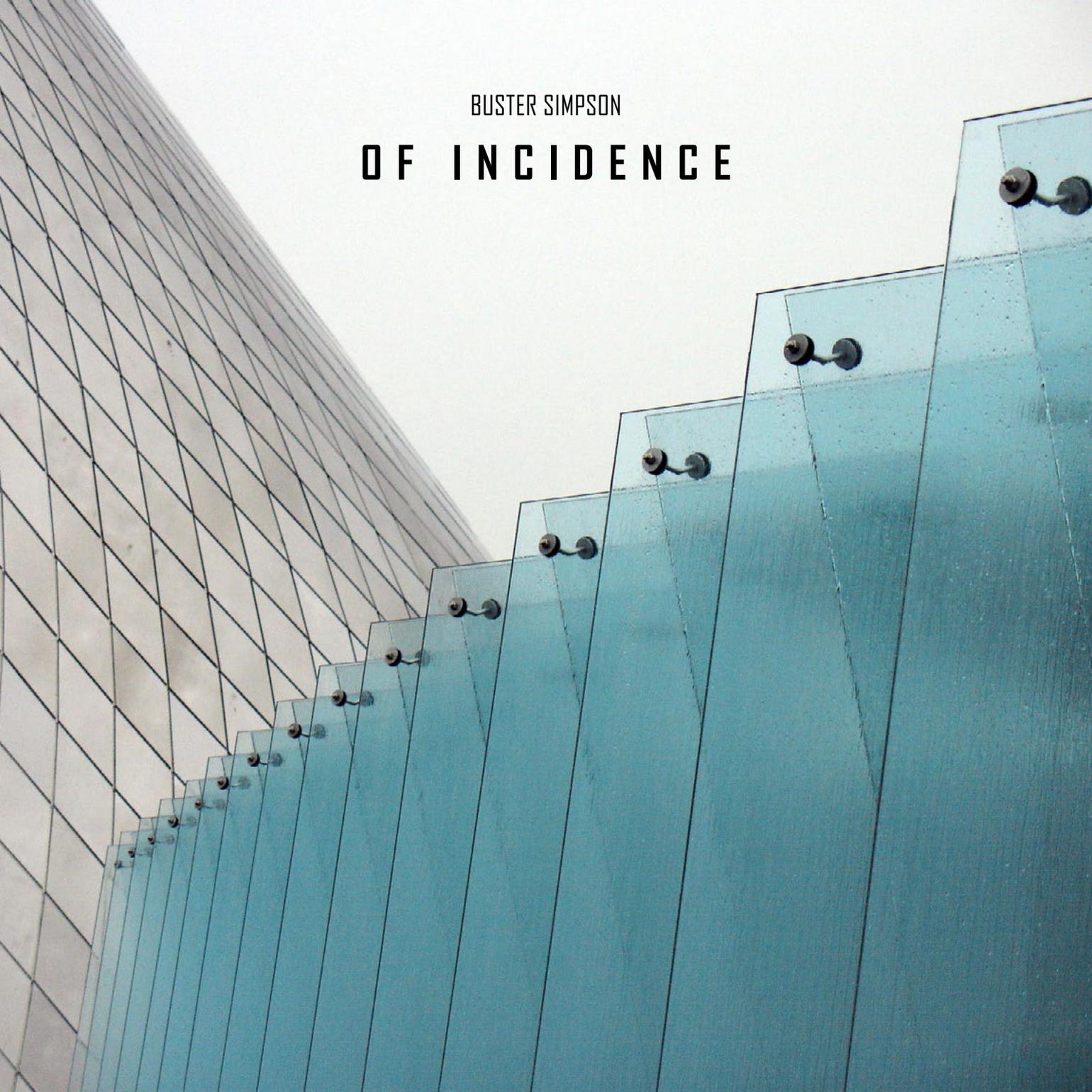


BUSTER SIMPSON

OF INCIDENCE





Front cover:  
*Incidence*, 2002.  
Tempered plate glass, stainless steel, rubber, Trex.  
96" x 1440" x 60". Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA.

James Carpenter, Dale Chihuly and Czechoslovak Socialist Republic's Castle Guard soldier at the entrance to Prague Castle, 1971.

4th edition (2019). First published in 2017.

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Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Portland, OR  
Pratt Fine Art Center, Seattle, WA  
Spectrum Glass, Woodinville, WA  
Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA  
The numerous glass artists and hot shops of the Salish Sea Region

## BUSTER SIMPSON OF INCIDENCE

In the winter of 1970, I traveled from New York to lecture at the Rhode Island School of Design. There I observed a collaborative approach to working with the medium of glass and met a number of artists, including James Carpenter and Dale Chihuly. Soon after, I went to Europe for two weeks with Carpenter and Chihuly, along with Robert Sestok, to visit glass facilities that combined the production of art and glass. The associations and trip introduced me to glass-working and helped lay the groundwork for my involvement with the Pilchuck Glass School (1971-73). Since then, Carpenter, Chihuly, Sestock and I have all taken the deployment of the medium in unique directions.

This publication, *Of Incidence*, documents a series of sculptural constructs that I have created to engage structural tension, entropy and chance using glass as the medium. The works in the series address site-specific responses to geometry, the materiality of glass, the incidence of light, social action, and occasionally include a spectacle performance.

*Of Incidence* culminates with the introduction of a proposed artwork, evolved from the prior works, which is an iconic metaphor of the human condition, delivered from the past to this particular moment in time.



