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Press Release


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IMMEDIATE


MTA Arts & Design Installs New Photography Exhibit of Botanical Designs

Portia Munson's Floral-Inspired Photographs Bloom Under Bryant Park

MTA Arts & Design announced today the installation of a new photography exhibit that brightens the 42 St-Bryant Pk  station with vibrant, blooming flowers.

Portia Munson's "Botanicals Below Bryant Park" is a two-part installation influenced by the gardens in midtown Manhattan's Bryant Park, located above the subway station. Munson was inspired by a desire to keep the flowers blooming underground year-round.





"More than 53,000 customers pass through the station each weekday, and we strive to make their time in the subway more lively and pleasant," said Lester Burg, Senior Manager of MTA Arts & Design. "Portia's bright botanicals are a refreshing addition to the workday commute."

Munson works with flowers, arranging them in circular shapes and patterns that resemble mandalas or intricate wreathes, to form compositions of stunning detail and color. She also incorporated flowers into a permanent art installation of laminated glass commissioned for MTA Arts & Design at the Fort Hamilton Pkwy  station.

In the Bryant Park lightbox project, Munson's photographic artwork has been installed in large illuminated panels in the station's mezzanine and on the windows of an unused space near the street exit at 42nd Street and Sixth Avenue, where two additional images are printed on vinyl. The work represents a specific moment in time, as the flowers used in the images were picked from Munson's own garden in upstate New York.

"To make these mandala images, I use a scanner like a large-format camera," said Munson. "I lay flowers directly onto it, allowing pollen and other flower stuff to fall onto the glass and become part of the image. When the high-resolution scans are enlarged, amazing details and natural structures emerge. Every flower mandala is unique to a moment in time and represents what is in bloom on the day I made it."

Munson began creating flower images in 2002. While walking in her garden, she imagined flower mandalas reminiscent of suzani textiles from Uzbekistan and garlands of fresh blossoms she saw in her travels in Asia. She arranged flowers using the mandala, the circular form that represents the universe in Eastern religions, in combinations of color and form that exaggerate the vibrancy of both.

MTA Arts & Design's lightbox project exhibits photography at four locations within the transit system:  42 St-Bryant Park station,  Grand Central-42 St,  Atlantic Av-Barclays Ctr and  Bowling Green. New artworks are installed annually at each location.

ABOUT MTA ARTS & Design

MTA Arts & Design, formerly known as MTA Arts for Transit & Urban design, encourages the use of mass transit in the metropolitan New York area by providing visual and performing arts in the transit environment. The permanent art program is one of the largest and most diverse collections of site-specific public art in the world, with more than 300 works by world-famous, mid-career and emerging artists. Arts & Design also produces graphic art, photography installations and live musical performances in stations, and relaunched the Poetry in Motion program in collaboration with the Poetry Society of America. Arts & Design serves more than 8 million people who ride MTA subways and commuter trains daily and strives to create meaningful connections between sites, neighborhoods, and people. For more information, please visit mta.info/art.



"May Apples," Portia Munson, 2013