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PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

Ma Chihuly's Floats Return to Ride the Wave

WHAT: Dale Chihuly's site-specific installation *Ma Chihuly's Floats* will be reinstalled on Richard Rhodes' sculpture in the Museum's central inner courtyard.

WHEN: Wednesday, April 10, 9:30 am to approximately 2 pm

WHERE: Tacoma Art Museum

To arrange a media visit, please contact Hillary Ryan at hryan@tacomaartmuseum.org.

Additional Information:

On April 10, Tacoma Art Museum returns *Ma Chihuly's Floats* to the museum's central courtyard. The floats are installed each spring and are on view through the summer. Chihuly began the *Nijjima Floats* series in 1991, inspired by a visit to Nijjima, Japan, along with his childhood memories of finding glass fishing floats on the Puget Sound beaches in Tacoma. This large-scale installation of 39 *Nijjima Floats* honors the memory of Viola Chihuly, the artist's mother. The installation is part of the museum's Dale Chihuly Collection, which includes important examples of the artist's key series, including *Baskets* and *Soft Cylinders*, *Persian Sets*, *Macchia*, and *Ikebana*. In addition to being one of the largest sculptures in the museum's collection, *Ma Chihuly's Floats* is the museum's second site-specific installation, coming after the untitled sculpture by Richard Rhodes.

Richard Rhodes' untitled "stone wave" sculpture sits at the heart of the museum and is made of 650 stones in a 1,650-square-foot enclosure. Rhodes designed the elegant form in collaboration with architect Antoine Predock with the vision of having other artworks installed in the courtyard.

The primary stones are 24 inches square and weigh about 250 pounds. The stones are 500-year-old pavers that come from a village slated to be engulfed by the Three Gorges Dam reservoir in China. The sculpture was originally assembled in China and each stone was marked for reassembly in Tacoma. The team of installers had to fit all material and supplies into the central courtyard space through a small door in the glass walls. Workers squeezed between the windows and the waves to fit the stones in place. Each stone had to be placed within 1/8 inch of its calculated position in order for the whole pattern to work.

Rhodes calls the shape a hyperbolic paraboloid, with only one of the four corners at a right angle. It was designed to look like water in a fishbowl that had been jostled and frozen forever in mid-slosh. The stones rest on foam pedestals attached to foam risers that are higher at the corners. The design of the supporting structure creates a void between the stones and gives the illusion that they are floating. The foundation is a plain concrete floor above the museum's parking lot. The base is covered in a waterproofing membrane and the honeycomb of support beneath the stones facilitates drainage.

The space has a certain serenity as the wave seems to go on for eternity, reflected in the mirrored walls. The sculpture brings a strong water motif into the heart of the building, much like Puget Sound and the region's rainy season is at Tacoma's heart.

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