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DALE CHIHULY'S *LIME GREEN ICICLE TOWER* FINDS A HOME AT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

MFA Receives Thousands of Gifts, Raising More than \$1 Million for 42-Foot Glass Sculpture



BOSTON, MA (October 12, 2011)—The 42-foot-tall *Lime Green Icicle Tower*, a glass sculpture by renowned artist Dale Chihuly that has been on view at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), since March, will continue to reside in the MFA's Shapiro Family Courtyard, the Museum announced today. The tower was specifically created for the courtyard and was a favorite piece among Chihuly's dazzling creations included in the exhibition *Chihuly: Through the Looking Glass*, on view this spring and summer at the MFA. Many visitors requested that the MFA acquire it, prompting the Museum to launch a public appeal on July 18. Thousands of gifts, small and large, were given by first-time visitors and long-time friends, ranging from piggy-bank savings brought in by children, to checks written by adults. Thanks to the overwhelming support of thousands of visitors and patrons, whose contributions enabled the MFA to acquire the work, the dramatic sculpture will remain as a focal point of the Museum's soaring, glass-enclosed courtyard.

Young fans of the *Lime Green Icicle Tower* (l-r) Jane Caputo, Maisie Fitzpatrick, Audrey Fitzpatrick, and Allison Caputo, donated some of their piggy-bank money to the sculpture acquisition fund at the MFA.*

The enthusiastic response enabled the Museum to reach its goal of more than \$1 million for the acquisition and upkeep of the sculpture. The public appeal also inspired several major donors to contribute to the effort, including the Donald Saunders and Liv Ullmann

Family of Boston, which made the largest gift. Donald Saunders is a Boston real estate developer and Liv Ullmann is an actress and director who also serves as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador.

"Delighted visitors to *Chihuly* did not want the show to end, and were particularly enthusiastic about the signature piece created by Chihuly for the Shapiro Family Courtyard," said Malcolm Rogers, Ann and Graham Gund Director of the MFA. "I was approached time and again by people offering to donate funds for its acquisition. Since July, we have been raising money to

keep the tower. Some of our friends have written checks, and others have made donations through contribution boxes and our first-ever mobile-giving initiative. The support has been tremendous and I am delighted by how this appeal has caught the imagination of the public. I extend my great thanks to all of those who so generously gave to this effort.”

The dramatic *Lime Green Icicle Tower* sculpture weighs some 10,000 pounds and comprises 2,342 pieces of hand-blown green glass spikes that form a tree-like shape. It was one of 12 installations featured in *Chihuly: Through the Looking Glass*—nine displayed in the Ann and Graham Gund Gallery and three (including the tower) in the Shapiro Family Courtyard. On view at the MFA from April through August, the popular exhibition was supported by the Highland Street Foundation and offered a retrospective look at the work of one of the world’s leading glass artists. It drew more than 372,000 visitors, making it the fifth best-attended show in the Museum’s history.

This is the third time that the MFA has made a major public appeal to acquire a work of art. The first was when the Museum hoped to acquire Paul Revere’s *Son’s of Liberty Bowl* (1768) in the late 1940s, when more than 700 donations, large and small, came in from the public and schoolchildren, allowing the MFA to acquire this historic work of art in 1949. The second time was in 1979-80, when the Boston Athenaeum decided to sell its iconic Gilbert Stuart portraits of George and Martha Washington (both painted in 1796)—on loan to the MFA since 1876. In 1979, a public campaign was launched in Boston to retain the paintings and, as a result, the MFA and the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery came to an agreement to share ownership of the paintings that has enabled each institution to put the works on view for three years on a rotating basis.

* Museum purchase made possible by a major leadership gift from The Donald Saunders and Liv Ullmann Family for The People of Boston, with additional gifts from Irving W. Rabb, Dr. Lawrence H. and Roberta Cohn, Penny and Jeff Vinik, Matthew A. and Susan B. Weatherbie Foundation, John F. Cogan, Jr. and Mary L. Cornille, Vance Wall Foundation, Robert and Jane Burke, Mr. and Mrs. J. Richard Fennell, Mr. and Mrs. George D. Behrakis, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald R. Jordan, Jr., Alan S. and Lorraine D. Bressler, Bettina and Craig Burr, Dale A. Roberts, funds donated in honor of Gerald W. R. Ward, Katharine Lane Weems Senior Curator of Decorative Arts and Sculpture (1992-2011), and funds donated anonymously and by contribution from more than one thousand individuals 2011.1634

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), is recognized for the quality and scope of its encyclopedic collection, which includes an estimated 450,000 objects. The Museum’s collection is made up of: Art of the Americas; Art of Europe; Contemporary Art; Art of Asia, Oceania, and Africa; Art of the Ancient World; Prints, Drawings, and Photographs; Textile and Fashion Arts; and Musical Instruments. Open seven days a week, the MFA’s hours are Saturday through Tuesday, 10 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.; Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. – 9:45 p.m. Admission (which includes two visits in a 10-day period) is \$22 for adults and \$20 for seniors and students age 18 and older, and includes entry to all galleries and special exhibitions. Admission is free for University Members and children 6 and younger. Youths 17 years of age and younger are admitted for free during non-school hours. On school days until 3 p.m., admission for youths 7–17 will be \$10. Wednesday nights after 4 p.m. admission is by voluntary contribution (suggested donation \$22). The Museum is closed on New Year’s Day, Patriots’ Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. For more information, visit www.mfa.org or call 617.267.9300.