



## Media Announcement

### New Digital Art by LaJuné McMillian Creates a Cosmic Space in Fulton Center



*The Portal's Keeper* (2024) © LaJuné McMillian, NYCT Fulton Center. Commissioned by MTA Arts & Design. Image: Courtesy of the artist.

(NEW YORK, NY — July 16, 2024) MTA Arts & Design is pleased to announce a new digital art commission by artist LaJuné McMillian, now on view at the Fulton Transit Center in Lower Manhattan. *The Portal's Keeper* is a mesmerizing 52-channel installation that depicts the artist's avatars diving into an alternate reality through movement and mediation. The artwork is displayed for two minutes at the top of every hour across screens throughout Fulton Center and the Dey Street pedestrian passage, which connects ten New York City Transit lines and the World Trade Center PATH station.

"McMillian's work is sure to leave a mark on riders, just like the MTA Arts & Design piece that inspired them," said **Sandra Bloodworth, Director, MTA Arts & Design**. "The artist's story is a testament to the impact of art in stations. This meditative installation calms the busy transit complex and creates an unexpected space for introspection."

As a young commuter, McMillian encountered *The Commuter's Lament/A Close Shave*, an artwork by Norman B Colp, installed in the corridor from 42 St-Port Authority Bus Terminal to Times Square station. This poetic, text-based piece commissioned by MTA Arts & Design in 1991 made a lasting impression on McMillian, driving their desire to create work for the public realm and in particular for the chance encounter of riders rushing through the space.

Created using 3D modeling software and Unreal Engine, the artwork begins with a jewel-toned portal unfurling into an enveloping world of clouds, fractals, and water. Two embodiments of McMillian's avatar manifest within the nebulous transmutation, gazing directly out to passersby. Their spirit avatar twists among cables in the A/C mezzanine screens, while their personal avatar materializes floating in the universe unburdened by the laws of gravity. McMillian utilized motion capture software to record their own improvisational, cathartic movement for the digital art piece while asking "How would you move through the world if no limitations were placed on you?"



*The Portal's Keeper* (2024) © LaJuné McMillian, NYCT Fulton Center. Commissioned by MTA Arts & Design. Photo: MTA Arts & Design.

“My artwork for Fulton Center is a reminder that movement does not only represent our individual experiences, but it also represents our collective memory, transcending space, time and oppressive social structures,” said **LaJuné McMillian**. “Movement allows us to connect to each other, our ancestors, our deepest selves, and gives us space to communicate to our future. Movement is a technology, holding the stories of our existence globally.”

*The Portal's Keeper* offers riders a place to contemplate the possibilities of the body. The gentle moves of McMillian's young avatar in the fractal space capture a beauty and freedom to be cherished. The digital artwork is part of a larger body of work by McMillian including performances and extended reality installations exploring themes of embodiment, inner child healing, spirituality, and liberation.

The Fulton Center digital network synchronizes 51 dynamic screens and one static display, totaling more than 2,100 square feet. The MTA Arts & Design Digital Art program is presented with technical support from Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield and ANC Sports.

## **ABOUT LAJUNE MCMILLIAN**

LaJuné McMillian is a multidisciplinary artist and educator creating art that integrates performance, extended reality, and physical computing to question our contemporary forms of communication. They are passionate about discovering, learning, manifesting, and stewarding spaces for liberated Black Realities and the Black Imagination. McMillian has had the opportunity to show and speak about their work at National Sawdust, Tribeca Film Festival, Times Square, and Brooklyn Public Library. McMillian was previously the Director of Skating at Figure Skating in Harlem, where they integrated STEAM and Figure Skating to teach girls of color about movement and technology. They have continued their research on Blackness, movement, and technology during residencies and fellowships at Onassis ONX, The Jerome Hill Artist Fellowship, Eyebeam, Pioneer Works, NYU ITP, Barbarian Group, and Barnard College.

## **ABOUT MTA ARTS & DESIGN**

MTA Arts & Design encourages the use of public transportation by providing visual and performing arts in the metropolitan New York area. The Digital Art program features works of contemporary new media artists at Fulton Center and Grand Central Madison LIRR terminal. The Percent for Art program is one of the largest and most diverse collections of site-specific public art in the world, with more than 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.

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