tools and materials he needs to make his art. This difference in attitude is evident in his work. While much studio glass, especially from the 1960s and 1970s, has a rough, homemade, even folk art quality, Patti's work of the same era shows an allegiance to an industrial design aesthetic in its crispness and elegance.

While Littleton, the acknowledged founder of studio glass, traveled extensively in Europe to research the history of glass and forged links with university and museum administrators in this country, Patti drew on his personal experiences. During his studies at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, he pursued a degree in industrial design, exploring prototype membranes either for the human body (where the membrane activated switches as a part of the body moved) or for housing. He developed a material that, once inflated, became rigid, then investigated novel means of pressurizing such a system. After college, he began a series of experiments, from casting ice to turning plastic straws into self-contained blowpipes (the material blown being the material of the straw itself). Given his exploratory nature, once he turned to glass he became interested in experiments combining the two classic methods of working with glass.

From ancient Egypt through the Middle Ages and into the 20th century, glass has been worked in two different ways: formed as a hollow shape around a core, which might be something as substantial as earth or as ephemeral as air, or formed as a flat, thin sheet, like the inlays on Pharaoh Tutankhamen's golden mask or the stained-glass windows of Chartres cathedral. These are the two great traditions of glass, represented in modern times by the light bulb and the skyscraper.

It has long been common to blow a glass cylinder and, by cutting it apart, create panes of window glass that give no obvious clue to their origin in a blown hollow; you might say that their flatness denies their origin. Patti, however, was perhaps the first to combine blown and flat traditions in glass when he formed a hollow object by introducing a bubble of air down through a stack of plate glass sheets that had been heated to a molten state. Patti says that he needed a way to get inside the stacked sheets of glass so that he could manipulate the interior: the bubble of air became his tool. The result was a melding of two great art traditions—the two-dimensional realm traditionally represented by painting and the three-dimensional realm of sculpture—into a single artwork.

Where Littleton's studio glass movement extended the ongoing evolution of the history of glass, simply moving the traditional glassblower from the floor of the factory to the artist's studio, Patti ruptured the evolutionary continuum by adopting a wholly different practice. He avoided, for example, any link to traditional glassblowing. Patti himself admits, "I am not a romantic. I wanted to break away from tradition. I'm not a glassblower." He adds, "Littleton invented the studio furnace; I eliminated it from the studio." His methods of working glass, which are concentrated and considered, run counter to the frenetic activity of the traditional glassblower, who must constantly move on the floor of the studio from the bench, to the furnace, to the glory hole (where the glass is reheated), all the while rotating the blowpipe so that the honey-like molten glass does not drip off onto the floor. Rejecting this approach, Patti developed a slower technical process that allowed him time for contemplation: "When you feel you've got to get up, don't get up; stay at the bench." Patti became a true original by staying put.

By the mid–1970s, Patti's work was attracting more attention within the art community, and in 1975 he lectured at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, where Dale Chihuly had founded a studio glass program. Both Patti and Chihuly are limited to the use of one eye because of injuries sustained early in their careers, but Patti notes that this constraint set

OPPOSITE **Tom Patti,** *Red Lumina with Concentric Disk* **(detail), 1992. H 4 1/4, W 4 13/16, D 3 13/16 in.**
COLLECTION OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO. PHOTO: GEORGE ERML

BELOW **Tom Patti,** *Genic Doran Divider, Sentinel,* **(1982–84). Polycarbonate plastic, marble. H 8 ft.**
COMMISSION FOR WORLD PLASTICS TECHNOLOGY CENTER, GENERAL ELECTRIC CO., PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS. NOW IN THE COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON. PHOTO: PAUL ROCHELEAU