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### Upgraded LAX Gateway Pylon Project Kinetic Light Installation again welcomes visitors

BY HELGA GENDELL

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Powered by upgraded state-of-the-art technology, the LAX (Los Angeles International Airport) Gateway Pylon Project Kinetic Light Installation — designed by artist Paul Tzanetopoulos — again graces the Gateway to Los Angeles, as a beacon and gateway, welcoming visitors with its subtle shifting of colors and speaking to the cultural diversity that is Los Angeles.

The public art structure with its kinetic lighting display — located on Century Boulevard and forming a circular central exchange at Sepulveda Boulevard — creates a "welcoming motion toward the airport," Tzanetopoulos said.

The kinetic lighting installation had not worked correctly for some time due to some technological and maintenance complexities.

A total of 26 pylons make up the "sculptural display," along the Century Boulevard median between Aviation Boulevard and Sepulveda Boulevard, with the pylons ascending in height as they approach the airport toward Sepulveda Boulevard.

All 26 pylons are constructed of steel truss structure with curved glass cladding and a glass thickness of three-eighths of an inch with protective translucent film on the inner face.

The 11 pylons on Century Boulevard range from 25 to 60 feet high, with a diameter of six feet, and the 15 Gateway pylons at the Century Boulevard and Sepulveda Boulevard traffic exchange form a circle 560 feet in diameter, and have an average height of 100 feet and a diameter of 12 feet each.

The lighting capabilities include 30,000 color variations in a three-hour program, lit from dusk to dawn in a variety of colors and sequences and visible to airline passengers at 3,000 feet, according to Tzanetopoulos.

Los Angeles World Airports officials say they worked with the City of Los Angeles' Cultural Affairs Department to commission Tzanetopoulos "primarily to create a large-scale public art work utilizing light and movement, and secondarily to work within the design team to create an artist's interface that would allow the creative lighting programming within the pylons, and ensure that the lighting technology would be implemented and consistent with the goal of the public art element."

Ted Tanaka of Ted Tanaka, Architects in Marina del Rey, served as the master architect and headed the LAX Gateway Enhancement Project design team, with Tzanetopoulos serving on the team to develop the scope, scale and artistic nature of the pylons.

The kinetic light installation celebrates and reflects the greater community of Los Angeles, creating locations that welcome people to both Los Angeles and LAX, said Tzanetopoulos.

"Coming from Athens, Greece as an immigrant over 30 years ago, it is very important being here, and this sculpture with its range of soothing and subtle colors defines the welcoming culture of Los Angeles," said Tzanetopoulos.

The public art sculpture, part of the LAX Gateway Beautification Program for Los Angeles World Airports and completed in August 2000, is said to be the largest permanent public art lighting installation in the world.

Tzanetopoulos worked for over a year to implement new and improved technology that would be far more energy efficient, provide better light diffusion, and bring a new color palette that "reflected the rich cultural diversity of Los Angeles in a more pastel and atmospheric quality."

The "rainbow spectrum of the whole earth — white light is purity, blue is the color of the universe from the Hubbell space telescope looking back toward earth — signify the wholeness cycle and the healthy greening of plants," flowing together to bring emotion to life, said Tzanetopoulos.

A geometric picture is imposed by the kinetic lighting of the pylons, beginning at the top of Century Boulevard, "walking the lights in a movement of color toward the ring circle of pylons, from tall to short, and amplifying as they come forth," Tzanetopoulos said.

A tranquility of timing that is very human, yet fragile and comforting, intended to serve and represent the community as a spectrum of diversity, according to Tzanetopoulos.

"When I lectured at a college in Los Angeles, a young woman was in the front row, and was obviously eager to comment about the kinetic light installation, said Tzanetopoulos. "I called on her and she was very emotional, telling me that she had come from China several years ago, and the first thing she saw coming into LAX was the array of beautiful colors in the light installation, and how much it meant to her."

[See Greg Wenger's photo of the Gateway Pylon Project Kinetic Light Installation on our cover this week.]

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