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WASHINGTON

The impressive ring of concrete and granite housing the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum has always presented a certain paradox. Though it successfully extends the language of modern sculpture into architecture, the Gordon Bunshaft 1970s structure bears little relationship to the institution's collection. Not only does the building's monumental scale overshadow the sculptures skirting its base, but its curving walls also challenge the rectilinear format of most paintings and photographs. Fortunately, the institution's mandate transcends its collection and, seeking to present the broadest range of determining contemporary practices, the museum's *Directions* series turns such discrepancies into exciting opportunities for artistic projects. Well aware of the building's unique characteristics, Associate Curator Anne Ellegood invited Scottish artist Jim Lambie to transform the Hirshhorn's humdrum lobby [May 13—October 2, 2006].

Hidden from the outside by darkly tinted glass, Lambie's blast of intense colored lines initially disorients visitors as they enter the building. Seeing others in the lobby, they are encouraged to move forward, but not without first analyzing the surface on which they must tread. Examination of the lobby's floor reveals a deceptively simple, although labor intensive, technique. The application of vinyl tape begins along the edge of every barrier in the place. Stripe follows stripe until stripes collide, creating spatial illusions—the floor before a revolving door seems to dip down—and various geometric and architectonic forms. The fluorescent colors, accentuated by lines of chrome, imply a fondness for psychedelic album cover designs. Together, the work's jazzy title, *Zobop*, and the variations in tape width suggest musical rhythms emanating from the floor's outer edges, and from its encounters with the base of the information desk, the escalators, and the gift shop's inner and exterior walls. Lambie, who is also a musician, makes additional musical references in the sculptural works that accompany the floor piece. The wall mounted *Atomic Dog*, 2006, recycles the title of a George Clinton

