



Welcome to

“The Quietest Place on Earth” and
“The World’s First Digital Recording Studio”

*Guinness World Records Certificates, 2004, 2005 and
2012...*

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Introduction

“The Quietest Place on Earth” (Guinness, 2004 and 2012) is the Orfield Anechoic Chamber, which lies in the center of Orfield Laboratories Inc., the world’s only independent, multi-sensory design research and consulting lab, specializing in architecture and product development. Our building was owned by our previous clients, Sound 80 Studios, which has since been recognized as “The World’s First Digital Recording Studio.” As the birthplace of world-famous albums, such as Bob Dylan’s “Blood on the Tracks” and the location that inspired the beginning of Prince’s musical career, we have long ties to the recording and art industry. Focused in the sciences of design and human perception and cognition, our focus has dovetailed well with this history, extending the building’s expertise in sound to include the sciences of Acoustics, AV, Lighting, Daylighting, Thermal Comfort, and Indoor Air Quality, the perceptual factors in design that are responsible for the human experience. We maintain the original studios of Sound 80, which are historically correct to date. We adorn our walls with the metaphors of great modern artists such as Carl Beam, the father of Modern Native-Canadian art and Doug Shelton, who refers to himself as an “Arizona Mystical-Surrealist.” Life is a multi-sensory experience, in which the sciences of human perception and cognition are well-researched in fields that are often divided by specialized language. Our lab is a place in which education is experiential, and where the experiences of science, design, art, and spirituality inform one another. We’ll look forward to sharing it with you...

“The Quietest Place on Earth” (Orfield Labs Anechoic Chamber)

The Orfield Anechoic Chamber was recognized by Guinness in 2004 and 2012 as “The Quietest Place on Earth.” Located in our NVLAP-accredited acoustic laboratory, an anechoic chamber is technically defined as a room with absolute sound absorption. Our anechoic chamber is 100% absorptive, while our reverberation chambers, which are defined as a room with absolute sound reflectance, are 100% reflective. Most anechoic chambers have an average measurement of 30 dBA. Our chamber has an average measurement of -13dBA, which is one sixteenth the sound of most others. Metaphorically, our anechoic chamber represents a small, quiet chapel, while our reverberation chamber represents the rest of the noisy world. As the most famous part of our facility, the anechoic chamber has been featured on news platforms such as NBC Today, CBS Morning, CBC, BBC, and in feature films around the world. Most visitors who register for tours of our lab come to spend time in the chamber. While many rumors have spread about the frightening experience of such silence, to us, the anechoic chamber is a spiritual experience, where visitors have the unique opportunity to be with themselves in an acoustically silent environment.

Sound 80 Studios: “The World’s First Digital Recording Studio” (Guinness, 2005)

Sound 80 Studios (est. 1969) was the birthplace of many famous musicians and pieces of music, founded by recording engineer, Tom Jung, and composer/musician, Herb Pilhofer. In the fifteen years that the studio was in operation, artists such as Bob Dylan (Blood on the Tracks, 1974), Prince (For You demos, 1977), Cat Stevens (Izitso, 1976), Leo Kottke, and Lipps Inc. (Funkytown, 1980) recorded in the space. In 1978, 3M brought in a prototype system for multi-track digital recording, the first in the world. Sound 80 recorded The Saint Paul Chamber’s Orchestra’s “Appalachian Spring” by Aaron Copland, which became the first piece of digital classical music to win a Grammy. This collaboration between Sound 80 and 3M led to Sound 80’s recognition in 2006 by Guinness as “The World’s First Digital Recording Studio.” Since selling the building to Orfield Laboratories Inc. in 1990, Orfield has maintained Sound 80’s studios, which are historically correct to date.

Orfield Laboratories Inc.

Orfield Laboratories Inc. (est. 1971) is the world's only independent, multi-sensory design research and consulting firm. Focused on sensory issues in architecture and product development, we are oriented in the concept of design for the cognitively and perceptually disabled. For over fifty years, we've been focused on the user, the products, the places, and their relationship with one another, in order to honor the concept of user experience as the highest order of solution in design. We work in all areas of design as they relate to human perception, consulting in architecture and product development. In architecture, we consult in Acoustics, AV, Lighting, Daylighting, Thermal Comfort, and Indoor Air Quality. In these areas, we've created the first multi-sensory design standards for Autism, Dementia, and a series of mental illnesses and other invisible disabilities. In the product development field, we consult on many product types including appliances, vehicles, audio-visual systems, medical products, aircraft, tools, consumer electronics, etc. With a specialty in human perception, we approach each of these types with a special focus on human perceptual comfort, performance, and preference.

