Racine Art Museum 441 Main Street Racine, Wisconsin 53401-0187 p 262.638.8300 f 262.898.1045 www.ramart.org

R|A|M

A Glass Act: First Rate Glass from RAM's Collection
January 31 – June 6, 2010

RAM celebrates **Therman Statom**'s installation in our Windows on Fifth Street Gallery by presenting this selection of highlights from our collection of contemporary artworks in glass.

Art Glass Involvement
This medium has been prized for centuries for its transparency and its ability to ignite color when exposed to light. Its origins date back to ancient Rome and the Middle East. However, the development of glass as a medium for contemporary artistic expression has happened only recently. In the 1960s, glass bodies were devised that could be melted in small-scale studio kilns instead of large glass factories. This new method freed artists to work in single person studios or small university art departments where intense experimentation has taken place.

Glass Movements in the United States
The United States has had two phases of development in glass.

Phase One

- The early and mid-1900s had a number of factories active in Ohio and Corning, New York, with factories such as **Fenton**, **Steuben** and others turning out both functional and artistic pieces.

Phase Two

- The second phase of glass in the United States happened in the 1960s as **Harvey Littleton**, **Dominick Labino** and **Marvin Lipofsky** kicked off the Studio Glass Movement by creating small-scale furnaces for the use of glass as an artistic medium. This modern studio glass movement caught on in design schools.
- In 1963, **Littleton** founded the first college level fine art glass program at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.
- In 1964, **Marvin Lipofsky** founded the university level glass program at the University of California at Berkeley and **Dr. Robert C. Fritz** founded a university-level glass program at San Jose State University in San Jose, California.
- In 1965, **Bill H. Boysen**, as a graduate student under **Harvey Littleton**, built the first glass studio at Penland School of Crafts, Penland, North Carolina. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1966, **Boysen** started the graduate glass program at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale later that same year.
- In 1969, **Dale Chihuly** initiated the glass program at the Rhode Island School of Design, and in 1971, he was one of the founding members of the Pilchuck Glass School, near Seattle, which has become a mecca for glass artists from all over the world.

R|A|M

RAM's Glass Collection

- Believing that this has been a historically significant time for artistic advancement, RAM has concentrated on the achievements of glass in the US and abroad to capture a clear picture of the movement's development.
- The museum owns examples from early leaders in the field, as well as some of today's emerging talents.
- Glass is popular with artists because of the many ways in which this adaptable material can be handled. It can be blown, cast, or assembled. Its surface can be etched, sandblasted or painted.
- Works selected present a variety of subject matter, ranging from still life compositions and depictions of the natural environment to figurative works and abstract compositions.
- This exhibition contains pieces that demonstrate a masterful combination of technical expertise and artistic vision, as practiced by internationally recognized artists known for their expertise in this medium.
- In our Ruffo and Schumann galleries, RAM demonstrates one of the museum's strengths: collecting artists in-depth throughout their careers. This forms a detailed documentation of how ideas germinate and develop over time. These cases contain works by **Dale Chihuly**, **William Morris** and **Joel Philip Myers**—three leaders in the field—demonstrating artistic achievements from different decades in their careers.
- These cases, in the Ruffo and Schumann galleries, also present a portion of the history of the Studio Glass Movement of the past 40 years. Early works by **Chihuly**, **Morris** and **Myers** reference functional forms traditionally executed in glass—vases, vessels and bowls. Later works created by a younger generation of artists follow two paths. Some artists, such as **Michael Glancy** and **Concetta Mason**, create sculptures that continue to recall vessels. Others, such as **William Carlson**, **Mark Peiser** and **Richard Ritter**, fabricate more purely sculptural forms.
- The Studio Glass Movement has benefited from close working relationships and a free exchange of ideas and techniques taking place on an international and intergenerational basis. **Littleton**, **Carlson** and **Myers** are respected artists and teachers. **Littleton** is joined here by **Chihuly**, who was his former student. **Chihuly** is also alongside **Morris**, who started his career in **Chihuly**'s studio before becoming internationally known for his own work.

R|A|M

Glass Artists in the Collection

Harvey Littleton was born in Corning, New York in 1922. **Littleton**'s involvement with glass began in the environment of the Corning Glass Works where his father was director of research. His studies in physics, industrial design and ceramics culminated in a distinguished career as an artist and educator. In the early 1960s, **Littleton** pioneered the Studio Glass Movement. His experiments in glassblowing, while teaching at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, became the impetus for many programs in studio hot glassblowing across the country and around the world. Much of his sculpture uses tubes, rods and columns of glass, with plate glass and even lens discs.

