

Public Safety Building - Police Memorial titled "Spiral of Gratitude"
Shimon Attie, commissioned by the San Francisco Arts Commission
September 21, 2012

Artist Shimon Attie is creating a police memorial artwork for the entry lobby of the new Public Safety Building in Mission Bay. The memorial consists of a large glass cylinder suspended overhead opening to a skylight above. A site-specific poem will be inscribed on the glass cylinder. The poem is written by Gwyneth Lewis, former National Poet of Wales, with the artist. The content of the poem was inspired by feelings of gratitude and appreciation that were submitted to the artist from members of BALEAF (Bay Area Law Enforcement Assistance Fund). The phrase that will be inscribed on the wall behind the cylinder has been changed from "Look Up, Their Valor Shines" to "Look Up, Their Courage Shines" as the word "courage" is more welcoming, inviting, and consistent with the tenor of the poem.

Below is the text of the poem and attached are images of the police memorial with the revised phrase and a preliminary layout of the poem on the cylinder.

Poem Inscribed in Cylinder:

You who are still in time, follow me as I spiral up.

You who grieve for me and whom I have lost, turn now, turn with me.

Those whom I served, track my voice with your body's eye.

You are my sweet spot. Together our acts support the sky.

Hearing of danger, I ran towards it. I may be lost or injured but my gifts to you are not.

Be bystander, witness and judge: duty is chosen but grief chooses us.

Love isn't subject to time. I'm here. When the sky reminds you of me, sun may be comfort, or cloud, or fog.

Turn, still in time, follow my words to the future. You turn in my mind forever. Together our bodies describe a spiral of gratitude.

I am so far from you now that my words may be difficult to read. Don't strain your eyes to make me out, I think you can hear me, for I am the bird so high that the city below cannot see me. I sense it all from the clouds and feel the smallest thing move.

Sacrifice ripples through generations, reverberates and shakes the stars.

I'm here. When the sky reminds you of me, sun may be comfort, or cloud, or fog.

Turn, still in time, follow my words to the future. You turn in my mind forever. Together our bodies describe a spiral of gratitude.

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