Special Edition
Celebrating the Opening
of the Contemporary
Art + Design Wing
Dear Members,

This special edition of The Gather celebrates the new Contemporary Art + Design Wing at The Corning Museum of Glass, which opened on March 20, 2015.

The new wing is the largest space anywhere dedicated to the display and creation of contemporary art and design in glass. It includes a new 26,000-square-foot gallery building that showcases some of the best works in glass from the last 15 years. Next door is the renovated former Steuben factory building that is now transformed into a 500-seat Amphitheater Hot Shop for glass demonstrations.

It is thrilling to have such a beautiful space in which to share the story of glass, and to have ample opportunities to enhance the understanding of this amazing material. You can look forward to innovative new programming, like new Guest Artist lectures and performances in our new hot shop, as well as new ways to explore the collection by using our GlassApp, a portable digital tool for learning more about the contemporary artworks on view and the artists who made them.

We are grateful to Corning Incorporated for fully funding this expansion, and for its unwavering support of the Museum since 1951. Many thanks also go to our Board of Trustees, our brilliant architect Thomas Phifer, our dedicated construction team, our visionary curator Tina Oldknow, and our hard-working and committed staff—all of whom played a strong role in making this new wing such a success.

A special recognition goes to Marie McKee, who retired as the Museum’s president in December, and who led this project from start to finish. I am honored to build on her vision and to share this beautiful new space with the world.

As importantly, I want to thank you, our Members. Your choice to support this Museum not only helps us financially, but it also indicates a commitment and a pride in The Corning Museum of Glass. It was inspiring to see the turnout by our Members and Donors during Grand Opening Weekend.

If you were unable to join us for the opening, I encourage you to put The Corning Museum of Glass on your must-visit list this year (as many times as possible). You will be amazed at what you experience.

Karol B. Wight
President and Executive Director
The Contemporary Art + Design Wing was designed by award-winning architect Thomas Phifer who strives to connect the built environment with the natural world in every project that he undertakes. Since founding Thomas Phifer and Partners in 1997, he has completed notable public and private buildings, including the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh, NC.
What impressed me most on my first visit to The Corning Museum of Glass was how vital the institution is. Its innovative programs and collection of glass are truly inspirational, its reach remarkable. It was clear to me that the focus of our work over the next three and a half years would be to create the best setting for their extensive collection of contemporary glass while honoring Corning’s important ethos of innovation. We began this journey by trying to fundamentally understand glass as a material.

Corning invited us to design an expansion which would include new spaces for their contemporary glass collection as well as a theater, located in the former Steuben Glass factory. It became immediately clear that our new addition must forge a deep connection with the existing Museum buildings and serve as a central and clarifying structure on the Corning campus. In 1951, Wallace Harrison designed the original campus with deceptively simple modernist rectangles clad in precisely detailed glass and steel. These still form the backbone of their campus. The new gallery building had to speak to this context and to the contemporary works it contained. In contrast, the Steuben factory had to be restored to honor the activity of crafting with hot glass.

We conceived the new Contemporary Art + Design Wing as a “building on the green”—a structure that operates both as an organizing element and is also emblematic of its contemporary contents. We worked closely with the director and curators on an architecture that aligns with the spirit of contemporary glass. The works in their contemporary collection are increasing in scale and ambition—like Constellation by Kiki Smith or Liza Lou’s Continuous Mile.

For me, light is integral to everything we experience. Light marks the passage of time and connects us with nature. It is the poetry in our lives. I saw this in my first hot glass demonstration and again when we were introduced to the research and development process of the Museum’s major benefactor, Corning Incorporated. We became passionately invested as we discovered how much precision and innovation are involved with glass. We found ourselves literally being enlightened and empowered through innovation.

There was a transformative moment when we took a tall Alvar Aalto vase outside and looked at it in natural light. With the crisp fall light coming from the sky the vase held an amazingly clear, bright, and intense light. It embodied the light and simply glowed as it pushed the light back towards us. I so admire the rigor that glass artists bring to their works, from attention to temperature and gravity to the quality of the surface and moments of illumination. We wanted to bring this same focus to the architecture to create an extremely quiet building, which would operate in harmony with the glass objects.

