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Elements of Wonder: The Public Art of Norie Sato

Norie Sato

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Elements of Wonder
The Public Art of Norie Sato
“...what Sato creates isn’t “public art” simply because it’s displayed where lots of people can see it; it’s “public” because lots of people inspired it. It’s artwork of the people, by the people and for the people, all guided by Sato’s curiosity and vision.”

~Michael Morain, 2016
Introduction

by Lynette L. Pohlman, Director and Chief Curator, University Museums

Creating over 45 site-integrated public art installations since 1982, Norie Sato (Japanese-American, b. 1949) strives to add meaning and human touch to the built environment and considers edges, transitions, and connections as important as the center. Her public art installations are located around the United States, with five site-specific installations in Iowa. Sato has created three major installations at Iowa State University - One, Now, All (1999-2000) in the Palmer Building, e+i+e+m+e+n+t+a+l (2010-2012) in Hach Hall, and most recently, The Fifth Muse (2015-2016) in Marston Hall. This exhibition of selected conceptual drawings, models and sculptural elements invites the viewer to explore Sato’s public art projects from conceptualization to fabrication and final installation.

The Christian Petersen Art Museum, Anderson Sculpture Garden and the Art on Campus Program work in concert to present public art and artists to the ISU campus directly addressing the University Museums’ mission to foster understanding and delight in the visual arts with a focus on the creative interactions in arts, sciences and technology. Typically, each semester a major public artist is featured in the Christian Petersen Art Museum or Anderson Sculpture Garden to present a larger context for their site-specific art commissioned for campus. Elements of Wonder: The Public Art of Norie Sato is one such exhibition. This exhibition presents the artist’s creative processes of conceiving, fabricating and installing campus public art with ISU educational partners, and highlights the democratic process involved in commissioning public art for ISU that fulfils our educational ideals of beauty, order and understanding.

The Art on Campus Collection at Iowa State University is one of the largest campus public art collections in the nation, and exists to serve the educational mission of the university. Norie Sato is among the 600 artists represented in the Art on Campus Collection. Please explore campus and view the over 2000 public works of art in the collection, and view Sato’s installations at Marston Hall, Hach Hall and in the Palmer Building.

This exhibition is curated and organized by University Museums with loans generously provided by Norie Sato.

Elements of Wonder: The Public Art of Norie Sato is on view August 22 - December 16, 2016 in the Christian Petersen Art Museum, 1017 Morrill Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. www.museums.iastate.edu
About the Artist

Norie Sato was born in Sendai, Japan in 1949 and moved to the United States with her family when she was 4. After spending some years in Michigan she graduated from the University of Michigan with a BA in Printmaking in 1971. She moved to Seattle in 1972 and received her MA in Printmaking and Video from the University of Washington in 1974. Since that time she has lived and worked in Seattle and has been involved with public art. Her artwork for public spaces is derived from site and context-driven ideas. Her practice also includes work for galleries, museums and other installations. Her projects are located around the country. She works in sculpture and 2-dimensionally, and in various media including glass, metal, terrazzo, integrated design work, landscape, video and light.

Shortly after moving to Seattle, one of Sato’s prints won first prize at the 1973 Pacific Northwest Arts and Crafts Fair. Sato was awarded National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships in 1979 and 1981. She received the 1983 Betty Bowen award, the 1998 National Terrazzo and Mosaic Association Honor Award, the 2013 Twining Humber Award from the Washington State Artist Trust, the 2014 Public Art Network Leadership Award from Americans for the Arts, and the 2014 Washington State Governor’s Arts and Heritage Individual Artist Award. Sato served on the Visual Arts Advisory Panel for the NEA in 1983. She is a former member of the Americans for the Arts Public Art Network Council and a former commissioner of the Seattle Design Commission.

More information: [www.noriesato.com](http://www.noriesato.com)
The bright lights. The tile floor. The body on the stainless steel counter.

The scene at the morgue was something most of us see only on “CSI” or “Law & Order,” but there in the chilly quiet stood Norie Sato, taking it all in. The Seattle artist was doing research a few years ago for a public art installation in the building where the State of Iowa Medical Examiner’s laboratory was to be located, in Ankeny, a few miles north of Des Moines.

