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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

New York's Underground Art Museum

Monacelli Press Publishes Definitive Compendium of Artworks Throughout the MTA

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced that Monacelli Press is set to publish *New York's Underground Art Museum*, a comprehensive book by Sandra Bloodworth and William Ayres with 264 pages in full color and 300 images that detail the stories behind the 250 permanent works of art throughout New York's transportation network.

"Traveling from home to work, and back again, day after day is a necessity," actor Stanley Tucci writes in the book's foreword. "To do so in an environment that incorporates art can make the usual unusual, the ordinary – more than that – the boring, stimulating, and what is ugly ... maybe beautiful."

"It is this very thing to which MTA Arts & Design has devoted nearly thirty years," he continues. "The program has rescued and recreated artisanal works of the past and created new works of art for the future. This visual feast, through which we are fortunate enough to move, is as ambitious as anything the WPA achieved seventy-some years ago."

The book, to be published on October 28, is an updated companion to *Along the Way* by the same authors, which was published by Monacelli Press in 2006. The new edition includes information about nearly 100 works of art that have been installed over the past eight years. Included in New York's Underground Art Museum are works of art that have been commissioned but not yet installed, for example, those that will be unveiled in the new stations of the Second Avenue Subway, at Fulton Center, and the extension of the Line.

In recent years, entire sections of subway lines encompassing multiple stations have been graced with new works of art, including the Line in Brooklyn (10 stations with new works), the Line in Queens (7 stations), and the Line in the Bronx (4 stations).

"Being able to enjoy our expanding collection of artworks is consistently ranked by customers as a high point in their experience with us," said MTA Chairman Thomas F. Prendergast. "If you want to learn a little bit more about the artwork you see when you ride with the MTA, this book is the definitive guide with information that will give you insights and answers about what you see on your commute."

The book features well received new artworks created by 100 artists, including Xenobia Bailey, James Carpenter, Ellen Harvey, Sol LeWitt, Jason Middlebrook, Odili Donald Odita, Duke Riley, Holly Sears, Jean Shin, Alyson Shotz, Shinique Smith, Doug and Mike Starn, and Allan and Ellen Wexler.

As an example of how the book tells the story of the evolving MTA network, it relates how in 2012, at the important new transfer point between the uptown train and the trains, MTA Arts & Design installed *Hive* (Bleecker Street) by Leo Villareal. The artwork is a web of ceiling-mounted colorful LED lights pulsing and changing color as subway passengers move through the station below. "Electronic code is Villareal's medium, and he cleverly exploits it, understanding the brain's need to recognize patterns and engaging each of us to arrive at a unique meaning," the book reads. "As passengers stand on the platform, waiting for the train, they are engaged by the work as they look for patterns within the random progression of light."

MTA Arts & Design, previously known as MTA Arts for Transit & Urban Design, has commissioned 250 works of permanent artwork that adorn stations of the New York City Subway, the Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad. Additional works are located elsewhere in the MTA's network, including the Hugh L. Carey Tunnel and New York City Transit's newly built Mother Clara Hale Bus Depot in Harlem.

The arts program was begun in the mid-1980s to invite customers back into what was then viewed as a decaying subway system, and to provide a sense of security and warmth, and to enliven and beautify stations. As part of the nationwide "percent for art" movement, the MTA sets aside one percent of the capital budget to create and install artwork when stations are renovated or facilities are built. Much of the focus over the past eight years has been in the subway stations in the outer boroughs of New York City.

New York's Underground Art Museum is available at the New York Transit Museum store, online at Amazon.com, BN.com, or wherever books are sold.

Information on the MTA's arts programs is available online at mta.info/art/. To find turn-by-turn directions to each work of art featured in New York's Underground Art Museum, one can download [the free Meridian app](#) for Android or iPhone.

About the Authors

- **Sandra Bloodworth** is director of MTA Arts & Design at the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. She received the Fund for the City of New York's 2005 Sloan Public Service Award in recognition of her work in the field of public art.

- **William Ayres** is an independent curator specializing in 19th- and 20th-century American art and editor of *19th Century*, the magazine of the Victorian Society in America.



Hive at Bleecker Street



Fulton Center