

CHORUS

The classical origin of the word culture comes from the Latin root, *cultura*, meaning cultivation. First used by Cicero, speaking of the cultivation of the soul, the word came in time to refer to the betterment of individuals and the development of universal human capacity. Culture is built upon and with the words and languages, aural and written documents collectively produced and shared in common. Recognitions are made and ideas are formed in and with words. The names of people and events are carved into stone and remembered. Whether brought about by elective succession or conflict, governments and generational thresholds are crossed with speeches, promises and the repetition of ritualized oaths. The legal foundation of contemporary civic institutions recognizes and protects rights crafted in a belief in the covenant of words and their possibility to remind us of where we are and to imagine and enact a future we can't yet touch.

CHORUS is a field of text woven from nationally and internationally authored declarations of human rights and independence in a marble mosaic of raised letter forms. The alignment of the documents as a concordance is based on the intersection of a keyword in one document within the body of another.

On the Southbound platform, the composition is vertically organized by spines of repeating words from the preamble to the 1776 United States Declaration of Independence. On the Northbound platform, the word, EVERYONE, repeats in column flanking either side of the oculus entrance to the station. The occurrence of these principal words and their accompanying text in the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, forms the horizontal lines on both platforms and is set in a contemporary design of Trajan, the classical letter form that wreaths the column, commemorating a ruler known not only as a soldier-emperor but as a benevolent philanthropic leader of social welfare policies.

A concordance is also an agreement, a harmony. In this project, a white on white tactile surface frames and brackets the subway platforms and the movement of the city through the site. It is a continuous field from which the eye, in passing, focuses on words that aggregate in the readers' mind and in their repetition, a chorus, and a refrain, sounds: everyone, equal, rights... These underground intersections and crossings of texts and people are the social, legal and institutional pillars that underlay cultural life above ground.