What struck Sato most wasn’t the sight of the corpse but the sober drama that played out among the technicians who tended it. When a second body came in, from a car accident a few hours earlier, the woman who unzipped the bag recognized the man inside, a neighbor. The staffer’s boss told her to go home.

“It was just so moving,” Sato said later. “And it made me wonder: How close is this community?”

The experience caught the artist by surprise, teaching her unexpected lessons and shaping her artistic results, which juxtapose images of lab tools with photos of the Iowa landscape. Work and place, or a sense of “home,” are separate on one hand, but inseparable on the other.

That response wouldn’t surprise anyone who is familiar with Sato’s art. Over the last four decades, she’s made a career out of showing up in different places both as a curious visitor and a commissioned artist. She asks probing questions and transforms the answers – both deliberate and serendipitous – into art made from steel, stone, glass and light. Her projects at airports, rail stations, universities, civic facilities and, yes, even a morgue, nudge the people who frequent those places to look up from their routines and see their surroundings as Sato does, with a renewed sense of fascination and wonder.

“When I start a project, I nose around, trying to see what I can find,” she said. “I feel lucky because I get to witness things that are meaningful in so many ways, different stories and histories, both personal and factual. Whether or not they make it literally into the artwork, they do influence the final result.

“I look at what I do as lifelong learning,” she added. “Each project brings in new experiences and new information.”

Wherever she goes, those experiences revolve around the people who know the territory. Her latest project, for Iowa State University’s College of Engineering, she gathered images and insights from students, alumni, faculty and staff. She enlisted students to help conceive, design and fabricate the sculptural elements, working in labs and manufacturing facilities on campus. She hired the Public Art Incubator at the University of Northern Iowa, in Cedar Falls, to help build and install the art’s structural skeleton.

“Instead of using my regular fabricators in Seattle, this made me work differently,” she said. “It’s a project made in Iowa by Iowans.”

Sato thrives on that kind of community collaboration.

“It’s a privilege to have so many scientists who are willing to tell me about their research when I’m working on their science-related building,” she said.
For the engineers, her sculpture involves everything from trusty old slide rules to shimmering silicon computer wafers, all of which now hang in an elegant mobile from the Marston Hall ceiling. A mix of old and new, the installation was inspired by the *Marston Muses*, a quartet of limestone figures that an anonymous stone mason carved above the 1903 building’s east entrance. Sato’s new sculpture, *The Fifth Muse*, nods to the past but looks forward, too, across the broad field of contemporary engineering.

Dr. Joel Johnson, director of Engineering Student Services, described the artist’s year-long series of focus groups and interviews as “refreshing.” He was impressed by how inclusive her process was – but for her, that’s typical.

“Because these are fields that I’m not completely familiar with, the design really depends on the people I talk to and work with,” Sato explained. “I try to make artwork that responds to each context rather than impose a predetermined style or material. I try to allow the specifics of a project to guide what I do.”

In that sense, what Sato creates isn’t “public art” simply because it’s displayed where lots of people can see it; it’s “public” because lots of people inspired it. It’s artwork of the people, by the people and for the people, all guided by Sato’s curiosity and vision. That explains why each of her projects looks so different from the others: Her aesthetic sensibilities shape the visual design, but the content – the spark of inspiration – always comes from each particular mix of participants.
“Her interest in working with public art isn’t just so she has a bigger canvas. She’s a person who has placed herself in public circumstances,” said Anne Focke, a Seattle arts advocate who has known Sato for more than 40 years. Focke said Sato is the opposite of a solo artist, holed up in her studio; she has served on all sorts of public art boards and commissions, working with complex teams to figure out creative ways to use space.

“She really works in the context of living people, of catching their interest and getting them involved,” she said. “There’s a really conscious engagement with the community.”

A lot of Sato’s art focuses on the edges of things, where one thing bumps or blurs into another. And maybe that makes sense: After all, the city where she lives straddles land and water. Her biography straddles two cultures.

She came to Seattle twice, first as a 4-year-old on a Japanese ship called the Hikawa Maru and later as a graduate student, after a childhood in Pittsburgh and Ann Arbor. Her father was a physicist, which helps explain her affinity for science even though she chose to focus on art.

