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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

Children's Book Author, Illustrator Ashley Bryan Creates Latest Graphics Poster for MTA Arts & Design

Bronx-Born Artist's Subway Poster Celebrates Music, Voices of His Hometown

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced the release of a new MTA Arts & Design graphics arts poster, titled "New York Voices," by artist and children's book author Ashley Bryan that will be installed in hundreds of subway stations and cars throughout the New York City Transit (NYCT) system.

The colorful poster depicts two groups of singers with their arms linked, mouths opened in mid-song. It is based on an original painting by Bryan, who said he was celebrating the variety of voices that create the soundtrack of New York City.

"The spirit of the voice harmonizes the city. It is this character of raising the voice in song which adds color to the life of all New Yorkers," Bryan said.

MTA Arts & Design commissions five to six artists each year to create transit-related graphic art for posters installed on platform and mezzanine walls of subway stations and for art cards displayed inside subway cars. The posters are seen by millions of NYCT customers, providing illustrators and artists an opportunity to reach a broad audience while introducing the public to visionaries who create engaging visual art.

"We are honored to work with the celebrated artist Ashley Bryan and to share his work with his hometown. He was inspired by the joyful music of the city and created an image of a choral group coming together to sing. His work celebrates the millions of voices in our great city and the harmony we can achieve when we raise our voices together," said MTA Arts & Design Deputy Director Amy Hausmann.

Bryan was born and raised in the Bronx in 1923. He studied art at Cooper Union until he was drafted into a segregated unit during World War II, but he continued to draw even on the beaches of Normandy. He returned to New York to finish his degree and earned a second degree in philosophy at Columbia University. He later went to Europe on a Fulbright scholarship.

Bryan taught for several years, at the Dalton School in Manhattan, Queens College and Dartmouth College, where he retired as professor emeritus in 1988. He also wrote and illustrated numerous children's books of African and African-American stories, becoming a pioneer in the genre. In 2013, he was honored as a Literary Lion by the New York Public Library.

Although he has lived on an island off the Maine coast for the past 50 years, New York remains a vital part of him.

"At every moment I strive for connection. If you are in the moment, you are stretching out to reach that which you recognize in others. That's my secret," Bryan said.

MTA Arts & Design established the graphic arts poster program in 1991 and has since received awards and recognition nationally and internationally, most recently from organizations such as American Public Transportation Association, The Society of Illustrators and American Illustration. Artists who have created award-winning graphics for the program include Peter Sis, Sophie Blackall, Marcos Chin, R. Gregory Christie, Carlo Stanga, William Low, Raul Colon, 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.

"The graphics arts program is extremely popular with transit customers. The arts bring an element of fun and visual interest to the daily journey. We expect 'New York Voices' to be very popular," said MTA Arts & Design Manager Lydia Bradshaw, who coordinates the program.

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. The permanent art program is one of the largest and most diverse collections of public art in the world, with more than 300 commissioned works by well-known, mid-career and emerging artists including Jacob Lawrence, Nancy Spero, Romare Bearden, Milton Glaser, Elizabeth Murray, Roy Lichtenstein, Al Held, Faith Ringgold and new projects by Xenobia Bailey, Chuck Close, Vik Muniz, and Sarah Sze. Arts & Design produces graphic posters, photography installations, live musical performances, the Poetry in Motion program and other special events. It serves more than 2.6 billion people who ride MTA subways and trains each year and strives to create meaningful connections between sites, neighborhoods, and people. To learn more, visit www.mta.info/art.

