



NEWS

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Painting the Metro Red Line Contest

L.A. CITY COLLEGE ART STUDENTS DO BEST IMPRESSION OF PICASSO BY CREATING STUNNING SUBWAY POSTERS; JUDGMENT DAY NEARS

The excitement that's been steadily building at Los Angeles City College since the MTA invited students from the school's art department to participate in a Metro Red Line subway poster contest will reach its zenith this coming Saturday, May 1, at 11 a.m. The judging event coincides with the start of the school's first City of Angels Community Conference and Festival.

A panel of judges will convene in the Da Vinci Art Gallery and announce which poster — 35 entries generated on computer or hand painted were originally submitted and has since been pared down — best exemplifies the spirit of the latest installment of the Metro Red Line subway. The 4.6 mile expansion, set to open in Hollywood on June 12, features five new stations, including the Vermont/Santa Monica station, located next to the campus.

"Since most of the students participating in the contest live in the same neighborhoods the subway will serve, this project has provided them with an opportunity to grow personally as well as professionally," said LACC President Mary Spangler. "I say this because as part of their research the students actually visited the Metro Red Line stations and observed for themselves how important public transit, especially the subway, is to the community, including students."

At stake, besides student bragging rights, is a \$1,000 scholarship being offered by the school and a beautiful trophy — the runners-up will receive complimentary one-month Metro System passes. In addition, the winning poster also will be used in MTA promotional materials including the distribution

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of facsimiles to the public on opening day weekend.

With only a few days left to go before the big poster event, 18 multicultural and generational students in instructor Gayle Partlow's computer graphics class, were busy putting last minute touches on their creations, which included splashy collages, montages and drawings.

"They're doing a fabulous job, each one is quite different and vivid," says Partlow. "Truly amazing is the fact that before this semester most of the students in my class had never used a computer before, and just look at the results."

"Phantasmagoria," is how Norm Schwab, the chair of the school's art and architecture department characterized the visual feast for the eyes created by student Gensuke Okamoto, 23.

"It hits you all at once," says Schwab. "It explodes right before you."

A quick survey of the students found most considered the project quite challenging, fulfilling since many in the community will actually see their work, but also extremely fun.

In student Jeff Chaowalit's poster, subway tunnels are fashioned like wings the 22-year-old says is intended to convey a sense of flying.

Just as symbolic is the poster of David Lopez, a freelance artist who returned to school later in life to learn the computer and is mum's the word on his age. Visceral stimuli includes Hollywood icons, including a dinosaur from "Jurassic Park" and subway track which gradually becomes sprocketed celluloid.

Schwab says the task before the judges will be difficult.

"They'll be happy with each one of them, I assure you, however, the winning poster will have to fit the image of the Metro Red Line and judges will be able to immediately identify what that is. It's that special quality that will be the determining factor."

The extension of the Metro Red Line will feature new stations on Vermont Avenue at Beverly, Santa Monica and Sunset boulevards, and on Hollywood

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Boulevard at Western Avenue and Vine Street.

In May 2000, the MTA is scheduled to open a 6.3 mile extension of the subway with stops at Hollywood/Highland, Universal City and Lankershim/Chandler in North Hollywood. At that point, the subway will span 17.4 miles with 16 stations. The overall Metro Rail system in Los Angeles County, which also consists of the light rail Metro Blue and Green lines, then will include 59.4 miles of track and 50 stations.

In the year 2000, Metro Rail average weekday ridership is projected to be 200,000 boardings. The subway portion, alone, will account for 125,000 of those boardings.

Metro Rail ranks as one of the largest public works projects ever undertaken in the United States. Subway construction got underway in 1986 and is being built in phases. The downtown segment opened in January 1993. Construction of the Hollywood leg started in 1994.

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Editors note: a press advisory about this event will be distributed later this week.

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