

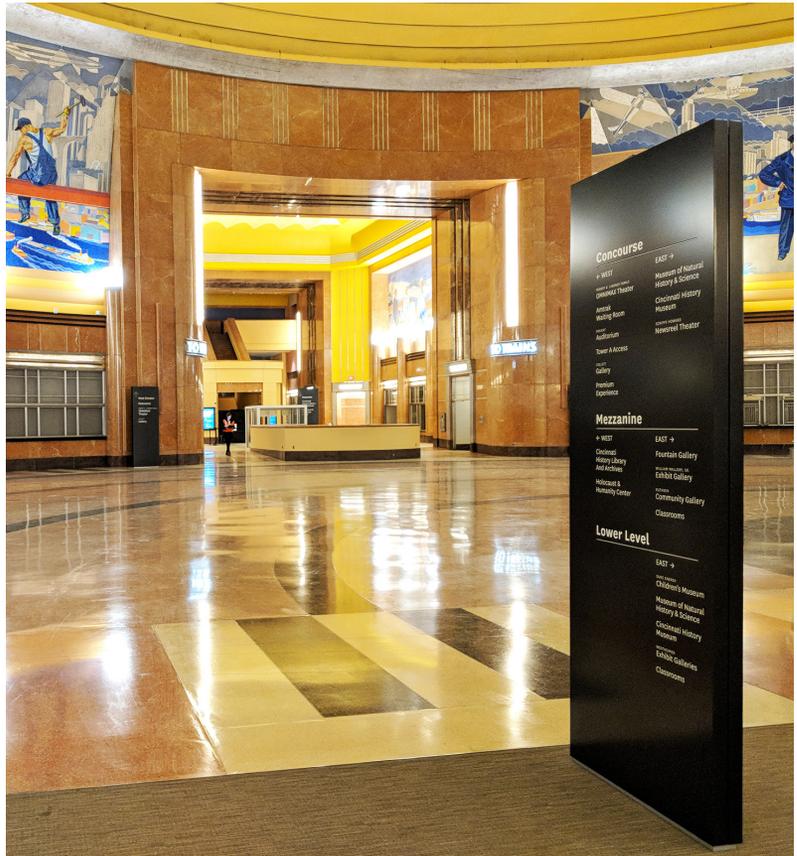
Category: **Wayshowing**

Project: **Cincinnati Museum Center**



What was the challenge?

Cincinnati Museum Center (CMC) is located in the Cincinnati Union Terminal building. The Union Terminal building is possibly one of the most significant examples of Art Deco architecture in America. Built as a train station in 1933 by the New York firm of Fellheimer and Wagner and the noted Philadelphia architect Paul Philippe Cret, the building embodies all important architectural principles of that style. Not only is it an architectural masterpiece, the building is also a historic site, tied to the history of World War II and the City of Cincinnati; notably, it features Winold Reiss' tile mosaic murals celebrating history and industry. The building was declared a National Historic Landmark relatively early in the history of the Historic Preservation Movement in this country (1976). Cincinnati Museum Center is now the largest informal education and cultural institution in the Ohio Valley region, serving over one million visitors each year.



The Union Terminal Corporation (UTC) recognized the need to revitalize the community icon and National Historic Landmark. In 2016, it embarked on the site's first comprehensive restoration project in the Union Terminal's 85-year history. The goal was to recognize the UTC's generous benefactors as well as honor the Art Deco architecture and the legacy of the space through designs that are versatile and timeless.

What was the solution?

Signage proved to be a major component of the overall scope to restore the building and previously unrestored historically significant spaces. Stylistically, the structure required special attention to its combination of history and newly renovated contemporary areas, such as the lower level. With one comprehensive signage program, wayfinding created cohesion between contrasting spaces. A donor recognition wall enlivens the lower level through a design that mimics the history upstairs, depending on one's site line.

The UTC hired GBBN Architects as the architects for project. Design consultants for the project include historic preservation architect John G. Waite Associates, who was responsible for the filing of the project with the State of Ohio's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the National Park Service (NPS), and oversaw the verification of the work to be in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Historic Preservation, and the administering of State and Federal Historic Tax Credits, as a critical component of project funding. Understanding of historic guidelines and their interpretation was a critical component of the design of signage and wayfinding throughout the building and historic spaces.

What was the effect?

The scope of the project involved replacement of all common area signage and wayfinding to inform visitors to the Cincinnati Union Terminal building.

It was not intended to be "branded" graphics for the Cincinnati Museum Center (the anchor tenant). Instead designers needed to reflect on the scope as a means to create and implement a palette that is timeless as to relate more to the interpretation of NPS standards in historic spaces. This is in addition to the pragmatics of clearly articulated directional signage for patrons and visitors. This signage got patrons to the museums, services (ticket sales, retail, food service and dining, restrooms, security, guest services), experiences, offices, and to new tenants, etc. – rather than within the museums themselves. The intent was to successfully link the museum center's historic and modern functions.

Contact:

name: Shi-Anne Shakes
company/organisation: Two Twelve
e-mail: sshakes@twotwelve.com
website: <http://www.twotwelve.com>

