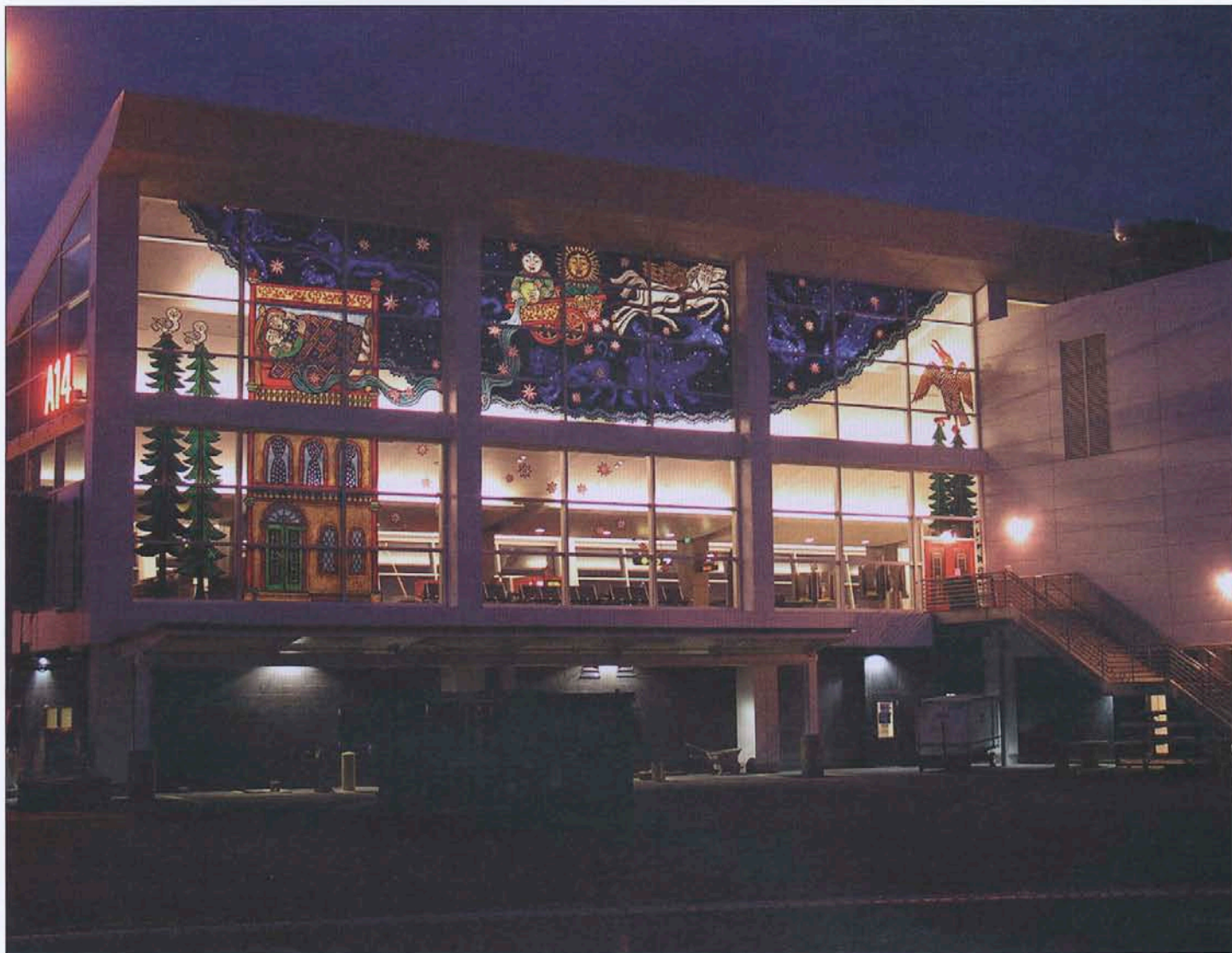


# Seatac Public Art Projects

## *The Seattle-Tacoma Airport Glass Commissions*

by David Wagner, Derix Art Glass Consultants



*"I Was Dreaming of Spirit Animals" was designed by Cappy Thompson and fabricated in Germany by the Derix Glasstudios. This installation can be seen in the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.*

In June of 2004, the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport celebrated the opening of their new terminal expansion. There were a number of exceptional public art installations in this new terminal, including two remarkable art glass windows designed by a pair of well-known Seattle artists. Both projects were fabricated at Derix Glasstudios in Taunusstein, Germany, using a number of innovative techniques. In both cases,

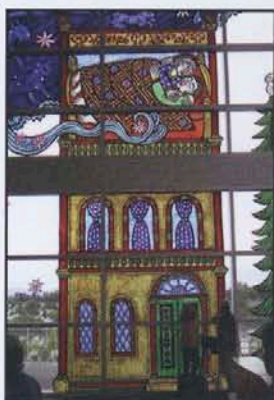
the art glass was conceived as an integral part of the architectural systems used in the building.

### ***Cappy Thompson***

Cappy Thompson's spectacular hand-painted window, titled *I Was Dreaming of Spirit Animals*, is 30 meters wide x 10 meters tall. It was installed as a functional exterior glass curtain wall at the end of the new concourse.

Cappy Thompson began her career as a stained glass painter. She later adapted her technique to the painting of blown transparent glass vessels, for which she has established an international reputation. Her focused narrative is based on a highly developed personal iconography. This new mythology features a strong painted line that gives the work a medieval quality unique in contemporary glass.





