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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Unveils 'On Paper/Grand Central at 100'

Contemporary Papercut Artists Featured in Grand Central Lightbox Windows

As part of the grand celebration of Grand Central's 100th birthday, MTA Arts for Transit and Urban Design has unveiled an exhibition, *On Paper/ Grand Central at 100*, featuring the work of four noted contemporary artists working with the technique of paper-cutting to render their intricate and detailed subject matter.

Papercut art is an ancient craft that has been rediscovered by contemporary artists and reinterpreted here in illuminated Lightboxes. The exquisite detail and time involved in creating such works echo and reflect the passage of time in an architectural marvel where time takes on special meaning. Together, the exhibit reveals ideas about time and space, while using a contemporary art form that echoes the high level of craftsmanship in the terminal's architecture and decorative elements, many of which were carved, not from paper, but marble.


"The Lightboxes at Grand Central are seen by many of the 700,000 visitors to Grand Central every day," said Sandra Bloodworth, Director of MTA Arts for Transit and Urban Design. "This is a unique opportunity to showcase original papercut works in celebration of Grand Central's Centennial. The quality of the work by the artists in this exhibition is stunning and in keeping with the architectural heritage of this beloved place."

The four artists – Laura Cooperman, Rob Ryan, Xin Song, and Thomas Witte – present original artwork inspired by Grand Central. The artists used Grand Central as their point of departure and source of inspiration with beautifully expressed works drawn from family memories, the grandeur of the Terminal's architecture, the celestial vaulted ceiling and the romance of this fabled place.

Created in black-and-white paper cutout, each artwork is composed of four panels set in the lightbox windows that flank the dining concourse. Lightboxes are lit from behind, thus highlighting the negative spaces that are removed by cutting, and bringing them to prominence. The exhibit is the first time the space will be used to display original artwork; the spaces are usually programmed to showcase photographic work.

Laura Cooperman is inspired by the simplicity of the melon lights she saw in family photos of her grandparents and father growing up in New York City. Entitled *Overhead*, the work is a nod to Grand Central's inspired use of electricity (to modernize the grand space for over a century.) A celebration of Grand Central's history and the passage of time, *Overhead* consists of a variety of light bulbs hand cut from paper that reveal negative space, set atop a cityscape, which is then illuminated by light from behind.

Known for his use of whimsical figures paired with sentimental, honest, and occasionally humorous writing, artist **Rob Ryan** created *There Is Only Time* to connect with people who are constantly rushing, trying to make it on time. Four incredibly intricate paper-cut panels depict scenes of daily happenings occurring under the clock. Smaller writings run across the top of each panel with a large initial connecting each piece with a central theme – *There Is Only Time*. The work is also Ryan's response to poet Philip Larkin's line, "where can we live but days?" Time can be seen as a place rather than just a concept. In time, Grand Central is a place where countless moments and memories conglomerate.

Time · Light · Gate · Clock is a spectacular and theatrical work that conveys the reflection of life both from above and below. Artist Xin Song conveys the eternal quality of the heavenly ceiling and light that shines through the grand windows of the terminal. Trained in traditional papercut in Beijing, **Xin Song** juxtaposes the abstract quality of the architectural details with the silhouettes of the onlookers cut in traditional technique, generating a dynamic play of positive and negative spaces with the aid of light from behind. In 2012, Song completed a permanent art project for the Bay Parkway station on the  subway line. The work transformed the colorful imagery of photos taken around the community into an intricate paper-cut work, creating a symmetrical and vibrant flowering tree.

Based on photographs taken around the Terminal in summer of 2013, *Cutting Shadows* by **Thomas Witte** is an interpretation of Grand Central in papercut, which makes it a unique work that documents the 100th birthday of Grand Central Terminal. *Cutting Shadows* also marks a point of departure in Witte's artistic approach of paper-cutting. Rather than creating the illusion of light by removing paper, he utilized the actual light as a medium adding another layer of his work. The result is a multi-layered cut paper work that invites the viewer to explore the intricate details of a very familiar place.

On Paper/Grand Central at 100 will be on view in the Lightboxes located in the Dining Concourse on the lower level of Grand Central Terminal from September 27, 2013, and remain on view through September, 2014.

Press event:

October 15, 2013, 10:00 AM, Grand Central Terminal Dining Concourse East

ABOUT MTA ARTS FOR TRANSIT AND URBAN DESIGN:

MTA Arts for Transit and Urban Design (AFT) encourages the use of mass transit in the metropolitan New York area by presenting visual and performing arts in the subway and rail system. The permanent art program is one of the largest and most diverse collections of site-specific public art in the world, with nearly 300 works by world famous, mid-career and emerging artists including Elizabeth Murray, Romare Bearden, Roy Lichtenstein, Nancy Spero, Jacob Lawrence, Leo Villareal, Ellen Harvey, Jean Shin, Duke Riley, Odili Donald Odita, Alyson Shotz, Shinique Smith and more. Upcoming projects include works by Sara Sze, Chuck Close, Xenobia Bailey and more. AFT also produces art posters, art cards, photography installations and more than 7,000 live musical performances in stations annually, and has re-launched the Poetry in Motion program in collaboration the Poetry Society of America. AFT serves the nearly eight million people who ride MTA subways and commuter trains daily and strives to create meaningful connections between sites, neighborhoods, and people.

Please visit [Arts for Transit and Urban Design](#), or download [Meridian Arts for Transit App](#).