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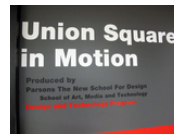
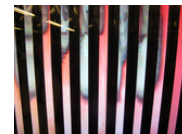
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Students Unveil Digital Art Project in Union Square Subway Station

September 27, 2011 12:04pm | By Mary Johnson, DNAINFO Reporter/Producer

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From left: Jaqi Vigil, a recent MFA graduate; Hilal Koyuncu, a current MFA student; Umut Ozover, a recent MFA graduate; Jeanne Kelly, a recent MFA graduate, and Josefina Santos, an undergraduate student (DNAINFO/Mary Johnson)

UNION SQUARE — A group of students from Parsons The New School for Design have transformed an abandoned storefront inside the Union Square subway station into a digital work of art.

The students—a group of six that's composed of master's and bachelor's students as well as a few recent graduates—first began working on the project during a class at Parsons this past spring. After the class ended, they kept working.

Finally, last week, they braved the filthy interior of the long-languishing storefront to bring the project to life. The students, shadowed by cameras and a crowd of curious onlookers, unveiled the piece Monday night in the station entrance at 14th Street and Fourth Avenue.

"We had no idea we could take it this far," said Jeanne Kelly, a recent graduate who served as team leader on the project.

The piece is titled "Union Square in Motion," and it is a kind of technology known as a digital zoetrope.

The zoetrope brings motion to still images. Each image differs slightly from the one right before it, and when viewed in succession as people walk past them, it appears as though the pictures are animated, even though they are not.

"In order to really experience it, you've got to keep moving," Kelly said.

The zoetrope rotates through nine different sets of images. One is a bouncing ball animation. One is a dancing woman. Another is a bear. The installation runs off its own wifi connection so the artists can change the images from afar.

Instructor **Joshua Spodek**, who pioneered the technology and co-taught the class this past spring with Associate Professor Anezka Sebek, said it is the largest digital zoetrope in the world.

"You always wants bigger. You always want more exposure," said Spodek, glancing around at the masses scurrying through the subway station on Monday night. "You can put stuff up in a gallery, and you're not going to have this many people go by in an hour."

The class at Parsons ended in May. Some students left the country. Some graduated and got jobs. But they still managed to come together to bring the work they started in January to life in the Union Square subway station, said Kelly, the project leader.

The project was funded largely through Kickstarter, which added up to between \$7,000 and \$8,000. That, coupled with a few private donations of money and materials, allowed them to complete the project, Kelly added.

Arts for Transit, the MTA organization that finds public art to fill the city's subways, embraced the idea of putting an art piece that encourages movement in a bustling underground space.

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"The technology engages the viewer," said Lester Burg, program manager for Arts for Transit. "It's not a static image, and we're all about moving people."

Students said they have seen parents bouncing their curious kids back and forth in front of the exhibit. Adults too have been pausing to inspect the installation on their way in or out of the subway, said Kelly.

"We've really been congratulated on transforming this space," Kelly said. "The big goal of the piece is really to try and, funny as it sounds, give a little bit of a pleasant experience to people as they move on their commute."

"Union Square in Motion" is set to be in place for a month. But, Kelly added, the MTA said that could be extended, if the organization keeps receiving positive feedback.

"And this," she said, looking around at the crowds gathered around the installation, "looks pretty positive to me."










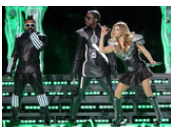








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