The Port Authority of Allegheny County
Public Art Program
for the Light Rail Transit System



Introduction

The Port Authority of Allegheny County's Light Rail Transit (LRT) system is a 10.5 mile reconstruction project to bring efficient rail transportation to Pittsburgh's South Hills corridor.

An integral aspect of the system's design and construction planning was establishment of the LRT Arts Project in 1981. The project was to include the selection and commissioning of artists to produce works of art for various LRT stations.

This unique project was envisioned to create an artistic and aesthetically pleasing environment for light rail patrons while carrying forward the strong tradition that has distinguished past Pittsburgh cultural endeavors by creating a funding partnership between the public and private sectors.

To implement the project, the PAT Board appointed a Committee on Arts for the LRT system, drawn from dedicated professionals throughout the field of visual arts. The Committee developed a public selection process and criteria so that works of art of the highest quality might be commissioned to enrich the visual setting and to create a transit system marked by excellence in all areas of design.

Through the end of 1982, the Committee on Arts undertook an intensive campaign to obtain nominations of a wide range of professional artists, both local and regional, including but not limited to environmental artists, painters, sculptors, photographers, craftspeople, fiber artists and those working in combined media. The process of nomination was open, with the Committee receiving nominations of artists from any interested individual or organization.

With each proposed site in mind, the Committee then reviewed the work of each artist nominated, and made direct selections for each site based on several criteria: artistic excellence; appropriateness to site; durability of design and materials; and minimal maintenance requirements.

A major concern in awarding preliminary design contracts was allowing sufficient time for the artist and LRT architects to work together to achieve an organic relationship between the artworks and the architecture, thus creating final station designs that are at once functional and aesthetically enriching.

In 1983-84, contracts were awarded to six outstanding artists for five installations in the three underground stations, including two each for the Wood Street and Steel Plaza Stations, and one for the Gateway Center Station. In addition in 1984-85, contracts were awarded for projects at three surface stations: a sculptural series by Diane Samuels at South Hills Village Station; an environmental sculpture by Martin Puryear at Penn Park Station, and at the Carson Street Station, the restoration and installation of several hundred running feet of railing from the former Brady Street Bridge.

Port Authority Board of Directors

James C. Roddey, Chairman
Neal H. Holmes, Vice Chairman
Marilyn Skolnick, Secretary
Barbara J. Rutkowski, Treasurer
John P. Robin
Robert P. Argentine
Anne L. Lang
James N. Kratsa
Edwin V. Clarke, Jr.
Cathryn L. Irvis
Robert B. Pease
John P. Spina

William W. Millar, Executive Director

Committee on Arts for the Light Rail Transit System

Carol R. Brown,
Chairperson
Director, Allegheny County Department of Parks, Recreation & Conservation, and Bureau of Cultural Programs

Leon A. Arkus
Art Consultant, past Director, Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute

Mary A. Kilroy
Coordinator,
Fine Arts Design Advisory Board, Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority

Elaine A. King
Director, Hewlett Gallery;
Faculty Member,
Art Department,
Carnegie-Mellon University

John R. Lane
Director, Museum of Art,
Carnegie Institute

William E. Strickland, Jr.
Executive Director,
Manchester Craftmen's Guild

James C. Roddey
Chairman,
Port Authority Board of Directors

Advisors to the Committee:

Port Authority Staff Representative,
Theodore C. Hardy
Director,
PAT Engineering and Construction Division

Consultant,
Francis Edward Elliot, AIA
Chief Architect,
Parsons Brinckerhoff-Gibbs & Hill

Station Architects

Steel Plaza Station
Celli-Flynn and Associates

Wood Street Station
IKM/SGE Pittsburgh

Gateway Center Station
TAP/NIRA Consulting Engineers

Funding

The Port Authority of Allegheny County wishes to thank the following private and public funding agencies for their generous contributions to the LRT Arts Project:

Steel Plaza Station

Rivers of Light
Allegheny County
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
Urban Mass Transportation Administration

Improvisations for Pittsburgh
Allegheny County
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
Urban Mass Transportation Administration

