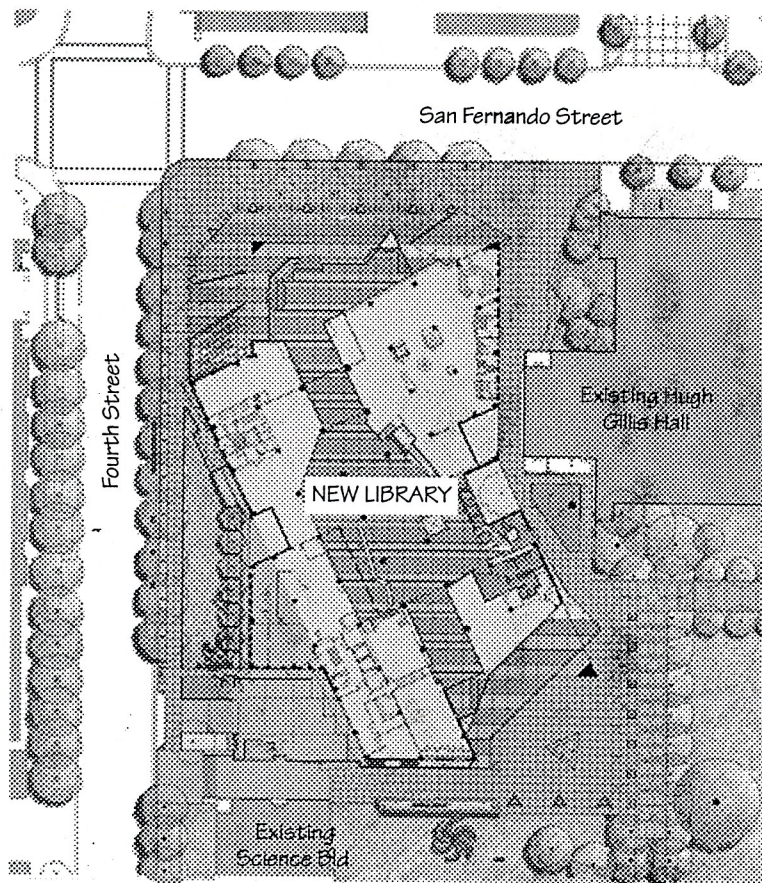

**DESIGN PROPOSAL FOR THE
SAN JOSE JOINT LIBRARY
PUBLIC ART COLLECTION**



Joint Library Site Plan

ARTIST: MEL CHIN

SAN JOSE JOINT LIBRARY PUBLIC ART COLLECTION

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

The new San Jose Joint Library will be the first combined city/university library in the country. As part of its ongoing commitment to the arts, the San Jose Public Art Program has commissioned artist Mel Chin to create artwork that is integrated into the Joint Library building.

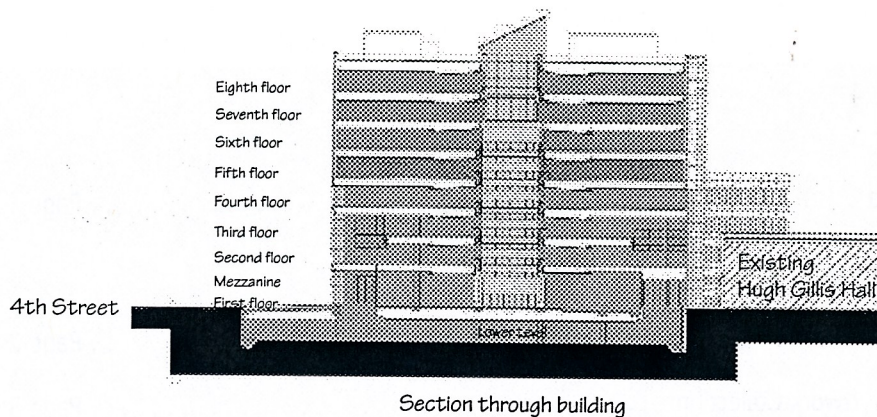
ARTIST TEAM

Mel Chin is an internationally recognized artist, known for creating artworks in a broad range of media and scale, including objects, temporary installations and permanent public artworks. Since the 1970s, Mel Chin has produced artworks that join cross-cultural aesthetics with complex ideas, including art that addresses political and ecological issues. Mel Chin's artistic process is highly collaborative in nature; he has worked with biologists, psychologists, geologists, medical doctors and television producers.

Mel Chin's chief collaborators on the Joint Library project are Haun Saussy, Chair of Asian Languages, and Associate Professor, Department of Asian Languages and Department of Comparative Literature at Stanford University; Robert Batchelor, Professor of History at Stanford University; artist James Millar; and artist Steve Durie. His methodology also involves extensive community process and participation; a number of the artworks in this proposal were conceived by community members and students.

COMMUNITY PROCESS

Through extensive and collaborative community forums, Mel Chin facilitated discussions on a wide spectrum of personal and civic issues that served to inspire the artwork concepts for the Joint Library. These discussions involved participants from multiple points of view and a diverse range of race, age and socio-economic backgrounds. The outreach process included community workshops at branch libraries (Biblioteca Latinoamericana, Berryessa, Alviso and East San Jose Carnegie), and a workshop for the general public at the San Jose McEnery Convention Center. A series of student design workshops were held at San Jose State University and Cooper Union Design School, New York, NY. Over 2,000 questionnaires were distributed to San Jose State University faculty to elicit input into the artwork. Additionally, workshops with University and City librarians, San Jose Redevelopment Agency staff, the Library architects, and University representatives were conducted to address issues related to technical coordination and long-term maintenance of the Public Art Collection.



ARTWORK CONCEPT

The artwork proposal presented by Mel Chin anticipates the design of a collection of sculptural "insertions" and/or "presentations" throughout the Joint Library. The artworks are designed to relate and refer to the Library book collection, and are intended to provoke interest, curiosity, a sense of mystery and to send patrons into the Library book collection for further exploration. The artworks will also reference contemporary technology and our City's cultural environment.

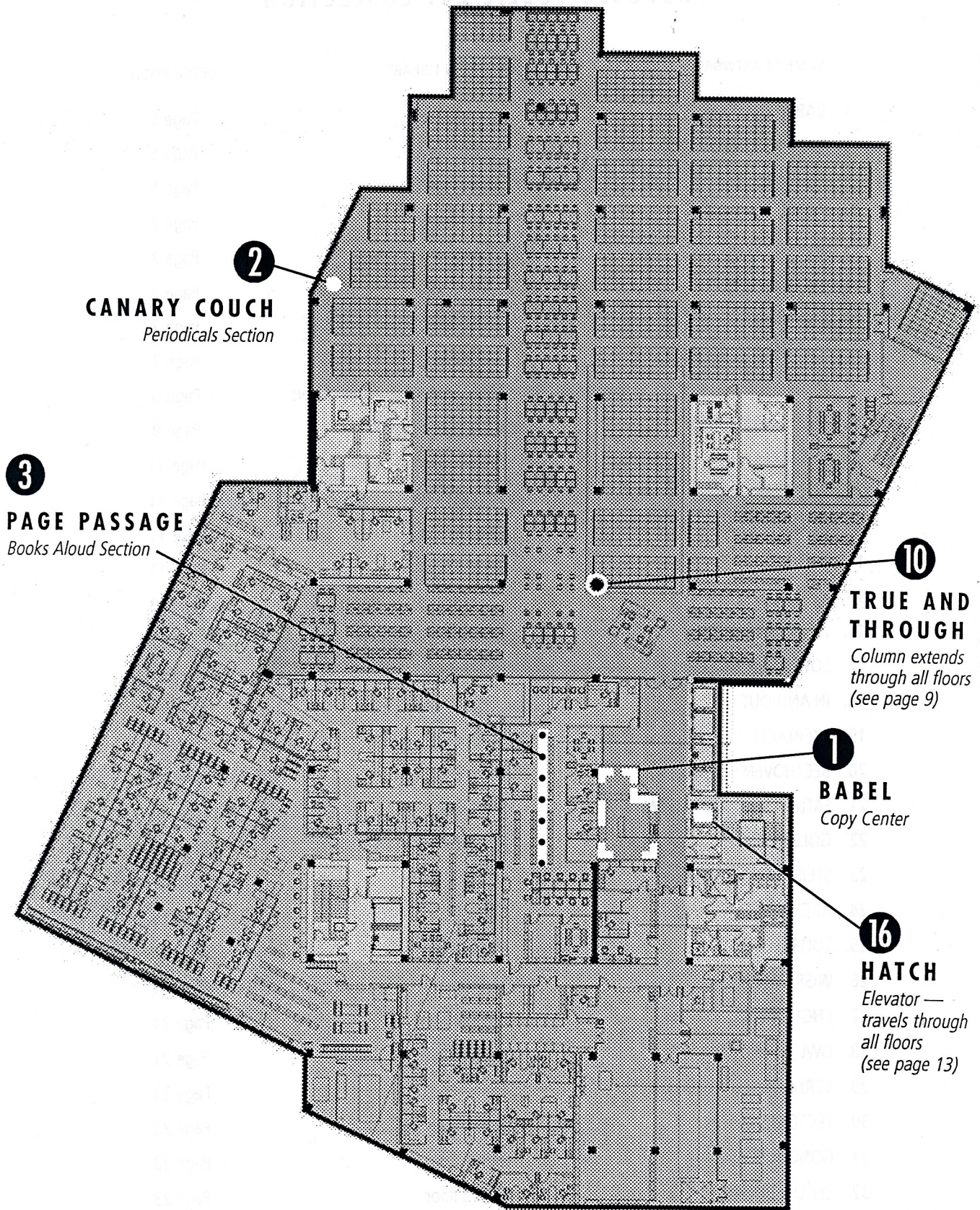
The Joint Library Public Art Collection is composed of 33 initial concepts that encourage patrons to explore and circulate through the Joint Library. The scale of the artworks contributes a humanizing element within the large interior space of the Joint Library. The artworks vary from intimate and subtle insertions that may require numerous visits to discover, to large and dramatic statements that have the potential to become landmarks within the building. Many of the artworks are sited to surprise Library patrons. They range from functional installations, such as chairs, tables and shelves, to sculptural ceilings, curious light projections, and more traditional formal sculpture. Some of the concepts are invested with a sense of humor, while others are designed to provoke intellectual consideration.

A portion of the project budget has been reserved for a final group of artworks, which will be designed and installed after the Joint Library building is completed in 2003.

In addition to the Public Artwork Collection, collateral material under consideration includes a web page and a printed catalogue.

