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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

Vignelli Subway Map Inspires New MTA Arts & Design Graphic Arts Poster

Illustrator Gina Triplett's Blooming Flower Celebrates Folk Art, New York's Gardens

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) has released a new graphic arts poster commissioned by MTA Arts & Design that is inspired by a historical moment in New York City Transit history: Massimo Vignelli's 1972 map of the subway system.

"The Growing City," by illustrator Gina Triplett, features a giant fluorescent flower blooming with patterned petals reminiscent of Vignelli's subway lines and of American folk art and color. The bold imagery of "The Growing City" also honors the nearly 600 community gardens throughout New York City. "Gina's colorful, graphic work celebrates the connection that the subway creates between people and communities with its use of Vignelli's iconic subway map," said MTA Arts & Design Deputy Director Amy Hausmann. "We love imagining the city as a giant flower, growing bigger and more beautiful as we make the city greener through our collective work in hundreds of community gardens across the boroughs and by using mass transit."

MTA Arts & Design commissions five to six artists each year to create transit-related graphic art for posters installed in subway stations and inside subway cars. The posters are seen by billions of New York City Transit customers, providing illustrators and artists an opportunity to reach a broad audience while introducing the public to visionaries who create engaging visual art. "The Growing City" can now be viewed in hundreds of subway stations.

Triplett as an artist enjoys the challenges and rewards of developing imagery for various objects, surfaces and environments. This has led to her work appearing on sneakers, snowboards, bedsheets, books, and wine bottles for clients that include Whole Foods Market, Target, Chronicle Books and The New York Times. For "The Growing City," she sought to link a personal fascination with American folk art and its hand-drawn qualities with the hard machinery of the subway system and the softness of Mother Nature through the city's community gardens.

"I've long been fascinated by the way in which American folk art synthesizes the seemingly disparate elements of decoration, geometric simplicity, and the humanistic imperfections of hand rendering," Triplett said. "I saw an opportunity to use the visual language of folk art to connect the modern and mechanical transit system to the natural beauty of the city's public garden spaces. Specifically, the train lines reference those used in Massimo Vignelli's high modernist version of the subway map, and the floral drawing is in the manner of early American folk art. These are all rendered by my hand, which imbues both natural and mechanical spaces with the presence of humanity. In essence, this is the subway rider who uses and visits these spaces."

"Our customers respond to the art in our graphic arts program with delight. Gina Triplett's 'The Growing City' does just that; it will bring a smile to our customers' faces and remind us that art improves our journey," said Lydia Bradshaw, manager of the graphic arts program.

MTA Arts & Design established the graphic arts poster program in 1991 and has since received numerous awards and recognition nationally and internationally. Artists who have created award-winning graphics for the program include Peter Sis, Sophie Blackall, Marcos Chin, R. Gregory Christie, Carlo Stanga, Red Nose Studio, Ashley Bryan, William Low, Jillian Tamaki, Frank Viva, Pop Chart Lab, Jennifer Judd-McGee, Yan Nascimbene, Yuko Shimizu and Victo Ngai.

The posters are available for sale at New York Transit Museum stores. Revenue from poster sales support the museum's educational and exhibition programs.

About MTA Arts & Design

MTA Arts & Design (A&D) encourages the use of mass transit in the metropolitan New York area by providing visual and performing arts throughout the transit system. The Percent for Art program is one of the largest and most diverse collections of public art in the world, with more than 300 commissioned works by accomplished, mid-career and emerging artists. A&D also produces award-winning graphic art, photography installations, digital art, Music Under New York, Poetry in Motion, special events and more. A&D serves more than 8.7 million people who ride Metropolitan Transportation Authority buses, subways and commuter railroads daily, and strives to create meaningful connections between sites, neighborhoods, and people through artwork and performances that engage our diverse ridership. Visit mta.info/art.



