signage, small Buddha statues, Native American baskets and carvings, and sports cars, to name a few. It is, however, his heartfelt devotion to his beloved hometown of Tacoma, Washington, and through the topography, climate, diverse community, and rich history of the Pacific Northwest that he continues to find many of his greatest artistic inspirations.



Dale Chihuly, *Cerulean Blue Macchia with Tabac Seaforms*, 1981–86. Collection of Tacoma Art Museum. Gift of the artist in honor of his parents, Viola and George, and his brother, George W. Chihuly.



Dale Chihuly, Cadmium Red Venetian with Green Leaf, 1991. Blow glass, overall: 21 x 22 x 17 inches. Museum purchase, 1991.12



Dale Chihuly, *Pink and White Seaform Set (detail)*, 1981-87. Blown glass, Overall dimensions: 36 x 60 x 29 inches. Tacoma Art Museum, Gift of the artist in honor of his parents, Viola and George Chihuly, and his brother George W. Chihuly.



**PRE-VISIT LESSON:** Reading Art

**GRADES:** K–12

**LESSON LENGTH:** 1 class period

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** What can we learn by “reading” art?

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

This pre-visit activity will help to prepare students for their museum visit by increasing their comfort level in viewing and discussing art in an encouraging, non-judgmental atmosphere.

## CCSS

Speaking and Listening Standards

- Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to take, purpose, and audience.

## EALRs

2.1 Applies a creative process to the arts

2.3 Applies a responding process to an arts performance and/or presentation of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts

3.2 Uses the arts to communicate for a specific purpose

## BACKGROUND

**Visual Thinking Strategies**, or **VTS**, is a student-centered, research-based methodology for discussing art with a group of young people or adults. It uses art to foster learners’ capacities to observe, think, listen, and communicate, asking them to back up interpretations of a work of art by identifying the visual evidence that led them to their conclusions. VTS promotes the growth of a student’s aesthetic assessment. Building on an existing foundation of descriptive language, the practice of VTS encourages the evolution of critical thinking. Students learn to compile visual clues and arrive at valid interpretations. The following lesson is an adaptation of the VTS discussion technique.

## A brief overview of VTS

In VTS, the educator:

- Facilitates, but is never the source of information or opinion
- Listens and repeats a succinct summary of what the student has said, emphasizing words and concepts that push the conversation further
- Links various converging and diverging viewpoints
- Acknowledges each comment as a valid and worthwhile contribution

The students...

- Have an opportunity to point out and verbally describe what they see happening in a work of art
- Know that their thoughts and opinions are heard, understood, and valued
- Provide evidence to explain interpretative comments
- Are able to see that each comment contributes to the group process of mining the art for meanings

## LESSON

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Let students know that today they are going to discuss a work of art to see what they can learn about the artwork and the artist(s) just by looking. Select one or more of the images included in this guide, or find and choose your own image(s). (Please note that in a first time VTS discussion, a figurative, narrative scene makes for a steady stream of conversation as well as diversity of interpretation. Using more abstract pieces can prove challenging for first-time art viewers, but can be developed quickly by guiding questions down a qualitative checklist. For example, "Who would like to tell me about the textures they see (line, depth, contrast, shape, e.g)?"

- Seat students in front of selected artwork and give them a moment to look at the image in silence before inviting them to speak. Look carefully at the image with the students. Encourage them to view the art much like they would read a book, scanning across, up, and down.
- Ask, "**What is going on in this image?**" Rather than starting out with "What do you *see*?" a question that invites a checklist of responses—"a dog," "the color green," "a red square," e.g.—an open-ended question about what is *happening* starts the discussion off by inviting students to make meaning out of what they see. It also implies that we can find meaning in any work of art.
- Paraphrase each student's comment after he or she responds, pointing to the details he or she mentions. Paraphrasing and responding to each comment in the same way helps indicate to students that no one interpretation is more valid or interesting than another.
- Introduce the appropriate vocabulary as it appears in the conversation.
- If a student provides an interpretive comment about the image ("I think the artist is sad," "It looks like a farm," "This takes place in the future," e.g.), ask, "**What do you see that makes you say that?**" This reminds students to return to the image to find evidence for their opinions; it also builds descriptive vocabulary.
- Ask "**What more can we find?**" intermittently to keep the discussion going—and to imply that there is always something more that we can find in a work of art.
- Repeat the three big questions as needed to allow students to continue to describe their observations:
  - "What is going on in this image?"
  - "What do you see that makes you say that?"
  - "What more can we find?"
- Use your own judgment to close the discussion when student focus wanes. (The time needed for this lesson may vary from 10-45 minutes, depending upon the age and developmental needs of students.) As you conclude, thank all the students for their contributions.



