

Secrets in the Browsing Library

A SCAVENGER HUNT INSIDE THE SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Details provided by The Transportation Museum

“When is the library open?”

Visit <http://library.sjsu.edu/library-hours/library-hours>

“What if I don’t have time to see everything?”

Be sure to see the Harry Potter Hiding Space, Mirrors in the Self-Help Section, Beethoven Collection, Steinbeck’s Fissure, Wisecracking Windows, and Vermin Miller Chairs.

More questions? Contact the museum at TheTransportationMuseum.com!

FLOOR 1: HARRY POTTER HIDING SPACE

One of the bookshelves, when pushed, will swing open and reveal a space large enough to hide inside. The Circulating Books Section (on your right, as you walk in the museum) boasts a secret rotating bookcase. One side of the shelf is stocked with fake mystery books, the other side with current popular-fiction titles. Location: Browsing Collection on Floor 1



FLOOR 1: ALICE’S ELEVATOR ADVENTURES

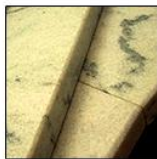
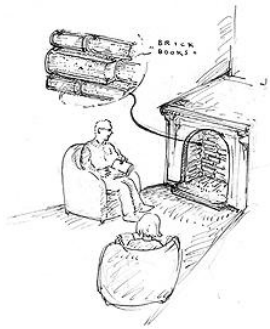
In the southernmost elevator on the first floor of the library, you’ll see a door that is totally inefficient for anyone riding up to check out a science textbook, but just perfect if you are 2 feet tall and fixing to go to Wonderland. Location: Southernmost Elevator on Floor 1; ride the elevator up to the 2nd Floor



FLOOR 2: BURNING BOOKS

A corner fireplace (without fire) is built from bricks cast in the shape of books and marble selected for its smoky tendrils. This artwork, placed in a quiet reading area, speaks to the history of book burning. These books are resistant to fire to honor the immortality of ideas while lamenting the loss of others.

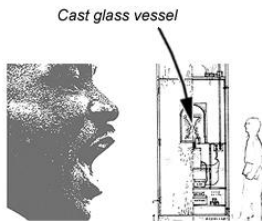
Location: Northeast Corner of Floor 2



FLOOR 3: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

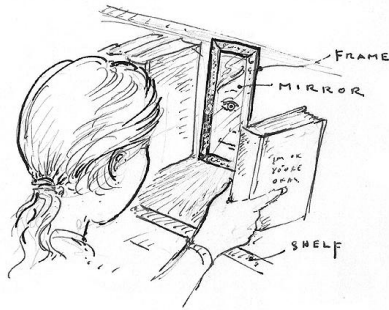
A vessel, formed in the shape of the redoubled profile of Martin Luther King, Jr., glows with light, emanating colors of skin tones, representing the ethnic composition of the citizens of San Jose. This vessel with this ever-changing representative light is located adjacent to the MLK Jr. historical exhibit.

Location: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civil Rights Collection on Floor 3



FLOOR 3: MIRRORS IN THE SELF-HELP SECTION

Mirrors behind the books in the self-help section give us another perspective with which to reflect on ourselves, if we care or dare to. Location: The Self-Help Section (Dewey Call No. 158) on Floor 3



FLOOR 5: BEETHOVEN COLLECTION

Thanks to a donation in the early 1980s by avid Beethoven collector Ira F. Brilliant, the DMLK library houses the largest collection of Beethoven paraphernalia outside of Europe. An impressive collection of pianos, manuscripts in Beethoven's own handwriting, and a lock of Beethoven's hair (clipped off his dead body by a visitor to the funeral home where he was temporarily housed) make this museum a must-stop. The Beethoven Room is open daily except Sunday (see http://www.sjsu.edu/beethoven/about/hours_location/ for hours). Location: Room 580 on Floor 5



FLOOR 5: MONASTERY CHAIR

One of the founders of the Santa Clara Franciscan monastery, Father Magin Català is said to have foreseen the coming of the Anglo-Americans, the railroad, the discovery of gold and the 1906 earthquake and fire, in dreams that came while he slept on his adobe pillow. This chair-sized pillow, fabricated from adobe with flakes of gold, steel particles and ash, alludes to those dreamlike prognostications of history. It is a playful element in the California Room, an area otherwise dedicated to serious historical research. The California Room is open daily (see <https://www.sjpl.org/caroom> for hours). Location: California Room on Floor 5

