

OSLER SCHOOL OF NURSING
5 QUEENSLEA AVENUE
WESTON - ONTARIO

ARTIST'S INTERPRETATION OF THE MURAL IN LOBBY OF SCHOOL

"In the conceptual stages of producing a mural there are several considerations which give rise to the completed image. The amount of space the total image will occupy, the way the image will affect the surrounding space of the foyer, the visual impact upon entrance to the foyer, the kind of colour relationships which will compliment rather than clash, the kind of activity that occurs in the foyer and the function of the institution that will house the mural are but a few such considerations.

The first thing to be encountered upon entrance to the school is the wall supporting the mural. The foyer itself is an intensely active space, allowing for the flow of students through the building. Consequently, I felt it mandatory that the image be a dynamic and active focal point. As a result, I developed a system of forces from geometric linear forms which actively push and pull one's vision in many directions. Overriding these directional forces exerting pressure on the interior structure of the image are three exterior major directional thrusts which lead the vision towards the three exits from the foyer to the rest of the building.

The internal structure of the mural deals symbolically with the process of education. The overall image is based on the idea of a labyrinth or maze. The educational process leads an individual through such a maze, offering a multitude of directions and often leading him into dead ends. With the aid of good instructors the individual can be guided out of the dead ends and into the right direction for his capabilities and subsequently out of the relatively protective educational labyrinth and into the more encompassing one called Life.

The push and pull of the directional forces in the labyrinth of the mural set up visual tensions which activate the image and suggest the tensions of the educational process. The positive and negative aspects of education are reiterated in the relationship between the positive red relief forms and the negative shapes and forces of the background wall they surround. These positive and negative forces carry on a visual dialogue with each other across the space of wall.

There is an ancient Greek myth concerning Theseus, son of King Aegeus of Athens, who entered the labyrinth of King Minos of Crete in order to slay the Minotaur and thus save Athens from its sacrifice of seven youths and seven maidens required every nine years by King Minos to satisfy the Minotaur's craving for human flesh. A magic ball of twine led Theseus directly to the Minotaur, which he slew, and by winding up the twine he found his way out of the labyrinth and back to freedom. The mural echoes this in the way that the directional forces emanate from a central line which runs through the length of the mural. This central line represents symbolically the path out of the labyrinth; the path each individual must discover in order to successfully thread his way through the intricate maze that our educational process constructs.

Out of these considerations, then, has come the image presented to you on the walls of the foyer. My aim has been to create a fluid unity, both visually and symbolically, that would radiate back and forth across the space of the wall and outwards into the space of the foyer. Since, psychologically, red is the most active colour, it was used to intensify this aspect of the image. Green, the compliment of red, was used to set off the red and run as a linear counter theme on a 90° angle to the plane occupied by red. Now that I have exposed some of the considerations necessary for the conception of the image, it is hoped that the viewer will go beyond them to discover more for, and about, himself."

Denis Cliff
Toronto, Ontario.