She earned a bachelor’s degree in printmaking from the University of Michigan and an M.F.A. from the University of Washington in 1974, just a year after Seattle became one of the first cities in the country to adopt a percent-for-art ordinance. That program requires city planners to set aside 1 percent of every public development project’s budget for artwork, which helped turn the city into a hotspot for bold planning and design.

Today the city’s parks, libraries, bridges and other civic spaces boast more than 400 permanent installations and nearly 3,000 portable works, including dozens that Sato has either created herself or helped choose. She spent nearly a decade leading the team of artists whose work livens up the city’s light-rail line, an undertaking that involved countless public meetings with residents, business owners and other stakeholders, as well as designers and engineers.

According to Ruri Yampolsky, who directs Seattle’s public art program, the city helped popularize the “design team” model of urban planning, which gives artists a seat at the table right from the get-go instead of at the end of the design process, when all they can add is “plop art” to whatever the architects and engineers already built.

Sato saw that model develop firsthand, Yampolsky said, and she internalized it. “She does a lot of research. She studies the history of the site and how it’s used,” Yampolsky explained.

During one of Sato’s investigations along the Seattle waterfront, for example, she discovered that the pier she sees from her studio window happens to be the very one where she first stepped ashore so many years earlier from Japan.

This kind of research is more common these days, when “creative placemaking is the flavor du jour,” said San Francisco Public Arts Commission Program Director Susan Pontious, who has followed Sato’s career. “Now everybody and their Aunt Jane wants to do public art. But back in the day, there were only a few people who did it the way Norie does, where the artwork evolves from the site, where it’s often part of the architecture … She really pioneered that kind of work.”

Pontious helped Sato with an installation at the San Francisco airport called Air Over Under, a massive grid of laminated glass that stretches across the façade of one of the terminals. The artist painted its first layer by hand — green to blue on one side and blue to purple on the reverse — and then silkscreened a second layer with a frothy spray of white pixels. The combined effect as viewers approach simulates the thrill of flying into a cloud. It invites them to pause, even for a moment, in the rush to the ticketing counter and marvel at the beauty of flight.

Sato “opened the door for other artists and let them know, ‘Hey, you can do this. You can work on a power plant or some other really utilitarian space and transform it into an artwork,’” Pontious said. “People hadn’t really thought of that before.”

This knack for bridging the practical with the beautiful is a hallmark of Sato’s art, from her earliest projects in Seattle to The Fifth Muse at Marston Hall.
When she talks to people to gather ideas, they usually don’t realize how much they will influence her final design. She controls the overall vision – “She’s really good at holding the line,” Pontious said – but often incorporates at least a few specific suggestions from the people she meets.

At Iowa State’s Palmer Building, which houses the university’s Child Development Lab School for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, their teachers told her how kids learn to read, first by recognizing individual letters, then arranging them into words. Accordingly, the art Sato carved into the stone lobby starts with a mess of letters on the floor, like magnets that fell off a kitchen fridge, and then forms words as it climbs up the wall, carved at two different depths. As Sato explained it, the shallower depth indicated “first words,” or words that a child would speak, while the deeper depth indicates the “last words” of an adult. Although the words don’t form sentences, relationships emerge among them to evoke thoughts or memories. Water spills gently down the wall to evoke the flow of time.

At Hach Hall for Iowa State’s Department of Chemistry, Sato’s dramatic aluminum, glass and blue-LED entryway riffs on the shorthand chemists use to sketch molecules and describe chemical bonds and processes, the building blocks of chemistry. Nearby, an installation called e+l+e+m+e+n+t+a+l shows off an array of whimsical sculptures made from glassware inspired by test tubes, flasks and beakers filled with powdered elements – purple manganese and cadmium oxides in red, yellow and green. Other elements in the work include zinc, carbon and shiny silvery gallium.

A copper etching of an early periodic table, arranged as a spiral instead of the familiar modern-day grid, caught the attention of Distinguished Professor Patricia Thiel during a recent tour. She leaned in for a closer look and said, “I hadn’t really noticed that before” – exactly what Sato had hoped would happen.

Part of the art’s appeal is the way it blurs the boundaries between the art itself and the walls around it. Viewers who inspect the rarer elements may soon wonder which compounds make up the installation’s glass window or its metal frame or the tiny bright light bulbs above. Come to think of it, what’s the floor made of? And the ceiling and the cushy chairs in the lobby . . . Where does the chemistry end?

