

RECO n F I g u r a T I O N S :

A MULTI-PHASE, SITE-SPECIFIC INSTALLATION

By Janet Shapero

I was interested both in the mission of *Discovering What's Next*® and in possibilities (and challenges) of working with a site that had been an elementary school classroom.

As a member of the 50 plus demographic whose needs and concerns *Discovering What's Next*® addresses, I appreciated the DWN mission. The idea of being in a new phase of life, needing to address changing circumstances, needing to embrace and adapt to change, is relevant to me personally. Also, having gone through the Newton Public School system, I felt an affinity for the site, as the classroom (and the building itself) called forth childhood memories and associations.

As an artist, I have long been working with concepts of evolving perspectives and perceptions, the role of memory, reconfiguration of self, and I have been exploring the notion of change over time.

This particular installation, *Reconfigurations*, provided the interesting opportunity of creating a work that would change over a period of time and be visited repeatedly over the course of its evolution by those who utilize the space.

It was a chance to act upon the environment and transform it in a way that might enhance the mission of *Discovering What's Next*®, to engage people 50+ in the creative exploration of the next life stage. As the classroom is also utilized by **Suzuki School of Newton**, I wanted the installation to have a musical quality as well.

Strongly believing in the role of art in education, communication and transformation, I hope that *Reconfigurations* will serve as a working model of evolution and exploration, participation, discovery and delight.

This installation was designed and created for Discovering What's Next®, in celebration of its move to a new location in the former Carr School, now the Newton Cultural Center,

RECO n FIGURATIONS :

Reconfigurations' evolution was conceived of as having three distinct phases:

Phase 1: Window: Rete-Chrome Mini-Panels

When first visiting this site, I found the large windows with their small individual panes to be the physical element that was most evocative. Also, the role of light has long been central to my work, as has the connection between the internal and the external world. So the windows were a natural place to begin. Taking my cue from the existing panes of sporadically placed frosted glass, I created numerous small rete-chrome panels designed to fit over many of the clear glass panes - as a means of altering the color and quality of light entering the room. I decided to use primary and secondary colors both for their reference to early education and for their tie to the track colors used by *Discovering What's Next*. For me, Phase 1 made metaphorical reference to inspiration and to early education.

Phase 2: Rete-Chrome Waves

The second phase works with the idea of becoming more dimensional and more independent. Each waveform is like a note that can be heard/seen both individually and/or in unison with others – in a composition that moves across time and space. While having physicality, the waves are almost incorporeal, and seem to float through space in the realm of ideas.

Phase 3: Rete-Chrome Forms

In phase three, the forms become more complex and more compact, often with multiple colors and multiple elements. There is also a shift in direction as the movement of this third set of rete-chromes seems to flow back towards the windows. This phase relates to the purposeful reconfiguration that we may choose to undergo as adults, adapting to an ever-changing world.

Viewers are welcome to become participants by identifying their aspirations and allowing those aspirations – in written form - to be incorporated in the Rete-Chrome Forms of Phase 3.

About RETE-CHROMES

For over a decade, I've been creating Rete-Chromes. Pronounced rĕt-ĕ-krōm: my hybrid term relates to my hybrid process and is derived from *rete*, Latin for net; and *chrome*, Greek for color.

By applying thin layers of pigment, both directly and indirectly to an open-weave backing,

I construct images of varying translucencies, held afloat in the geometry of the screen.