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### The Brochstein Pavilion



Exterior of the Brochstein Pavilion

The Brochstein Pavilion sits at the center of Rice University's quadrangle. Although it houses the café, Salento, its mission advances more than offering edible pleasures. The Brochstein Pavilion provides a place where students and professors can smoothly relax with each other between classes. It also has brought order to the campus that has long suffered an architectural disorganization in planning. The Brochstein Pavilion accomplishes tranquil elements of space and balance through the themes of determinism and heroic vs. ordinary.

Rice University has fostered more social interaction because of the openness in the Brochstein Pavilion. The Pavilion provides a spacious area to complement its sociable mission. The distance between the building's inner structures convey a sense of spacious freedom to move anywhere. The interior architecture sets the serene mood, and people feel the effect in

the actions they do. The glass walls functioning as windows provide natural light that fosters tranquility in contrast to light bulbs. Michael Fox describes the mood setting when he writes, “It’s the feeling of elation that it stirs in those who visit or simply walk past...Transparency and spatial intimacy—the contrasting sensations of sweeping openness and protection—contribute.” As people chat with their friends or study alone, the grand view of the outside beauty adds a warm approach to their daily routine. In my view, solid walls entrap people in an area and do not motivate people because of their dull performance. Glass walls, like in the Pavilion, however, nurture energy and optimism to concurrent and future activities. The natural scene breathes life and tranquility to a busy area. The glass walls incorporate the outside with the in. Rather than having the greenery and outside, human movement as a show to the inside, the walls associate the two forces as one item. The windows function not as a border, but a connection between the students, professors, and activities inside and out. David Kaplan comments on the two opposites when he writes, “It’s a building that puts you in touch with nature, even when you’re sitting inside, and shows you just how beautiful Houston can be.” Kaplan illuminates how the Pavilion conveys determinism. Its environment soothes people to chat without pressure and anxiety. The Pavilion combines with its atmosphere to radiate tranquility.



Glass walls of the Brochstein Pavilion

The patio that greatly extends from the main building also conveys determinism on the ongoing interactions. The long cover extends more than ordinary ones. With tables and chairs under, the patio creates a sense of definite space. The large covered area adds flexibility for mobility. The wide range of pavement creates a mood of freedom which indirectly fosters excitement and elation. Lisa Gray comments on the overall effect when she says, “[Thomas Phifer] likes the idea that the building will seem ‘porous.’” Gray conveys the openness the Pavilion creates through its breathable space and fluid access. It gives people the self-liberty to chat, to move, and to enjoy because of the huge territory it definably shapes it. The Pavilion successfully executes determinism through its components.

The landscape architecture not only helps in creating a social atmosphere, but most importantly, it reinstalls balance to an asymmetric Rice campus. Before the construction of the Pavilion, Rice University suffered from a disorganization in architectural planning. The university finds itself in the shape of a quadrangle. The asymmetric-looking library, however, ruined the scenic view of the university. The library offset the center of the quadrangle and the perfect symmetry of the campus. In regard to its school body, the library created an incongruent area where students and professors should instead see a harmonious order that can foster their academic achievement. The oddity of the library acted as a disturbance to passing pedestrians while everything around looked symmetrical.

The design of the Brochstein’s landscape combated the mistake with pure, ambient balance. The garden acts as the heroic feature compared to its ordinary surrounding. With its final refinement, the garden brings harmony again to the area. As Karen Hess Rogers mentions, “The project ultimately encompassed the entire Central Quadrangle of the Rice

campus, enlivening an outdoor space that was frequently overlooked and undervalued.” The Pavilion’s side facing the library utilizes equal distance and proportions to convey order. The sidewalk extending from the library to the Pavilion acts as the center axis for the garden. In each side, allee lacebark elm trees find themselves in four rows of six. The clear organization of the trees in both sides makes a symmetrical statement. The space between each tree is wide enough to illuminate order. The distance not only defines the tree’s shape, but also the clarity in the garden’s floor plan. In a quick glance, the trees may act as the main tool to bring symmetry to the library side, but it is the way they create perfect space that forms order. They refine what unused space can have potential to do. Overall, the garden “is enriched by the awareness of location and landscape, the movement of the sun, the changes in weather” (Thomas).



Landscape of theBrochstein Pavilion

The long, rectangular water fountains also act similar to the trees. On each side, a black rectangular prism trickles down its water below the trees. The dominant prisms successfully finishes the tree’s attempt of visual symmetry. All of them together, the landscape “radically transforms this void into a positive space of high energy” (OJB). The long size dominates a large

portion of the garden territory. With its long extension, the water fountain incorporates the whole side as one whole piece. The fountain's harmonious interaction with the trees also advances the perception of order. The black color helps in counterbalancing the almost empty space and thin trees with a prevailing, solid feature. The color emphasizes the fountain's simple shape and creates a dynamic interconnection with the trees. The new balance between the new and the old restores the architectural beauty of the campus. As Ronnie Self states, "Although the [Pavilion] clearly breaks with Rice's strict architectural code, it appears liberating rather than jarring." The garden's symmetry does not hide the disorder, but balances it with a formal pattern. The library's back side creates tension, but the garden offsets it. Students now have a relaxed environment because of the landscape's ability "to foster social interaction and improve the human condition" (Brochstein). Every component successfully conveys the heroic vs. ordinary theme. The garden restores balance to its ordinary surrounding.

The Brochstein Pavilion uses space and balance to provide solutions to past plans that produced mediocre results. The Pavilion uses the design principle of space to create an ample atmosphere to chat and relax. Space exerts an emotional influence on people, and the Brochstein Pavillion accomplishes its sociable mission by creating freedom to its inhabitants. Its influence complements determinism: the way an environment affects how people behave. In Pavilion's case, people react smoothly. The building revives an area where no interaction occurred. In addition, the landscape architecture uses balance to counteract the incongruence of the east side of campus. Rather than structurally fixing the library, Rice University instead choose the power of balance to restore organization. The landscape and the library fit in the thematic analogy of heroic vs. ordinary. The landscape makes a heroic and successful attempt

to fix the library's commonplace architecture. The clarity in the garden's beauty mitigates the library's disorder. The Brochstein Pavilion, as a whole, exerts a positive influence on Rice University because it regenerates a social and organizational desire it has lacked in the past.

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