

[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/ Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

Need e-Help?

Call the Help Desk
at 2-4357

[Contact myMetro.net](#)



Artist May Sun at the recently refurbished East Portal Aquarium. Below, at right, artist Bill Bell tweaks a circuit board to fire up the A-Train at the entrance to the Metro Red Line Station.



^ Run your mouse over image to see the movie star passengers, now arriving on the A-Train at Union Station.



Images of 'A-Train' by Deniz Durmus.

Metro Art Restores East Portal Artworks

- Visitors once again enjoy the view of eons of Los Angeles history
- ARTIFAQs: Before you hop on the A-Train, better read ['An A-Train Primer'](#)

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Feb. 23, 2006) Artist May Sun describes the concept of the East Portal entrance to Union Station: "It represents where Los Angeles started," she said on a recent visit to inspect the refurbished artworks that compose the east entrance to the region's rail system.

Completed in 1995, the East

The Union Station East Portal "City of Dreams/River of History" is composed by the

Portal is defined by works of art: the overhead mural of portraits by Richard Wyatt looks down upon a river bed that deposits its silt of artifacts recovered during the construction into a mountain of memories.

The river bed, which symbolizes the Los Angeles River, makes its way across a floor inscribed with fossils and ancient shapes to the refrigerated saltwater aquarium housing fish native to the Pacific Ocean it represents.

The A-Train, an electronic representation of rail operation at the entrance to the Metro Red Line by artist Bill Bell, blinks, rattles, toots and roars over its light-stick tracks as it carries freight, memories and movie stars in a visual representation of time and travel.

The artwork, installed during the construction of Union Station Gateway in the early 1990s, was funded by Catellus Development Corporation in keeping with the city's Public Art requirements.

The decade following the installation took a toll on the monumental artworks. The river bed, hampered by the irreverent tossing of gum wrappers, food scraps, and packaging remnants into its fountains, now flowed into an increasingly glum aquarium, where algae blackened the makeshift sea and depleted the fish population.

Over at the Red Line entrance, the A-Train was skipping a few beats, barely blinking at rush-hour audiences who used to stop and watch the A-Train roar through its entire 9-minute cycle of electronic imagery.

Refurbishment of the artworks was coordinated by Metro Art and funded by Prologis. (Catellus Development Corporation merged with and into ProLogis Sept. 15, 2005.)

artist team of May Sun, Richard Wyatt, and architect Paul Diez.



The river bed lined with rocks from the Los Angeles River and Tujunga Creek deposits artifacts actually excavated from the original Chinatown.



Metro Art and Design Manager Jorge Pardo and conservation technician Angelene Campuzano tour the artworks of the East Portal, where the floor is inscribed with symbols of native flora and fauna.



Line drawings of historical figures are etched onto the aquarium glass.



Jorge Pardo, art and design manager in Metro Art credits the success of the effort to a partnership forged by a solid working relationship with ProLogis. "Together, Metro Art and ProLogis have restored the artistic capital of this highly visible transit environment."

The East Portal lobby is reflected in the 7,500 gallon saltwater aquarium, home to some 65 fish native to the Pacific Ocean.

Photos: Gayle Anderson

Metro Art conservation technician Angelene Campuzano supervised restoration of the artworks.

The work included:

- draining and cleaning the aquarium throughout, including algae removal;
- Repairing the filtration system;
- Filling the aquarium with 7,500 gallons sea water; adding kelp;
- Adding some 60 fish to the five resident Horn Sharks: Senorita Wrasse, Black Smith, Surf Perch, Black Perch, Opal Eye, Kelp Fish, and Sculpin;
- Completing repairs to the soffit above the aquarium, and
- Removing etched graffiti from the acrylic tank.



Conservation technician Angelene Campuzano.

"The aquarium was getting darker and darker, said the artist, May Sun. "Now, kids can see the fish in the 'ocean' and they run to it, excited as before. I am pleased and grateful to Metro Art for taking this kind of quality care."

===



All aboard the A-Train in the East Portal. Photo by Deniz Durmus.

Fixing the A-Train, however, required direct intervention from its creator, artist Bill Bell, who looks a bit like a wizard and acts like one,

too.

Hidden away in a secret room behind the wall is a Macintosh computer from which Bell wields cyber-control of A-Train and the light-stick screen.

He was in that room, late last year, writing code, updating software and fixing links, while Campuzano hovered about the wall, removing fixtures and cleaning glass covers.

“There is the code to write to put images in the right shape and code to get the images colored and operating in a particular way,” Bell explained.

Originally, Bell developed several hardware and software programs to create images and distribute data to the light sticks mounted on the wall. Now refreshed, the computer behind the wall continues the magic that operates the A-Train.

With artwork repairs completed, visitors can see clearly, now, the beauty of the East Portal. As the people of the world transport themselves through the “portal” to Los Angeles, they will know where it all began.

Next> Hop on the A-Train: Go to [An A-Train primer](#)

Photo: Gayle Anderson



Artist Bill Bell programs the Mac that runs the A-Train from the other side of the wall.