

## Barbara Cooper

2009

### *Transitions*

The two components of *Transitions* by Barbara Cooper (b. 1949)—a sculpture and a glass mosaic—exist in dialogue and unify the space with their interrelated forms. The sculpture, a swirling organic form, is constructed of aluminum, brass, copper, and stainless steel sheeting that is riveted together and suspended in the atrium of the **Paulina** station. This arrangement of small vortices references such variously scaled phenomena as cell structures, eddies in water, burls in wood, and, less obviously, clusters of neighborhoods.

The glass mosaic on the wall at the top of the wide landing of stairs takes the energetic imagery further. The mural depicts an intersection of two opposing sets of concentric circles, each rippling out from their own core while circling back to encompass and meld with the other. For the artist, this movement suggests the idea of passengers entering or disembarking the trains.

Mosaic: Hand-cut glass

Sculpture: Riveted brass and stainless-steel sheeting

Cooper's work is rooted in conceptual art, and it is also based in craft. She is known for her dynamic sculptures constructed from numerous layers of wood veneer. The natural world and its environmental processes, from the flow of water to how trees grow, is often the starting point.

Of the piece in the CTA's collection, the artist wrote: "*Transitions* is intended to mirror the fluid, ephemeral, high-energy intensity of the city, which, in a sense, public transportation embodies. It is a system of electricity and tracks connecting and subsequently enabling movement between various hubs and neighborhoods in the city. In an even larger capacity, public transportation enables each of us to move beyond our own isolated worlds to the larger scope of what the city has to offer in terms of community, education, work, and culture. It assists in connecting us to what provides meaning in our lives."