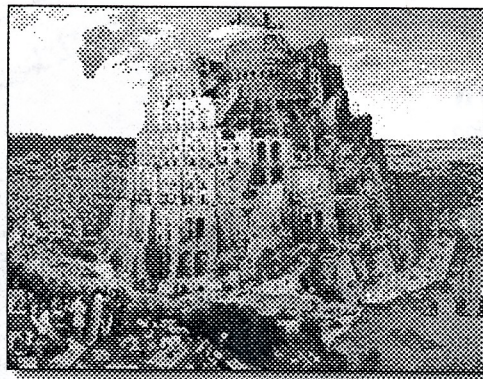
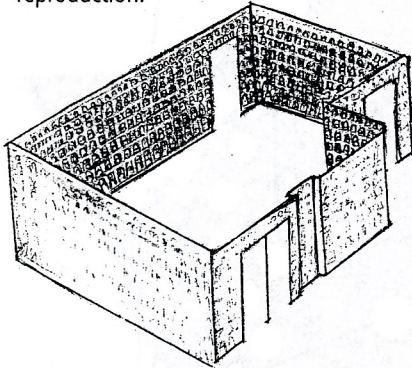
INDEX OF PROPOSED PUBLIC ART COLLECTION

NAME OF ARTWORK	LOCATION IN LIBRARY	DESCRIPTION
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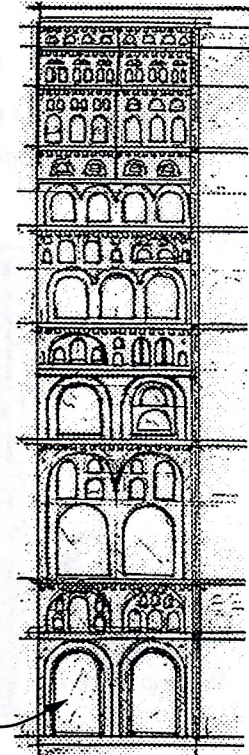


1 BABEL

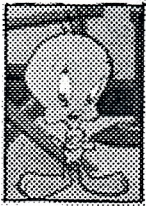
The walls of the Copy Center will be faced with millwork referencing Breughel's *Tower of Babel*. Mirrors installed within the millwork will metaphorically reference the theme of reproduction.



Breughel's *Tower of Babel*

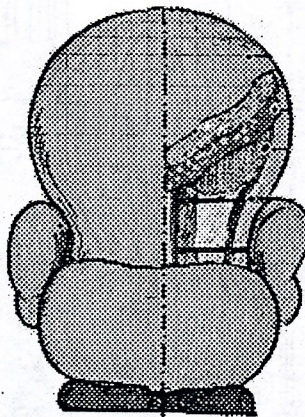


Millwork Detail

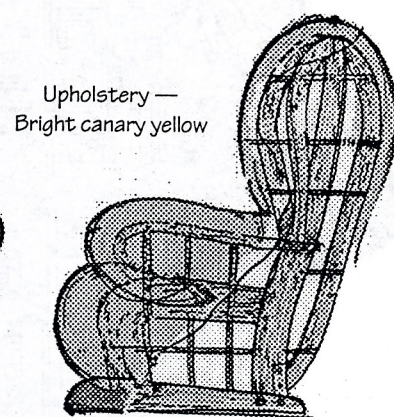


2 CANARY COUCH

A reading chair will be upholstered in bright canary yellow, adding an element of humor to the Lower Level reading space by presenting a couch in an abstracted form of Tweety Bird. More seriously, the artwork recalls the history of copper and mercury mining in the Almaden mines, and points to the critical role of libraries as "mineshaft canaries": cultural institutions whose health and vigor testify to the well-being of the societies that support them.



Front View

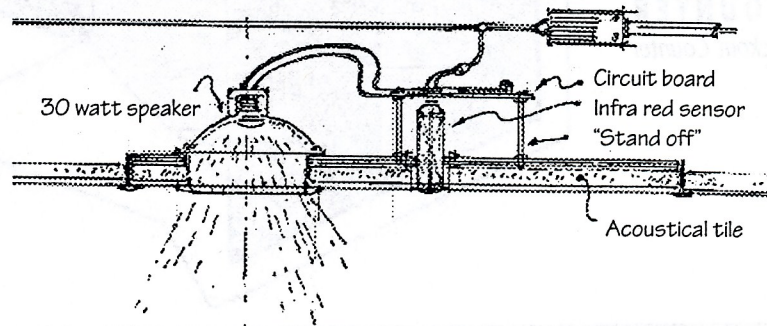


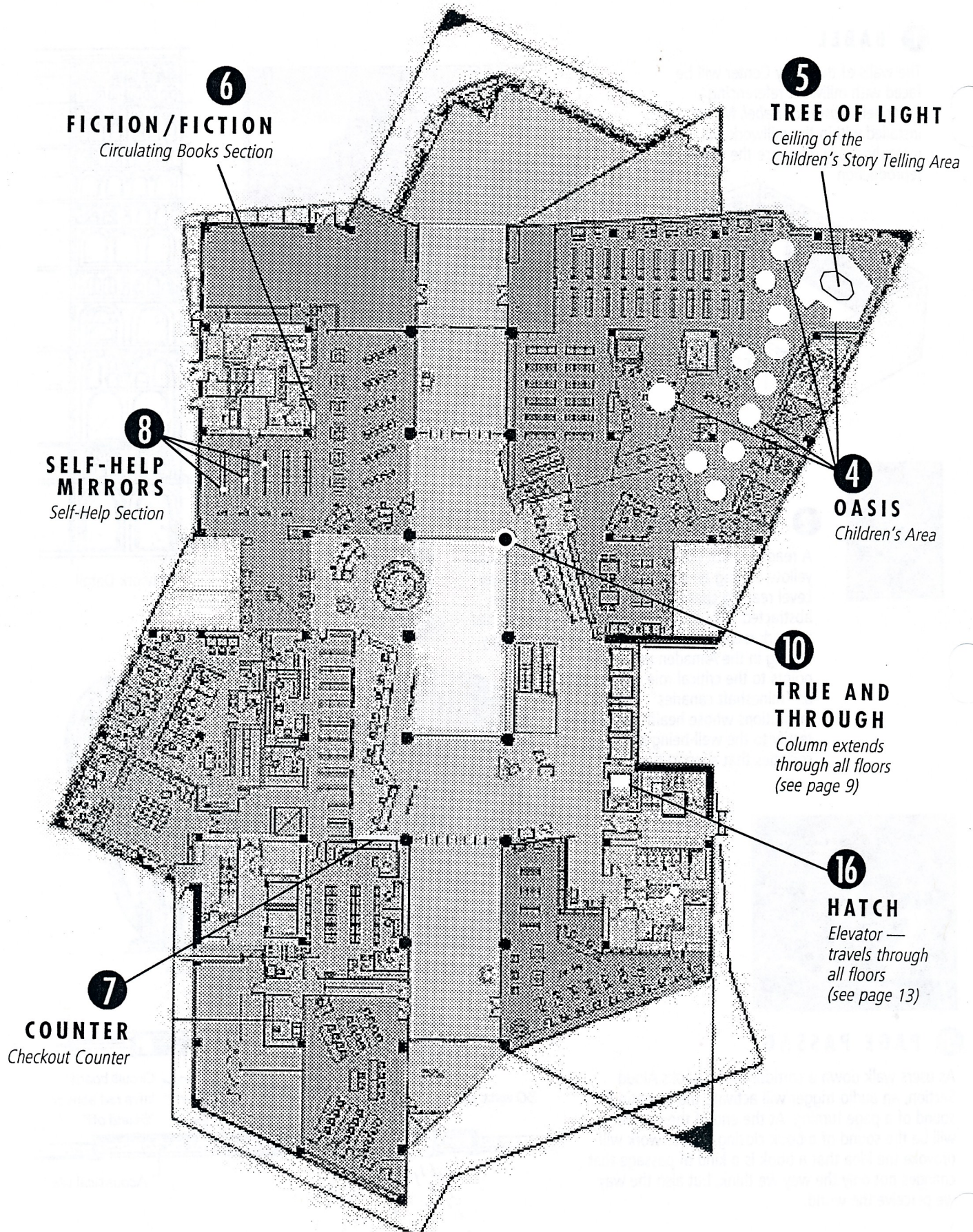
Side Section



3 PAGE PASSAGE

As users walk down a corridor in the Books Aloud Section, an audio trigger will activate the repeating sound of a page turning. At the end of the corridor will be the sound of a book closing. This artwork will provoke the idea that a book is a kind of passage that changes not only the way we think, but also the way we perceive the world.

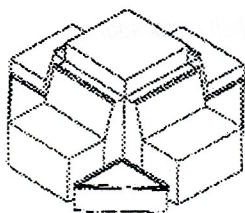




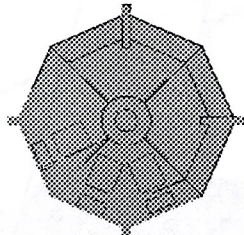
FIRST FLOOR

4 OASIS

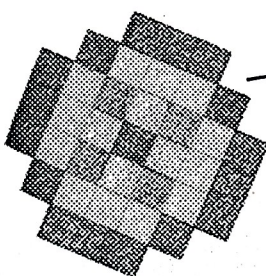
Designs for furniture and carpet patterns in the Children's Area inspired by, and drawn from, traditional nomadic rug designs. Carpet patterns will be constructed of carpet tiles in five colors. Furniture, collaboratively designed by Library architects Carrier Johnson and artist Mel Chin, will include mobile shelving, the computer table, and the story-telling area, and will be re-created in a traditional carpet pattern shape.



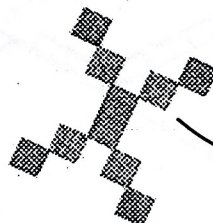
Furniture



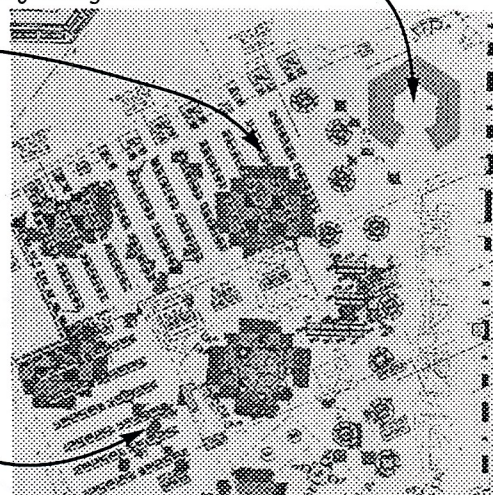
Computer table



Carpet patterns

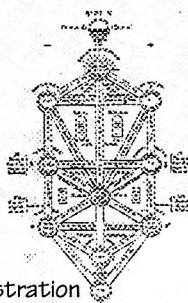


Story Telling Area

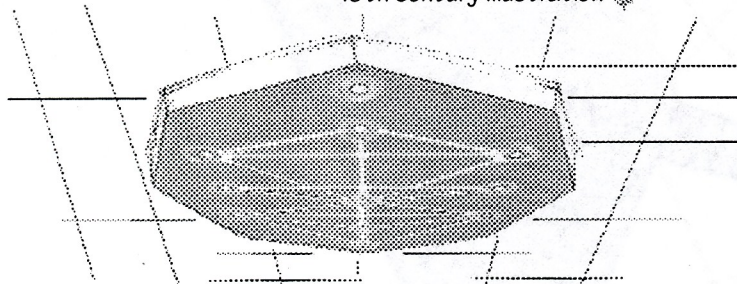


5 TREE OF LIGHT

The Tree of Light is a geometric constellation of fixtures derived from historical cross cultural attempts to symbolically map the nature of belief and reality.

