

# Focus

A Newsletter for Customers of the GSA  
Public Buildings Service, Mid-Atlantic Region

Summer 2004



## African Burial Ground Exhibit Makes Stop at Federal Building in Philadelphia

Federal tenants and visitors held a ceremony on May 24 to welcome the African Burial Ground Exhibit to the William J. Green, Jr. Federal Building in Philadelphia. The federal building was home to the exhibit through the beginning of July.

In 1991, during excavation for what is now the Foley Square Federal Building in lower Manhattan, workers unearthed the largest colonial-era cemetery for enslaved Africans in America. The discovery led to GSA's African Burial Ground Project, a major effort to memorialize and celebrate those buried at the site. The project, which spanned the last decade, is now chronicled in a

special exhibit created to share the extraordinary archaeological discovery and a journey to "Return to the Past to Build the Future."

The African Burial Ground Exhibit is a traveling display detailing the discovery of New York's African Burial Ground and features poignant images of on-site archaeological investigations, detailed photographs and drawings of recovered artifacts and remains, historical maps, photographs of the "Rites of Ancestral Return" re-interment ceremony held last October, and models of the custom-made coffins and crypts designed and built for the burials.

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The exhibit highlights the artifacts found at the burial ground and artwork inspired by the African Burial Ground Project.

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## From the Desk of the ARA...

Collaborative efforts among GSA, our federal clients, local communities, and the private sector have yielded many great results for the federal government and our nation. We celebrated the success of such partnerships in May, when the Erie County Historical Society honored GSA with a 2004 Construction Award for the new federal courthouse complex in Erie, Pennsylvania.

The new complex blends three historic structures with new construction, creating a world-class facility that enhances the workplace of our federal clients and supports local community development efforts. We share this recognition with our federal tenants in Erie and our community and private sector partners who worked so closely with us to ensure a facility that all will treasure for many years to come.

GSA was also honored to be among those recognized at the 2004 Philadelphia Federal Executive Board (FEB) Excellence in Government Awards this May, and it was

exciting to see so many of our federal partners recognized as well. The FEB awarded medals to nearly 100 employees of GSA's Public Buildings Service. Solid working relationships with our federal clients and with our community and private sector partners form the foundation for our success now and in the future. I look forward to our continued collaboration. Working together, we will continue to craft smarter solutions for the federal government and our nation's communities for many years to come. □



*Jan Ziegler*  
Assistant Regional Administrator  
Public Buildings Service  
Mid-Atlantic Region

## Continuity of Operations and Your Space Needs

In accordance with Executive Orders 12656 and 12472, federal agencies are required to maintain continuous operations during an emergency. Developing and maintaining a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) is a necessary tool in continuing operations and resuming critical operations if they are interrupted.

A key to maintaining and continuing operations in the event of a disruption—be it a natural disaster or other threat—is having a base of operations. There are many reasons why your office may become unavailable for occupation for the short term or permanently. Identifying, in advance, an alternate facility that you can occupy on short notice will prepare you and your employees for a crisis situation.

The point when an emergency arises is not the time to locate an alternative base of operations. Many agencies choose to arrange their COOP alternate site in their own nearby field or satellite location in the region. However, this arrangement is not always possible. Sometimes agencies determine the best course of action is to prepare in advance by leasing space that is always available and

ready to be occupied. GSA is ready and able to handle this lease requirement just as we would any other. We have negotiated COOP leases for our customers in the past, and our Realty Specialists are available to serve this need.

The second piece of a COOP is resuming critical operations. Should your office space be permanently out of commission, we will provide our leasing expertise in getting your employees back into an office setting and performing their critical functions. As we have done many times in the past, most recently for Hurricane Isabel, GSA is ready and able to execute emergency leases and get your office back up and running.

