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Members of the Metro Art Docent Council add the new installation at the Metro Gold Line portal to their Metro Art itinerary.



## The Sun also Rises in the Metro Gold Line Portal

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(June 21, 2006) Today is June 21, the Summer Solstice, the longest day in the solar year when the Sun is at its highest path through the sky.

From the perspective of the 34<sup>th</sup> parallel, L.A.'s geographical address, the Summer Solstice is perfectly depicted in Metro Art's newest artwork installation -- artist Roy Nicholson's "Solar Shift: San Bernardino and Santa Monica, 2006."

Transforming the gloomy, dark concrete lobby that houses an elevator and ticket vending machines, two 55-foot-long glass mosaic murals and skylight well frame the entrance to the Metro Gold Line platform at Union Station.

"Recognizing the importance to our customers of this active entry portal and its somewhat dreary appearance, we commissioned an outstanding mural that relates specifically to the Los Angeles environment and is composed of timeless materials, " said Jorge Pardo, Art and Design Manager, Metro Art.



The Sun at Summer Solstice is depicted at sunrise on the east panel, at right, and at sunset in the west panel, at left.

At the Metro Gold Line portal, the sun rises and sets every day, revealing its own mosaic of sky, mist, smog and shadows. The sun's path across the northern hemisphere is measured by the solstice and equinox of the four seasons.



Artist Roy Nicholson

"The piece relates this place to the environment and also what's just beyond the walls," said Nicholson, on site in June to direct the installation and apply finishing touches to the shimmering panels of impressionistic color.

"Solar Shift" went from concept to installation in just under a year – about the same amount of time it takes the sun to complete its solar path around the world.

Positioning himself on Santa Monica beach for the setting of the sun, Nicholson captured the images on the exact time of solstice/equinox. Images of the sun rising were captured by the University of San Berdardino's webcam that Nicholson found

online.

Nicholson produced meticulously rendered drawings and traveled to the Franz Mayer Studio in Munich, Germany, for the artistic Mexican and Italian glass mosaics used in the panels. Under his supervision, artisans there transformed the images of Los Angeles' equinox and solstice into the murals. Some 308,000 tiny pieces of tile were assembled in strips onto a wire base and shipped to the United States. In the final phase of the installation, the strips of mosaic were applied to the concrete wall at the entrance to the Metro Gold Line.



The mosaic skylight well echoes the colors of morning to the east and evening to the west, with mid-day blue to the north and south.

Completing the installation June 16, construction workers installed a metal strip beneath each mural rising on the concrete horizon.



The mosaic murals celebrate the natural beauty of Los Angeles' geographic environment, reflecting the east-west orientation of the Metro Gold Line portal walls by depicting sunrise and sunset at various points in the annual solar cycle. Looking west, above, the Sun is at its lowest path in the sky at the Winter Solstice, which occurs on December 21. After that day, the Sun follows a higher and higher path through the sky each day until it is in the sky for exactly 12 hours at the Spring Equinox on about March 21. At the Summer Solstice, which occurs on June 21, the Sun is at its highest path through the sky and the day is the longest. Because the day is so long, the Sun does not rise exactly in the east, but rises to the north of east and sets to the north of west allowing it to be in the sky for a longer period of time. After the Fall Equinox on or about Sept. 21, the Sun will continue to follow a lower and lower path through the sky and the days will grow shorter and shorter until it reaches its lowest path and the Earth is back at the Winter Solstice. Looking east, below, the Sun also rises.

