Michael Krondl
Variation in Silver and White, 2011
Photographic Mural, 10 Panels of ceramic pigment on tempered glass
7 x 37 feet

In 2011, the western wall adjacent to the stairwell was identified as the ideal location for the integration of public art at the Town of Vail's new Lionshead Transit and Welcome Center. As a highly visible location for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic, this wall would serve as a blank canvas for an artist to creatively enhance the appearance of this expansive façade with their work.

A public call to artists was issued which resulted in over 90 submissions from artists around the country to be considered for this project. After careful review, the Art in Public Places Board (AIPP) selected three finalists to present site-specific proposals for this wall. The criteria for the proposed work included: site compatibility, quality and innovation, timelessness, permanence and maintenance, public safety, and a work that is reflective of the Vail environment. Michael Krondl's photographic mural *Variation in Silver and White* was selected by the Art in Public Places Board for this public art project and then also approved by the Town Council.

Krondl, a New York based artist, explained in his presentation that the historical limitations for photography in public art is no longer a hurdle. The technical advancements in photography and the ability to produce large-scale photos on durable materials allows for more public art projects to be created in this medium. This would also prove a great opportunity for the Town to diversify their collection by selecting a new medium not previously represented.

Krondl visited Vail prior to the selection process when the call to artists was first publicized to capture the mountain during the winter season through his camera lens. He took numerous photos which he combined digitally into a panoramic collage. He adjusted and digitally retouched the photos to create a more expansive vista.

Variation in Silver and White is a photo based image of the Gore Range as seen through a scrim of Aspen trees. "Conceptually the piece works in several ways. Its primary impact is one of erasure, as if part of the building had been made to disappear, or as if a window now allowed you to peer directly through the structure revealing the ravishing view that it blocks," explains Krondl. Not only does the artist achieve a transformation of space, but he also captures the passage of seasons. "While in the winter, the trompe l'oeil effect is dominant, in the summer, the image serves as a sort of souvenir. One may see this as an echo of the season past, or equally, as a teaser for the upcoming winter season." Given the placement of the work adjacent to a stairwell, the physical interaction of Krondl's work mirrors that of one descending and ascending a mountain.

The artist hired the ateliers of Mayer of Munich, who is highly regarded for their expertise in art glass and ceramics, to produce the final work. With nearly 160 years of experience the reputable family-owned company is known for creating site-specific art glass and ceramic installations throughout the world.

Creating *Variation in Silver in White* was a hands-on process for the artist and Mayer of Munich studios. Krondl reduced the photos to a black and white image resembling a film grain. The black and white images were made into silk-screens that were printed directly onto the glass panels and then fired directly onto the glass panels. While the artist was at the studio, appropriate pigments were selected which were painted on the panels by studio artisans in a technique reminiscent of vintage hand-tinted photographs. The image was fired again and sandwiched with a layer of opaque glass. The image was fired a final time creating the permanent photographic mural.

"The AIPP Board was quite taken with Michael's presentation and photographic work. We are excited about this piece which will continue our mission to promote public art throughout Vail," Kathy Langenwalter AIPP Board Member.

- Molly Eppard, Art in Public Places Coordinator