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# Robin Cass

Associate Provost

Professor of Art (tenured)

Catawba College

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## OVERVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FACULTY POSITIONS

- **Associate Provost**, Catawba College (January 2026 - present)
- **Vice Provost**, Catawba College (July 2024 - December 2025)
- **Director of Creative Engagement Programs & Graduate Program Director**, Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) (Oct 2020–June 2024)
- **American Council on Education (ACE) Fellow**, hosted by Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) (Aug 2020–Jun 2022)
- **Provost's Associate for the Integration of Technology, the Arts, & Design**, Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) (Jul 2020–Aug 2021)
- **Interim Dean**, College of Art and Design, Rochester Institute of Technology (Apr 2017–Jun 2019)
- **Senior Associate Dean**, Rochester Institute of Technology (Aug 2016–Mar 2017)
- **Administrative Chair, School for American Crafts**, Rochester Institute of Technology (Sep 2012–Jan 2014)
- **Professor** (Full, Associate, Assistant; Visiting), Rochester Institute of Technology (1998–2024)  
Granted tenure in 2010

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## LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

### Catawba College

Catawba College is a private, SACSCOC-accredited liberal arts institution located in Salisbury, North Carolina. Founded in 1851, the college enrolls approximately 1,390 students (fall 2025) and is supported by roughly 98 faculty members, yielding an 11:1 student-faculty ratio. Catawba offers more than 70 undergraduate programs and select graduate offerings. The college's endowment exceeds \$580 million (2024). Its suburban campus spans approximately 276 acres, and Catawba competes in NCAA Division II athletics as a member of the South Atlantic Conference.

Jan 2026-Present

### Associate Provost for Experiential Learning & High Impact Practices

*Portfolio: Experiential Learning & High-Impact Practices • First-Year Experience (FYS) • Global Engagement & Travel Learning • Internships, Career-Integrated Learning & Workforce Partnerships • Signature Centers-aligned High-impact Programming • Scholarships and Faculty Grants to Support Access & Equity in Experiential Learning • High-Impact Practices Assessment & Reporting*

- 7 staff FTEs (3 direct, 4 dotted line)
- Operational budgets ~\$100,000.
- Administer: student awards/scholarships ~\$675K, faculty seed grants ~\$150K, endowments ~\$1.2M

## Vice Provost

*I assumed this role to lead two priority initiatives: the collaborative development and successful faculty approval of a new General Education Core, and the stabilization of the Student Success unit operations during a period of leadership transition. This included overseeing interim leadership, rebuilding senior staff capacity, expanding the success coaching team, and securing institutional approval for the adoption of EAB Navigate360. With these goals achieved, I transitioned into my current position.*

**Portfolio:** Student Academic Success • First-Year Experience • Career Development & Internships • International Studies • Core Curriculum Revision • Institutional Retention Strategy

- 11 staff FTEs (8 direct, 3 dotted line)
- Operational budgets ~\$150,000.
- Administer: student awards/scholarships ~\$675K, faculty seed grants ~\$150K, endowments ~\$1.2M

**Key Contributions (completed or actively underway)**

### Student Success, Retention, and Institutional Coordination

- Launched and operationalized a college-wide retention initiative, Thrive@Catawba, providing shared structure, accountability, and coordination across divisions.
- Established shared leadership structures to support a data-informed retention strategy, including goal setting and progress review through a collaborative leadership model.
- Launched two faculty grant programs promoting High Impact Practices (HIPs) and Open Educational Resources (OERs) to strengthen student engagement, reduce barriers to learning, and support improved student retention.

### Academic Systems, Advising, and Student Support Operations

- Stabilized and scaled student success operations during a period of staffing constraints and leadership transition, sustaining 839 student success coaching meetings in Fall 2024 with three staff members while maintaining service continuity.
- Led student success units through interim leadership, hiring, onboarding, and mentoring of senior staff; oversaw expansion from three to five success coaches, translating increased staffing into stronger targeted academic interventions while rebalancing caseloads and workflows to ensure capacity supported student-facing work.
- Identified and addressed critical space and infrastructure needs within student success operations and secured institutional support for an urgent renovation of the Student Success Center.
- Restored and aligned international studies and career development functions with student success and curricular priorities.