*"I Was Dreaming of Spirit Animals," details. This window is based on Cappy Thompson's dreamscape.*

This window, like much of Cappy's work, is based on her dreams and the mythical personalities and images that populate them. The foundation of the composition is the small house with two figures, representing Cappy and her mate, sleeping in their bed, and dream-

ing a fantastic galaxy of astrological creatures, sprinkled with stars and flowers by the two gods sailing through the night sky.

There are two main processes used in the creation of this window. Much of the artwork is realized by hand painting

and firing vitreous enamels to the surface of clear float glass, primarily the black line and shading, as well as the two shades of blue. Most of the color in the window consists of large pieces of hand blown flashed glass which are laminated to the inside surface of the same float glass panel using a two-part silicone process. These pieces have been elaborately acid etched and painted.

All painting on this window was performed by Cappy and a Derix painter at the studio. The vitreous enamel is often mixed with a variety of different solvents and emulsions to allow more than one layer of colors to be applied before firing. At about 1100 degrees, the





*Above and right column, opposite page: Installation details illustrating the monumental size of "Traveling Light," which was designed by Linda Beaumont and fabricated by Derix Glasstudios.*

*Left column, opposite page: The entire installation consists of 85 floor-to-ceiling panels and creates a glass wall that separates the security area from an adjacent wterminal walkway.*

coatings vitrify permanently to the surface of the glass to produce a transparent or translucent color.

All the glass is tempered and assembled into standard 25mm thick insulated glass units, and installed as a normal architectural component by the site glazing contractor, as part of the glazing schedule for the building. The outer panel in each unit is a low E glass, as used throughout the terminal expansion.

### **Linda Beaumont**

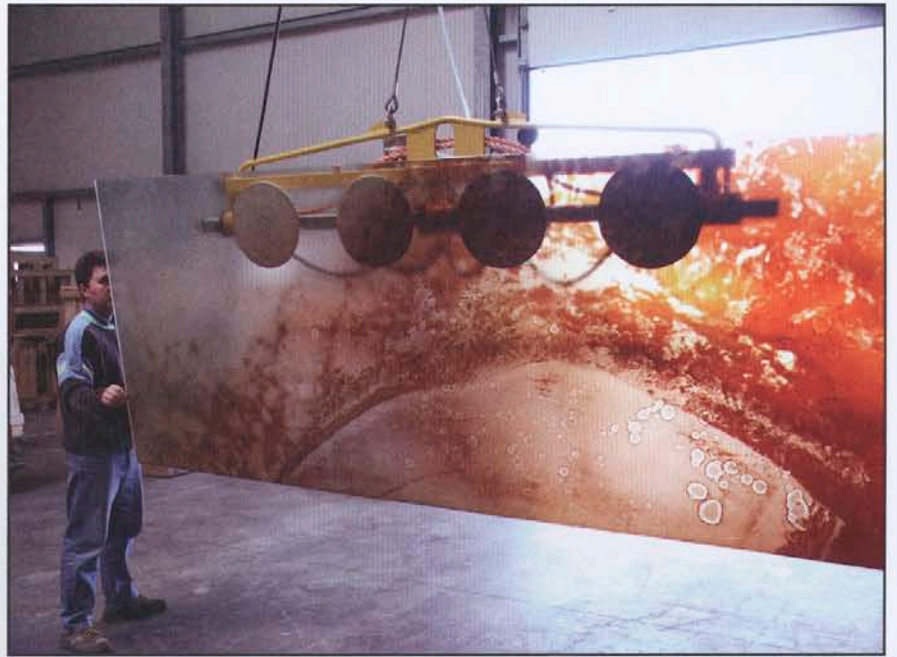
Linda Beaumont creates public and private artworks within the Pacific Northwest. She is a versatile artist with a well-established reputation for both studio and public art. She utilizes a number of materials in her work, including glass, stone, terrazzo and fiberglass.

Her work at the airport, entitled *Traveling Light*, is an entire interior art glass environment, consisting of 85

floor-to-ceiling panels surrounding an escalator entrance and serving as a glass wall separating the security area from the terminal walkway.

The piece addresses the history of the lumber industry in the Northwest, with an ebullient use of wood grain patterns and images. Each panel is built of two sheets of 8mm float glass elaborately silkscreened with silver stain, then air and hand brushed with





vitreous enamel, and fired. Certain areas were then etched with a photoresist process to produce very fine half tones in the figures.

Linda's process of design is unique and interactive. She worked closely with the studio artisans to develop methods of applying the glass enamels that had not been tried before. Much of her improvisation takes place right at the surface of the glass.

After all firing, the glass is tempered and the panels assembled as a standard laminated safety glass panel. Once again the glass was installed by the site glazing contractor.

### Conclusion

One of the notable aspects of these projects is the way in which the work was integrated into the skin and structure of the building. The art glass was configured as a standard architectural component — permanent, maintenance free, secure, and installed as part of the building's normal glazing schedule.

These public art projects were managed by the public art organization 4Culture and includes artists from throughout the US, selected through invitational and open competitions. Seatac is home to an impressive collection of contemporary and regional art.

Derix Glasstudios is a fine art fabrication facility near Frankfurt, established in 1866. The studio has earned a reputation worldwide for the highest-quality craftsmanship and innovative techniques in the creation of architectural art glass. The studio works in collaboration with artists for the development and creation of public art internationally.