Wood Street Station

Thirteen Geometric Figures
Vira I. Heinz

Ornamental Frames
Allegheny County
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
Urban Mass Transportation Administration

Gateway Center Station

Pittsburgh Recollections
National Endowment for the Arts
Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation
Federated Investors, Inc.
The Hillman Foundation, Inc.
PPG Industries Foundation
Allegheny County
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
Urban Mass Transportation Administration

Romare Bearden

Born
1914, Charlotte, North Carolina

Studied
B.S., Mathematics,
New York University, 1935

Art Students League,
New York, 1935-36

Selected Exhibitions
Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh
Corcoran Gallery,
Washington, D.C.
The High Museum of Art,
Atlanta, Georgia
Williams College, Massachusetts
Studio Museum, Harlem,
New York
Museum of Modern Art, New York

Pittsburgh Recollections

1984
Ceramic

Gateway Center Station
Platform level



Internationally known artist Romare Bearden spent some years in Pittsburgh during his childhood, but grew up in New York City. As an adolescent living in Harlem, he was introduced to and strongly influenced by the musical and cultural innovations of jazz. This influence later emerged in Bearden's painting as a form of visual orchestration of the many pieces and styles to which he had been exposed in his youth. In the early 1950's, Bearden lived in Paris and studied at the Sorbonne, where he met and worked with important European artists.

Bearden's mural *Pittsburgh Recollections*, sixty feet long and thirteen feet high, depicts Pittsburgh's social and cultural history and spans the far platform level wall in Gateway Center Station. Located across the trainway from the station platform, the wall is the focal point of the platform level of the station.

To translate Bearden's design into mural scale, and to create a surface suitable for withstanding exterior moisture and changing weather, as well as the close movement of transit vehicles, the mural was fabricated of 780 ceramic tiles by Bennington Potters, Inc. Each 12" by 12" fired clay tile was applied with glazes in the colors and patterns of Bearden's design, and then permanently mounted to the wall surface.

Sol LeWitt

Born
1928, Hartford, Connecticut

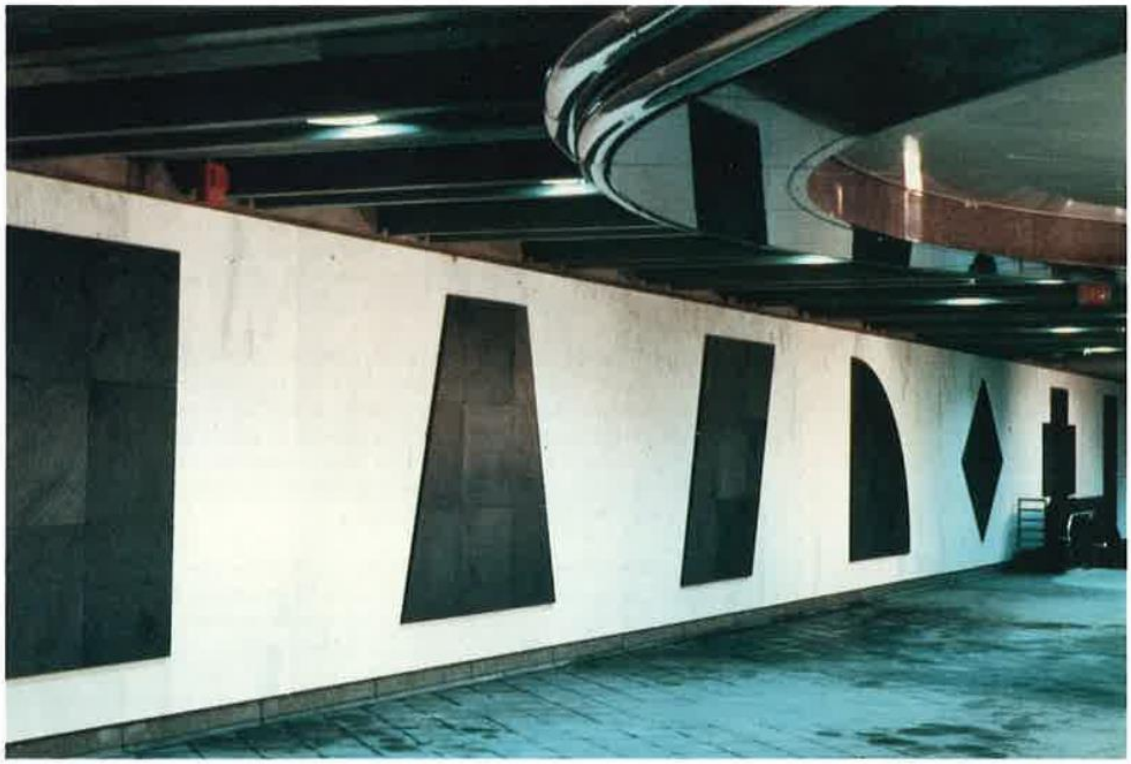
Studied
B.F.A., Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York, 1949