Eisch Glass Factory, Frauenau, Germany, 1971.



Security fence, 1904. Antoni Gaudi. Casa Batlló, Barcelona, Spain.



*Armored Perimeter Wall Cap*, 1981. Buster Simpson. Glass, concrete. 15" x 60" x 8". Pratt Art Center, Seattle, WA.

Two related pieces, the *Domino Card House* and the *Glass House of Cards (Beige-à vu version)*, were created for the Glass Art Society Conference held in Seattle in 1981. These two pieces have been shown or staged in various renditions from 1981 through 2017.

*Domino Card House* was constructed of sheets of stained glass. The installations had the appearance of being a house of cards, made of stacked dominos. They presented a constructed double entendre, as if to be either a deck of cards or a roll of the dice, and spoke to issues of social and ecological fragility. Black silicone adhesive circles were compressed between two sheets of translucent stained glass to create the domino pips, which when stacked became a ten-foot-tall sculpture.

In 1981, the performance piece, *Glass House of Cards (Beige-à vu version)*, was presented at Pratt Fine Arts Center's hot shop. Spectrum Glass, a local art glass manufacturer, donated a rejected run of beige-colored stained glass for the performance. *Glass House of Cards* was kept together without the use of any adhesives. Only static friction contact, glass to glass, kept the structure from collapsing during the

act of stacking the sheets. Similar to building a playing card house, but at a much larger scale, the performance played on elements of chance and tension. At the outset of the performance, each member of the audience was given a stone with no instructions, leaving the intent up to the audience to determine.

The performance piece also had a sonic variable that engaged resonating frequencies and vibrated the glass to tempt it loose from its contact points and possibly bring the house down. After stacking the glass card house, the installation crew removed ladders and presented the piece to the audience. On cue, two long glass horns (with proportions similar to Torricelli's Trumpets) appeared and a duet was performed by Charles Parriott and Lark Dalton. After about eight minutes, the horns found sonic purchase and the card house fell, becoming a heap of shards. In a wonderfully unscripted collective act, the audience offered their stones to the pile of shards (perhaps in a gesture of relief because no one had to cast the first stone). The shard detritus from the performance was then gathered up and imbedded into wet concrete to create *Armored Perimeter Wall Cap*. This action became a forerunner to the *Shard Cornice* series.

For *Shard Cornice* installations, glass shards were gleaned from Seattle area glass artists' discards and dumpsters. The shards were imbedded into concrete masonry units to become an armored wall-top trespass deterrent. The opulent, seductive qualities of the glass presented the conundrum of "look but don't touch". *Shard Cornice* was first exhibited at the Henry Art Museum in Seattle in 2001, then in 2005 at Bellevue Arts Museum's exhibit, *Taking Shape: Pilchuck Glass School in the '70s*. It is now in the permanent collection at the Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, New York.

The sculptural installation *Incidence* was sited at the Museum of Glass in Tacoma, Washington from 2002 to 2006. Placed within a roof-top plaza reflective pool, the alignment of thirty-eight plate glass sheets (4' x 8' each) responded to the Fibonacci patterned shingling of the adjacent iconic *Burn Cone* (designed by architects Arthur Erickson and Wyn Bielaska). As the viewer passed alongside the glass array, a procession of kinesthetic movements punctuated ambient reflections. A perpendicular view through the installation framed the distant Mt. Rainier (Tahoma), recalling a "spirit door" myth of the first peoples of the region.

*Incidence* was commissioned soon after the World Trade Center attack in 2001. That event and the cultural ripples that followed, influenced early thinking about the project with first design ideas suggesting a continuation of the *Domino/Glass House* series, but eventually the project focus related more to the site and adjacent *Burn Cone*. *Incidence* was dismantled in 2006 in order to modify the reflective pool.

*Glass House of Incidence* is a proposed new artwork. This installation would be created by reusing the sheets of glass that originally made up *Incidence*. The new work would be twenty-two feet tall and be engineered to be a robust multi-glass laminated sculpture using structural adhesive and post tension fasteners. The reflective faceted geometry of the clear plate glass would respond like a chameleon's visual call in response to movement, ambient light and the surroundings. *Glass House of Incidence* would carry a present tense reflection of our shared entropic systems, both natural and man-made, which we meddle with and attempt to mend.



*Domino Glass House of Cards*, 1981. Glass, silicone pips (dots). 120" x 72" x 26". Seattle Center, Seattle WA.



*Domino Glass House of Cards, 1985.*  
Glass, silicone pips (dots). 120" x 72" x 26".  
Portland Center for the Visual Arts,  
Portland, OR.



*Falling Dominos, 2017.*  
Glass silicone Pips (dots). 45" x 26" x 38".  
*Making our Mark: Art by Pratt Teaching Artists,*  
Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue WA.



*Glass House of Cards*  
(*Beige-à vu Edition*), 1981.  
Glass. 120" x 72" x 26".  
View during Re/De-construction/Repurposing  
performance at the Pratt Fine Arts Center,  
1981, in conjunction with the Glass Art  
Society Conference. Performers included  
Lark Dalton, Mark Eckstrand, Charles Parriott,  
Buster Simpson, Therman Stratum, and Toots  
Zynsky. Photo by Pratt Fine Arts Center.



