

# MIT List Center

## Harry Bertoia

One of the leading industrial designers of his day, Harry Bertoia was commissioned to create a sculpture for the interior of Eero Saarinen's non-denominational chapel. The result is his 1955 brazed steel Altarpiece for MIT Chapel.

Professor of Art History at MIT, Caroline Jones--

Bertoia responded with this completely abstract screen. And this screen suspends these small pieces made of steel. They've been patinated with bronze. And they catch the light in a very specific way because Saarinen designed the chapel for no direct light to come in. The entire screen has this glimmering, abstract presence that is truly fitting for the monotheistic religious beliefs that God would be an awesome presence, a presence that cannot really be described and figured, but can only be felt. So whether it's God coming down as light from the heavens above, or our own yearnings flying up on these beautiful metal plates, I think Bertoia had all of that in mind when he made this piece.

Please refer to the nearby signage to access additional commentary about the chapel and spire, as well as Kresge Auditorium.