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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Psyche by Donald Lipski Once entering the lobby of new Auraria Scientific Building, one can see a huge butterfly slowly fluttering under the ceiling and shimmering in the light with gradations of yellow and red colors. This is Psyche – an installation created in July 2010 by artist Donald Lipski together with technical support team of engineers, IT-designers and others.

Auraria Science Building was founded to serve the educational purposes for students from Metropolitan State College of Denver, the University of Colorado Denver and the Community College of Denver in biology, chemistry, computer sciences, maths, physics and Earth sciences.

Additionally, it was considered that Science Building would “ physically and visually connect the Auraria campus to the greater Denver community”, so the “ building’s floor-to-ceiling windows” were designed accordingly – to attract passers-by to come in and see what is inside (Wausau Group 1). Thus, in short, the building was supposed to perform a connection between beauty and science. And Donald Lipski’s sculpture was called to embody this connection. Referring to the idea, Lipski noted that the common feature between artists and scientists is their “ passion for discovery”, which “ just takes different paths”. The artist believes the “ public institutions of higher education should emphasize and include culture at every opportunity” (Wiebesiek).

Psyche is 10 feet high and about 14.5 feet across butterfly sculpture made of steel, resin and glass. It has two pairs of wings – the 8 feet across top wings and 6 feet across bottom wings. Psyche consists of black metal frame which outlines the form of a sculpture with its wings covered with stainless steel net, from where 10,000 test tubes filled with liquid yellow, orange and

red acrylic resin are hanging. Donald Lipski explained that test tubes “ are among the most basic and familiar tools of science” (Wiebesiek), which are utilized in medicine as well as physics or chemistry. Moreover, the usage of test tubes in this project is rather symbolic – it indicates the sculpture is not some separate item of design but the one that, in its structure, reflects scientific atmosphere of a place.

Hanging at 60° angle, the butterfly slowly drifts in the air, moved by the air flows of air-conditioning system. While moving and sharing its various shades colors all around, the sculpture resembles a “ monumental stained glass window” (CCI), causing an awesome impression and excitement.

From Greek the word “ psyche” can be translated as “ soul”, “ spirit” or “ mind”. However, in ancient Greece it also had the meaning of butterfly: “ the butterflys life cycle—from caterpillar to chrysalis to butterfly— was symbolic of the passage from life to death to resurrection” (CCI). Donald Lipski related Greek symbol of butterfly to changes which occur in the world as time passes. He admitted that it is important for the scientists to be vulnerable to this changes if they strive to achieve the highest levels of creativity and effective performance. Also Lipski found out that, besides Greeks, butterfly was a symbol of reincarnation and rejuvenation to other ancient civilizations. Psyche shows the correlation between something physical and tangible in its meaning of butterfly and something abstract, imperceptible in the meaning of mind. Thus, the sculpture represents the physical as well as aesthetic sides of the Auraria building.

It is quite interesting that in his project Donal Lipski also relied on the idea expressed in Edward Lorenzs “ Does the Flap of a Butterfly’s Wing in Brazil

Set Off a Tornado in Texas?”, a paper discussing Chaos Theory, which described that the flow of gasses in a space “ miraculously takes the form of a butterfly” (Wiebsiek).

So, as one can see, Donald Lipskis Psyche installation is not only astonishingly beautiful and unique work of art, but also a representation of higher ideas of time flow, changing world and, more generally, life path. At the same time its evictio proportions, “ heavy” materials and test tubes harmonically coincide with the educational atmosphere of the scientific building.

Works Cited

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