

Introduction where
the backdrop is
usually used



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Introduction

The Rockefeller center is widely known as the heart of Manhattan, containing many of its oldest yet most historically well known structures that symbolize America's industrial might, the potential to achieve the so called " American Dream" and the wealth of a nation that has yet to reach its peak (Machleder, 5).

The area itself is a well travelled location with thousands taking in the sight of the GE building, the lower plaza, the statue of Atlas as well as the location regularly being shown on shows such as " Good Morning America!" where the backdrop is usually used during the live tapings of the show. In fact I can go so far as saying that the area itself is the world's most visited and traversed historical monument due to its centralized location (Rockefeller Center, 1). People cannot help but come to the center in order to get from one area of Manhattan to the other. Based on my previous visits to the area as well as the contexts adhered to it in pop culture the Rockefeller center can be considered an icon of American progress due to its location in the center of the richest and most progressive city in the world (Machleder, 2). Yet as of late the area has lost some of its spark, as many of you may recall not too long ago there was the attempted bombing of Time Square, the multiple threats directed against the U. S. by Muslim extremist groups as well as the 9/11 destruction of the World Trade Center towers where well over 2, 000 people lost their lives (Bornstein, 52). As a result of these incidences there is feeling of insecurity within the center, almost a form of paranoia that's palpable in the very air (Bornstein, 53).

Though most people may not be aware of it there is actually a significant police presence in the area, with an increased number of patrols as compared to a few years ago (Bornstein, 52). Unattended bags in the area are treated as bombs, everyone going in and out of the area becomes a suspect and the very resilience to change that the center is known for has been replaced with feelings of suspicion and uncertainty (Krueger, 2). It is not just the threat of terrorism that has changed the center but rather the recent financial crisis, the actions of Bernard Madoff in his Ponzi scheme along with the current state of the economy have given people an apparently different outlook on what the center symbolizes. Awe at American progress and achievement has been replaced by a distinctly different outlook that sees the center as a symbol of American corporate greed and the price ordinary people have to pay as a result of the actions of a few.

While the center has always been a symbol of success and achievement with the people working there admired as pioneers and captains of industry, today they are viewed as parasites, thieves and destruction incarnate due to the ruin and devastation the actions a few of them brought about.

Landscape and surrounding Architecture

The sunken plaza setting and the surrounding pre-World War 2 architecture was designed in a way to overwhelm visitors by the sheer immensity of the structures. It's somewhat closed off setting combined with the positioning of the buildings was meant to create a sort of box like structure with visitors directly in the middle of the plaza needing to crane their heads upwards in order to see the sky (Christopher, 7). Other unique features of the area are the unique Greek inspired art deco style statues particularly the statue of <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-where-the-backdrop-is-usually-used/>

Atlas located near the center of the square (Christopher, 7). What these pieces were meant to convey was a sense of being in the seat of the Gods wherein people are meant to feel closed off, shocked and awe inspired by the way in which the buildings seem to reach for the sky. The entire area itself could be stated as a way of paying homage to America's industrial potential which it did live up to following the events of World War 2 wherein America became a global industrial juggernaut (Klamm, 161). The sheer scale of the project along with the location of buildings was clearly meant as a message not only to the citizens of the U. S.

but also that of other countries that America would continue to grow and eventually reach the very clouds themselves. One particular aspect of the Rockefeller center that is interesting to take note of is how its creation actually inspired the creation of the surrounding buildings and greatly inspired the architecture of the city. After World War 2 American became an industrial juggernaut due to its various industries and factories being largely unaffected by the war in Europe which enabled it to effectively produce products to be sold to various countries around the world that were devastated by the war (Schwarz, 92). What this meant for Manhattan was a sudden resurgence in architectural growth due to the sudden industrial expansion of the country (Klamm, 161). Inspired by the creation of the Rockefeller center and the limited space available within the city architects began emulating the various skyscraper styles of the center and started building up which today has resulted in the sheer amount of skyscrapers that dominate the New York skyline. In fact it can even be stated that the creation of the Rockefeller center set off the popularity of concentrating

skyscrapers within a single location so as to better utilize the amount of space given. To an extent, it can be stated that the wider significance of the site is that it is a symbol of American wealth and power due to the concentration of several top firms and company's within that particular area.