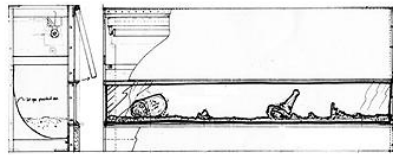


FLOOR 5: STEINBECK'S FISSURE

A diorama at ankle height is located outside the Beethoven Collection (outside the glass walls to the Steinbeck Collection, on the westernmost wall). Steinbeck described “the process of rediscovery” as follows: “A young, inquisitive and original man might one morning find a fissure in the traditional technique of thinking. Through this fissure he might look out and find a new external world about him.” The fissure contains soil samples from the Oklahoma-to-California path of migration outlined in Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath*. Location: Northwest Corner of Floor 5, outside glass walls



Detail of artifacts

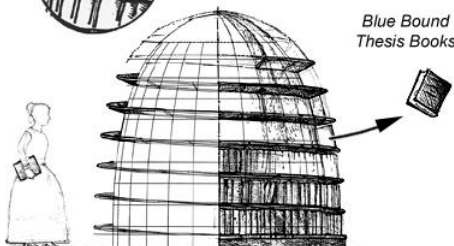


Artifacts include: Soil samples, tin cans, petrified wood, auto parts

FLOOR 5: SKEPTACLE

If “Skep” is an old word for a beehive made of straw, and a spectacle is something to behold, and being skeptical is advised while beholding this complicated world, then Skeptacle is a giant bookcase crafted to contain the thesis volumes produced by generations of SJSU students. The spiral form honors their bee-like creative and intellectual productivity. Location: Southeast Corner of Floor 5

Handcarved wood-trim detail

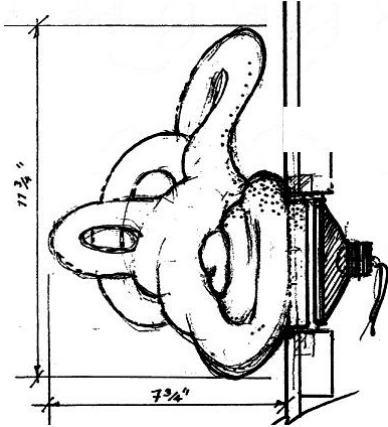


Blue Bound Thesis Books



FLOOR 5: BEETHOVEN'S INNER EAR

Approximately the size of a French horn, a brass-plated, perforated sculptural representation of an inner ear replaces the grill of a public-address speaker in the ceiling of the Music Section. "The most perfect music is soundless," said the Daoist philosopher Laozi. Beethoven's later compositions, produced after the onset of his deafness, are the result of an inner, intellectual hearing, and are considered by most performers to be his most far-reaching and exploratory work. Location: Music Collections on Floor 5 (in Listening Section)



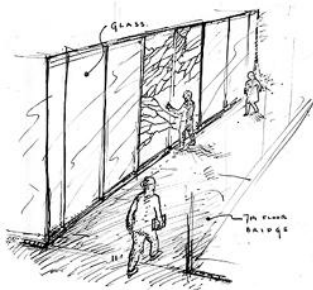
FLOOR 7: REFLECTING POOLS

Creating a continuing commentary on water usage and industrial erosion, one of the three sinks within the men's and women's restrooms are sculpturally eroded. Location: Bathrooms on Floors 3-8



FLOOR 7: WISECRACKING WINDOWS

The glass windows on the 7th Floor Bridge appear cracked. With a closer look, one can see that the cracked lines are comprised of jokes and puns, sand-blasted into the surface of the glass. Marcel Duchamp (artist of the Large Glass) shattered art-making tradition, using puns, irony, and complicated layering to emphasize the conceptual over the retinal. Location: Bridge on Floor 7



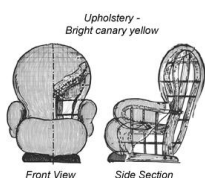
FLOOR 8: VERMIN MILLER CHAIRS

A group of standard office chairs, each sporting an additional pair of legs, nest and socialize near the natural science section that is home to books on entomology. Location: Scattered around southwest area of Floor 8 (you'll have to hunt around!)