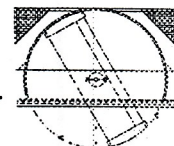


19th Century Illustration

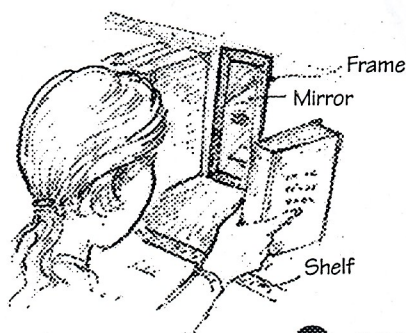
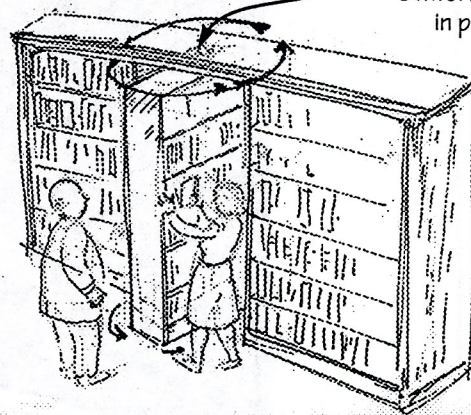


6 FICTION/FICTION

A secret shelf, located in the Circulating Books Section, will rotate. One side will be stocked with faux mystery books, the other side with circulating popular fiction.



Swivel mechanism in plan view



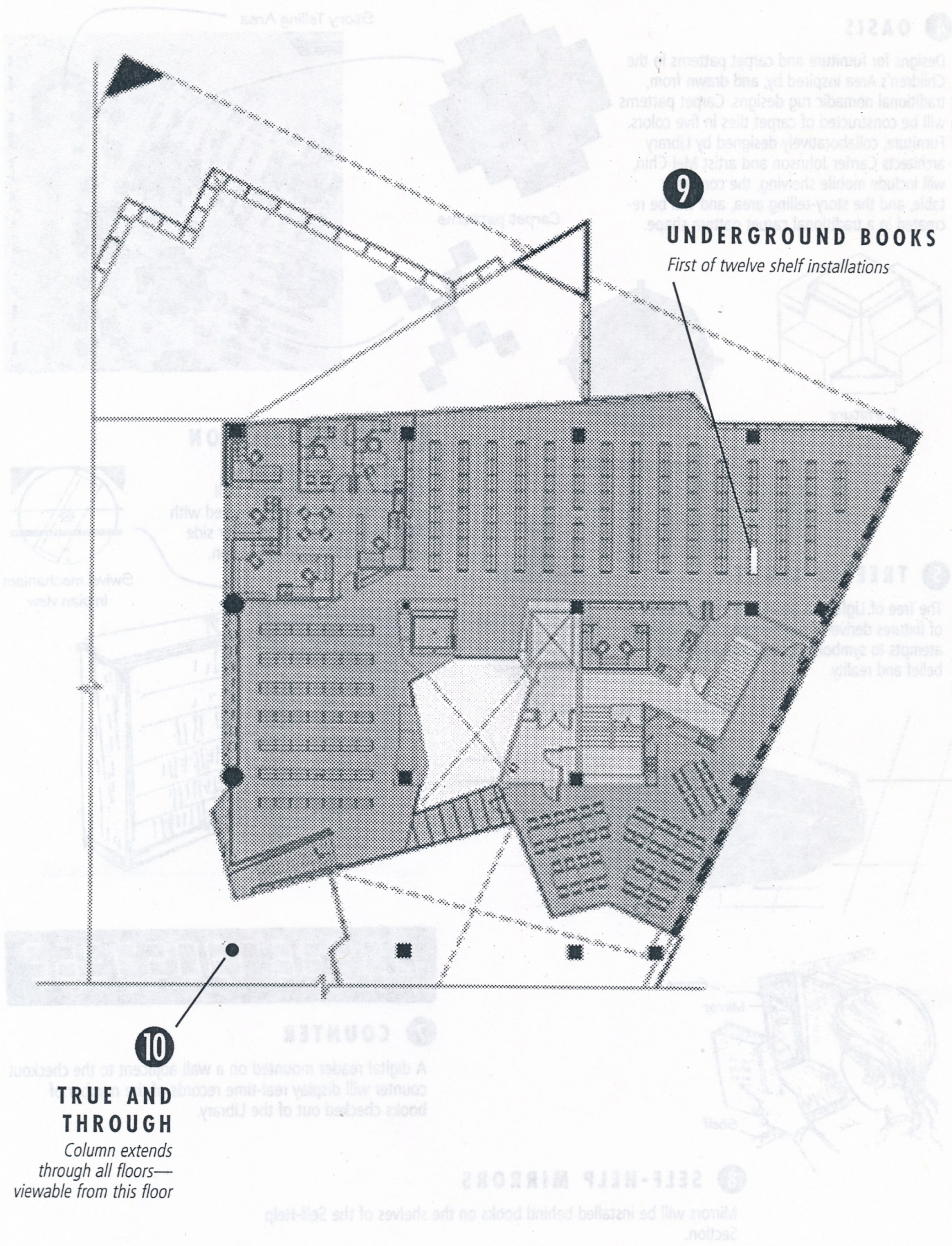
8 SELF-HELP MIRRORS

Mirrors will be installed behind books on the shelves of the Self-Help Section.



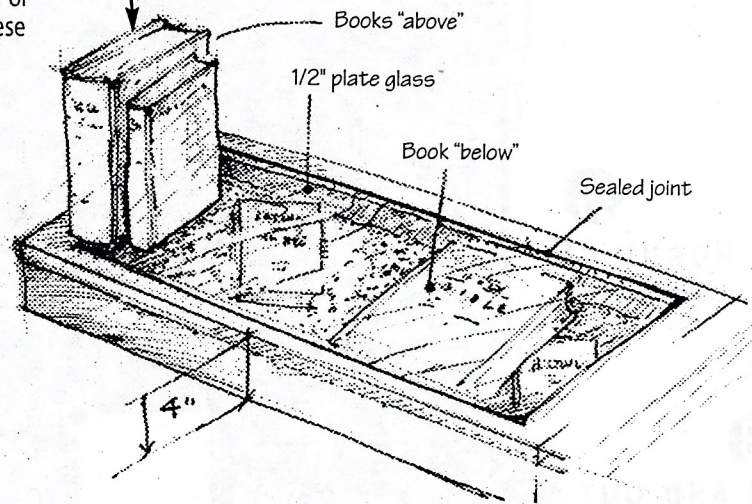
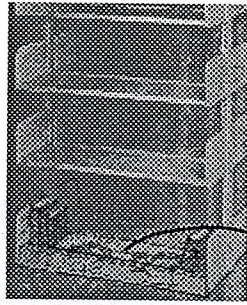
7 COUNTER

A digital reader mounted on a wall adjacent to the checkout counter will display real-time records of the number of books checked out of the Library.



9 UNDERGROUND BOOKS

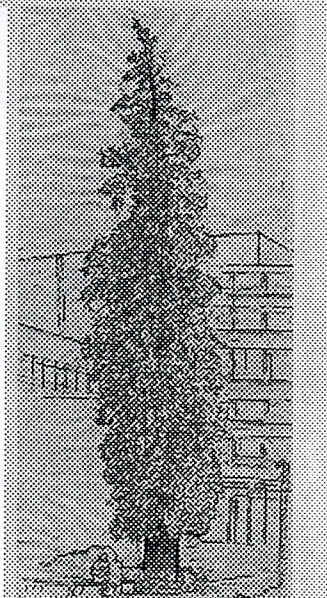
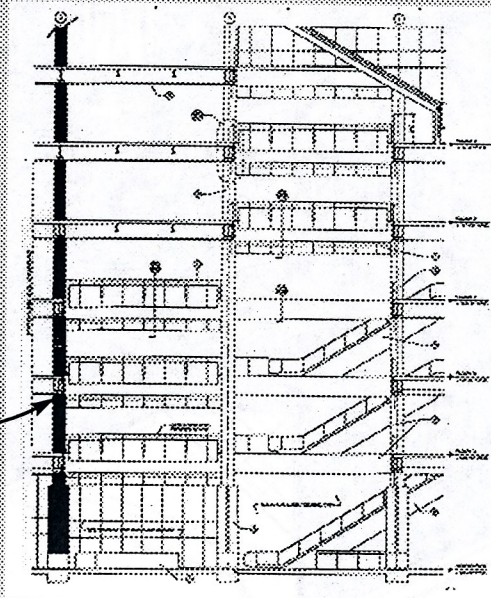
Twelve subterranean, or seemingly subterranean, shelves will reveal themselves beneath selected book stacks. These underground "vaults" will contain books that have been banned, burned or otherwise intentionally set aside. There will be twelve of these insertions sited throughout the Library.



True and Through occurs on 9 floors.
Although not part of this floor, it is viewable from the Mezzanine.