### **Data, Technology, and Evidence-Informed Practice**

- Engaged external benchmarking partner, Hanover Research, to inform the development of a holistic advising model and student success best practices.
- Led evaluation of student success platforms and data systems to improve alignment among data use, advising practice, and curricular priorities.
- Secured institutional approval for adoption of the EAB Navigate360 student success platform and led cross-campus implementation planning, including coordination with institutional stakeholders, vendor partners, and faculty and staff training.

### **Policy, Risk, and Organizational Effectiveness**

- Led collaborative reviews of policies, procedures, and workflows to reduce friction and improve institutional effectiveness, including a coordinated review of twelve key student-facing policies for student-centeredness, resulting in actionable recommendations designed to improve the overall student experience.
- Led a comprehensive overhaul of the Impact Award student funding program, reviewing associated policies, procedures, and workflows to strengthen fiscal stewardship, streamline administration, and expand equitable student access to high-impact experiential learning opportunities.
- Initiated revisions to student-facing risk and compliance policies, reviewing underlying procedures and workflows related to academic travel and international student protocols to enhance student safety and wellbeing while ensuring alignment with government requirements and sound institutional practices.

### **Academic Innovation, Culture, and Faculty Staff Engagement**

- Led the collaborative development of a new undergraduate core curriculum, including learning outcomes and curricular frameworks, and guided it through successful faculty governance approval within one year.
- During the 2024–25 academic year, initiated and produced three editions of an internal Academic and Student Affairs newsletter to improve transparency, share updates across divisions, and strengthen alignment among faculty and staff.
- Across the 2024–25 academic year and into Fall 2025, launched five all-faculty and staff EVP/Provost Assemblies to improve institutional communication, clarify priorities, and provide structured, well-attended forums for dialogue and feedback.
- Initiated a series of “Coffee and Tea with the EVP/Provost” gatherings during the 2024–25 academic year and Fall 2025 to humanize senior leadership, encourage open dialogue, and strengthen trust, contributing to broader culture-building efforts centered on clarity, collaboration, and shared purpose during periods of institutional change

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## Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)

**Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)** is a private research university located in Henrietta, New York. Founded in 1829, RIT enrolls approximately 19,000 students across undergraduate and graduate programs in engineering, computing, science, business, liberal arts, and the arts. The university is home to the **College of Art and Design**, one of the largest and most comprehensive art and design colleges within a U.S. research university. RIT is classified as an R2 doctoral institution with high research activity, operates a suburban 1,300-acre main campus with several international sites, and competes in NCAA Division III athletics as the Tigers.

Oct 2020–June 2024    **Director of Creative Engagement Programs & Graduate Program, College of Art & Design**

### Key Contributions

#### **Program Architect and Director, RIT Art Experience (ArtEx) Program**

Launched, and led a new institution-wide enrichment program expanding access to high-impact, experiential arts learning for non-arts majors, with particular impact on STEM students. Built full program infrastructure from inception, including cross-college partnerships, faculty and graduate-student staffing models, safety and onboarding protocols, budgeting and fee structures, scheduling systems, and a multi-year assessment framework tied to yield, engagement, persistence, and retention.

In the inaugural academic year, ArtEx enrolled 203 incoming first-year students, with 140 active participants from every RIT college outside the College of Art and Design. Delivered 57+ structured learning experiences in one semester (17 core events and 40 hands-on workshops) across disciplines such as glassblowing, blacksmithing, ceramics, casting, woodworking, and printmaking. Students participated in an average of 1.9 events per semester, demonstrating sustained engagement beyond orientation-level programming. Program evaluation showed 72% “extremely satisfied” ratings for individual experiences and over 70% of respondents likely to recommend the program to incoming students, validating early impact on student engagement, belonging, and institutional distinction.

