



Arts & Design

Media Announcement

Collection of Six New Poster and Art Card Commissions Arrive in Subway Cars and Stations



Artworks (top to bottom by column): *Turtle Island Connections* (2023) © Dennis RedMoon Darkeem; *Catch a Line* (2023) © Erin K. Robinson; *NYC Superhero* (2023) © Yevgenia Nayberg; *Year of the Dragon* (2023) © Taili Wu; *The underground helps the garden 1* (2023) © Marcel Dzama; *The underground helps the garden 2* (2023) © Marcel Dzama. All artworks commissioned by MTA Arts & Design.

(NEW YORK, NY — February 20, 2024) **MTA Arts & Design** announces a collection of six new graphic artworks commissioned for display within the transportation system. Since 1991, artists have been engaged to create posters and art cards depicting transit-related imagery. Original artworks by Dennis RedMoon Darkeem, Marcel Dzama, Yevgenia Nayberg, Erin K. Robinson, and Taili Wu were rendered through various techniques and mediums including pencil, paint, ink, ceramic, photography, and digitally. The colorful and richly detailed artworks—two posters and four art cards—depict a coffee-fueled superhero, a flying dragon, and a subway car filled with exotic animals. Reflecting the distinctive styles of each artist, the compositions touch on themes of New York City's indigenous history, superpowers, the environment, and the Chinese zodiac Year of the Dragon. For

a duration of roughly six months or longer, the art cards are posted inside subway cars, and the posters are installed at select locations on station platforms and mezzanines. The installation began in January 2024 and will be rolled out throughout the year.

“Like so many transit riders, we look forward annually to the debut of these delightful new works,” **said MTA Arts & Design Director Sandra Bloodworth.** “The temporary artworks produced through our award-winning Poster Program become an imaginative backdrop to our commute for the year. They enhance the transit experience for the millions of riders daily. Available for sale at the New York Transit Museum, it’s no surprise that they quickly become collector’s items for transit buffs and contemporary art fans alike.”

Posters

Direct Connection on Turtle Island by **Dennis RedMoon Darkeem**, weaves together past and present with reference to Indigenous history and cultural symbolism, emphasizing city dwellers’ connection to the natural environment. Inspired by old maps, Darkeem added a decorative border and figures at the top left and right corners. A modern cityscape, complete with the subway, is situated on the shell of a turtle, symbolic of creation stories about the origin of the Earth and the human relationship to it. There is a bright sun radiating above, with the dark hues of a night sky at the bottom. Wampum and the medicine wheel are also shown, connecting to changing seasons, healing, and water. The lines of the subway map appear as ripples within the cerulean water, representing the importance of transportation to the city.

Darkeem is a Bronx artist, educator, community, and cultural practitioner. He uses installations, photography, sculpture, drawing, painting, sound, and performance as vessels to convey and balance ideas of transformation, generation, and honor. He has exhibited locally and nationally and received awards and fellowships from the Bronx Council of the Arts, Bronx Museum, the Laundromat Project, and others. He holds a BA and MFA from Pratt Institute.

Catch a Line by **Erin K. Robinson**, celebrates travel by subway and the iconic graphic design of the New York City subway map. The colorful collage shows a network of bold subway lines and street grids set within a green background reflective of the city’s lively parks and green spaces. The central figure, representative of a typical commuter, is shown juggling giant subway symbols, playfully exploring potential travel routes, transfers, and connections. *Catch a Line* highlights not just the importance of transit to daily life but the opportunities for play and adventure sparked along the way.

Robinson is an Emmy-nominated illustrator in the news and documentary category. Her illustrations have been featured in numerous children’s books, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*, among others. The illustrator splits her time between Nairobi, NYC and Washington, DC.

Art Cards

The underground helps the garden 1 and *The underground helps the garden 2* by **Marcel Dzama** both offer a fantastical depiction of flora and fauna filling a subway car. Dzama’s composition began as a pencil drawing that was overlaid with lines in ink, then painted to completion. The artwork was designed to the standard dimensions of an art card and for a second dimension to fit frames within the new subway cars. Subway riders that appear in the artwork imagery include Mother Earth holding the Earth in her hand, an Alice figure next to a white rabbit, a musician, and other typical commuters who don’t seem to notice anything unusual about the commute. Birds, bears, squirrels, and rabbits appear amongst them, surrounded by lush greenery. With an air of magical realism, the works speak to the importance of preserving the environment and the beneficial use of mass transit.

