

# DALE By Saxon Henry CHIHULY

SINCE REVOLUTIONIZING THE STUDIO GLASS MOVEMENT, DALE CHIHULY HAS CONTINUALLY PUSHED TO NEW HEIGHTS AND EXPERIMENTED WITH NEW FORMS, CREATING BLOWN-GLASS ARTISTRY THAT ENHANCES INDOOR AND OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS. HIS WORKS ARE SYNONYMOUS WITH DRENCHING COLOR—EVIDENT IN THE TEMPORARY INSTALLATION ENSCONCED IN FAIRCHILD TROPICAL BOTANIC GARDEN EARLIER THIS YEAR AND A COMMANDING CHANDELIER THAT TAKES CENTER STAGE IN THE RESTAURANT KARU. NEXT YEAR, DRAMATIC GLASS INSTALLATIONS WILL GRACE THE INTERIORS OF REGALIA, A CONDOMINIUM DEVELOPMENT BEING BUILT IN SUNNY ISLES BEACH.

**SH: Have you always been fascinated with electric color?**

**DC:** No, there was a period in the '70s and '80s when I used subtle color, but I had run out of new colors in the palette I was working with and decided to use bright colors. I have ever since.

**SH: How did you choose glass as your medium?**

**DC:** That's a difficult question to answer. If I think way back, I remember stained glass windows in a church I went to as kid; they fascinated me. I also combed the beach when I was a boy for Japanese glass fishing floats—it was thrilling to find them. But it wasn't until I was taking a course at the University of Washington in 1962 that I saw the first clear indication of my fascination with glass as an adult. The teacher told us to put something unusual into a weaving that we were all making, and I chose glass that I had fused to a copper wire.

**SH: Did you know you would be an artist when you were young?**

**DC:** My mother tells me that I liked to sit on the floor and draw when I was a kid, but I wasn't a very serious student, especially in high school—I lost my father and my only sibling during that time, so I was pretty distracted. It wasn't until halfway through college that my desire to really do something kicked in during a trip to Europe. I came back a changed person who was determined to do something with my life.

**SH: What launched your career as a dynamic glass artist?**

**DC:** I started the glass program at the Rhode Island School of Design; then I started the Pilchuck Glass School north of Seattle, which became known as one of the most recognizable glass schools in the world. Now, there are more glassblowers in Seattle than there are in Venice.



**SH: How do you explain the excitement that your works create?**

**DC:** The color is a very important part of it, but it could also be the scale of the works I create. I think people are excited because they are often looking at things they've never seen before.

**SH: Is there a challenge you have not yet met that you dream of fulfilling?**

**DC:** I've thought about what it would be like to design my own building and then do an installation in it.

**SH: Is there an upcoming project that excites you?**

**DC:** I'm doing a large project at the new Atlantis Hotel in Dubai. I think it's going to be stunning.

**SH: Do you design installations differently when they are going to be outdoors?**

**DC:** Indoor works are usually shown in a very neutral space where all of the emphasis is on the pieces. Outside, the work has to respond to the exotic plants and the colors that it is set within so I must pay attention to the setting when I'm designing. I've been doing installations in natural settings for about five years now, and I like them very much.

**SH: You seem to be quite in demand at the moment. Has the rhythm of your work become less challenging or more so given that you are producing so much?**

**DC:** Though we are producing a lot of glass, I am doing about 50 installations and eight exhibitions a year now, I feel like the work becomes more innate the more I do it. ☺