



NEWS

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FREE GUIDED TOURS OF METRO ART PROJECTS NOW OFFERED

Responding to increasing requests for tours of the highly touted artwork featured on the 47 station Metro Rail system and at the multi-modal Gateway Transit Center, the MTA is now offering free docent-guided group tours.

The docents made their debut on June 12 during the opening of the Metro Red Line subway extension to Hollywood, which features five new stations.

While docent programs are commonly found at museums around the world, the MTA is believed to be the first transit agency to benefit from such a program. Sixteen volunteer docents have completed an extensive 12-week training program under the direction of MTA Docent Program Coordinator Barbara Lashenick. Lashenick was executive director of Free Arts for Abused Children for nine years and has been a Los Angeles County Museum of Art docent for 16 years.

"The docents are dedicated, involved individuals who love L.A. and who love art," says Lashenick. "Several of the volunteers are docents at the L.A. Conservancy and the L.A. County Museum of Art, and they are very excited to be able to share their knowledge and enthusiasm for the arts in this new and very public environment."

Groups of fifteen or more will be led on informative two-hour tours of several projects. The tours introduce the individual artists and the concepts behind their wide variety of works, as well as outline the artist selection process and the particular challenges of creating art for public environments. Participants are offered the opportunity to not only learn more about contemporary art but to explore Los Angeles' growing Metro Rail system.

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The MTA's public art program was recently described as "one of the most imaginative public art programs in the country" by the *New York Times* and has received extensive international media coverage. The *L.A. Times* featured the new stations of the Hollywood Extension on the cover of its Sunday, June 6th Calendar section. The stations are an extraordinary blend of art, architecture, landscape, and engineering and are the result of the MTA's interdisciplinary approach of adding artists to the traditional mix of architects and engineers.

Tours can be arranged for groups of 15 or more and can be requested for any day of the week, including weekends. Each tour lasts approximately two hours. School groups are particularly encouraged to participate. While there is no charge for the docents' time, tour-goers will need to pay the transit fare. To request a docent-guided group tour, call 213-922-4ART.

Examples of some tours:

Central Los Angeles Area

Join a game of hide-n-seek, explore the South Central Codex, sit on a spool of thread, make a wish, discover portraits of Central Avenue artists...

Downtown Area

Discover whimsical bus shelters, dancing lights, flying men, industrial angels...

South Bay Area

Encounter a 30-foot hand and a "paper" airplane, large colorful medallions; concrete living room furniture, butterfly benches, and an interactive "space" station...

Long Beach Area

Stained glass, mosaic, porcelain enamel, kinetic sculptures, imaginary conversations...

Hollywood Area

Encounter enormous rock sculptures; 10,000 thought-provoking questions; a yellow brick road; fossils and historic Red Car replicas; and a "stellar" sculpture...

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