Some of the most powerful corporations in the world are based off of offices located at the Rockefeller center and as such the center acts as a type of indicator of the current prosperity of the country (Krueger, 2).

Personal Perspectives on the Site

From my personal observations of the site I can say with certainty that 9/11 truly did change the overall sense of the place. While there may be people skating, shopping and eating in the various restaurants around the plaza the increased police presence in the area is an almost ubiquitous facet of the area itself. While I do understand the need for greater security I do believe that at times they are taking things too far which actually affect the people who come in and out of the area.

It could just be me but I see far fewer people lingering in the area compared to before, with many of them hurrying from place to place instead of stopping to observe the unique architecture and various pieces of art that dot the surrounding area. While it can be stated that such people are merely in a hurry I believe the police presence plays a rather significant role in their attitudes regarding the location. The main reason why I chose this particular site for this report is due to the fact that I have always enjoyed visiting the general area. The sense of being overwhelmed by the large buildings on

either side of you combined with the sheer size of the GE building always makes one stare in awe at the sheer scale of the project.

I also happen to enjoy watching people skate on the ice rink from time to time since there are usually moments of comedy where someone trips, falls or otherwise collides with someone else often causing a rather amusing tangle of limbs. The statue of Atlas is also a rather remarkable structure that serves to symbolize the immensity of the entire site. On the other hand, while I have visited the site in the past little has actually changed with only a few stores disappearing with new ones taking their place. Overall, in my opinion the Rockefeller plaza could be described as being a timeless testament to the power and strength of the United States and how it will continue to become a notable aspect in history in the centuries to come. Based on my observations, since the site is part of a metropolis and houses many of the nation's corporate offices people visit the site usually to conduct business or to eat at the surrounding restaurants.

The fact of the matter is, as I see people walking around the various structures and coming out of several buildings I noticed that they no longer look about in awe at the sheer scale of the center but rather seem so used to the scenery that they no longer even feel the least bit impressed by the site. On the other hand foreign tourists always seem to gawk and gape taking pictures here and there due to impressiveness of the center. I believe that it is quite a shame that the local residents no longer feel even the least bit awed by the sheer size and grandeur of the location.

It is a definite sight to behold in the brightest of days or the darkest of nights with the buildings acting as silent sentinels guarding over the people walking below them.

Building a Community

In terms of building a community I would describe the area as actually being the source of a rather unconventional business community. For me the various people who work in center tend to know each to an extent and do give average pleasantries with each other. The type of community found in the center is not the sort that you would find in a small town or apartment complex but rather an implicit understanding of the various people who go in and out of the buildings that each of them is an important individual of some distinction since they work at the plaza. s such while there is none of the usual closeness and friendliness that one would normally associate with being in a community there is a slight feeling of respect and understanding among the various people who go about their daily business here.

Historical Perspective

Rockefeller Plaza to an extent can be called the main reason why Manhattan island became the skyscraper metropolis that it is today. After the plaza was built World War 2 had commenced and as a result America became a global economic super power since its various facilities and industries were largely untouched by the resulting war that devastated the European continent. As a result Manhattan became a global center for trade and commerce resulting in various architects emulating the style of the buildings of Rockefeller center both to conserve space but also to portray the growing power of the U. S. on the international scene. What this site tells of the American culture <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-where-the-backdrop-is-usually-used/>

in general is that it's people are ambitious, they seek to achieve the near impossible and they hope to continue to change and become better than they currently are. The phrase "living the big life" is an eloquent enough phrase to describe the type of culture that the Rockefeller center embodies, it is the absolute measure of wealth and power in the country and something many American aspire to and even yearn for.

The desire to become a success is actually deeply embedded in the hearts and minds of many Americans and as such many of them aspire to greatness. It is this very aspiration that the Rockefeller center truly symbolizes, it is a goal, an object to look at with awe and desire, it is for all intents and purposes the heart of the American Dream.

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