

## **CURRICULA VITAE**

### **KENNETH FREDERICK VON ROENN, JR**

Kenneth Frederick von Roenn, Jr. was born in 1948 in Louisville, Kentucky. As a young man, his interests were athletic, primarily in springboard and platform diving. He attended Florida State University, on a full athletic scholarship, while also pursuing his interests in fine art, philosophy and English, earning a B. A. degree in 1970.

von Roenn began his career in glass in 1970 at Louisville Art Glass. Within a few years he had become the General Manager and in 1975, he was promoted to President. In the early 70's he was an active member of the Stained Glass Association of America serving on the executive committee and also as chairman of the publications committee. During this period, he compiled a body of innovative architectural glass artwork and establishing the studio as one of the most aesthetically and technically progressive in the country. During this period von Roenn wrote regularly for several magazines on the topic of glass in architecture and taught courses in architectural art at the U of KY School of Architecture from 1974-76. Recognizing a need to pursue his evolving interest in architecture, he took a leave of absence from the studio in 1977 to pursue a Masters Degree in Architecture at Yale University, graduating in 1981. While at Yale, von Roenn further developed his interest in architectural art through work with the architect/sculptor Kent Bloomer, which was culminated with his independent thesis entitled, 'The Primary Modalities of Art's Relationship to Architecture: Integration, Juxtaposition and Synthesis'. While still in graduate school he founded in 1979 the von Roenn Studio Group in Branford, CT, which designed and produced glass, architecture, graphics and furniture, executing commissions nationally and internationally. In 1983, he returned to Louisville and worked for two architectural firms before establishing an architectural practice with two partners to form Bailey, Preston, von Roenn Architecture. It was also at this time that he returned to competitive diving, which was culminated with winning ten national masters National Championship titles and two World Championship titles, setting two world records at the age of 41. Having achieved his earliest goal of becoming a world champion at long last, von Roenn turned his exclusive attention to his true passion, expressive glass in architecture.

Recognizing a need for the development of architectural expressive glass in 1991, von Roenn bought the Louisville Art Glass Studio and renamed it **Architectural Glass Art, Inc.** He expanded and reorganized the company, redirecting its focus on new roles and opportunities for glass in architecture. The studio quickly became recognized for its innovative application of new technologies in the execution of architectural glass art. Within the studio he served as the director of design and CEO/President, managing a staff of thirty and directing the exploration and development of techniques and technologies in glass fabrication.

In the late 90's, von Roenn's desire to expand the studio led to his search for a new space. During this period, he joined with a group of developers and investors interested in the revitalization of downtown Louisville as well as the region's firm commitment to the arts.

The group, guided by von Roenn's vision of a multipurpose glass facility, formulated a concept for **Glassworks**. From the original idea of a new home for Architectural Glass Art, von Roenn created a space for more than 50 glass artists to work and sell their art. Von Roenn owned and oversaw the two galleries, a public workshop, a tour program, a special events program and the glass blowing studio, and a mobile glass blowing van powered by vegetable oil, all of which comprised Glassworks. More than 125,000 people visited Glassworks annually, which made it one of Louisville's most popular tourist attractions. In 2012 von Roenn sold his interest in Glassworks to focus his attention exclusively on Architectural Glass Art.

Under von Roenn's leadership the studio executed more than 1,500 projects throughout the United States as well as projects in Japan, Mexico, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, and China. In addition to designing his own projects, von Roenn has also collaborated with several significant artists on major projects including Al Held, Jose Bedia, Laura Battle, Thomas Sayre, Jose Bedia and Jennifer Bartlett. He has also worked with many of the leading American architects including Cesar Pelli, Charles Moore, William Turnbull, Thomas Ventulett, Graham Gund, Turan Duda, Gyo Obata, David Rockwell, Peter Marino, Mark Simon, etc. Von Roenn designed, and his studio produced, the world's largest glass sculpture, which crowns the top of the 3 Wells Fargo Center in Charlotte, NC. This work weighs more than 500,000 pounds, can be seen from miles away and is designed to withstand hurricane force winds.

Von Roenn's work has been published in numerous books and in many major architecture magazines, including a feature article on his work in "*Architecture*" magazine. He has lectured extensively throughout North America and Canada and has written dozens of articles on art and architecture. Von Roenn has received numerous awards, including the Faith and Form Visual Arts Grand Award, American Crafts Award for Architectural Art, the AIA Allied Professional Award, the DuPont Benedictus Award, the Corning Museum Award, the Al Smith Fellowship, Tau Sigma Delta Architecture Fraternity Award, five Ministry & Liturgy's Bene Awards and ten CODAworx Awards. In addition, von Roenn received the Crystal Award for his design of a glass bridge for the Louisville arena. This project has been recognized as a technological tour de force for the way in which artistic glass was used as a primary structural element for the bridge. He has been inducted into the American Glass Hall of Fame as well as the Atherton High School Hall of Fame and was named one of the twenty-five most influential people in the arts in the Midwest by *Dialogue* magazine. He was presented with the Governor's Award in the Arts for Lifetime Achievement in 2011 by the governor of Kentucky, which is the highest honor bestowed on a Kentucky artist.

In 2013 von Roenn decided that it was time in his life to begin to slow down (primarily at the urging of his domestic partner, Ursula Vourvoulis). He closed Architectural Glass Art and moved to Tallahassee, FL to work with Florida State University on the development of a new public art program. At FSU von Roenn also served as the Director of the Master Craftsman Studio as well as the founder of the Public and Architectural Art program. As a professor

von Roenn taught courses in public and architectural art as well as sculpture and creative entrepreneurship. He did not renew his contract with FSU in 2016 so he could once again turn his attention exclusively back to glass. In 2016, von Roenn was invited to present the keynote address to the **American Glass Guild** annual conference in Chicago.

With his move to Florida he established **Kaiser / von Roenn Studio** with his partner, Ursula Vourvoulis, and serves as its Design Director. K/vR Studio's focus is on large-scale architectural glass projects nationally and internationally. Since the inception of the studio in 2013 K/vR Studio has completed major projects in Manila, Philippines, Dublin, Ireland, Austin, TX, Nashville, TN, Denver, CO, Los Angeles, CA, Washington D.C., Dallas, TX, San Diego, CA, Miami, FL, Denver, CO, el Paso, TX and Nashville, TN. He lectures frequently on the topic of public art and its role in communities as well as the role of artistic glass in architecture.

A documentary film of von Roenn's work is currently being produced by the noted film maker, Sam Halstead, which is scheduled to be released in spring '23.

