

ELECTRIC WORD 8.02



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When architect Frank Gehry commissioned glassmaker Nikolas Weinstein to create a 2.5-ton chandelier for the new DG Bank Building in Berlin, they knew no one had built anything like it before. The plans called for a seascape of 36 massive glass panels, each composed of fused glass tubes, suspended from 600 steel cables.

To start, the San Francisco-based Weinstein (www.nikolas.net) designed a computer-controlled kiln to shape the glass pipes into panels and the panels into swooping arcs using soft-tipped metal rods that rise from the kiln floor (pictured). Next, he consulted a physicist on how to arrange the tubes of differing circumferences to melt into a strong honeycomb structure. And to solve a persistent cracking problem, Weinstein consulted with a designer of the windows on NASA space shuttles. The finished glass matrix, as Weinstein calls it, will be unveiled when the new DG Bank opens this spring.

— Rick Overton