LAX unveils public art by Ball-Nogues, Mark Bradford and Pae White

A view of artist Pae White's installation "ΣLAX," recently unveiled at the international terminal at LAX.

(PanicStudio L.A.)

By DAVID NG

JULY 1, 2015
The Tom Bradley International Terminal at LAX debuted this week three new public art commissions designed to greet departing and arriving passengers and provide a measure of calm and reflection amid the chaos of air travel.

The artists involved all have strong ties to Los Angeles -- Mark Bradford, Pae White and the Ball-Nogues studio each resides or works in the L.A. area. Funds for the commissions came from the airport, with each installation budgeted at $1 million, according to Sarah Cifarelli, the art manager at LAX.

She said the airport participates in the city’s "1% for arts" program, under which developers pay an amount equal to 1% of the construction value, with the money going to public art. The recently unveiled installations are on view on a permanent basis, she said.

The Ball-Nogues Studio created a multicolor installation, titled "Air Garden," located in the terminal's Great Hall. The curtain-like suspension is made of approximately 90 miles of metallic chain, but the piece has a light, airy feeling.
"We imagined this space as a kind of reprieve or garden where people could rest their minds as they moved through the building," said Benjamin Ball of the studio in an interview, adding that the work can be interpreted as a three-dimensional painting. "The project is meant to be seen from a variety of angles."

He added that the abundant light in the atrium inspired the piece and allows the colors to play off each other.

Mark Bradford's "Bell Tower," suspended over the security screening area at Tom Bradley International Terminal at LAX.

(Joshua White)

White's installation, titled "ΣLAX," is suspended above the terminal's north and south corridors that lead international passengers to customs. The work resembles a mathematical pattern and is made of almost 24 miles of cordage dyed in three distinct color palettes.

The color palettes are intended to reference the colored-tiled mosaics by the late artist Charles D. Kratka, located in the airport's terminals 3, 4 and 6.
As previously reported by The Times, Bradford created an installation titled "Bell Tower" that is located on the mezzanine level of the terminal's departures hall. The work is suspended from a skylight above the TSA security screening area, so both ticketed passengers and the general public can view it.

The sculpture is modeled after a medieval bell tower, though it also resembles the kind of jumbotron seen at sports arenas. The work of art is made of 712 panels cut from salvaged plywood and posters collected from construction sites throughout L.A.

Bradford is currently the subject of a major exhibition at the Hammer Museum -- "Mark Bradford: Scorched Earth," which is the L.A. native's first solo museum show in his hometown. The exhibition is scheduled to run through Sept. 27.

The Tom Bradley International Terminal has undergone extensive renovations in recent years as part of a larger upgrade to LAX.