If your agency chooses to lease an alternate site that would always be available for your use, you can begin this process as you would for any lease procurement. If you have further questions regarding the assistance GSA can provide to your agency in COOP preparations, please contact **Maryann Toniazzo**, GSA's Mid-Atlantic Regional Emergency Coordinator, at [maryann.toniazzo@gsa.gov](mailto:maryann.toniazzo@gsa.gov) or by phone on (215) 446-4911. □

# African Burial Ground Exhibit Makes Stop at Federal Building in Philadelphia

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The welcoming ceremony at the federal building included a dance performance by students of the Philadelphia High School for the Creative and Performing Arts and two musical selections performed by vocalist Ruth Naomi Floyd. GSA Regional Administrator Barbara Shelton spoke on the history of the African Burial Ground and the significance of finding the site, which is only part of what may have encompassed five to six acres of what is today lower Manhattan.

"Perhaps the reason the bulldozers stumbled upon the burial ground was so that those folks would have the chance for their story to be told," said Shelton.

The discovery of the African Burial Ground site opened the doors to a rarely discussed part of our nation's history and of the major role of Africans, both enslaved and free, in the building of New York City. On site at 290 Broadway, New York, archaeologists uncovered the human remains of over 400 Africans and thousands of artifacts. The exhibit features historical data, detailed descriptions of the scientific evidence uncovered by the remains, and the meaning of artifacts found in the burial ground.



Barbara Shelton, GSA Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator, and Stephen Perry, GSA Administrator, welcome the exhibit to Philadelphia.

Featured speaker Stephen A. Perry, GSA Administrator, welcomed the large audience and encouraged them to bring colleagues, family and friends to view the exhibit. Perry has made the successful completion of the African Burial Ground Project one of GSA's highest priorities.

"GSA is not in this business, this is not what we do," said Perry of the challenges faced during excavation when the burial site was discovered. "Perhaps it was a destiny type of thing that we found ourselves in 1991, in a place where these remains were unearthed."

Perry also recognized the federal agencies that have worked with GSA throughout the project, such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of the Interior, and the National Park Service, in addition to national and state historic preservation societies.

## The discovery of the African Burial Ground site opened the doors to a rarely discussed part of our nation's history and of the major role of Africans, both enslaved and free.

"We took the opportunity to learn this part of the story, and we will all be better off as Americans," said Perry. "So will our children and our children's children."

The African Burial Ground was named a National Historical Landmark in 1993 and GSA continues to work with the National Park Service to oversee the design, construction activities, and management of an African Burial Ground Interpretive Center adjacent to the burial ground to inform, engage and enlighten visitors about the historical, archaeological, and cultural findings of New York's ancestral African community. The Interpretive Center is open to the public and offers educational materials, lectures, films, and outreach services. Please visit [www.africanburialground.com](http://www.africanburialground.com) for more information. □



The ceremony featured a dance performance by the Philadelphia High School for the Creative and Performing Arts.

# GSA Completes First Construction Phase at the Pittsburgh Post Office and Courthouse

We are pleased to report that GSA is completing, on schedule, its first phase of construction renovations at the Post Office and Courthouse (POCH) located on the corner of Grant and Seventh streets in downtown Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Since the summer of 2002, the historic building, originally constructed in 1934, has been undergoing a \$70 million renovation and expansion to update the facility and meet the courts' and related agencies' growing spatial and security needs.



*Window wells are being in-filled to provide space for additional courtrooms.*

The project has evolved as a direct response to comments and feedback we have received from our customers in the facility. The majority of Phase One work focused on addressing the needs of the Post Office, the U.S. District Court, the Office of the U.S. Attorney, and GSA's Field Office.

**“The support provided by GSA was important in the whole process of design, build-out and relocation.”**

— *Mary Beth Buchanan*

*U.S. Attorney for the Western  
District of Pennsylvania*

Meeting the courts' growing spatial demands brought on by their increasing caseload, this renovation project provides the courts with an additional 20,000 square feet of space and six new courtrooms. Steel and glass atrium in-fills have been installed, recapturing space in the building's rear window wells. Additionally, the third floor office space was completed in June and is now occupied by the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania. Third floor courtrooms are currently receiving new millwork and interior finishes, and will be completed by mid-August.

Four remaining courtrooms will be completed during Phase Two.

Another major accomplishment of the first construction phase is the completion of the offices for the U.S. Attorney. The U.S. Attorney's office and staff had been housed in several parts of the building, as well as in leased space. Their entire office is now housed in contiguous space on the fourth floor of the POCH.

