

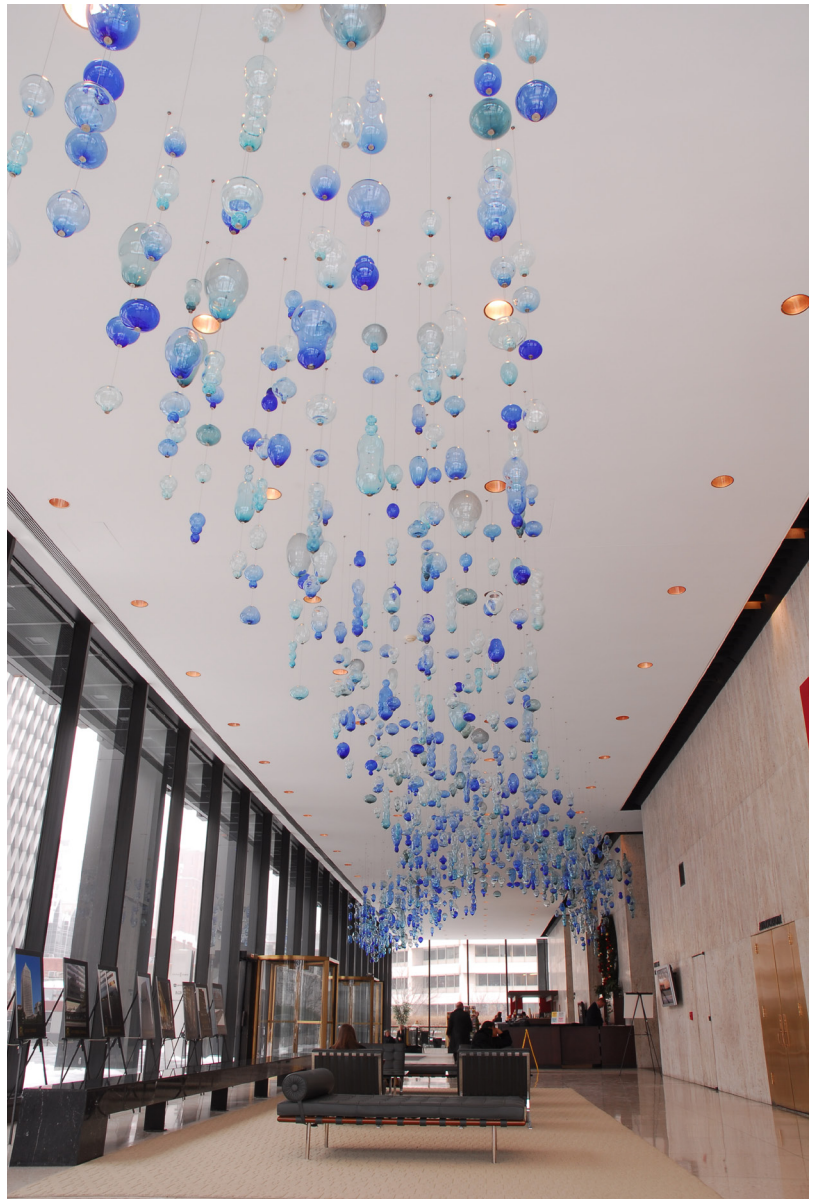
# RIVERS OF GLASS: DIMINUENDO AND CRESCENDO IN BLUE

Pittsburgh's First Glass Public Art Installation created by Jill Reynolds and Daniel Spitzer

A river of glass now flows through Pittsburgh in the city's first all glass public art installation. "Rivers of Glass: Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue" is located in the lobby of 11 Stanwix Street, an historic 1960s-era high-modernist office tower owned by REXHALL Realty, LLC. Designed and fabricated by Jill Reynolds and Daniel Spitzer, a team of glass artists from Beacon, N.Y., the installation illustrates Pittsburgh's three rivers in three ways.

