

Waves and Wind Illuminated in Public Art

by Diana Schwaeble, June 11, 2012



Commuting to and from work is a necessary evil during the daily grind, fraught with crowded trains, delays, and good God, sometimes even a bad smell!

Often not noticed in the everyday commute is the sometimes hidden oasis of artwork in our public spaces. Some are interactive (take a look at the 34th Street display to see real genius), some are tributes to history, and some are designed to make you think.



A recent installation titled "Fluent" located in the NJ Transit Hoboken Ferry Terminal is designed to draw the viewer's eye up to the magnificent height of the terminal, brought vividly to life with the moving spheres hanging in the space.



"Fluent" is the latest work by artists Kristin Jones and Andrew Ginzel, who have worked together for over two decades. The work spans the terminal. At a glance, the steel structure looks perhaps like a giant mobile with stainless steel disks hung from the ceiling, and plummets in the water, which tracks the rising and falling tide.



"It really is about experiencing the dramatic energy of the place. We wanted to illuminate what was already here," said Kristin. "We didn't want a piece that was merely decoration," explains Andrew, who adds that the display measures the tide and wind flow.

The inspiration for the artwork can be found in nature – in the wind and the water.

According to Kristin, they wanted the artwork to reflect the movement of the wind, and to gauge the measurement of the tide, revealing the invisible wind currents surrounding them. “Hopefully, if you stand still to watch, it will spark your awareness of the water,” said Kristin. Designing the installation and gaining approval for the project took three years, she said. She says there were many meetings before the final project was accepted, not to mention a public competition. “Once we were selected, we had to make a number of proposals. We worked on it for three years. We’ve never tackled a space of this size before,” she said.



The installation was commissioned by the NJ Transit Arts Program with assistance from the New Jersey State Council of the Arts and funding was made possible by the Federal Transportation Administration.

“We worked with a great local installer. We spent a lot of time in this building and in the city,” said Kristin. As an artist, she became very interested in the phenomenon of wind and light – a sense that nothing is fixed. As she spoke she pointed to the spheres and noted that they appear almost purple in the fading light.

If the opening was any indication, the public loves art in open spaces. The crowds of people took in the display as the sun set over the Hudson.

“You have to believe in public art,” said Kristin. “It is not for the light hearted.”

Photos of the installation courtesy of Andrew Ginzel and Diane Roehm.