

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 27, 2012

### Chihuly Chandelier Will Beckon Visitors

Installations begin in early October

A signature installation of the Dale Chihuly exhibition begins October 5 and will feature an intricate, 3,000 pound glass chandelier visible from the museum's main approach. *Blue Ridge Chandelier* will hang adjacent to the Tiffany *Christ Resurrection Window*. The fall exhibition, *Chihuly at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts*, opens October 20.

“Although a century apart, we’re delighted to showcase two legendary glass innovators side by side,” VMFA Director Alex Nyerges said, “especially since this year is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the studio glass movement. The chandelier, inspired by the Tiffany windows, is a spectacular example of Chihuly’s artistry, constructed from approximately 1,151 hand-blown glass elements.”



*Blue Ridge Chandelier* (detail), 2012, 216 x 160 x 84”  
Photo by Nathaniel Willson

Another site-specific installation, *Red Reeds*, was installed in the reflecting pool in the VMFA sculpture garden in August. More than 60 feet in length, the work features 199 Red Reeds measuring up to 10 feet tall, interspersed among the aquatic foliage.

The Chihuly exhibition at VMFA is the artist’s third major U.S. museum exhibition in recent years. Chihuly is recognized for his ambitious architectural installations around the world, in historic cities, public museums and gardens. A hundred and one exhibitions in seven countries have presented artworks by the artist during the last decade, which have been enjoyed by more than 10 million visitors. He is credited with revolutionizing the Studio Glass movement and elevating the medium of glass from the realm of craft to fine art.

### Related programs

Educational programs will include a free family day, *Celebrate the Art of Glass*, on October 13, as well as a lecture by glass historian William Warmus, films, studio classes, gallery talks and glassblowing demonstrations.

### Studio glass movement

The year 2012 marks the 50th anniversary of the studio art glass movement in America. *Chihuly at Virginia Museum of Fine Arts* is among the many commemorative glass exhibitions and events that are being celebrated by the Art Alliance for Contemporary Glass.

Fifty years ago, Harvey Littleton, an artist and son of the director of Corning Glass Works, organized the Toledo Workshops and spearheaded the development of smaller furnaces and kilns

that could be used by artists in their own studios. Through a series of seminars at Toledo, Littleton taught glassmaking techniques ranging from blowing and casting to engraving, polishing, etching and painting. In 1963, Littleton established a glass art program at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, and Dale Chihuly was one of his students.

In 1969, Chihuly helped establish a glass program at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). Two years later, he and glassmaker Paul Marioni cofounded the Pilchuck Glass School, an experimental program begun on a tree farm in Seattle that has become a leading institution in the studio glass movement. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Chihuly taught at Wisconsin, RISD and Pilchuck.

#### **About the exhibition:**

- TITLE: *Chihuly at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts*
- DATES: Oct. 20, 2012 – Feb. 10, 2013
- LOCATION: NewMarket, Altria and Center galleries, Atrium and Reflecting Pool
- CURATORS: Chihuly Studio; Barry Shifman, VMFA Sydney and Frances Lewis Family Curator of Decorative Arts 1890 to the Present
- TICKETS: \$20; \$16 for seniors, students with valid ID and groups of 10 or more. Free for members. Timed for access on the half hour. To purchase, visit [www.vmfa.museum/chihuly](http://www.vmfa.museum/chihuly) or call 804.340.1405.
- HOTEL PACKAGES: Hotel and travel packages are posted at <http://www.visitrichmondva.com/Plan/Hotel-Packages>
- VMFA SHOP: Limited edition Chihuly works will be available, as well as Chihuly publications and decorative items.
- VMFA RESTAURANTS: Best Café and Amuse will provide fare inspired by the exhibition.
- SOUVENIR BOOK: *Chihuly | Virginia Museum of Fine Arts* Essay by Dr. Robert Hobbs
- MEDIA PARTNERS: Richmond Magazine and NBC12.
- SPONSORS: Organized by VMFA in cooperation with Dale Chihuly. Presenting sponsor is Altria Group. Major sponsors of the exhibition are The Richard S. Reynolds Foundation, and Fred T. and Roddy P. Tattersall. Contributing sponsors include Eda Hofstead Cabaniss, Mrs. Frances M. Dulaney, Frances Lewis, and Andy and Ginny Lewis, True and Charlie Luck, Steve and Kathie Markel, Norfolk Southern Corporation, RBC Wealth Management, The Anne Carter and Walter R. Robins, Jr. Foundation and Dr. and Mrs. Harry A. Wellons, Jr. The Banner Exhibition Program at VMFA is made possible by the Julia Louise Reynolds Fund.

#### **About the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts**

VMFA's permanent collection encompasses more than 33,000 works of art spanning 5,000 years of world history. Its collections of Art Nouveau and Art Deco, English silver, Fabergé, and the art of South Asia are among the finest in the nation. With acclaimed holdings in American, British Sporting, Impressionist and Post-Impressionist, and Modern and Contemporary art – and additional strengths in African, Ancient, East Asian, and European – VMFA ranks as one of the top comprehensive art museums in the United States. Programs include educational activities and studio classes for all ages, plus fun after-hours events. VMFA's Statewide Partnership program includes traveling exhibitions, artist and teacher workshops, and lectures across the Commonwealth. VMFA

is open 365 days a year and general admission is always free. For additional information, telephone 804-340-1400 or visit [www.vmfa.museum](http://www.vmfa.museum).

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**Press Contact:**

Suzanne Hall, [suzanne.hall@vmfa.museum](mailto:suzanne.hall@vmfa.museum), 804.204.2704

Pryor Green, [pryor.green@vmfa.museum](mailto:pryor.green@vmfa.museum), 804.204.2701

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 200 N. Boulevard, Richmond VA 23220-4007