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SKY HIGH DESIGN

Architects take decorative glass to new levels in large-scale façade applications

By Katy Devlin

The outer envelope of a building can be an architect's canvas, where they express themselves and their designs to the outside world. Increasingly, architects are turning to decorative glass on big and small scales to help them fulfill their vision. "Architects and designers are looking for ways to incorporate color and pattern into their designs. ... The trend will be more and more bolder colors, unique silkscreen designs and textured glass that will uniquely enhance a building's aesthetics," says Chris Dolan, director, commercial and interior glass products, Guardian Industries Corp., Auburn Hills, Mich. The following feature looks at six projects that feature large-scale decorative glass, demonstrating advancements in decorative glass technology and trends in design. From a printed glass mural to multistory lettering, and brightly colored spandrel to a backlit glass art display, the following projects show the diversity and capabilities of large-scale decorative glass.

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Photos by Michel Brunelle.

Efficiency and design at Espace 400 Pavilion

The basics: A decorative double-skin façade provides increased performance and innovative design at the renovated Espace 400 Pavilion in Canada's Quebec City. The double façade covers the existing building and surrounds the new additions, providing improved insulation and allowing solar heat gain to accumulate in the double wall. The decorative architectural glass features a silk-screen design depicting the arrival of Samuel de Champlain on the site of Quebec City in 1608.

The players: Architects, Dan Hanganu Architects, Montreal, and Côté Leahy Cardas Architects, Quebec City; general contractor, EBC Inc., Quebec City; glass fabricator, Prelco Inc., Montreal; glass manufacturer, Cardinal Glass Industries, Eden Prairie, Minn.; contract glazier and



glazing system supplier, Gamma Industries, L'Ange-Gardien, Quebec.

The glass and systems: Insulating glass with one lite of ¼-inch clear LoE2-272 glass, and R-Max warm-edge spacer, argon fill, and one lite of ¼-inch clear glass with ceramic frit silk-screened pattern. Gamma G400S four-sided silicone structural glazing system.



Image by HOK.



Harlem Hospital tells a story in glass

"There were a lot of issues. This is a corridor, with people passing through looking out onto the street scene. So HOK had three primary objectives: it had to look good in daylight from outside, look good in daylight from inside, and look good at night from inside and outside. To make it work, we had to constantly assess opacity, ink, consistency between panels, registration, framing [and] the budget."

—David Balik, president, General Glass International, Seacaucus, N.J.

The basics: New York's HOK architecture firm won the competition to redesign Harlem Hospital with a design that used the front glass façade to depict a series of historic murals describing the migration story of African Americans coming to the United States—from slavery through the Harlem Renaissance, according to a release from General Glass International. The image depicted on the glass façade is

a representation of a series of Works Progress Administration murals from famous African-American artists originally painted throughout the hospital in 1936. The design was printed on the glass using GGI's Alice digital, direct-to-glass printing technology. The project is targeted for completion in the second quarter of 2010.

The players: Architect, HOK, New York; glass fabricator, General Glass International, Secaucus, N.J.; glazing contractor, W&W Glass, Nanuet, N.Y.; glass manufacturer, PPG Industries, Pittsburgh.

The glass and systems: The mural façade is made up of 429 individually printed panes of glass. The insulating glass units are 1⁵/₁₆ inches wide, with the decorative Alice lite tempered and laminated to a low-iron PPG Starphire lite on the exterior, and a lite of PPG Solarban solar-control, low-emissivity glass on the interior.

Multistory lettering spans three floors at Houston YMCA

The basics: The Tellepsen Family YMCA, a design-build project in Houston, features YMCA lettering across the face of the curtain wall, spanning three floors. The design incorporates a combination of vision glass, graphic dot patterned glass and spandrel glass; the curtain wall spans multiple floors and minimizes horizontal sight lines. This building partnered the architect, general contractor, glazier, glazing system manufacturer and glass fabricator, as meticulous coordination was required to assure graphic alignment within the curtain wall system, according to officials at Oldcastle Glass, Santa Monica, Calif.

The players: Architects, Kirksey, Houston; general contractor, Tellepsen Builders, Houston; glazing contractor, Admiral Glass and Mirror, Houston; glass fabricator, Oldcastle Glass Commercial Projects Group, Wright City, Mo.; glazing system supplier, Oldcastle Glass Engineered Products, Terrell, Texas.

The glass and systems: Custom Pressure Bar Curtain Wall System with captured vertical mullions and horizontal butt-glazed (structural silicone glazed) mullions. 1-inch insulating glass units with PPG Solarban 70XL low-emissivity coating and i-Glass decorative glass. i-Glass incorporates state of the art ink-printing technology, providing precise computer-generated custom images. The IG units were provided with a combination of custom graphic lettering and dot patterns on the No. 2 surface.