**POST-VISIT LESSON:** The Language of Inspiration

**GRADES:** 6-12

**LESSON LENGTH:** 1 class period

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** How do artists transform ideas or words into art?

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION**

Students will create visual artwork inspired by short readings.

## **CCSS**

### Writing Standards

- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.

### Speaking and Listening Standards

- Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to take, purpose, and audience.

## **EALRs**

1.2 Develop arts skills and techniques.

2.1 Apply a creative process in the arts: conceptualize, gather, develop, organize, reflect, refine, and present

3.1 Use the arts to express and present ideas and feelings.

## **MATERIALS**

- brushes
- cups for water
- thick drawing paper or watercolor paper
- water soluble colored pencils, optional
- watercolor paints

## **BACKGROUND**

Chihuly started drawing after a car accident in the late 1970's left him blind in one eye. He gave up the physically demanding glass blowing and began drawing as a way to communicate his ideas with his team of glass blowers.

Chihuly's drawings have evolved over the years from black and white charcoal drawings to vibrant acrylic paintings on paper, acrylic and glass. Chihuly uses fluid acrylic paint in bottles to capture his movement and energy. He enjoys the spontaneous act of drawing. Chihuly's drawings have become a creative outlet that has helped him develop the ideas for his future glass sculptures. Chihuly noted that "the drawings have given me a new freedom-if I can do it on paper, I can do it with the glass."

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## LESSON

Students will make art that is inspired by a piece of writing. Imagine listening to someone read a piece of writing and feeling inspired to draw, paint, or blow glass.

## PROMPTS

1. Teacher: Set-up classroom with watercolor paints, paper, brushes, and water at each table.
2. Ask students to close their eyes and visualize as you read the following quote to the class:

“Effortlessly I glide through a sapphire sea, admiring sparkles on the underside of slick, moving wavelets rimmed with light, gently cupping an ephemeral bit of living jelly in my hand, then turning to glimpse a dazzling sight: corals, sponges, anemones, in a riot of soft pinks, blazing reds, luminous oranges, all marked with the disciplined wildness that I love in nature—and in the Seaforms.”

Sylvia Earl, “Chihuly and the Sea.” Published in *Chihuly: Seaforms*, Portland Press, 1955.

3. Invite students to open their eyes and begin painting the scenes and objects described in the reading as you reread the quote a second time.
4. Have students set down their brush and close their eyes again for a second time. This time, think back to the museum field trip and the glass sculptures you saw. Think about the sculptures as I read the quote again.
5. Ask students to open their eyes and continue painting, adding details to the scene. Invite students to add some of the sculptures that they were reminded of as you reread the quote.
6. Continue to work on your paintings silently. Everyone’s paintings will be very different from one another and you’ll have the opportunity to share and discuss your paintings when everyone is finished.
7. Reread the quote occasionally during the art making time. Encourage students to add new details or images that they hear in the quote as it is reread.



## CONCLUSION

When the class has finished their paintings, have students write a short narrative about their piece and experience and invite them to share their art with the class.

- What different ways did students interpret the reading?
- Which parts of the reading did you choose to illustrate in your artwork? Why?

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Use the project outlined in this lesson to lead additional art activities with other writing samples, artworks and materials.

**IMAGES** <http://www.chihuly.com/>



**POST-VISIT LESSON:** Creation through Collaboration

**GRADES:** 4-12

**LESSON LENGTH:** 1 to 2 class periods

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** How do artists work together to create?

### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION**

Students will collaborate as a team to create a work of art.

### **CCSS**

Speaking and Listening Standards

- Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to take, purpose, and audience.

### **EALRs**

2.3 Applies a responding process to an arts performance and/or presentation of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts

3.2 Uses the arts to communicate for a specific purpose

### **MATERIALS**

- colored construction paper
- colored pencils
- fishing line
- hole punches
- markers
- pencils and erasers
- scissors
- sketch paper
- skewers (wood)

### **BACKGROUND**

Dale Chihuly has developed many techniques through his career, including the fundamentals of a team. At the helm of the studio glass movement, he was instrumental in bringing glass out of the factories and into a more experimental environment. As the function and development of Chihuly's work evolved into larger-scale series as well as installations, it became apparent that the roles and structure of the group would now transform into a team effort to create a vision led by Chihuly. Teamwork is now a process integral in the world of glassmaking.

A unique work by Dale Chihuly demands the participation of up to twelve people. These people, who have varying skills and talents, are now distinguished in their own right. They exude a form of communication that is not always verbal, making the relationships between these artisans a masterpiece in itself.

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## LESSON

Students will explore how artists work together, including what steps they take from the initial idea, to planning the creation of the piece, to partitioning out responsibilities and *finally* putting the whole piece together?

## PROMPTS

1. Invite students to gather around the art materials and introduce all of the materials to the class. If you have access to books with images of Dale Chihuly's work you should make them available to the students for reference. You may also use the images found in the curriculum guide.
2. Note that you will be dividing the class into groups of five (or whatever works for your class size). Each group will collaborate and create one work of art inspired by the work of Dale Chihuly. Students will use the materials provided to:
  - Come up with one concept for creating a collaborative sculpture by sketching your ideas on paper.
  - Discuss which art materials your team will want to use in the creation of your sculpture.
  - Work together to decide what tasks each team member will be responsible for in completing your sculpture.
  - Assemble and complete your work.
  - Present your sculpture to the class as a team. Be prepared to discuss your active role on the team.
3. Remind students that when they are creating their sculpture they need to ensure to include a surface pattern. You may decide to cover the entire surface or just a small part. It is up to you and your team of artists.

## CONCLUSION

When the class has completed their sculptures, invite students to place them all together in one area of the classroom. This might work best by placing several large tables together with smooth, even surfaces.

Invite each group to present their work to the class and review:

- What words would you use to describe this sculpture?
- What in particular about Dale Chihuly's work inspired you to create your piece?
- Tell us about your use of surface pattern.
- Does your sculpture change if you view it from another position or angle? How?
- What was it like to work as a team? What was most difficult? Most successful? Why?
- What did you learn from this collaborative process?
- Would you do anything differently next time? If so, what?

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Many artists have worked with Dale Chihuly and his team, such as Dante Marinoni, Preston Singletary, Flora C. Mace, Joey Kirkpatrick, and Lino Tagliapietra to name a few. Each artist that worked with Chihuly brought a different style and approach to working with glass.

Have students research how artists work with glass from fusing, slumping, blowing, painting, engraving, etc. and have students present images or videos to the class. Students will be pleasantly surprised to learn how different artist work with the medium around the world.

## CHIHULY'S VOCABULARY OF FORMS

Dale Chihuly explores color and form by making many variations on a theme, called a *series*. Chihuly often develops a new series while he continues work on earlier ones. The following vocabulary of forms describes the basic types of series that have occupied Chihuly for nearly thirty years.

### **Baskets**

With this series Chihuly liberated the glassblowing process from the restrictions of symmetry, allowing glass to respond naturally to gravity. He began to replicate the wavering woven forms of old Northwest Coast Indian baskets, after having seen the collection at the Washington Historical Society in 1977. Inspired by the stacked and collapsing baskets themselves, Chihuly began to group his *Baskets* together into sets. Originally the *Baskets* were earth-toned and red; he later experimented with more exuberant color compositions. A contrasting color is used to delineate the sinuous line of the opening of the vessel—a lip wrap—a device that would be used in nearly all his subsequent series.

