

## Bridging THE GAP // Five functional sculptures are fixtures in Twin Cities: [METRO Edition]

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Published 08/01/96: This article omitted one of Siah Armajani's functional sculptures. The Post Office Park sculpture in Wayzata was unveiled this week.

Five of Siah Armajani's functional sculptures are permanently installed in the Twin Cities, where thousands of people see and use them daily, probably without even recognizing them as art - which is exactly how the sculptor prefers it.

The publicity-shy artist wants his work to blend into its surroundings, becoming a useful amenity appreciated as much for its utility as its beauty or design.

In addition, Walker Art Center in Minneapolis owns several smaller pieces that are shown irregularly, including a table-top-sized model bridge. The museum also is planning an Armajani retrospective that's scheduled to open in February 1998 and tour museums throughout the country.

His Twin Cities public sculptures are:

Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs Plaza, 301 19th Av. S., Minneapolis, on the University of Minnesota's West Bank. Surrounded by brick walls and shade trees, the grass-and-brick plaza offers a shady spot for reading, lunching or talking. In one corner is a small speaker's platform. Quotations from Humphrey, the former vice president, senator and Minneapolis mayor who died in 1978, are set into the walls and bench backs on terra cotta plaques. The plaza, completed in 1988, has unfortunately deteriorated. Quotation tiles have popped out of the walls, leaving unsightly gaps; bricks are badly chipped, and the speaker's backdrop is shabbily painted. Repairs were scheduled this year, but postponed until the new Carlson School of Management building - under construction on the plaza's south side - is completed in 1998.

Skyway linking Norwest Bank and the Firststar Bank building, 607 Marquette Av. S., Minneapolis. Spanning Marquette Av. between 6th and 7th Sts., the terra-cotta colored skyway has a gold-glass centerpiece topped by a gold-glass pyramid.

Irene Hixon Whitney Bridge spanning Interstate Hwy. 94. The pale-blue-and-yellow bridge links Loring Park on the east to the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden on the west. Armajani's design for the 375-foot walkway incorporates two classic forms: the rising curve of an arch bridge and the descending curve of a suspension bridge. The artist merged them into a symbolic "handshake" spanning the freeway. Completed in 1988, the \$1.6 million bridge-sculpture was paid for primarily by the family of Whitney, a Minneapolis arts patron and civic activist who died in 1986.

Loring Park Gazebo, overlooking Loring Lake near the Irene Hixon Whitney Bridge, 15th St. and Hennepin Av. S., Minneapolis. Dedicated in 1993, the blue-green gazebo is a latticework cube of painted steel fitted with wooden benches. A gift of the Wheelock Whitney family to the city of Minneapolis, the sculpturelike gazebo is a further link between the park and the nearby sculpture garden. Like much of Armajani's work, the gazebo incorporates poetry, in this case three reading stands bearing quotations from T.S. Eliot's poem cycle "Four Quartets."

General Mills walkway, 1 General Mills Blvd., Golden Valley. Linking an employee parking lot with the food company's corporate headquarters, Armajani's walkway provides a sheltered passageway through a series of small pavilions overlooking a landscaped park. The company's grounds are open to the public.