



# Berman

JOEL BERMAN GLASS STUDIOS LTD

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## **A SPARKLING NEW GLASS 'JEWEL BOX' IN CHICAGO'S MERCHANDISE MART**

Joel Berman Glass Studios has successfully exhibited at the NeoCon World's Trade Fair for Interior Design in Chicago every year since 1995. As a reflection of his respect for the venerable Merchandise Mart, the Vancouver based glass artist and designer has decided to create a striking 'jewel box' of a permanent showroom in the building which will be unveiled at this year's NeoCon, June 10-12, 2002. A media launch will take place on June 11 2002 at 7.30am.

The focal point of the interior is a dramatic forty feet long three sided abstract modernist glass sculpture which acts almost as a tunnel inviting visitors to enter and experience the layered glass components in a direct way. "From an artistic point of view it's very tactile, all the glass is textured and all the textures speak to each other, so you want to get down on your hands and knees and feel the glass - it all works together" Berman suggests.

The sculpture is lit, in part, by a computerized LCD unit which can be programmed to create a variety of sensations by washing the translucent glass in dynamic colored light, appropriate in entertainment design such as nightclubs or restaurants. Opposite the glass sculpture is a wall of rotating tall, brightly colored, curving glass pieces which contribute a cacophony of random reflection and visual complexity.

To design the space, Berman turned to Tom Marquardt of Chicago firm Design Collaborative with whom he has had a long working relationship. True to the company's name Marquardt joined in a productive collaboration with Berman and Rodrigo Segovia, a designer in Berman's Vancouver studio.

Marquardt feels it is important to create an environment that is not only a sales tool in the conventional sense, but a more literal expression of the firm's abilities. "The challenge is to show an application of the great variety which Berman has, while maintaining a coherent design statement." Marquardt explains that the sculpture is the "one big gesture that holds the space and the rest of the pieces work off of it".