



**GIANT GLASS JELLYFISH:  
POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM REVEALS EXCITING PUBLIC ART FOR NEW  
PACIFIC SEAS AQUARIUM ON KAIT RHOADS ART DAY AT MUSEUM OF GLASS**

*Seattle artist to create giant glass jellyfish sculpture Oct. 27 in partnership with Hilltop Artists*

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Tacoma, Wash. -- Tacoma is getting a brand-new aquarium with four pieces of public art – and members of the public can watch one of them being created in the Museum of Glass Hot Shop from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Oct. 27.



Seattle artist Kait Rhoads will work with the Hot Shop team and students from Hilltop Artists to create glass tubing that will make up the 10-foot tentacles and 2-foot bells of three giant glass jellyfish.

Visitors who want to watch can receive a special promotional discount to the Downtown Tacoma museum on Oct. 27. Find details at [www.pdza.org/kaitrhoadsday](http://www.pdza.org/kaitrhoadsday). The jellyfish installation is one of four pieces of public art commissioned by Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium for its new Pacific Seas Aquarium.

**Kait Rhoads, right, with Hot Shop Manager and Gaffer Ben Cobb in the Museum of Glass Hot Shop. Photo:** Rozarii Lynch.

The \$51.6 million state-of-the-art building is slated to open next summer.

As Rhoads works with her team to make the tubing that will eventually be threaded onto wire “tentacles,” she’ll be joined by Dr. Chad Widmer, the zoo’s jellyfish aquarist, who is also a glassblower. Widmer will take the mic at 11:30 a.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. that day to talk about the amazing qualities and species of jellyfish and the challenges of recreating them in glass.

Rhoads will be assisted by members of the Hilltop Artists, a non-profit organization allows students from diverse backgrounds to learn the art of glassmaking. As Oct. 27 is a day off for Tacoma Public Schools students, the event offers classmates of Hilltop Artists an opportunity to watch them and Rhoads in action.

In the museum's Studio, visitors will be able tap into their imagination and creativity as they try their hand at making their own jellyfish.

The work of two additional artists also will be featured in the Pacific Seas Aquarium.

- Maria Jost, a Tacoma illustrator and science teacher, is creating a marine-inspired mural for installation in the aquarium's Tidal Touch Zone hands-on area.
- California-based Gordon Huether is working on two installations for the aquarium's downward ramps. "Shimmer," a light projection, will play along the walls and floor, and "Shoal," a collection of metal fish, will be suspended from the ceiling.
- Rhoads' jellyfish will be suspended overhead in the atrium just past the 250,000-gallon Baja Bay habitat, which will be home to green sea turtles, hammerhead sharks, spotted eagle rays and other warm-water species.



**Rhoads' rendition of how her sculpture will look in the atrium of the Pacific Seas Aquarium.**

The art is funded through the One Percent for Public Art program of Metro Parks Tacoma, which owns and operates the zoo. This program earmarks 1 percent of all public works projects over \$100,000 for the creation of public art.

"Metro Parks values public art. The Park Board approved the policy in late 2014, and I'm happy to see it's already paying dividends," said Park Board Commissioner Aaron Pointer. "Art inspires people and adds to their quality of life. The new aquarium's artwork helps tell the story of how we relate to nature."

Information on all three artists will be on view in the museum's Grand Hall, along with one of Rhoads' other glass sculptures.

"I feel honored to be able to create artwork for the new aquarium," she said. "Researching jellyfish with Chad Widmer has been such an inspiration. My hope is to spread the message of ocean ecology through the wonder of jellies. Working with Hilltop Artists and the Museum of Glass will help create a community connection to the sculpture, as well as to the aquarium, the zoo, Puget Sound and the entire ocean."

"We're delighted that we can help bring art like Kait's to Tacoma," said John Houck, Deputy Director of Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. "Her glass jellyfish sculpture reinforces the message of the Pacific Seas Aquarium, where animals will inspire visitors to take action to protect the world's ocean."

Museum of Glass officials are excited about their partnership with the zoo on this project.

“Working on this special event with Kait Rhoads, Hilltop Artists and Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium gives our visitors the chance to see jellyfish come to life in the Museum’s Hot Shop,” said Debbie Lenk, the museum’s executive director. “It’s something they will remember every time they see the jellies on display in the new aquarium.”

Hilltop Artists Executive Director Dr. Kimberly Keith agrees.

“This is a really exciting opportunity to collaborate with Kait Rhoads, Museum of Glass and Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium on a project that will engage so many people in our community,” she said.

For more information, see [pdza.org/kaitrhoadsday](http://pdza.org/kaitrhoadsday), [museumofglass.org](http://museumofglass.org) and [kaitrhoads.com](http://kaitrhoads.com).

## **DISCOUNTED ADMISSION**

Zoo members and ticketholders will get half-off general admission to the Museum of Glass Oct. 27-29, while museum members and ticketholders will also receive half-off general admission to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium Oct. 27-29.

The discount can be obtained by presenting membership card or ticket at the admission desk or window.

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*Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest’s only combined zoo and aquarium, promotes responsible stewardship of the world’s resources through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities. The zoo, a division of Metro Parks Tacoma, is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA).*

*The Museum of Glass is a premier contemporary non-profit art museum dedicated to glass and glassmaking in the west coast’s largest and most active museum glass studio. Opened in 2002, the Museum has established a reputation for hosting impactful and engaging artist residencies, organizing nationally traveling exhibitions, and creating unique programs for visitors while building a growing permanent collection chronicling the contemporary glass art movement. Museum of Glass provides an environment for artists and the public to ignite creativity, fuel discovery, and enrich their lives through glass and glassmaking.*

*Established in 1994 with the help of Dale Chihuly, Hilltop Artists is a 501(c)3 non-profit, tuition-free glass arts program that provides classes and individualized instruction to over 650 students, ages 12 to 20, each year. Through their programs, young people have an opportunity to learn the art of glassblowing, fused glass, and flame working. Hilltop Artists serves a diverse group of youth and is especially effective with young people who are searching for ways to connect and belong.*

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