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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Arts & Design Debuts Stop-Motion Film at Fulton Center

Animation by Red Nose Studio Illustrates Quick History of a Century of Subway Cars

MTA Arts & Design has installed a new stop-motion animated short film by animator and illustrator Chris Sickels at Fulton Center as Arts & Design expands its audience by presenting new, innovative work to MTA customers.

Sickels' "The Blowing Bowler" (2015) depicts a brief history of New York City's subway car designs as a man pursues his wind-tossed bowler hat in a subway station. As the man follows his hat down a tunnel, a progression of subway cars rolls by representing designs from the Beach Pneumatic Transit Company (1870s), Interborough Rapid Transit Company (1910s), a second generation R-10 car (1940s), a R-15 car (1950s), a car from the 1970s State of the Art Car Program (SOAC), and a more recent R-188 subway car (2013).

Sickels, who is also known as Red Nose Studio, was inspired by the New York subway system and the continuous movement of MTA riders. He created a dioramic model from wood, clay, fabric, wire, cardboard and found objects, then painstakingly filmed each motion as a frame of the film. In addition to the main minute-long animation, three shorter loops feature comical cat-and-mouse antics in reference to the round-the-clock operations of the New York City Transit system and a ridership that is always on the move.

"We are all chasing something, maybe the chase is more important than the catch. I encourage folks to enjoy the journey," Sickels said.

The animations air simultaneously for two minutes at the top of each hour on a large-scale 52-channel video installation in the Fulton Center   station complex and in the Dey Street pedestrian tunnel that connects to the  line, where it will be displayed until summer 2016. "The Blowing Bowler" is shown on Fulton Center's 52 screens, which range from 55-inch LCD monitors to street-level LED walls, which measure 31.5 feet by 18.9 feet.

"The clean lines of Fulton Center's soaring contemporary public space are juxtaposed by Red Nose Studio's handmade aesthetic and witty storytelling," said Sandra Bloodworth, director of MTA Arts & Design. "This combination elicits a feeling of traveling through time. We hope that the craftsmanship and playfulness of this charming artwork will spark the imagination of our customers, young and old."

The work is presented by MTA Arts & Design with technical support from the MTA Multimedia team, Westfield Properties and ANC Sports.

To complement the digital installation, Sickels created an art card for Arts & Design's graphics program based on "The Blowing Bowler" animation. The art card is scheduled to be installed in subway cars in early 2016, and copies will be available at New York Transit Museum stores.

About the artist

Chris Sickels is the creative force behind Red Nose Studio. His three-dimensional illustrations are based on sets and puppets made from materials including wire, fabric, cardboard, wood, miniatures and found objects. Red Nose Studio's illustrations have appeared in magazines, books, newspapers, advertisements, animations and character development projects. He wrote and illustrated "The Look Book," and illustrated the children's books "Here Comes The Garbage Barge!" "The Beginner's Guide to Running Away From Home," and "The Secret Subway," the story of Alfred Ely Beach's pneumatic subway, to be released in March 2016. His recent animated short, "Creosote," won a silver medal from The Society of Illustrators 58, and was screened at film festivals such as Future Film Festival, LIAF 2015: Late Night Bizarre, and GIRAF 2015 Indie Animation Mixtape Side B.

About MTA Arts & Design

MTA Arts & Design encourages the use of mass transit in the metropolitan New York area by providing visual and performing arts in the transit environment. In November 2014, Arts & Design launched an award-winning digital arts program that features works of contemporary new media artists throughout MTA's digital media network. Its Percent for Art program is one of the largest and most diverse collections of site-specific public art in the world, with more than 266 works by world-famous, mid-career and emerging artists. Arts & Design produces photography installations as well as graphic arts and live musical performances in stations, and the Poetry in Motion program in collaboration with the Poetry Society of America. It 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.



Screenshot from "The Blowing Bowler" (2015)