

“Leaves of Light”

A Golden Section Solar Installation

Entryway: Life Sciences Building, York University, Toronto

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The entryway of the new Life Sciences Building at York University in Toronto is now graced with a solar art glass installation inspired by the golden section and the remarkable Ginkgo tree. Many plantings of Ginkgo have been done near the Life Sciences Building.

“Leaves of Light” is designed to collect solar energy during the day then use it at night to illuminate the entryway at night. The embedded, custom designed blue-grey solar cells are a perfect match for the innovative sculptural façade (based on DNA molecules) designed by SSG Architecture. (<http://www.ssgarch.com>).

Glass Artist Sarah Hall, RCA has created the piece in three distinct layers: a solar layer that collects energy from the sun, LED light sheets powered by the solar cells, and a painted layer with golden Ginkgo imagery and layers of related poetry and text.

The solar layer was designed by Sarah Hall and fabricated in collaboration with Wulfmeier Solar in Bielefeld, Germany. This east-facing solar façade (installed at 90 degrees) contains 251 Sunways CH504505 multi-crystalline cells. These blue-grey cells measure 125mm by 125mm each with 2,25 Wp. The power is sufficient to gather energy on a daily basis to power the middle layer of LED sheets (125,5 Volts / 565 Wp). For further information please contact Ranier Schoene: schoene@wulfmeiersolar.com. The artist has designed an elegant, expressive solar layer which includes the classical proportions of the golden section and screened images of Ginkgo fossil leaves backed by red dichroic glass.

Charles Darwin in 1859 referred to the Ginkgo as a living fossil. The Ginkgo Biloba is the world’s oldest living tree, whose existence can be traced back over 250 million years. Smithsonian paleontologists have been studying fossils of Ginkgo leaves from a time of sudden greenhouse warming 55 million years ago. By counting microscopic pores on the leaves, scientists have estimated the amount of carbon dioxide in the prehistoric atmosphere. By comparing the pores to those on living Ginkgo leaves, they have been able to compare the prehistoric atmosphere to our own.

The west-facing painted layer is a combination of hand painting, digital printing and screen printing on glass. The artwork includes Goethe’s 1815 poem *Ginkgo Biloba* in the original German in addition to Spanish, English, French, Italian, Dutch, Portuguese and Japanese. The work Ginkgo is also written in Chinese, Greek, Arabic, Hindi, Persian, Hebrew, Thai, Russian, Bengali and Korean - acknowledging the multi cultural nature of York University. The text is used in a symbolic way and often overlaps becoming a pattern in itself. The art glass was created in collaboration with her long time fabricator Glasmalerei Peters GmbH in Paderborn Germany. All glass is durable, laminated safety glass and easily maintained.

Through poetry, technology and images of leaves and trees “Leaves of Light” offers a unique demonstration of solar energy collection while celebrating the beauty of our natural world and proving a warm welcoming beacon of light for those who enter the new Life Sciences Building at York University.

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Link to Press Images: <http://www.sarahhallstudio.com/artgeneratesamps.com/press.html>