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Public art projects must make connections among people, places and art, rather than distance themselves, in order to be accepted by the people who will live with them. Public art projects must move away from the notion of art as a detached entity and embody instead the idea of integrating art into the pattern of everyday life, as it was in the public places of the past. For instance, Michelangelo's *David*, in the City Hall square of Florence, gave Florentines of the time a self-image around which to rally against the external giants who threatened them.

Bringing about this connectedness is an ongoing process. The sometimes conflicting interests of architects, artists, users, owners, contractors and the media must be diplomatically negotiated, and possibilities must be created within the context of limitations. The role of an arts coordinator is to make this happen.

The University of Oregon places great emphasis on enabling users to participate in the planning and design of campus projects; this emphasis was embraced by the architects for the science complex and applied to the art selection process. The architects and future users of the complex had been meeting for more than a year when I was appointed the project's Visual Arts Coordinator in spring, 1986. Together they had developed a number of design goals for the overall project, among them the following, which were included in the "Invitation to Artists":

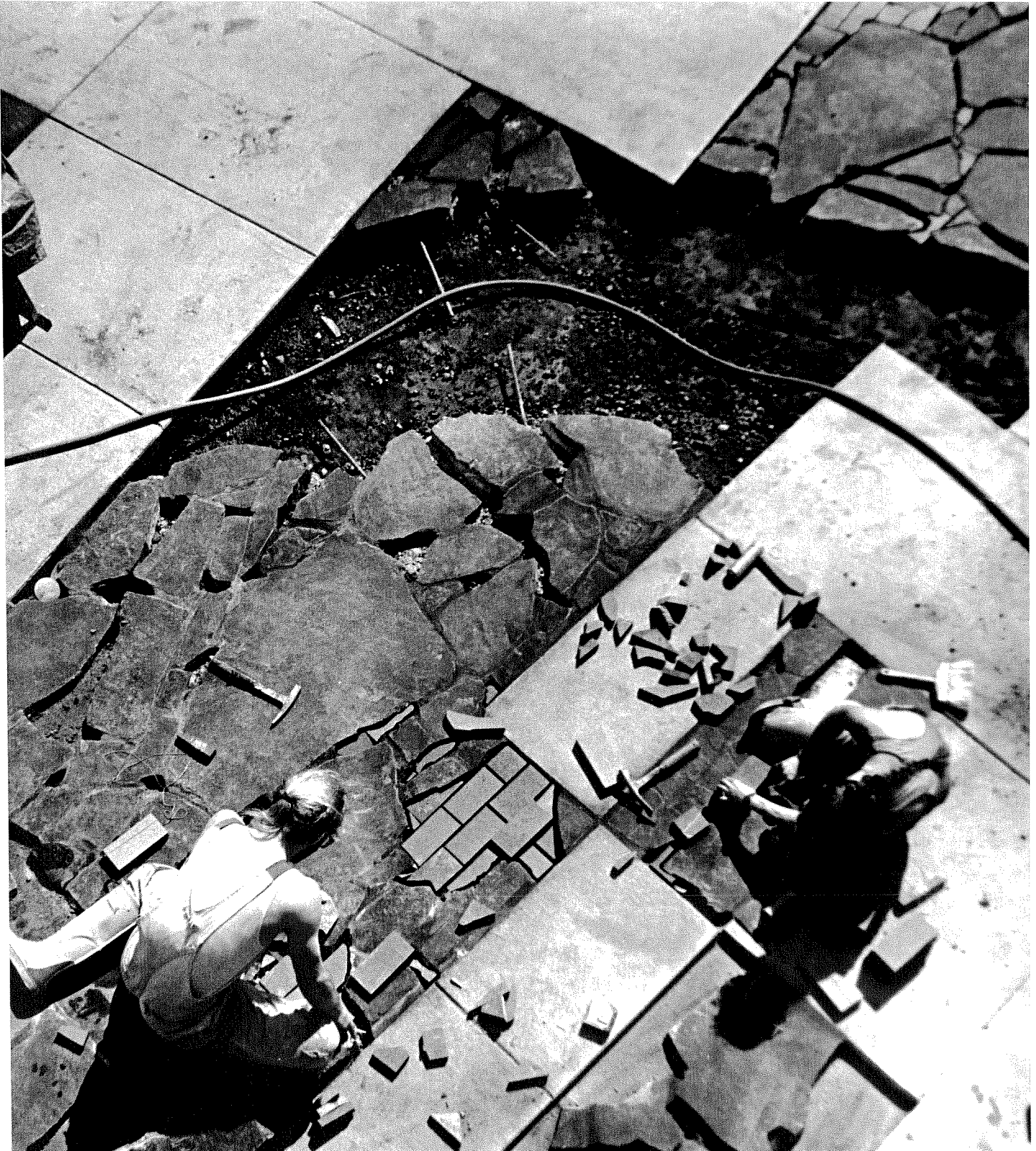
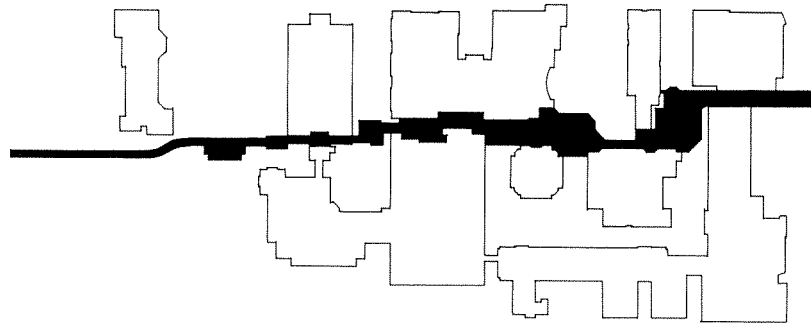
- Make outdoor spaces positive places, not spaces left over after the buildings are put up.
- Make outdoor rooms that accommodate a variety of different activities, from one person reading a book to many people gathering for a major science fair or commencement.
- Link new laboratory space to support intra- and interdisciplinary work.
- Provide covered connections among buildings where practical.
- Make a wide variety of places to support different activities and users.
- Emphasize places that take advantage of the sun when it is out.
- Make places that work in the rain, celebrate water and work as winter outdoor spaces.
- Provide a variety of paths through the site.

