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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Arts & Design Debuts Marble Mosaic at WTC Cortlandt 1 Subway Station

“CHORUS” by Ann Hamilton Offers Repose in New Station at World Trade Center

MTA Arts & Design today unveiled a new marble mosaic spanning both platforms of the new WTC Cortlandt 1 subway station, just steps away from Ground Zero.

The white, monochromatic mosaic by the renowned multimedia artist Ann Hamilton was commissioned by MTA Arts & Design as part of the construction of the new WTC Cortlandt station, which is located below street level within the World Trade Center site. The new station was built within the footprint of the Cortlandt St 1 station, which was destroyed in the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Hamilton’s wall installation, titled “CHORUS,” spans a total of 4,350 square feet and is integrated into the architectural design of the station and the World Trade Center Transportation Hub to which it is connected. Small marble tesserae form a white-on-white surface and spell out text from the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The tactile surface invites subway riders to touch the text as they read the words, creating meaningful personal encounters meant to acknowledge the civic ideals and aspirations of humanity and society.

“Artists have the extraordinary ability to use their vision and creative process to create deeply meaningful civic places. Ann Hamilton creates a place that speaks to our highest ideals,” said Sandra Bloodworth, Director of MTA Arts & Design. “The woven text of her tactile walls moves us through the WTC Cortlandt station, acknowledging its historic significance and embracing the rights embodied in universally shared declarations.”

Ann Hamilton, a MacArthur and a Guggenheim fellow, is internationally recognized for her large-scale multimedia installations. She trained in textile design at the University of Kansas, and received a master of fine arts from Yale University. Noted for their dense accumulation of materials, her ephemeral environments create immersive experiences that respond to the architectural presence and social history of their sites. In 2015, Hamilton was honored with the National Medal of Arts, the highest award given to artists by the U.S. government.

A panel of arts professionals convened by MTA Arts & Design unanimously selected Hamilton in July 2014. Her design gave context to the station’s place physically and historically, and provided calm in an emotionally charged space, according to the selection committee that included Paola Antonelli, senior curator in the Department of Architecture and Design of The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), and Anita Contini, former director of the Memorial and Cultural Programs for the Downtown Development Corporation and the World Trade Center site. Hamilton’s design was supported by MTA officials and community representatives, including Alice M. Greenwald, director of the 9/11 Memorial Museum; Jessica Lappin, Director of Alliance for Downtown New York, and Catherine McVay Hughes, the chairwoman of Manhattan Community Board 1 at the time.

“Culture is built upon and with the words and languages of people, their aural and written documents, collectively produced and shared in common,” said Ann Hamilton. “‘CHORUS’ is a testimony to the ideas and ideals these national and international documents embody and demonstrate.”

“These words celebrate New York’s long history of standing up for human rights and aspirations,” said Catherine McVay Hughes, former chairwoman of Manhattan Community Board 1. “The World Trade Center rising around it reminds that these ideas have a great future.”

The opening of the WTC Cortlandt subway station represents the completion of the remaining few major infrastructure projects in the World Trade Center site and the restoration of Lower Manhattan as a vibrant transit and commercial center. Hamilton’s installation joins a large number of public artworks and civic spaces that have been commissioned or constructed in the wake of 9/11, including the September 11 Memorial Museum near the entrance of the WTC Cortlandt subway station.

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. Its permanent Percent for Art program is one of the world’s largest and most diverse collections of site-specific public art in transportation, with over 300 site-specific commissions by world-famous, mid-career and emerging artists. Arts & Design produces photography installations, digital art, 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.

