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Light Reading

Peter Reiquam 2006

Light Reading is an outdoor, open-air reading room for conversation, reflection or contemplation. Sitting atop a textured concrete slab, the artwork features a pair of over-size solid granite armchairs, a fabricated bronze coffee table and two bronze bookcases infilled with lighted, cast-glass books.

The use of light is key to this project aesthetically, functionally and conceptually. The books are internally lit so that the room, defined by the textured concrete floor, is bathed in a glowing light. Metaphorically, the light emanating from the books is the illumination of knowledge and ideas gained through reading. The radiant books provide a unique light source, making the installation accessible after dark. The vertical bookcase, as seen from a short distance away, reflects in scale the warmth and luster of the building's four-story lighted glass entry. The horizontal bookcase, as seen from the granite armchairs, creates a level horizon line across the campus backdrop.

The armchairs are made from dappled green granite called *Mountain Green* quarried in Jay, New York. The surrounding landscape, as well as the forms and textures of the chair's neighboring elements are reflected in the stone's polished surface.

"Light Reading" is a lighthearted piece that makes reference to the library and academic center near which it sits. I hope that it will be a thought provoking installation and that it

will become a popular gathering place for students, faculty members and visitors to the campus.

Thank you to Patricia Hamilton and Bev Watt at *WSAC*, Bruce Thompson and Nancy Clark Brown and everyone at *WSU*, *Graham Construction* and *Power City Electric* and all of those mentioned in the notes below who helped to make this project a reality.

Notes on the creation of the elements that make up *Light Reading*.

- The stone armchairs were built to my design specifications by *Cold Spring Granite Company* in Cold Spring, Minnesota and installed by a local Spokane firm, *Tresko Monument and Washington Stone*. Dick Tresko and his crew did an expert job of placing the furniture with care and grace especially considering that each piece weighs approximately 3000 pounds.
- The glass books were cast in a Seattle studio called *Totally Blown Glass*. Dehanna Jones, Jackie Mendelson and Kelly McLain all lent their expertise to a difficult and delicate task. The glass was cast in a graphite mold produced by Kurt Nordquist of *Davinci's Workshop* in Burien, WA.
- Bob Teeple, a Seattle artist who specializes in animated electronic LED artworks made the lighted circuit boards that provide the glass books with their blue glow.
- Ed Garmon and his crew from *Garmon Concrete Construction* in Spokane poured the concrete slab and invented a modified trowel for creating the "carpet" texture.
- I fabricated all of the bronze furniture pieces in my studio in Seattle and trucked them to Spokane where Chuck Meyer and I spent three days assembling the various parts to create *Light Reading*.

Peter Reiquam

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ARTIST'S BIO

Reiquam is a Seattle artist whose work ranges from prints and drawings to sculptural furniture, mechanical sculptures and public art projects. He earned his B.F.A. in sculpture from the University of Washington in 1982 and his M.F.A. in sculpture from Yale University in 1984. He was employed as the Head Technician and Head of the Sculpture Department at Pratt Fine Arts Center for over ten years. Reiquam served six years as a commissioner on the King County Public Art Commission (now 4Culture) and has taught sculpture at Pratt Fine Arts Center, Cornish College of the Arts and the University of Washington School of Art. He recently joined a group of Seattle area artists in a new public art mentorship program at the City of Seattle's Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs (formerly Seattle Arts Commission) to assist emerging artists in the development of their first public art projects. In addition to the production of his own artwork, Reiquam's business, *New Art Projects Company* specializes in the fabrication and installation of the work of a variety of architects, designers and other artists.