

**title*****Untitled Murals*****artist****Richard Haas***Untitled 2, detail***Location**

Agronomy Building, First and Second Floor

**Material**

Oil and Acrylic on Canvas

**Size [each]**

7.5 x 12.5 feet

**Date**

1986

**About the Works of Art**

These indoor murals are located at the ends of long hallways in the Agronomy Building. As the viewer approaches these works, they appear to be windows overlooking the Iowa landscape. The method that Richard Haas used to achieve this effect is called *trompe l'oeil*. This is a French term meaning deception of the eye. The term is applied to a painting style that is so photographically realistic that it may trick the viewer into thinking the scene is real instead of painted. The illusion of the Agronomy Murals is created through the artist's incorporation of the images of the surrounding floor tiles, window moldings, and architectural pillars into the paintings. Of course the illusion is also enhanced by the artist's knowledge and use of perspective, natural color, and atmospheric effect.

The first floor mural displays a view of the rolling Iowa landscape on a sunny mid-summer day. The scenery is represented as if the viewer were looking out a ground floor window. The view includes many characteristic elements of the Iowa countryside such as fields of crops, farm buildings, and livestock. Included in the detail of the painting are the peaks of several of Iowa State's buildings.

The view seen in the second floor mural conveys quite a different effect from the painting a floor below. The painted scene presents the Iowa countryside from a bird's-eye view. This landscape shows the farms and fields broken into patterns of different colored patches. One of the most striking features of the painting is the image of the thunderstorm being led across the plains by a swirling tornado or possibly a Cyclone.

University Museums - Art on Campus Program

Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa

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## Artist's Comments

*The views [of the Agronomy Murals] showed the agricultural and weather aspects of the American heartland, i.e., Iowa. The first view showed the fields and crops of the rolling hills Iowa farmland. The second took one up to the stratosphere as seen when one flies at 40,000 feet or more. Here the landscape is reduced to square miles of farms and irrigated fields and pasturage and, of course, storms can be seen as moving events across the landscape.*

*I've always seen the outdoor and indoor murals, though different, as closely related. Actually, historical precedents for interior architectural illusionism are far greater, more diverse, and refined. My interior works are extremely different from the exteriors and the intentions and details more elaborate.*

## Additional Author Information

Cable, Carol. "Richard Haas: Artist of Architectural Illusion." *Architecture Series: Bibliography*, 1983: 1018.

Freeman, A. "Mural Seemingly in the Third Dimension: Recent Works of the Remarkable Richard Haas." *Architecture*, April 1985: 72-9.

Haas, Richard. *Richard Haas: An Architecture of Illusion*. Rizzoli Int., New York. 1981.



## About the Art on Campus Collection

Iowa State University is home to one of the largest campus public art programs in the United States. Over 2000 works of public art, including selection by significant regional, national, and international artists, are located across campus in buildings, courtyards, open spaces, and offices. In 1982, the University Museums created the Art on Campus Program that codifies acquisition, education, and care and conservation of the campus public art collection.

The foundations of the contemporary Art on Campus Program began during the Depression in the 1930s when Iowa State College's President Hughes envisioned that, "The arts would enrich and provide substantial intellectual exploration into our college curricula." In 1978, Iowa passed the Iowa Art in State Buildings legislation, which requires .5 percent of new construction or remodeling funds to be used to acquire public art. Since 1978, Iowa State has completed Art in State Building projects, commissioned or acquired public works of art, and involved faculty, students, and staff in the commissioning and acquisition processes.

## Agronomy Building

### Murals

Art on Campus accession number U86.447ab

Additional information on public art, other Art on Campus information sheets, and Art on Campus maps are available at the University Museums office, 290 Scheman Building, (515) 294-3342, or visit us online at [www.museums.iastate.edu](http://www.museums.iastate.edu)

**This information sheet is intended to be used in addition to viewing the Art on Campus Collection. At no time should this sheet be used as a substitute for experiencing the art in person.**

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IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

# Art on Campus Poetry Collection

## Commission

Something to trick the eye  
at the end of the hallway  
or bright for a corner, maybe  
a shade between tangerine and peach;  
anything blue for an out-of-the-way place  
or a tactile centerpiece of polished stone  
to make everyone's hand flutter  
with a need to land there.

Say something to the body  
which has forgotten to listen  
and hear daily the gray  
droning of the brain;  
interrupt the brain's numb monotone  
with the lonely ache of a lost dialogue.  
Shout from the tops of buildings;  
argue forever in the quiet courtyards;  
whisper subliminal code from hooks  
and pedestals in dusty rooms  
in the true language.

### Neal Bowers

Ames, Iowa

Commissioned in 1992 by University Museums with inspiration from the murals by  
Richard Haas