*Glass House of Cards*  
(*Beige-à vu Edition*), 1981.  
Glass. 120" x 72" x 26".  
View of completed structure.  
Pratt Fine Arts Center, Seattle, WA.  
Photo by Pratt Fine Arts Center.



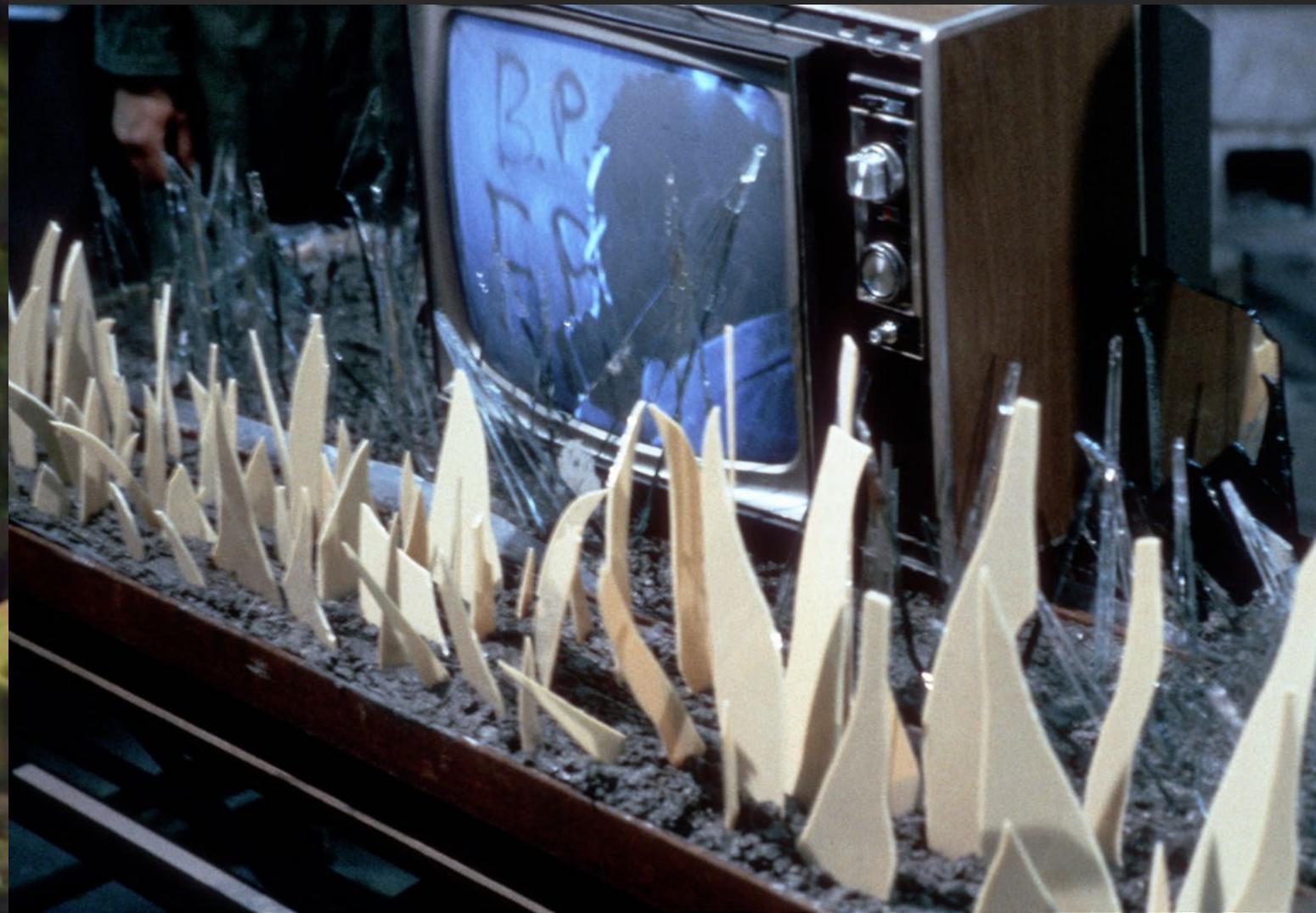
*Glass House of Cards*  
 (Beige-à vu Edition), 1981.  
 Glass. 120" x 72" x 26".  
 View of Torricelli's trumpets being played  
 to produce sound at a resonating frequency  
 and vibrate the friction connection of glass to  
 glass, inducing collapse.



*Glass House of Cards* (Beige-à vu Edition), 1981.  
 Glass. 120" x 72" x 26".  
 Contact sheet views of performance.  
 Photo by Pratt Fine Arts Center.



*Gathering Beige-à vu Shards for Armored Perimeter Wall Cap (Video Stills), 1981.*  
Glass. 120" x 72" x 26".  
Gathering beige shards to be placed in wet concrete for Armored Perimeter Wall Cap.  
Pratt Art Center, Seattle, WA. Photos by Pratt Art Center.



*Armored Perimeter Wall Cap, 1981.*  
Glass, concrete. Beige shards placed in wet wall armor.  
Pratt Art Center, Seattle, WA.



*Gathering Beige-à vu Shards for Armored Perimeter Wall Cap, 1981. Glass. 120" x 72" x 26".*  
Gathering beige shards to be placed in wet concrete wall armor. Photo by Pratt Fine Arts Center.



Glass shard from the World Trade Center, on display at the 9/11 Memorial Museum, 2017. New York, NY. Photo by 9/11 Memorial Museum Collections staff.



