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Sep
28

Zoetrope of the Day: Union Square in Motion

By [Benjamin Kabak](#)



Union Square in Motion is the world's largest digital linear zoetrope (Photo via Joshua Spodek)

I wonder how many transit systems can say they are home to two life-sized zoetropes. While Manhattan-bound riders on the B and Q have long spied [the Masstranscope](#) just east of the Manhattan Bridge, straphangers passing through Union Square can now marvel at the world's largest digital linear zoetrope.

As part of a temporary Arts for Transit installation, the MTA along with a professor from Parsons the New School of Design and his students unveiled "Union Square in Motion" earlier this week. Consisting of abstract and organic images, the scenes move as subway riders walk past the display. The installation is similar to a project designer Joshua Spodek and his team installed in Bryant Park last year.

"When you see two strangers stop to look then start talking to each other, amazed at the art they're seeing in the subway, you realize what art can do to create community and draw people together," Spodek said.

The display is currently housed in a temporarily vacant retail space outside of the fare control area and below the Food Emporium along 14th Street east of Fourth Avenue. "These works of art will be shown in series, so subway riders will get a fresh visual treat each time they walk through the station," Lester Burg, Program Manager for MTA Arts for Transit, explained. For more on the project, check out [Spodek's website](#). I've embedded a behind-the-scenes video of the installation process after the jump.

[Behind the Scenes - Installation](#) from [Union Square in Motion](#) on [Vimeo](#).

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3 Responses to “Zoetrope of the Day: Union Square in Motion”

1. [John Paul N.](#) says:

[September 28, 2011 at 6:44 pm](#)

I have a question (or two): Is the artwork at the 66th Street – Lincoln Center station considered to be a zoetrope? After a lady in a lecture brought it up, the classification has fascinated me.

The second question: Does the MTA plan to install a zoetrope or other artwork in the uptown Bleecker Street station once that section is closed?

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2. [skunky](#) says:

[September 28, 2011 at 8:54 pm](#)

um lots of European subways have advertising in tunnels using zoetropes. sorry to rain on your parade.

[Reply](#)

3. [SpendmoreWastemore](#) says:

[September 29, 2011 at 10:15 am](#)

This sort of stuff is important; in NYC, especially if one uses the subway often one needs a moment’s relief from the endless grime, filth and sundry sensory assault. Anything fun or uplifting poking its nose into the situation earns its keep.

Of course the TWU would rather have two more elevator button-pushers (as seen at 181st on the 1) than anything that benefits the people who pay their inflated incomes.

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