Meridian International Contemporary Culture Center
Proposed Addition to Meridian International Center

Elizabeth Waites
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Susan Piedmont Palladino, Committee Chair
Marcia Feuerstein, Committee Member
Paul Emmons, Committee Member

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ABSTRACT

Located just off of Seventeenth Street NW in Washington, D.C., the Meridian International Center complex sits on an elevated, crescent-shaped tract of land opposite Meridian Hill/Malcolm X Park. On the site are two neoclassical residences, both designed by John Russell Pope in the early 20th century. Initially designed as diplomatic residences, when Meridian International Center purchased the site in 1960, the houses were converted into facilities for the organization. Today, having recently undergone extensive renovations, the buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Meridian International Center is devoted to the exchange of people, ideas, and art. The organization aims to promote international understanding through diplomatic exchanges, art programs, lecture series, and educational programs. The majority of operations is devoted to the International Visitors Program, however in recent years, the organization has expressed a desire to expand their other programs, specifically the Arts & Culture and World Affairs divisions. A primary intention of Meridian International Center is to open its doors to the city, to invite and engage the public in international matters through a variety of expositions.

Currently lacking sufficient space to accommodate such programs, this thesis proposes a new facility to Meridian International Center’s building complex. This facility is to house one of Meridian International Center’s new divisions, the Contemporary Culture Center, ensuring the organization is able to engage the public both literally and figuratively, the building is to act as a beacon in the city for the sharing and mixing of cultures.
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Chinese Art and Greek Art

By Jalaluddin Rumi

The Prophet said, "There are some who see Me by the same Light in which I am seeing them. Our natures are one. Without reference to any strands of lineage, without reference to texts or traditions, we drink the Life-Water together."

Here's a story about that hidden mystery:

The Chinese and the Greeks were arguing as to who were the better artists. The King said, "We'll settle this matter with a debate."

The Chinese began talking, but the Greeks wouldn't say anything. They left.

The Chinese suggested then that they each be given a room to work on with their artistry, two rooms facing each other and divided by a curtain.

The Chinese asked the King for a hundred colors, all the variations, and each morning they came to where the dyes were kept and took them all. The Greeks took no colors. "They're not part of our work," they said. They went to their room and began cleaning and polishing the walls. All day every day they made those walls as pure and clear as an open sky.

There is a way that leads from all-colors to colorlessness. Know that the magnificent variety of the clouds and the weather comes from the total simplicity of the sun and the moon.

The Chinese finished, and they were so happy. They beat the drums in the joy of completion. The King entered their room, astonished by the gorgeous color and detail. The Greeks then pulled the curtain dividing the rooms. The Chinese figures and images shimmeringly reflected on the clear Greek walls. They lived there, even more beautifully, and always changing in the light.

The Greek art is the Sufi way. They don't study books of philosophical thought. They make their loving clearer and clearer. No wantings, no anger. In that purity they receive and reflect the images of every moment, from here, from the stars, from the void.

They take them in as though they were seeing with the Lighted Clarity that sees them.
Hi,

I recently completed my Master's Thesis at Virginia Polytechnic and State University and am preparing my Electronic Thesis Document which includes images from Google Earth. I am requesting permission to use a Google Earth screen shot of the site. The thesis will be available online as part of the electronic database of theses.
Concept Model of Cultural Center
Circulation as a connecting link to each level offering access to programs, the journey leading to the top, the roof, the view...

Circulation diagram of Cultural Center

Study of Existing Buildings on Site
North Elevation   Section looking South B-B'

Sixteenth Street NW

Meridian Hill/Malcolm X Park

Seventeenth Street NW
Typical Wall Section at Exterior Ramp

- Insulating Vision Glass
- Sealant
- Steel Grate
- Cavity for Drainage
- Recessed Light
- Custom Mullion @ Back Face
- Anodized Aluminum Panel
- Insulating Translucent Glass in Window Box
- Firestop
- Insulating Clear Glass
- Anodized Aluminum Panel w/Curtain Wall
- Insulation
- Shade in Pocket
- Insulated Clear Glass
- Vision Glass  w/Panel Shadowbox
- Anodized Aluminum Panel w/Curtain Wall
- Insulation
- Shade in Pocket
Modeling Views

View of Northeast Corner

View of Southwest Corner

View of Northwest Corner

View of Southeast Corner
Modeling Views

Roof Terrace Exterior Ramp
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