Selected Exhibitions
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, England
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
The Jewish Museum, New York
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California
Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan
The Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois
The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
Israel Museum, Jerusalem
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indiana
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut

Thirteen Geometric Figures

1984
Slate on marble

Wood Street Station
Mezzanine Level



Sol LeWitt is a painter, sculptor, draftsman and printmaker whose work with open cubes, ordered grid constructions and geometric forms is internationally recognized.

His work spans several Modernist movements, including Constructivism, Minimalism, and Conceptualism.

In *Thirteen Geometric Figures*, his dramatic mural permanently installed at the mezzanine level in the east wall of the Wood Street Station, LeWitt's simple geometric forms translate abstract elements into a mural of epic scale, two hundred and three feet long and nine feet high.

Albert Paley

Born
1944, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Studied
B.F.A., Tyler School of Art,
Temple University,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1966

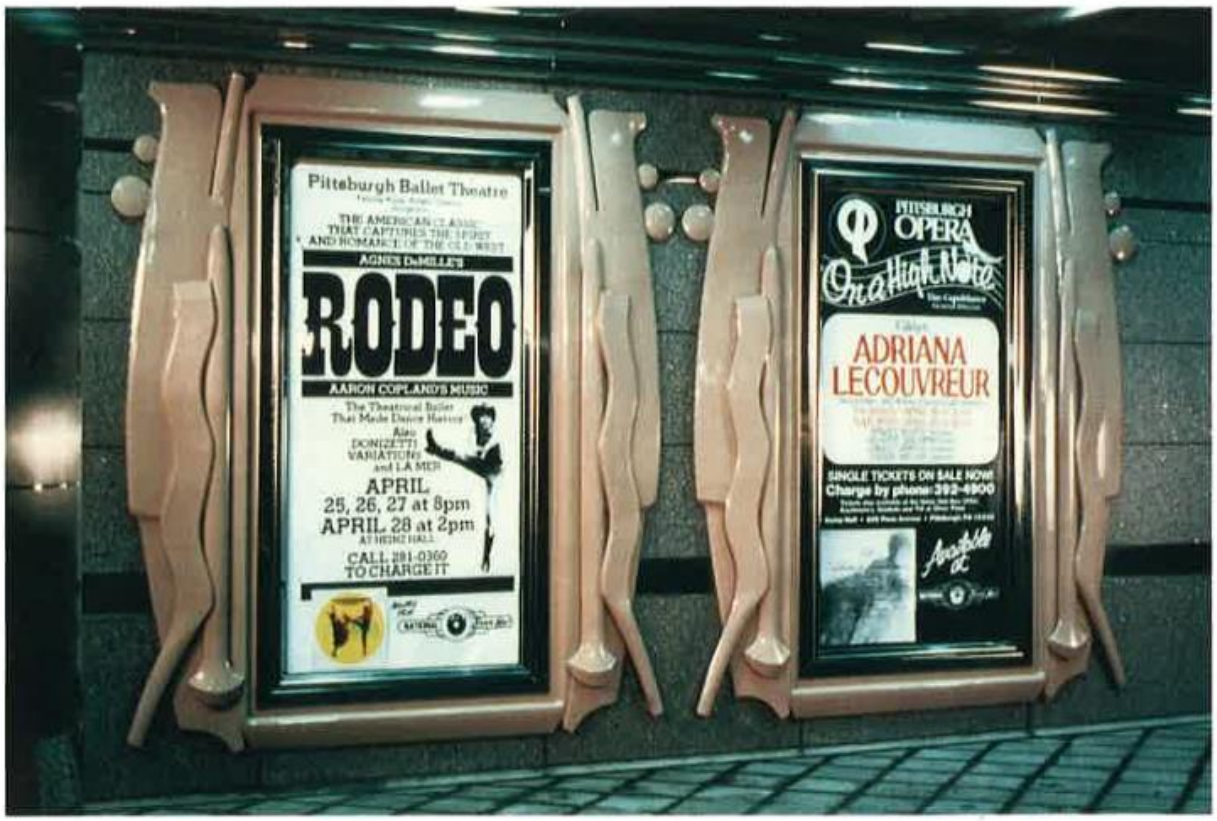
M.F.A., Tyler School of Art,
Temple University,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1969