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## American Council on Education

The American Council on Education (ACE) is the principal coordinating body for U.S. higher education, representing more than 1,600 accredited colleges, universities, and associations. Founded in 1918, ACE provides national leadership on policy, research, and advocacy. Its ACE Fellows Program, established in 1965, is the premier leadership development program for senior faculty and administrators, offering immersive, yearlong placements with college and university presidents focused on executive leadership and governance.

Aug 2021–Jun 2022    **ACE Fellow hosted by Southern New Hampshire University**

Southern New Hampshire University is a private, nonprofit university accredited by NECHE and located in Manchester, New Hampshire. Founded in 1932, the

university enrolls approximately 3,000 students on its main campus and serves more than 135,000 students through its online programs. SNHU offers over 200 academic programs across undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels. Its suburban campus spans roughly 300 acres, and the university competes in NCAA Division II athletics as a member of the Northeast-10 Conference.

**Mentors:** President Paul J. LeBlanc & Chief of Staff Donald Brezinski

#### Fellowship Activities

Selected as an ACE Fellow and embedded at Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) to engage in enterprise-level leadership development, change management, and strategic execution within the nation's largest nonprofit university. Worked closely with the President and Chief of Staff, shadowing senior decision-making and participating in trustee meetings, Leadership Alignment Meetings, and Portfolio Alignment Meetings. Contributed to and learned from work across the Office of Program and Product Innovation (OPPI), campus leadership, and the newly formed Strategic Realization Partners (SRP) unit, with a focus on mission-aligned prioritization, initiative evaluation, and organizational agility. Examined and supported academic portfolio review, hybrid and alternative learning pathway development, and strategies to expand access, equity, and affordability, including competency-based education (CBE) and prior learning assessment (PLA), within a highly dynamic, student-centered institutional model.

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## Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)

Jul 2020-Aug 2021

### **Provost's Associate for the Integration of Technology, the Arts, & Design**

Led a presidential strategic initiative to develop an institution-wide strategy integrating technology, the arts, and design, reporting directly to the Provost. Worked with senior university leadership to coordinate cross-college collaboration across the university's nine colleges and to produce a high-level plan aligned with the university's strategic priorities for student success and institutional distinction.

#### Key Contributions

- Directed cross-college faculty and administrative leadership to develop and advance a shared Technology-Arts-Design strategy.
- Led structured deliberation and stakeholder engagement through a cross-institutional faculty team.
- Engaged national organizations (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities) to benchmark best practices and inform planning.
- Contributed to an institutional transformation framework addressing structural, policy, and cultural change.

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Apr 2017–Jun 2019

## **Interim Dean, RIT College of Art and Design**

### Key Contributions

- Served as chief academic, fiscal, and administrative officer for a college of approximately 2,000 students, 160 faculty, 75 staff, and a \$25M budget.
- Led organizational restructuring to improve transparency, engagement, and participation in budget and merit processes.
- Enriched enrollment management through college-level marketing and communications; achieved a 12% increase in undergraduate deposits and a 42% increase in transfer deposits in the second year.
- Oversaw attainment of more than \$5M in philanthropic and industry support; rebuilt donor and corporate partnerships, including Autodesk and Wacom.
- Established RIT City Art Space, an urban gallery and experiential learning venue connecting the university with the Rochester community through creativity.
- Initiated and formalized international partnerships, including an alliance with the Central Academy of Fine Arts (China).

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Aug 2016–Mar 2017

## **Senior Associate Dean, RIT College of Art and Design**

### Key Contributions

- Led undergraduate curriculum development and learning outcomes assessment reporting.
- Co-directed decennial NASAD reaccreditation for BFA and MFA programs.
- Oversaw study abroad programs and international academic partnerships.
- Represented the college on the Provost's Council for the Representation and Engagement of Women Faculty.