*Shard Cornice*, 2005.  
Concrete masonry units, glass shards, concrete.  
78" x 165" x 128".  
View looking east. Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue, WA.



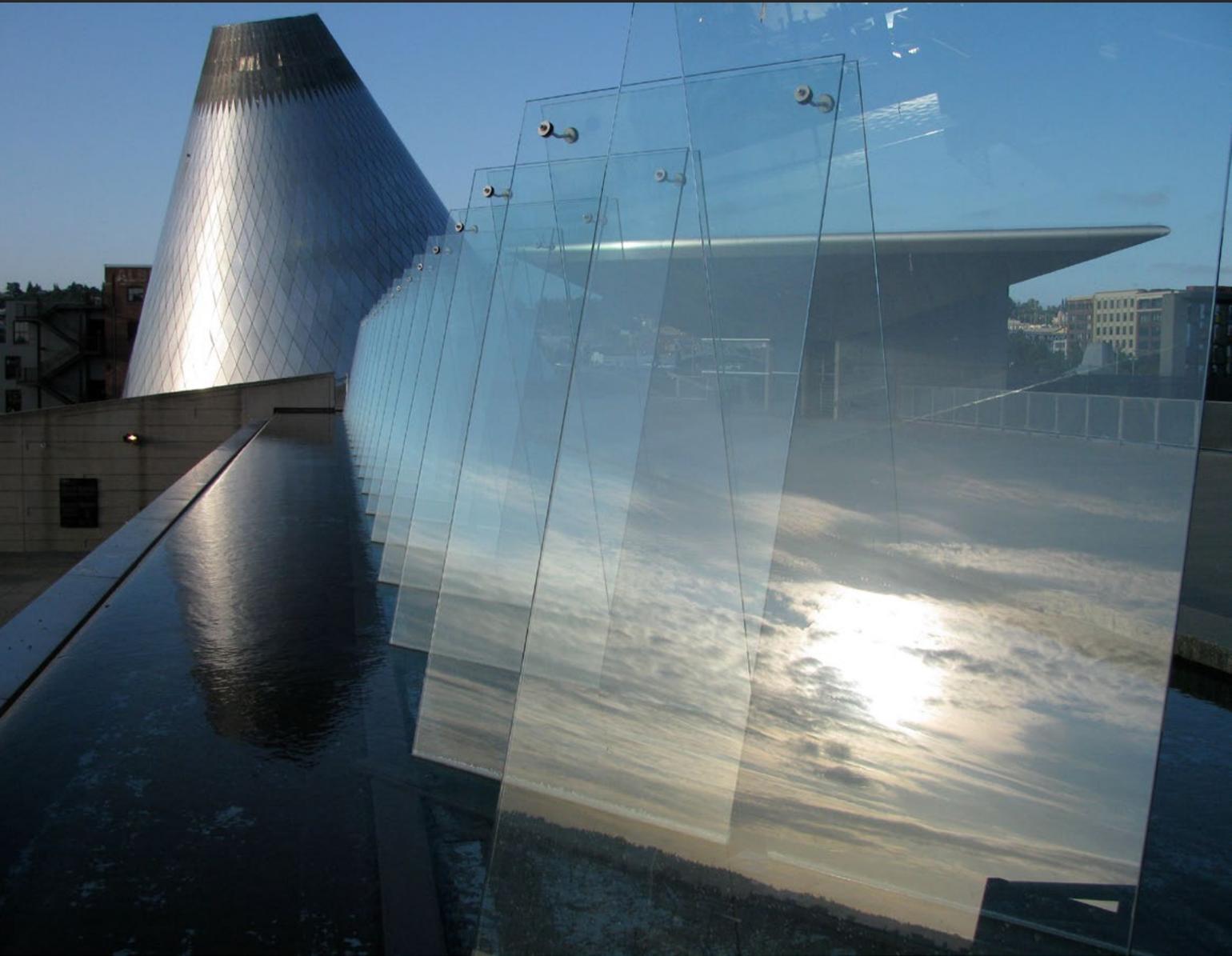
*Shard Cornice*, 2005.  
Concrete masonry units, glass shards, concrete. 78" x 165" x 128".  
View looking west. Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue, WA.  
Photo by Bellevue Arts Museum.



*Shard Cornice*, 2016.  
Concrete masonry units, glass shards, concrete.  
84" x 165" x 128". View from above.  
Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, NY.



