

Sunburst

Medium: Decorative Arts and Utilitarian Objects, Glass | Blown glass, neon, metal armature

Size: 120 in. (304.8 cm)

Creation Place: North America, United States

Culture: American, North America, United States

Style: 20th century

Physical Description: Yellow and orange glass; red and yellow neon tubing

Credit: Collection Minneapolis Institute of Arts; Gift of funds from Donna and Cargill MacMillan Jr.

Accession Number: 99.132

Artist: Dale Chihuly, American, born 1941

Since the 1960s, Dale Chihuly has pushed the limits of glass in all directions -- including color, scale, and display -- to form organic, sculptural environments. Chihuly studied at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Rhode Island School of Design, where he experimented with glass, neon gas, steel, and Plexiglas. In 1968 a Fulbright scholarship allowed him to study at Venini Fabbrica. There, he absorbed the ancient Venetian method of teamwork, in which glass masters work with assistants to produce a collaborative work. Chihuly brought the method back to RISD, and in the early 1980s, back to his home state of Washington. He centers his glassmaking and teaching activity in Seattle at his studio, The Boathouse, and the Pilchuck Glass School. Since losing an eye in a car accident in 1976, Chihuly now serves as designer and director of his collaborative works, no longer blowing glass himself. *Sunburst* is made up of more than 1,000 individual pieces of glass and 100 feet of neon tubing. It weighs more than 3,000 pounds.

The Inspiration for this piece comes from a family recollection. As child, the artist's mother would take him daily or often to see the sunset. The image of the sun impacted him greatly, and that marvelous impression never left him.

Questions:

1. Is there a family tradition you have with your family that has impacted you?
2. How does the sun or lack of it affect your daily life?
3. As you look this object, how does it make you feel?