

Joyce Kozloff: Harvard Square Subway Station

"New England Decorative Arts," Harvard Square Subway Station, Cambridge Arts Council's Arts on the Line Program, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Boston, Architects; tiles fabricated by Brimstone Tile Works, Boulder, CO and painted by the artist; photos Cymie Payne

The mural is on a curved wall adjacent to a pedestrian ramp connecting the bus platforms with the train tunnels. Since it is experienced sequentially rather than altogether, the visual narrative is episodic, and cannot be easily grasped in its entirety. As the public walks up or down the ramp, the work unfolds and reveals itself. It is comprised of interlocking geometrical shaped tiles glazed in many bright colors. The all-over pattern is interrupted by unexpected variations, breaks in the rhythm, shifts in tone and value, changes in mood. Its passages include gravestones, sailing boats, weathervanes, bowsprits, silhouettes, wall stencils, quilts and a "primitive" New England landscape, motifs familiar to inhabitants of the area. It is a composite picture of Boston's visual history as seen through the decorative arts, the carriers of popular culture. The sections vary in length (from 2 to 21'): those which are closest to the viewer have the most intricacy; those which are seen from further away are painted more loosely.