

Enchanting: Functional Beauty Thrives at RBIII



Project: The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital, Research Building III
Location: Columbus, OH
Year of Installation: 2012

Product Used: LEVELe Wall System, LEVELe-103 Elevator Interiors and Stainless Steel Columns. Materials: ViviGraphix Spectra glass, ViviChrome Chromis glass and stainless steel.
Architect: NBBJ
General Contractor: Turner/Smoot Construction
Brand Identity: Ralph Applebaum Associates

Nationwide Children's Hospital recently completed an historic seven-year campus expansion project, the largest pediatric expansion ever undertaken in the US. The campus additions culminated with the opening of a leading-edge research facility, a six-floor, 225,000-square-foot space dedicated to changing the future of children's health.



LEVELe Wall System with Blind panels in ViviChrome Chromis glass with White interlayer and Standard finish; column in Stainless Steel with Seastone finish

The \$93 million Research Building III (RBIII) is home to four centers of emphasis including: Center for Injury Research and Policy, Center for Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Research, Center for Perinatal Research, and the Battelle Center for Mathematical Medicine.

This amazing space was designed by global architecture firm NBBJ, who has a 35-year history working with the hospital. They also designed Research Buildings I and II. The new building features a dazzling lobby, laboratories flooded with natural light, support facilities, offices, conference rooms, seminar space, a café, and collaborative areas.

Forms+Surfaces provided a wide range of products and materials to help support Nationwide Children's new branding initiative and to encourage collaboration among RBIII's researchers.

Building a Brand

As RBIII was being constructed, Nationwide Children's was going through a comprehensive re-branding effort with the help of Ralph Applebaum Associates, a global branding experience firm based in New York City.

The new main hospital on campus was designed with a magic forest theme. Bright green trees, parachuting turtles and hula-hooping caterpillars consort with squirrels and ducks to make for a very playful, child-centered space.



LEVELe Wall System with Blind panels; insets in ViviGraphix Spectra glass with custom graphic interlayer and Standard finish; also shown, LEVELe-103 Elevator Interior

However, RBIII is a research facility, and while it is focused on children's health, the building itself is for adults only. Originally, the lobby was designed to just feature all white glass, but then Nationwide decided that they wanted to somehow incorporate their new branding into RBIII as well.

Creating an Enchanted Forest

Applebaum designed a more grown-up version of the hospital's branding elements – utilizing the silhouettes of trees in muted colors, and adding pops of color with bold blue leaves, birds and butterflies.

Forms+Surfaces was able to take this design and bring it to life with our ViviGraphix Spectra architectural glass, which is comprised of a color graphic interlayer between a transparent lite of glass and a reflective glass backer. In this case, we transformed their digital forest into glass wall panels which were used within our highly configurable LEVELe Wall System.



Glass door in ViviGraphix Spectra glass with custom pattern interlayer and Standard finish; LEVELe Wall System with Blind panels in ViviGraphix Spectra glass with custom graphic interlayer and Standard finish



LEVELe-103 Elevator Interior with main panels in Stainless Steel, Seastone finish; accent panels in ViviChrome Chromis glass, White interlayer, Standard finish; Elevator ceiling with LED downlights and LED perimeter accent lighting; Rectangular Handrails

Stasia Czech, Senior Associate/Interior Designer at NBBJ, said, "This is really where the Forms+Surfaces products came into play. They gave us the flexibility the facility needed."

Both the customizable ViviGraphix Spectra glass and the modular LEVELe Wall System made it possible to create a specific atmosphere and carry that theme throughout the lobby – behind the reception desk, up to a second floor, around elevator doors, surrounding an information kiosk, and even over a glass door.

Likewise, our stainless steel panels were used both within our LEVELe Wall System and our LEVELe Elevator Interiors. The same stainless steel was also used for columns within the building, extending a consistent look and feel within the space.



LEVELe Wall System with Blind panels in ViviGraphix Spectra glass with custom graphic interlayer and Standard finish, and Stainless Steel with Seastone finish

The Writing on the Walls

In addition to the challenge of incorporating the updated branding elements, Czech said that the Research Institute specifically requested a design that would foster cross-discipline collaboration and communication among the physicians, researchers, lab techs, mathematicians and academics working in the facility.

NBBJ opted to implement what they dubbed a “purposeful network of connections,” instead of creating one giant atrium space as many facilities do. The building itself is laterally oriented, and three “neighborhood hubs” were placed on each floor to encourage more intimate gatherings.

These small, comfortable lounge or kitchenette style areas are lined with sleek Forms+Surfaces ViviChrome Chromis white glass walls which can be written on in dry erase markers like whiteboards.

Czech said, “The researchers and technicians gather in the hubs to eat or take a break, but soon find themselves discussing problems, and writing formulas or equations on the walls.”

“They love it so much that they’ve started writing on all the glass surfaces. It’s become a creative canvas for them to work on.”



LEVELe Wall System with Blind panels in ViviGraphix Spectra glass with custom graphic interlayer and Standard finish



LEVELe Wall System with Blind panels in ViviGraphix Spectra glass with custom graphic interlayer and Standard finish

A New Beginning

In the end, NBBJ’s strategy has paid off. Where previously, technicians might have spent most of their time isolated in walled off labs and offices, now they can interact and problem-solve together, which may someday lead to a medical breakthrough for children’s health.

Forms+Surfaces is delighted to have played a role in RBIII, and seeing our products be used in both beautiful and practical ways to bring people together. If you are interested in learning more about any of our products, please visit us at www.forms-surfaces.com.