



UTP

Public Transport International

Transport Public International - Der Öffentliche Nahverkehr in der Welt

01/2003

Design and Art: it is not a frill!

ART

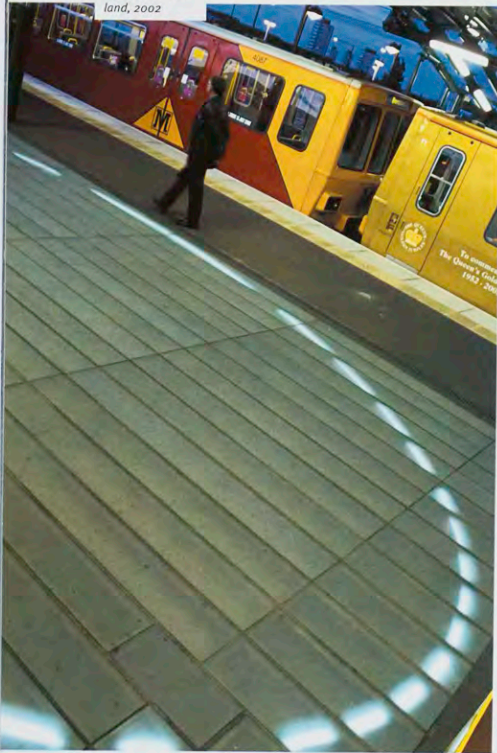
Details of Morag Morrison's colour scheme for Park Lane Metro Station, Sunderland, 2002



Art and Design, a successful combination

Recently, the extension of the Metro to Sunderland, with 12 stations, provided further opportunities to commission new works. This time it has been possible to integrate the artworks with the new architecture at an early stage, rather than commissioning works for existing spaces, as had predominantly been the case in the past. Indeed, a "Colour Strate-

"White Light", by Ron Haselden, commissioned for St Peter's Metro Station, Sunderland, 2002



gy" has been commissioned from the artist/designer Morag Morrison. Her approach has been to develop the existing Metro house style to respond to the environment of each station. Her designs provide a clear identity for the system whilst allowing each station to express more of its own character. She developed a palette of nine colours, reflecting the natural colours of the landscape of the line. The combination of coloured vitreous enamel panels changes for each station and becomes more intense as the line approaches the city centre. Morag commented: "Nexus has been a really amazing client to work for. They could so easily have gone for something ordinary, but they were happy to take a risk, and I hope the subtle colour changes between the stations will become a familiar part of the line for everybody using it."

Ron Haselden's "White Light" at St Peter's Metro Station - part of the extension of the Metro to Sunderland - is one of the artworks that is most closely integrated into the design of a station. St Peter's is close to the site of Monkwearmouth Monastery, where stained glass was first introduced to England from France and Italy in 674AD; the new National Glass Centre is also just down the river. "White Light" takes the form of two ovals of neon set under the glass block floors of the passenger shelters. The light level rises and falls depending on the direction of the wind - with the oval on one platform rising as the one across the tracks decreases, and vice versa. Ron Haselden said: "I've been fascinated by the oval shapes in Monkwearmouth Bridge since I did some work at Sunderland's Ceolfrith Arts Centre in the early 80s. It was an amazing coincidence when I was asked to make an artwork as part of the viaduct approach to the bridge, so using an oval shape was almost inevitable. The architect's design for the station was constrained by the historic architectural nature of the viaduct, so it balances delicately either side of the viaduct. I wanted something that was del-

icate as well, and as there is so much light and glass around I chose neon mounted under glass blocks. The natural light there can be particularly bright and the atmosphere very airy - the kind of light and air you get near the sea. The fact that "White Light" changes as the wind turns is a response to the sea climate. A further practical advantage is that the slight heat generated by the neons helps to prevent ice forming on the platforms during the winter." Paul Collard is responsible for putting together the bid by Newcastle and Gateshead to be European Capital of Culture in 2008. He believes that the public transport system and its approach to commissioning new art is helping his bid, and will prove crucial if it succeeds. "Successful festivals need good public transport. One of the great strengths of the Newcastle-Gateshead bid is that we have by far the best public transport system of any of the competing cities. We can already move people around between the various key sites in a quick, efficient and environmentally friendly way. The committee looking at the bid was very impressed by the system, and by the fact that these wonderful artistic interventions are accepted as a natural part of everyday life."

Mike Parker, Director General of Nexus, added: "Nexus takes an extremely proactive approach to ensuring the well-being of our passengers and staff. Public art can be seen to enhance the travelling environment. It is entirely appropriate that one of the finest transport systems in the world should be able to attract artists of international standing to work with us to make the system even more appealing."

By commissioning works suitable for their sites and working closely with schools and community groups, Nexus has succeeded both in improving the travelling environment and also in being, for a quarter of a century, at the crest of Tyneside's world-beating wave of public art.

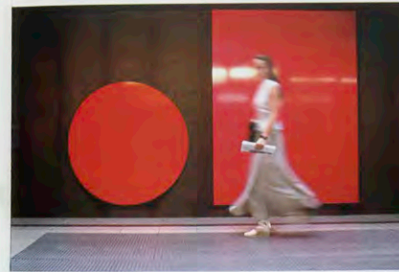
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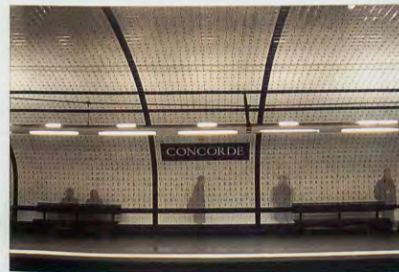
LISBON - CAMPO PEQUENO
Artist: Francisco Simões



LISBON - CARNIDE
Artist: José de Guimarães

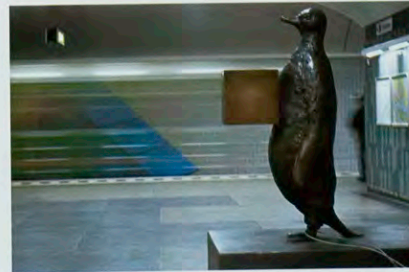


MUNICH - MACHTLINGER
Artist: Reupprecht Geiger



PARIS - CONCORDE
Artist: Françoise Schein

the metro



STOCKHOLM - ASPUDDEN
Artist: P.G. Thelander

Since the beginning of time when men still lived in caves, they have painted and decorated the walls of them. Today the travelling environment of the underground is often decorated with public art installations. If we consider today's underground stations as caves and the modern cave dweller their passengers, we could say that nothing has changed and we are still "painting" our "cave" walls!

Here is a selection of pictures taken by the photographer, Lothar Schiffler, which depict the difference between the movement of the passengers and the vehicles against the background of a work of art, itself sometimes portraying motion while it remains static.

UITP members will be able to appreciate his work for themselves as an exhibition of a selection of photographs is planned for early 2003 in the UITP Exhibition space in the reception area of the General Secretariat.

For any further information, please contact Heather Allen or visit: www.metro-art.de