“Our new office space has permitted the consolidation of our civil, criminal, appellate, and administration divisions on one floor. The synergy created by this consolidation has enhanced communication and morale,” said Mary Beth Buchanan, who is the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania, and also Director for the Executive Office for U.S. Attorney.



*U.S. Attorney's Office, Post Office and Courthouse, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

“The newly designed office and conference rooms allow for greater efficiency and productivity. The support provided by GSA was important in the whole process of design, build-out, and relocation. Thank you GSA for a job well done.”

With the completion of Phase One, the first floor now houses the GSA Field Office and the building's nurse's station. The Post Office expansion is complete, and its facility is up and running as well. The renovated South Lobby will resume operations upon completion in November 2004. This will be followed by renovations to the North Lobby. Creating a smoother traffic flow and improved security will also serve to welcome both building tenants and the general public alike.

Phase Two of construction, beginning this summer, ushers in the start of new projects as well as a new GSA Project Manager. Larry Boreali will replace Rick Spencer as GSA Project Manager. Larry is currently GSA's Project Manager for the \$30 million renovation of the historic U.S. Courthouse in Erie, Pennsylvania. His successes managing the complex project in Erie, and his existing relationship with customers in the POCH, will ensure a smooth transition.

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# GSA and IRS Team Up to Renovate Child Care Facility in Philadelphia

The Sound Start Child Care Center at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Northeast Service Center in Philadelphia has been re-accredited by the National Academy for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) through June 2008. Sound Start is also among the few centers designated as a Pennsylvania Four Stars Center, a recognition that has garnered monetary rewards for the center. Achieving this high quality of child care and recognition is not easy and Sound Start faced many obstacles along the way. GSA and IRS worked together to devise and implement a number of innovative ideas, giving the troubled center new life and ensuring a safe and nurturing environment for children of federal employees.

In 2002, Sound Start was in desperate need of repair. The center was falling short of meeting both the GSA Child Care Facility Compliance Checklist standards and NAEYC accreditation standards. Improving Sound Start would prove especially challenging due to monetary and other constraints. Also, any repairs to the center would have to be completed while the facility remained open. GSA and IRS would have to put their creative minds together and think outside the box to turn this failing center around.

The GSA team worked closely with Jim Reynolds, Chief of IRS's Building Administration Section, and Sue Wolohan, former IRS Facilities Specialist, and began both immediate and long-term planning for the center. The team decided to first focus on repairs to Sound Start's exterior and roof. Some investigative research by GSA revealed that the roof was still under the lessor's manufacturer warranty. The finding was crucial to stretching an already tight budget. The team then addressed the absence of a handicap route from the center to the designated waiting area, which was about 200 feet across the lawn. A handicapped-accessible sidewalk was expediently added.

With immediate needs addressed, the GSA/IRS team turned their focus to the long-term needs of Sound Start. The center was cluttered and outdated, but there was no expansion space available within the building. The team brought in an architectural/engineering firm to help



redesign the center to make more efficient use of the existing space. GSA and IRS worked together to prioritize work items, with IRS volunteering to complete many tasks using their in-house



*New receptionist desk presents professional entrance for Sound Start Child Care Center in Philadelphia; bright colors create stimulating environment for children.*

resources, but the budget was still very tight. The team implemented creative financing, funding the project as a GSA Installed Improvement and amortizing the costs within IRS' rent. This approach allowed IRS time to budget for the project while immediately improving the quality of the center.

GSA and IRS worked together to develop a phased schedule for the project that would minimize disruption to Sound Start's operations and GSA hired a construction manager from GSA's term contract to oversee the job. The construction manager was able to visit the site frequently to ensure renovation work was being completed as intended, allowing GSA more time to focus personal attention on the needs of our client. The team expanded the usable space in the center's classrooms by eliminating some partition walls. New windows, ceilings, exhaust, painting, and the use of linoleum flooring, a "green" product, completed the renovations.

"I am very pleased with the renovation of the Sound Start Child Care Center," said Department of Treasury's Monique Goodwin, who uses the Center for child care services.

