



CHESTERFIELD
GALLERY

Chris Ahalt

Born in 1977, lives and works in Minneapolis, MN.

Education

Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Bachelor of Fines Arts in Sculpture/Furniture Design

Biography

Chris Ahalt is a flame worker with 17 years of experience. In 2005, he apprenticed under master flame worker, Cesare Toffolo, in Venice, Italy. There he learned many of the Venetian techniques that have given him the building blocks to create glass of the highest quality. His most recent work, however, is not directly attributed to his time in Italy. Rather than fine ornate cups and vessels, Ahalt sculpts intricate animals and figurative balloons that are strung up as though they are floating, tethered to a weight below.

Statement on Animal Balloons

Sculpted in meticulous detail and bright colors, my animal balloon series depicts visually strong animals made fragile by delicately balancing above wire. I've created numerous animals from hollow glass including elephants, rhinos, giraffes, hippos, polar bears, and whales just to name a few. Hours of intensive work result in deceptively simple animal balloons. They are then sandblasted for a frosted finish, strung up on copper wire with hand-forged ridges emulating real ribbon, and tethered to small weights. The flexibility of the wire enhances the illusion of floating by allowing the balloons to sway back and forth.

Balloons, to me, suggest celebration, children and wonder. The iconic animals that I pick appeal to those childlike sensibilities as well. Most of us had a favorite animal as children, and the idea of turning one's favorite animal into a balloon seems a fitting marriage that is hard to dislike. These animal balloons also metaphorically speak to their fragile lives, many of them endangered. Some of the balloons, such as the rhino, have their legs bound alluding to the precarious environments created for them by humans. I think of these animal balloons as a mixture of playfulness and harsh reality – homage to not only the iconic beauty of these majestic animals, but also as tribute to the many endangered species that may not survive.

Selected Exhibitions

2017

Art Wynwood, Chesterfield Gallery, Miami, FL.

2016

SOFA Expo, Chesterfield Gallery, Chicago, IL.

Simon Says, Chesterfield Gallery, New York, NY.

Architectural Digest Design Show, Chesterfield Gallery, New York, NY.

2015

SCOPE, Chesterfield Gallery, Miami, FL.

SOFA Expo, Chesterfield Gallery, Chicago, IL.

Architectural Digest Design Show, Chesterfield Gallery, New York, NY.

NE Art Showcase, Architectural Antiques, Minneapolis, MN.

Press

Vice, The Creator's Project

American Craft Magazine

The Chicago Tribune

The San Diego Union-Tribune

The Spokesman-Review