

Artis—Naples

*Home of The Baker Museum
and the Naples Philharmonic*

5833 Pelican Bay Boulevard
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Dreaming Forms: Chihuly Then and Now | Fact Sheet

Exhibition Details

- **Exhibition Title:** *Dreaming Forms: Chihuly Then and Now*
- **Exhibition Dates:** November 1, 2020 – February 28, 2021
- **Tickets:** The Baker Museum will be open to the general public with timed entries and reduced capacity beginning November 1, 2020. Admission can be scheduled **online**.
- **Museum Hours:**
Tuesday—Saturday, 10am–4pm
Sunday, Noon–4pm
Closed Mondays
- **Overview:** *Dreaming Forms: Chihuly Then and Now* will present stunning artwork installations drawn both from recent works and from the artist's earlier signature series. Among the featured series are *Baskets*, *Venetians*, *Ikebana*, *Fiori*, *Rotolo*, *Glass on Glass*, and *Red Reeds*. *Dreaming Forms: Chihuly Then and Now* marks the artist's third exhibition presented in The Baker Museum and coincides with the newly renovated museum's 20th anniversary.

About the Artwork

New works

- *Gilded Fiori Boat*

Baskets

Chihuly began the *Basket* series in 1977. Experimenting with the use of fire, gravity, and centrifugal force, he found new ways to create asymmetrical vessels with thin, undulating walls. He often groups them in sets, with several small pieces nested within larger, wide-mouthed forms. Originally *Baskets* were created in subdued earth-tones; the artist has revisited the series throughout his career experimenting with increased scale and exuberant colors.

Chihuly Merletto

Chihuly began working with this ancient caneworking technique in 2019 as a new body of work within *Baskets*. *Merletto*, meaning “lace” in Italian, is a labor-intensive and complex process that involved the fusing of glass cane to a molten bubble through a pick-up technique which embeds a lace-like effect to the vessel form. This is the first presentation of *Chihuly Merletto* in a museum setting.

Boats (72 x 191 x 81")

Chihuly first filled boats with glass in Nuutajärvi, Finland, during the 1995 *Chihuly Over Venice* project. After several days of glassblowing, Chihuly started tossing glass forms into the Nuutajoki river to see how they would look in the environment. As the glass floated downstream it was retrieved in wooden boats by local teenagers, inspiring Chihuly to begin massing forms into wooden boats, for installations in museums and gardens.

- *Gilded Fiori Boat*

Cylinders

Chihuly began his first series, *Cylinders*, in 1975 and has since created an ever-evolving range of *Cylinders* with glass thread drawings fused onto molten vessels. This revolutionary "pick-up drawing" technique has allowed Chihuly to integrate a wide range of motifs into his work, particularly patterns inspired by Native American textiles.

Drawings (Works on Paper)

What began for Chihuly as a means of expressing his ideas to the glassblowing team, evolved into a unique body of work that references the development of his glass series. *Drawings* vary from light and airy to bold and colorful. Chihuly works with acrylic, watercolor, charcoal, graphite – even fire – to create his expressive two-dimensional artworks.

Fiori

Chihuly's *Fiori* demonstrate the artist's penchant for organic, free flowing forms that evoke the natural world. With the variety of forms in this series, Chihuly creates compositions that range from a few standalone forms to multiple elements brought together in installations he calls *Mille Fiori* (Italian for "a thousand flowers").

- *River and Cobalt Mille Fiori*

Glass on Glass

Debuted in 2017, *Glass on Glass* demonstrates Chihuly's ongoing exploration of the transmission of light through transparent media. Comprised of three glass panels that are painted with vitreous-glass enamel, then layered within a special frame to create a single unified vision, the depth of each *Glass on Glass* composition is revealed as the viewer changes position. Painting with vitreous enamels is an age-old art form going back a thousand years. Some of the first examples of painting on glass can be seen in objects from the Roman Empire. Chihuly explores modern themes using this traditional technique.

Ikebana

Ikebana began in 1989 as an offshoot of the *Venetians* and was inspired by "ikebana," the art of Japanese flower arrangement. The series, like others initiated by Chihuly during this period, demonstrates the artist's aspiration to move glass from the pedestal into the realm of large-scale sculpture. His approach to *Ikebana* focuses on assemblage, a concept used in earlier series such as *Seaforms*.

Macchia

Motivated by a desire to use as many color combinations in one series as possible, Chihuly created *Macchia* (Italian for "spotted") in 1981. The development of the series involved creating a technique for applying a layer of white between colors to prevent them from blending. Pieces of colored glass are fused onto the surface of the *Macchia* during the glassblowing process to produce the mottled effect for which this series is named.

Reeds (Sizes vary from 6-10')

Originating during his experimentation in Nuutajärvi, Finland, and later revisited by Chihuly, *Reeds* are among the most dramatic blown glass forms. To create the long, tubular shape, one glassblower is elevated in a mechanical lift while blowing through the pipe to encourage the form to stretch, while another pulls the glass toward the ground.

Rotolo

An extension of the *Venetians*, *Rotolo* (Italian for “coil”) are dense coils of glass fused to a solid base. Chihuly began developing the series in 2013 as an exploration of the quality of light emanating from the complex clear glass forms. Over time, Chihuly expanded the series to include rich hues of red, blue, green, and purple. Heavy, intricate, and delicate, *Rotolo* is the most technically challenging work Chihuly has created. Each *Rotolo*'s weight is included in its title with some weighing as much as 140 pounds.

Seaforms

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

Soft Cylinders

Chihuly began the *Soft Cylinders* series in 1984, combining the “pick-up drawing” technique used in earlier *Cylinders* with the softer, sagging forms of *Baskets* and *Seaforms*, and the bright contrasting colors of *Macchia*.

Venetians

Inspired by Venetian Art Deco vases, Chihuly began the *Venetian* series with Italian glass blower Lino Tagliapietra in 1988. Chihuly communicated his creative vision to Tagliapietra through watercolor and graphite sketches of classical forms with several handles. With Chihuly's use of charcoal, the drawings became bolder and the sculptures more extreme, with handles changing to knots, prunts becoming claws, colors evolving from subtle to bold, and forms shifting from symmetrical to asymmetrical.

Combining historical traditions of glassmaking and decorative arts with contemporary techniques and unconventional forms, each *Venetian* has a character of its own, with flamboyant attachments, sometimes humorous, and often organic.

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