



Media Announcement

New Artwork by Shervone Neckles at Westchester Sq-East Tremont Av Station Honors Indigenous History



The Land Between Open Water (2024) © Shervone Neckles, NYCT Westchester Sq--East Tremont Av Station (left). Commissioned by MTA Arts & Design. Photos: Jason Mandella.

(NEW YORK, NY — January 15, 2025) MTA Arts & Design is pleased to announce new artwork at the Westchester Sq-East Tremont Av station (6) by artist Shervone Neckles. The work honors the indigenous Siwanoy population, a band of Munsee-speaking Lenape, who lived for centuries in the area now known as The Bronx. *The Land Between Open Water (2024)* refers to Snakapins, a large village inhabited by the Siwanoy until they were displaced by Dutch and English settlers in the mid-1600s. The artwork consists of eight full-height, painted steel panels set within the walls of the station at the platform level.

“The artwork honors the history of The Bronx by celebrating the area’s early native inhabitants,” said **MTA Juliette Michaelson, Interim Director, MTA Arts & Design**. “This message of respect offers present and future generations a tangible way to connect with the past.”

Archeological excavations and research conducted more than a century ago described the findings of earth pits, multi-purpose and multi-layered spaces used for the storage of valuable objects, as well as ground ovens, fireplaces, and burial sites. Earth pits often contained a top

dressing of forest mold, stones, and dark soil.

The idea of home is central to Neckles' artistic practice. Inspired by the construction and craftsmanship of the unearthed contents, *The Land Between Open Water* features hollowed underground spaces resembling nests, as well as a box tortoise shell and antlers used by the Siwanoy to make jewelry, bowls, and other tools. Patterned backgrounds pick up lines and marks from fragments of indigenous earth-ware and pottery. A scene featuring a modern cityscape atop an earth pit is a nod to another artwork at the station: Romare Bearden's faceted glass artwork *City of Glass*, installed in 1993.

"As New Yorkers, we are surrounded by so much rich history," said **artist Shervone Neckles**. "There's something powerful about discovering the history of the place and environment in which we live and work. By knowing and understanding this history, we are reminded that we are also part of it and can decide how we will contribute to it now and in the future."

Westchester Sq-East Tremont Av station received ADA accessibility upgrades that included new elevators, restoration of the historic headhouse, and other improvements including new artwork. The metal panels, fabricated by KC Fabrications, are visible at the platform and from street level. Four images repeat on both the southbound and northbound platforms. Gold accents on both inner and outer sides of the panels enliven the surfaces with a soft glow.



The Land Between Open Water (2024) © Shervone Neckles, NYCT Westchester Sq--East Tremont Av Station. Commissioned by MTA Arts & Design. Photos: Jason Mandella.

ABOUT SHERVONE NECKLES

Shervone Neckles is an interdisciplinary artist who makes embellished textiles, prints, sculptures, installations, and public art to retell Afro-Caribbean histories and mythologies. Her

multimedia installation—an examination of selfhood and memory—was featured in the 2019 Venice Biennale’s Grenada Pavilion. She also recently created an outdoor installation at the Lewis H. Latimer House Museum (Flushing, Queens) to commemorate the life and legacy of the African-American inventor, which has traveled to Downtown Brooklyn (NY), Museum of Science (Boston, MA) Chelsea City Hall (Chelsea, MA) and Library Foundation of Los Angeles (Los Angeles, CA). In 2022-2023, her work was presented in a solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art (Jacksonville, FL). In 2023, she unveiled “The Lunar Portal,” a permanent public art installation at the University of Pittsburgh Mercy Pavilion Plaza (Pittsburgh, PA).

ABOUT MTA ARTS & DESIGN

MTA Arts & Design encourages the use of public transportation by providing visual and performing arts in the New York metropolitan area. 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 Graphic Arts, Digital Art, photographic Lightbox exhibitions, as well as live musical performances in stations through its Music Under New York (MTA 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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