We realized that we were beginning to investigate an experience that was different from the way we traditionally thought about museums. Contemporary glass is not harmed by the quantity of light. Horizontal illumination puts the glass in silhouette and limits the patron’s understanding of the form of the work itself; however, light from above does the opposite. It honors the material so that the more light the object absorbs, the more it reveals the form, depth, and richness of the glass. It took months of careful research, calibration, looking at contemporary artists’ works and the way they used light to fully understand what this experience should become. The embodiment of light in these works is the poetry that makes a truly memorable experience.

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-THOMAS PHIFER

Inspired by the image of walking into a white cloud, we designed a collection of spaces defined by soft curving walls that dissolve the separation between the art, atmosphere, light and space. The walls and light unify the experience while honoring the works. Freed of a normal museum relationship of wall-mounted works, the curving walls and the light from above enable the pieces on the floor to levitate. The simple exterior glass surfaces are white, contemporary and almost devoid of detail. They frame the works inside much like a vitrine. This building is a distilled container for glass and light; a place that serves the art.

-Thomas Phifer
Visitors approach the new galleries through the **Promenade** which presents the idea of glass as a material for contemporary art with large-scale works.

### What to Look For:

**A** *Choreographed Geometry* (2007) by Klaus Moje is a four-panel painting composed of more than 22,000 hand-cut strips of glass that have been heat-fused together.

**B** *Fog* (2007) by Ann Gardner is a suspended sculpture in which hanging mosaic-covered pods in grays and whites imitate the atmospheric condition of clouds that are opaque one moment and translucent the next.

**C** *To Die Upon a Kiss* (2011) by Fred Wilson draws its name from the dying words of Shakespeare’s Othello, and is inspired by the highly decorative chandeliers that adorn the palazzos lining Venice’s Grand Canal. In this work, Wilson refers to the enduring, but rarely discussed, African population in Venice. The color of the sculpture gradually shifts from opaque black at the bottom to colorless glass at the top, depicting the slow ebb of life.

* Works on view for the first time.
The Nature Gallery is dedicated to sculptures that refer to the natural world.

**What to Look For:**

**D** On Extreme Fragility (2003) by Anne and Patrick Poirier is inspired by the famous glass flowers made for Harvard University by the 19th-century Bohemian glassmakers Leopold and Rudolf Blaschka.

**E** Still Life with Two Plums (2000) by Flora Mace and Joey Kirkpatrick is a giant bowl of glass fruit meant to heighten our awareness of the world around us, including our dependence on nature and its cycles and seasons.

**F** Forest Glass (2009) by Katherine Gray is an installation of thousands of reclaimed green, colorless, and brown drinking glasses arranged on shelves to suggest a stand of three trees. Inspired by the process of creating glass, which historically required the burning of timber to power the furnaces, Gray questions the impact of glassmaking on the environment in the past and present.

The Body and Narrative Gallery focuses on works inspired by the human body.

**What to Look For:**

**G** Imprint of an Angel II (1999) by Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová is an abstract shape based on a man's shoulders and chest, its mysterious interior space representing the inner light, or the divine part, of man.

**H** Evening Dress with Shawl (2004) by Karen LaMonte is a haunting evocation of the beauty of classical statuary.

**I** Endeavor (2004) by Lino Tagliapietra features abstract forms inspired by the boats that gather in the Venetian lagoon for the annual Festa della Sensa.
The **History and Material Gallery** presents works that reflect the manipulation of traditional forms in glass and focus on its material properties.

**What to Look For:**

1. **Material Culture** (2008) by Beth Lipman references and recontextualizes functional vessels so that we understand them in new ways. The abundance of objects explores the idea of amassing large collections of objects, and the cultures of excess.

2. **Carroña** (Carrion) (2011) by Javier Pérez exploits the beauty and drama of Venetian chandeliers, creating a statement very different from that of functional lighting fixtures. The installation is meant to evoke opportunistic birds gobbling carrion by the side of the road, a metaphor for the gradual disappearance of the traditional glass industry in Murano, Italy.

3. **Tire** (2005) by Robert Rauschenberg is meant to be ambiguous and highly ironic, while urging viewers to consider everyday objects in new ways. It explores the idea that a rubber tire—humble, dirty, industrial, and ecologically adverse—is recreated in colorless glass and presented as a thing of exquisite beauty.

