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Press Release

July 7, 2014

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Arts for Transit Recognized for Grand Central Centennial Events

2 Performance Art Projects in Grand Central Among Best Public Art in US, Canada

MTA Arts for Transit & Urban Design has been honored by Americans for the Arts' 2014 Year in Review for two special events commemorating last year's centennial of Grand Central Terminal. Americans for the Arts, a nonprofit foundation, is the only organization that recognizes outstanding public art in the United States and Canada.

The panel of judges appointed by Americans for the Arts chose two performance art projects commissioned by MTA Arts for Transit for inclusion among 37 outstanding public art projects completed in 2013. The two MTA Arts for Transit projects were "Grand Central Lights" and HEARD-NY.

This is the third consecutive year that the program has recognized MTA Arts for Transit for its work producing trailblazing public art and performances for New York City's transit system.

"The Grand Central Centennial provided a unique and historic opportunity to present new, engaging performance work. Artists Charlie Todd with his group Improv Everywhere and Nick Cave with HEARD-NY created site-specific pieces that highlighted Grand Central's magnificent architecture and delighted the thousands of people who make the space one of the busiest transit centers in the world. We are excited to receive this national recognition and grateful for the dedication and enthusiasm of scores of volunteers, staff and others who worked with the artists to make it possible," said Amy Hausmann, deputy director of MTA Arts for Transit.

For "Grand Central Lights," MTA Arts for Transit commissioned Charlie Todd, founder of Improv Everywhere, to create a work to surprise Grand Central visitors on February 1, 2013, during the historic building's centennial party. A group of 135 volunteer performers, equipped with flashlights and camera flashes, performed a choreographed routine in the large arched windows on the building's west façade.

"It was a thrill to get to work with MTA Arts for Transit on the occasion of Grand Central Terminal's 100th birthday. I was so happy our human-powered light show added an unexpected element of surprise to the terminal's big day," Todd said.

The spectacle, which highlighted the architecture and grand atmosphere of the terminal, was filmed, and a YouTube video of the event generated more than 1 million views in its first week. Americans for the Arts judges unanimously selected "Grand Central Lights," saying it was "about the art of making places public."

Judges also selected HEARD-NY, a major installation and performance project by artist Nick Cave presented by MTA and the nonprofit arts organization CREATIVE TIME. For one week in April 2013, Grand Central Terminal was transformed by 30 life-size, multi-colored sculptural horses that periodically broke into choreographed movements to live music. The work featured 60 dancers from the Ailey School accompanied by harpists and drummers. Cave sought to provide a magical, transformative experience for customers, and approximately 15,000 people experienced the performances during the twice-daily, weeklong presentation.

Editors: For photos of the events, visit the MTA Flickr:

<http://bit.ly/1m40X6g>

<http://bit.ly/1nSJMUV>

ABOUT MTA ARTS FOR TRANSIT AND URBAN DESIGN

MTA Arts for Transit and Urban Design encourages the use of mass transit in the metropolitan New York area by providing visual and performing arts in the transit environment. Its permanent art program is one of the largest and most diverse collections of site-specific public art in the world, with more than 300 commissioned works by world-famous, mid-career and emerging artists. AFT also produces award-winning graphic art, photography installations and live musical performances through Music Under New York, and relaunched the Poetry in Motion program in collaboration with the Poetry Society of America. AFT 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 www.mta.info/art.