Sato employs a similar strategy at the state of Iowa’s labs in Ankeny, where her Slides installation involves a series of colored glass panels that actually slide back and forth to create mix-and-match overlays. Painted and sandblasted images of scientific tools – forceps, fingerprint brushes and, of course, microscope slides – are layered with sweeping silkscreened photos of the Iowa landscape. It’s hard to distinguish the translucent photo from the real thing, rolling off to the horizon outside.

Don Simmons, one of the lab managers, stood in the sun-dappled hallway on a recent morning and summed it up well: “You realize you’re part of a bigger picture.”

You see in Sato’s art the connections between people and purpose and place that are everywhere, just waiting to be revealed.

Michael Morain is the communications manager for the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, a position he took after a decade covering arts and culture for the Des Moines Register. The Ames native is a two-time fellow of the NEA Arts Journalism Institute and lives in downtown Des Moines.

*Уннэнчэнэнчэн*, 2010-2012. Commissioned by University Museums and the Department of Chemistry in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Major funding provided by Dr. Richard Forsythe, B.S. Chemistry 1943 and Ph.D. Chemistry, 1949, Iowa State University. An Iowa State Art in State Buildings Project for Hach Hall. In the Art on Campus Collection, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. U2010.253 Photo by Bob Elbert.
The Iowa Projects

ONE, NOW, ALL, 1999-2000
Palmer Building, Iowa State University

At the Palmer Building, which includes preschool and early childhood education teaching classrooms, family therapy and consumer therapy teaching laboratories, One, Now, All is a public work of art that is integrated into the architecture. The installation is comprised of three, major sculptural elements: a 2-story water wall, engraved words and a terrazzo floor with inset brass letters.

The two-story water wall is composed of limestone, with water gently flowing down the face, on which are sandblasted words derived from several languages. ‘First words’ (shallowly carved) are words spoken by children as they begin to learn language, and the ‘last words’ (carved more deeply) are words spoken by adults as they mature in life. The second aesthetic element is the terrazzo floor of 5 colors in the lobby and hallways on the first floor. It contains bronze letters and details in black at the base of the water wall. The remaining lobby portion of the floor is based abstractly on a partial globe and made of a unique terrazzo formula of a rich yellow with mother of pearl iridescence. The final sculptural feature carved high in the lobby’s limestone wall are three large-scale words: ONE, NOW, and ALL. These three words symbolize the uniting of the individual, family, community and time.

Materials: Anamosa limestone, water, terrazzo, brass letters

Commissioned by University Museums and the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, College of Family and Consumer Sciences. An Iowa Art in State Buildings Project for Palmer Building. In the Art on Campus Collection, University Museums, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. Accession Number: U2000.53

Project Partners: Fountain designer, John Narinsky, Fountain Tech, Portland, OR; Hawkeye Terrazzo Floors, Iowa City; Weber Stone Company, Anamosa, IA; RDG/Bussard-Dikis Architects, Des Moines, IA.

Art in State Buildings (AiSB) Committee: Beverly Crabtree, Dean of Family and Consumer Sciences; Carol Grant; Susan Herrington, Landscape Architecture; Joan Herwig, Human Development & Family Studies; Maurice MacDonald, Human Development & Family Studies, AiSB Chair; Tom Oftedal, FP&M Design Services; Lynette Pohlman, University Museums; Scott Sankey, FP&M Architect; Ann Swift, Human Development & Family Studies; Phil Hodgin, Bussard Dikis RDG.

Public Art Philosophy Statement
The art philosophy for the Palmer Human Development and Family Studies Building is to express the mission of the College of Family and Consumer Sciences and Department of Human Development and Family Studies and the commitment of faculty, students, and staff to improve the quality of life for children and families through teaching, research, and extension/outreach programs. We are committed to advancing life quality through the dynamic engagement of the student learner in a setting that balances the synergies of actual life span development: vulnerability eased by nurturance; curiosity led by practical needs; challenge met with resolve; elementary units responding to the community environment; and diversity while respecting the whole culture. Thus the art form should be embedded in the everyday world and speak to one's experience in the Palmer Human Development and Family Studies Building. ~Palmer AiSB Committee, February 17, 2004

