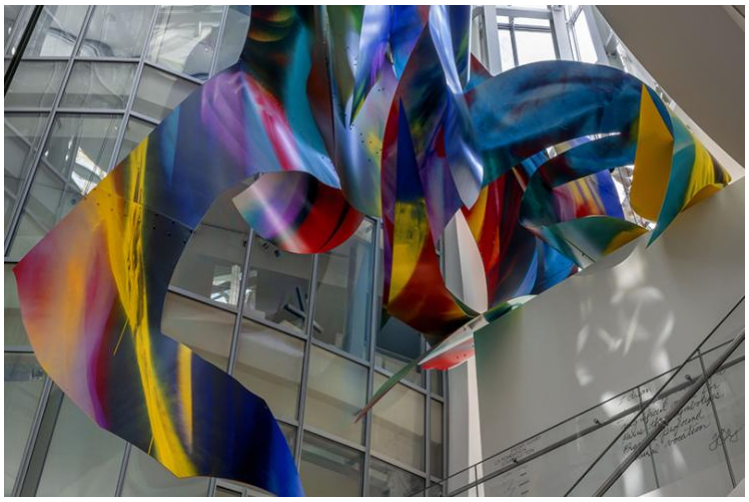
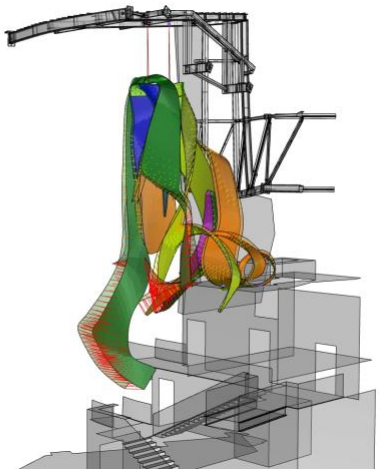






Canyon

Location : Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris XVIème

Client : Fondation Louis Vuitton

Scope : Conception, suivi de réalisation et assistance pour l'exécution de la sculpture et de ses dispositifs de suspente

Date : 2022

Canyon, by Katharina Grosse, is the latest in a series of works specifically commissioned for installation in spaces within the Fondation Louis Vuitton (including Grotto by Olafur Eliasson, and works by Ellsworth Kelly in the auditorium).

Drawing on and responding to the architecture of the building designed by Frank Gehry, this monumental sculpture is composed of eight 'petals' made of aluminium sheets spray-painted with several layers of paint. The piece is suspended from a beam high up beneath one of the Fondation's glass roofs.

This work constitutes the artist's response to a painting's existence "in a space with neither floor nor walls, where air, light, currents and energies circulate". Echoing the characteristics of the building it occupies: Canyon, the name given to this visible void created by the facades and glass roofs within the building.

Despite having already made several large-scale works, this vast project – suspending a sculpture of abstract forms, weighing 4 tonnes and measuring 15 metres – is a first for the artist.

The sculpture is attached to the timber structure of the glass roof. It is suspended, but also rests on top of the volume built as an Artists' Studio. The spatial configuration of the Canyon, a central, open space encircled by the three levels of exhibition spaces, allows visitors to view the work from different heights and to gain a clear understanding of its forms and scale, and the profusion of its colours.

From a constructive point of view, the petals rest on a saddle-shaped plate composed of two steel sheets folded into a U, inserted one inside the other. Conscious of the artist's concern that all elements other than the petals should be as inconspicuous as possible, the metal sheets were designed to be tangential to the petals that sit directly above. Thus, the saddle is simply a momentary extrusion from the petals and visually disappears, providing an efficient structural support for the suspension cables. These attach to the beams via a collar that is threaded along each beam. This principle was designed so as to be able to adjust the position and orientation of the sculpture by moving the two collars. The beams transfer the loads towards the existing structure of the glass roof.

The processes of cutting, bending, bolting together and painting were conducted by Kunstgiesserei St Gallen, Swiss art foundry experienced in projects of complex geometry. T/E/S/S's expertise made it possible to define hanging systems on the building's existing structure and to carry out the necessary calculations for validation, as well as accompanying the artist and the production workshop on the design and realisation of this unusual piece.