



University of Houston  
Division of Administration and Finance

## Press Release

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### **CRUZ-DIEZ ART PIECE INSTALLED AT WELCOME CENTER SITE**

An eye-catching art piece designed by famed artist Carlos Cruz-Diez was recently installed outside the Welcome Center. Located on the north side of the building off University Boulevard, the piece is a medium height serpentine wall that spans fifty-three feet long. It is made up of approximately 2000 individually painted pieces all of which work in unison to create an optical effect as you walk or drive past. Splashes of color such as red, blue, and green align aluminum modules which are designed to change and blend in a bizarre and unexpected way.

According to Michael Guidry, curator of University Collections, the art piece was purposely designed to draw attention. And during the short time it's been in place, the piece has garnered a lot of positive feedback and has caused curious heads to turn. Comments have ranged from "What is it?" to other flowery compliments.

Although Cruz-Diez was first commissioned in fall 2004, the process experienced some difficulties due to the fact that Cruz-Diez is an international artist based in Venezuela. According to Katherine Miller, Facilities Planning and Construction's senior project manager for the Welcome Center Project, "it made sense to do the fabrication here instead of overseas; plus site work needed to be involved. In addition we had to make sure to find the right type of shop." Once the artist was selected, Cruz-Diez's son Jorge, who works very closely with him, was able to manage the project on his behalf.

The installation is a collaborative effort that included Basic Industries which served as the general contractor for Welcome Center public art component. Blumenthal Sheet Metal, a local shop that also fabricated the Tim Glover piece for the Campus Recreation and Wellness Center, was selected to fabricate the Cruz-Diez piece. Their work involved reviewing drawings, ironing out the details, and managing the installation process. J.E. Titus Painting Contractor handled arduous task of painting the piece. Sonny Rose, estimator for Blumenthal Sheet Metal, described the task as "a very lengthy process requiring individual layers of paint to dry completely before applying several subsequent layers. The painted surface was cut out on our CNC plasma table then sent to the painter."

In addition, Bos Lighting Design served as the lighting consultant. One unique aspect of the piece is its revolving light aspect in which the details are enhanced at night; additional pieces needed to enable the lighting function are scheduled be added within the next several weeks.

The price of the artwork is approximately \$200,000 and includes artist fees, fabrication and shipping costs.

Cruz-Diez has spent much of his career doing color analysis and is considered an expert. Guidry explained, “The reason he was selected is because it was a great opportunity [for us]. He’s a great artist and the System Wide Art Acquisition Committee could visualize one of his sculptures there at the [Welcome Center] site. He also has gallery representation in Houston at the Maria Sicardi Gallery on Richmond Avenue so they could help us facilitate the work. He is well-respected and this is his first commercial commission in the U.S., a major coup for UH and Houston.”

Cruz-Diez, currently resides in Paris. His website is <http://www.cruz-diez>.



Installation of art piece on February 6, 2009



PHOTOS: Cydney Rax



Original Cruz-Diaz Perspective

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