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Sep 2012–Jan 2014

## **Administrative Chair, RIT School for American Crafts**

### Key Contributions

- Coordinated four specialized academic areas with BFA and MFA programs.
- Directed strategic planning and self-study processes.
- Initiated alumni relations and development efforts.
- Developed international partnerships and student exchanges in Asia and Europe.

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## GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS & RESIDENCIES (selected)

- **Henry Ford Museum**, Dearborn, MI – Artist-in-Residence, 2019
- **Rochester Institute of Technology** – Connect Grant, “Advance RIT” initiative funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF); Principal Investigator; RIT Women’s Research Colloquium Series (CREW), 2016–2017
- **Rochester Institute of Technology** – Provost’s Learning Innovation Grant (PLIG), *The Digital Hand: Integrating CAD and Rapid Prototyping into Material Arts Education*; Principal Investigator, 2014– 2015
- **Pilchuck Glass School**, Stanwood, WA – *John H. Hauberg Fellowship*; Fellow Competitive residency supporting collaborative research and advanced creative practice in glass. 2014
- **Osaka University of Art**, Osaka, Japan – *Visiting Artist in Residence*; Artist-in-Residence, 2010–2011
- **Tacoma Museum of Glass and Center for Contemporary Art**, Tacoma, WA – *Visiting Artist in Residence*; Artist-in-Residence, 2008; 2005
- **Seto City Cultural Center**, Seto, Japan – *Visiting Artist in Residence*; Artist-in-Residence, 2002
- **New York State Arts and Cultural Council**, Monroe County, Rochester, NY – *Special Opportunity Stipend (SOS) Grants*; Award Recipient (four grants), 2006; 2002; 2000

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## EDUCATION

- **EdD, Higher Education Administration**, Northeastern University, Boston, MA
- **MFA, Sculpture**, New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University, Alfred, NY
- **BFA, Sculpture/Glass**, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI

## Professional Leadership Development

- **Management and Leadership in Education**, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA, 2019
- **Development for Deans and Academic Leaders**, Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), Vancouver, BC, 2018
- **Management Development Program**, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA, 2016
- **Academic Chairpersons Conference**, Kansas State University in partnership with The IDEA Center, San Antonio, TX, 201

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## TEACHING & MENTORSHIP PROFILE

I have taught primarily at the advanced undergraduate and graduate levels, designing courses that emphasize conceptual inquiry, research-informed practice, and sustained mentorship. While many courses were grounded in glass and sculptural materials, the emphasis has been on intellectual framing, analytical reasoning, and guiding complex work from concept through completion using project-based learning, iterative feedback, and sustained faculty-student engagement.

At the undergraduate level, my teaching has centered on upper-division and capstone experiences that integrate technical knowledge, conceptual intent, and critical reflection within clear expectations and timelines. These courses emphasize structured critique, peer learning, and revision to support students' development of independence and judgment. Introductory material courses have been taught intentionally as foundational entry points, establishing shared standards, habits of inquiry, and disciplinary ways of thinking that support progression into advanced work.

At the graduate level, I have led research-oriented seminars, advanced studio practica, and pedagogy courses that use material practice as a vehicle for original inquiry. These courses prioritize interdisciplinary perspectives, peer exchange, and rigorous articulation of intent, process, and outcomes. I have supervised over forty graduate theses, served on over one hundred thesis committees, and mentored independent studies, guiding students through proposal development, research design, execution, and final defense through sustained advising relationships.

More recently, I developed and taught a Data Literacy course as part of a SACSCOC QEP pilot, focused on building students' capacity to interpret, analyze, and communicate data across contexts. The course emphasized applied reasoning, ethical use of information, and evidence-based communication, extending my teaching into quantitative and analytical domains.

