

Student Health Center

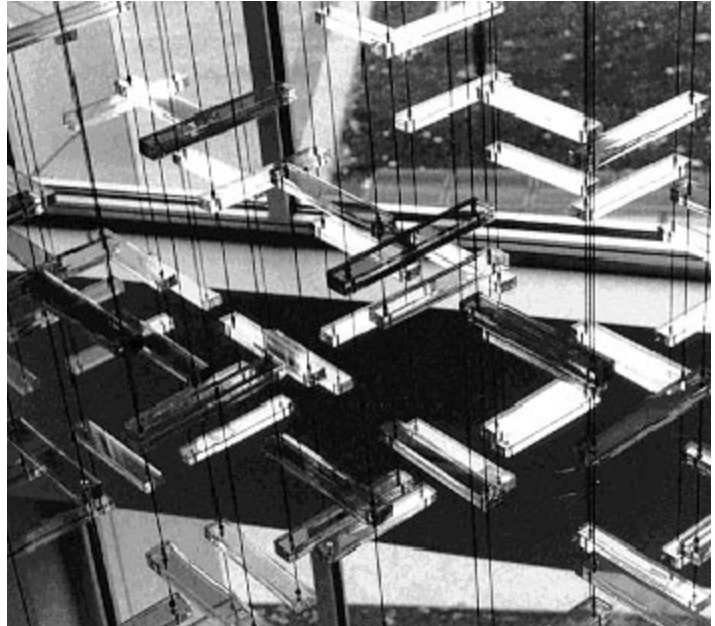
title

Light River

artist

Ray King

Location:
Student Health Center
Material:
**stainless steel cables and
dichroic laminated glass**
Size:
32' X 4' X 6'
Date:
1997
Made possible by:
***Iowa Art in State
Buildings Program**
Collection:
**Art on Campus Collection,
University Museums,
Iowa State University**



Light River, detail

About the Sculpture

Initially trained in stained glass, Philadelphia artist Ray King has been designing, creating, and installing site-specific sculptures throughout the United States since the 1970s. Using glass and metal as his primary media, King's work deals with geometry, architecture, color, and especially light. His *Light Projecting Helices*, a 140-foot long, light-activated sculpture created from stainless steel cable and dichroic and holographic laminated glass, was installed in the Jacobson Athletic Building in February 1997. King's second public art project at Iowa State is *Light River*, installed in August 1997 in the entrance lobby of the Student Health Center. Like *Light Projecting Helices*, *Light River* was created using dichroic glass bars, which reflect one color but transmit another, making the colors change with the shifting sunlight throughout the day. King enjoys the fluctuations in color, pattern, and texture created by his work, saying, "I'm really in favor of 'live' sculpture where the pieces breathe and change." The 441 glass bars that make up *Light River* hang from the 30-foot tall ceiling on thin stainless steel cables, projecting kaleidoscopic colors onto the walls and floor. *Light River* can be viewed during regular business hours at the Student Health Center.

**University Museums/Art on Campus Program
Iowa State University Ames, Iowa**

Artist's Comments

Light River is a light activated sculpture composed of suspended 1/16-inch stainless steel cables with dichroic glass bars connected at intervals along the cables. Dichroic is a definition for a thin-film coating that has the thickness of one-half of a wavelength of light -- thus it reflects one color and transmits its complimentary color. The overall form of the glass sculpture tapers to link to the geometry of the entry space and to expose the dichroic glass bars to the sunlight from the three south facing windows. The sunlight will trigger an explosion of reflected colored patterns up and onto the complex geometry of the landing and walls to the north as well as project colored patterns onto the floor and walls in its vicinity.

The 1/16-inch cables are hung in a 6 X 6 inch grid suspended from the ceiling close to the three southern windows. The glass bars are made of three laminated layers of glass, with a range of four (magenta, blue, yellow, and cyan) different dichroic colors. These colors will change with the angle of light as well as the mix of projecting and reflecting light. Although there are four dichroic colors, each color will always appear different as one views the sculpture. This is because the view from a person's eyes will be at a slightly different angle for each glass element.

The piece measures approximately 32 feet long X 4 feet high X 6 feet wide and consists of 272 cable sections that contain 441 dichroic glass bars 10 X 1 1/2 inches.

This is a work of art that comes alive in the sunlight and will also become animated with electric lights at night. Light has always represented health, goodness, and purity. These colors are created from pure (non-pigmented) light. It is my true hope that this project will add to the healing properties of the Student Health Center.

Artist's Statement

"This sculpture combines light and the changing views of its spatial geometry to engage the viewer in an experience of natural light, color and pattern. *Light River* depicts the independent and connected linkage of each of us as we move through time and space. Light has always been symbolic with healing and giving and it is my intention that the sculpture will enhance the Health Center, breathing with the movement of the sun."