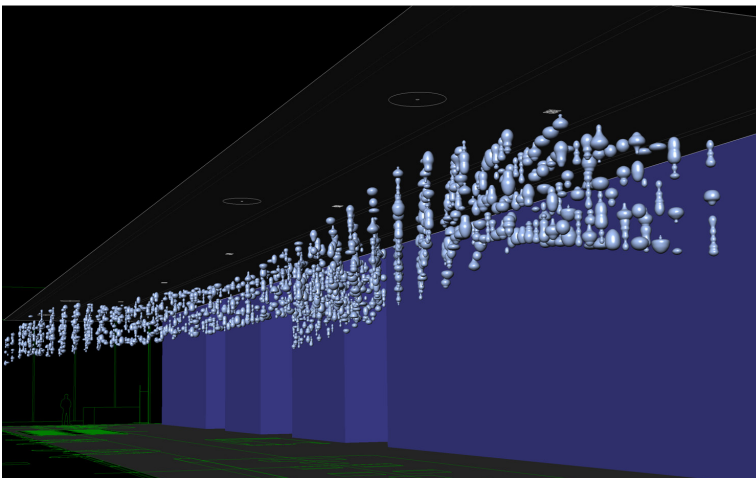
- The overhead installation depicting Pittsburgh's three rivers—the Allegheny, the Monongahela and the Ohio – covers an estimated 1,500 sq. ft. and is oriented in the direction of and parallel to the actual riverfront. The suspended glass globes hang from steel cables two feet from the ceiling.
- It includes approximately 1,300 individually hand blown glass forms modeled on high-speed images of water droplets. Working in collaboration with Bo Gehring, a 3-D computer modeler, an alphabet of 26 varying 3-D water droplet forms in eight shades and intensities of blue were designed. The forms were blown at Pittsburgh Glass Center and then suspended from the ceiling at 11 Stanwix in groups of threes and fours.
- The suspended glass forms are hung to create an undulating wave that represents a segment of a sound wave from the song "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue" an arrangement by Pittsburgh jazz legend Billy Strayhorn of a Duke Ellington composition. A segment of the sound wave was stretched on a computer with Gehring's assistance to fit within the lobby space and filled with the vocabulary of glass elements that were designed. The forms create a four-foot thick undulating wave formation, rising and falling within a range of seven feet from the top of the wave to the bottom of the wave trough.

"Our first impression on seeing the lobby was that some sort of long sinuous form would be an obvious choice for activating the space, and from there it was simply a matter of looking out the window of 11 Stanwix to see where the exact shape of that form would come from -- the three rivers. In addition to the formal considerations of shape and color, modeling the wave form on the Billy Strayhorn piece was a way to incorporate references specific to the dynamic history and culture of Pittsburgh," said Jill Reynolds.



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### “Sculpting Light on Stanwix”

The 11 Stanwix building is an historic 24-story modern skyscraper, originally built as the headquarters for the Westinghouse Corporation. The building was designed by the architects Harrison & Abramovitz and completed construction in 1970. Its location at 11 Stanwix Street is in the heart of downtown Pittsburgh and looks out over the three rivers.

When planning to update the building, REXXHall Realty, LLC partnered with architecture firm EDGE studio and Pittsburgh Glass Center, a nonprofit glass art school, studio and gallery, to launch this project they called “Sculpting Light on Stanwix” in fall 2008.

Aaron Stauber, President of REXXHall Realty, explains, “The modern architecture of the building and the open expansive lobby seemed to demand that it contain beautiful art pieces. We believe it was the intent of the architects to create an area that would showcase publicly accessible art. At the same time, we hoped it would enhance the work experience for our tenants. We were fortunate to have the Pittsburgh Glass Center to assist us in bringing our vision into a reality.”

Artists across the U.S. submitted ideas for the \$75,000 commission. Out of 28 applications, “Rivers of Glass: Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue” was selected early in 2009 based on the concept, quality and meaningful narrative by a distinguished panel of jurors including Morton Brown, Pittsburgh’s public art manager; Paul Makovsky, editorial director of “Metropolis” magazine and Sarah Nichols, adjunct curator at Carnegie Museum of Art.

### About Jill Reynolds and Dan Spitzer

Jill Reynolds was the recipient of the 2002 Corning Museum of Glass Rakow Commission. In 2001 she received a Pollock-Krasner Artist Grant and a Massachusetts Cultural Council Grant in Sculpture. In 1998-99 Reynolds was an Artist Fellow at Harvard’s Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. Recent exhibitions include *Gene(sis)* at the University of Minnesota Weisman Museum in 2004 and the University of Washington Henry Art Gallery in 2002. Solo shows include *UNICITY* at the University of Georgia Lamar Dodd Gallery in 2005, *MATTER* at the Pittsburgh Glass Center in 2003, *THRESHOLD* at the Tacoma Art Museum in 2000, and *NEXUS* at Harvard’s Rothschild Gallery in 1999. From 2000-2003, she was part-time faculty at Rhode Island School of Design and currently teaches at SUNY (State University of New York) New Paltz.

Daniel Spitzer has over 20 years of glassblowing experience. For 10 of those years, he was a member of Dale Chihuly’s team in Seattle and on trips abroad, and has also worked with Sonja Blomdahl, Flora Mace and Joey Kirkpatrick, and Pino Signoretto. In 2001 he completed a series of blown glass car tires commissioned by the artist Robert Rauschenberg. His current work uses elements based on several references, including natural forms and early American cartooning.

The artists can be reached at [spitzerglass@gmail.com](mailto:spitzerglass@gmail.com)



More information and images about the project can be found at [www.pittsburghglasscenter.org](http://www.pittsburghglasscenter.org)  
 “Rivers of Glass: Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue” is open to the public, Monday – Friday from 9am – 5pm.