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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

{{American Glamorama:}} Liza Lou Beads Grand Central

Using millions of brightly colored, shiny glass beads, Vanderbilt Hall will be transformed this summer into a perfect replica of suburban utopia when Liza Lou's "Back Yard" is installed by MTA Arts for Transit in its inaugural exhibition at the newly renovated Grand Central Terminal.

"Back Yard" is 600 square feet of glistening lawn with a picnic table, checkered table cloth, clothesline and iconic barbecue grill. It is part of the exhibition "American Glamorama" by California artist Liza Lou that opens June 25 and runs through July 26, 1999 in Grand Central's former Main Waiting Room, which has been transformed into Vanderbilt Hall, a spectacular showcase space for public and private events.

"The Metropolitan Transportation Authority is delighted to make contemporary art accessible to the public through our Arts for Transit program," said MTA Chairman E. Virgil Conway. "Vanderbilt Hall in the newly restored Grand Central is the perfect venue to present this exhibition, which will delight commuters, tourists and New Yorkers alike."

Sandra Bloodworth, Director of MTA Arts for Transit, adds, "Liza Lou's magnificent sculptures transform popular cultural icons into extraordinary objects creating a visual experience which dazzles the eye."

MTA Metro-North Railroad, which operates Grand Central and serves the northern suburbs with 550 daily trains, is sponsoring the exhibit along with MTA Arts for Transit.

The show also includes "American Presidents," a portrait gallery of the presidents rendered in Liza Lou's unique, three-dimensional medium, beads. This is Liza Lou's tongue in cheek reference to the purchase of Manhattan island from the native inhabitants for \$24 worth of beads, and a spoof of traditional portraiture.

"It seems fitting to see James Polk, for example, covered in zillions of beads," Liza Lou says.

"Bridal Barbie," "Business Barbie," and "Supersister," three larger-than-life, jeweled visions of the perfect woman, and "The Closet," complete the show.

The beaded doors of "The Closet" stand ajar. Peek into a life-size model of a typically messy utility closet, cluttered with everyday items such as old shoes, brooms, mops, a tennis racket, football, games, paint cans and other ephemera.

Liza Lou, 30, burst upon the contemporary art scene with a 1996 show at New York's New Museum of Contemporary Art featuring her environmental sculpture "Kitchen," an extravagant monument to women's simple, everyday labor.

For Liza Lou, "Back Yard" was a logical extension of "Kitchen," for standing in front of the sink, what do you see? The back yard.

"I've always been inspired by the suburbs. This is really my landscape," says Liza Lou, who was born in New York City but moved as a child to Southern California. "With 50,000 square miles of lawn in this country, the lawn truly is a symbol of America."

Admission is free and the exhibition will be open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week. A special exhibition poster will be on sale at Vanderbilt Hall and in the Transit Museum Gift Shop at Grand Central.

MTA Arts for Transit is a program of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority that encourages the use of public transportation by presenting visual and performing arts in subway and commuter rail stations. More than 500,000 people use Grand Central Terminal every day.