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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

New Artwork Installed in Times Square Lightbox

Artist Vik Muniz' "New York City, after George Bellows" Recreates Painting by Bellows

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Arts for Transit & Urban Design announced today the installation of a photographic artwork, "New York City, after George Bellows," by artist Vik Muniz in its outdoor Times Square lightbox. Muniz used torn strips of magazine pages to remake George Bellows' famous 1911 painting of Times Square and then photographed the resulting collage. This post-modern take on Bellows' "New York" melds subject with a technique appropriate for a portrayal of the teeming streets of the city.

When Muniz's photograph was exhibited in 2011 as part of the Pictures of Magazines 2 series, New York Times art critic Roberta Smith wrote: "...It is the larger impression — of quivering, fluttering surfaces, of the surfeit of detail, of painting actively overtaken by collage — that holds the eye. This crazed fusion of matter, hand and lens is always at play in Mr. Muniz's photographs, but until now it has never been achieved in quite such adamant terms."

The large photograph can be seen through 2014 in front of the main entrance to the **N R Q S 1 2 3 7** Times Sq-42 St station at 42nd Street between Broadway and Seventh Avenue. The original painting by Bellows, "New York," is in the collection of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and was last seen in New York City in an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2012.

"For the millions of passersby at the 'Crossroads of the World,' this is a rare opportunity to be able to see the subject of an artwork and the art itself together. Having Muniz's art in the lightbox lets us bridge the past and the present, and experience both the art and the place at the same time," said Lester Burg, senior manager of MTA Arts for Transit & Urban Design, the group that oversees arts in the transit system.

Muniz has long been fascinated with the properties of photographs and the appropriation of art that is recreated through unconventional methods and materials. He has made a Mona Lisa in chocolate syrup and organized trash pickers in Brazil to arrange cast-off material into monumental artworks, which became the subject of the Academy-award nominated documentary "Wasteland." In a series recently on view at the Sikkema Jenkins gallery in Manhattan, he created seven-foot-high photographs from hundreds of vintage photographs or postcards.

In "New York City, after George Bellows," Muniz uses jewel-like colors for the street scene and the thoughtful selection of torn magazine strips in a painterly technique, imparting a show-stopping quality of constant motion and energy to the faces in the crowds and theater marquees familiar to those who have visited Times Square.

MTA Arts for Transit's Lightbox Project exhibits photography at four locations within the transit system: **B D F M** 42 St-Bryant Park station, **4 5 6 7** Grand Central, **B D N Q R 2 3 4 5** Atlantic Av-Barclays Center and **4 5** Bowling Green. New artworks are installed annually at each location.

For credit purposes:

"New York City, after George Bellows," credit: *Pictures of Magazine, 2011*

Courtesy of Vik Muniz and Sikkema Jenkins & Co. Gallery

About MTA Arts for Transit

MTA Arts for Transit & Urban Design (AFT) 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. AFT also produces graphic art, photography installations and live musical performances in stations, and relaunched the Poetry in Motion program in collaboration the Poetry Society of America. AFT serves more than eight 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.