### Representative Courses

#### Select Introductory Foundations

- Data Literacy
- Foundations of Three-Dimensional Thinking and Making
- Introduction to Sculpture

#### Advanced Undergraduate and Capstone Courses

- Applied Materials and Processes
- Advanced Project Development Capstone

#### Graduate-Level Courses and Seminars

- Graduate Research Seminar
- Advanced Graduate Studio Practicum
- Graduate Thesis Research and Production
- Technology-Enhanced Conceptual Practice
- College Teaching and Learning

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## Institutional Service

### Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)

- **Co-Lead, Self-Study and Accreditation Review**, Led the college-wide National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) self-evaluation; coordinated faculty and administrative contributors; oversaw data collection, narrative development, and compliance documentation; and served as the primary liaison during the accreditation review cycle.
- **Lead Contributor, Research Culture and Infrastructure Development**, Provided college-level leadership in articulating the arts as rigorous forms of research and critical inquiry, helping internal and external audiences understand how creativity and critical thinking are inherent to artistic practice. Advance these conversations through support of research and creativity symposia and contributions to institutional dialogue on the role of the arts within interdisciplinary research cultures.
- **Member, Institute Curriculum Committee (ICC)**, Exercised institute-level curriculum governance authority, contributing to policy deliberations and approval of academic programs and curricular standards.
- **Member, University Graduate Council**, with lead responsibility for graduate curriculum and policy matters, representing the College of Art and Design. Advanced college interests in university-wide graduate governance and contributed leadership to discussions shaping graduate education policy.
- **Faculty Mentor, junior and mid-career faculty**, Provided sustained mentoring related to teaching effectiveness, research development, and professional advancement to more than twenty-five faculty colleagues.
- **Organizer / Lead Facilitator, Faculty Development Workshops**, Designed and facilitated professional development activities supporting pedagogical innovation and scholarly growth.
- **Lead Coordinator, Cross-Departmental Academic Initiatives**, Directed collaborative curricular and academic projects spanning multiple programs within the college.

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## Professional Associations & Service

- **Editorial Board**, *Groundworks*, Association for the Arts in Research Universities (a2ru) Service on the editorial board of a national publication focused on arts-based research and interdisciplinary practice, 2021–2024.
- **Accreditation Evaluator**, National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). Completed evaluator training and certification; served as peer reviewer for institutional accreditation, 2019–2024.
- **Board of Directors**, Glass Art Society (International) Elected to two consecutive terms; served on the Executive Committee, including as Treasurer, 2004–2010.
- **Education Committee**, College Art Association (CAA) National committee service focused on issues of pedagogy, curriculum, and professional practice in higher education. 2019–2021.
- **Member**, College Art Association (CAA); National Council of Arts Administrators (NCAA); College of Fine Arts Deans International (CFAD)

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## PROFESSIONAL ARTISTIC PRACTICE

I am fascinated by the human inclination to seek out and gather odd and novel objects for personal contemplation and public display; an urge exemplified by the "WunderKammer" or cabinets of curiosities of Renaissance Europe. Ironically, the qualities that animate living organisms are highlighted by captivity and containment; the rigid materials associated with collection and display serve as effective foils for the luminous softness of living flesh. The most prized specimens in any collection are those that diverge from the norm or defy classification. Although it is our nature to categorize and define, we relish the sense of wonder accompanying an enigma. As an artist, I am essentially making my confounding oddities to entice and perplex the viewer.

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### Publications and Media Coverage

- **American Craft Magazine**, Feature-length artist profile, *Queen of Parts* (2014).
- **Research at RIT Magazine**, Feature article highlighting interdisciplinary creative research (2012).
- **Masters of Blown Glass: Significant Works by Leading Artists**, Major international survey volume edited by Susan Rossi Wilcox (2010).
- **Breaking Ground: Craft Art in Western New York**, Scholarly regional survey documenting leading contemporary practitioners (2010).
- **25 Years of New Glass Review**, Retrospective publication by the Corning Museum of Glass (2006).
- **Women in Glass**, International reference volume published by Shiffer (2003).
- **Glass**, Glass Art Society Annual Journal, Invited essay on material practice and pedagogy (2001).
- **Selected Reviews and Profiles**, Coverage in *Montreal Gazette*, *Rochester City Newspaper*, *Vineyard Gazette*, *RISD Views*, and *New Glass Review*.