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# New GSA National Broker Contract on the Way

The GSA Public Buildings Service (PBS) is planning to award a new National Broker Contract, effective October 1, 2004, to support our nationwide real estate program and the acquisition of leases and related real estate services on behalf of our federal clients. GSA Realty Specialists from across the east coast met May 11-12 in Arlington, Virginia, (west coast Realty Specialists are participating in a similar meeting) to learn more about the new broker contract and how it will serve as a useful tool in helping PBS anticipate client needs and proactively plan and provide for them.



*GSA Realty Specialists learn about the upcoming GSA Broker Contract.*

The new contract will increase the capacity of PBS real estate resources and allow PBS employees more time to plan for and manage client requirements. It will enable PBS to leverage its national position in the market and take advantage of the best financial terms being offered. The contract is also intended to provide consistent and coherent GSA services across the nation, leading to better overall service to our clients.

During the meeting in Arlington, GSA Realty Specialists learned about the intent behind the contract, the solicitation of the brokerage firms, award status, training requirements,

contractor performance, the GSA Realty Specialist's role as project manager, and the roles and responsibilities of a Contracting Officer's Technical Representative. Mary Pesina, GSA's national program manager for the contract, facilitated discussions regarding the implementation of the new contract. Guest speaker Joe Gilliam delivered a motivational speech stressing the importance of creating a positive culture and humored the audience with examples of the fears that come along with change.

GSA intends to award the contract on August 1, 2004 in order to be up and running by the October 1 start date. Through consolidating our lease acquisition requirements under the national broker contract, we look forward to substantial benefits for GSA and our federal clients. □

## GSA and IRS Team Up to Renovate Child Care Facility in Philadelphia

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"I specifically like the way you used bright colors and designs throughout the facility. The rooms are more open and that gives a more friendlier environment for the children."

As a result of the innovative thinking and close working relationship between GSA and IRS, Sound Start has experienced a 180-degree turnaround. In addition to their NAEYC re-accreditation, the Center was recently highlighted in a private sector video focusing on best practices in child care. Employees at the IRS Northeast Service Center now have an on-site child care facility that they can be proud of.

For more information about the Sound Start Child Care Center, please contact Sound Start Director **Anna Russo** at (215) 516-2144. For more information about GSA's Child Care Program, please contact GSA Regional Child Care Coordinator **Robyn Major** at [robyn.major@gsa.gov](mailto:robyn.major@gsa.gov) or (215) 446-2893. □

## Thank You for Your Feedback

We would like to thank all of you who took time out of your busy schedules to respond to our 2004 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

GSA is committed to providing you with the best work environment possible, and your feedback will help us to improve service to you in the future.

# Learning from Our Legacy

In the Public Buildings Service (PBS), we realize that our employees are our most valuable asset. The development of our employees and the knowledge sharing among our employees is crucial. With this in mind, PBS has partnered with Harvard University to develop *Learning from Our Legacy*, a two-day program where PBS employees from across the nation, now joined by representatives from our client agencies, share lessons learned, good practices, expertise, and insights. The course is helping us move from being customer focused to customer driven.

The *Legacy* course, offered four times a year, provides PBS employees with an opportunity to share lessons learned on recent PBS projects and collaborate with individuals of various disciplines from across the national PBS organization and our client base. It focuses on broadening project management capabilities and developing innovative critical thinking and problem solving skills so that employees are better able to meet complex challenges and successfully deliver PBS business.

The case studies of PBS projects are prepared by Harvard University and presented by the actual PBS employees and clients involved in delivering that project. A facilitator from Harvard moderates the class and challenges employees to examine and discuss various stages of the projects, delving into the issues facing the project team and brainstorming solutions.

The *Legacy* course originally included only PBS attendees, but the sessions have since been broadened to include participation from our clients. The first class with client

participation involved a case study of the IRS Detroit Computing Center. As a result of the success of this class, Mike Huston, IRS Facilities Manager, continues to attend *Legacy* sessions to provide the GSA client perspective.

Our most recent session held in Cambridge, Massachusetts, included our client partners from the Census Bureau. The 10-year census cycle results in unique space demands for the Census Bureau and unique challenges for GSA. By meeting with Census Bureau decision makers in an energized and animated discussion forum, we could both clarify our positions and gain a better understanding of each other's requirements. Including our clients in the *Legacy* session allows our PBS employees to gain insight into our clients' perspective.

