Presenting...

Seeking Freedom
An exhibit of strikingly poignant sculptural works by six artists who fled Communist homelands

The National Liberty Museum is proud to announce the opening of Seeking Freedom: Six Artists’ Journeys from Oppression to Freedom. More than two dozen sculptural works in glass from six artists who fled Communist homelands are featured, alongside the stories of their escapes and on how their lives are different in America. (Photos: Guests view exhibit on opening night. At right: Leading the tour is Scott Patria, Glass Dept. Director)

Participating artists include Latchezar Boyadjiev (Bulgaria/Czechoslovakia), José Chardiet (Cuba), Janusz Walentynowicz (Poland), Martin Rosol (Czechoslovakia), Binh Pho (Vietnam) and Pavel Novák (Czechoslovakia). Details of their stories begin on page 2.

The exhibit debuted on Thursday, June 28 with an opening event attended by over 100 Museum donors and glass collectors. The evening’s international flavor was enhanced by a flameworking demonstration by renowned glass artist Lucio Bubacco. See page 3 for opening night photos.

The Seeking Freedom exhibition will remain open through October 12, 2012. We encourage you to visit and enjoy this amazing display of art. The Museum’s summer hours are 10am to 5pm, Monday–Saturday, and 12noon to 6pm on Sunday. After Labor Day, the Museum is closed on Mondays. This exhibit is included with regular Museum admission. As always, Museum donors and members are welcome to visit at no charge.

If you would like information about purchasing a work from this exhibition, we would be delighted to schedule an appointment for you. Please call our Glass Department Director Scott Patria at 215-940-2956 or take this shortcut to our E-Store: http://bit.ly/PBlWX. We’re also offering an exclusive Seeking Freedom book, which is a perfect keepsake of this exhibition.

Notably, 2012 marks the 50th anniversary of the development of the Contemporary Studio Glass Movement in America. Special thanks go to the Art Alliance of Contemporary Glass (AACG) for their support of this exhibit and its related programming.
Artists featured in the *Seeking Freedom* Exhibit

Janusz Walentynowicz  b. 1956, Dygowo, Poland, Emigrated USA: 1982

“I left Poland with my family in 1960, escaping in the middle of the night in a secret compartment in an old fishing boat. Due to a broken compass, we first landed in Sweden, then Denmark, where the leaky vessel eventually sank. Coming from a Communist society, I have experienced first hand the difference between free and oppressive societies. ‘Prisoner’ reflects mental and spiritual imprisonment, while ‘Chain’ (not shown), I think, perfectly addresses the notion of freedom and liberty, expressed very much in its large and heavy scale, together with the last, broken link…”

Janusz’ works are exhibited and collected worldwide. He is among the first artists to move beyond the realm of decorative studio glass to create unique works on a highly personal level.

Latchezar Boyadjiev  b. 1959, Sofia, Bulgaria, Emigrated USA: 1986

“In 1986 my wife and I defected from Czechoslovakia in a search for personal freedom from Communist oppression. I wanted to be a glass artist and create art free of any propaganda. Liberty is sacred and has to be preserved. Very few places on earth do have Liberty… we have to be more aware how important it is and not take it for granted! This idea is expressed in most of my work. It is fragile, dynamic, full of movement and bright colors. When you look at my work I hope you get a positive and uplifting feeling which is a result of free existence.”

Latchezar’s exuberant sculptures have been exhibited and are represented in private and public collections worldwide.

Martin Rosol  b. 1956, Prague, Czechoslovakia, Emigrated USA: 1988

“My introduction to glass was as an apprentice in Prague, where I worked for 10 years… at that time you could not just ‘be an artist’ without the official sanction of the government. I left in 1986 because I was seeking artistic and personal freedom. I escaped Czechoslovakia by car with my wife and two small children… living in the car for three weeks. People in free countries take so many of their liberties for granted. Liberty is a way of life not easily achieved, which has to be protected. Here, I am free to explore my concepts… my pieces were conceived and executed in Freedom, and being in this exhibition is an ultimate manifestation of this process.”

Martin’s elegant, architecturally-inspired sculptures have been exhibited in private and public collections worldwide.