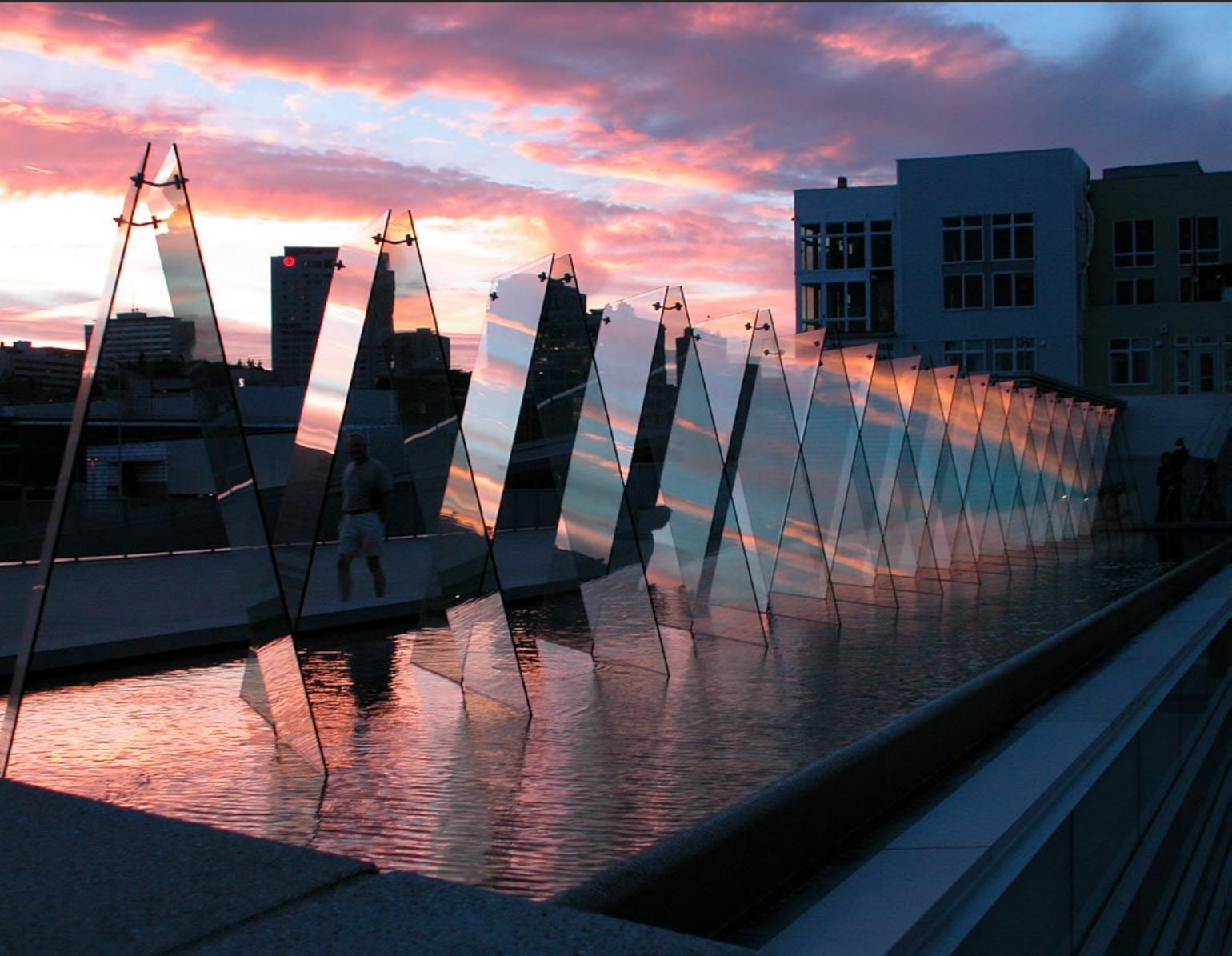
*Shard Cornice*, 2016.  
Concrete masonry units, glass shards, concrete. 84" x 165" x 128".  
Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, NY.  
Photo by Corning Museum of Glass.



*Incidence, 2002.*  
(38) 4' x 8' x 1" sheets of tempered plate glass, stainless steel,  
rubber, Trex. 96" x 1440" x 60". Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA.



*Incidence, 2008.*  
(38) 4' x 8' x 1" sheets of tempered plate glass, stainless steel, rubber, Trex.  
96" x 1440" x 60". Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA.



