



CHRISTOPHER RIES

*"We all think about light. Glass embodies it.
Glass is the one medium that gathers, focuses,
amplifies, transmits, filters, diffuses and reflects it.
It is the quintessential medium for light.
I see it all on a symbolic level."*

ABOUT CHRISTOPHER RIES

Christopher Ries creates highly evocative, contemplative works of art in glass through classical reductive sculpture technique. Unlike the traditional hot glass techniques of blowing or casting molten glass, Mr. Ries sculpts mammoth blocks of the world's finest crystal, blocks whose starting weight is often more than three thousand pounds.

He carves these massive pieces into elegant enigmatic forms whose internal reflection offer the viewer a journey into another world. In addition to height, width, depth, Christopher Ries' work lures the viewer into a stunning fourth dimension created by reflection, refraction, and optical illusion. You'll see things that aren't there ...or are they?

For the past three decades, Christopher Ries has explored glass' potential as a sculpture medium. The fine art which he creates must truly be seen to be believed.

Christopher Ries composes light through the medium of glass. Working with large blocks of optic crystal he releases the form, employing the same techniques used in stone sculpting. While these sculptures suggest a range of sources from prisms to faceted gemstones, these terms are too limiting to describe them. His works quietly move the viewer. They create emotional reactions in the viewers that connect them to his work and to the things from our environment that inspire him. Ries effectively blends a technical precision with an artistic vision that challenges the mind, while satisfying the spirit.



*The artist with Opus (above left)
Desert Flower sculpture (far right) and details.*

Artist and glass sculptor Christopher Ries grew up on a farm in central Ohio. He earned his Bachelors Degree in Fine Art at the Ohio State University in 1975. He received his Masters of Fine Art from The University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1978. During his time in Madison Ries was research assistant to the Founder of the American Studio Glass Movement, Harvey K. Littleton.

Ries founded the glass department at The Ohio State University and was its first instructor as an undergraduate student. He also ran a glass blowing studio for two summers at Mineral Point, Wisconsin while in graduate school. Mr. Ries opened a studio in Columbus, Ohio after graduate school and developed his cold working skills and understanding of optics.

It was in 1979 that Ries made an effort to find the ultimate glass sculpting material. His search led him to Schott Optical in Duryea, Pennsylvania. Ries experimented with many glass types produced at Schott over the next few years in his Columbus, Ohio studio. In 1986 Ries had earned the respect of Schott's President, Dr. Franz Herkt, and was offered studio space at the Pennsylvania factory. Mr. Ries has been Schott's "Artist-in-Residence" ever since.

Christopher Ries has produced the largest whole, unassembled pieces of crystal sculpture known. The work is in many museums and fine art collections around the world.

ABOUT CHRISTOPHER RIES

"Communicating one's vision through the cold working process is elusive and challenging. It starts with conceiving a form in glass that can convey your thoughts. Since there are so many things a work of glass can say, it can be challenging to choose a direction to take the form.

Once the concept has been chosen, the carving process is like a game of chess. In the beginning, the moves you can make are limitless, but as you decide where to cut and what to leave, inevitably you reach a point where there is no where else to move without suffering a negative effect.

Zugzwang! You reach a point of diminishing returns that forces the end of the process. Unlike a simple game, however, where the participants are judged by win, lose, or draw, the finished piece of art work is judged qualitatively by the beholder through aesthetic, emotive and spiritual filters, completing the communication process."



Christopher Ries' use of light as a primary material for creating art sets his work apart from other hot and cold glass sculptors. His designs harness the energy of light to drive illusions. Visions of living flowers and soaring gothic arches inhabit the interior of his sculptures. The designs within the piece often appear to be larger than the actual size of the glass sculpture that surrounds it. This effect is what Ries refers to as "the fourth dimension" in his work. He shapes, smooths, polishes and grinds the exterior of a mass of crystal to transform it into a conduit for its interior light, producing optical masterpieces within. Facets and surfaces on the exterior of Ries' works reflect inward, forming light into abstract designs deep inside the sculpted glass.

The clarity of glass and unexpected illusions contained within, create an intense artistic experience and sense of wonder in viewers: How did he do that? Each work provides an exceptional sculptural point of view on the life of light within glass. Traditionally light has been used in art to create the illusion of dimension - a painter uses light and dark to render a three-dimensional object in two dimensions. Ries integrates the idea by creating a fourth dimension of light and dark within each sculpture.

In Ries' work, viewers become explorers navigating through the piece, discovering deliberately positioned illusions. Each design leads viewers to places of curiosity, sensation and drama. Yet, in conversation, Ries humbly explains that what you are viewing is all an illusion. *Excerpted from "Christopher Ries: Sculptor in Four Dimensions," by Debbie Tarsitano, Glass Art Magazine (July/August 2007)*



ART AS EMISSARY

At Wiford Gallery & Sculpture Garden, we believe that art acts as an emissary to a better world. Art inspires us. The power of art is its ability to move us to the deeper places of our heart and soul...toward joy and awareness, toward meaning and revelation.

Art speaks to the emotions in ways that words cannot. It can do so because it enters the mind from a place in the heart. Art carries the energy of intention and speaks to us with a mere image. When the heart is opened, our mind is informed by inspiration and from that place we can create our world more meaningfully.

With art acting as emissary, we begin to anticipate beauty and abundance as a way of life.



ABOUT WIFORD GALLERY & SCULPTURE GARDEN

Wiford Gallery & Sculpture Garden is a destination for fine art in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Surrounded by a spacious outdoor sculpture garden and nestled just off Canyon Road, we represent artists of the highest caliber, whose dedication and talent are clearly displayed in their work.

We choose our artists for three reasons: the mastery of the work, the quality of joy in the artist, and their trajectory for growth. By focusing on these three characteristics - rather than a specific style or genre - we are able to enjoy and offer the highest caliber of works in an array of mediums - glass, wood, oil paintings, bronze, precious metal and mixed-media.

We hope each of our guests feels the undeniable exuberance of our artists and shares the optimism and belief translated through their work.

We are honored to represent some of the finest artists in the world. It is with gratitude that we share these beautiful works of art. Thank you for your support of the arts, and for working with Wiford Gallery.



403 Canyon Road
Santa Fe, NM 87501
505 982 2403
wifordgallery.com

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ART AS EMISSARY