



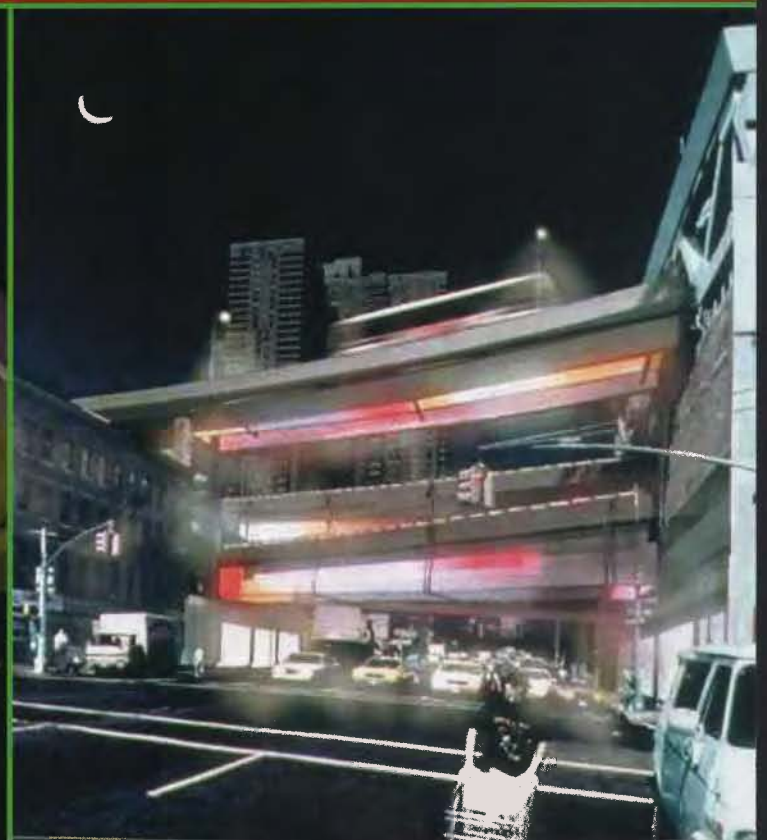
# URBAN LIGHT

**Lighting aids in the rebirth of two forgotten cityscapes.**

AS CITIES DEVELOP AND EXPAND OVER TIME, UNIQUE SPATIAL CONFIGURATIONS emerge. Places that were once the city's edge become enveloped in its fabric, and others that once had a specific use become places of confusion. But in the case of the Triple Bridge and Jamaica streetscape projects (both to be completed by the end of 2004), architecture, light and landscape work in unison to reclaim these neglected urban spaces. While the projects each have

their own unique circumstances, their sites and the applied design approach are similar. Both projects address the spatial conditions of urban underpasses: Triple Bridge is part of the complex system of ramps that buses traveling between New York and New Jersey use to enter Manhattan's Port Authority Bus Terminal, and the Jamaica, New York, project is an active pedestrian underpass for the Long Island Railroad.

The Triple Bridge Gateway project creates a "visual" landmark on Manhattan's Ninth Avenue (bottom right). Fluorescent lamps behind the suspended reflector panels highlight the underside of the ramps (bottom left). The chain-link scaffolding system is attached to the underside of the bridge structure (above).



## TRIPLE BRIDGE GATEWAY, NEW YORK CITY

Nine years in the making, Triple Bridge is a testament to collaboration and vision. The search for a solution to remedy this unfriendly and dark pedestrian space along Ninth Avenue had long been the focus of dialogue between the community and the Port Authority, the agency that oversees New York and New Jersey's major transportation hubs. The 50-year-old ramps were already scheduled to undergo painting and deck rehabilitation. Discussion with the community led the Port Authority to host an invited design competition to incorporate architectural improvements with the rehabilitation. The lighting enhancement is just one part of a larger plan that includes renovating a community center located directly under the ramps and refurbishing the Port Authority façade on Ninth Avenue.

The Triple Bridge project creates a landmark for the neighborhood, while addressing the juxtaposition of activities and modes of transportation that simultaneously occur at this location. The design team—New York City architects Pasanella + Klein Stolzman + Berg and lighting designer Leni Schwendinger Light Projects—wanted pedestrian, automobile driver and bus commuter to have a sense of arrival and departure as they transitioned through the space. The design took its cues from the bridge's beam structure. "I wanted to enhance and magnify the existing conditions, to reinterpret the existing structures through light and color," explains Schwendinger. The lighting works in conjunction with the architectural solution to wrap the sides and underside of each ramp in a total containment system—scaffolding that can be used as a scrim to reflect and diffuse light, as well as provide full-time maintenance access.

