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Re Site Specific Environmental Art for MRCOG Building Project

LIVING MURAL

Design Philosophy and Concept...

Living Mural is artwork which grows, blooms and greens over time. This living wall art is a *living mural* with changing and growing plant materials. Using hydroponics, this *Living Mural* is designed specifically this space, using the existing architecture to determine the exact design, form, lighting and plant materials. The element of water is used not only for the pleasant light sound of rain it creates when dropping from each panel into the water reservoir, but also improve the air quality in the space with moisture, greenery and elevated oxygen.

Living Murals are intended as means of integrating landscape and the associated psychological and educational benefits of nature into buildings and not as high maintenance art. It is used to help question the interior and exterior design and use. Plants are grown *vertically*, without soil, experiencing greenery on the different very plane, with a different reality.

In effect *Living Murals* becomes a homage and a commentary on the act of interpreting landscape. A "plain nature" painting of the internal landscape. Also referenced is Mondrian's influence on Modernist Landscape Architecture where the landscape is demarcated by horizontal and vertical divisions of hardscape, water, and plant material.

The materials for the construction of the frame would be chosen based on the site, it's architecture and style. Wood, metals, faux finishes, etc. can be used for the structural elements. The benefits of vegetation include improvement on heating cooling costs within the building as well as psychological and health improvements.

The Benefits of Vegetation

Numerous benefits of nature have been explored by landscape architecture and environmental psychology including the provision of privacy, mental stimulation, sensory stimulation and support of developmental activities that foster divergent and exploratory thinking. (Heseltine, 1987; Jansson, 1984; Kirkby, 1989; Miller, 1972; Moore, 1986, 1989; Nabhan & Trimble, 1994; Senda, 1992; Strinse & Moore, 1989; Taylor, Wiley, Kuo, & Sullivan, 1998; Tranick & Evans, 1995 as cited in Taylor et al., 2001)

The idea that nature in the surroundings is good is somewhat of a duh hypothesis. While there are numerous other reasons for creating a landscape with minimal natural features including budget, ease of maintenance, accessibility, and water conservation it would be hard to argue that people do not benefit from the presence of natural features. The question that is left unanswered by the literature is exactly what in a window scene is responsible for the positive health outcomes seen in many studies and how can landscape be designed to optimize these effects.

Knowledge and hence optimal usage of plant material should result in minimized water usage, efficient maintenance, and lowered installation and replacement costs without compromising the benefits of having

natural surroundings. The integration of a Living Mural into any interior setting would present the opportunity to further question design and use of interior and exterior space.

Design Details...

Hydroponics

These methods often use the horticultural practice of hydroponics, which substitutes liquid balanced nutrient solution for soil, thus providing plants with all food and water requirements without the weight and erosion issues presented with soil substrates.

Structural Materials

PVC pond liner to protect the wall	Reservoir structure
PVC pipe	cooler padding
vinyl tubing	wall mounts
pumps for each panel	seed starter to speed sprouting time
air stone and pump to deal with oxygenation	seed varieties
lighting	wood
wall mounts for lighting and green panels	ph balancer
plumbing to water source	timers
floaters to protect water level from being too low, or too high	

Entrance into the Building

The entrance into MRCOG with the view of the *Living Mural* creates an atmosphere which encourages re-seeing of the landscape while improving health in this space.

Wall Design, Plant Materials & Water

Artistically- the *Living Mural* wall evokes feelings of movement, change, time, and earth elements. The materials of structure relate to water, sky, earth, architecture and many of the southwest qualities that bring people here. The shape of the greening mural allows for light play with shadows, and is shaped to be abstractions of many elements. The dimensions and shapes of the piece will be determined exactly based on the wall, it's strength, water weight, and other site features.

The plant materials used for *Living Mural*, will be based on the light quality as well as working with colors, scents, scales and shapes within the space. Ground covers include creeping bent grass, perennial grasses, wild flowers, clover, and other ground covers. The plants have different growth rates as well as different life stages. Each panel can be removed and reseeded as needed without affecting the entire piece. The panels re-seeding will be determined in part by the plant materials chosen.

The light from the artificial lights as well as any natural light will allow the piece to grow within the space.

Artistically, the sound of the water hitting the reservoir is a sound many people love- as clearly shown by the sale of fountains. Also, the sight of the water falling through these pieces is to be used for plant growth and allows people to see the processes of the landscape. The sight of changing greenery throughout weeks and months is a stunning experience for all those who will use or see the space.