

Black Family Visual Arts Center



1

The Black Family Visual Arts Center is located just off the Dartmouth campus, on Lebanon Street in the contiguous town of Hanover, NH.

The lobby, as shown to the left in Figure 1, is a public space with innovative seating. It is full of large crimson red couches and tall lamps.

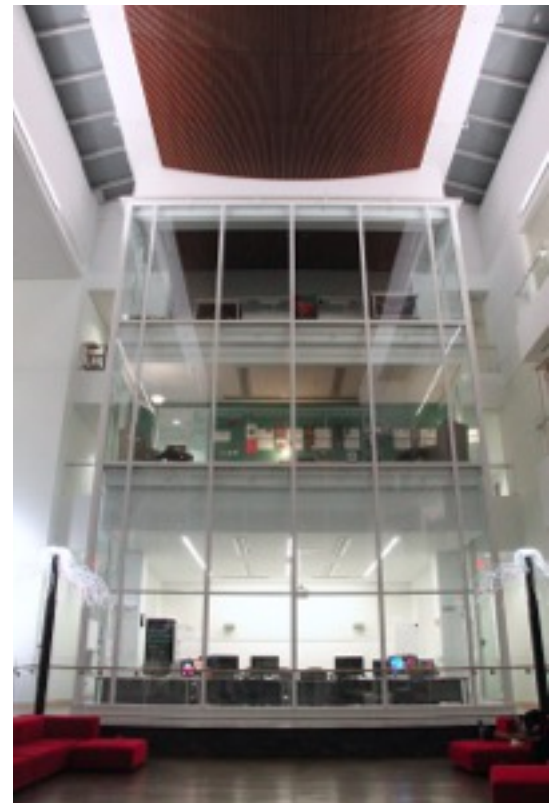
The floor space is open in the middle, enabling large congregations, but discouraging small groups of conversation.

Its ground floor, as shown at left in Figure 2, is part of a large atrium that reaches up to the third floor. The space is open to the walkways of each level, and on the north side large glass windows frame a room on each floor. These rooms are life-size display cases, and their contents are changed frequently (except the bottom floor's, which is the digital arts lab). They usually contain art pieces or interactive installations. One can view them from the atrium, or they can walk directly inside them and peer out.



3

The fact that the ground floor opens up to the rest of the building gives it a unique publicity. Every sound made in the lobby echoes up to the third floor. In addition, as seen at left in Figure 3, elements of the entire building's architecture can be seen from this space. The angularity and clean design of the building is emphasized by these parallel staircases, which mimic the right angles produced by the couches on the ground floor. Everything seems to be placed at simple, intentional angles.



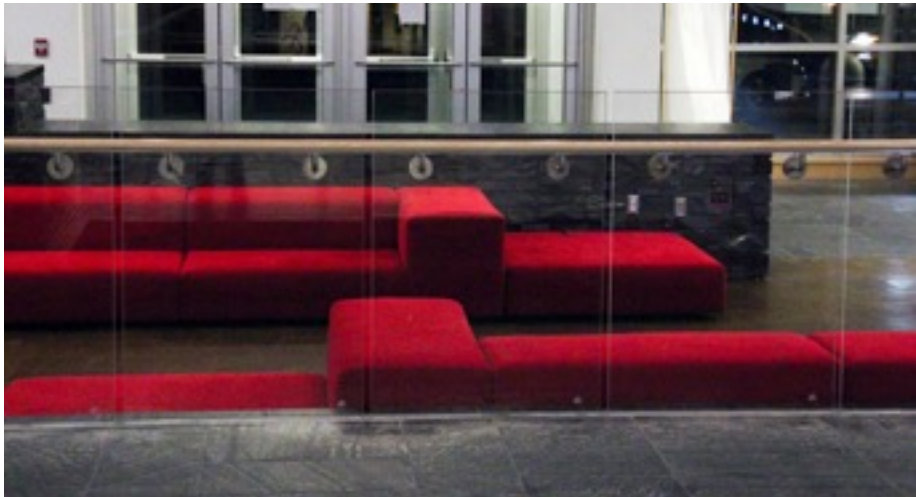
2

As detailed in the Figure 4 at right, the lamps on the ground floor are pieces of art themselves. They seem to have tendrils or tentacles that reach out and dispense their light. These lamps provide better lighting on the ground floor, as the ceiling is several floors above. They are at once aesthetically innovative, artistic, and practical.



4

However, the flow of the entire space seems to be determined by the arrangement of these red couches on the ground floor. Figure 5 shows that they are placed assymmetrically but they face each other in parallel lines, creating a certain simplicity and regularity. The space seems decidedly clean and quiet, and the congregation space is defined by this atmosphere.



5