The **Design Gallery** is devoted to international design from the past 25 years and features a range of functional glass vessels, furniture, lighting, and design art.

**What to Look For:**

4. **Etruscan Chair** (1992) by Danny Lane is constructed of colorless glass that has been chipped, ground, polished, drilled, and assembled with fabricated metal.

5. **Folpo Nero** (2003) by Maria Grazia Rosin is both a chandelier and a sculpture. The octopus—with its waving arms, murky color, and staring eyes—evokes the mysterious depths of the ocean. The eyes are illuminated with fiber-optic lighting, and the deep black glass is enlivened with iridescent purple, blue, green, and gold sparkles.

6. **Eye Prototype** (2011) by Sigga Heimis was made at The Corning Museum of Glass as part of Glass-Lab, a pioneering collaboration between international designers and master glassmakers from the Museum.
The Special Temporary Projects Gallery will be a changing space in which large-scale installations can be displayed.

**What to Look For:**

*Constellation* (1996) by Kiki Smith is a room-sized installation that will be on view until March 2016. It is a meditation on the infinity of space and the human desire to understand it, bringing the heavens to earth. Twenty-six hot-sculpted glass animals of different sizes represent different animal-themed star patterns. Smith designed the piece after a 19th-century celestial atlas, and worked with Venetian maestro Pino Signoretta to produce it.

The Porch is the display area around the themed galleries which overlooks the Museum's new one-acre green.

**What to Look For:**

*The White Necklace* (2007) by Jean-Michel Othoniel is a floor-to-ceiling necklace composed of 51 irregularly shaped blown glass beads, made to demonstrate how glass beads may participate in the larger context of contemporary art.

*Continuous Mile* (2006-2008) by Liza Lou consists of black glass beads sewn onto a continuous mile-long cotton rope that is coiled into a circle. Lou spent several years working with a team of beadworkers from several townships in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, to create the piece.

*Untitled* (2013) by Roni Horn is a large, abstract sculpture made of lime green glass, and cast in one block. The work was removed from the mold and left in its natural, flawed state. When exposed to light, the sculpture captures and reflects moments of instability and change, which will be readily apparent in the skylit gallery.

* Meet the Curator: Tina Oldknow

Tina Oldknow started her museum career as a curator of Greek and Roman art and ancient and historical European glass at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. It was there, in 1982, that she was introduced by collectors Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser to the emerging world of American studio glass. She was hooked.

Fast forward to 2015: Tina is now one of the most widely respected experts in contemporary art and design in glass. She lived and worked for many years in Seattle, the West Coast mecca for glass, before moving to Corning in 2000 to become the Museum’s curator of modern and contemporary glass.

Tina has authored numerous publications on contemporary artists and their works. She coedits the Museum’s long-running journal, *New Glass Review*, and curates all of the modern and contemporary exhibits at the Museum. In 2014, she was chosen by her peers to be an Honorary American Craft Council Fellow, recognizing her excellence and experience in the field.

Tina says the most exciting aspect of her job is writing about art and artists, and researching and acquiring works of art. She also enjoys working on gallery displays for the public, who she hopes will love the artworks as much as she does. Most importantly, she appreciates getting to know the artists.

“To me,” she says, “the artists are the thinkers in our society. They’re the philosophers. And I’m always interested in hearing what they have to say.”

About the new wing, Tina says, “The building is an incredible work of art in itself. The skylight roof is particularly special and I love the idea of looking at sculpture and having a cloud pass over the sun and to see that difference as that shadow passes by. It’s so dynamic.”

* Works on view for the first time.
Large 10’ x 20’ panels (glass, of course!) make up the façade of the building. The panels are made of all transparent low-iron glass with a layer in between that is white (for the gallery building) or fritted (for the 140-foot window wall).

The entire gallery roof is made of 980 skylight panels in a seemingly random (but planned) pattern of opaque, translucent, and clear glasses. The natural light enhances the glass objects, and the unusual pattern produces a pleasant dappled effect of light in the galleries.

A central core houses elevators, stairs, bathrooms, and executive meeting rooms.