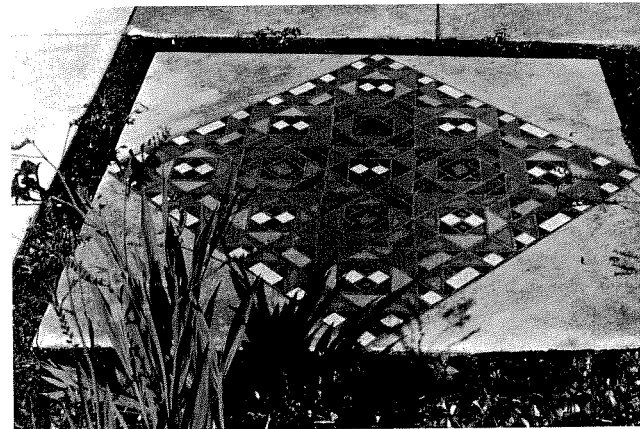
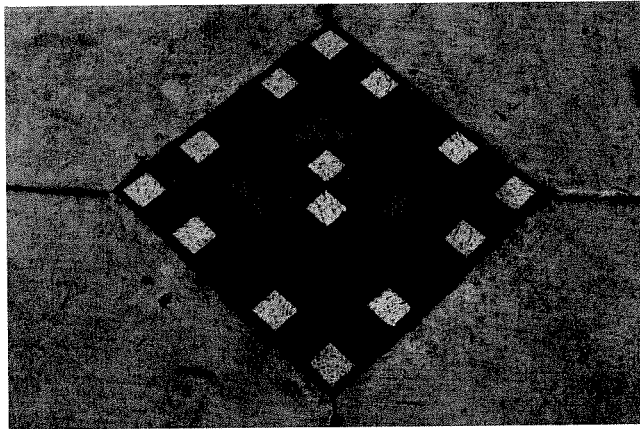
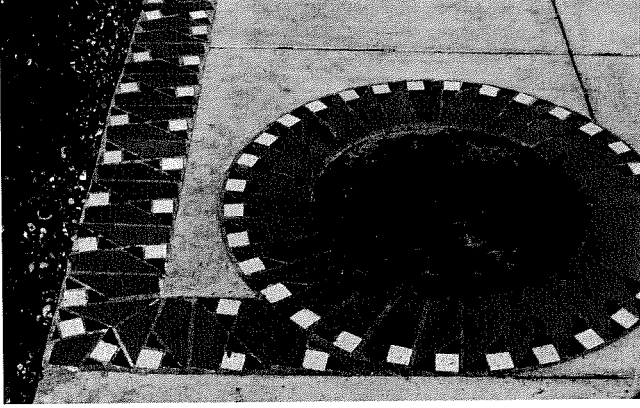
People, Place and Public Art