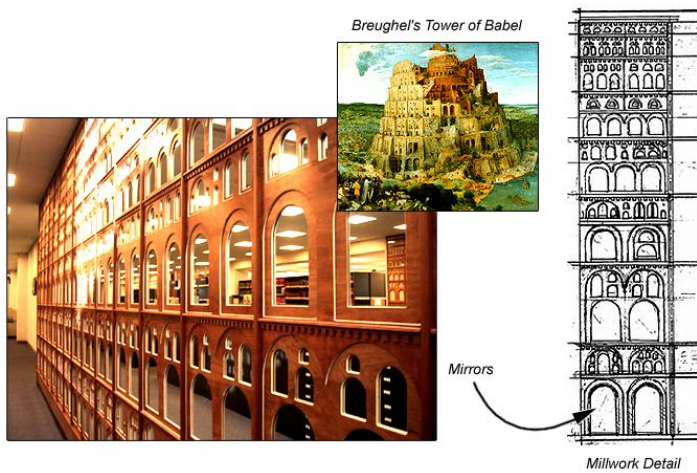
LOWER LEVEL: CANARY CHAIR

A reading chair upholstered in bright canary yellow, situated amid the stacks on this subterranean level, recalls the history of mining south of San Jose. "Mineshaft canaries" that were used to warn miners parallel the role of libraries as cultural institutions—in both cases, the health and vigor testifies to the well-being of the societies that support them. This over stuffed version of Tweety Bird contends that we can stay healthy with humor and comfort, as well. Location: Periodicals Service Desk on Lower Level



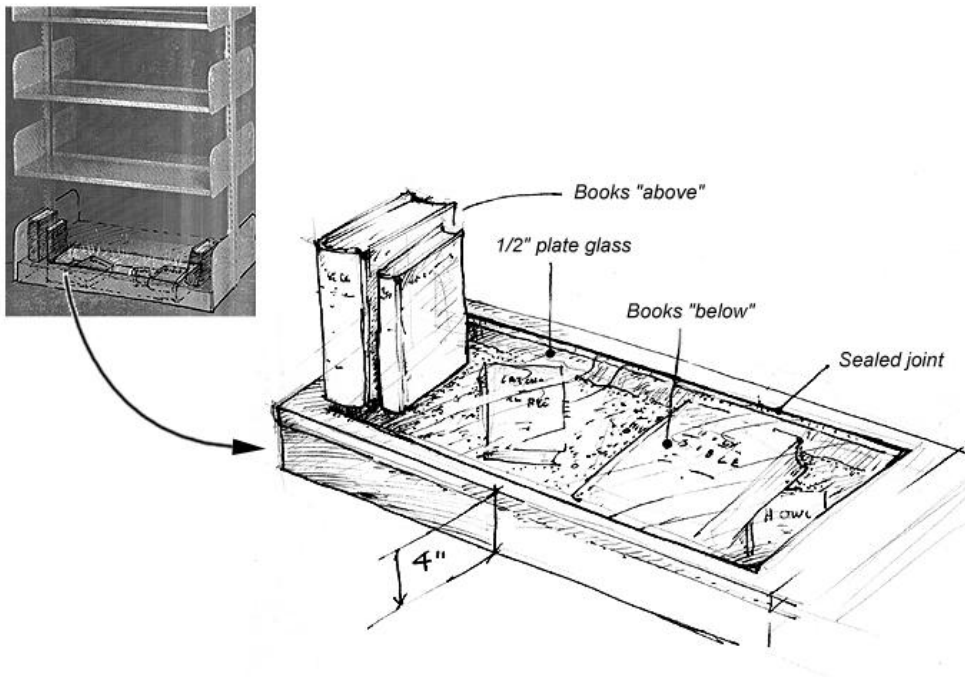
LOWER LEVEL: TOWER OF BABEL

Two parallel walls in the Government Periodicals section are covered with millwork derived from Pieter Breughel's depiction of the Tower of Babel (a story from the Bible that explains why the world's peoples speak different languages). Mirrors occupying the window frames of the millwork reinforce the theme of infinite reproduction. Location: West of the Periodicals Service Desk on Lower Level



TO BE DISCOVERED: UNDERGROUND BOOKS

Beneath certain book stacks located throughout the library lie underground "vaults" holding books that have been banned, burned, or otherwise intentionally set aside in history. Location: To Be Discovered



For a full list of art installations, visit: <https://www.sjlibrary.org/melchin-art-list>