

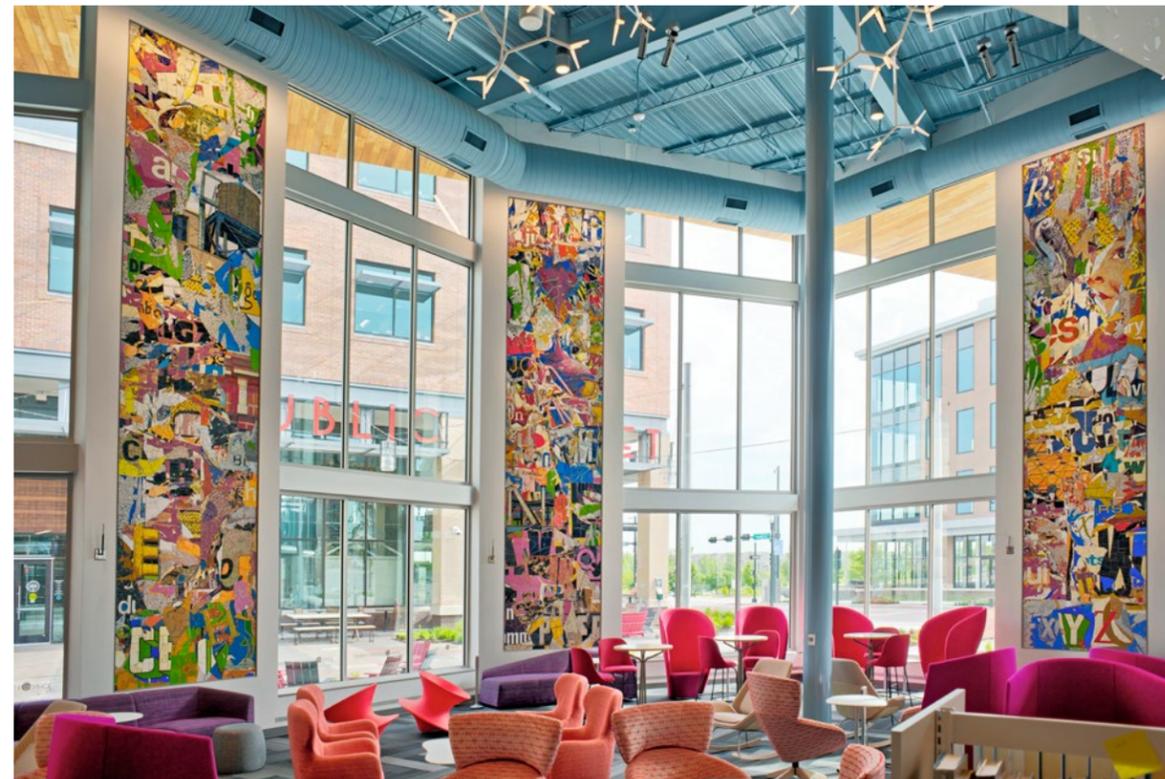
Art Work at Lenexa City Center Library

Technical Notes

Artist Stephen T. Johnson worked with the German company Franz Mayer of Munich to fabricate these works. This company works with artists from all over the world to interpret their designs from the original medium into architectural glass and mosaics. Johnson created digital designs for these artworks and emailed them to the fabricators. The company used Johnson's designs as guides for how to arrange the many individual glass pieces used to compose the mosaic.

In this mosaic there are four different kinds of tesserae:

- Flat marbles/glass gems – small round glass pieces that have an entirely smooth surface
- Glass cake – large flat pieces of mosaic glass that can be cut or broken into regular or irregular shapes, used to make both kinds of smaller pieces listed below
- Italian Smalti – small, regularly-sized, machine cut and broken mosaic glass pieces that has an identical surface quality on all facets
- Mexican glass – small, irregularly-sized hand-cut and broken mosaic glass pieces that can have different surface qualities and colors on different facets



Interconnections by Stephen T. Johnson

Stephen T. Johnson is a Caldecott Honor children's book author/illustrator who lives and works in Lawrence, KS. He has exhibited his artwork both regionally and nationally. He has created works of art for Love Field Airport in Dallas, TX, and subway stations in Brooklyn, NY, and Los Angeles, CA.

"Interconnections" is a set of three mosaics, each 23-1/2 feet tall x 5-1/2 feet wide. Find the large glass mosaic triptych in the Atrium. Take a moment and think about how all the different parts of this artwork go together in this particular space.

Take-Home Activity

A haiku is a traditional Japanese poem that has three lines. It has three parts, like a triptych. The first and third lines each have five syllables, and the second line has seven syllables. Haiku do not have to include complete sentences, and usually don't rhyme. Try writing a haiku inspired by this artwork yourself!

If you and a friend have each written a poem, try sharing and writing a haiku in response each other's poem.

Next try to write a poem using the letters of your name written vertically as starting points for each line.

For example: **K**ansas artist
Always looking around
Taking ideas and turning them
Into something new
Everyday

Which poem activity did you enjoy more? Make sure to share your finished poems with the Library on your next visit. We want to read your creative responses!

Some Art Words

composition	in art, literature, and music – the way in which parts make up a whole
fabrication	physical manufacturing of an object
font	a set of letters and symbols with a similar design
grout	mortar or paste for filling in between tiles
mosaic	a picture made up of small pieces of hard material such as stone or glass
tesserae	the individual pieces of a mosaic
triptych	a work of art made of three separate and related pieces
vertical	up and down
visual or implied texture	in art, a surface that has the illusion of a texture that it does not actually possess



Let's begin in the Atrium, where many people gather. Take one minute and look at each panel, carefully observing the various details. Then stand far enough away to see all three panels at the same time. Talk with your family and friends about what you see by answering these questions.

Questions to Consider

- ? All the panels contain letters of the alphabet. What else is the same about the three panels?
- ? What words would you use to describe the colors? How did the artist unify the composition?
- ? Find the X, Y and Z in the right panel. There are lower- and upper case letters in many different fonts. We see that the letters aren't in alphabetical order, they're somewhat jumbled. Why might the artist choose to do this?
- ? Where do you see letters made of everyday objects? *Hint: on the lower part of the left panel, there is a upper case "E" made of a streetlight viewed from the side. Try to find more hidden letters made of everyday objects.*
- ? Look around the Atrium and outside the windows. What other letter shapes in everyday objects do you see?
- ? Look for curves. Can you find pieces of glass that have a bumpy texture? There are many different shapes of glass in this art work. How do the shapes move your eyes across the surface?

Read the "Words from the Artist" and think about this question:

- ? How might the function of the Atrium in the Library relate to the idea of interconnections in artwork and literature?

Words from the Artist

We rearrange the notes of a scale to generate musical compositions, we mix the colors of a rainbow to create visual works of art, and we reorder the letters of an alphabet to form words and texts.

As with a triplet of stained glass windows or three lines of a haiku, "Interconnections" is a triptych that celebrates the twenty-six letters of the English alphabet through a profusion of typographic fonts, both uppercase and lowercase, intermixed with images from my books - Alphabet City, Alphabet School, and A is for Art: An Abstract Alphabet.

Reading from left to right, the first panel celebrates the letters A to I, the second panel J to Q, and the third panel R to Z. The goal of "Interconnections" is to inspire visitors to the Library to view our world in a fresh and playful way, and in so doing, discover for themselves

juxtapositions of scale, color harmonies, rhythms in surface

textures, and joy in what may seem unremarkable or ordinary, by transcending the mundane and unearthing its hidden beauty.

