

## CHROMATIC GATES SCULPTURE BY HERBERT BAYER

Proposed for Center City Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (commission never executed)

*Building Type:* Civic artwork

*Overview:* Technical consultant to the artist for materials, structure and foundations



*Role: Architect of Record*

The late Herbert Bayer was one of the last living masters of the Bauhaus Design School in pre-war Weimar, Germany. Art historians regard the Bauhaus as one of the seminal influences on the art and architecture of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Although known primarily for his graphic design and corporate identity programs, Mr. Bayer was also a painter and sculptor; his works are exhibited in museums and corporate art collections in Europe and the United States.

This work was conceived as an entrance to the Market-Frankford Subway Station at 15<sup>th</sup> and Market Streets (where the “Clothespin” currently stands.) People would pass through the rainbow-colored “Gates” when entering and exiting the Concourse. Other Center City locations were also explored, all in connection with subway access points.

Locating large civic sculptures at subway entrances presents a number of related problems. The piece will invariably be sited on bridgework over the subway, where it is subject to intense vibration and places significant point loadings on a structure that was not intended to support them. The smaller gate at 16 feet in height, was projected to weigh 19 tons and the larger at 32 feet in height, 35 tons. Additionally, the old structural steels used in the subways are not of an alloy, configuration and condition that lends itself to welding and reinforcement using contemporary methods.

Feasibility studies included investigations of materials, coloring agents, wind loadings, atmospheric corrosion resistance and structure. Materials investigations lead to an aluminum alloy that significantly reduced the weight, and a catalyzed industrial paint finish that would provide the durability and the highly saturate hues the artist sought. The foundation and reinforcement problems were not resolved because the commission did not proceed to a final location.

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