

# PRESS RELEASE

## THE WHITNEY MUSEUM AND THE MTA PARTNER TO BRING ART ACTIVITIES AND THE LANDMARK WHITNEY BIENNIAL DIRECTLY TO RIDERS



Through “Whitney On The Rails,” the Museum will offer all-ages artmaking activities in subway stations and at cultural organizations easily accessible by public transportation all summer.

This partnership also involves the Whitney installing, in select stations, large-scale reproductions of artworks tied to its landmark exhibition series the Whitney Biennial.

**New York, NY, May 31, 2024** —The Whitney Museum of American Art is going “on the rails” this summer, partnering with the MTA to bring art, artmaking, and the legacy of the Whitney Biennial directly to New Yorkers in select subway stations.

As part of ongoing efforts to connect more New Yorkers to contemporary American art, the Whitney is spotlighting its landmark exhibition series, the Whitney Biennial—a survey of what’s

new in contemporary American art, held every two years, and a part of the New York City cultural landscape since 1932—in the busiest subway system in the world.

The MTA is a perfect partner: through its innovative Arts & Design program, the MTA has connected New Yorkers to art for decades. To date, MTA Arts & Design has commissioned nearly 400 permanent artworks, including 54 by artists who have been featured in the Whitney Biennial.

The [2024 Whitney Biennial, currently on view at the Museum at 99 Gansevoort Street \(closest to the ACE lines and 14th Street station\) until August 11.](#)

[Images available for download can be found here.](#)

The multi-pronged partnership with the MTA includes:

- Large-scale vinyl installations featuring artworks by former and current Whitney Biennial artists on the facades of former retail spaces on three subway station platforms—West Fourth Street, Jay Street, and Fordham Road. Artists featured include [Roy Lichtenstein](#), [Jane Dickson](#), [Dawoud Bey](#), [Alex Katz](#), and [Eamon Ore-Giron](#), all of whom have connections to New York City and were featured in at least one Biennial (Ore-Giron’s work is currently on view in the 2024 Whitney Biennial). The MTA’s vacant retail activation initiative aims to fill vacant former retail spaces in the subway system with creative and non-traditional ideas to make stations more welcoming for customers.
- All-ages art projects held in subway stations and at cultural institutions that are easily accessible by public transportation all summer. **The kick-off will be at Union Square station on June 1 beginning at 10:30 am until 2 pm (or until supplies last).** Whitney educators will facilitate a project inspired by artist [Ruth Asawa](#) (who was in three Whitney Biennials) that involves decorating Whitney tote bags with fruits and vegetables. [See the project here.](#) Other locations set for this summer:
  - New York Botanical Gardens (an institution accessible by subway and Metro-North that inspired Whitney Biennial artist [Joseph Stella](#)) on Saturday, June 29
  - The New York Transit Museum on Saturday, July 27
  - Hudson Yards subway station later this summer
- The creation of a digital map—found at [whitney.org/map](#) and on the Whitney’s Bloomberg Connects guide—that showcases the history of the Biennial in New York City. In addition to many other pins, the map includes every MTA Arts & Design project that features Biennial artists, allowing New Yorkers to explore and discover these works.

The first Whitney Biennial—a survey of contemporary American art—opened on November 22, 1932. The exhibition has been held regularly since, featuring artists such as Edward Hopper, Georgia O’Keeffe, Roy Lichtenstein, Jasper Johns, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Mark Rothko, Andy Warhol, and many others.

“At the Whitney, we are thrilled to partner with the MTA to bring the excitement of the Whitney Biennial to more New Yorkers,” said **I.D. Aruede, Deputy Director of the Whitney Museum of American Art**. “This collaboration is part of the Museum’s ongoing commitment to making the work of contemporary American artists more accessible—as we do with our new free admission initiatives and other projects—and forwards our mission of celebrating artists and creativity.”

“Working with the Whitney and other organizations is an opportunity to build cultural and community connections and enliven stations with special installations and events,” said **MTA Arts & Design Director Sandra Bloodworth**. “Through this partnership and the MTA’s creative approach to revitalizing underutilized retail sites, we’re using the power of art to make these transit spaces welcoming for our riders, which has been central to the Arts & Design team’s mission for nearly 40 years.”

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## PRESS CONTACT

For press materials and image requests, please visit our press site at [whitney.org/press](http://whitney.org/press) or contact:

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## ABOUT THE WHITNEY

The Whitney Museum of American Art, founded in 1930 by the artist and philanthropist Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney (1875–1942), houses the foremost collection of American art from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Mrs. Whitney, an early and ardent supporter of modern American art, nurtured groundbreaking artists when audiences were still largely preoccupied with the Old Masters. From her vision arose the Whitney Museum of American Art, which has been championing the most innovative art of the United States for ninety years. The core of the Whitney’s mission is to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit American art of our time and serve a wide variety of audiences in celebration of the complexity and diversity of art and culture in the United States. Through this mission and a steadfast commitment to artists, the Whitney has long been a powerful force in support of modern and contemporary art and continues to help define what is innovative and influential in American art today.

## **Whitney Museum Land Acknowledgment**

The Whitney is located in Lenapehoking, the ancestral homeland of the Lenape. The name Manhattan comes from their word Mannahatta, meaning “island of many hills.” The Museum’s current site is close to land that was a Lenape fishing and planting site called Saponckanikan (“tobacco field”). The Whitney acknowledges the displacement of this region’s original inhabitants and the Lenape diaspora that exists today.

As a museum of American art in a city with vital and diverse communities of Indigenous people, the Whitney recognizes the historical exclusion of Indigenous artists from its collection and program. The Museum is committed to addressing these erasures and honoring the perspectives of Indigenous artists and communities as we work for a more equitable future. To read more about the Museum’s Land Acknowledgment, [visit the Museum’s website](#).

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## **VISITOR INFORMATION**

The Whitney Museum of American Art is located at 99 Gansevoort Street between Washington and West Streets, New York City. Public hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 10:30 am–6 pm; Friday, 10:30 am–10 pm; and Saturday and Sunday, 10:30 am–6 pm. Closed Tuesday. Visitors eighteen years and under and Whitney members: FREE. The Museum offers FREE admission and special programming for visitors of all ages every Friday evening from 5–10 pm and on the second Sunday of every month.

### **Image credit:**

Photo by Timothy Schenck

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