

NOTE: Wallach Glass Studio is now AMRI STUDIO.
It continues under the leadership of principal and lead designer Christina Wallach Amri.

THE ART CORNER

Expressing gratitude **in glass**

BASED ON AN INTERVIEW WITH **CHRISTINA WALLACH**, WALLACH GLASS STUDIO

There are so many healthcare institutions in this country that are the product of long-standing dreams backed by enormous goodwill and philanthropic support that it's appropriate to create an art piece for a healthcare facility that not only celebrates this, but also serves as an architectural enhancement in its own right. To do this, we are creating pieces in crystal that are carved and sculpted as a piece by a monument maker or stonemason would be. We have discovered that we can deep-carve letters and etch images into the crystal that can be side-lit with LED lighting built into the edges of the



Baylor College of Medicine hired Wallach Glass Studio to custom-design and fabricate 21 cut, polished, deep-carved, and etched glass panels. Mounted to a custom-designed and LED-lit architectural wall, the panels are held with Los Angeles artist Eric Zammit's mosaic light bar, made up of more than 20,000 pieces of cut, glued, and polished colored acrylic. The overall design depicts a "tiling pathway" chart of a section of DNA chromosome 12, complemented by an etching of a photograph by famous dance photographer Lois Greenfield, showing the magnificent wholeness of the human being. *Photo by John Sutton.*



Dancer, etched into the glass and side-lit by the LED lighting system. *Photo by John Sutton.*

Website: www.amristudio.com

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(Above and Right) An 8-foot-high donor recognition sculpture in the lobby of the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, a Center of Excellence at the University of Miami School of Medicine. Etched in inch-thick crystal is a shower of light, based on a collaboration with artist Alex Grey, serving as a metaphor for the spinal column, as well as hope and interconnectivity. It is surrounded by a curved crystal handrail representing the myelin sheath that covers the nerves. Carved into the crystal are the names of founding members and supporting donors, as well as inspirational quotations. *Photo by John Sutton.*



crystal. The effect is a glowing, holographic look.

The technique involves “chisel-cutting” perfectly V-shaped letters deep into the crystal—for example, as much as three-quarters of an inch into inch-thick crystal. (Crystal must be used rather than standard glass, because the latter produces a murky greenish appearance; lighting from side-mounted LED lighting penetrates crystal as much as eight feet or more.) The carving involves very careful and attentive handwork that allows no mistakes—glass putty, unfortunately, hasn’t been invented yet.

The LED lighting system, which we adopted after experimenting with neon, fiberoptics, and other light sources, can be done in colors and can also be used to enhance etched-in photographic images. We can then layer these with the lettering

surface, making the piece three-dimensional.

Donor recognition has had a bad rap with some architects, but administrators do take an active interest in it and have asked facility designers to provide the space, weight support, and electrical systems necessary for this glass sculpture approach. Facilities are not only rewarding their donors in this way, but they are also using these pieces to highlight mission statements and historic information. For this reason, our pieces are becoming known for interpreting the values of an institution and, in essence, becoming a “voice”—and a very effective public relations statement to patients and visitors as they enter the building. **HD**

For further information,
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The staff of Wallach Glass Studio, Santa Rosa, California.