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THE RISD MUSEUM ANNOUNCES CHIHULY AT RISD
INAUGURAL EXHIBITION FOR CHACE CENTER

Two-Part Exhibition Presents Site-Specific Installation and Works by Prominent Glass Alumni

Opening Date: September 27, 2008 — daylong free celebration for public

Chihuly at RISD

September 27, 2008 to January 2009

PROVIDENCE, RI (October 24, 2007) —The RISD Museum of Art announces that renowned artist and RISD alumnus Dale Chihuly '68 MFA will create a special site-specific installation as the inaugural exhibition for the new special exhibition gallery in the Chace Center. This exhibition, *Chihuly at RISD*, by the acclaimed artist will be complemented by an exhibition of works from other glass artists who were students during or after Mr Chihuly's time at RISD. Serving as a sort of homecoming for this alumnus, *Chihuly at RISD* will inaugurate the Museum's new special exhibitions gallery in the much anticipated new building designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jose Rafael Moneo.

To mark the opening of the Chace Center (20 N. Main Street) on Saturday, September 27, 2008, Dale Chihuly will create a massive work composed of many of his signature hand blown glass components. A riot of sculptural forms of a scale and energy unlike anything seen before in New England, this unique, site-specific work will fill the largest gallery (nearly 6,000 square feet) in the new Chace Center. This new gallery is nearly twice the size of the Museum's current largest gallery. The Museum has planned a day long celebration — all free and open to the public — with performances, music, and programs in honor of the opening.

“This presentation of Dale Chihuly as our inaugural exhibition celebrates the new Museum's spaces with the appropriate measure of flamboyance, mass, and artistic statement while also honoring a figure who is an intrinsic part of RISD's history,” said Hope Alswang, Director of the RISD Museum.

When Chihuly received his MFA at RISD in 1968, it was from the ceramics department, predating the glass program. After earning his degree, he was asked to help establish a RISD department for the medium (1969). A native of Tacoma, Chihuly had initially worked with glass as an interior-design major at the University of Washington (BA 1965). He went on to enroll in the first glass program in the country and was awarded an MS in Sculpture (1967). This was at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, with Harvey K. Littleton, who had founded the program and with it the Studio Glass movement. Chihuly then went on to RISD. He was already employing blown-glass forms often lit with neon or argon to fill rooms. After graduation here and time spent in Venice on a Fulbright Fellowship at the famed Venini glass factory in Murano (1968), Chihuly stayed on in Providence, where the studio glass movement was beginning to take hold through the program that he had helped to establish at RISD. This department now boasts an outstanding percentage of world-class glass artists among its ranks, some of whose work will be on view in the inaugural exhibition.

In 1971, Chihuly co-founded the Pilchuck Glass School (near Stanwood, outside Seattle) while still continuing to teach at RISD sporadically until the late 1980s. Chihuly was Pilchuck's first artistic director (1971 –89). Under his leadership

it rapidly became a world center for and proponent of glass as fine art and as a medium in installation and environmental art, as well as for a multidisciplinary approach. After losing an eye following a 1976 car accident, Chihuly began to refine the team approach to glassblowing that he had observed years earlier in Venice. Portland Press publishes Chihuly's books, videos, DVDs, and notices of limited editions by the artist.

Chihuly has created many well-known series of tabletop-size works that are technically brilliant, richly colored, and voluptuously shaped and grouped, among them the *Cylinders*, *Baskets*, *Macchia*, *Seaforms*, *Persians*, and *Venetians*, but he is also celebrated for large-scale architectural installations. He has been quoted as saying, "I don't know why I work so large. I very often push a series to its maximum size —just to keep the glassblowers at the very edge of their technical abilities, to keep the tension high, to make it exciting"; and also, "If you know exactly what you're doing and you can make it every time, it's not going to be very interesting."

In 1995, he embarked on the major project *Chihuly Over Venice*, which involved glass factories in Finland, Ireland, and Mexico with the resultant sculptures installed over the canals and plazas of Venice. In 1999, Chihuly mounted a most ambitious installation in the Tower of David Museum, *Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem*, which was attended by over a million visitors. In 2001, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, curated the exhibition *Chihuly at the V & A*. Chihuly's lifelong affinity for greenhouses began to grow during this period into a series of exhibitions within botanical settings. His abiding love of flower forms refers back to his mother's garden in Tacoma, just as his love of sea themes harks back to his childhood there on the shores of Puget Sound. His first garden presentation was at the Garfield Park Conservatory in Chicago (2001). Chihuly has exhibited at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, near London (2005) and its more than 300 acres and several greenhouses. Another popular presentation at the Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens in Pittsburgh opened in May and runs through November 11, 2007.

Chihuly's work is included in more than 200 museum collections worldwide and has been exhibited at countless national and international venues. He has received numerous awards, including ten honorary doctorates, a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Grant, and two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Chihuly at RISD is presented by Bank of America. Additional support provided by the Bafflin Foundation, Corning Foundation, and the Chihuly Leadership Committee.

ORGANIZATION

This exhibition is organized by the Rhode Island School of Design Museum in cooperation with Dale Chihuly. The work displayed is protected by copyright and any copying is expressly prohibited. *Chihuly at RISD* and the complementary exhibition of glass alumni have both been coordinated for The RISD Museum by James Hall, Assistant Director of the RISD Museum of Art.

PROGRAMMING

Grand Opening Celebration: The RISD Museum in the new Chace Center will be open and free to the public on Saturday, September 27, 2008, from 10am to 10pm. The day will include performances, music, and activities for adults and children.

ALSO ON VIEW

September 27, 2008 through January 28, 2008
Building Books: The Art of David Macaulay

June, 2008 ongoing

Twentieth-Century Works from the Permanent Collection (title TBD)

In its new Central Gallery, a series of spaces previously closed to the public, the Museum presents new galleries devoted to its collection of Twentieth-Century art, decorative arts, works on paper, and costume and textiles. The third floor of the 1926 Radeke Building has been restored to include exhibition spaces, the Danforth Lecture Hall, and new public restrooms. The connecting entrance from the Chace Center, this floor welcomes visitors to explore its many permanent collection galleries.

Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) has earned a worldwide reputation as the preeminent college of art and design in the country. Today, with more than 22,000 alumni, RISD enrolls approximately 1,900 undergraduates and 400 graduate students from the United States and almost 50 countries, offering degree programs in the fine arts, architecture and design disciplines, and art education. Academic programs include research and design initiatives, the exploration of art criticism and contemporary cultural concerns, as well as international exchange programs. Each year, RISD hosts prominent and accomplished artists, critics and authors on campus. For more information, go to www.risd.edu.

The RISD Museum of Art, a world-class museum in Providence, RI, was founded as part of Rhode Island School of Design in 1877. Its permanent collection of nearly 84,000 objects includes paintings, sculpture, decorative arts, costume, furniture, and other works of art from every part of the world, including objects from Ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, and art of all periods from Asia, Europe, and the Americas, up to the latest in contemporary art. In addition, the Museum offers a wide array of educational and public programs.

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