

# Environmental Design

Prepared for the Design Commission of the City of New York

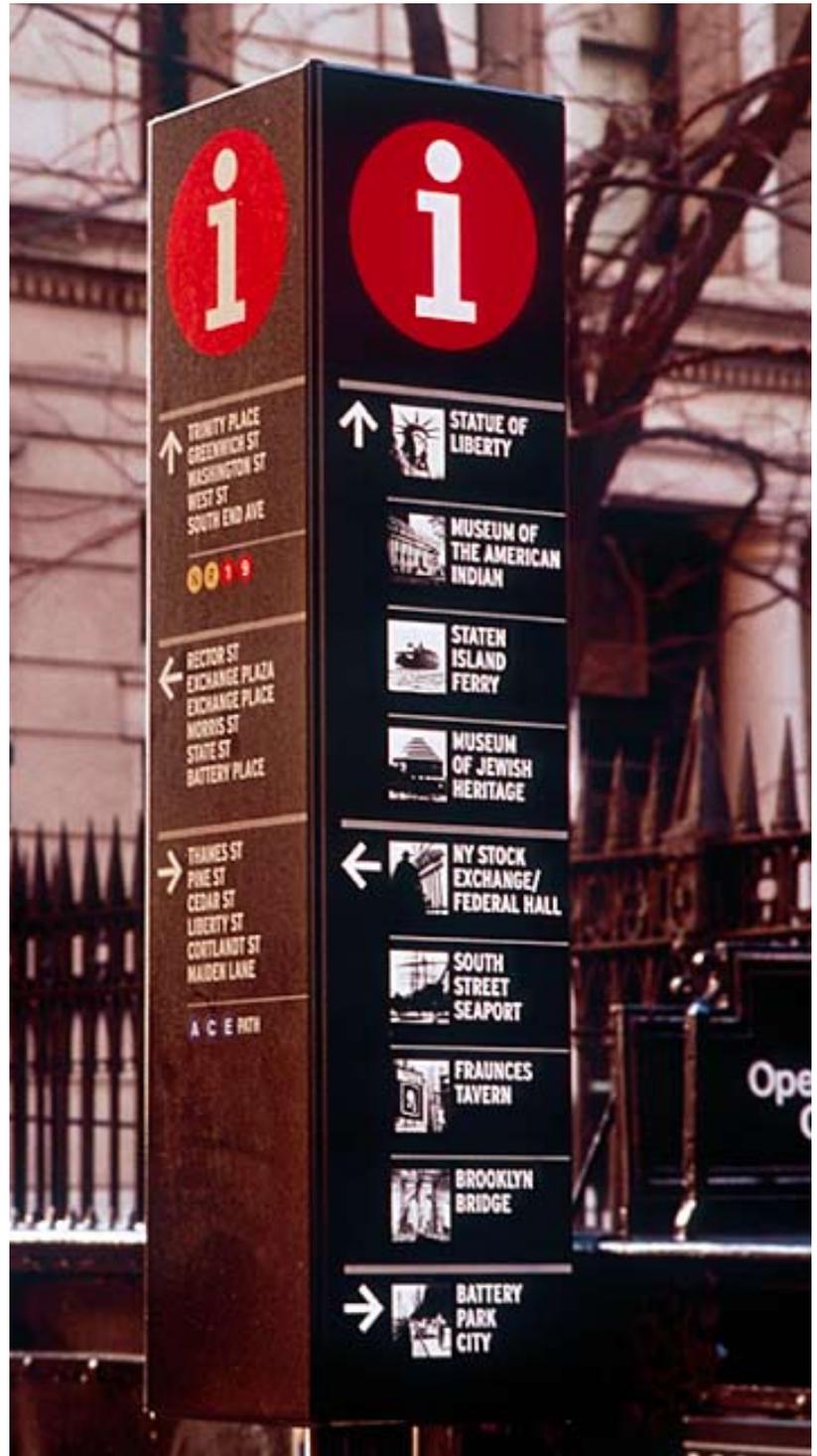
While environmental design subscribes to specific code regulations and is typically thought of as a purely functional part of an architectural project, environmental graphics should convey the identity and spirit of the building, as well as its purpose. The best environmental graphics are both functional and inspirational, and should marry seamlessly with the building(s) they serve.

