

New School Free Press

THE ONLY WAY TO FIND THE NEW SCHOOL ALL IN ONE PLACE

SEARCH

SEARCH

[About Us](#) [Contact](#) [Submissions](#) [Login](#)

[NEWS](#) | [ARTS & CULTURE](#) | [OPINIONS](#) | [COLUMNS](#) | [EDITORIALS](#) | [BLOGS](#) | [MULTIMEDIA](#) | [EVENT CALENDAR](#) |

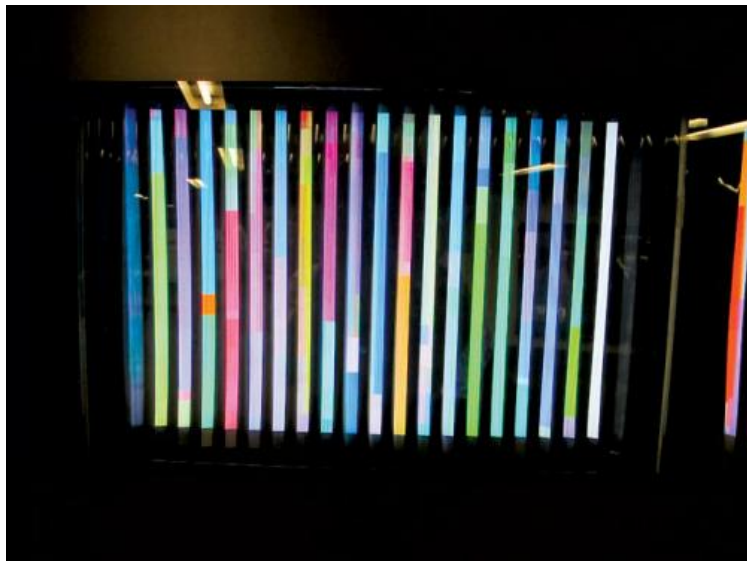
Students Set Union Square in Motion

[Featured Stories](#) [Arts & Culture](#)

ERIC FERNANDEZ

Tuesday, October 4th, 2011

Walk down into the entrance of the Union Square subway station at 14th Street and Fourth Avenue, and you'll see a series of shape- and color-shifting images on a series of screens split up into two displays, spanning 18 feet across the east wall. This interactive multimedia installation, called Union Square in Motion, was designed, produced, and built by a group of Parsons students and alumni.



Union Square in Motion, which held its official opening celebration on September 26, came from the work of BFAs and MFAs in a collaboration studio class within Parsons' arts/media technology and design technology programs. It features screens with embedded images of shapes, animals and colors that fluctuate as onlookers walk by, creating the illusion that the images themselves are moving.

The installation features a series of screens at head level that, as the viewer walks by, project colorful shapes and figures that move and shift. The piece stretches across two planes of the wall of the subway station, making it visible to commuters entering this particular station from either side of 14th street.

"I think the concept behind it is emergence. Most of the images

suggests ideas like growing, decaying, or coming into something," explained Joshua Spodek, a professor of digital technology at Parsons and producer of the installation. Spodek explained that the concept of the piece and its execution came simultaneously. After toying with lots of different kinds of imagery to display on the screens, the concept began to form for Spodek and the students as they built and installed the piece.

The piece came to fruition while the group was experimenting last semester during a collaboration studio class, in which undergraduate and graduate students are teamed up with a sit-in professor to work on specific projects that are highly applicable for work outside of the classroom.

Josefina Santos is the only undergraduate from Parsons involved in production of Union Square in Motion and in the collaboration studio from which the piece stemmed.

"I want people to appreciate the interactivity, but I also want them to recognize the technology. I want it to be clear that it's a digital installation that is interactive," Santos explained.

Santos explained that this installation is special in that they were granted a lot of space in a high-volume location. Also, they did not have to worry about commerciality, which this kind of technology is typically used for.

Sven Travis, associate professor of Media and Design at Parsons, explained that the commercial and artistic distinction is not one the curriculum makes regarding installation pieces like this.

"This installation is an artistic use of the technology; there are many commercial applications as well. One or the other isn't more correct," explained Travis. "Part of what we teach our students is to apply technology to a variety of applications, and to experiment with the possibilities. Most of our graduates will work in the commercial design world at some point in their careers, so the crossover between artistic and commercial becomes pretty fluid for them."

While Union Square in Motion introduces important new technology for the students, it is not anything out of the ordinary for this particular department at Parsons.

"The DT programs have a long history of using unique technology. We have garnered an international reputation for doing exactly that, so I don't see this project as anything radical, but more of an extension of an existing DT culture," continued Travis.

Related Stories

More by this Author



A Haven in Crown Heights



Film Preview: Tupac Biopic



V-Day Die-In

The installation can be found in front of the turnstiles in the Union Square subway station, in the entrance to the east of Fourth Avenue on 14th Street. Arts for Transit will determine how long the piece will be installed based on rider response.

Add new comment

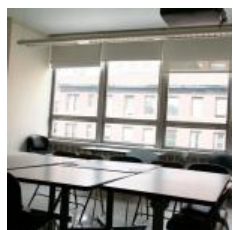
Tweet

Featured Articles

University Announces New Lang Dean

Concluding a lengthy and deliberate search for a new dean at Eugene Lang College, The New School announced the appointment of Stephanie Browner, who has most recently served as academic vice president and dean of the faculty at Berea College in Kentucky, to lead the university's liberal arts

School's out for Summer!



One Last Chance to Catch the Old Coney Island



Reflecting on the Loss of a Photojournalist and Friend

I never thought Chris Hondros would die so soon. Neither, I'm sure, did anyone among the thousand people who filled the Sacred Heart's St. Stephens Church in Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn, on April 27. At Chris's memorial, we were reminded of the shock of a week earlier. when word

Tribeca's Carless Drive In Attempts Nostalgia; Fails



© Copyright 2011, New School Free Press.