



NEWS

February 9, 1999

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EXHIBIT FEATURES PHOTOS OF METRO RED LINE SUBWAY BUILDERS

"Building the Red Line: Faces of Labor," noted photographer Ken Karagozian's latest collection of black and white, portrait-size photographs depicting life as a Metro Red Line subway construction worker, will be on exhibit at the Francis Howard Goldwyn Hollywood Regional Branch Library, March 3 through May 30. The library is located at 1623 N. Ivar Avenue in Hollywood.

The timing of the exhibit could not have been better — the subway will grow from its present 6.5 mile length to 11.1 miles in mid-1999 when it opens in Hollywood. Ridership on the subway is expected to double at that time.

For years, Karagozian, 44, has documented Los Angeles city life with his urban portraits of everything, including swap meets. The award-winning photographer's fascination with the subway was sparked in 1994 when he drove past a construction site and wondered who the men and women behind the scenes were.

Since 1994 he has taken more than 1,000 photographs he describes as "history in the making" and still spends four hours a week far beneath the surface of the earth to produce images of workers performing a wide spectrum of work. Miners toiling hundreds of feet underground in dimly lit, muddy conditions, electricians, track installers and carpenters are among the army of faces photographed. Accompanying some of the photos and further illuminating the workers and their jobs are interviews he conducted.

"They've come to accept me as a friend," Karagozian proudly states.

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According to Karagozian, people will leave the exhibition with a better understanding and appreciation of what it's like to work underground at labor intensive jobs , and a more humanistic outlook toward what is perceived by the public to be enigmatic occupations.

"Creating an everlasting image in the minds of people of the workers who actually built the subway is my goal and will make any journey on the subway that more meaningful," says Karagozian.

"The cumulative effect of viewing the photographs will be an immediate connection with these workers as human beings, especially the tunnelers. They're actually no different than you or me."

The 4.6 mile extension of the Metro Red Line subway to Hollywood will feature stations on Vermont Boulevard at Beverly, Santa Monica and Sunset and on Hollywood Boulevard at Western and Vine.

When the Metro Red Line opens in the San Fernando Valley in mid-2000, the Metro Red Line will span 17.4 miles, beginning at Union Station and concluding at Lankershim and Chandler boulevards in North Hollywood.

Metro Rail, which includes the Metro Red Line subway and light rail Metro Blue and Green lines, will span some 59.4 miles by the middle of the year 2000 and carry a ridership of approximately 200,000 weekday boardings.

For exact exhibit hours, please call the library at (323) 467-1821.

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