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Press Release

March 14, 2001

MTA Headquarters

IMMEDIATE

MTA Arts for Transit and Creative Time Present "Wink" in Vanderbilt Hall

MTA Arts for Transit and Creative Time will present *Wink*, a show of new work by Takashi Murakami in Grand Central Terminal's Vanderbilt Hall. Murakami's installation was designed specifically for this landmark space and will open to the public on March 14 and close April 13, 2001. *Wink* is major exhibition of Murakami's work, placing his subtle balances of sub-culture, mass-culture, tradition and hyper-activity amidst the classical beaux-arts architecture of Vanderbilt Hall.

The installation consists of three inflatable sculptures -- two giant floating "eye-balls" and a ball of daisies held up by a cartoon character named "Oval" sitting upside down--and two floor sculptures which will be large discs lying flat on the ground, covered by cartoon eyes, echoing the balloons. The eyes on each sculpture will be distinctively different in size and expression; each will look in a different direction. *Wink's* eye motif reflects the myriad perspectives of the pedestrian traffic passing daily through Grand Central Terminal. Floating overhead, the balloons will cast a light-hearted, winking glance, ricocheting between commuters, the floor disks and the suspended eyeballs in the frenetic energy of train stations and New York City. These works have been conceived and produced specifically for this exhibition and have never been seen before.

Wink is a significant step in Murakami's artistic practice. Through his work, Murakami has blurred the oppositions in East and West, past and present, high art and low culture while remaining consistently amusing and accessible. His work combines the charming world of popular contemporary Japanese cartoons with the historic styles of Japanese painting (he is classically trained, with a Ph.D. in the traditional nihon-ga style). Similar to other contemporary Western artists, he has embraced popular culture as a vehicle for artistic infiltration. His recurring Mickey Mouse-like character, Mr. DOB, appears on t-shirts, key-chains, etc. world-wide. Items from this show will be on sale at the New York Transit Museum.

Murakami's artwork has been exhibited in prestigious museums all over the world, including the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and a recent solo retrospective exhibition at the Bard College Museum of Art. This will be the first time Murakami's inflatable artwork will be shown in the large public arena. Admission is free and the exhibition will be open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week. Takashi Murakami will speak at The Japan Society on March 20th at 6:30 as part of their program, *Inside the Studio*. For tickets and program information, please call 212-752-3015 or visit our website. There will be a concurrent exhibition of new paintings by Murakami at Marianne Boesky Gallery.

Creative Time, New York City's leading public arts presenter has a 29 year history of presenting experimental public artworks that investigate the role of art and the artist in our social landscape. For more information please visit our website.

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.