Selected Exhibitions
The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
New York
Cooper-Hewitt Museum,
New York
Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, D.C.
Philadelphia Museum of Art,
Pennsylvania
Minnesota Museum of Art,
Minneapolis

Ornamental Frames

1984
Steel

Wood Street Station
Platform level



Metal artist Albert Paley has an established reputation for fabricating utilitarian objects in ways that are both decorative and sculptural.

His benches, gates, fountains and screens, fabricated of steel and a variety of metals, are delicate and intricate as well as forceful and dynamic.

Paley has designed poster cases for the platform level of the Wood Street Station which are striking sculptural wall reliefs as well as totally functional cases which will display posters promoting local cultural events.

The cases, approximately nine feet high and six and a half feet wide, have been forged and fabricated of quarter-inch mild steel plate, continuously welded and of hollow construction, and painted with a heavy-duty, high-performance coating.

Jane Haskell

Born
1923, Cedarhurst, New York

Studied
B.S., Skidmore College,
Saratoga Springs, New York, 1944

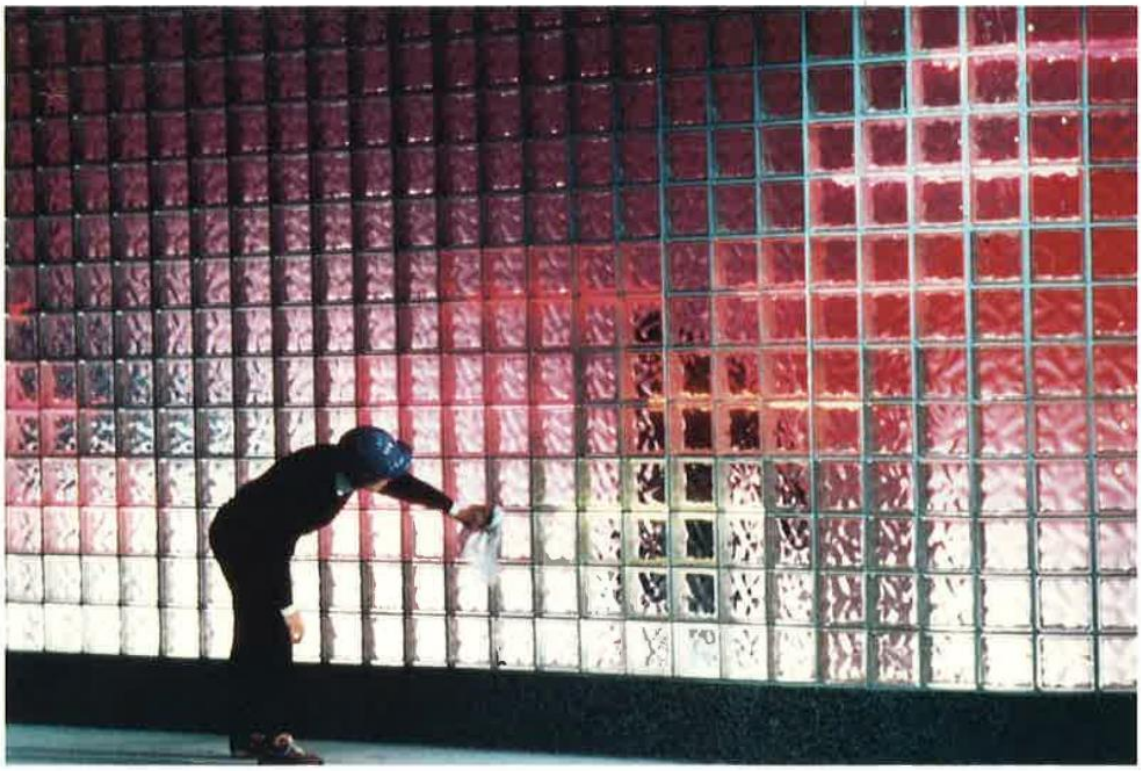
M.A., Art History, University
of Pittsburgh, 1961