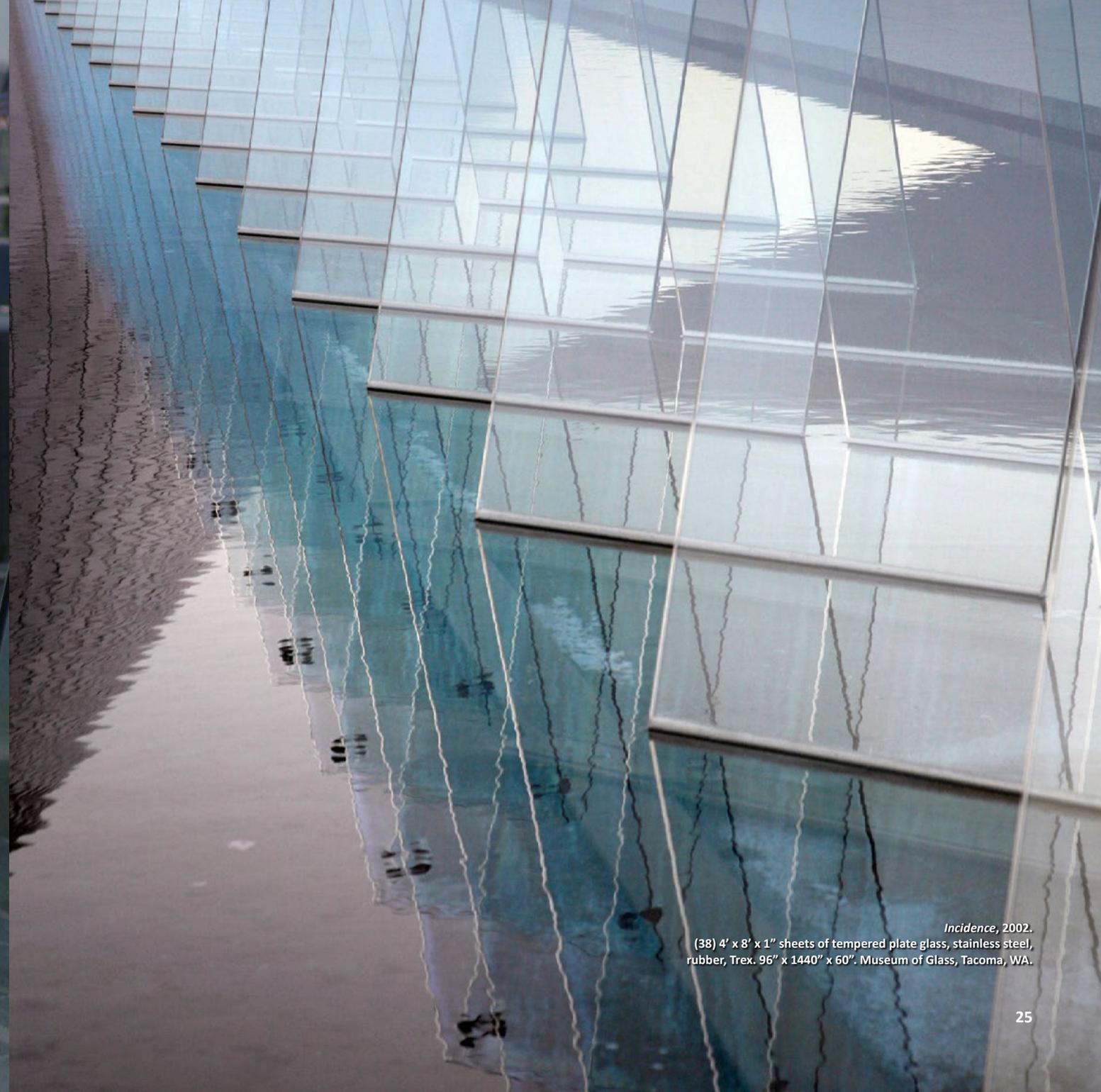
*Incidence*, 2002.  
(38) 4' x 8' x 1" sheets of tempered plate glass, stainless steel,  
rubber, Trex. 96" x 1440" x 60". Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA.  
Photo by Wyn Bielaska.



*Incidence*, 2002.  
(38) 4' x 8' x 1" sheets of tempered plate glass, stainless steel,  
rubber, Trex. 96" x 1440" x 60". Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA.



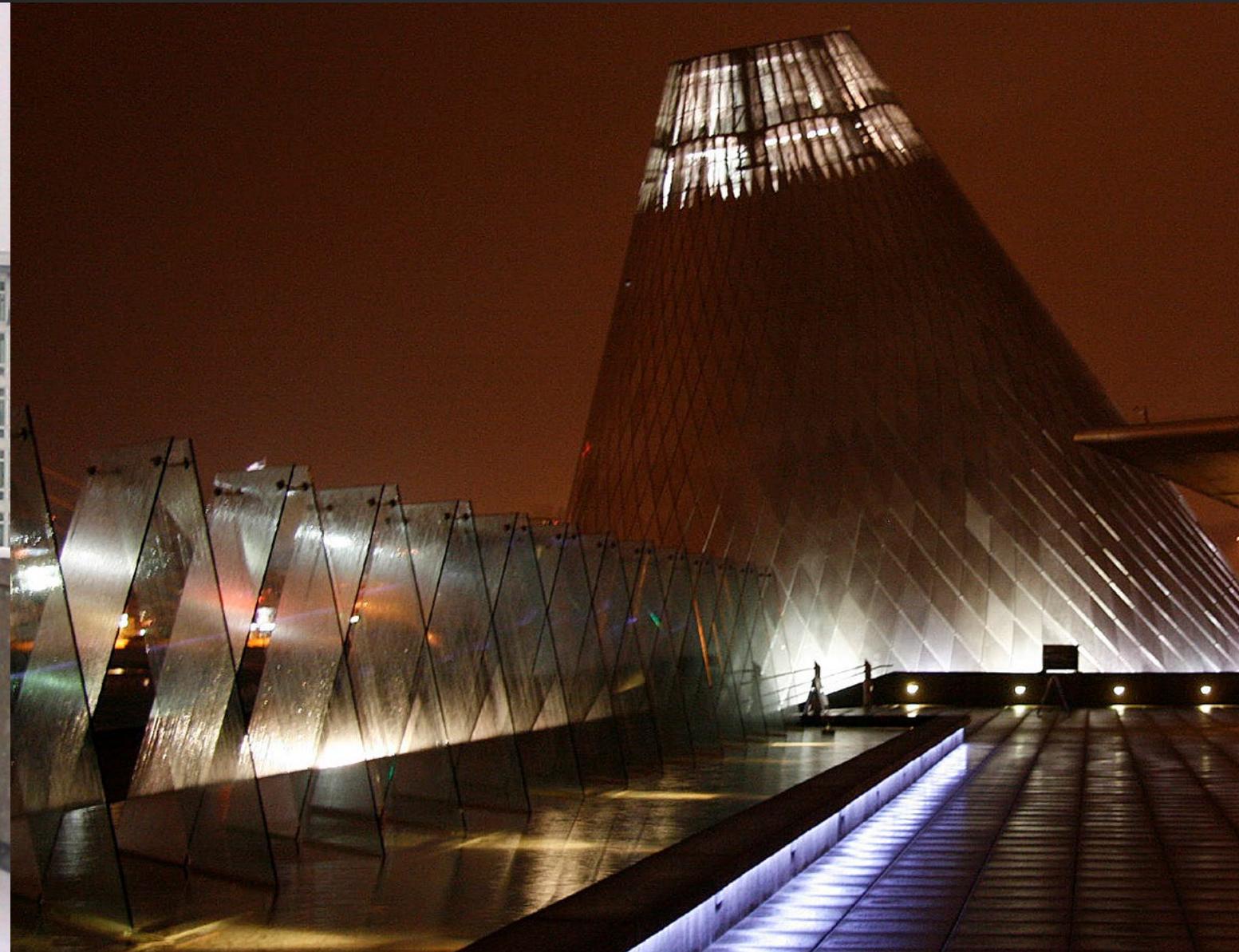
*Incidence*, 2002.  
(38) 4' x 8' x 1" sheets of tempered plate glass, stainless steel, rubber, Trex. 96" x 1440" x 60". Detail showing reflection of Fibonacci Cone geometry on glass *Incidence* surface. Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA.



