



Art, Technology and Sky Factory SkyCeilings™

Not just another pretty picture...

It is our opinion that SkyCeilings are not just pretty pictures. They are not just innovative or stylish design elements. In the deepest sense, they are not even about the sky.

We like to think that our SkyCeilings are a technology – an artistic technology – whose purpose is to introduce the power and purity of nature into interior environments.

In “Ode on a Grecian Urn” John Keats concludes by telling us, “Beauty is truth, truth beauty, – that is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know.” At the Sky Factory it is our belief that by delivering the full beauty of the sky, we can deliver truth – the profound inner truth of nature.

Why are we focused on the beauty of the sky? The sky is humanity’s most universal experience of nature - we all see and love the sky. No matter who we are or where we live, everyone has experienced lying on their back and looking up into clouds floating across a blue canopy and we all respond similarly – expanded calmness, a sense of inner stability and peace.

Because our physiology is so attuned to the sky it is no accident that our eyes and mind register the coolness of blue as distant space. (This is a fundamental optical

principle of Impressionism; that cool colors recede while warm colors push forward, hence our use of red stoplights.) Because our psychology is also linked, it is no accident that “blue sky” is the symbol for freedom and infinite possibilities in many languages.

The clouds that inhabit our blue skies occur in patterns and these patterns are actually exquisite visual expressions of the physical laws of nature that govern fluid dynamics. (We can see these same patterns repeated in the sand at the seashore, the bottom of streams or in large-scale erosion when viewed from high altitudes.) In short, the sky is not only beautiful but also a place where the workings of nature are given visible form and easily accessed by us all.

How do we attempt to create (or recreate) a beauty that is “truth”? To begin with, a Sky Factory SkyCeiling installation, like much of real art, is an *illusion*. We go to great lengths and use every possible tool to create a *hyper-real* illusion, an illusion that has the power to trick the eye and mind and elicit our desired outcome – the experience, not of illusion, but of *reality*. One of our favorite compliments came from a child who, while looking at a SkyCeiling, asked her dentist, “What do you do when it rains?”

In all our installations, we start by respecting gravity and verticality. (While we love mountains and the seashore, they do not appear above our heads and so we do not put landscapes on ceilings!) We control the perspective and angle of view of our images so that the sky and trees we place in a SkyCeiling are accurate and properly scaled for the observers – as if we had cut a hole in the ceiling for observers to look through. We use large format digital photography and digital cinema with a master prime lens to insure that our images contain as much real-world information as possible. We use special surfaces so that the eye and mind are not alerted by inappropriate reflections to the image’s true two-dimensional photographic or cinematic nature. We even use software that eliminates depth-of-field issues that result from the photographic process. In Luminous SkyCeilings, we print for and then display with high CRI 6500-7000 Kelvin lighting systems that we design to create perfect luminosity. In pre-press and printing, we carefully control light and color, and in that way express humidity, altitude and time of day.

Certainly one of our most important tools is composition – for this we study and emulate the organizing principles used by the great painting masters of East and West to insure that a work of art is self-contained, continually moving and *attractive*. We carefully select images and place them in the ceiling so that the eye

and mind respond by moving, and in that movement, experience the full journey, the full truth of the image. Always, our SkyCeiling compositions imply the greater, but unseen, field of sky.

While the movement of eye and mind is on the surface – from one element to the next – there is also a movement inward, into the depths of the image and its content. In our opinion, the ultimate “truth” of these natural images is transcendental. Hence, it is our wish to lead the attention of our viewers from the trees and clouds to the formless infinite freedom of blue sky. From this experience of transcendence we expect them to emerge refreshed and re-awakened.

Recently, we have begun the exploration of nature with digital cinema. So far, this has not resulted in any change to our underlying aesthetic or approach. To the contrary, with digital cinema, we are enthusiastic about capturing and displaying *the flow of time*. Time is expressed by change and motion. Nature is now recorded and displayed as a real-time living “event”. We feel that the *uninterrupted* flow of time permits an even deeper penetration into the underlying mechanics and truth of nature. In SkyV™, blue skies, perhaps seen through breeze-blown trees, are transformed into patterns of rippling afternoon clouds that later dissolve in evening light. In eScape™, tides, surf and a rising sun deliver the multiple rhythms of the ocean. Not surprisingly, we are committed to displaying 1 to 1½ hour segments of *unedited* content – sometimes our cameras run for entire days.

In viewing Sky Factory SkyCeilings, SkyV and eScape, it is the refreshing and repeated exposure to nature’s deep mechanics (her truth) and the resulting resonance of that truth with our own individual nature, which delivers the benefit. And the “benefit” – the reason for employing these technologies, is to refresh and revitalize our link to nature, our own piece of nature, the underlying unity that guides life from within us. Apart from being deeply satisfying and nourishing, the value is simple. Nature heals. Nature heals our psychology, our physiology and our innermost self.

Does all this really work? If Keats is right about Art, and if we do our job, we expect a powerful “yes”. To date we do have a growing body of extraordinary subjective reports and now are embarking on a program of carefully controlled scientific research to bring objective clarity to the reports of thousands of enthusiastic Sky Factory friends.

But the real question is, "Does it work for you?" We certainly hope so.

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