Joel Philip Myers was born in Paterson, New Jersey in 1934. He began his work in glass with individual, smooth polished pieces that had imbedded collages of variegated color. In the late 1990s, **Myers** moved on to creating installations of vertical mold-blown glass vessels that are monochromatic in color and at times textured or pierced. Their cylindrical shapes echo the human form, and their groupings evoke human relationships.

Dale Chihuly was born in Tacoma, Washington in 1941. His introduction to glass was while studying interior design at the University of Washington. After graduating in 1965, **Chihuly** enrolled in **Harvey Littleton**'s glass program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, then continued his study of glass at Rhode Island School of Design, where he later established a glass program. In 1968, **Chihuly** was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to study in Venice, Italy at the Venini factory. While there, he observed the Italians' team approach to blowing glass, which is critical to his studio today. In 1971, **Chihuly** co-founded Pilchuck Glass School in Stanwood, Washington. He is well known for his many series of works, among them the *Baskets*, *Persians*, and *Seaforms*. He is most celebrated for his large architectural installations.

Ginny Ruffner was born in Atlanta, Georgia in 1952. She lives in Seattle, Washington. Much of her work employs lampworking techniques with mixed media. Her pieces tend to outline space while occupying it at the same time. **Ruffner**'s pieces are very narrative, and explore philosophical issues, such as, "What is beauty?." Her surfaces are often filled with imagery created in enamel paint.

Richard Marquis was born in Bumblebee, Arizona in 1945. He was educated at the University of California-Berkeley in the mid 1960s when the Studio Glass Movement was just getting started. A Fulbright scholarship took him to Italy where he developed his knowledge of Venetian glass-forming techniques. **Marquis** has created a body of work that is quirky, funky, satirical and irreverent. He mixes skillfully blown pieces with an eclectic mix of art and junk that he collects.

R|A|M

Joey Kirkpatrick and **Flora C. Mace** have worked collaboratively for over 27 years after meeting and teaching at the Pilchuck Glass School in 1979. They have created a diverse body of work that includes both blown glass vessels with applied imagery, and sculpture fabricated with wood, glass and other media. The artists, respected for their innovative work, have recently concluded the series for which they are best known, large-scale blown glass fruit and vegetable forms. They continue to work on life size figurative wood and glass sculptures, as well as outdoor bronze installations. Their newest work includes clear blown vessels and cast panels with illustrations of the "first facts" of bird identification through applied glass dust drawings.

David Huchthausen was born in Wisconsin Rapids. While a student at the University of Wisconsin-Wausau, he majored in architecture, but gravitated toward the sculpture department, working in welded steel, wood and found objects. In 1970, he began his involvement in glass, and eventually became **Harvey Littleton**'s graduate assistant. His background in architecture and interest in primitive art and ritual are strong influences in his work. **Huchthausen**'s pieces have icy, super polished surfaces, but also razor sharp edges. He has an innovative integration of glass and light. His work illustrates the concept that the projected images, patterns and shadows are integral and inseparable components of the sculpture.

Therman Statom's work in glass began in the 1970s at the Rhode Island School of Design where he received his BFA in 1974. He received his MFA in Sculpture four years later at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. **Statom** has had major solo and group exhibitions at important galleries and art museums around the world. He regularly teaches workshops and conducts community projects for children like his recent weeklong residency in Racine's public schools this past March. His works are included in the permanent collections of numerous art museums.

Glass Terms

Acid Etching is the process of decorating glass, developed in the 19th century, in which the surface is etched with hydrofluoric acid. The glass is coated with an acid resistant substance such as wax through which the design is scratched. Then acid is applied to etch the exposed areas of glass.

Acid Polishing is the process of making a glossy, polished surface by dipping the object into a mixture of hydrofluoric and sulfuric acids.

Annealing is the process of slowly cooling a completed glass object in an auxiliary part of the glass furnace, or in a separate furnace. This is an integral part of glassmaking because if a hot glass object is allowed to cool too quickly, it will be highly strained by the time it reaches room temperature; indeed, it may break as it cools. Highly strained glass breaks easily if subjected to mechanical or thermal shock.

Batch is a mixture of raw materials used to make glass.

R|A|M

Blowing is the technique of forming an object by inflating a gob of molten glass gathered on the end of a blowpipe and shaping it with tools or in a mold.

Blowpipe is an iron or steel tube, usually about five feet long, for blowing glass. **Blowpipes** have a mouthpiece at one end and are usually fitted at the other end with a metal ring that helps to retain a gather.