Artist Statement
This artwork expresses the work of the department which includes teaching and services for people throughout their lives. The work brings various stages of life together through words, time and global reach via a variety of elements to create an experiential and holistic installation. Working corroboratively with the architects, allowed the artist to develop an artwork that is integrated within the building as a whole. The public art installation encompasses the walls and floors throughout the first floor, as well as a water wall that flows down the three stories of the lobby area, allowing for a work of art that is truly part of the building, both conceptually and physically. The individual, the community and time are united through the work of art in different layers. Words on the water wall unite young and old, while the water gently flowing down the surface symbolizes the flow of time. The three large words sandblasted into the stone lobby wall are about the individual, time and the community, with the word ALL moving from inside the building to outside. The terrazzo pattern on the lobby floor alludes to a globe, with latitude and longitude lines emanating from the front door towards the back of the lobby and outward. ~Norie Sato, 2000
Hach Hall, Iowa State University

A multi-part architecturally integrated public work of art is centered at the entrance and lobby of this chemistry lab and classroom building, and incorporates chemical elements and patterns. The art’s major focus is a series of blue-hued backlit aluminum panels of water jet cut chemistry patterns that transform from Penrose patterns, occurring on microscopic surfaces, to molecular, and other chemical structures. These aluminum panels flow from the exterior vestibule into the interior lobby creating an aesthetic entrance experience that enhances the sculptural quality of the lobby, and forges an identity for the building. The pattern continues onto the glass of the multiple pivot doors separating two lobby spaces. The focus for the lobby interior is a whimsical, sculptural installation utilizing chemistry laboratory glass and a series of monoprints based on an old periodic table model visualized in a spiral form.

Materials: Aluminum, acrylic, LED lights, glass, carbon fiber, copper, zinc, gold leaf, lead, glass and other materials.

Commissioned by University Museums and the Department of Chemistry in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Major funding provided by Dr. Richard Forsythe, B.S. Chemistry 1943 and Ph.D. Chemistry, 1949, Iowa State University. An Iowa State Art in State Buildings Project for Hach Hall. In the Art on Campus Collection, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. Accession Number: U2010.253

Project Partners: Roger Weed/Kirsten Hurt, OPN Architects, Cedar Rapids IA; Innovative Lighting/Channelbrite, Roland, IA; Reflections Glass, Ames, IA; Fabrication Specialties, Seattle WA; University Museums, ISU; Mortensen Construction; Central Stores, ISU; Ralph Berry; Trond Forre, gaffer, Dept. of Chemistry; Ryan Feddersen; and Shea Bajaj.

Hach Hall Art in State Buildings Committee: Representing the Department of Chemistry, Patricia Thiel, AiSB Committee chair and distinguished professor; Jason Chen, assistant professor; Renee Harris, administrative specialist; Dapeng Jing, student; William Jenks, professor and chair; Jacob Petrich, professor and chair; Nicola Pohl, professor; Selena Russell, student; Representing ISU, JaneAnn Stout, Associate Dean and Director, Iowa State University Extension to Families and University Museums Advisory Committee; Lynette Pohlman, director and chief curator, University Museums. Courtesy appointments: Mark Grief, project manager, ISU Facilities, Planning and Management; OPN Architects, Des Moines, IA; Ellenzweig, Boston, MA.

Public Art Philosophy Statement

The mission of the public work(s) of art for and in the Chemistry Building should convey the joy and excitement of scientific discovery in a way that draws people into the building and also engenders curiosity about the field; and, convey the centrality and pre-eminence of chemistry, both as an underpinning of modern civilization and as a discipline at Iowa State University. ~Chemistry AiSB Committee, June 3, 2008

Artist Statement

Using a combination of light and patterned surfaces, this artwork resides at the intersection of pattern, structure and materials inspired from chemical elements, surfaces and molecular models. Incorporating actual chemical patterns or partial ones, the patterns encourage looking and discovery. The title derives from the obvious study of elements that occur in chemistry, but also the incorporation of as many basic elements as feasible within the artwork itself. The glass sculptures in the lobby mural play with the notion of chemistry’s role in many aspects of life, while being clearly rooted in the tools often used in research and discovery. ~Norie Sato, 2010
The Fifth Muse, 2016