Lotte Streisinger



Science Walk is a "main street" connecting the old and new buildings of the science complex. Below, workers install Scott Wylie's masonry designs. Drawing courtesy Moore Ruble Yudell. Photo courtesy *Oregon Daily Emerald*.





Detail of Scott Wylie's ornamentation for Science Walk.

Photos courtesy Scott Wylie.

One of the first steps in establishing the science complex art program was convening an Art Selection Committee, which included the architects, two visual artists, an art historian, three people from user groups and representatives of the State System of Higher Education, the Oregon Arts Commission and the University administration. As Visual Arts coordinator, I served as the non-voting chair.

This was the briefing I gave committee members before the first meeting:

Public buildings provide an opportunity and, indeed, create a need for works of art and craft. In the past it was taken for granted that art and architecture complement each other. Modern architecture, however, has tended to deny that notion, with the result that we have many streets and workplaces where there is nothing to look at, nothing to identify with and nothing to exercise the imagination.

But attitudes are changing again and today, here in Eugene, we have the chance to become involved in a project with a unique juxtaposition of factors: a state that mandates one percent of the construction costs of public projects for art, a consequently substantial budget for art and a set of architects who are very interested in working with artists and artisans.

I met with the principal architects for the project several times and we formulated preliminary goals for building-integrated or site-specific art works. These goals, after discussion, modification and approval by the Art Selection Committee, were also included in the prospectus.

We sent the prospectus to artists around the country and asked them to submit slides of their previous work and short proposals that described the concept of a project for the science

complex. The Committee reviewed the 225 entries and selected 25 semi-finalists, each of whom was paid a professional fee to prepare a model. The semi-finalists' models were presented in a public exhibition (which also provided, for many people, their first glimpse of the new science facilities). The Committee met again and chose seven finalists.

Design Development and Execution

The integration of art work and architecture depends on coordination with the construction schedule, which can be affected by factors like the bidding process, labor disputes, or the weather. Artists must be kept apprised of changes in the schedule, design and budget. There can be a very long lag time between the selection of the artist and the installation of the work. (Art-mason Scott Wylie spent more than four years working with the landscape designers in installing his ornamentation for Science Walk.)

During the long period between selection and completion, many things can change. For instance, glass artist Jane Marquis had proposed stained glass windows for a new science

library reading room, which was part of the original plan. But the reading room was later eliminated for budget reasons. In consultation with the campus planning office we suggested that she shift her site to the glass window walls surrounding the existing library atrium. For each of the 44 windows she created stained glass panels with quotations, submitted by campus scientists and others, that comprise an artist's reflections on science.

Other art sites were changed in response to user input. Upon being selected as a semi-finalist, glass artist Ed Carpenter prepared a model of windows incorporating glass marbles and proposed it for the colloquium room of the computer and information science building. When the computer scientists saw this proposal at the exhibition of the models, they were adamantly opposed to it; they wanted nothing like rows of marbles that reminded them in any way of the computer

screens at which they looked all day. When they gazed out their windows, they said, they wanted to see sky, clouds and trees.

After many discussions with the architects, we assigned the colloquium room to Ken VonRoenn. He provided elegant, minimal glass: tall, narrow, bevelled window strips with prisms and no color. The doors leading into the room are ornamented in the same way, giving a quiet, somewhat old-time quality to a building dealing with a new science.