### **Chandeliers**

Chihuly *Chandeliers* range from three to thirty feet in length and can be made up of as many as 1,000 elements of glass attached to a stainless steel armature. *Chandelier* pieces can be bulbous, as in his first *Chandelier* in 1992, or long and twisted, short and spiraled, and even frog-toed. Hung together, the many pieces make up an intricate dangling composition.

### **Cylinders**

Since 1974 Chihuly has used his *Cylinders* to present his glass-thread drawings on vessels inspired by Native American textiles. Colorful threads are carefully laid out in an intricate design and fused onto the vessel when it is in its molten stage. This is known as the “glass pick-up drawing” technique.

### **Drawings**

Chihuly *Drawings* are colorful and energetic gestural paintings on watercolor paper. They are also the expressive and immediate guidelines for his hot shop team showing what he wants them to execute in glass. Lively, swirling lines and forms burst their outlines with splats, drips, and blotches

### **Ikebana**

This series began as a development of the *Venetians*. Long flower-like glass stems were set in the *Venetians*, much like in the Japanese art of ikebana. Eventually, the Venetian vessels were replaced by simpler, gourd-like vases.

### **Installations**

Unlike any other artist working in the medium of glass today, Chihuly's installations are distinctive artistic achievements in scale, composition and form. Light and spatial arrangements are his *métier*. Often these installations sit peacefully in nature; sometimes they hang from the ceiling or spring forth from walls. In any setting, the color, form, and light of a Chihuly installation brings something magical to its environment.

### **Macchia**

In 1981, Chihuly began the *Macchia* series. The richly colored *Macchia* often have wildly contrasting hues on their interior and exterior; these colors are separated by a layer of white glass “clouds” so they do not blend. A lip wrap of yet another color outlines the opening of the vessel.

## **Niijima Floats**

Named for the island of Niijima in Tokyo Bay and for the small Japanese fishing floats Chihuly would find on the shores of Puget Sound as a child, *Niijima Floats* are very likely the largest glass spheres ever blown (up to 40 inches in diameter and weighing up to 80 pounds). The simplicity of this form allows Chihuly to concentrate on creating complex surface patterns using layers of colors.

## **Persians**

Chihuly *Persians*, begun in 1986, are exotic forms with spiraling “body wraps” and herringbone effects decorating their surfaces. The series includes both pedestal compositions, often with smaller nesting shapes set in them, and the large, posted *Persians* which are mounted onto walls and ceilings. Optic molds are used to strengthen these glass pieces, which can be as large as forty inches in diameter.

## **Putti**

In 1990, Chihuly began attaching solid, hot-worked glass *Putti* (cherubs) created by Pino Signoretto of Murano to the *Venetians*. The *Putti* have since developed into their own series with individual *Putti*, up to 30 inches in length, mounted on simple vessels.

## **Seaforms**

The *Basket* series metamorphosed into *Seaforms* in 1980. More delicate, thin-walled, and made up of subtler blues, pinks, and grays than the *Baskets*, the *Seaforms* conjure up underwater life, but do not imitate it. The use of optic molds in the glassblowing process creates ribs that increase the strength of the thin-walled glass, and thin lines of color, known as “body wraps,” emphasize their undulating form. Like the *Baskets*, they are often grouped together into sets.

## **Soft Cylinders**

Combining the glass “pick-up” drawing technique from Chihuly’s earlier *Cylinders* with the softer, sagging forms of his *Baskets* and *Seaforms* and the bright contrasting colors of his *Macchia*, Chihuly began the *Soft Cylinder* series in 1986.

## **Venetians**

Inspired by Art Deco Venetian vases, Chihuly began the *Venetian* series with Italian glass blower Lino Tagliapietra in 1988. Each *Venetian* seems to have a character of its own, with flamboyant attachments, sometimes humorous and often times organic.

## GLOSSARY

**Abstract** – a work of art emphasizing design and simplified or systematic exploration of forms; the subject matter may be recognized or may be completely transformed into shape, color, or line.