Selected Exhibitions
Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute,
Pittsburgh
Three Rivers Arts Festival,
Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh Plan for Art
Associated Artists of Pittsburgh
Academy of Arts, Easton, Maryland
Chautauqua Art Festival, New York
Penn State University,
New Kensington Campus

Rivers of Light

1984
Painted aluminum, neon, and glass block

Steel Plaza Station
Platform level



Jane Haskell is a renowned Pittsburgh artist distinguished primarily for her color and neon light environments. *Rivers of Light* is an environment of light and color occurring behind glass block walls at the platform level of the Steel Plaza Station covering approximately 5,000 square feet of wall space.

Aluminum wall panels behind the glass block have been painted in a pattern designed by the artist in a range of 15 vibrant colors.

Haskell's environmental design was inspired by the v-shaped platform and track design of the station. Symbolizing the confluence of Pittsburgh's two rivers at the triangle, the artist used color and light to suggest the flow of the rivers from dawn to dusk.

The east platform walls are executed in a scheme of warm colors (reds, pinks, violets), while the west platform walls are cool (blues, greens, and a repetition of violets). Neon tubes, installed in the seven different locations, are connected to a timer and dimmer behind the glass block. In early morning the warm neon lights glow, while in the evening cool neon colors predominate.

Kathleen Mulcahy and Ron Desmett

Kathleen Mulcahy
Born
1950, Newark, New Jersey

Studied
B.A., Kean College,
New Jersey, 1972

M.F.A., Alfred University,
Alfred, New York, 1974

Selected Exhibitons
Pittsburgh Plan for Art
Rudolph Lee Gallery, Clemson University, South Carolina
Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh
Horizon Gallery, Mill Valley, California

