



ARCHITECTURAL GLASS ART, INC.

THE DESIGN PROCESS

Before beginning designs for a project, I gather as much information as possible about the nature of the project, including information about the architecture as well as the client. I talk to the architect/designer to learn about the building and how they envision glass contributing to the intended design. I get to know the client in order to develop a work that not only meets their expectations, but also reflects the clients themselves. If the project is for a church, I like to spend a weekend with the church community to get to know them and what makes their community unique. Around this time, I meet with the committee to discuss the specifics of the project, addressing themes, symbolism, relevant issues, and any special requests or objectives. With this knowledge, I am able to evaluate my designs as they develop and determine whether they reflect the unique character of the community. The objective of this preliminary evaluation is to design a work that is sympathetically integral to the architecture, as well as aesthetically attuned to the nature of the client.

The next step in the design process is building a scale model of the space where the glass is to be installed. The model is very helpful in understanding the architecture and in studying the way the light will animate the glass. The designs, executed on transparencies, are installed in the model, enabling the clients to see how the designs work within their architectural context. Viewing the model enables the clients to visualize the proposed work more accurately and thus encourages them to contribute their opinions. As a result, the client, whether an individual or a committee, becomes a more integral part of the design process, able to offer objective observations about the designs. To accompany the designs and model, we also fabricate full-scale prototypes using techniques and materials proposed in the design. With these, the client can envision the finished project and how it works with light. The model and prototype are also very beneficial for fundraising purposes.

The designs in this model form are presented to the client at several stages of development. The first review consists of preliminary designs, often including several different design approaches; each developed in response to different issues. From the observations and comments of the client and the architect/designer, I continue to develop the designs, with subsequent review meetings, until everyone is satisfied. Throughout the design process, I prefer to work in collaboration with the architect/designer and the client, as opposed to developing a design in isolation and presenting it for acceptance. When working with a church, I prefer to present the designs, models, and prototype to the whole community prior to final acceptance, to give them an opportunity to comment on the work before it is complete.

Concerning budgets, I prefer to establish a budget prior to beginning the designs so that I have a specific cost objective during the process. The budget can be determined in one of several ways. First, I can analyze the project and its issues and determine the amount necessary to achieve the project objectives and requirements. Second, the client can establish a budget, which I can review with consideration of the project objectives and determine whether it is adequate. Third, I can discuss the budget with the client and together we can agree on an appropriate budget. I have found that some of my best work has been for projects with limited budgets because I was challenged to find innovative solutions to meet the needs of the project.

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