

Afterglow by Christopher Ries

In recognition of the important part that art has had in the Mayo Clinic environment since the original Mayo Building was finished in 1914, *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* will feature some of the numerous works of art displayed throughout the buildings on the Mayo Clinic campuses.

Christopher Ries, (1952-), was raised on a farm in the rural Columbus, Ohio, area. He received his BFA from The Ohio State University in Columbus in 1975 and his MFA from the University of Wisconsin in Madison in 1978, where he served as an assistant to the founder of the American studio glass movement.^{1,2} His initial studies delved into glassblowing as an art medium, and he maintained a glassblowing studio for several summers after graduation.¹ With the aid of the products from a company called Schott Optical Glass, which notes it markets 115 different glass formulas, Ries discovered his defining medium and technique to create a unique, specialized, and new form of glasswork—sculpture.^{2,3} Starting with massive blocks of glass crystal, often weighing as much as 3000 lbs, Ries carves and polishes each piece into highly reflective, refractive, and prismatic forms.⁴

As with all of Ries' creations, *Afterglow* contains an internal life of its own. The external boundaries of the glassworks' edges frame a highly dynamic microcosm of its surrounding environment. Each moment a newly introduced object becomes temporarily imprisoned within *Afterglow*. The structure of the sculpture defined by these lines grants it solidity. Its shape imitates a falling tear or a modern-day award given in honor of excellence. The interior reflections are as volatile as any in a butterfly effect⁵ outcome. Each of the 4 images reveal a completely new view of *Afterglow* in kaleidoscope fashion, depending on the angle, light, or passerby that was present when each view of *Afterglow* was photographed. If a viewer gets tired of the current image, he needs only to turn his head or squint his eye and a surprising change takes place.



Afterglow, sculpted in 2006, is a gift from Elizabeth M. Ross and is located on the 14th floor of the Gonda Building, in Rochester, Minnesota.

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1. Christopher Ries. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Ries. Accessed May 9, 2012.
2. Biography Ries website. <http://www.christopherries.com/biography.htm>. Accessed May 9, 2012.
3. Schott Optical website. http://www.us.schott.com/advanced_optics/english/our_products/materials/optical_glass.html. Accessed May 11, 2012.
4. Art Glass Ries website. <http://www.christopherries.com/artglass.htm>. Accessed April 9, 2012.
5. Glossary definition: Butterfly effect. <http://www.pbs.org/faithandreason/physglass/bfly-body.html>. Accessed May 11, 2012.