Janet Cummings, Census Bureau Assistant Division Chief, Field Division, thanked GSA on behalf of the Census team participants saying that the *Legacy* course "was a tremendous benefit to me" and "I am looking forward to having more interaction with the type of group you organized for the training. We can all learn a lot from it."

GSA and Harvard are now in the process of preparing a case study in conjunction with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and both the IRS and Census are eager to participate in future *Legacy* sessions.

For more information about the *Legacy* program and upcoming *Legacy* sessions, please contact Realty Services Officer **Celeste Martins** in GSA's Mid-Atlantic Region at (215) 446-4546 or [celeste.martins@gsa.gov](mailto:celeste.martins@gsa.gov). □

## GSA Completes First Construction Phase at the Pittsburgh Post Office and Courthouse

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By the project's scheduled completion in the fall of 2005, all historic courtrooms will be restored. The project also includes new interior finishes and much needed cleaning and repairs to the structure's façade, already underway. The installation of new heating and cooling systems will provide balanced temperatures and better air circulation.

GSA is employing many tactics to communicate project information by anticipating inconveniences that might arise and keeping the lines of communication open. Project information boards throughout the facility highlight the project's overall scope and contain updates pertinent to the current construction phase. The building newsletter keeps tenants abreast on major construction developments and milestones. When completed in 2005, the POCH renovation and expansion will provide federal agencies and the public with a modernized, efficient, and secure workplace that better serves their needs. □

### What Would YOU Like to Read About?

Is there a GSA project, program, or policy that you would like to read more about in an upcoming issue of FOCUS?

If so, please send your ideas to the editors of FOCUS at [r3.custserv@gsa.gov](mailto:r3.custserv@gsa.gov)

*We love hearing from you!*

# Art-in-Architecture Program Enhances Mid-Atlantic Assets

The GSA Art-in-Architecture Program enables GSA to provide government office buildings and courthouses that are not only pleasing and functional, but also enrich the cultural, social, and commercial resources of the communities where they are located. Through the program, GSA sets aside one-half of one percent of the estimated construction costs of every new or substantially renovated federal facility for the commissioning of artists to create works that will be an integral part of the building's architecture. GSA has recently utilized this program to enhance a number of our assets throughout the Mid-Atlantic Region.



Artist David Wilson's glass installation complements the U.S. Courthouse in Erie, Pennsylvania

The new federal courthouse complex in Erie, Pennsylvania incorporates three historically significant structures, creating an environment that is rich in history. That environment has been further enhanced with art. GSA commissioned artist David Wilson of New York to create an art-glass installation for the new complex. The art-glass is made up of two vertical panels that span the wall of

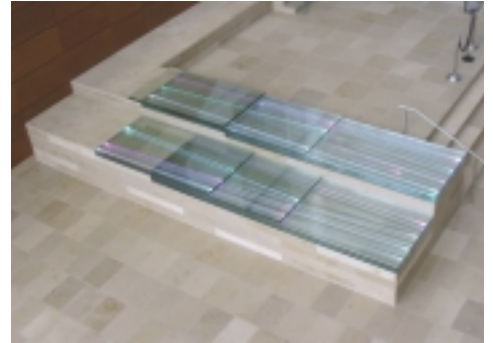
the complex's connector, a public area that unites the various buildings that make up the complex. The glass is transparent except for traces of blue, but it is made of textured glass, including prisms and beveled pieces. The art-glass, designed specifically for the space, comes alive as light strikes it. Like a prism, it sends out colored patterns that reflect on the walls and floor. Wilson's design complements the sense of transparency and openness that GSA desired and that the architects achieved with the glass connector.

GSA utilized the Art-in-Architecture Program to fund the commission of artist Mikyoung Kim of Massachusetts to create an art installation for the new U.S. Courthouse Annex in Wheeling, West Virginia. The work, titled *River of*

*Light*, is located in the atrium of the new facility. Kim used fiber-optic technology laminated between plates of glass to create a visual river of color.