### **How to think about an environmental designer:**

The best environmental designers are trained graphic designers who expanded their reach to take on environmental graphics. Graphic designers think in terms of ideas, over-all identity, spirit and information architecture. Often their key training was in identity design, typography, information design and editorial design, and even motion graphics. These skills are crucial in the development of effective signage packages.

Many signage designers have not been trained as graphic designers first. Some signage designers started out as architects, but then took a job in an architecture firm designing signage. Other signage designers worked for sign manufactures and developed their skills there. Today, effective environmental design calls for broad graphic design skills that go beyond selecting materials and measuring and organizing information. Identity is a crucial part of every signage project as each project is different, and identity design defines the spirit of a specific place.

Wayfinding should be functional, legible and in no way confusing to the pedestrian. It should relate stylistically to the institution, corporation or other structure's main entrance signs.



Downtown New York

Major Room Signs can be used as a way to express the identity of an institution or organization



Symphony Space





Pittsburgh Children's Museum

# Heroic Wayfinding Signs

# Design Commission Signage References

Sometimes the floors, walls and ceiling can be utilized for wayfinding if it accurately addresses the identity of a given place.

New 42nd Street



# Heroic Wayfinding Signs

# Design Commission Signage References

Dodger Theater



# Heroic Wayfinding Signs

# Design Commission Signage References

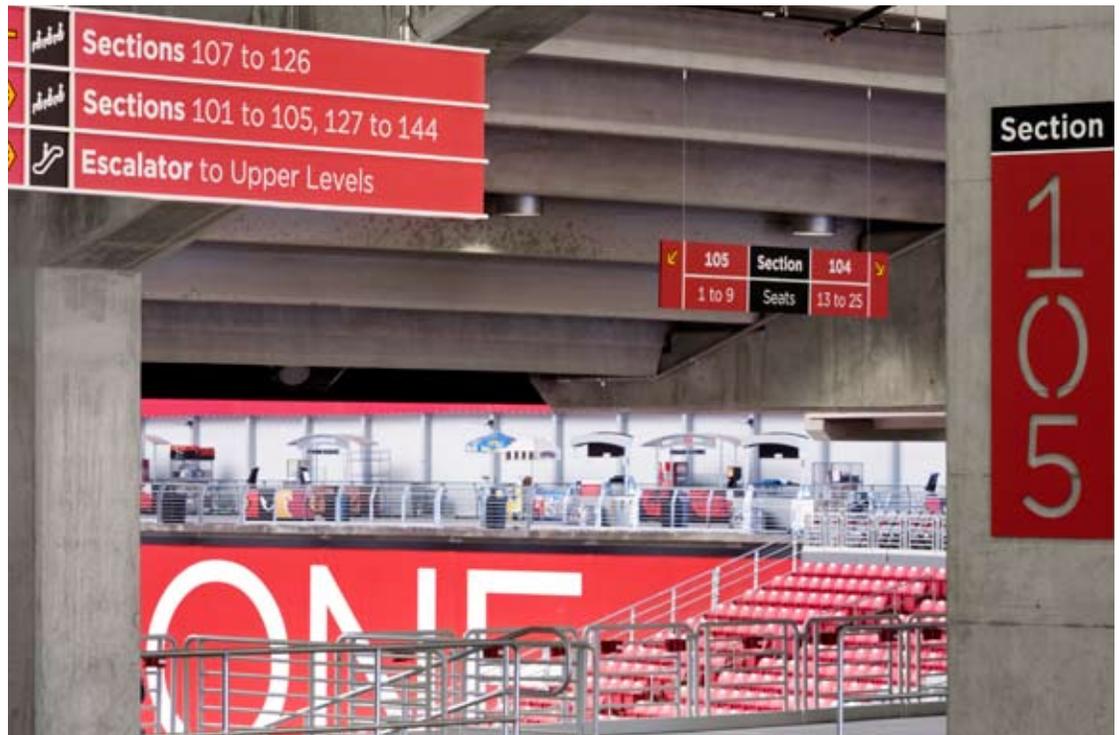