*Incidence*, 2002.  
(38) 4' x 8' x 1" sheets of tempered plate glass, stainless steel, rubber, Trex. 96" x 1440" x 60". Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA.



*Incidence*, 2004.  
(38) 4' x 8' x 1" sheets of tempered plate glass, stainless steel,  
rubber, Trex. 96" x 1440" x 60". Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA.  
Photo by Charles Parriott.



*Incidence*, 2005.  
(38) 4' x 8' x 1" sheets of tempered plate glass, stainless steel, rubber, Trex.  
96" x 1440" x 60". Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA. Photo: Museum of Glass

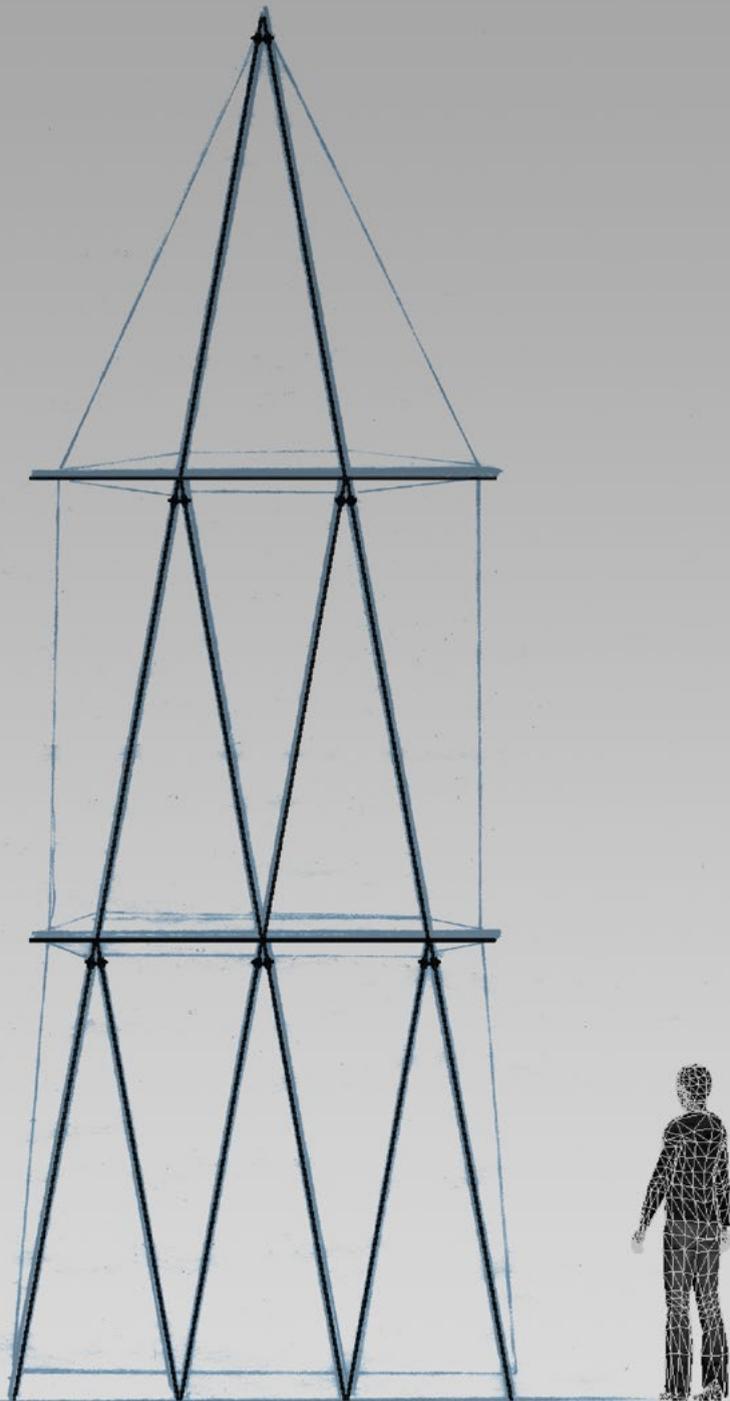


*Shingle with Froe, 2001-2018*  
Wood and steel froe, paint, inkjet print, stainless steel.  
68" x 29" x 9.75." Froe and inkjet print document of  
*Incidence* on salvaged stainless steel shingle from the  
Fibonacci inspired architectural "burn cone" located at  
the Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA.

