

Service Changes

on the C/E 23rd St Uptown Platform

an exhibition of art works by and in collaboration with the New York City Metropolitan Transit Authority

Service Changes presents a collection of works by and in collaboration with MTA employees and anonymous artists, situated within a space often criticized for its blank walls, dirty spaces, and downtrodden appearance. Responding to eroding notions of authorship and a renewed interest in public spaces, this exhibition reassesses the purpose of art, casual beauty, and graffiti in examining the reappropriation of the private experience in these heavily-trafficked interactive spaces.

Development of this visionary exhibition began in 1932, taking a full 76 years to come to fruition in its current form, though the exhibition remains only a fleeting snapshot of the continuing evolution of this important incubator of creativity. Many commuters incorrectly believe the almost 500 New York City subway platforms to be featureless, bland spaces, when they are in fact brimming with creative life, filled with art works and collaborations by and with the MTA and the thousands of artists who add to the dialogue while waiting for trains.

The MTA is to be commended for its generosity with its own exhibition space, as it is not only committed to leaving its doors open to patrons all day and every day, but to enabling any artist to add to its on-going exhibition. While some of the exhibited works are permanent installations by the MTA, many are collaborations resulting from the Authority's own progressive policy that encourages and enables these creative developments by refraining from immediately interrupting or removing artists' contributions, a marked departure from subway authority policies around the world. This policy has sparked countless collaborations, encouraging thousands of waiting commuters to interact with, add to, and become a part of the platforms on which they collectively experience the city.

As a result, the exhibited artists have had an extraordinary impact on the art world, not only because of their monumental vision, but simply because of the sheer number of visitors the exhibition space receives every day. A few of these important works are noted here:



The Arriving and Departing Of the Train (1932)

Since its inaugural performance in 1932, an untold number of people have become participants of this work by entering or leaving trains labeled with a "C" or "E". The piece has since become an integral part of life in west Manhattan, where many cannot imagine life without the ritual of this piece's daily involvement in their routine. The periodic arrival and departure of the "C Trains" and "E Trains", as they're known colloquially, was an inspiration for Martin Creed's "Work No. 850" in which a runner sprints through the Tate every 30 seconds.



Yellow Square on Bathroom Door (2007)

The highly-acclaimed 2002 documentary *Subconscious Art of Graffiti Removal* took as its subject the increasing number of unintentional public art pieces being funded by the city of Portland as workers covered the less desirable, unauthorized graffiti, leaving in its stead works comparable to Mark Rothko, Kazimir Malevich and Robert Rauschenberg. This work follows in the tradition of these masters, and the artists in Portland, supplanting unwanted graffiti with squares of surprising beauty.



Self-Referential Art (2008)

Long a standard in graffitiic rebellion, the sticker allows for a quick, nearly undetectable modifications to one's surroundings. Where spraypaint is too noticeable, and carries with it a stiffer fine due to cleaning costs, a sticker provides the same content, with less likelihood of arrest. This artist furthers this evolution from spray to stick with a sticker of spraying. This meta piece encompasses a revolution in graffiti, while saying true to the roots of the genre.

The Service Changes gallery would like to thank the New York City Metropolitan Transit Authority for their kind hosting and collaboration, and their vision in becoming a creative space for anonymous artists.

Please visit the gallery again soon to observe the continuing evolution of these works.