

# COMPOSED

The recent donation of his massive glass sculpture "Sail" to the University of Central Florida provides yet another opportunity for Schott Glass Technologies to showcase the astonishing art of the company's artist-in-residence, Christopher Ries.

He is fascinated by its light transmission, by its translucence and transparency. His medium is glass, Schott glass, in most instances the clear white, highly refractive LF5.

## Composing light

"The challenge is to take a pure raw material and try to make something that captures the imagination," says glass sculptor Christopher Ries.

In glass, the refractive index is the relationship between the speed of light in glass and air, a measure of the power of a glass to bend light and split it into its constituent colors. The higher the index, the more color separation and reflection.



Moonstone is a 385 pound (190 kg) glass egg.

"You might say that I compose light through the medium of glass," says Ries.

His search for glass of the finest optical qualities brought Ries to Schott, where he used discarded glass cullet at Schott Glass Technologies in Duryea, Pennsylvania, to create the sculptures he envisioned. One of these was "Moonstone," a 385-pound egg of translucent blue with an image of the

moon seemingly suspended inside. It was this piece that in 1986 prompted then Schott president Dr. Franz Herkt to offer Ries the post of artist-in-residence, a move, says Ries, that changed his life. A brief, six-month trial convinced him that the relationship was viable. He moved his family to a 19th century farmhouse not far from Schott, renovating its hay barn into a gallery for his work and a studio where he and his assistants produce smaller pieces.

## Schott studio

His larger works, some weighing over 1,000 pounds, are produced in his studio at Schott, where overhead bridge cranes move the massive pieces from step to step in the sometimes months-long process required to produce one

singular, spectacular sculpture. Ries "cold cuts" each piece himself after selecting the glass and marking the design free-form, using a red wax pencil in sweeping strokes. Then begins

*Ries' sculpture 'Sail' was donated to the University of Central Florida by Schott Glass Technologies and is installed in UCF's School of Optics. It is over four feet tall (125 cm) and weighs more than 400 pounds (180 kg).*

## The Glass That Art Is Made Of

Schott Glass Technologies is known the world over as a manufacturer of extremely high optical quality glass. The reason: a production process that allows for refining of the glass, making it nearly bubble- and inclusion-free as well as highly homogeneous. Schott's customers utilize this material in such highly technical applications as camera lenses for NASA astronauts, ultra-precise ring laser gyroscopes and amplifier discs for the world's largest lasers. Schott is also a major producer of glass for prescription eyeglass lenses and some of the best known sunglasses. The high quality of Schott glass makes it an ideal medium for artists and designers as well.



# L I G H T



*Ries at work in his studio. His work capitalizes on the high clarity, transmission, refractive and reflective properties of the optical glass he uses.*

the laborious task of grinding and polishing, using air-tools he helped to develop as well as thousands of dollars worth of diamond-edged dental tools for finishing details. He is assisted by four Schott employees, Corey Bormann, Ernie Hubert, Doug Leidy and Kevin Rail.

His artistry lies in illusion – and his sure knowledge of the nature of glass. He knows, for example, how the cut of a curve will make a petal appear to unfold or harp strings undulate. All the more amazing as, for the most part, all his pieces are abstract, “the essence of reality.”

As part of their remarkable relationship which includes co-ownership of the major works, Schott routinely uses Ries sculptures as gifts on a grand scale. The most recent was the donation to the University of Central Florida, where Schott Glass Technologies is a member of the school’s Industrial Affiliates program and the School of Optics’ Board of Visitors.

“Christopher Ries’ sculpture presents the quality of our material in its best light. Even people from outside our field marvel at the purity of our glass that Ries reveals through his art,” says Bruce Jennings, president of Schott Glass Technologies. “The work we have done together will continue to speak well of the company as long as it exists” ■



*Triumph is a cut, ground and polished work from 1999.*



*Pacific Flora from 1999 is a work cut, ground, polished and engraved.*

## See for Yourself

Sculptures by Christopher Ries using Schott glass are on display at a number of venues around the world.

### Events

SOFA (Sculpture Objects Fine Arts) Exhibition, Navy Pier, Chicago, Illinois, November 2–5, 2001

Solo Exhibition at the Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, Ohio, Fall 2001

### Galleries

Buschlen Mowatt Gallery, Vancouver, BC, Canada

Collectors Fine Art of Hawaii, Koloa, Kauai & Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii

Coplan Gallery, Boca Raton, Florida

Gallerie Rob van den Doel, The Hague, The Netherlands

G. Case Art Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan

Gerald Peters Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Holsten Gallery, Stockbridge, Massachusetts

J Gallery at the Orchid, Kohala Coast, Hawaii

Light Opera Gallery, San Francisco, California

Miller Gallery, Cincinnati, Ohio

The Rachael Collection, Aspen, Colorado

Riley Hawk Galleries, Cleveland & Columbus, Ohio, and Kirkland, Washington