



OBJECT of the **month**

January 2022

BEGIN TRANSCRIPT

Hello. I'm Pat, a Museum Guide at the Dayton Art Institute. In this talk, we are going to experience a work by artist Christopher Ries called *Celebration*.

Before we get started, please take a moment to pause the video and take a good look at the sculpture. When you think about 'glass sculpture', is this piece what you usually think of? Or perhaps you see works

by Dale Chihuly, colorful and exuberant, or by Lino Tagliapietra or Dante Marioni, composed and serene? What is so different about Ries' work? Pause and look again.

Did you notice the solidity of the work, the absence of any color or the image within the object? *Celebration* is made of the world's highest quality lead crystal, highly reflective and refractive. Reflection is when light hits a surface and bounces back without being absorbed. Think of looking at yourself in a mirror. Refraction is when light hits a surface and bends as it passes from one medium to another. Have you ever noticed that a straw in a clear glass of liquid looks bent? In *Celebration*, light bends when it passes from the air into the glass and then is reflected internally in multiple ways, producing the inner beauty of the artwork.

Looking more closely now, we notice that the glass has been cut, ground and polished. It was carved from a block of glass, producing faces or sides, and then ground to appear satin-like or polished, being highly reflective. It has been noted that Ries works like a traditional sculptor in marble sculptor. He starts with a block of glass and with glass-cutting saws removes material to achieve its final shape. He then grinds and polishes the surfaces, revealing a finished form with internal beauty created by the passage of light.

Returning to *Celebration*, let's focus on what we see inside from different sides. Notice the different views you see based on where the light enters and then is reflected internally. The internal images we see are composed by the movement of light throughout, created by the external form, the angles, shapes and finishes of the faces.

Although we can define Ries' works within a frame of physics, it is the sheer beauty and sublime use of his material that create pure magic.

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I will leave you with Celebration and a quote by Ries reflecting on his work: “I have chosen a pure material and a pure form,” Ries says. “It is analogous to singing a cappella. Few singers have such a pure voice that they can rivet you in time and space but it can be an even more powerful experience than singing with accompaniment and embellishment.”

Thank you for watching ‘Object of the Month’ and be sure to visit the Dayton Art Institute to see *Celebration* and other glass works in Gallery 123, the Eileen Dicke Gallery of Glass.

END TRANSCRIPT

Click [here](#) to access the video presentation.

FEATURED ARTWORKS*

Dale Chihuly (American, born 1941), *Aurora Red Ikebana with Bright Yellow Stems*, 2001, blown glass. Dayton Art Institute, OH. Museum purchase with funds provided by an anonymous donor, John Berry, Sue and Donald Dugan, Warren and Barbara Fryburg, Anne Greene, Bill and Sandy Gunlock, Steve and Sue Libowsky, Elden and June Lindquist, Steve and Lou Mason, Bill and Judy McCormick, Judy and David Montgomery, NCR Corporation, Bob and Linda Nevin, Carol and Richard Pohl, Jr., Violet Sharpe, Frank and June Shively, Doug and Flora Thomsen, Lee and Betsy Whitney, Judy Wyatt, Bill and Dorothy Yeck, and gift of Mr. and Mrs. T. Hart Fisher in memory of Fredricka Patterson Lewis by exchange, 2001.87

Lino Tagliapietra (Italian, born 1934), *Hopi*, 1998, blown glass. Dayton Art Institute, OH. Museum purchase with funds provided by the James F. Dicke Family, 1999.56

Dante Marioni (American, born 1964) *Grey Vessels with Red Lip Wrap*, 1998, glass. Dayton Art Institute, OH. Museum purchase with funds provided by the 1999 Associate Board Art Ball, 1999.28.1-2

Christopher Ries (American, born 1952), *Harp*, 2003, cut, ground, and polished optical crystal. Photograph © James Kane

Christopher Ries (American, born 1952), *Bouquet of Light*, 1998, cut, ground, and polished optical crystal. Photograph © James Kane

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