



An American Tour: *160*



Corning, NY's *Museum of Glass*

Founded in 1951 by Corning Glass Works (now Corning Incorporated) as a gift to the nation for the company's 100th anniversary, the Corning Museum of Glass is a not-for-profit museum dedicated to telling the story of a single material: glass. Thomas S. Buechner, who would later become director of the Brooklyn Museum, was the founding director of the glass museum, serving in the post from 1951 to 1960 and again from 1973 to 1980.

The original Museum and library were housed in a low, glass-walled building designed by Harrison & Abramovitz in 1951. By 1978, the Museum had outgrown its space. Gunnar Birkerts designed a new addition, creating a flowing series of galleries with the library at their core, linked to the old building via light-filled, windowed ramps. With memories of the 1972 hurricane still fresh, the new galleries were raised high above the flood line on concrete pillars. The new Museum opened to the public on May 28, 1980, exactly 29 years after its first opening.

By the early 1990s, the Corning Museum of Glass was once more overflowing its exhibition space, and increasing visitation put a strain on guest facilities. In 1996, the Museum embarked upon the first phase of a planned five-year, \$65 million transformation. Under the directorship of David Whitehouse, the first element to be added was The Studio. This state-of-the-art teaching facility for glassblowing and coldworking opened for classes in 1996.

There was an addition to the main Museum building, using glass wherever possible to convey the beauty and elegance of the art form in the building itself. The Museum's renovation was completed in 2001, and included a new visitors' center, Sculpture Gallery, (now the Contemporary Glass Gallery), Hot Glass Show demonstration stage and a hands-on Innovation Center with exhibitions. A redesigned 18,000-square-foot GlassMarket, one of the largest Museum shops in the country, filled the entire first floor of the museum. The Rakow Library was relocated across the Museum campus.

Over the past decade, the Museum's collection, programs, and global impact have grown significantly. At the beginning of 2012, the Museum announced a \$64 million expansion project to expand contemporary gallery and Hot Glass Show space. The Contemporary Art + Design Wing opened on March 20, 2015.

In 2015 Karol Wight appointed president and executive director of the museum. She is also curator of ancient and Islamic glass at the museum. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corning_Museum_of_Glass]