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### Presentations, Panels, and Invited Lectures (selected)

- **College Art Association Annual Conference**, NCAA Affiliate Session, Panel presentation, *The Interdisciplinary Dinner Party* (2019), New York, NY
- **International Council of Fine Art Deans Annual Conference**, Roundtable, *Culture Eats Policy for Breakfast* (2018), Seattle, WA
- **Central Academy of Fine Arts, International Foundations Program**  
External reviewer and visiting critic (2016, 2015), Beijing, China
- **Fabrica**, Benetton's art and design research center, Artist lecture (2014), Treviso, Italy
- **Glass Art Society Conference**, Panel presentation, *Embodied Learning: Intelligence of the Making Body* (2012), Toledo, OH
- **Hong Kong Baptist University** (Hong Kong, PRC), **Tama University** (Tokyo, Japan), **Nagoya University of Art** (Nagoya, Japan), **Kent State University** (Kent, OH), **San Jose State University** (San

Jose CA), **National College of Art and Design** (Dublin, Ireland) Lectures, demonstrations, workshops, and visiting critic roles (2002–2011)

- **The Studio of the Corning Museum of Glass and Pilchuck Glass School**, repeatedly invited instructor and lecturer roles (2002–2008)

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## Curatorial Projects

- **Poetry of Science: An International Exhibition of Glass Sculpture**  
The Gallery at One Bausch and Lomb Place, Rochester, NY (2003)
- **Visionary Women: An International Exhibition of Glass Sculpture**  
The Gallery at One Bausch and Lomb Place, Rochester, NY (2001)

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## Exhibitions and Creative Work

### Solo Exhibitions

- **Essential Deviations** - Waterworks Arts Center, Salisbury, NC (scheduled for July, 2026)
- **If Anything Happens...** - View Arts Center, Old Forge, NY Collaborative installation with Bill Klingensmith (2017)
- **Menagerie** - Axom Gallery, Rochester, NY (2015)
- **Foundlings: A Tribute to Misfits** - Rochester Contemporary Art Center, Rochester, NY Collaborative installation with Bill Klingensmith (2015)
- **Curious Growths** - Shift Gallery, Seattle, WA (2011)
- **Curious Growths** - Gallery at Osaka University of Art, Osaka, Japan (2011)
- **Yield** - Alexander Brest Museum, Jacksonville, FL (2007)
- **Consumption** - Tittot Museum of Glass, Taipei, Taiwan (2006)

### Invitational Exhibitions (selected)

- **On! Pushing Back the Darkness** – South Shore Art Center, Cohasset, MA (2018)
- **FLOW / GROW: Qingdao Contemporary Glass Art Exhibition** – Qingdao Archives and Research Center for Contemporary Art, Qingdao, China (2015)
- **International Ceramic and Glass Art in the 21st Century** – Seto City Art Museum, Seto, Japan (2011)
- **Clear Your Mind: Contemporary Glass Invitational** – Figge Art Museum, Davenport, IA (2008)
- **A Gathering of Contemporary Glass** – Farnsworth Museum of Art, Rockland, ME (2007, 2008)
- **Contemporary Glass Invitational** – Fullerton Art Museum, San Bernardino, CA (2007)
- **Glass Symposium Exhibition** – National Museum of Ukraine, Lviv (2004)

## Permanent Collections

- **The Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, MI**
- **Tacoma Museum of Glass and Center for Contemporary Art, Tacoma, WA**
- **Seto City Cultural Center, Seto, Aichi, Japan**
- **Museum of American Glass, Millville, NJ**
- **Lviv Museum of Glass, Lviv, Ukraine**
- **Lady Helen Hamlyn Collection, London, England**

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*References available upon request.*