“At age 14, I toured different factories to choose a career… I was assigned glass grinding… It was a very grueling job with long hours and no incentive to be creative or use any type of initiative. One day, I was offered summer work grinding glass for Michael Pavlik in the US… this was my first taste of freedom. After 7 years working part-time in the US, I moved here. Living in America gives me the freedom to make my living as an artist, and make and sell the work that I choose to make. If I had chosen to stay in the Czech Republic, my life would have been spent either working as a teacher, or in a factory making someone else’s work.”

Pavel is an emerging artist whose brilliant sculptures and jewelry are now gaining widespread recognition.

José Chardiet  b. 1956, Havana, Cuba, Emigrated USA: 1960

“My father worked for a year under Castro and, seeing the growing clouds of Communism, took a ‘leave of absence’. Supposedly on vacation, we knew we weren’t coming back. We left with what we could carry, flying first to Miami and then to New York. The word Liberty brings up really strong feelings for me. As a family, having lost our liberties, we know what it is like to live without them, to lose everything that generations worked for. To live in fear. This is reflected in the colors I sometimes choose: a sense of isolation and loss.”

José is considered one of the leaders in the second generation of the Studio Glass Movement.

“I grew up during the war, North and South Vietnam, Communism vs. Freedom. When U.S. troops withdrew, I planned my escape for freedom. After 4 long hard years, including capture and ‘re-education’ camps, I arrived in the U.S. in 1979. Every piece of my work (first in wood, now in glass) represents my life story. The challenge is the combination of the two opposite mediums so it can tell the story better. Glass is most opposite from wood, cold and fragile, when it breaks, it’s gone... it reminds me of life itself. Liberty is not a fancy word, and its meaning is not obvious until it is no longer there; the absence of Liberty is much more powerful than when it’s there... One must experience the absence of liberty to understand why millions are willing to die for it.”

Binh is an internationally-renowned wood sculptor who has recently begun working in glass and is considered a rising star.

Opening event draws huge audience of Museum friends and supporters

Alex Friedman • Debra & Pavel Novák • Shelby & Bob Ford • Paula Amar & Mel Schwartz • David Gruber

Peggy Sweeney, June O'Neill • Norman & Suzanne Cohn and Laurie Wagman & Irvin Borowsky • Jeff Ladouceur, Steve Wittenberg • Marvin Sharfstein

William Dean, Arlene Silvers, Judge Sandra Moss-Dean • Phil Lindy, Sherrie Savett, Doug Tozour, Lucio Bubacco • Jean Moss, Jane Davis

Louise Gilbert & Seymour Frank • Matt Denuncio, Gwen Borowsky • Beth Galvin, Erin Hartshorn, Nicole LeVine • Stephanie & Richard Abraham and many others!
Upcoming art events you won’t want to miss!

Tuesday, August 14 - “Open the Box” Party
Surprises galore await all who attend this “Open the Box” Party at the home of Arlene & Norman Silvers in Cherry Hill, NJ. We may find glass pieces that we will preview for the Auction or pieces from the newly acquired collection. Whatever we uncover, it’s sure to be lots of fun.

Friday, September 28 - Private tour of the new Barnes Museum
This past May, the legendary Barnes Museum opened the doors to its magnificent new home on Benjamin Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia. It houses an extraordinary art collection of Impressionist, Post-Impressionist and Early-Modern paintings, along with other important works. We invite you to join us for a private tour of this extraordinary facility.

Sunday, September 30 - Artist Judith Schaechter will lead us on a tour of her exhibition at Eastern State Penitentiary
Built in the late 1700s, Eastern State Penitentiary is a defunct prison that now serves as a major tourist site with an active artist installation program. Currently on display is Judith Schaechter’s new work featuring 17 stained glass windows installed in historic skylights throughout various cell blocks. Ms. Schaechter will lead us on a private tour of her work.

And be sure to mark your calendar for our BIG EVENT of the year: The 2012 GLASS AUCTION, Saturday evening, September 29.

To participate in any or all of these activities, please call Stephanie Linn at 215-925-2800, ext. 135. We hope you will join us!