Carpenter was assigned a new site, a small sunny gazebo room on the top floor of the biology building. This is a visually elaborate building with lots of architectural excitement. Carpenter had difficulty coming up with a glass design for it; he told me it was because there is already so much to look at there. I suggested he think of his work as adding another layer of visual richness. He found that helpful and arrived with softly abstract stained glass pan-



The science library atrium's stained glass windows, by Jane Marquis, incorporate quotes submitted by science faculty. Photos courtesy Jane Marquis.

els all around the room, changing with the light.

In some cases the artwork on the buildings refers to the kind of work the scientists do within. Most obviously, Kent Bloomer's *Physics Wall*, in the four-story atrium of Willamette Hall, alludes to the different kinds of research that takes place on the various levels of the building, with molecular physics on the ground floor and astrophysics at the top. Bloomer had seen an architectural drawing of this atrium in the prospectus. He recognized it as a potential site for his work, made his proposal accordingly and then, when he had been selected, persuaded the architect to modify the columns to accommodate his piece.

Bloomer also designed the series of lanterns that begins in the atrium and continues outside along Science Walk, emphasizing the indoor/outdoor nature of the atrium. These lanterns are reminiscent of older lighting fixtures on campus — appropriately so because, for the exterior of the new science buildings, the architects have taken their inspiration from older buildings elsewhere on the campus.

Willamette Hall, the physics department building, proclaims itself on the outside as such, with Wayne Chabre's gargoyle portraits of Marie Curie, Sir Isaac Newton, James Clerk Maxwell (and his Demon) and Albert Einstein. Likewise, the Computer Science building proclaims its identity and historical roots with

gargoyles of Alan Turing and John Von Neumann. The new Museum of Natural History features gargoyles of animals (salmon, bear and raven, with Pacific Northwest Native American emblems for the same) as does the biology building (fruit fly and zebra fish). Many of these gargoyles face 13th Avenue, the main campus thoroughfare, making it a "Street of Faces." In each case, the images were selected in discussions among the artist and users of the buildings.

The computer scientists, incidentally, also became involved in the placement of "their" two portraits. Various building users thought the gargoyles should be hung in other locations than those indicated on the architects'

plans. The artist was at hand, as well as the construction supervisor, the workers and a raised platform. I suggested that we try the locations indicated by the architects, as it is hard to know what things will look like until you can see them. We did, and there they remain, to the general satisfaction of all.

Users also became involved in Alice Wingwall's fountain in the geology courtyard. Several geologists contributed rocks, which direct water's flow in various ways.

Making Places with Public Art

The history of public art in the U.S. has not always been one of public acceptance: Richard Serra's controversial *Tilted Arc*

Evaluating the Art Projects

The Art Selection Committee (working with the arts coordinator and architects) established a series of goals for the building-integrated or site-specific art works that would accompany the science complex. These goals were published in the prospectus circulated to artists and guided the selection process. They can also be used to evaluate what the art projects add to the science complex.

• **Enrich, ornament and embellish the built environment.** Science Walk's brick patterning provides the enriching ornament we sought. Among the ideas we listed in the prospectus were tiles, friezes, paving patterns; brick, brick patterning, glazed brick; column

capitals in concrete, stone, metal; cornices, finials, moldings; art glass; and gargoyles.

• **Offer unexpected insights into science, creativity and the power of thought.** Jane Marquis' stained glass windows, which incorporate familiar quotes from science literature, accomplish this. One suggestion we made was for "A Circle of Elders." At least one proposal to that effect, for carved stones, made it to the semi-finals.