The new one-acre Museum Green will be located on the north side of the building.

206 concrete beams rest on the concrete serpentine walls and support the skylight structure. The beams also act as a filter for the sunlight.

White serpentine concrete walls define the five gallery spaces. All of the utilities are hidden in the walls, ensuring there are no distractions from the art.
The former Steuben factory building has been renovated into a 500-seat Amphitheater Hot Shop. The original 1951 structure was stripped down to its steel core, reinforced to support modern building codes, and re-clad with black metal panels.

Skylights in the roof and windows along the north and south walls offer natural daylight.

A balcony runs around the perimeter of the hot shop offering 360-degree views of the activity below.

The highly capable hot shop equipment can accommodate the creation of large-scale works and the use of multiple glassworking techniques beyond glassblowing.
Q: What was your role in planning this installation?
A: I always think of myself as sort of the Lorax for the collection. I speak for the glass. There are certain things I pushed for like the 10-foot door access and passage from the loading dock to the galleries. Contemporary sculpture keeps getting larger and we wanted to make this facility high-functioning for the future.

Q: How do you work with a curator, in this case Tina Oldknow, senior curator of modern and contemporary glass, to put together a new exhibit or gallery?
A: The curator chooses what we acquire for the collection and has a desire for where and how they’d like to display the art. I always joke with Tina that she may want a piece to hover in space, but I can’t defy the laws of physics. Curators many times are thinking about aesthetics, but we have to strike a balance between safety and aesthetics.

Q: What are some of the unique aspects of the space when it comes to installing glass?
A: There’s no ceiling. In most museums when you need to hang something from the ceiling, you have a structure, but here we have skylights and these beautiful concrete beams. We had to come up with a strategy so that objects that need to be suspended, like It’s Raining Knives by Silvia Levenson, could sit on top of those beams and be anchored, but still visually pleasing, so your focus is on the art and not the mechanics.

Q: When you could finally start working in the galleries, where did you begin?
A: We started looking at how our model and plans realistically
matched up to what had been built. We thought about the flow of how we were going to install—starting with objects furthest away from our access point. Then the exhibition fabrication company came to set up the casework—decks, wall cases, and platforms—that we had been working with them to build for nearly two years, and we installed behind them.

**Q** What goes into installing a single piece of glass?

**A** There are so many different pieces with different installation instructions in the new wing that we created a master binder. When it’s time to install a particular piece, we flip to that page, and there are pictures, as well as unpacking and installation instructions. Is it going in a wall case? On a platform? For objects like *Black Cube*, we can’t lift it up and over the glass barrier, so we need to tell the exhibition fabricators to leave the glass and stanchions off so we can install the artwork first and then place the enclosure around it.

**Q** Are there any particularly challenging pieces to install?

**A** A lot of them! Some are challenging because they’re new and we’ve never set them up before. Some are very complex because of the technical aspects of not only setting them up, but making them run reliably into the future. Other pieces are challenging just because of their sheer fragility. *Red Pyramid* is one of my favorite pieces in the entire museum, but few things make me as nervous to move. It’s like trying to move a car, but all of its edges are like Pringles. Susan Plum’s *Woven Heaven* feels like picking up air, and typically when we move it, you can hear it giving off some of its stress with clinks and tings. It’s sort of frightening, but we understand it’s just doing what it needs to do.

**Q** How do you go about moving an object?

**A** Glass objects by their nature are fragile, so we need to assess the needs of each piece. They’re sort of like children. Each kid has a different way of learning and a different way they want to be talked to, so with an object you need to determine how it wants to be moved—the fragility, the safety, the weight of it. And you need to figure out how to keep the people moving it safe. We also involve our conservation staff. If we have something that’s fragile, we want to talk to them about all the challenges of the piece.

**Q** How long can it take to install a single object?

**A** The first time we set up *Forest Glass*, it took us a week. The artist, Katherine Gray, was here assembling the piece aesthetically. It has over 2,000 objects within the composition, so it’s very time- and labor-intensive. We knew we’d be setting up the piece again, so when we de-installed it, we took pictures of each shelf and packed all the glass on that shelf together in a crate, so it didn’t take quite as long to install this time.

