

Basic Detail Report



Americanoom

Date

1963

Primary Maker

Chryssa

Medium

aluminum, welded steel, stainless steel and neon

Description

Americanoom is a giant aluminum and neon tubing construction based on the repetition of found fragments of metal advertising signs with the words: “[R]oom,” “air,” “Try,” “new,” “Cafet[eria,]” “CHORd.” These elements have been juxtaposed to create an arrangement of urban calligraphy that explores the formal qualities of the written word. The king-size mural, or relief, continuously beckons viewers by flashing its four neon colors from the upper right panel at intervals of 60 seconds. As visitors try to read the verbal puzzle, they may discover that the work addresses issues of human communication in written form. The artist’s interest in urban calligraphy has its roots in her early chalking of graffiti on the sidewalks of her native Athens. The signs and symbols of language have always informed Chryssa's work, but it was not until immigrating to New York City in 1954 that the artist became captivated by oversized advertising signage. In 1961, she began to incorporate the flashing neon of commercial advertising into her own work. Her contributions in this medium are considered essential to the development of neon art, which flourished as part of the Pop culture of 1960s. Chryssa’s legacy continues today among a new wave of neon artists both here and abroad.

Dimensions

Overall: 90 x 108 in. (228.6 x 274.3 cm)