**Annealing** – a heat process whereby metal is heated to a specific temperature and then allowed to cool slowly which softens the metal allowing it to be cut and shaped more easily

**Composition** – arranging of art elements (line, shape, form, value, texture, space, color) using the principles of organization (balance, contrast, rhythm, pattern) to create an artwork

**Furnace** – an enclosed structure heated to a very high temperature so that substances put inside, such as glass, will melt or burn

**Gaffer** – leader of a glassblowing team and the person in charge of the glass piece being created

**Gesture drawing** – a work of art defined by rapid execution and typically shows movement or an action

**Glass** – a hard transparent material made from silica sand that is used to make different objects

**Glassblowing** – blowing air into a tube to form heated glass into objects

**Hot shop** – a facility with a furnace, gas-fed heating chambers, a temperature-controlled annealing oven and other equipment, where glass blowers create works made from glass

**Installation** – arrangements of art objects in galleries, museums or outdoors. Installations are often planned with a specific environment in mind and designed so that the work and the space interact with each other in dynamic ways

**Mold** – a hollow container with a particular shape into which soft or liquid substances are poured, so that the substances harden and take the shape of the container

**Opaque** – preventing rays of light from passing through, and therefore not transparent

**Organic shapes** – free form shapes that represent living things with irregular edges

**Sculpture** – an artwork that has three-dimensions: height, width and depth or thickness

**Sketch** – a preliminary drawing used in planning an artwork

**Style** – the distinctive characteristics contained in the work of a individual artist, a group of artists, a cultural group, a period of art, or art from a common geographical location

**Translucent** – allowing some light to pass through

**Transparent** – allowing most light through so that a material can be seen through easily

# TACOMA ART MUSEUM

## ARTIST RESOURCES

[Dale Chihuly](#): Learn more Dale Chihuly, while exploring images and videos.

## PUBLISHED RESOURCES

Dale Chihuly, *Chihuly Art Kit Activity Book*. Portland Press, 2009.

*Fireworks of Glass: The Art of Dale Chihuly*. The Children's Museum of Indianapolis, 2006.

Joan Seeman Robinson, "Chihuly Seaforms." *Chihuly: Seaforms*, Portland Press, 1955.

Linda Norden, "Dale Chihuly: Shell Forms." *Arts Magazine*, June 1981.

Rock Hushka, *Dale Chihuly: A Celebration*. Tacoma Art Museum, Abrams: New York, NY, 2011.

Sylvia Earl, "Chihuly and the Sea." *Chihuly: Seaforms*, Portland Press, 1955.

## TEACHER RESOURCES

[Art Resource Center](#): Learn more about the exhibitions on view at Tacoma Art Museum by visiting the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Art Resource Center – with more than 6,000 art books, numerous art periodicals, videos, and teacher resource packets available, the ARC is an excellent community resource to learn more about the visual arts.

[Arts Impact](#): Based out of the Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD), a professional development program that empowers K-8 classroom teachers to become competent and confident teachers of visual and performing arts using arts-infused lesson plans with a focus on mathematics and literacy.

[Tacoma Art Museum's collection database](#), designed to make the museum's 3,200 object collection available online, was launched on November 1, 2011 and is a work in progress. New objects and information are being added to the database regularly.

## EXTENDED LEARNING

[Chihuly Garden and Glass](#): Located at the Seattle Science Center the Chihuly Garden and Glass is a new art experience showcasing the most significant works of internationally acclaimed artist and pioneer Dale Chihuly.

[Corning Museum of Glass](#): A museum in Corning, New York dedicated to the art, history and science of glass. It was founded in 1951 by Corning Glass Works and currently has a collection of more than 45,000 glass objects, some over 3,500 years old.

[Hilltop Artists](#): Established in 1994 with the help of Dale Chihuly, Hilltop Artists is a 501(c)3 non-profit glass arts program that provides classes and individualized instruction for over 500 students each year.

[Museum of Glass](#): A 75,000-square-foot art museum in Tacoma, Washington provides a dynamic learning environment to appreciate the medium of glass through creative experiences, collections, and exhibitions.