

# Art in America

## *San Francisco Transbay Transit Center Project to Include Monumental Public Art*

By Chérie Turner - Art in America, September 7, 2011

Marking a significant addition to San Francisco's public art offerings, the Transbay Transit Center in the city's SOMA district will feature \$4.75 million in new commissioned works. Jenny Holzer, San Francisco-born Tim Hawkinson, light artist and designer James Carpenter, and Bay Area artists Julie Chang and Ned Kahn will each create a large-scale work for the site.

Currently under construction, the mega-transit complex will encompass one million square feet. It will be topped off by the Transit Tower, planned to be the tallest building on the West Coast and designed by Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects. It replaces the existing dilapidated bus terminal. The complex is slated for completion in 2017.

Greeting travelers as they enter will be Hawkinson's 41-foot sculpture, his most ambitious public work to date, not only for the size but also the contents. The work will be fabricated from reclaimed materials from the former bus terminal, including massive concrete pillars, barriers and a streetlamp. To be located at the intersection of Mission and Fremont Streets, the sculpture will represent a figure with one arm raised—a rough and powerful guardian for safe travel.

The other four works will variously embody movement and travel or refer to San Francisco's unique character. Holzer's 11-foot-high, digitally displayed truisms will run along a glass enclosure on the center's mezzanine level. These texts, which will be visible from outside, will include quotes from San Francisco writers, highlighting the city's strong literary history, interspersed among original lines by Holzer.

Underfoot in the Grand Hall entry will be Chang's colorful and festive terrazzo floor. The work, which will cover roughly 20,000 square feet, will weave together culturally diverse motifs ranging from Islamic star-and-cross ornamentation to Japanese crests.

A sculpture by Kahn will be located in the rooftop park; the long, narrow piece will have water jets whose height and motion respond using sensors to the movement of busses below. Carpenter's work, made up of 54 illuminated pairs of cast acrylic resin glass pavers on the ceiling and reflecting pavers and illuminated benches on the floor, will run along the pedestrian passage under the main structure. The light will create a wave-like pattern, providing a sense of movement.

A second phase of smaller-scale public art commissions are planned for niche areas of the complex, including lounges, entrances, and waiting areas. The selection of artists participating in phase two has yet to be announced.