Brooklyn Academy of Music



Cardinals' Stadium



Cardinals' Stadium



Toronto Pearson International Airport

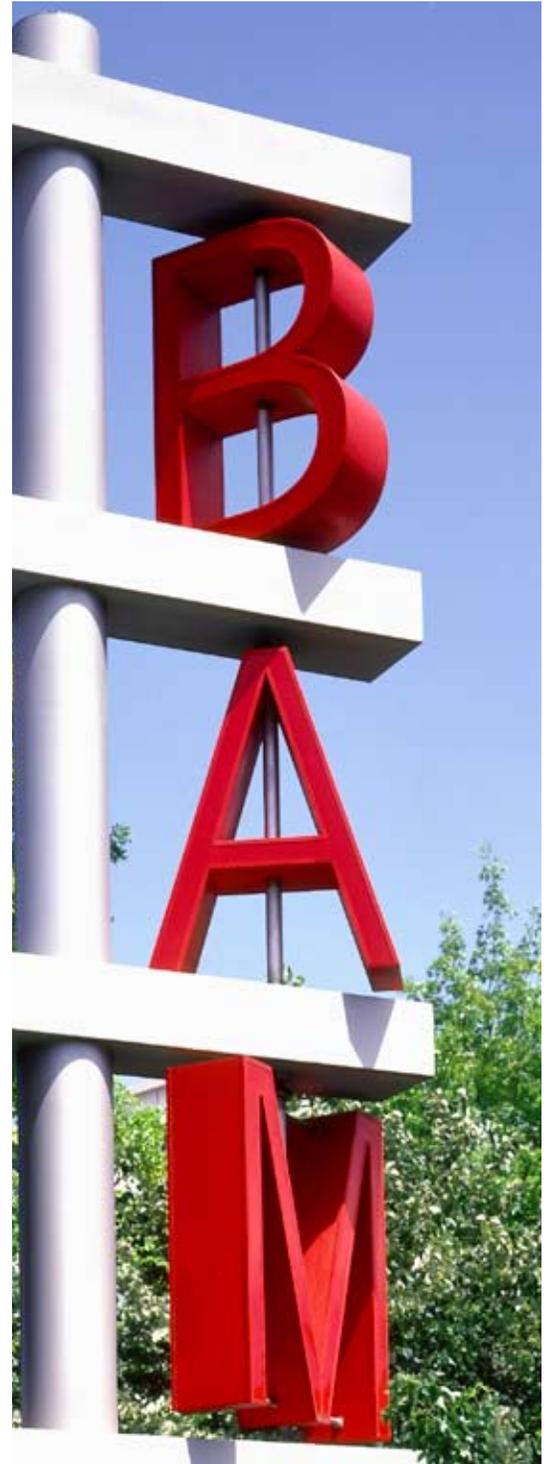
# External Building Signage

## Design Commission Signage References

External signage: address and/or main building identification:  
External building signage very often designates the “front door” of a building, the main entrance to a group buildings, or even an entrance to a building campus. External signage should set the stage, ignite the mood, or create the identity for the building(s) it serves. While legibility is desired in all signage, in external building signage the legibility may be judged not just by scale and style of architectural lettering, but also by positioning, lighting, use of materials and appropriateness of the design in relation to both the architecture and the purpose of the building.



Pittsburgh Children's Museum



Brooklyn Academy of Music



The New York Times



New Jersey Performing Arts Center

# External Building Signage

# Design Commission Signage References



623 Fifth Avenue



Scandinavia House



Parson's New School



Lever House



770 Broadway

Dodger Stages



# Dynamic Signage

## Design Commission Signage References

LED's and projections are very compelling sign systems in public spaces because the images can change and the technology is often dazzling. Unfortunately, very often they are recommended for a site without proper consideration regarding how they will be run and maintained. LED and projections signs require programming and program management to run effectively and to maintain any interest beyond an insipidly repetitive loop that will quickly be resented by the local community.