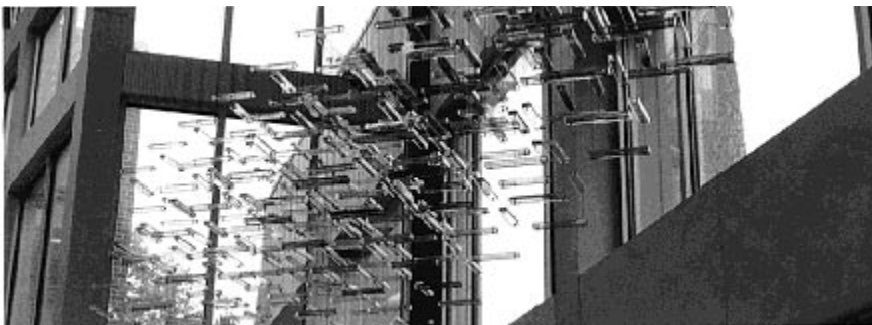
Ray King
September 1997

About the Artist

Ray King was born on July 4, 1950. He began blowing glass in 1970, and was awarded a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation fellowship to study at Burleighfield House in England in 1975. He has worked in the Corning Museum of Glass in Corning, New York, and at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, England. Ray has been exhibiting work since the mid-1970s and has been the recipient of several fellowships and awards. King also created the public art for Iowa State University's Jacobson Athletic Building. Ray currently lives and works in Philadelphia. Additional biographical information is available at the University Museums office.

Selected Commissions

Avenue of the Arts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in process
University of Wisconsin, River Falls, Wisconsin, 1996
Market Street Wharf, Bristol, Pennsylvania, 1995
Rowan College, Glassboro, New Jersey, 1994
Austin Community College, Austin, Minnesota, 1993
Oregon Department of Transportation, Salem, Oregon, 1990
The Rainbow Room, Rockefeller Center, New York City, 1987
University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Alaska, 1985
Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1982



Light River

LIGHT RIVER

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Additional information about *Light River*, other Art on Campus information sheets, and Art on Campus maps are available at the University Museums office, 290 Scheman Building (2nd Floor), 515/294-3342, or visit us online at <http://www.museums.iastate.edu/>

*The Iowa Art in State Buildings Program was enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa (Chapter 304A, Code 1979. Sections 8-14) to provide for the inclusion of fine arts projects in state building construction projects in cooperation with the Iowa Arts Council. At Iowa State University, the Art in State Buildings Program is administered by University Museums.

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

University Museums Art on Campus Program

What is public art?

This contemporary term represents ancient to contemporary objects, landscapes, and architecture located in places accessible to the public. The Pyramids, the Eiffel Tower, the St. Louis Arch, the Statue of Liberty, and the ISU Campanile are examples of architectural public art. The White House's Rose Garden, New York City's Central Park, ISU's Central Campus, and ISU's new Rieman Gardens are examples of public art as landscape. *Lady Liberty* on the Capitol Dome in Washington DC, the *Umbrella* in Des Moines, and *Left-Sided Angel* at Parks Library are examples of aesthetic objects as public art.

Public art:

- defines a specific and unique place
- expresses diverse qualities, beliefs and values of various cultures and artists
- is physically and intellectually accessible
- serves as a vehicle for inspiring and understanding change as presented in our contemporary society

What is Art on Campus?

Iowa State's Art on Campus Collection (public art collection) spans over a century, beginning with the design of Central Campus by Adonijah Welch, Iowa State's first president. Through the years Iowa State has commissioned, purchased, and received gifts of art that form the Art on Campus Collection. The traditional public art program began in the 1930s. At the height of the Depression, ISC President Raymond Hughes envisioned that the "arts would enrich and provide substantial intellectual exploration into our college curricula." Hughes invited Grant Wood to create the Library's agricultural murals that speak to the founding of Iowa and Iowa State College and Model Farm. Hughes then offered Christian Petersen a one-semester sculpture residency to create the fountain and bas reliefs at the Dairy Industry Building. In 1955, 21 years later, Petersen retired having created 12 major sculptures for the campus, including the *Fountain of the Four Seasons*, *The Gentle Doctor*, the *Wedding Ring*, and *Conversations*.

There were lean years for public art at Iowa State and, indeed, the country, from 1955 to 1978. However, following the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts and Art in Public Places programs, public art gained nation-wide momentum. In 1978 Iowa passed the Iowa Art in State Buildings legislation, which today allows for the acquisition of public works of art for the campus. Private and class gifts also continue to be used for public art acquisition.

What is the Art in State Buildings Program?

The Art in State Buildings legislation requires that one-half of one percent of new construction funds be used to acquire public art. Since 1978, Iowa State has completed more than 27 Art in State Buildings projects, commissioned or acquired more than 135 works of public art, and involved more than 300 faculty, students and staff in the commissioning process. University Museums administers the Art on Campus Program and the Art in State Buildings Program for Iowa State University. Today there are over 200 major works of public art in the University's Art on Campus Collection. These works of public art are located across campus in buildings, courtyards, open spaces, and offices.