Three different shades of blue light shift in a staggering

pattern to create the perception of moving water. The *River of Light* sits on an architectural stepped stone base with the layering of fiber-optic lights emanating from each of the stone stairs. The piece was designed to reflect the local landscape of the West Virginia area.



River of Light, U.S. Courthouse Annex, Wheeling, West Virginia

Existing federal facilities under major repair and alteration also benefit from the program. New York artist Alice Aycock was commissioned to create a landscape sculpture, titled *Swing Over*, to complement a multi-year repair and alteration project at the George H. Fallon Federal Building in Baltimore, Maryland. The sculpture was installed following completion of upgrades to the building's main office tower, entrance lobby, and plaza. The large-scale installation consists of two triangulated trusses, which loop across the façade and through the entrance portico of the building to create a dynamic and lyrical gesture in metal with a gravity defying quality.

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**The [Art-in-Architecture] program continues to engage American artists early in GSA construction projects to enhance the vitality of the nation's federal facilities.**

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"The building did present a backdrop for *Swing Over*. With a different building, I would have designed a completely different piece," said Aycock. "I took advantage of the architecture of the building and the portico. I used the façade as a backdrop for something livelier than the

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# Billing for Recurring Services through Your PBS Rent Bill

Agencies routinely reimburse the GSA Public Buildings Service (PBS) for recurring costs for enhanced or “premium” operating expenses such as overtime utilities, operations and maintenance of mechanical equipment, and special or daytime cleaning. Prior to October 2002, these reimbursements could only be submitted to GSA via a Reimbursable Work Authorization (RWA) due to limitations within PBS’s accounting and billing systems. PBS has since enhanced these systems and can now accommodate agencies wishing to pay for such recurring services through their PBS rent bill.

The ability to pay for reimbursable services through the rent bill offers added convenience important to our clients. Once the “fixed” cost of the reimbursable service has been established, the monthly processing is routine and requires no additional monitoring or processing efforts. The rent bill, including the cost of recurring services, is issued to the agency each month and the expenses are routinely paid.

Agencies can participate in this service as long as they have signed up as a “participating agency” through GSA’s Office of the Chief Financial Officer and their recurring services are billed to the same Intragovernmental Payment

and Collection (IPAC) or Billed Office Address Code (BOAC) number used for their rent bill. Your agency official who receives the PBS rent bill must agree in writing to have reimbursable recurring services included on the bill, and the amount billed for reimbursable recurring services must be identical from month to month.

GSA can get this process started easily for you by amending your existing Occupancy Agreement. Please be aware that the billing and services will automatically be discontinued at the end of each fiscal year and must be renewed by the tenant agency if they wish to continue receiving the services and continue being billed via the PBS rent bill. There is no increased cost for paying for recurring services through your rent bill; the fee remains \$100 for each service billed per fiscal year.

We remain committed to developing smarter solutions for our clients and hope you enjoy this added convenience. For more information, please visit our web site at [www.gsa.gov/rentpricingpolicy](http://www.gsa.gov/rentpricingpolicy) and click on “Procedure for Billing Recurring RWAs” or contact **Christa Hodge** in GSA’s Revenue Division at (202) 219-0085. □

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## Art-in-Architecture Program Enhances Mid-Atlantic Assets

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façade... to make you look at the building and look up instead of just walking right through as we usually do... to make you more conscious of entering the building.”

*Swing Over* is composed of 400 linear feet of aluminum, standing 40 feet high by 120 feet wide. The sculpture adds dimension and interest to the building, which was constructed in 1967.

The Art-in-Architecture program began as the Fine Arts in New Federal Buildings program, established in 1962 under President Kennedy’s administration. The goal of the Fine Arts program was to ensure, “where appropriate, fine art should be incorporated in the designs [of federal buildings], with emphasis on the work of living American artists.” The initiative was reintroduced and expanded in 1972 as the Art-in-Architecture Program and, today, the program continues to engage American artists early in GSA construction projects to enhance the vitality of the nation’s federal facilities. Visit [www.gsa.gov/artinarchitecture](http://www.gsa.gov/artinarchitecture) for more information on GSA’s Art-in-Architecture Program. □



*Swing Over, Fallon Federal Building, Baltimore, Maryland*