

STAINED GLASS

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A wall illumination for the office of the Chairman of the Board of Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc., Orlando, FL. Designed by Harriet Hyams. See page 316.

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The Chairman's Office

by Harriet Hyams

photo: Jerry White



Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc., Orlando, FL.

I have never met *the chairman*, and I probably never will. In some strange way I believe I don't have to anymore.

Through a combination of articulate spokespeople from his firm of Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc. and the Ventura Partnership, architects for the building, my assignment was to design a stained glass window wall for his eighth floor office in the new world headquarters of Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc. in Orlando, Florida.

I would never know Mr. William Jovanovich, he would be described. The strength of his personality and his love of art were my basic clues. The fact of his remoteness would always transcend, and would be a continuing mystery though his spokesmen tried to be particularly clear in elaborating and explaining what was the essential assignment.

Mr. Jovanovich was familiar with the work of Ludwig Schaffrath and he admired it. The plans of the building

were laid out and described. I would not see the building during the installation as the completion of the building and the installation of the stained glass would be simultaneous. The exterior was to be blue glass and the interior of *the chairman's* office would be a green marble floor, with teak walls.

Mr. Jovanovich requested subdued colors for the stained glass with the purpose of the glass to obscure twenty-foot-high blue HBJ letters on the building's exterior just outside his window. He wanted to be able to see out beyond the glass with the ultimate condition—a work of art.

I would furnish three designs that were compelling, different and unlike Schaffrath but sympathetic to his aesthetic, using glass that blended with the interior and at the same time keeping the HBJ letters viewed from the exterior only. Mr. Jovanovich would select one design from the three choices offered. The use of opaque, opalescent

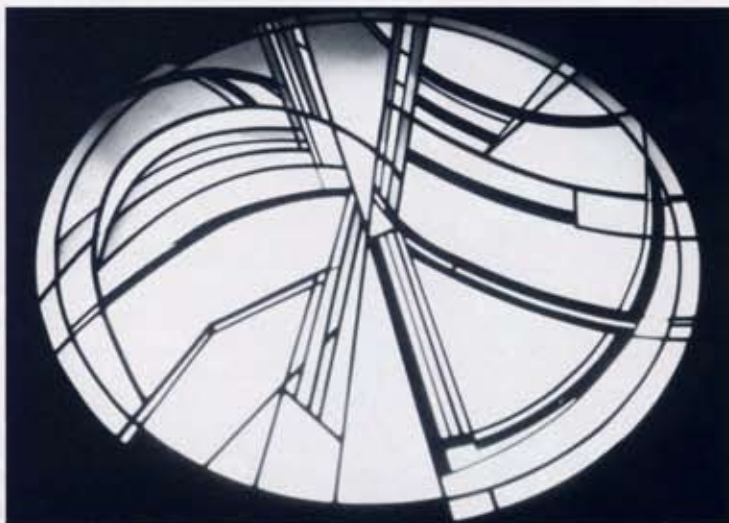
and some antique glass made this possible and at all times the letters are obscured. But, occasionally they cast a blue light on the stained glass wall.

When the stained glass was installed we photographed it—a completed work in an incomplete room. The problem existed to photograph the room when furnished. How could this be done when Mr. Jovanovich had moved in with his personal possessions? Would he permit more pictures and could this be accomplished without intruding on his privacy.

I was given permission to write him a letter requesting a photograph of the completed office. His nature was generous, as was proven when soon after I received the superb shot that appears on the cover. The invisible *chairman* looks out over his desk towards my glass wall, a man seemingly inscrutable but no longer an enigma. Artists need to be published and this was recognized from the *chairman* on down.



Skylight in Englewood, NJ residence. Designed by Harriet Hyams, fabricated by Jack Cushen. Photo by Charles Shimel.



Window in Saddle River, NJ residence. Interior and exterior view. Designed by Harriet Hyams, Palisades, NY. Fabricated by Jack Cushen, NYC, NY. Photo by Charles Shimel.

