

Light Through

by Bernie Miller

Location: The Disraeli Bridge

Media: Stainless steel

A collaboration between the Winnipeg Arts Council, the City of Winnipeg Public Works Department, Plenary Roads Winnipeg, Tetra Tech, PCL Construction and artist Bernie Miller

Light Through is an artwork that consists of sixteen 350 cm tall stainless steel structures that cover the four bridge piers. These structures contain photographs depicting the history of the bridge and its surroundings. To perforate the stainless steel panels, the artist developed software to translate the photographic images into patterns of holes. When light shines through these holes, the photographs are distinctly revealed, and picture the lively public interaction with the bridge since 1959.

"I started with photo-based images of the previous bridge. The richest trove of archival photos turned out to be in a City of Winnipeg Engineering Department binder of photographs taken during the construction of the 1959 bridge. The Light Through depictions also result from searching through various archives for images that are both iconic and graphic. During my archival search I became increasingly aware that our present would unavoidably become the past. I decided that a compelling exercise would be to mirror archival images with new present-day documentary photographs. This part of the project was a collaborative effort with Winnipeg photographic artist William Eakin.

The actual significance of the artwork, however, derives from the importance of the bridge itself. Winnipeg, as a river city, not only thrives because of its bridges but also derives an important part of its identity from the variety of its bridges. Think of the storied Arlington Bridge, the striking design of Esplanade Riel Bridge and now this graceful addition to the main arterial expressway and bridge that is the Disraeli. The artwork simply celebrates something that is itself significant and it does so at an important moment in its life, by looking back to the bridge's origins and forward into the future."

-Bernie Miller, Artist

Bernie Miller was born in Toronto. He graduated from the Ontario College of Art in 1974. In Toronto he is represented by Paul Petro Contemporary Art and was a director at YYZ Artist's Outlet for 16 years. Bernie's work has been exhibited in the USA, France, Italy, Sweden, Austria, Poland and Germany. Bernie has been commissioned to create major public artworks in Toronto, Vancouver and Edmonton. In 2006 Bernie and Melony Ward co-edited *Crime and Ornament: The Arts and Popular Culture in the Shadow of Adolf Loos*. Bernie lives in Winnipeg and serves on the board of Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art.

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