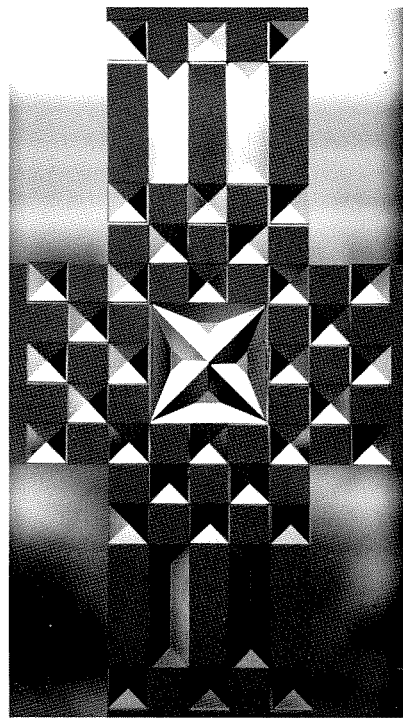
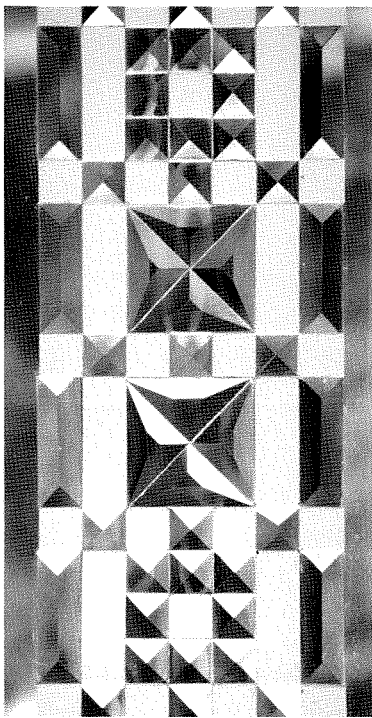
• **Offer unexpected insight into natural phenomena (such as sun, wind, rain, gravity, mold, lichen, sound, light, motion, pattern, symmetry and time).** Our suggestions included a rain fountain, wind sculptures, or light shows. In Alice Wingwall's fountain, water creates different sounds as it tumbles over two cascades.

• **Contribute to campus history and myth.** The quotes in the stained glass windows are a historic record of sorts, and the gargoyles (whose patina makes them look aged already) will create new campus myths.

• **Endow useful objects with a special quality.** We proposed artists work with signage, maps, kiosks, downspouts, lamps, benches, or drinking fountains. Kent Bloomer responded with ornamented lanterns.

• **Provide objects that add delight, humor and beauty to everyday life regardless of their utility.** The gargoyles, which are purely ornamental, contribute this spirit.

— Lotte Streisinger



Glass by Ken VonRoenn.

Top photos by Timothy Hursley.

Bottom photo courtesy Ken VonRoenn.



lished and is available in department offices.

Involving the people who will encounter the art on an everyday basis with the selection and creation of the art projects can help. The Art Selection Committee involved users in decisions about what projects were chosen and where they would be located. Some of the artists involved users, too: Geologists brought rocks for “their” fountain and other campus users contributed favorite quotations for the stained glass in the science library atrium.

It is not unusual to see signs of how the art has been received: A biology department Christmas party featured a Santa Claus gargoyle with his tongue sticking out as a lab door decoration — a fond reference to the Einstein gargoyle. The computer scientists have included “their” gargoyles — Turin and Von Neumann — among the photographs of faculty and staff in the building’s lobby. The rim of the fountain is a favorite place to sit on a sunny day. Clearly, the public art projects at the science complex are well-integrated, both with the architecture and in the consciousness of the people who use it.

sculpture in New York and Robert Arneson’s *Portrait Bust of Mayor Moscone* in San Francisco are well-known examples of public art that was ultimately rejected. We are also familiar with the phenomenon of “plop art” — pieces, often by famous artists, that are “plopped” onto a site near a new construction, more or less as an afterthought. The best that can usually be expected is that the pub-

lic will walk around such art and ignore it.

One way to promote acceptance of art in public places is to have a lot of it; in this way all the attention is not focused on one piece and there is something for everyone to like or even not to like. The Einstein gargoyle, which portrays him with his tongue sticking out (as he posed for a famous photo), caused a little furor but there are eleven other gargoyles to contemplate.

Another important path towards public acceptance and even love of public art projects is to make information about them available. We opened up the artist selection process by exhibiting the semi-finalists’ models. We prepared news releases, invited television stations to the hoisting of the first gargoyle and have given a number of tours and a lecture. A brochure offering a self-guided tour of the art projects has been pub-