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Artist Designs Seating for Civic Center Metro Rail Station in Los Angeles

(LOS ANGELES) Artist Peter Reiquam specializes in the design and fabrication of public furnishings that are both fun and utilitarian. His recent work, a sleek series of four subway 'sofas,' was recently installed at the Los Angeles Metro Rail Civic Center Station. The contemporary benches provide a seating area where commuters may comfortably sit and talk to one another while waiting for the train.



Photo by William Short

"I have designed the benches in a modular style that relates to the formal grid of the paving tiles and the station's formal geometry," said Reiquam. "The pieces are sculptural and contemporary and suggest a stylized version of domestic furniture. The polished surface exposes the intricacy of the stone's interior."

Artist Peter Reiquam designed series of four subway 'sofas' for Civic Center Metro Rail Station in Los Angeles.

The assembly of contrasting slabs of mossy Mountain Green, warm reddish-brown Carnelian and lustrous pink Texas Pearl create a rich and cheerful color play. For example, pink may be used for a bench back, while carnelian may be used for the seat, with varying combinations from bench to bench.

Stone was chosen as a principle building material for the Civic Center Station because of its ready availability, timeless elegance, inherent beauty and durability: all leading design requirements for transit artwork.

The granite was quarried within the United States; the slabs fabricated under the artist's supervision in Cold Spring, Minnesota. The installation team worked with Metro Maintenance Facilities to carefully deliver the granite slabs, some weighing more than 1,000 pounds, on a flatbed rail car to the Civic Center Station. Local subcontractors installed the benches in a week's time, working only during non-service hours.

Reiquam is a Seattle-based artist who obtained his MFA from the Yale School of Art. Reiquam has over 20 years experience working on public art projects. His accomplishments include commissions for the Tri-Met Public Art Program Portland and the Washington State Arts Commission, as well as projects at the King County International Airport and the Meany Hall for Performing Arts, Seattle. He was the recipient of a Nation Endowment for the Arts Visual Artist Fellowship in 1986.

Reiquam was selected for the Los Angeles Metro Rail project by a panel brought together to review qualifications from artists with the highly specialized experience required design artistic, functional and durable artwork benches.

Located in the heart of downtown Los Angeles, the Civic Center Station serves many cultural attractions, among them: The Los Angeles Music Center and Walt Disney Concert Hall, the recently renovated Los Angeles City Hall, the community of Little Tokyo, the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels.

The 63 Metro Rail stations and Gateway Transit Center feature the work of more than 85 artists commissioned to enhance the 73.1-mile transit system. Metro policy allocates 0.5% of rail construction costs to the enhancement of the rail system through the arts.

Established in 1989, Metro Art has commissioned over 250 artists for a wide variety of both temporary and permanent projects. Artists are selected through a peer review process with community input; all works are created especially for the transit-related sites.

Free tours of the art of the Metro Rail system are given by the Metro Docent Council on the first Saturday and Sunday of every month. For more information e-mail lshenickb@metro.net or call 213.922.2738. Free tours for groups of 15 or more are available by special arrangement.

For directions by Metro Bus or Metro Rail call 1-800-COMMUTE or visit www.metro.net. For more information, visit www.metro.net/metroart or call Metro Art at 213-922-4ART.

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