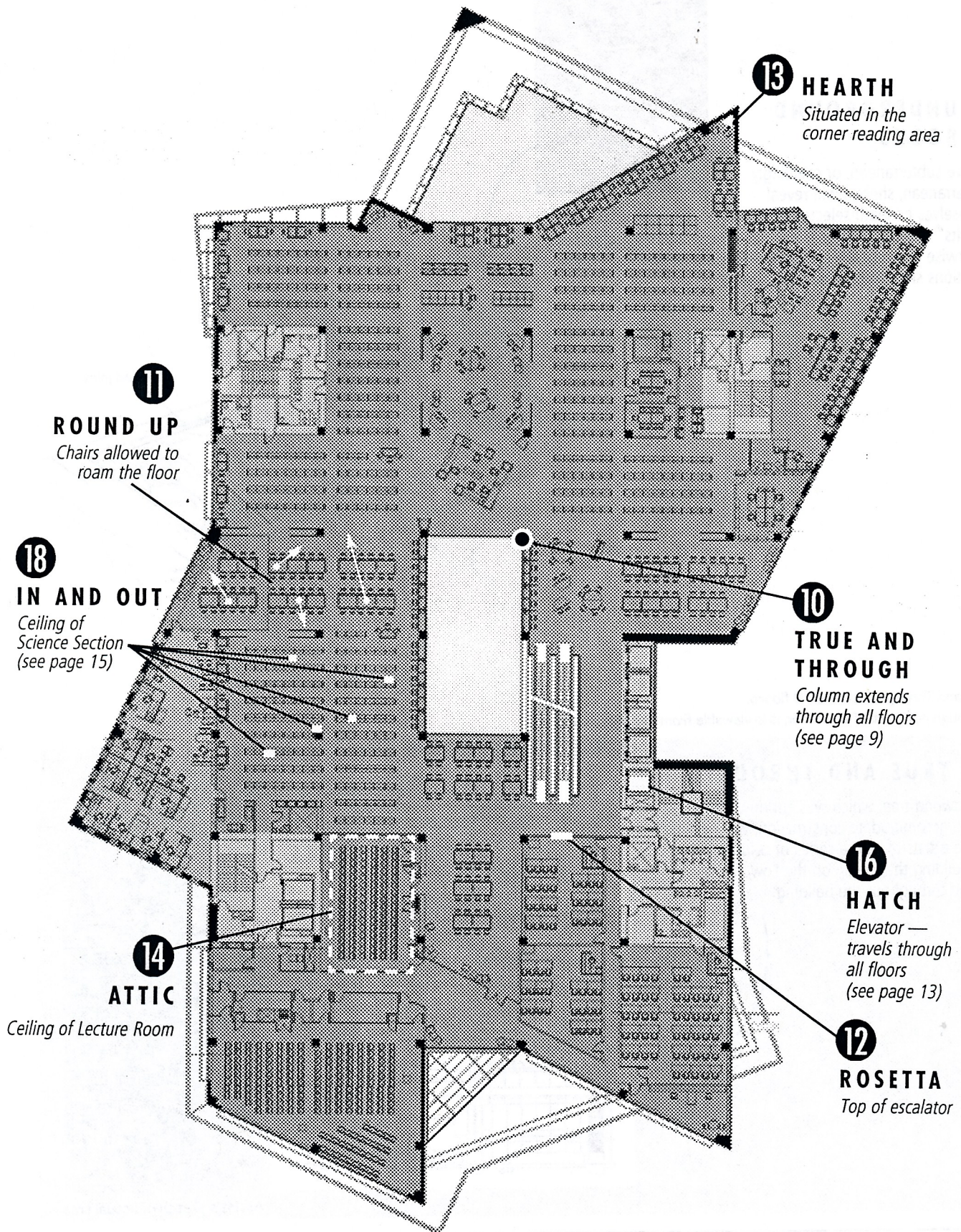
10 TRUE AND THROUGH

A Redwood tree, which was cut down from the site to accommodate construction, will be milled by the artists to clad a series of columns within the building that begin on the Lower Level and extend throughout the building.



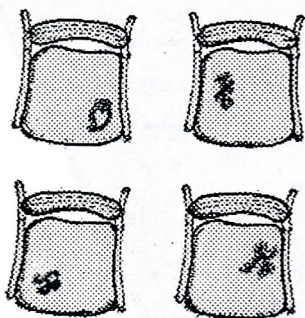
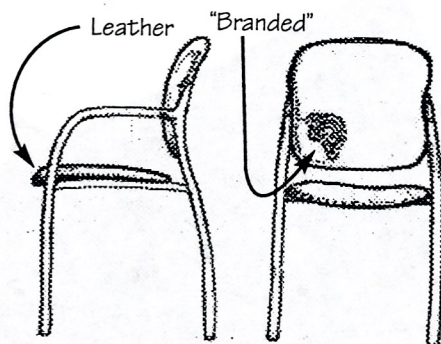
Artist's sketch of actual tree

SECOND FLOOR

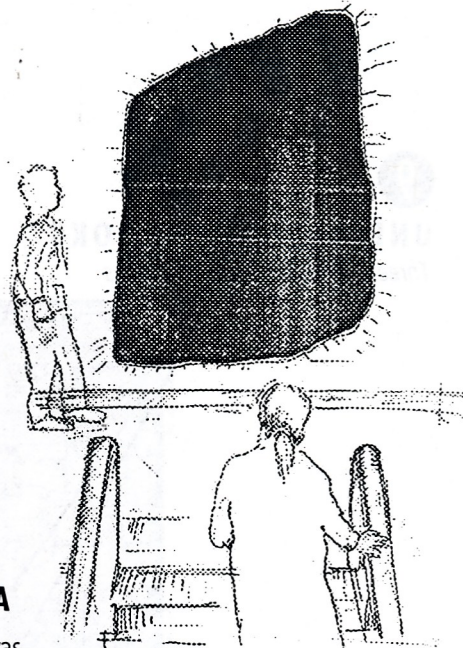


11 ROUND UP

Eighty-one leather chairs will each be marked with one of the twenty-seven historic cattle brands of the original San Jose ranchos (1819). The chairs will be allowed to "wander" freely on the second floor.



Plan View of chairs

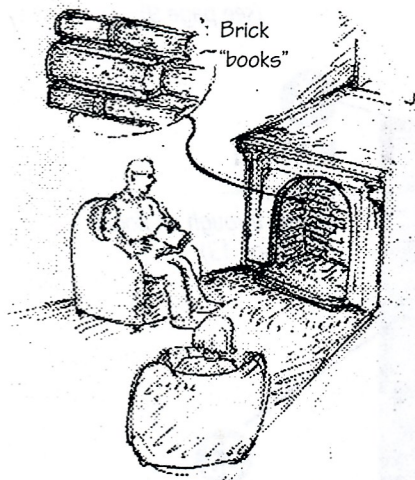


12 ROSETTA

The Rosetta Stone was discovered in 1802, and its trilingual inscription made it possible to decipher hieroglyphics. This proposal calls for the image of the Rosetta Stone to be etched on a glass surface at the top of the escalator on the second floor. Behind the glass, will be fleeting images of multi-lingual messages created by LED reader boards.

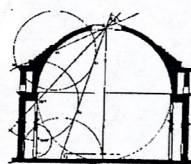
13 HEARTH

A non-functioning fireplace, will be installed in a corner location. This proposal speaks to the history of book burning.

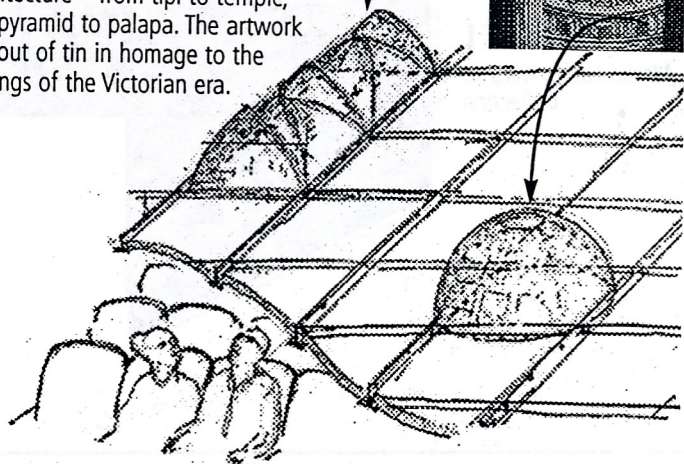
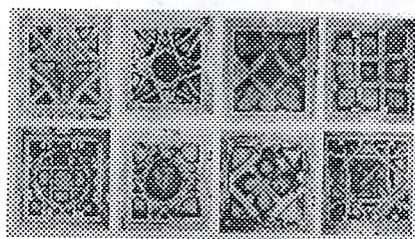
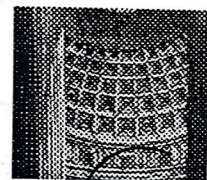
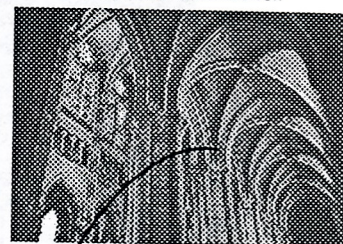


14 ATTIC

The ancient "art of memory" technique calls for the building of an imaginary "memory palace" with different rooms to store one's thoughts. The ceiling of the Lecture Room will have randomly sited portals, which morph into architectural models of famous places, such as the domes and vaults of world architecture—from tipi to temple, stupa to sepulchre, pyramid to palapa. The artwork will be constructed out of tin in homage to the mass-produced ceilings of the Victorian era.



Chartes Cathedral



9

UNDERGROUND BOOKS

Three of twelve shelf installations

10

TRUE AND THROUGH

Column extends through all floors (see page 9)

16

HATCH

Elevator — travels through all floors (see page 13)

15

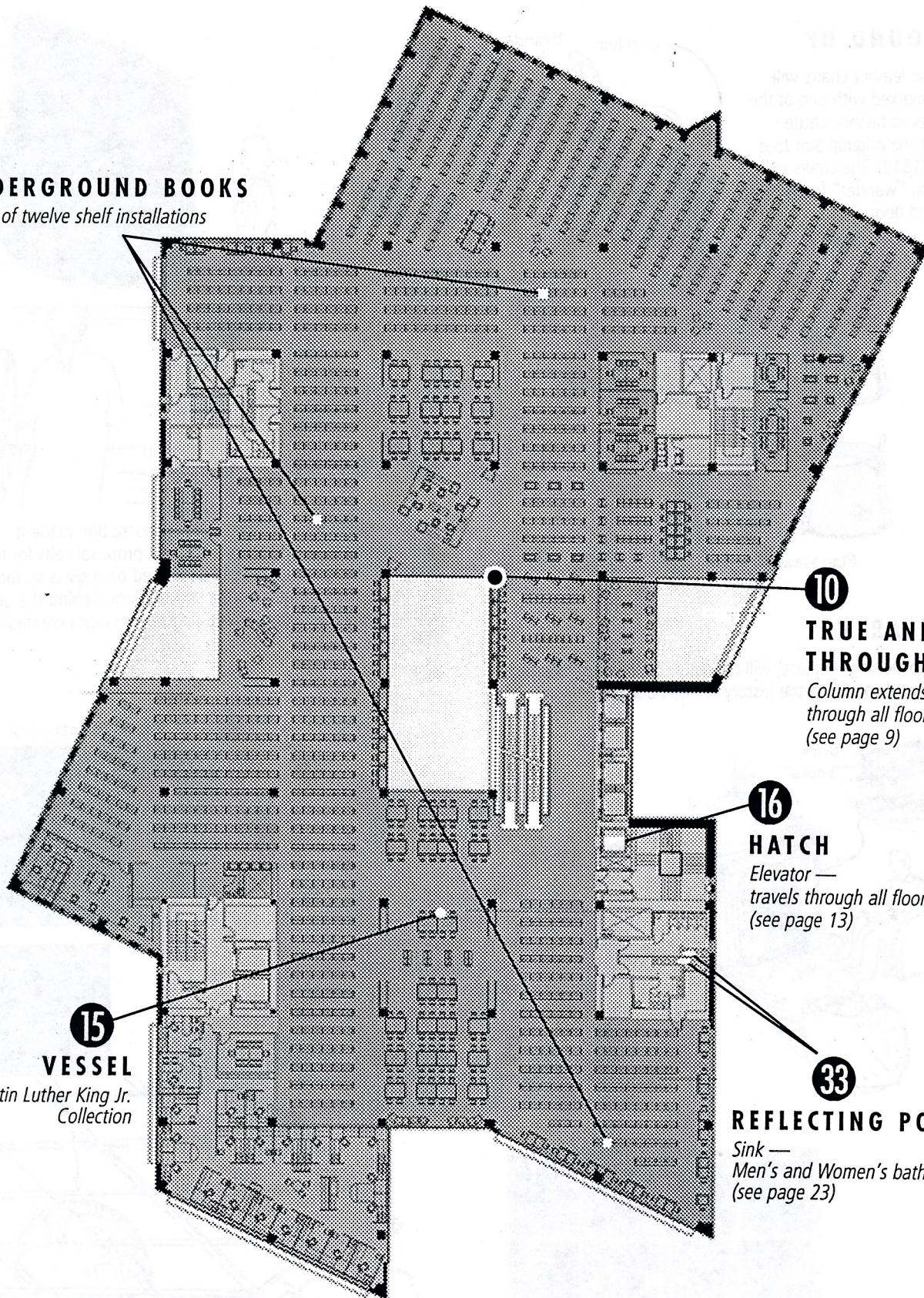
VESSEL

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Collection

33

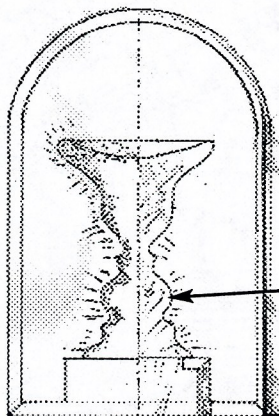
REFLECTING POOLS

Sink — Men's and Women's bathrooms (see page 23)

