

Art Glass in Orange County

Federal Courthouse

Map #29

Public Art & Commercial Buildings



Gravity's Strings - (20' X 50')
2007

One enormous window fills the eastern wall of the vast atrium with the fanciful and shifting-perspective, abstract design of Al Held entitled Gravity's Strings and fabricated by Architectural Glass Art.

Several smaller windows on the south wall of the atrium continue the theme with additional designs by the artist, who did not live to see his Gravity's Strings designs realized in the courthouse, when it opened in 2007.

The piece was made with inlaid laminated art glass. And the art glass is imported hand blown glass. There is no mullion around the glass pieces and no frame holding it together. Each piece is applied to a laminated piece of glass with a resin. The 20'-x50' piece consists of 18 separate panels weighing a little over 500 pounds each.

These pieces were commissioned by General Services Administration's Art in Architecture program.

About the artist featured here: [Al Held](#) was an American Abstract expressionist painter particularly well known for his large scale hard-edge paintings. Born in Brooklyn, New York in 1928, Held showed no interest in art until leaving the Navy in 1947. Inspired by his friend Nicholas Krushenick, Held enrolled in the Art Students League of New York. In 1949, using the support of the G.I. Bill, he went to Paris for three years to study at the Academie de la Grande Chaumiere. He returned to New York in 1953 to struggle with his work for several years.

After his first solo abstract expressionist exhibition in 1959, Held's large-scale paintings of colorful, simple abstract geometric forms gained increasing recognition in America and Europe. In 1962, he was appointed to the Yale University Faculty of Art (where he would teach until 1980). In 1965, the critic Irving Sandler curated the critically acclaimed Concrete Expressionism show at New York University featuring the work of painters Al Held and Knox Martin and the sculptors Ronald Bladen, George Sugarman and David Weinrib. In 1966, Held was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and received the Logan Medal of the arts. Feeling that he's reached the end of his style's potential, he shifted in 1967 to black and white images that dealt with challenging perspectives and "spatial conundrums". Some critics dismissed this work as simply disorienting; others declared it Held's finest achievement to date. By the late 70's, he had re-introduced color to his work.

In his later years, Held earned commissions of up to one million dollars. In 2005, he completed a large, colorful mural in the New York City Subway system, at East 53rd Street and Lexington. At age 76, Held was found dead in his villa swimming pool near Camerata, Italy, on July 27, 2005. It is believed he died of natural causes.

Federal Courthouse

401 W. Central Ave.
Orlando, FL 32801

Hours of Operation:
Monday - Friday
Open 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Entrance is through airport type screening procedures.

NO CAMERAS, CELL PHONES OR WEAPONS ALLOWED!