Cognitive and Perceptual Disabilities as the Majority

Cognitive and perceptual disabilities are largely misunderstood and misrepresented worldwide. While physical disabilities are largely recognized, invisible disability groups such as Autism, Dementia, Aging, ADHD, PTSD, Anxiety, Depression, etc. are rarely accepted as such, as they often have no outward signs of their existence. Furthermore, these disabilities make up about fifty percent of the human population. Because of this, our work in designing for the cognitively and perceptually disabled is also defined as design for the majority (50+ percent) of people.

Experiential Education

While life as an experiential journey, most educational philosophies seldom teach through real-world experience. After many years of explaining our approach to design and product development, we decided it would be much more effective to demonstrate the problems and the solutions in the real world. We purchased our 15,000 sq. ft lab after defining the need for experiential learning, so that students, clients, and visitors from around the world, could have the opportunity to experience our view through their own.

Lab Overview

Disciplines:

Architectural Technical Consulting (Offices, Industrial, Civic & Government, Schools & Higher Education, Healthcare, Senior Housing, Hospitality, Religious, Multi-Family Housing, Retail, Performing Arts, Sports)

Product Development (Automotive, Appliance, Aircraft, Lawn Products, Power tools, Consumer Products, Medical,

Specialties:

Cognitive and Perceptual Disabilities: Orfield Laboratories Inc. has a specialty in cognitive and perceptual disabilities, and their application to universal design. We have a strong interest in projects in the disability field, including Autism, Dementia, Aging, PTSD, SPD, ADHD, Deafness, Blindness, and we have in-depth experience in Senior Housing, Healthcare, and Autism.

Areas of Focus:

Acoustics
Audio Visual (AV)
Lighting
Daylighting
Thermal Comfort
Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Labs:

Anechoic Chamber - NVLAP Accreditation
Suite of Reverberation Chambers (3) - NVLAP Accreditation
Acoustic Simulation Lab
Visual Performance Lab
Open Plan Office Lab
Studio 1 (Auditorium)
Studio 2

To get more information about the nature of these areas, please email info@orfieldlabs.com or call our office at 612-721-2455

Consultation

We receive many requests for private conversations related to sensory and cognitive issues. While we do not offer personal psychological or medical services in these fields, we are happy to engage in discussions about these issues.

If you are interested in scheduling a consultation, please email steve@orfieldlabs.com or call our office at 612-721-2455.

The Anechoic Experience

The Anechoic Experience is an immersive session in the Orfield Anechoic Chamber, which has been measured as being “The Quietest Place on Earth.”

The anechoic chamber is in the human and animal hearing range and has an average dBA measurement of -13dBA, which is 13 dBA below the threshold of perfect infant hearing (0dBA).

We have witnessed many seeming miracles, some of which have explanations and some which remain mysteries, as a result of time spent in our anechoic chamber. We remain curious about the nature of the chamber’s impact on all people, its therapeutic properties, and how it can influence human perception. While anechoic chambers are traditionally used to study products, ours is becoming also about the people.

If you are interested in booking this experience, please email emma@orfieldlabs.com to schedule a phone consultation.

Cost: \$600 per hour

Note: There is a cost for time in the chamber, and there is no reward given to participant(s) that attempt to set or succeed in setting a new record. Payment must be received in advance for each hour that the participant(s) is attempting, and there is no refund regardless of how much time is completed. This is merely a unique opportunity to experiment with your relationship with yourself in an environment that provides true acoustical silence.

The Orfield Challenge

We live in a world full of sensory stimulation, where many of us live busy lives in environments that make us feel stressed rather than feel peaceful. Many people are uncomfortable with the nature of silence, and few have experienced true acoustical silence. *The Orfield Challenge* is an opportunity to test your relationship with complete silence in the Orfield Anechoic Chamber, which has been recorded as “The Quietest Place on Earth.” Over the many years that we have welcomed visitors to the chamber, some have come with the intention of setting a personal record for time spent in the chamber, silent, in the dark. This has evolved into *The Orfield Challenge*, which has gained popularity world-wide.

