



## **For Immediate Release**

# **Artist Dale Chihuly Refuses to Bow to Ex-Contractor's Threat**

*Handyman Seeks \$21 million Amid Baseless Claims*

SEATTLE – June 2, 2017 – Seattle-based artist Dale Chihuly, credited with revolutionizing the creation of glass art and known around the world for his groundbreaking architectural installations, today revealed a demand from a former contract handyman effectively seeking \$21 million for his silence.

In making his demand, Michael Moi, whom Chihuly had hired for various cleaning, repairing and small-construction projects over the years, claims for the first time that he was a joint creator of many of Dale's paintings. He also alleges possession of Chihuly's private documents, including medical papers and personal letters, that would be "substantively uncomfortable" if released to the public.

Mr. Moi made his initial demand in February, threatening to publicly file a lawsuit if his demand for money was not met. Earlier this month, when Chihuly had not agreed to pay him, Moi served Chihuly's legal counsel with a state court complaint. Today, Dale and Chihuly, Inc., allowed the claims to become public rather than accede to Mr. Moi's ultimatum.

In legal documents filed today in response to Moi's claims, Chihuly, Inc., calls the demand "nothing more than an ugly and reprehensible display of opportunism and exploitation."

According to the documents, "Mr. Moi never worked with Dale as a painting assistant, and he did not participate in the creation of Dale's art. Mr. Moi's claims are not only baseless, they are a complete fabrication.

"Under the guise of a frivolous legal claim, Mr. Moi is threatening to disclose publicly whatever personal information he might have, including confidential information about Dale's mental health and struggles and personal documents that are not rightfully in his possession and control, unless he succeeds in convincing Dale and Chihuly, Inc., to pay him a massive and unwarranted amount of money for his silence."

Leslie Chihuly, President and CEO of Chihuly, Inc., underscored these points.

"Mr. Moi's claims are not based on facts or truth," she said. "They are completely and absolutely false. But Mr. Moi apparently thought that we would agree to pay him just to prevent him from exposing information that he considers to be embarrassing and sensational. He was wrong."

Dale does not work alone. Like many fine artists, he uses studio assistants to execute his vision and support his artwork. Dale is also well known for his collaborative approach to art, pioneering the adoption of the studio glass movement in the United States and ultimately Team Chihuly.

Dale's reliance on his team stems in part from physical necessity, which is well known. Less well known is Dale's struggle with mental illness. In this, Dale's 75<sup>th</sup> year and one of Chihuly Studio's most productive periods ever, Dale and Leslie, his wife, have begun to speak together publicly for the first time about his bipolar disorder.

"This disease and, more recently, Dale's advancing years, have made him more vulnerable to those who might take advantage of him," Leslie Chihuly said. "While we hope that an open discussion of Dale's diagnosis might comfort and inspire others who also grapple with mental illness, the Chihuly family also hopes to disarm those who might seek to exploit Dale's illness and our family's desire for privacy."

Leslie Chihuly indicated that Chihuly, Inc., will vigorously defend the Chihuly name and Dale's artistic vision.



"We look forward to shining a bright light on the facts and discrediting this and any other baseless claims concerning the authenticity and originality of Dale's creative work," she said.

To learn more about Dale's paintings, see [this video](#), and [this](#).

### **About Chihuly**

Dale Chihuly is renowned for his ambitious architectural installations around the world, in historic cities, public museums and gardens. In 1971, Dale cofounded Pilchuck Glass School in Washington state. With this international glass center, Dale has led the avant-garde and is credited with elevating the medium of glass from the realm of craft to fine art. His work is included in more than 200 museum collections worldwide. Dale has since received a dozen honorary doctorates in fine arts, two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, and numerous other accolades. In 1992, he was recognized as the first National Living Treasure.

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