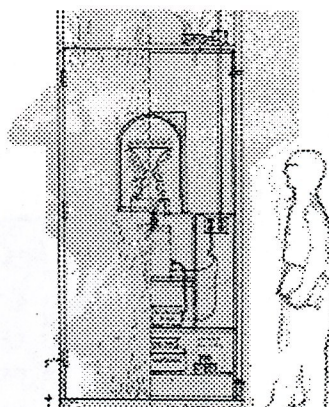


15 VESSEL

A glass vessel formed in the profile shape of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will project multi-cultural skin tones representing the citizens of San Jose. The vessel will be located adjacent to the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Collection, and will be sited in a wall behind glass.



Cast glass vessel

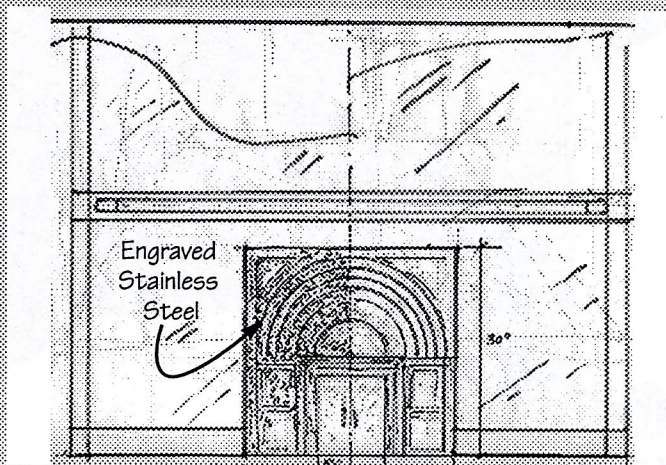


Hatch travels through all floors; located in Elevator Five

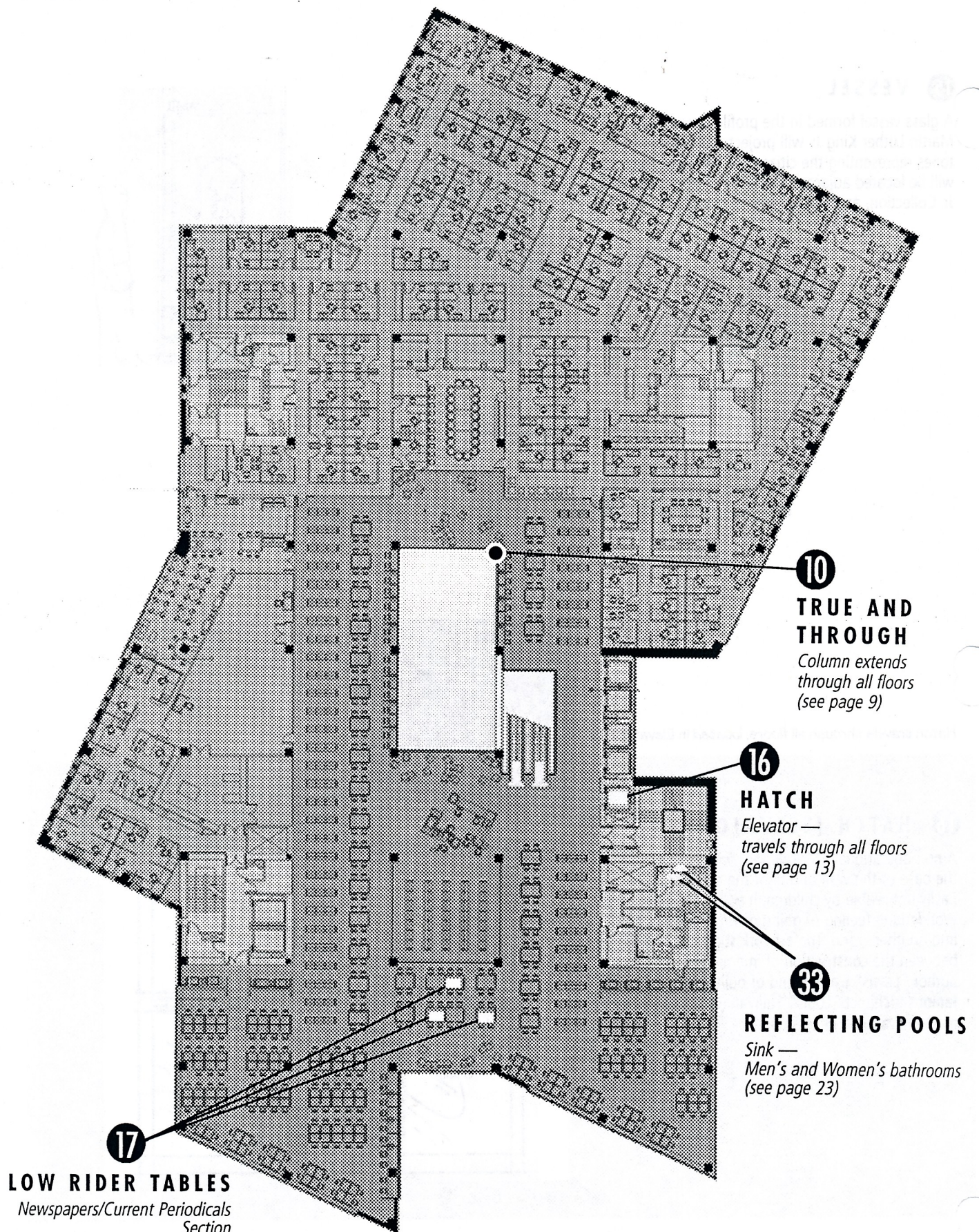


16 HATCH (ELEVATOR)

A non-operational 15"-tall door will be located at the base of the wall of one of the elevator cabs. Easily noticeable by children, it will evoke an Alice in Wonderland feeling of going down the rabbit hatch into another world. The artwork suggests a dialogue between the construction of imaginary spaces by author "Lewis" Carroll, and of built spaces by famous architect "Louis" Sullivan (whose skyscrapers made elevators a necessity).



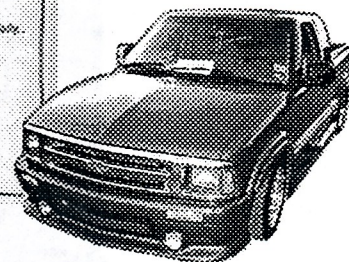
FOURTH FLOOR



Three low-to-the-ground reading tables with customized chairs will be painted in airbrush metallic colors, to commemorate the low rider car culture of Latino youth in California. This transformation and personalization of a mass-produced object parallels in many ways the process of reading, which is not merely about mechanical reproduction but a way to open doors to personal creativity. This piece will be painted by a local low rider car customizing shop, selected from a community competition.