Nature of the Challenge:

Description: The participant will attempt to spend 3+ hours in the Orfield Anechoic Chamber in the dark.

Cost: \$600 Per Hour

Current Record: 3 Hours (Caitly Weaver, *New York Times*)

Note: There is a cost for time in the chamber, and there is no reward given to participant(s) that attempt to set or succeed in setting a new record. Payment must be received in advance for each hour that the participant(s) is attempting, and there is no refund regardless of how much time is completed. This is merely a unique opportunity to experiment with your relationship with yourself in an environment that provides true acoustical silence.

Tour Descriptions

Standard Tour:

The Standard Tour is an overview of Orfield Laboratories Inc., Sound 80 Studios, The Orfield Non-Profit Art Gallery, and “The Quietest Place on Earth.” During this tour, you will experience the musical history of our building, which was previously owned by Sound 80 Studios, “The World’s First Digital Recording Studio.” You will experience the context and mission of Orfield Labs, our 50+ year-old design research and consulting practice, where we work in all areas of human perception as they relate to design, specializing in sensory issues and in design for the cognitively and perceptually disabled. We will take you through a series of demonstrations in each area of human perception, such as Lighting and Acoustics, where you experience sensory issues, as well as sensory. You will have an opportunity to spend 20 minutes in our anechoic chamber, which Guinness as deemed as “The Quietest Place on Earth.”

As you walk through our various labs and studios, you will experience our modern art collection and the stories behind them.

Duration: 1.5 Hours | Cost: \$200 per person, with a \$400 minimum per tour.

Participants have the option to add an immersive session in the anechoic chamber for \$600/hr.

Experiential Education Tour:

The Experiential Education Tour is intended to offer visitors with an in-depth look at Orfield’s work in multi-sensory design consulting and research. Visitors will experience demonstrations in each area of human perception as they relate to design. Upon scheduling this tour, visitors will have the option to focus on particular sensory issues that are of interest to them.

Duration: 2.5 Hours | Cost: \$300 per person, with a \$600 minimum per tour.

Custom Tour:

Our Custom Tours are designed on a case-by-case basis to accommodate individuals and groups that are interested in working with Orfield to achieve a specific experience.

These tours may be structured based on the following:

- Extended Tour of Orfield Laboratories
- Small or large group format
- Specific interest(s) or field(s)
- Half-day or Full-day rental of Orfield Laboratories
- Conference
- Meeting



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Fax 612 721 2457

E-Mail info@orfieldlabs.com

Application to Tour Orfield Laboratories Inc. (1 form required per visitor)

Date of Application: _____

The following information must be supplied in order to schedule a visit to Orfield Labs for one of our tours.

- Name: _____
- Address: _____
- City, State, Country: _____
- Cell Phone: _____
- Email: _____
- Driver's License Number: _____
- Member of the Press (Foreign, National, Local, Internet) Yes _____ No _____

- We are a multi-sensory design research and consulting firm, working in architecture, design, and product development. If you work in any of the following or related areas, please check "yes" and specify your area of work/position clearly (please be specific). Areas: Architecture, Design, Product Development, Acoustics, AV, Lighting, Daylighting, Thermal Comfort, Indoor Air Quality.

Yes _____ No _____ Specify _____

- Typically, we require visitors to submit a copy their vaccination card. Occasionally, we make exceptions for vaccination requirements. In the case of these exceptions, we require visitors get a medically administered PCR COVID Test within 3 days of their scheduled appointment.
- Member of the Press (Foreign, National, Local, Internet) Yes _____ No _____

You may take pictures while at Orfield Laboratories Inc., but your pictures may not be used for publication on any social media site or other public site without express written permission from Orfield Laboratories Inc. If you are a member of the press, this must be disclosed beforehand.

No Guns, other weapons, or dangerous materials are allowed on Orfield Laboratories Inc.'s premises. If you agree that you will comply with this rule set forward here, fraudulent or misrepresented information will result in a fine of \$5,000.00. Plus, any expenses incurred as a result of investigation and litigating a violation.

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

Design Research Testing
Acoustics
Vibration
Vision
Lighting
Architecture
Market Research

Staff Affiliations
ASA
IES
AES
ASTM
ANSI
IFMA
SID
ARVO
OSA
HFS
CIE