

Joyce Kozloff: Humboldt-Hospital Station, Buffalo

Humboldt-Hospital Subway Station, Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, Buffalo, NY; Partially Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts; Roberts & Shackleton, Buffalo, Architects; mosaics fabricated by Crovatto Mosaics, Yonkers, NY, tiles fabricated by the artist; art consultant Nina Freudenheim, Buffalo; photos Biff Henrich

The 114' long, two-story project covers a 1794 square foot wall, and sections of it are visible from several vantage points – street, entry, down an escalator to the train level. There are a variety of visual incidents as one descends and ascends. Since budgetary restrictions precluded covering the entire wall with handmade tiles and glass mosaic, large mosaic discs sparkle and float on a field of commercially manufactured tiles. The designs in these discs are derived from nearby Seneca Indian pounded metal body ornaments or similar circular motifs found in local architecture, especially Louis Sullivan's recently restored masterpiece, the Prudential Building and the inlaid floor of the Ellicott Square Building. On the upper and lower landings at eye level for children, there are a series of hand painted tile friezes and tile "pictures." These inserts are lightly interpreted passages from other Buffalo structures, some respected, others unrecognized: the exterior bands on the funky Art Deco Vars and Braun Cadillac Buildings, the glorious stained glass windows in Frank Lloyd Wright's Heath and Martin houses, recycled native American motifs at City Hall, and the awesome, streamlined moderne Niagara Mohawk Building. The intention is to be both unique and familiar, combining traditional design elements in an interrelationship that is vast without being imposing.