Aquatic Sculptures at the Living Planet Aquarium

Application

4,700 cubic feet of Foam-Control® 100 and 130 was used to create life-like aquatic sculptures for the main entrance of the Living Planet Aquarium in Draper, Utah.

Project Details

Sculptor Stephen Kesler worked with the Living Planet Aquarium to design and fabricate a series of aquatic creatures to be suspended above the new aquarium’s main lobby. Kesler’s medium was expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam manufactured just a few miles from his studio by ACH Foam Technologies. EPS can be precisely shaped; it is lightweight enough to be safely suspended above the public; and large enough to accomplish the life-like scale of mega animals cost-effectively.

Kesler first develops a steel framework for each piece that will support the overall sculpture and then creates contact points for hanging it. The foam blocks are cut to the rough sizes required for the full assembly and then attached to the steel frame using a two-part polyurethane liquid adhesive. Kesler uses a hot-wire cutter to remove the initial layer of excess foam, followed by various chainsaws, reciprocal saws, rasps, files, and sanding devices working into the foam as the animal’s detailed form takes shape. Sculptures meant for outdoor displays are covered in fiberglass for durability. Indoor pieces are covered in a special Class A fire-rated compound that passes building code requirements.