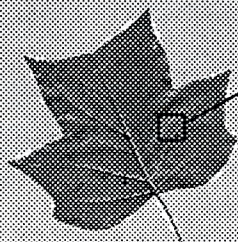


Conceptual mock-up for competition poster

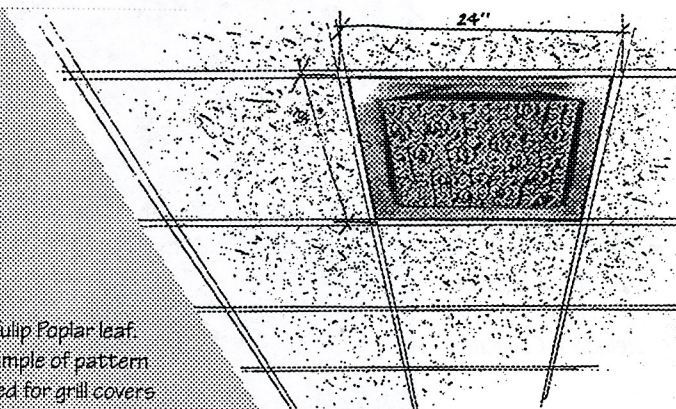


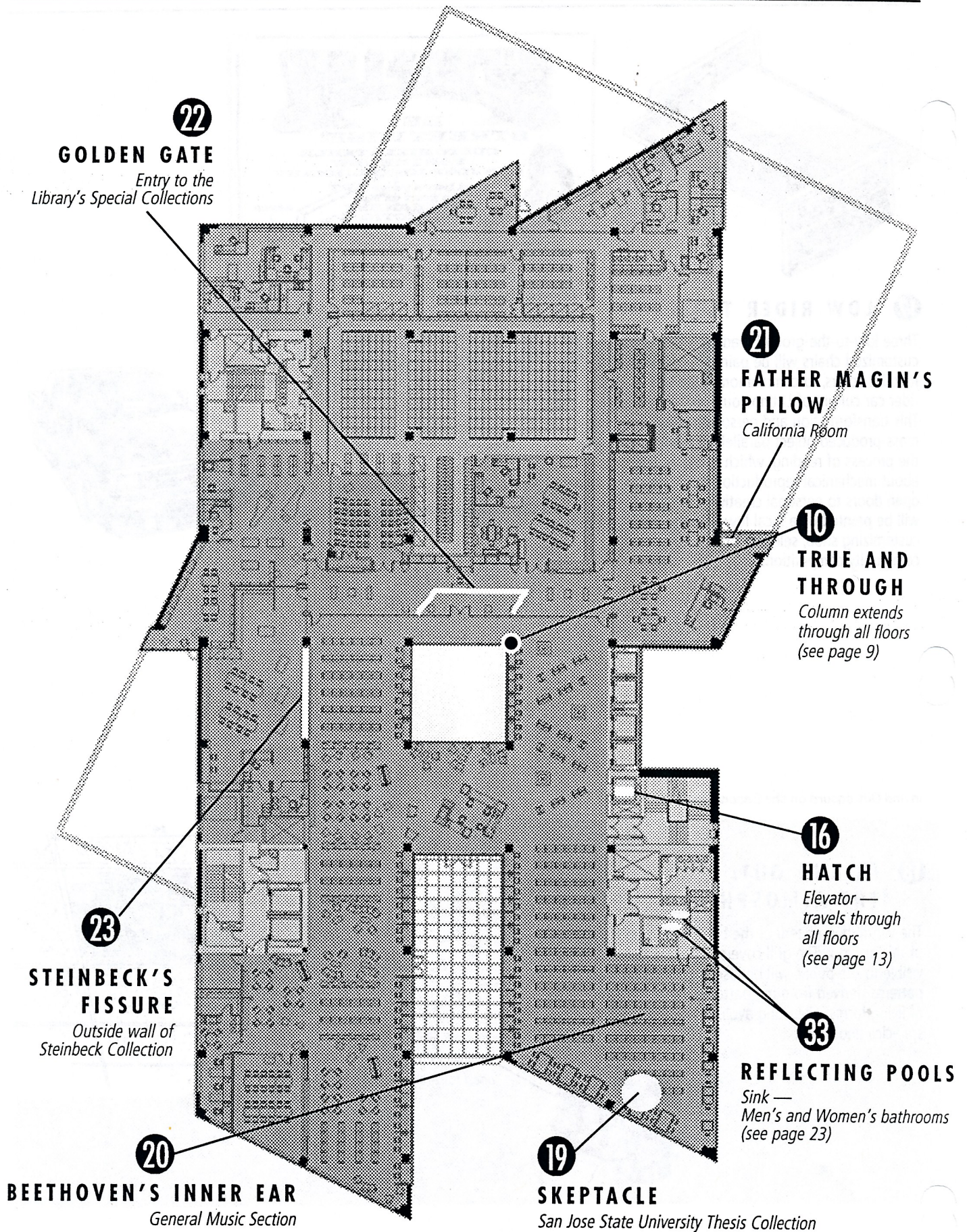
In and Out occurs on the Second and Eighth floors.

The ventilation system of the building will be the focus of this artwork. The grill covers of the HVAC system visible to the public will be laser cut in geometric patterns derived from the patterns of breathing apparatus of living forms: gills, lung avoli, plant stomata and insect spiracles and tubes.



Tulip Poplar leaf.
sample of pattern
used for grill covers



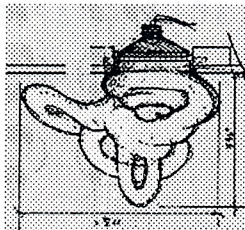
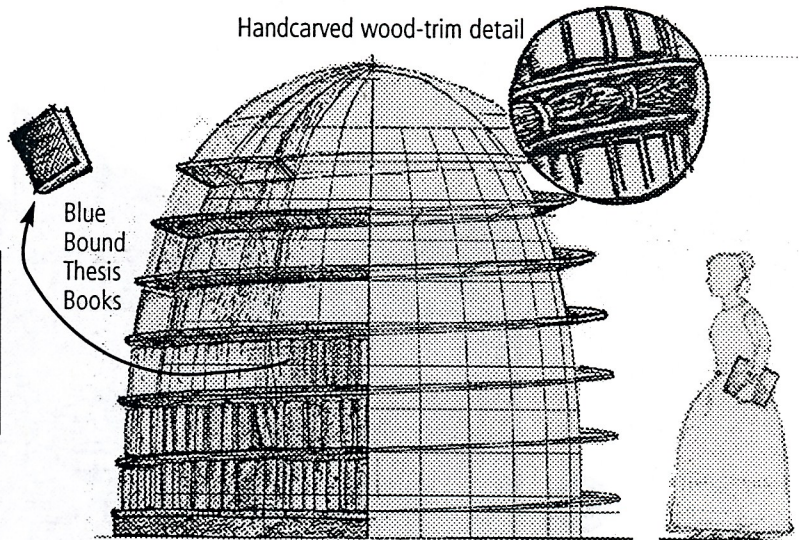


19 SKEPTACLE

A beehive (or "skep")-shaped bookshelf will hold the San Jose State University Thesis Collection. The skep form references the vast productivity contained within the shelves of this collection.

Skep (skēp) *n.* A beehive, esp. one of straw.

Spec•ta•cle (skēp'te-kel) *n.* 1. A public show or display, especially on a large scale.
2. Something of a striking or impressive kind.

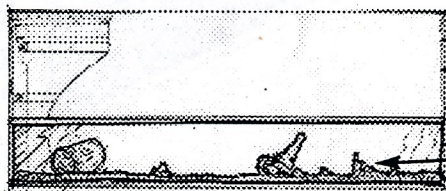
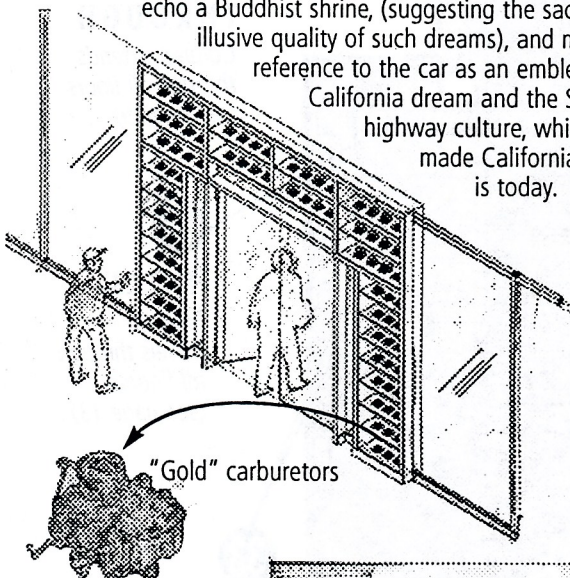


20 BEETHOVEN'S INNER EAR

A brass-plated, perforated metal sculptural representation of an inner ear (approximately the size of a brass horn) will replace the grill of a building speaker in the ceiling of the General Music Section.

22 GOLDEN GATE

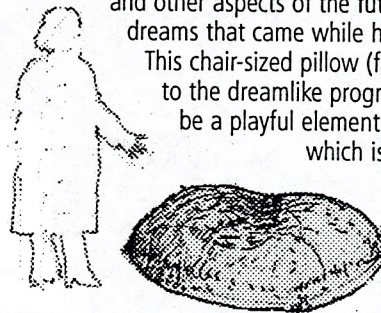
A gateway to the Library's Special Collections that display 88 gold-plated carburetors. The construction of the gateway will echo the form of the Golden Gate Bridge, an emblem of the utopian hopes and dreams of California. The carburetors echo a Buddhist shrine, (suggesting the sacred yet illusive quality of such dreams), and make reference to the car as an emblem of the California dream and the State's highway culture, which has made California what it is today.



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

21 FATHER MAGIN'S PILLOW

A Spanish Nostrodomus from the eighteenth century, Father Magin predicted events such as the San Francisco earthquake and fire, and other aspects of the future of Alta California, from dreams that came while he slept on his adobe pillow. This chair-sized pillow (fabricated in adobe) alludes to the dreamlike prognostications of history. It will be a playful element in the California Room, which is a place for serious historic research.

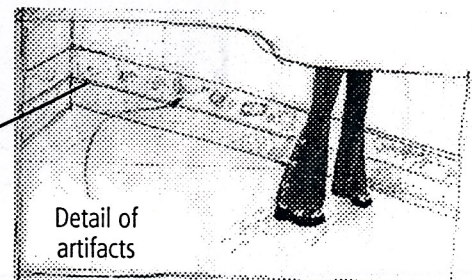


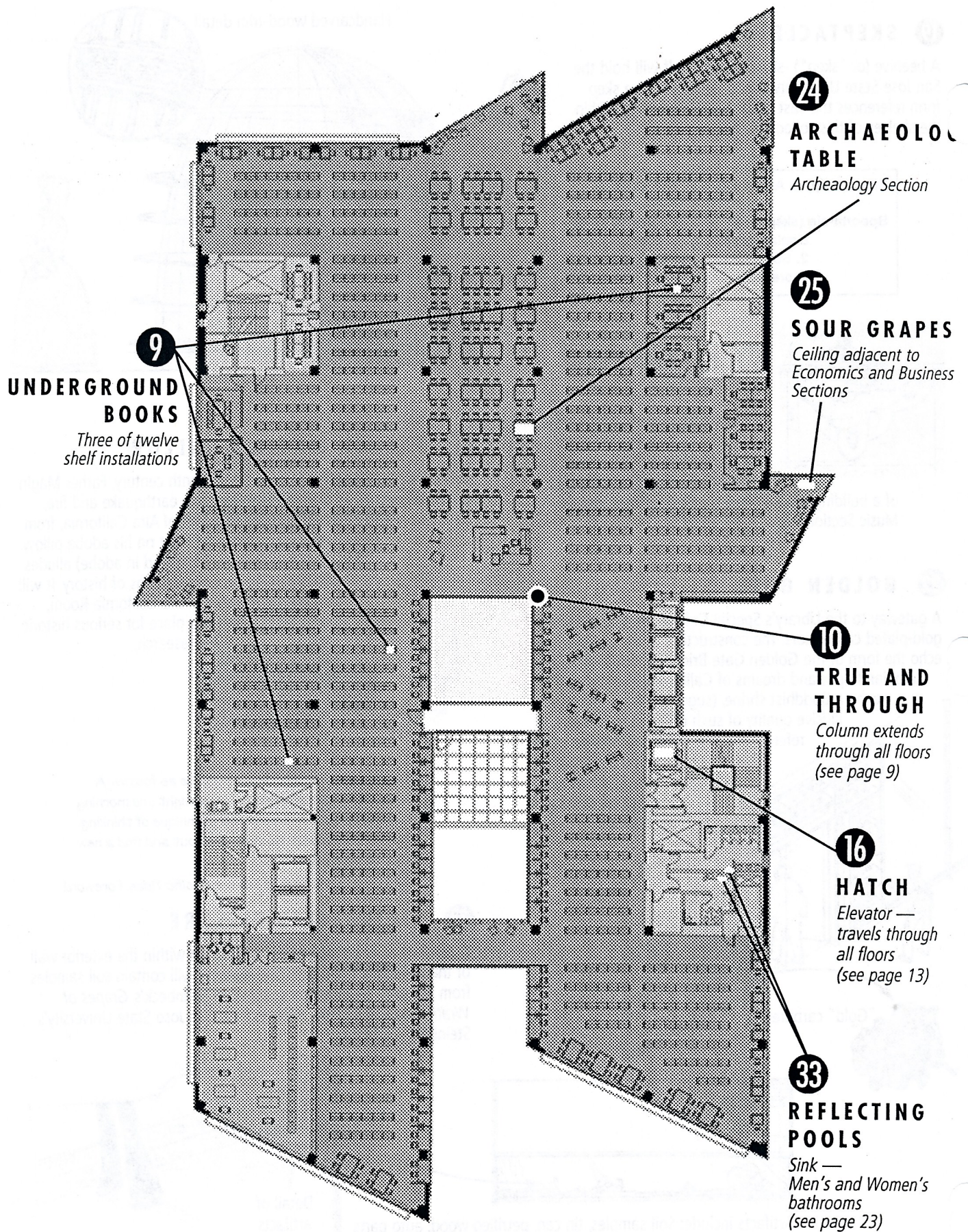
"The process of rediscovery might be as follows: A young, inquisitive and original man might one morning find a fissure in the traditional technique of thinking. Through this fissure he might look out and find a new external world about him."