**Q** Any objects that are personal favorites when it comes to installation?

**A** We’d never installed *Carroña* (Carrion) by Javier Pérez before. It’s a shattered chandelier with taxidermied crows, and there are bags of broken glass you just dump out. I think this one has such a bold presence and is really going to be a visitor favorite.
The Contemporary Art + Design Wing houses not only beautiful light-filled galleries displaying works in contemporary glass, but also the new 500-seat Amphitheater for live glassblowing demonstrations. Although it has been fitted with the latest and greatest in glassmaking equipment, the space pays homage to its deep roots in glassmaking, dating back more than 60 years.

Steuben Glass opened in Corning in 1903, moving from its original factory on what is now Denison Parkway in downtown Corning to a building in the new complex of the Corning Glass Center in 1951. The Glass Center was comprised of the Steuben Glass factory, science and technology exhibits, and a new institution called The Corning Museum of Glass.

“On These Shoulders We Stand”

Preserving Glassmaking Tradition in the Amphitheater Hot Shop

“On These Shoulders We Stand”

Rob Cassetti, senior director, creative services and marketing for The Corning Museum of Glass. “It’s sacred ground. The Steuben Glass factory (which closed in 2011) was the last glassblowing factory here in this valley. But that story didn’t end.”

Cassetti became a designer for Steuben Glass in 1987, but first visited the factory a decade earlier as a college intern working for Corning Incorporated in a model shop. He often made plaster models for the Steuben designers, and one day, he was invited to see the space, which included the Robertson Ventilator blowing room, known as the “hot end” of the factory.

“It had this spiritual quality about it, and felt like a cathedral to me,” Cassetti said. “Walking into the space was a rush—the roar of the furnaces, the activity of the hot glass. It made the hair stand up on my neck.”

When Cassetti later gave tours of the Steuben factory, visitors were often struck by the beautiful steel structure of the building. Years later, architect Thomas Phifer would feel exactly the same way.

“Tom said he wanted to retain as much of the original structure as possible and to make that the expression of the building,” Cassetti said. “There are construction pictures taken back in ‘51 that look very much like the pictures taken during this expansion period. We took it back to the original building frame, then reinforced and rebuilt it to meet modern building codes.”

The flow of the new wing is very deliberate, described Cassetti, a poetic journey through the process of understanding, appreciating, and making glass. Visitors enter the Museum in the Admissions Lobby, a public, bustling space where there are cash registers and people
coming and going. But when you step into the gallery space, you leave that all behind and are transported to this world of art.

“Tom Phifer made going through the galleries a spiritual experience,” said Cassetti. “There’s a purity to that space. It’s white and light. The curvilinear walls somehow speak to nature. The building is so minimal and all of the details are reduced. You don’t see the light switches on the walls or vents in the floor. They’ve worked hard to make all of that go away.

“Then you cross over the threshold into the Amphitheater Hot Shop and it’s the exact opposite,” he continued. “It’s black. It’s industrial. Every part, piece, bolt, and screw is exposed. The structure of the building is fully expressed. It’s like a child’s drawing of how you hold up a building. You’re in the belly of the beast, and you’ve come to where glassmaking begins.”

Since 1951, the space has been used for glassmaking and to give visitors an opportunity to see the glassmaking process. As part of the original Corning Glass Center tour, people could sit on the 90-seat bleachers and look into the Steuben blowing room. The factory, however, would shut down for weeks in the summer, and rarely operated on weekends. The Museum’s Hot Glass Show was born in the 1990s as a way to provide consistent, reliable glass demonstrations to Museum visitors. The new wing has taken that same idea, but amplified it into a space that can now seat 500.

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—ROB CASSETTI, Senior Director, Creative Services and Marketing

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“When I look at our glass demonstration programs, and all of the things we’re doing, we are building on what we learned from our masters,” Cassetti said. “This is a place of teaching, and it connects us all the way back to our teachers that worked here. On these shoulders we stand. There’s a rebirth in this space, and I think it’s tremendously powerful.”
The 500-seat Amphitheater Hot Shop will be the most capable space for glassmaking demonstrations anywhere in the world. The possibilities seem endless for sharing the excitement of hot glass with our visitors through special demos, themed shows, and public guest artist and designer sessions.