Marston Hall, Iowa State University

A hanging sculpture of diverse materials and objects creates a focal point in the main entrance lobby for the newly renovated historic Marston Hall. Inspired by the diversity and reach of engineering as a field, the sculpture focuses on many different elements that help create a sense of the universe of engineering. Anchored to the ceiling by a structure that represents the wheel and a turbine that are connected by a loop, recalling an infinity symbol, the hanging elements include real and fabricated parts, imagined sculptures, as well as expressions of process, and concepts in engineering. *The Fifth Muse* alludes to the four *Marston Muses* on the outside of the building, which in turn refer to classical female forms updated with engineering objects of its era (1900s). The artwork encourages close examination from different vantage points to determine what some of the elements might be and how they might relate to or embody engineering.

**Materials:** Aluminum, glass, stainless steel, acrylic, ABS Plastic, steel, and other materials.

Commissioned by University Museums and the College of Engineering. An Iowa State Art in State Buildings Project for Marston Hall. In the Art on Campus Collection, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. Accession Number: U2016.506

**Project Partners:** Iowa State University – College of Engineering Faculty and Staff and the following makers and fabricators of elements: Boyd Labs, Sandy Bremer, Josh DeLarm; ABE Student Innovation Center Waterjet Facility: Rob Hartmann; Rapid Manufacturing and Prototyping Laboratory: Matthew Frank; Frank Peters; Aerospace M:2:1, Matthew Nelson, Christine Nelson; Wind Simulation and Testing Laboratory, Andrew Jordan; and CIRAS, Chris Hill. Dept. of Chemistry Glassblower: Trond Forre; College of Design Labs, Jennifer Nieland; Tom Bos, MA, Industrial Design 2017, ISU; Frederick Koke Master’s Degree, College of Engineering, 2016, ISU; Christian Wehr; Joel Lanus; and Ralph Berry. For the University of Northern Iowa, Public Art Incubator: Tom Stancliffe, Professor of Art – Sculpture and Public Art Incubator, Dan Perry, Shop Technician and Instructor and Public Art Incubator; Marie Glaser, BA Art Education 2017; Dallas Guffey, BFA Art - Sculpture 2016; Abby Hedley, BA Art 2019; Tim Jorgensen, BFA Art - Sculpture 2017; Jacob McGinn, BA Art 2014 (Post Bacc Studies). Also, Mortenson Construction Company, Minneapolis, MN; Substance Architecture, Des Moines, IA; and Imaging Sciences, Willoughby, OH.

**Marston Hall Art in State Buildings Committee:** Representing College of Engineering: Dr. Joel Johnson, AiSB chair; Mufit Akinc, professor; Ashley Kohagan, student; Sarah Rajala, dean; and, representing University Museums, Lynette Pohlman, director and chief curator, and Nancy Gebhart, educator. Courtesy appointments: Kerry Dixon, project manager, Facilities Planning and Management; and, Paul Mankins, Substance Architecture.

**Public Art Philosophy Statement:**

Engineering Education inspires and empowers students to find solutions that impact humanity with innovation and style. Marston Hall is the central hub for all the disciplines of engineering; and a space to celebrate its diversity and creativity. —*Marston AiSB Committee, January 5, 2015*

**Artist’s Statement:**

At the main building for the College of Engineering, hanging objects evoke the intricacies, complexities and diversity of engineering disciplines at the College. Referring to the traditional sculptures of four muses, on the exterior of the historic building, this artwork looks to the present and future. An important aspect of the artwork was to fabricate or acquire most of the objects in Iowa and especially through the various manufacturing and technical labs at the University and the College of Engineering, making an installation that is mostly made in Iowa and partially made by engineers at the labs within the College of Engineering. This artwork is anchored by the basic wheel, an early engineering invention, and the turbine, a more recent invention connected by an infinity symbol as its main structure from which over 100 objects hang. Each object tells a story, yet relationships between the various objects also tell other open-ended narratives that become personal as well as universal. The Marston Water Tower hangs rather like a plumb bob, its legs swirling into the hanging objects as if it were becoming a cyclone, further adding to the story. —*Norie Sato, 2016*
ANKENY, IOWA
SLIDES, 2003-2005

Iowa State Laboratory Facilities
Sliding glass panels inspired by glass microscope slides carry images from the four laboratory departments which share this facility, magnifying their forensic work and juxtaposing them. Behind the sliding panels are images of Iowa's landscape from the local area. The Iowa landscape is a significant part of the Iowan psyche, and becomes the “constant” over which the sliding panels are viewed and can be moved. There are 16 total sliding panels and 22 stationary landscape panels.