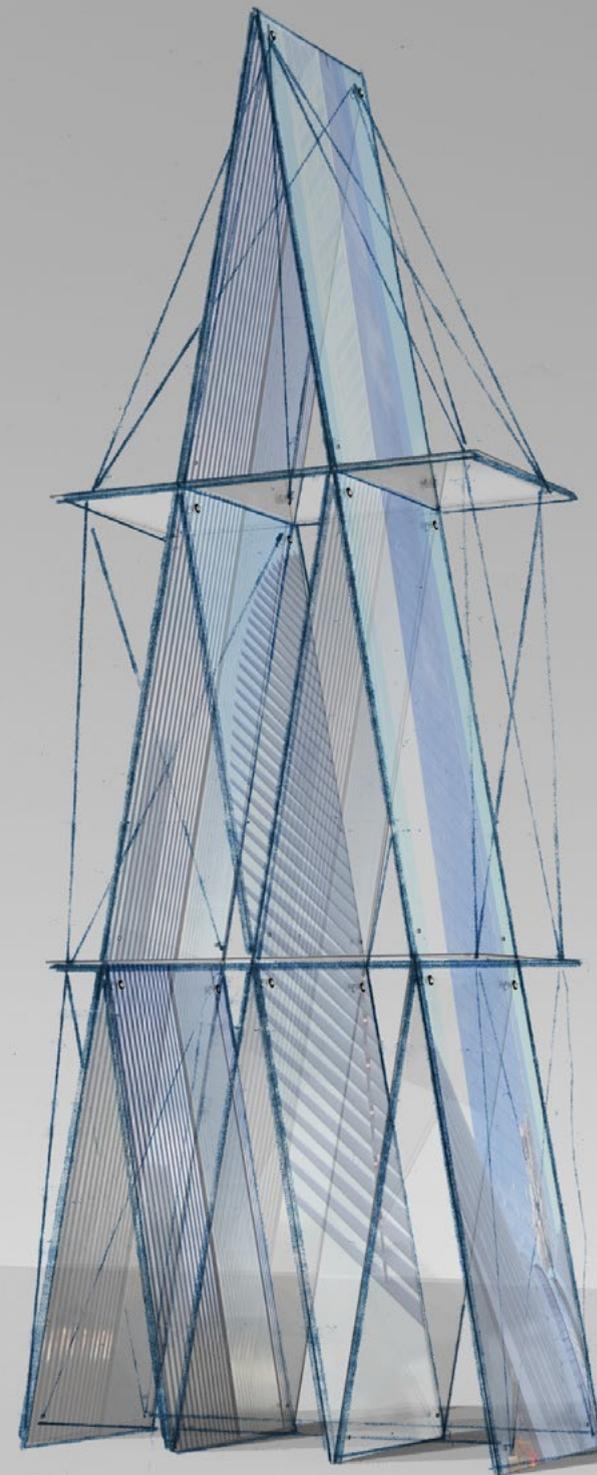


*Incidence of Two Fibonacci Cones, 2001-2016.*  
Stainless steel, inkjet print on plastic, acrylic paint.  
92" x 56" X 2.5". During construction of the Museum  
of Glass, stainless steel shingle rejects were retrieved  
from the construction site dumpster and ultimately  
provided the surface for a collage layered with  
*Incidence* photo document and a painted pine cone.

*Proposal: Glass House of  
Incidence, 2017.  
288" x 102" x 48".  
Location to be determined.  
Concept rendering.*



*Proposal: Glass House of  
Incidence, 2017.  
288" x 102" x 48".  
Location to be determined.  
Concept rendering.*



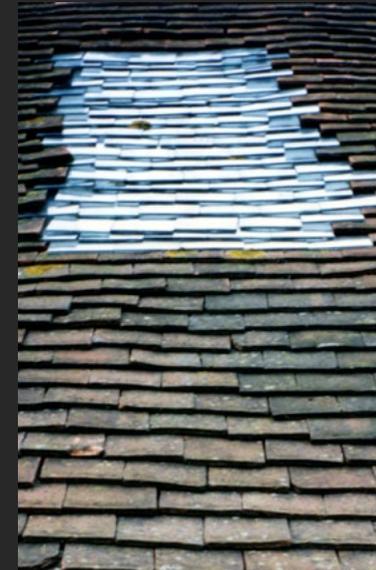


*PoP Tent Vitrine*, 2019. Urban Encampment simulation.  
61" x 48" x 96". Tempered glass, stainless steel hardware.  
Repurposed 1/2" glass panels from *Incidence* installation (2002-2006),  
Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA. Digital rendering: Todd Metten.



*PoP Tent Vitrine*, 2019. Pilchuck School Tree Farm simulation.  
42" x 48" x 96". Tempered glass, stainless steel hardware.  
Repurposed 1/2" glass panels from *Incidence* installation (2002-2006),  
Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA. Digital rendering: Todd Metten.

*Cedar sequesters, protects and splits.  
Glass transforms, fractures, emits.*



Glass shingle inlay into slate roof. Cornwall, UK, 1971.



Walt Haas (1925-2012) with froe in hand to split cedar shakes for Pilchuck Glass School, 1973.

Back cover:  
*Domino Glass House of Cards* (Detail), 1981.  
Glass, silicone. 135" x 45" x 26".  
Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Portland, OR.

