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Project Proposal  
Textile Hanging  
Entrance Lobby  
Oregon Institute of Technology  
Student Union  
Klamath Falls, Oregon

The majority of my works are architectural in concept and scale. Commissioned pieces must respond to spaces where art work can enhance the activity of the building. Understanding the space, the activity, materials of construction, and lighting and air current problems is necessary before design work can commence.

The lobby of the student union is a transitional zone from the exterior to the interior of the complex. The space functions as the greeting space of the building, the most dramatic architectural space and the focal point of the Union, if not the campus.

The largest space that the work can occupy is essentially a pie-shaped wedge 35'x20'x20' (planview) and ranges in height from 22' in the northeast corner to 12' along the southwest edge. The construction materials are brick paved flooring, tinted glass in the skylight and gyp board on the balcony, wrapping the steel beams of the lightwell and all wall dividers. The skylight will let in southwest light throughout the year which will flood the space with natural sunlight. Incandescent 150 watt floodlamps mounted to the concrete pan of the skylight provide night illumination. A large free hanging fixture is scheduled to occupy the center of the lobby (see Electrical Plan Lower Level-Addition). Air currents will be created by three wall registers (see HVAC Plan Lower Level) and the double doors on the southwest entry.

The lobby is a transitional space, a passageway. The piece that occupies the volume should respond to that activity...constant movement. It is a non-contemplative space; people are rarely seated for long periods of time. Viewer involvement is momentary, yet possibly repeated daily. Because of constant traffic through the lobby, the work should make a more ethereal statement of space and mass rather than a singular opaque monolithic structure. The piece should change as the viewer moves to the different levels and areas of the room.

The volume appears to be well defined, a strong architectural statement, changing from the first to second floor. Apart from the brick flooring the building materials are neutral and non-textural. The different levels of the building change the volume of the space. The art work must have a strong definition of perimeters to exist equally with these architectural forms. The piece need not be formalistic, yet it cannot be amorphous or organically growing and flowing throughout the space.

The piece must be three dimensional; because the space is a strong volume, the work must be equally volumetric. The two balconies and stairways provide several views; the traffic in all directions throughout the lobby provide many more. The piece must be successful looking up in it, through it, and down into it.

The light from the skylight will be strong during the summer months. Even with tinted glass, ultra-violet rays will effect the longevity of colors and materials. Dacron, silk, metallic materials and bonded color are less effected by the sun than silk, rayon, nylon and applied color. No color can be "fast" or fade resistant when saturated by this much sun. The architectural plans call for tinted glass panels. Many panels are solarized and filter a certain percentage of ultra-violet waves. If these panels are used they will prolong the life of any textile piece. The light fixture hanging in the center of the lobby appears to be mainly decorative, a focus for the space. If the textile piece is to be a strong visual element of the lobby, it cannot compete with this fixture. If additional light is required to replace that lost by the removal of this fixture, direct spot lights would be more effective for the piece. The quality of light will be a strong influence in the lobby. The art work should not in anyway block the light; it should play with it and react to it, allowing the light to pass through, possibly using translucent or reflective materials to alter and redefine the light.

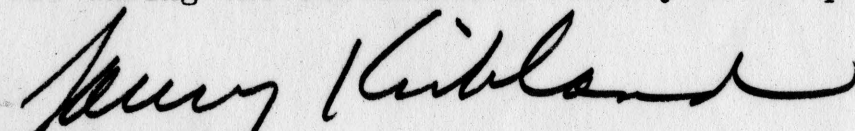
The three heating vents, if not diffused will encourage dirt build-up on the piece where the flow is directed. A good vent diffuser refocus the air currents away from the piece. The two entrance doors will be the major cause of air current in the space.

From the analysis of the space I feel that the work should be an airy atmospheric statement rather than a more traditional planer banner application. Banners would tend to block the natural light rather than react to it. The piece should be defined by definite perimeters; to contain itself and direct the focus inward rather than toward the corridors and walls of the lobby. The perimeters should echo the wedge shaped volume; being triangular in plan view and ascending toward the the peak of the skylight at the northeast corner. Because the lobby is a large space, and the construction of the piece is airy, the artwork must be quite large to be a statement of any consequence in the space. Technically it is simpler to construct and install several modular pieces rather than one large structure. If the modular unit is (in plan view) an equilateral triangle, four of them, installed together will form a larger triangle, echoing the space while allowing for installation at varying heights, relative to the angle of the roof and skylight.

The enclosed color reproductions show two examples of constructions that would be appropriate for the commission. Atmosphere is a net with long fiber strands attached at each cross point. The piece allows for light to pass through and will move slightly with air motion. Colored linen or dacron threads in combination with stainless steel thread would provide color and reflective change throughout the piece. The "air pocket" created by the hanging network would be the focus from the upper balcony, while the "rain" would be from the lobby floor. However, because the piece is transparent, the entire piece would be seen from any one point, Looking through the many levels.

A more massive piece could be created in similar triangular modules of the Changer piece. These pieces are created by multiple layers of ribbon, hung from a structure. Each ribbon is twisted and attached at the bottom to a secondary support. The interaction caused by the viewer moving by the piece, and a regular intervals of space and twisted ribbons results in a moire effect. I have been working with multiple color structure rather than the monochromatic piece in the example. In a structure of this size, changing color will add another dimension to the piece.

Both of these constructions use the repeated use of space and mass intervals on a constant grid as the primary design element. They allow for passage of light and demand viewer involvement to benefit from the work. Each provides the needed focus for the lobby of the union and, hopefully, enhances the quality of life of those who interact with it. I estimate that either piece would be close to the original budget figures for the flat wall piece except for installation. I assume that any scaffolding or special ladders would be provided by OIT during the installation if they are required.

  
Larry Kirkland  
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