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Courthouse display ready to come off the walls

Nicholas Price's 'An Abstract World' will remain up through June 30

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VIEW STAFF WRITER

When Las Vegas resident Nicholas Price installed about \$250,000 worth of his artwork in the Lloyd D. George Federal Courthouse in October of 2003, he expected the work to come back down about six months later. At the end of this month, after more than two and a half years on display, Price's work will leave the federal building.

Price said he installed the collection of work, called "An Abstract World," in the federal building to demonstrate how contemporary art can work in the public domain. The collection, which included sculptures and paintings by Price, is placed throughout the second through eighth floors of the courthouse.

"We were trying to show how public art would make a difference in a space such as the courthouse," he said. "It's not always a pleasurable experience to go into a courthouse, so I had the idea of putting some thought-provoking pieces in the building."

Price said there was no artwork on display in the second through eighth floors at the time, so he spoke to Judge Lloyd D. George about installing "An Abstract World."



An Abstract World Copyright Nicholas A. Price

"When I first gave Judge George the portfolio of my work, he looked through it sort of just nonchalantly, and I thought perhaps he didn't like the work," Price said. "Then later, he said he thought it was great, and that he was quiet at first because he wanted something challenging but not offensive in the building, and that he finds my work challenging but not offensive. He was very supportive of the idea of displaying the collection."

Price said since installing the work, he's received many positive comments about it from members of the public who have visited the building and the people who work there.

"The irony of the first few weeks of the display was that the people on the top floors of the building were getting to work late -- they were standing around looking at the pieces," he said. "They said at each floor they'd pause at the elevator doors to look at the work."



Figure 1 - An Abstract World Copyright Nicholas A. Price Archives

Price said he spent his own money to install the collection, and that the project cost "a substantial amount." However, the positive reactions to the work, along with the possibility that some of his work might have moved people, were worth the cost, he said.

"To me, inspiring others -- that's worth anything," he said.

George said the collection added something "unique and interesting" to the top seven floors of the building and called some of the pieces "quite inspirational."



An Abstract World Copyright Nicholas A. Price

"We really want this building to be a building felt to belong to everyone," George said. "(Price) is quite an artist ... The time may come when we decide to have something else he's done in (the building)."

For now, Price said he's unsure what will happen to "An Abstract World," though some pieces will go to private art collections throughout the city, while others will remain in the public eye.

"I would like to put up this work citywide now, rather than all in one place," he said.

Price also is in the process of planning a collection that will take the form of an outdoor sculpture garden, and said he wants to work on more pieces intended for public display.

George said he thinks more work by other artists will eventually be brought into the building and placed throughout the second through eight floors. In the meantime, he said the community is welcome to view Price's work and the continually rotating work displayed in the courthouse's first floor rotunda.

"We have a lot of art displays come in every month or two in the main room," he said. "Right now in the rotunda there is a great picture of an eagle. The community should know it is here, and they can come in and view it."

ARCHIVES: Nicholas A. Price/An Abstract World/Sculpture/2006

The Lloyd D. George Federal Courthouse, 333 Las Vegas Blvd. S., is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. "An Abstract World" will be on display through June 30. To see more of Price's work, visit www.nicholasprice.net.