It is not sufficient to only purchase LED hardware from a technology consultant. The program for the LED has to be determined by the institution or organization that is purchasing the equipment. The institution should hire an information designer who can help the institution establish content and then program the information to appear in an appropriate manner. In an elaborate LED scenario, an organization or institution may be hiring an information architect, an outside programming group, and if the programming is complicated, a content manager to ensure that the LED system is continually updated with relevant information.

If LED's are being considered in any proposal, the fees of the information designer and programmer, as well as the cost of the software, should be estimated to have a realistic understanding of what the real costs will be. Technology companies will typically sell an organization the hardware with the expectation that the organization will purchase an off-the-shelf program to make the system work. Off-the-shelf programs look off-the-shelf, and will make expensive technology become annoying and banal.

745 7th Avenue





Walker Art Museum

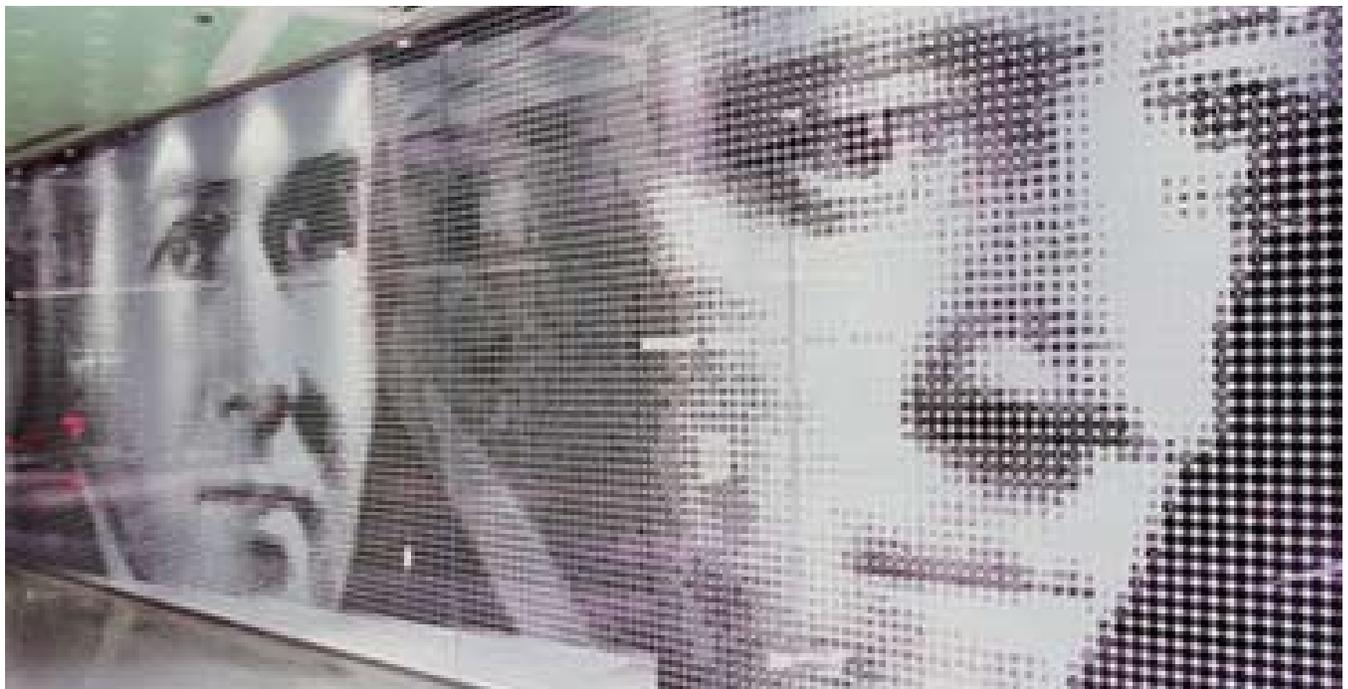


Jianianhua Center

# Super Graphics

## Design Commission Signage References

Very often a wall, fence or dull side of a building can be enhanced by an engaging supergraphic. Supergraphics should be thought of as a bridge between identity and public art. Their goal is to engage, delight, set mood and spirit, and allow humor, beauty and even a bit of controversy to become part of our visual cultural discourse.



