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IMMEDIATE

Metro-North Railroad Celebrates Installation of New Artwork at Peekskill

Vines Rendered in Colorful Steel Form Railings and Spell Out 'Peekskill'

The just-renovated train station at Peekskill now boasts “Jan Peeck’s Vine,” a steel sculpture that creeps around columns and railings and spells out the name “Peekskill” under the eaves.

“The City of Peekskill is extremely happy with the progress at the station,” said Brian Havranek, acting city manager of Peekskill. “We are very excited that the MTA has incorporated art work in the project, which reflects Peekskill’s standing as an active arts community.”

The work by artist Joy Taylor and commissioned by MTA Arts for Transit and Urban Design translates natural forms into dramatic sculptures that echo the structural elements of the existing station, but frees them to run riot in a flowing, whimsical design. The artwork is named for the area’s first European resident for whom the city is named.



“The piece is designed exclusively for Peekskill,” Taylor said. “It incorporates the zigzag structure of the historic station, which transitions into a flowering vine descriptive of the current flowering of the arts in the city. The vine itself is a stylized contemporary vision of the indigenous bindweed that Jan Peeck would have found growing here on his arrival.”

The Vine consists of two matching sculptures on the southbound platform, one on either side of the stairs. From their bases they rise to the canopy roof, surrounding two supporting columns with zig-zag pattern that replicates the lacing historic northbound canopy. As they climb up the columns, they begin to curve and twine, transforming into vines that meet above the stairs like a huge vine-covered arbor welcoming visitors to a local garden.

These sculptural elements are fabricated from carbon steel rod and shaped plate carbon steel that gives the vines, the leaves and flowers a sinuous three-dimensional reality as well as a distinctive silhouette.

Elements of this sculpture recur in the two “Peekskill” monograms atop the elevator entrances. The third element includes several vine-like railing inserts that replace vertical railings in several sections on the northbound platform. Here the design, a near-symmetry reminiscent of the larger vine sculptures, is cut from flat steel and finished to match “Jan Peeck’s Vine,” unifying the elements. The artwork is finished in two colors, gray-green for the vines and leaves, red-orange for the flowers.

While it hints at earlier Peekskill architectural motifs, “Jan Peeck’s Vine” is a thoroughly contemporary piece. It takes advantage of steel’s ability to soar free of support, to twine and suspend itself in air. Its bold color and stylized, oversized leaves and flowers add a striking new layer to Peekskill’s visual life which will become part of the experience of arriving here.

“Jan Peeck’s Vine” is Joy Taylor’s second project for MTA Arts for Transit. An earlier work, “The Four Seasons,” a 40 foot long glass mosaic, was installed in the Larchmont station in 2005.

Joy Taylor regularly exhibits her work at galleries in the Hudson Valley and New York City, and lives in Red Hook, NY. She studied art at Skidmore College, leaving for New York City, where she studied collage with Romare Bearden. She moved upstate in 1987, where she continues to live and work. She received a Pollock-Krasner grant in 1991, and has also received grants from the Dutchess County Arts Council, Sculpture Space in Utica, NY, and the Women's Studio Workshop in Rosendale, NY. Nature remains a source of inspiration and imagery for the artist, as does the collage aesthetic. Her work is diverse, including sculpture, painting, drawing, and assemblage. Her public work also includes a temporary installation at the Albany International Airport, Dream of Flight, installed in 2008.

Since 1985, MTA Arts for Transit and Urban Design has commissioned public art that touches the lives of the millions who use the MTA network, as well as national and international visitors. As the MTA rehabilitates the subway and commuter rail stations in New York City and its suburbs through its Capital Programs, it uses a portion of the funds for the installation of permanent works of art. To date, Arts for Transit has commissioned more than 300 artworks that create unique visual links to neighborhoods that echo the architectural history and design context of the individual stations. Both well-established and emerging artists contribute to a growing collection of works that utilize the materials of the system—mosaic, ceramic, tile, bronze, steel, and glass.

For more on MTA Arts for Transit and Urban Design, visit mta.info/art

Taylor's artwork has been added to the MTA Arts for Transit app by Meridian so that travelers can have the art collection in the palm of their hand. The app includes links to the permanent art projects installed throughout the MTA system.