Cane is a solid glass rod.

Carving is the removal of glass from the surface of an object by means of hand-held tools.

Casing is the application of a layer of glass over a layer of contrasting color.

Casting is the generic name for a variety of techniques used to form glass in a mold.

Crackled is a surface decoration produced by chilling the glass in water and reheating to partially smooth the cracks and relieve the strains.

Crystal is a term for highly refractive, colorless lead glass.

Cutting is the process of making facets, grooves and depressions by using rotation discs of various materials, sizes and shapes and a stream of water with an abrasive.

Enameling is a decorative technique wherein colored powdered glass is mixed with oil, then painted onto the surface and reheated to fuse the design.

Engraving is the process of decorating glass by cutting the design into the surface of the glass by a diamond, a metal needle, or a rotating wheel.

Etching can be done in several forms, but mainly it involves hydrofluoric acid action under controlled conditions on certain unprotected areas of the glass. Pattern stencils are used, and acid resist paint is applied to the areas that are not to be etched.

Favrile is a type of glass developed in the early 1890s by Louis Comfort Tiffany with an iridescent surface that simulates excavated ancient glass.

Flameworking is the working of glass rods and tubes heated in a flame; also called *lampworking*.

Fuming is the coating of the surface of glass with a thin spray of metallic chloride, creating a wrinkled and iridescent surface.

Furnace is the source of heat for fusing the raw ingredients of glass, maintaining objects in a molten state, and reheating partly formed objects. (See also *glory hole*.)

Fusing is the process of melting the batch; heating pieces of glass in a furnace until they bond; heating enameled glasses until the enamel bonds with the surface of the object.

Gaffer is the master blower and head of a team of artisans.

Gather: 1. To get glass from the furnace onto the pipe or *punty*. 2. The molten glass on the pipe or *punty* before it is blown.

Gilding is the process of decorating glass by the use of gold leaf, gold paint, or gold dust. The gilding may be applied with size, or amalgamated with mercury. It is then usually fixed to the glass by heat. Gold leaf may be picked up on a gather of hot glass.

R|A|M

Glass is an artificial substance made by fusing some form of silica (sand), an alkali (potash or soda), and sometimes another base (lime or lead oxide). It is plastic when molten and rigid when cold.

Glory Hole is a reheating oven within the furnace.

Kiln is an oven used to process a substance by burning, drying, or heating. In contemporary glassworking, kilns are used to fuse enamel and for kiln forming processes such as *slumping*.

Kiln Forming is the process of fusing or shaping glass (usually in or over a mold) by heating it in a kiln. See *slumping*.

Lampworking is the process of manipulating glass that has been slowly heated over a torch or flame until soft; also known as *flameworking*.

Marver is a slab of marble or steel used for rolling and chilling hot glass.

Melt is the fluid glass produced by melting a batch of raw materials

Mold or **Mould** is the form, normally made of wood, metal, graphite or plaster, used for shaping and/or decorating molten glass. Some molds impart a pattern to the *parison*, which is then withdrawn, and blown and tooled to the desired shape and size. Other *molds* are used to give the object its final form, with or without decoration.

Parison (French, *paraison*) is the gather, on the end of a *blowpipe*, which is already partly inflated.

Pate-de-Verre is a French term meaning glass paste. Powdered colored glass is mixed with a binder and a fluxing medium, then molded and fired. The process was known in ancient Egypt and revived in France in the 19th century.

Pick Up Decoration is the technique whereby a *hot parison* is rolled in chips of glass, which are picked up, *marvered*, and inflated.

Polishing is smoothing the surface of an object when it is cold by holding it against a rotating wheel fed with a fine abrasive. Glass can also be polished with hand-held tools.

Punty (Pontil) is a solid steel rod used for gathering glass and for attachment to the bottom of a blown piece so that the blowpipe may be struck off and the opening of the piece reheated and finished.

Sandblasting is the process of removing glass or imparting a matte finish by directing a pressurized stream of sand at the surface.

Slumping is the process of creating a sagging form by using the force of gravity on heat-softened glass.

The **Studio Glass Movement** in the United States in the 1960s. The development of a small furnace by **Harvey Littleton**, and easy-to-melt glass by **Dominick Labino**, allowed artists to produce one-of-a-kind objects in their studios.

Wheel Engraving is the process of decorating the surface of glass by the grinding action of a wheel, using disks of various sizes and materials (usually copper, but sometimes stone). An abrasive in a grease or slurry is applied to a wheel, as the engraver holds the object against the underside of the rotating wheel.