Dimensions: Three main areas in the triangular shaped lobby are treated, two are approximately 10 x 20 ft. (one is in two parts), the third is approximately 10 x 6.5 ft.

Materials: Hand painted, sandblasted, airbrushed glass enamels on float glass

Commissioned by: Iowa State Arts Council, Department of Administrative Services, State of Iowa

Project Partners: Franz Mayer of Munich Studios; Fabrication Specialties; Ron Fine; Craig McNeel; Evan Blackwell; Ralph Berry; HDR Architects

SLIDES, 2003-2005. Images provided by the Artist.
IOWA CITY, IOWA

STUDY CIRCLES, 2010

Iowa Hygienic Laboratory, The University of Iowa

Two ribbons on two layers of glass allude to helices, connections, the micro and macro, all while illuminating the work of the Hygienic Lab, merging the inside of the lab with the outside. Circular details are metaphoric petri dishes that refer to various elements of the research at the lab including: water and air quality, environmental issues, mold, bacteria, viruses, pond scum, and asbestos. Images are from the microscopic view to views easily visible to the human eye. Perceiving, exploring, juxtaposing and scrutiny are integral to the artwork, just as these processes are integral to research, experimentation and discovery in science.

Dimensions: 12 ft. x 30 ft. x 24 in.

Materials: Hand painted, silkscreened, sandblasted glass with antique glass details.

Commissioned by: The University of Iowa Art in State Buildings Program.

Project Partners: OPN Architects; Franz Mayer of Munich Studios; Netom Glass, Cedar Rapids, IA; and Ralph Berry.
Selected public art projects by Norie Sato included in the exhibition *Elements of Wonder*

- **Water Passages** (2007-2015), Fort Worth Chisholm Trail Parkway, TX.
- **Study Circles** (2010), University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory, Iowa City, IA.
- **Air Over Under** (2009-2011), San Francisco International Airport, CA.
- **Cactus Mirage** (2006-2008), McDowell Mountain Ranch Aquatic Center, Scottsdale, AZ.
- **Slides** (2003-2005), Iowa State Labs, Ankeny, IA.
- **Here and Balance** (2000), Salt Lake City, UT.
- **Ghost Palms** (1998-2007), Miami International Airport, FL.
- **Biochemistry Waltz** (1996-1998), Biochemistry Building Addition, University of Wisconsin at Madison, WI.
- **Dallas Convention Center Expansion** (1991-93), with Garrison Roots, William J. Maxwell, Philip Lamb, TX.
- **Transience of Memory** (1991), Seattle, WA. (temporary)
- **Brief Cases** (1998), with Tad Savinar and Bill Will, Portland City Hall, OR.
- **Of a Leaf or a Feather** (2012-2015), San Ysidro Land Port of Entry, CA.
- **Helical Tango** (2009-2011), Biochemistry Building Addition, University of Wisconsin at Madison, WI.
- **City Cycle: Arbor** (2004-2005), Federal Way City Hall, Federal Way, WA.
- **Harlequin** (2007-2011), with Jim Hirschfield and Sonya Ishii, Cary Arts Center, Cary, NC.
- **Traveling Stones and Other Vagabonds** (2007-2008), Salt Lake City Intermodal Transit Center, Salt Lake City, UT.
- **Witness, Levels and Other Dilemmas** (2000-2002), with Pam Beyette, Michael Davis, Richard Turner, Seattle, WA.
- **Dialogue** (2000-2002), University of Washington/Cascadia Community College, Bothell Campus, WA.
- **Central Link Light Rail, Sound Transit** (1999-2008), Seattle, WA.
- **The Spirit of Silence: the Reflection Room** (2012-2014), San Diego International Airport, CA.
- **Quiet and Soaring** (2014-2016), University of North Texas Student Center Meditation Room, Denton, TX.