“Up to this point, we’ve had shops that have been focused on making a good demonstration,” said Eric Meek, manager of hot glass programs, “but this shop is focused on making great work. It’s a huge difference. This shop is capable of supporting the talent of our team, as well as the vision of great artists. There’s hardly anything you can imagine in glass that can’t be made in there.”

Meek is planning to take full advantage of that through the programming he’s putting together for the new space.

“Because of the size of the shop, everything will be scaled up a bit,” said Meek. “We can offer our visitors who have a deeper interest level in glass the chance to see something special. Perhaps they’ve already seen a Hot Glass Demo on the Innovation Stage. They can come to the Amphitheater Hot Shop and see expanded shows with new techniques that only a bigger hot shop and more time will allow.”

Meek is working on the first of the thematic glass demos to go along with the Museum’s summer exhibition Ennion and His Legacy: Mold-Blown Glass from Ancient Rome, opening in May. The demo will highlight some of the glassmaking techniques used to create the objects on display in the exhibition. Other programming in the space will include blocks of time to work on intricate projects, like pulling canes that can take all morning.

But perhaps what is most exciting for Meek is the ability to invite glass artists and designers into the Amphitheater Hot Shop to work on pieces that could never be realized in a small shop—and to share it all with the public.

“This creates new opportunities for artists to engage with The Corning Museum of Glass,” said Meek, “and for the community to be able to watch an amazing level of talent come to our town.”

The Guest Artist Program will welcome accomplished glassblowers, providing them with a talented team of Museum glassblowers for support, starting with Bertil Vallien in April. But the Museum will also invite fine artists and designers, who may or may not already work in glass. They will bring with them a vision, and the Museum’s glassmakers will make it come to life. Many of these will be large-scale, and performance-based works.

“We’ve built the ultimate shop,” said Meek. “The potential of that space and the life it will take on is something I can’t even imagine. I have no idea what we’ll be doing in there in five years, but I know it’s going to be fantastic, and beyond what anyone here has dreamed of, because this space is special.”
New Programming in the Amphitheater Hot Shop

All photos except those noted are by Gary Hodges
PICTURES FROM OPENING WEEKEND

Photo: Maria Strinni Gill

Photo: Molly Cagwin

Photo: Gary Hodges

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GlassApp Allows You to Get In On the Conversation

Walking into the Contemporary Art + Design Galleries, visitors will see all kinds of big, beautiful, and thought-provoking pieces. It’s hard not to be curious about the story behind each object. “What was the artist thinking when they created this?” “How was this made?” And even, “How the heck do they move that?”

The Museum decided to enhance the discussion that will naturally happen when you look at the art with a program designed to help you jump in on a larger conversation. GlassApp works as your own personal guide to the new wing, giving you access to all kinds of information at your fingertips.

When you join the Museum’s Wi-Fi network, powered by Corning Incorporated’s new ONE™ Wireless Platform, you’ll be automatically directed to GlassApp, a web app specifically designed for visitors to use as they are going through the galleries.

GlassApp features “Current Conversations in Glass,” short videos you can watch as you stand in front of the works, giving you behind-the-scenes insights you won’t find on the labels. Videos might highlight a fact about the artist, or a personal connection to the piece shared by someone who works at the Museum.

“The voice of GlassApp is very friendly and engaging,” said Scott Sayre, chief digital officer. “It’s based around conversations and gaining unique insights on the objects in the galleries from a range of different people. GlassApp helps you make personal connections with the works and artists themselves.”

Using GlassApp is intended to be very social, and visitors are encouraged to join the conversation by sharing their thoughts and pictures via social media channels. Monitors in the gallery space will also display the social media feed.

“We are reaching people on a device that’s in their pockets,” said Kris Wetterlund, director of education and interpretation. “They already know how to use it. There’s a lot of information to share, and we’re allowing visitors to pick and choose what they want.”

If visitors don’t want to use their phones, iPad stations that contain the content will be available throughout the galleries.

“We hope visitors to the Museum will enjoy using GlassApp to engage with the works in the new Contemporary Art + Design Galleries,” said Sayre, “and will join in on the exciting conversation.”