Ron Desmett
Born
1948, Clearfield, Pennsylvania

Studied
B.S., Akron University, Ohio, 1971

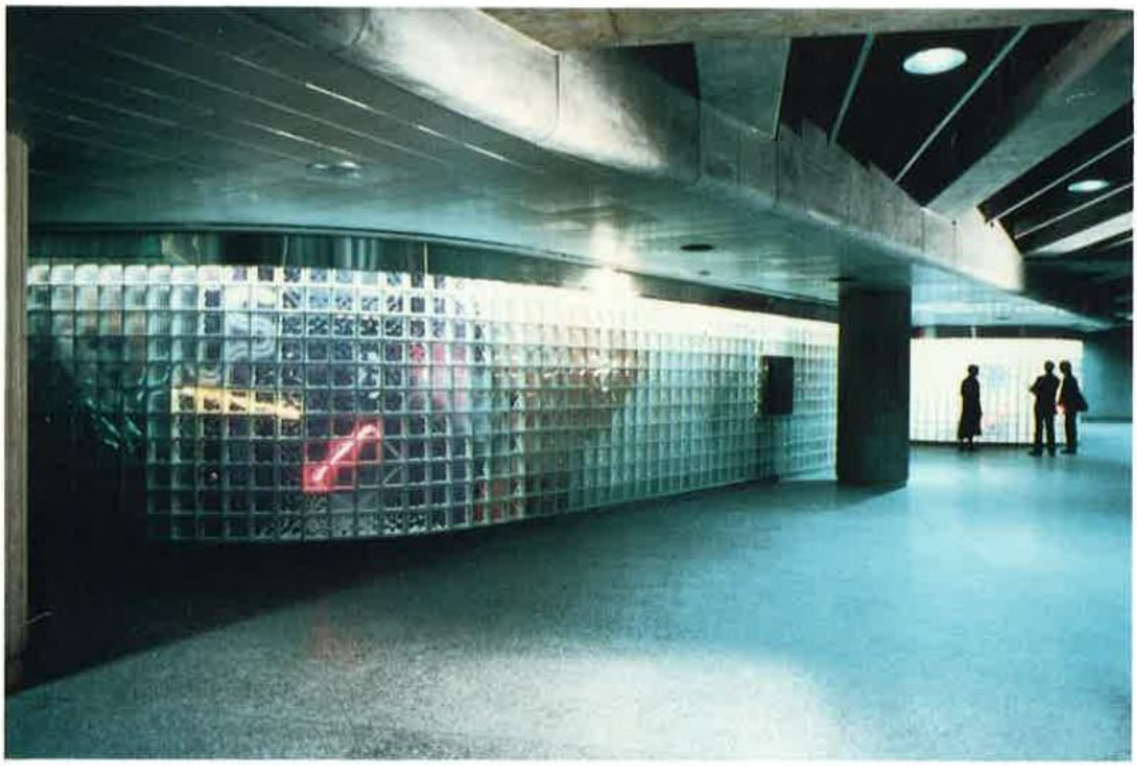
M.F.A., Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, 1979

Selected Exhibitions
Pittsburgh Plan for Art
Rudolph Lee Gallery, Clemson University, South Carolina
Hewlett Gallery, Carnegie-Mellon University
Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh

Improvisations for Pittsburgh

1984
Hand pressed glass block, paint, and neon

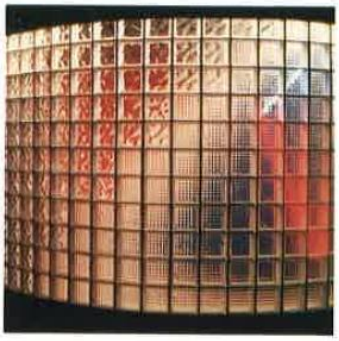
Steel Plaza Station
Mezzanine level



Glass artist and sculptor Kathleen Mulcahy and sculptor Ron Desmett were chosen to design an arts project for the mezzanine level of the Steel Plaza Station for their ability to work creatively with glass, light and color.

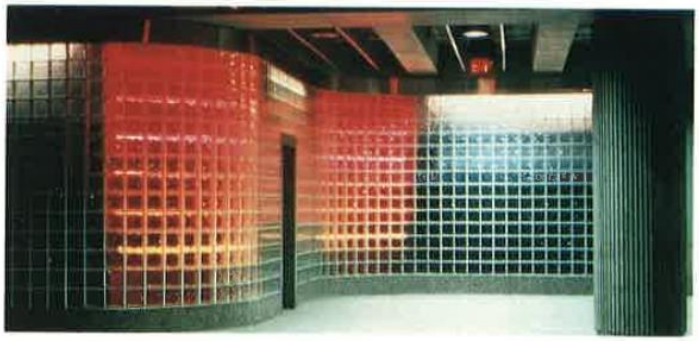
Improvisations for Pittsburgh is incorporated into and behind the glass block portions of five wall areas, eight feet high and ranging from twenty to sixty-seven feet long. The glass block in the walls has been laid in patterns developed by the artists, behind which special lighting and color patterns have been installed. In addition, individual glass blocks have been hand patterned and pressed as well as etched to create an intricate pattern.

The treatment of each wall in the Mulcahy/Desmett project relates to a Pittsburgh theme. The separate patterns in the glass blocks, some as simple as a single line, some as complex as an intricate grid, create varying images of city life and relate to and reflect the colors and shapes on the back panels. A triangle motif is repeated in four sections, as well as floating images representing Pittsburgh street scenes and geography. Neon lines, some relating to the patterns on the block, some to the colors on the walls, are used to create a play of light between the walls and the glass block











Transit