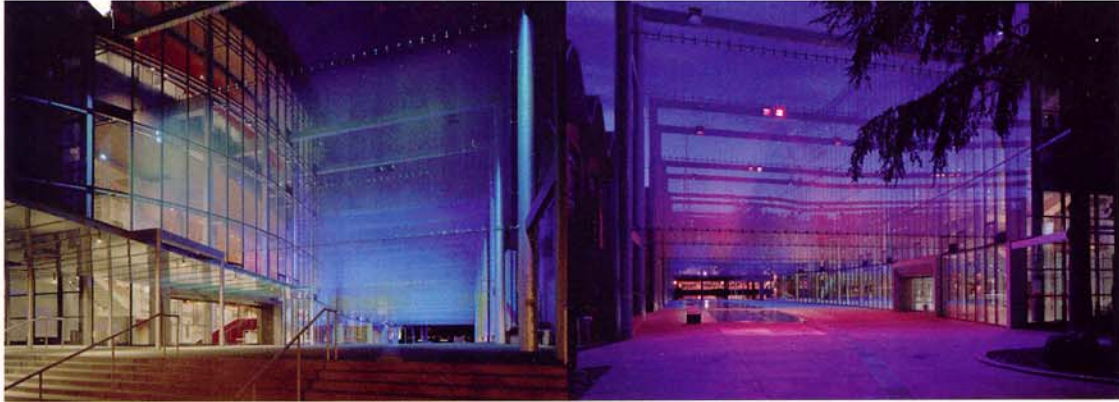


# Sculpture

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to Kraft, the sculptural effect was a challenge to fabricate: "Three-dimensional neon-lit sculpture on this scale is hard to find because of the difficulty in constructing a three-dimensional structure capable of securely holding fragile glass neon tubes." Kraft developed the design before the building itself was constructed. Using architectural drawings and models, he achieved the integration of "three-dimensional line and volumes of light with an open rectilinear structure."

The illuminated works of Cork Marcheschi, Stephen Antonakos, Dan Flavin, and Keith Sonnier influenced Kraft's design, but the real impetus

came from the unique structural challenge and the desire to integrate art and architecture. The synthesis may be viewed as symbolic of a rejuvenated community center. Kraft explains, "The plaza now has a sculptural mark, more than just marking a location. The image suggests importance, integration, vitality, and energy—a place where the community can come together and recognize each other."

#### Leni Schwendinger

*Dreaming in Color*  
Seattle, WA

Known for her environmental sculpture and large-scale projection performances, Leni Schwendinger recently completed a light work for the Seattle Center's new opera venue, the Marion O. McCaw Hall. Commissioned by the Seattle Arts Commission, *Dreaming in Color* brings the theatrics of opera outdoors using an orchestrated play of colored light and metal scrims.

*Dreaming in Color* began as a collaboration of LMN Architects, the landscape design firm Gustafson Guthrie Nichol, Ltd., and Schwendinger. The architectural plan called for nine nearly transparent, illuminated metal-mesh scrims to hang along the 300-foot opera house promenade. LMN Architects approached Schwendinger as the project evolved into a public art scheme. The team rejected an initial concept involving video projections as too expensive and insensitive to the potential for light contrast. Schwendinger had to conceive another method: "My studio assistant and I studied the scrims' sectional drawing and wondered, 'What is the absolutely simplest solution to this complex and monumental challenge?'" The solution was to project a changing array of colored lights onto the 45-foot-high scrims.

Above, left and right: Leni Schwendinger, *Dreaming in Color*, 2003. Illumination and computer controls, 45 x 30–50 x 150 ft. Below: Craig Kraft, *Lightweb*, 2004. Rolled aluminum and neon, 35 x 10 x 10 ft.

The final work—an immense "color field"—offers a contemporary approach to the aesthetic explorations of Mark Rothko and Helen Frankenthaler, among others. Schwendinger used their pursuit of chromatic "atmospheres" as an inspiration. In *Dreaming in Color*, color transcends the static, contained field to become an environment in constant flux. Two or three lights per scrim change the colors periodically. Color variations are dictated by an x/y-axis diagram developed by Schwendinger and her associates. Using the "visual score," the exact length of color projection on each scrim is mapped out down to the second. Perspective and elevation were also taken into consideration before the color/time combinations were finalized. In total, there are four color compositions: "Aquamarine, A Beguiling Song," "Sleepwalk Into Primary Red-Blue-Green," "Within the Northern Lights," and "Of Rothko, Section and Plane." These combinations of light, color, and pacing create a dramatic outdoor stage on which architecture and function are integrated for the general public to enjoy.

—Angela Melkisetian

*Juries are convened each month to select works featured in Commissions. Information on recently completed commissions, along with quality 35mm slides or transparencies and an SASE for return of slides, should be sent to: Commissions, Sculpture, 1529 18th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036.*



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