

Client: GSA, Richard Bolling Federal Building / A+D Firm: Helix Architecture + Design / Glazier: A2MG

Project Challenge: The Richard Bolling Federal Building (RBFB) is in its fourth and final phase of extensive, award-winning renovations, led by Kansas City-based Helix Architecture. Helix has implemented a creative focus to modernize the 1.2 million square-foot building with innovative aesthetic design and improved working conditions. The firm’s collaborative spirit was a perfect match to that of renowned local artist Anne Lindberg, who was commissioned to bring color and movement to the central public space of the RBFB. Her vision was to create a four-storey custom art glass installation.



Richard Bolling Federal Building by Helix Architecture / Photographer: ©Mike Sinclair

To integrate fine art with structural architecture, Skyline Design had to bring to life Lindberg’s “Curtain Wall” – a bright, multicolored feature wall that runs the entire length and height of the escalators. “Curtain Wall” would realize the artist’s vision and the architectural potential of the space, but it would be a very exacting process, especially at such a grand scale. Skyline’s Advanced Screening Technology (AST™) and durable Vitracolor® technique was the ideal process to execute the artist’s intent.

Skyline’s Solution

In the large 60 x 60 feet space, also occupied by a 1960s escalator, metal ribs were installed so the glass wall system could work architecturally within pre-existing plaster walls. On each of the unique 270 glass panels installed into that ribbing, Skyline textured lined patterns using our AST digital print process. On the back side, a brilliant design of chromatic vertical stripes varies in width and opacity. In addition, more than half of the panels are eco-etched on the front surface with Lindberg’s own custom linear pattern that compliments the graphic image on the back surface of the glass.

A sense of rhythm is created as one moves from floor to floor, and “Curtain Wall” pumps color and exuberance into the core of the RFBF, enlivening the experience for government employees and visitors.



Process

In its final leg of renovation, the RFBF was given special attention by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) – an effort for federal buildings to incorporate fine art and preserve the historic fabric – special funds were allocated to this project. Lindberg was selected through a design submittal process and shortlisted by a panel that included representatives from the art profession, local community, GSA, a tenant agency, and Helix.



Photographer: ©Mike Sinclair



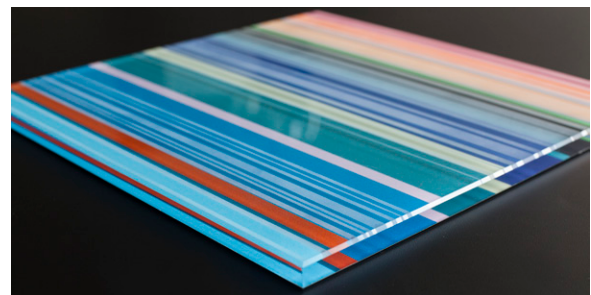
Photographer: ©Kelsey Lindsey



Once chosen, Lindberg worked within the framework designs and glass specifications provided by the architect. She created a dual layer image, ultimately establishing a composition of color, line width, and etching that changes the sense of speed and movement of the space.

Each panel of glass has its own identity. The work consists of five rows of glass, each including a different set of colors that were specified in Adobe Photoshop. Every stripe printed was created as a vector rectangle with a unique color. In order to perfectly execute Lindberg's colors and dimensions, Skyline, Helix and the artist worked with a spreadsheet of some 360 detailed image files.

Sixty percent of the panels are dual layer, with first surface Eco-etch® and second surface AST bold colored stripes. The other forty percent of the panels are solely composed of AST backside colored stripes, adding a glossy finish to the installation. Skyline's opaque back-paint enhances the second side of all of the panels; it also ensures the longevity of the design and ease of cleaning for this public space.



Photographer: ©Kelsey Lindsey



Photographer: ©Mike Sinclair

Result:

The GSA's ARRA stimulus did more than just fund Lindberg's project. It furthered the effort to bring architecturally integrated art into our federal buildings, creating beauty in public sector spaces.

The RFBF was awarded a 2013 American Institute of Architects Kansas City Allied Arts and Craftsmanship Merit Award, and the GSA are delighted that the artwork has rejuvenated the heart of the building. The client has fully embraced the concepts of the project and is pleased with the addition of a vibrant splash of color into the interior escalator core of this federal office building.

Skyline so enjoyed working with Anne Lindberg that she is now a featured artist in the Digital Glass Portfolio; four of her colorful "Pulse" designs are currently available.