

Shared Skies

A public artwork by Kim Abeles for the new Anderson-Munger Wilshire Family YMCA Architect Roger Chikhani, Luckman Partnership, Inc.

Through the Art Policy of the Community Redevelopment Agency CRA/LA, the YMCA is contributing up to 1% of development costs to on-site public art.

Narrative statement describing *Shared Skies*

Shared Skies, an artwork in the lobby of the new Anderson-Munger Wilshire Family YMCA reflects the spirit of the goal of the YMCA for the “pursuit of wellness and community.” The Y can be found worldwide in 125 national federations and serves people of all ages. They are particularly dedicated to health and recreational programs for youth, and this new YMCA located next to Charles H. Kim Elementary will partner with the school to develop joint programs.

Shared Skies speaks to the idea of “reaching beyond one’s grasp”, “reaching for the sky”, and the importance of goals and vision. Also, the artwork literally describes the global nature of the YMCA and the connections of people worldwide by having at its core, imagery of skies found worldwide where the YMCA is located.

The physical elements of the artwork are integrated within the architecture. Specifically, the suspended elements respond to features in the lobby design by the architect, Roger Chikhani of Luckman Partnership, Inc. There are four elements to the artwork and each responds to the architectural space:

1. 36 suspended, tempered glass panels with photographs of skies worldwide
2. 12' x 20' suspended ellipse with the skies as woven, powdercoated aluminum
3. 5 windows that view the pool with sandblasted images of swimmers ascending
4. 3 powdercoated aluminum panels showing the “legend” for the artwork
5. 8' x 15' tile mural with the local sky and aerial views of neighborhood and YMCA locations found globally

When the visitors enter from Oxford Avenue, the suspended, illuminated glass panels showing skies from around the world will lead them into the lobby toward the reception desk.

Above the reception desk, a second sculptural element visually reinterprets the sky imagery, this time as a large, suspended ellipse made with the sky-photographs created as a weaving of powdercoated aluminum. In this way, the *Shared Skies* become a woven fabric that speaks to the skies that are individual to locations, and that it is one sky after all.

To the left of the reception desk, are large bay windows that overlook the pool area. The upper sections of the five windows show drawings of swimmers ascending. These are sandblasted in tempered glass. As a detail to the windows, it enhances the metaphor of *Shared Skies*: reaching upward.

The fourth element of the artwork is also made of powdercoated aluminum and is embedded in the lobby's north wall. It is a "legend" to visually express where the skies were photographed worldwide; and, to make a connection with the neighborhood itself. For example, Charles H. Kim Elementary, next door to the new YMCA, is notable as the first school in the U.S. to be named after an Asian-American. The three panels of the "legend" speak of the inspirational legends of this neighborhood's history. This fourth element of the artwork will enhance the interaction with *Shared Skies* for the viewer who is curious to know more about its meaning.

An exterior wall, adjacent to the entrance of the Anderson Munger Family YMCA, provides an opportunity to install a tile mural. The piece relates to the imagery of the artwork designed for the lobby.

Entitled, *Shared Skies – Bird's Eye View*, the artwork is composed of 594 tiles featuring a sky photographed from the site of the new YMCA. Scattered throughout this 18' x 15' sky are individual photographic image tiles showing aerial views of the neighborhood, and aerial views of YMCAs in other part of the world. In this way, the mural continues the themes of *Shared Skies*: reaching upward, soaring to the sky, and the importance of both the local and the global.