Dzama is a Brooklyn-based artist, born in Winnipeg, Canada. He has exhibited widely in solo and group presentations throughout the United States and abroad. Work by the artist is held in museum collections worldwide, including the Dallas Museum of Art; Musée d'art Contemporain de Montréal; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate, London; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; and the Vancouver Art Gallery. The artist is represented by David Zwirner.

NYC Superhero by **Yevgenia Nayberg**, features an imagined transit superhero in flight, illustrating how New York's vast transportation system enables riders to metaphorically fly across the city. The superhero dons a cape patterned with subway symbols and travels with a cup of steaming coffee, allowing commuters to envision themselves as heroes as they set off on their journeys to work, school, and other destinations. The background shows the New York City skyline with various Manhattan buildings and the subway traveling under a crescent moon near Coney Island's Ferris wheel. The artist created a mixed media work using colored pencils and acrylic paint, then completed it digitally.

Nayberg was born in Kyiv, Ukraine, and lives in New York City. She is an author/illustrator, painter, and stage designer. Her illustrations have appeared in magazines and picture books, and on theatre posters, music albums, and book covers; her paintings, drawings, and illustrations are held in private collections worldwide. Nayberg has received multiple awards for her picture book illustrations and as an author. Yevgenia Nayberg works with illustration agency, Morgan Gaynin.

Year of the Dragon by **Taili Wu**, references the subway and other New York City highlights, in a scene that celebrates the Year of the Dragon. The zodiac animal symbolizes growth, expansion, and energy. The subway dragon is depicted moving across the city, set against a sunshine-yellow background. The dragon's body is made up of with sculptural references to New York City, including the Statue of Liberty, Central Park, cultural institutions, foods, and entertainment. Wu created the artwork using hand-sculpted ceramic pieces, which she arranged, photographed, and manipulated digitally.

Wu is a stop-motion artist, illustrator, and educator. Born in Taiwan, the former New York City resident now lives in Rhinebeck, NY. Wu, a.k.a. Monster Shaper, has a love of making creatures and puppets. She received an MFA from the School of Visual Arts in computer art and her BFA from Taipei Municipal University of Education in art education and education. She is currently a faculty member at the School of Visual Arts.

About MTA Arts & Design (A&D)

MTA Arts & Design encourages the use of public transportation by providing visual and performing arts in the metropolitan New York area. The Percent for Art program is one of the largest and most diverse collections of site-specific public art in the world, with nearly 400 commissions by world-famous, mid-career and emerging artists. Arts & Design produces Posters, Digital Art, Photography exhibitions, as well as live musical performances in stations through its Music Under New York (MUSIC) program, and the Poetry in Motion program in collaboration with the Poetry Society of America. It serves the millions of people who rely upon MTA subways and commuter trains and strives to create meaningful connections between sites, neighborhoods, and people.

About the Poster Program

Through MTA Arts & Design's Poster Program, approximately five to six artists are commissioned each year to create transit-related artworks for reproduction into posters and art cards for display within the system. The program, now more than 30 years in practice, supports MTA A&D's mission to enliven the transit experience and promote mass transit. The Poster Program was initiated in 1991 to highlight neighborhood destinations and enhance the stations' environment, while the Art Card Program was modelled after the success of the Posters in 1999.

MTA Arts & Design's popular posters have received various awards and recognition nationally and internationally; most recently from organizations such as the Society of Illustrators/Museum of Illustration and American Illustration as well as past recognition through the American Public Transportation Association.

Posters and Art Cards are available for sale at New York Transit Museum stores. The Transit Museum Stores support the exhibition and educational programming of the New York Transit Museum. Stores are located in the Museum's main subway station home in Downtown Brooklyn, at the Museum's Gallery Annex and Store at Grand Central Terminal and online.

PRESS CONTACT

MTA Press Office
(212) 878-7440

For email inquiries:
arts@mtahq.org

CONNECT

Instagram: @mtaartsdesign
Twitter: @MTAArtsDesign
Facebook: @MTAArtsDesign