

Learning Places Summer 2016
SITE REPORT #2

New York Public Library



(Burdick 2012)

Jeury Gomez

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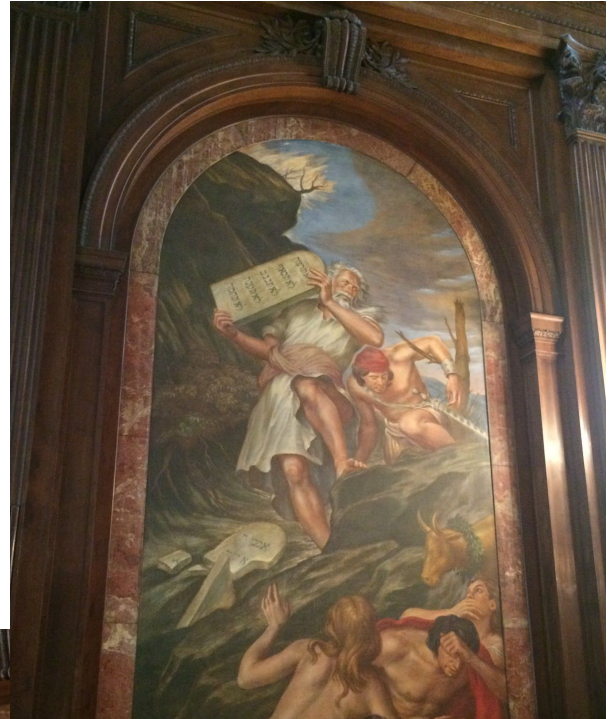
INTRODUCTION

The New York Public Library is perhaps one of the most aesthetically designed libraries in New York possibly giving competition to the library of the Bronx Community College. The Library is about 100 years old and to this day still stands strong. Before completion the building site was in fact a city reservoir and took nearly two years for workers to lay tear down the reservoir and lay the foundation to build the library. The library to this day is held by public and private finances. (The New York Public Library)

The Library is located on 5th avenue and 42nd Street New York. At the corner of 42nd street if one stands facing east you can catch a glimpse of Grand Central Terminal, which notably are probably the only few structures in the city that terminates one's horizontal view when looking down an avenue.

The library host many event from free english courses to resume workshops, and contains a some historical artifacts such as a copy of the "Gutenberg Bible." The library is a great place for students and scholars who seek to do research work as the library has a very rich collection.

Paintings at the McGraw Rotunda



These paintings are situated at the McGraw Rotunda. We can see that in one of the paintings on the bottom left as the podcast stated “ [here we see] Gutenberg showing a proof of his bible printed in 1455.” We also can see Moses on the top right painting holding a tablet in which he appears to hold the commandments. These paintings all symbolically represent the creative nature of writing. Interesting enough the McGraw Rotunda is rectangular as opposed to circular

as the name implies which was somewhat confusing.

Statues and Hallways



The sculpture or statues which are found in several locations I think gives the library a very unique look. Statues such as these are normally seen at museums. I find that this gives is a very polished look to the overall image of the library. The entrance of almost each room has this this decorative cornice signifying that each room is of high value. Interesting enough the lights that illuminate these hall have a very modern design to them as opposed to an old style chandelier.



View above the McGraw Rotunda



The celestial painting above the McGraw Rotunda is a very interesting choice selection. As one is walking up the stairs and glances up at the roof we see this painting. The placement and symbolism of this painting makes me think of the constellations in Grand Central Terminal. It is of no coincidence that these painting both were chosen and strategically placed to let the viewer know that these are monumental structures.

Lights over staircase

One of the things that really caught my attention were theses lantern lights. Although powered by electricity; I really like the theme here of making the interior resonate the 1800s which was a time a period of enlightenment. These lights embolism that feeling.

DISCOVERIES

The New York Public is perhaps the most European (mostly Roman) influenced architectural building in New York City that I have seen. From the very entrance to sculpture selections and even the very atmosphere of the building evokes an enlightenment aura. This building truly represents the meaning of the Beaux-arts style. I must again admit that although I have been to the NYPL in the past, that is I've met with friends and hanged out in front of the building; I have never been inside of it though. The library is rich in symbolism and detailed crafts. The one thing that I quickly realized was the use of animalism and all the carving sculpture that are incorporated in the library's design. The lion is a very recognized symbol and in essence is the mascot of the NYPL. According to the guided podcast when touring the building it stated that the lion is a symbol of "patience" and "fortitude". Two giant lions rest on each side of the building entrance, One certainly feels fortuitous just by walking into the building and noticing the three triumphant arch entrance that welcomes you into the building. These entrances resemble the roman baths of caracalla, which at the time were vast roman baths that purposely had these vast arch passageways, which in my opinion makes one feel like zeus.

This theme of enlightenment is seen everywhere, even the water sculpture that is at the very left of the main entrance. Here we can see a sculpture of who I believe appears to be Socrates one of the greatest thinkers that ever walked on this earth standing over a fountain, in which water flows over him which is symbolic for the spreading of knowledge as the water

travels from a shorter passageway and eventually meets a larger body of water.

As I toured the building with the guided podcast I quickly was excited to have found a place where I can study. The paintings that cover the building, the sculptures, from the dark lighting of the building all create this magnificent study environment. One easily feels as if they are trapped in the enlightenment period of the 1800s and that at any moment John Locke and Immanuel Kant would roam around the halls. As the time went by I began to feel angry as I saw that the place barely had any areas for study and tourists with their camera phones snapping pictures of the building. Not once did I see anyone who resembled a scholar or is studying/researching while I toured around the building. I grew grotesque at the very idea of what this building seems to have become.

Given that we toured three times Grand Central Terminal one can argue why this structure should never be brought down. Grand Central Terminal structure still serves a purpose that is a train terminal and one can understand why this structure has become a landmark. On the other hand the NYPL building is beautiful design. I am angry to see that such library has become the site of tourism rather than a building for actual academic work.

KEYWORDS

Balustrade: A turn or rectangular upright supporting a railing or handrail

Cornice: A crown molding

Cornucopia: A cone-shaped ornament or receptacle

Corinthian column: The slenderest and most ornate of the three classical Greek columns, including tallest base of the three classical Greek orders

Cyma: A molding of double curvature which is concave at the outer edge and convex at the inner edge

Flute: Shallow vertical grooves on a column

Works Cited

About the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building. (n.d.). The New York Public Library. Retrieved June 26, 2016, from <http://www.nypl.org/about/locations/schwarzman>

All keywords

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