— Steinbeck, *Between Pacific Tides*, Foreword

23 STEINBECK'S FISSURE

A diorama at ankle height will be located within the exterior wall of the Steinbeck Collection. The diorama will contain soil samples from the path of migration outlined in Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, and will include artifacts from San Jose State University's Steinbeck Collection.



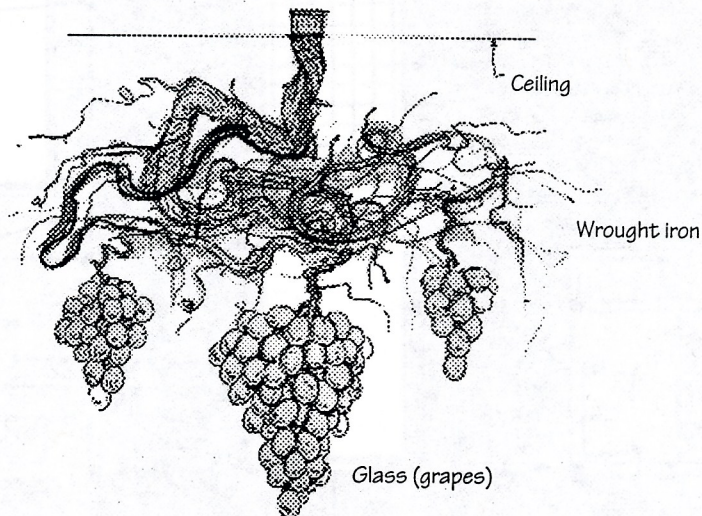
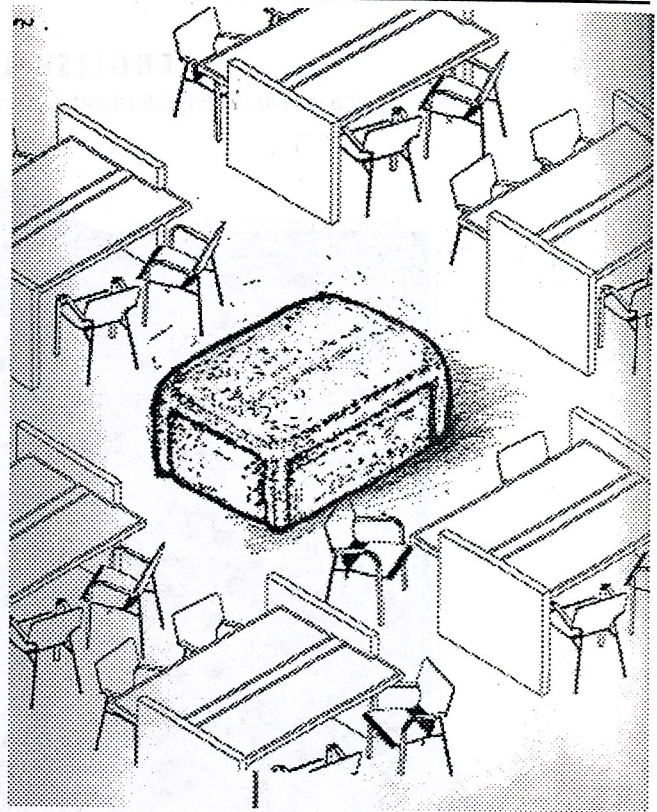




The table's presence and design allude to Olmec archaeology.

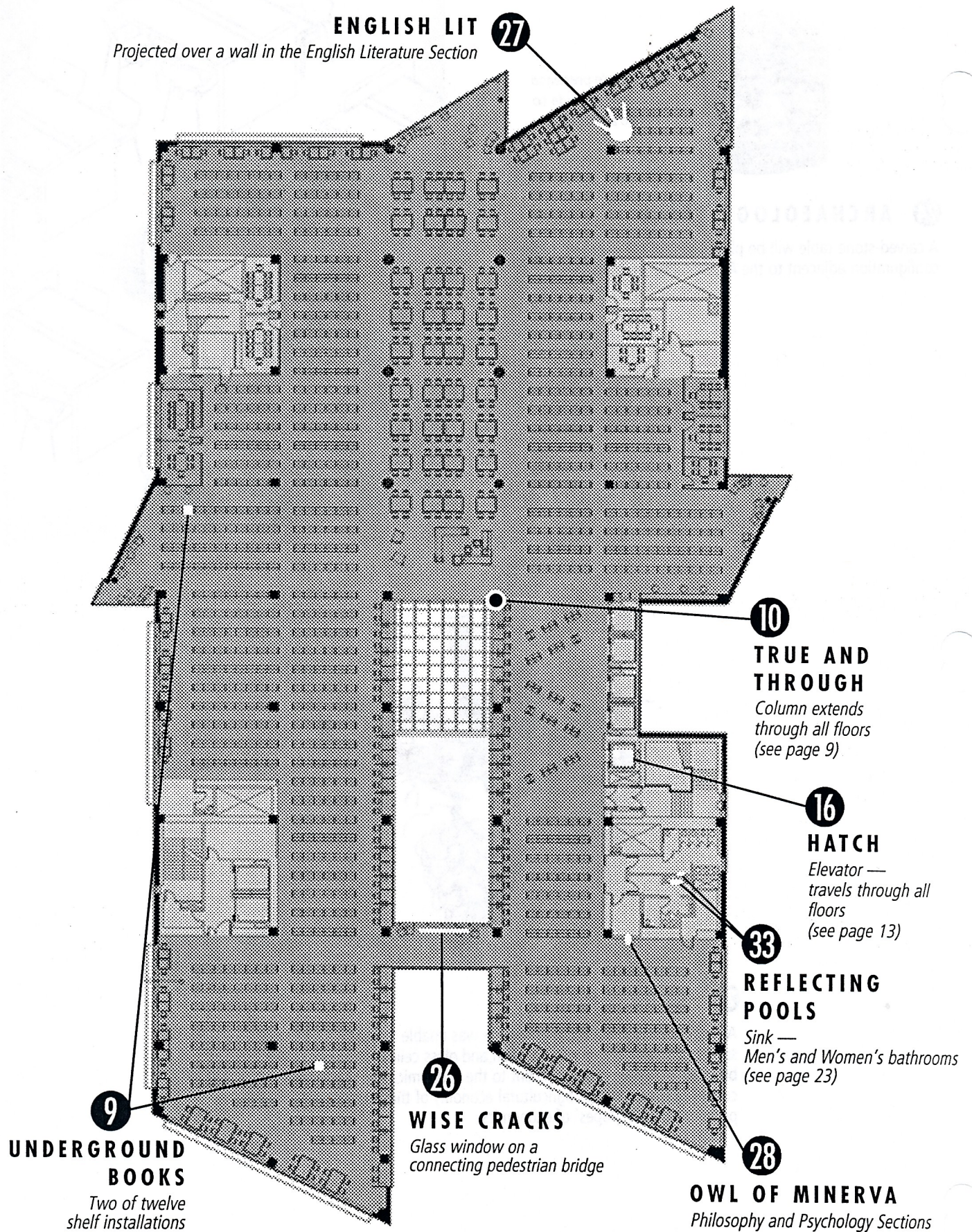
24 ARCHAEOLOGY TABLE

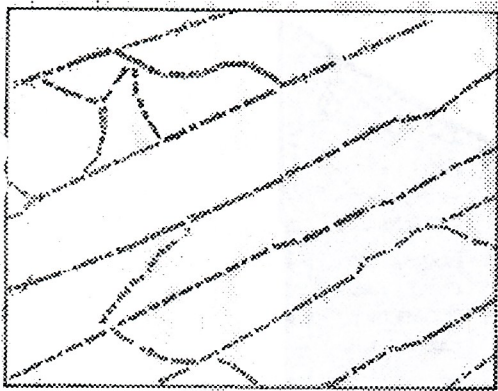
A carved-stone table will be placed within the standard table configuration adjacent to the Archaeology Section.



25 SOUR GRAPES

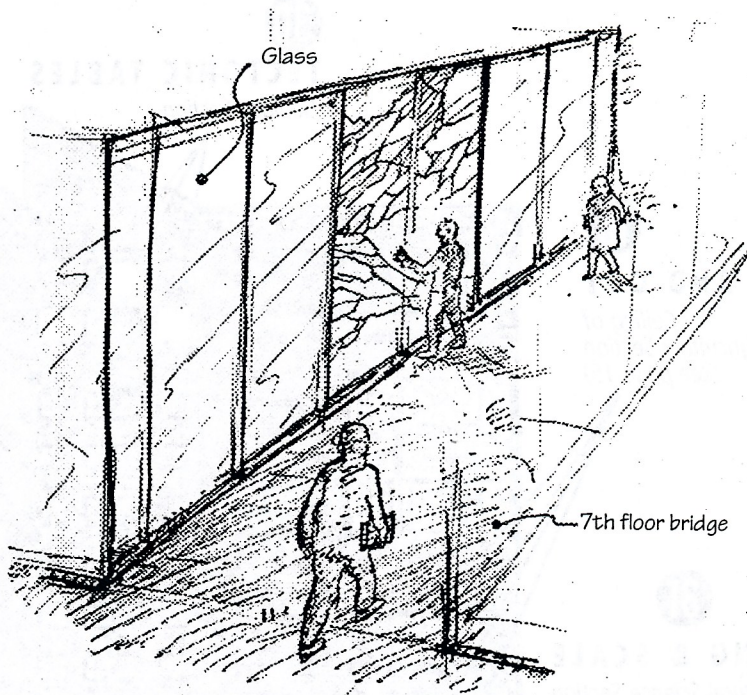
Aesop's fox disparaged the grapes he was unable to reach, saying that they were sour. In this artwork, a wrought iron and glass ceiling sculpture in the form of bunches of grapes, sited adjacent to the Economics and Business Sections will comment on the earlier agricultural economy of the San Jose area and the potentially 'sour grapes' of economics.