Without interfering with the ramp roadway lighting, multiple light sources illuminate the bridge structure and the area under the bridges. Metal halide sources graze the stainless-steel chain-link of the scaffolding system, and wallpacks are used to wash the bridge coffer. Another inspiration behind the lighting design was the "urban" quality of light. "The reflected light from glass clad buildings creates wonderful patterns," explains Schwendinger. Pendant-mounted reflector panels, approximately 3 feet by 3 feet, pierce the containment system. Metal halide sources on the east and west walls of the underpass shine onto the panels that, in turn, cast reflected light patterns onto the street. Fluorescent lamps behind the reflector panels illuminate the underside of the bridge structure. The positioning of the reflected light patterns ties together the existing lines and spaces of the bridges, and promotes the idea of movement and animation. Both day and night, this space becomes a place of light.

## STREETSCAPE IN JAMAICA, NEW YORK

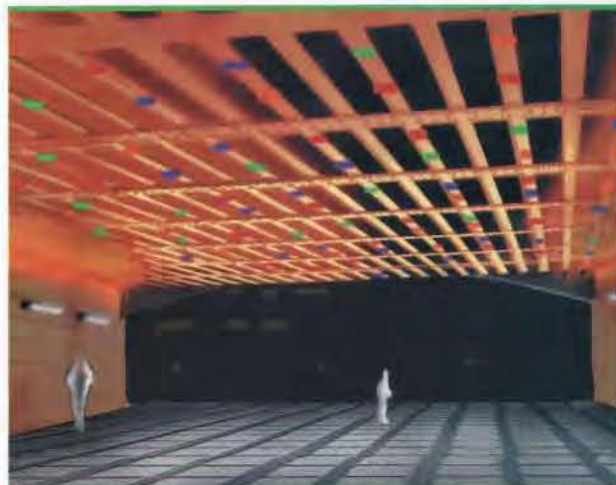
Lighting also serves as an elixir for a neglected pedestrian underpass that divides York College from downtown Jamaica. Like Triple Bridge, the design process includes a large team of designers, city agencies and private institutions. The underpass is part of a larger rehabilitation plan to redefine an entrance for York College, improve the surrounding streetscape and signage, and install new lighting at the nearby courthouse.

The original design solution was to refurbish the decayed interior of the underpass with tile, but this proved too expensive. "These are marginal spaces. The infrastructure is maintained, but the aesthetics are not. The question is how do you reclaim these spaces? Bringing light to this dark dingy place seemed logical," explains Brooklyn-based landscape architect Donna Walcavage, who proposed Leni Schwendinger be brought on board. Once embraced as a design solution, light was used to "tile" the underpass.

The site is the confluence of two grid systems—the street axis and the railroad structure—and the lighting scheme takes advantage of this intersection. Light reflectors painted in red, green, purple and white are attached to the underside of the underpass and accentuate the "ceiling" grid. These strips, approximately 1 inch by 4 inches, are evenly spaced to provide a balanced surface illumination. During the day they reflect the daylight funneled into the underpass, and at night they reflect the metal halide uplights, installed on the orange-painted side walls.

Light has helped create two physical and visual urban gateways. Schwendinger incorporates and manipulates light as a way of creating a civic stage. What were once forgotten spaces are now local landmarks actively reintegrated into the urban landscape. **ELIZABETH DONOFF**

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Evenly spaced light reflectors attached to the underside of the Jamaica streetscape underpass highlight the "ceiling" grid (above).

## DETAILS

**PROJECT** Triple Bridge Gateway, New York City  
**OWNER** The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey  
**ARCHITECT** Pasanella + Klein Stolzman + Berg, New York City  
**LIGHTING DESIGN** Leni Schwendinger Light Projects (LSLP), NYC

MANUFACTURERS	APPLICATION
Kim Lighting	Chain-link graze
Holophane	Bridge coffer
Northstar	Reflector panel lighting
Insight Lighting	Reflector bridge wash
HessAmerica	Sidewalk lighting

**PROJECT** Streetscape in Jamaica, New York  
**OWNER** Greater Jamaica Development Corporation  
**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT** Donna Walcavage, Brooklyn, New York  
**LIGHTING DESIGNER** LSLP

MANUFACTURER	APPLICATION
Elliptipar	Metal halide ceiling washer

**IMAGES** All images and renderings courtesy LSLP