IIT

Cardinals' Stadium



Guggenheim





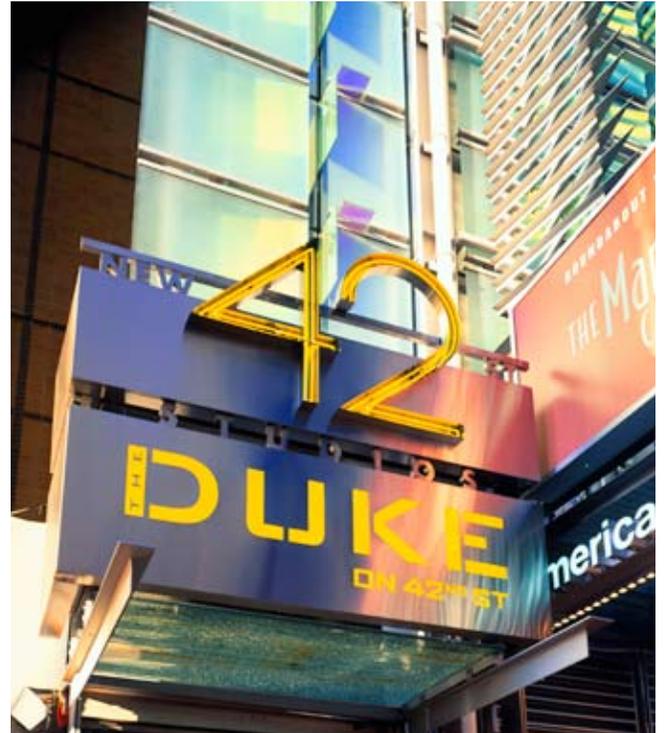
Prada Store

# Marquees

## Design Commission Signage References



Jazz at Lincoln Center



Symphony Space



New 42nd Street Theater

Canyon of Heroes

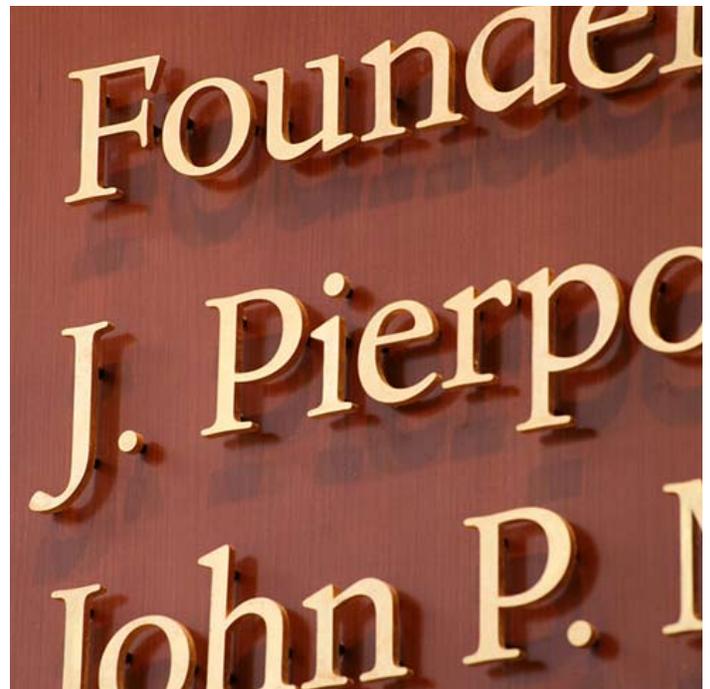


Freedom Tower  
Cornerstone





The New York Botanical Garden



The Morgan Library and Museum

# Dedication & Donor Signs

## Design Commission Signage References

Jazz at Lincoln Center



Symphony Space