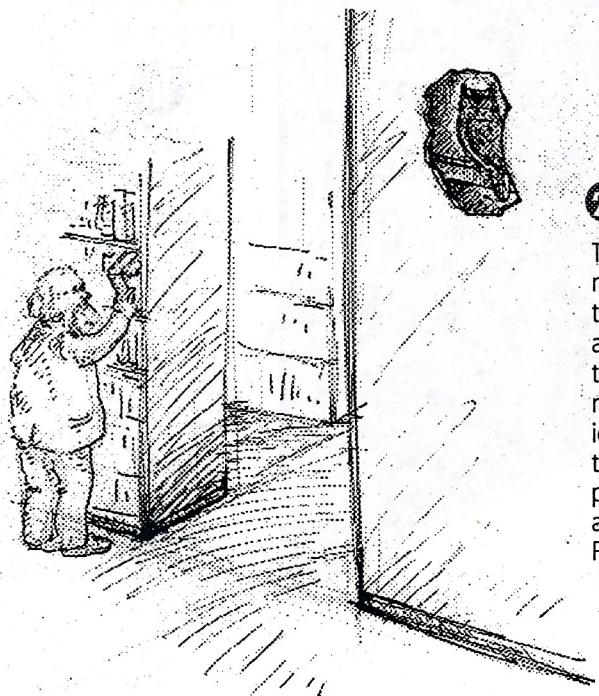
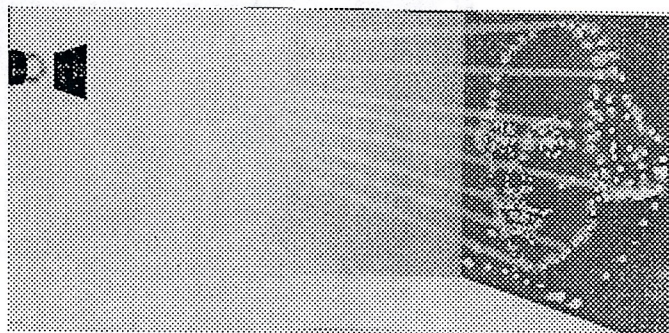
26 WISE CRACKS

The glass window on a connecting pedestrian bridge will appear to be cracked. Upon closer inspection, the cracked lines will be comprised of text sandblasted into the surface. The text will be multi-lingual jokes and puns about art, language, and human relationships.



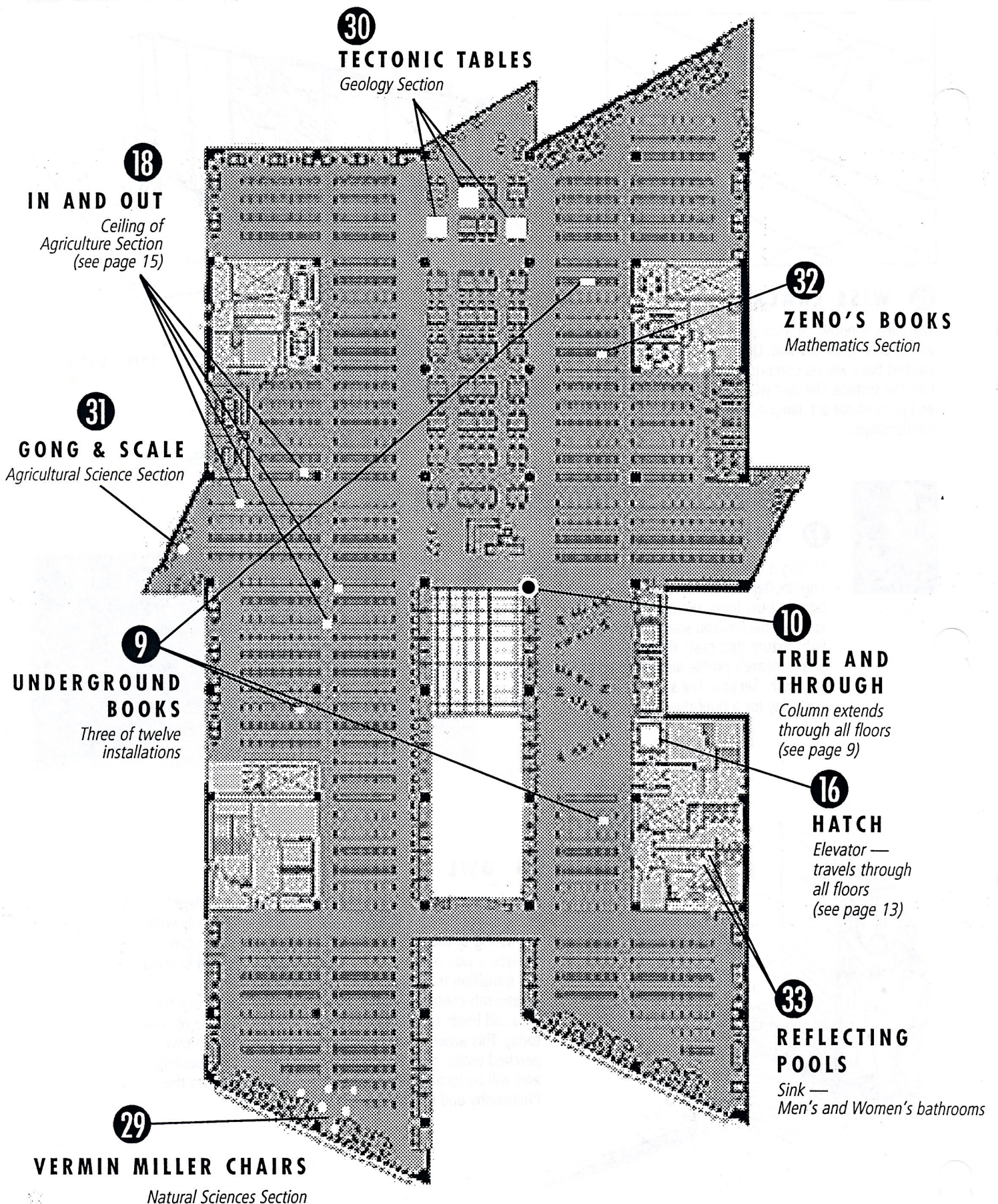
27 ENGLISH LIT

Noting a desire expressed by members of the English Department faculty to immortalize the Bard in bust form, the artists have designed a special, mechanized shadow clock, that will be a light fixture that casts the shadow of Shakespeare's profile across a wall of the English Literature Section. The shadow will appear once each day for a brief duration.



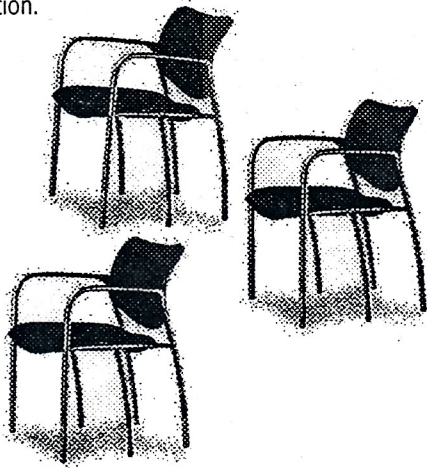
28 OWL OF MINERVA

The nineteenth century idealist philosopher G.W.F. Hegel noted that "the owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk" — meaning that philosophy can analyze a way of life only as it passes away. He had in mind the transition from eighteenth-century feudalism to nineteenth-century commercialism and democracy, but the idea still holds for all the changes in society that we observe today. This artwork will be a realistic sculpture of an owl perched within a darkened niche and lighted from behind, and will be located imbedded in the wall adjacent to the Philosophy and Psychology Sections.



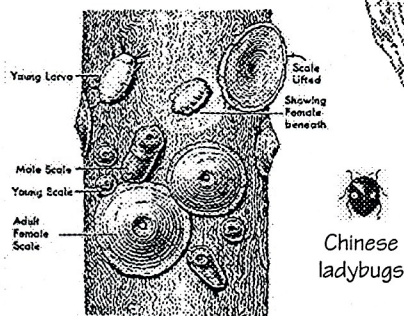
29 VERMIN MILLER CHAIRS

Twenty-four standard chairs will be altered by adding two additional legs. This artwork references the insect world and will be located in the Natural Science Section.



31 GONG & SCALE

A cast bronze gong will be designed after the San Jose Scale, a parasite to fruit trees discovered in the 1880s and its striker, fashioned after the Chinese Ladybug, used to combat the pest. The work recalls another aspect of local agricultural and labor history. Existing anti-Asian sentiment increased due to the problem and prompted one of the first U.S. labor strikes by Chinese workers. This artwork will be located adjacent to the Agriculture Section.

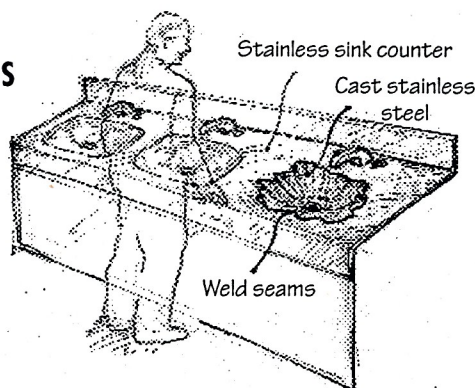


San Jose Scale on the trunk of a fruit tree



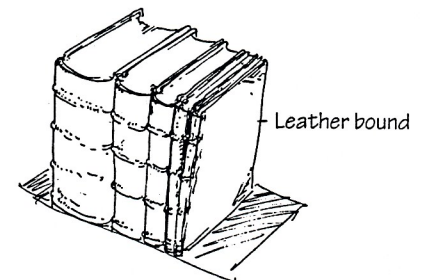
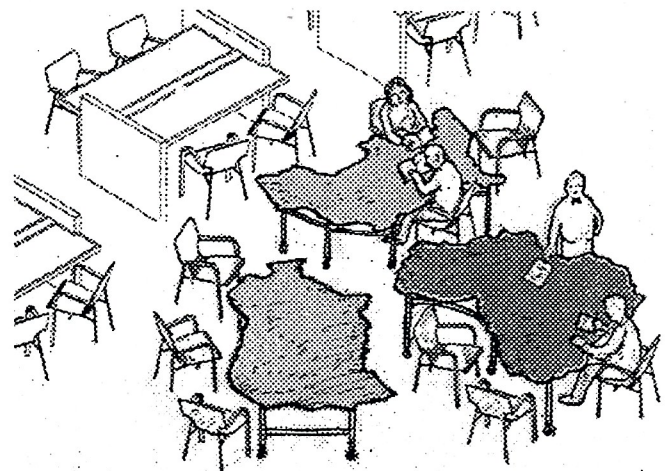
33 REFLECTING POOLS

Creating a continuing commentary on water usage and industrial erosion, one of the three sinks within each of the men's and women's bathrooms will be sculpturally eroded in a progressive state from the top floor to the third floor.



30 TECTONIC TABLES

A set of functional reading tables will be fabricated in the shape of the continents as they were before they began their continental drift; the tables can be brought together (as in the reconstructed Gondwanaland), or used separately. Slightly uneven surface planes on the tables will allude to the active tectonic subsurface of California. This artwork will be located adjacent to the Geology Section.



32 ZENO'S BOOKS

This artwork will be comprised of brown leather-bound books inserted within a shelf of the Mathematics Section. Zeno of Elea, in the sixth century BC, argued that motion was impossible. His reasoning was that since the space between any two points can be infinitely subdivided (halved, then halved again, then halved again...), no moving object could ever reach its goal. This series of leather books, shrinking progressively from one thousand pages to two pages, commemorates Zeno's invention of time and motion studies. In honor of Zeno's conclusion, these books will not circulate from the Mathematics Section.