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NEW MOYNIHAN TRAIN HALL
Features three ambitious site-specific permanent installations by artists Stan Douglas, Elmgreen & Dragset, and Kehinde Wiley

**Commissioned by Empire State Development
in partnership with Public Art Fund**



December 30, 2020, NEW YORK, NY—Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced today the January 1st opening of the new Moynihan Train Hall, along with three unprecedented site-specific art installations by **Stan Douglas**, **artist duo Elmgreen & Dragset**, and **Kehinde Wiley**, counted among the most innovative and revered artists working today. As part of the Governor’s visionary transformation of the nation’s busiest transportation hub, the artworks are commissioned through a partnership between Empire State Development (New York State’s economic development agency) and Public Art Fund (the leading non-profit that commissions and presents art in public spaces). A testament to New York’s creativity, diversity, and richly layered heritage, the three monumental commissions complement the new cutting-edge Train Hall, while embracing its civic character. Offering the public a fresh perspective on the history and grandeur of the original Pennsylvania Station and James A. Farley Post Office, Douglas’s, Elmgreen & Dragset’s, and Wiley’s installations bring a sense of wonder and humanity to these public spaces, and will evoke civic pride and delight for generations to come.

“Nothing could be more fitting for a great metropolitan transit hub than three astonishing works of art that stop us in our tracks. Each one dazzles with its sheer beauty, epic scale, and technical mastery. Collectively, they also remind us that great art comes from great ideas,” said **Nicholas Baume, Director & Chief Curator of Public Art Fund**. “Each artist has thought deeply about the history, context, significance, and future of this newly transformed place, creating brilliantly innovative works of art that allow us to see ourselves—past, present, and future—in a truly civic space.”

With its unique history, distinguished architecture, and world-class art program, the expansive new Train Hall celebrates New York as a worldwide leader in innovation and culture. The broad and diverse public passing through the new Train Hall daily will be greeted by three artworks that enhance the space’s democratic sense of place. Wiley’s and Elmgreen & Dragset’s breathtaking ceiling installations define two primary entryways to the Train Hall—the Midblock Entrances at 31st and 33rd Streets—while Douglas’s captivating photo series appears in four 22-foot-long panels on the wall spanning The Ticketed Waiting Room adjacent to the main grand sky-lit boarding concourse. Woven into the fabric of the building, these works are destined to become emblems of the Train Hall and the city.

Pushing the boundaries of their practices and using new technologies, the artists pay tribute to and draw on the legacies of the McKim, Mead & White–designed Farley Building and its architectural sister, the original Pennsylvania Station. The Train Hall’s public art program sets a new standard for contemporary public art in a landmark civic space. Whether or not you’re catching a train, the public art program makes the Train Hall a destination in its own right.

The conversion of the 1914 James A. Farley Post Office in Midtown Manhattan into the 21st-century Train Hall represents one of the most ambitious upgrades to New York’s transit infrastructure in decades. Transforming the travel experience for hundreds of thousands of Long Island Rail Road and Amtrak passengers—and named after its longtime champion, the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan—Moynihan Train Hall will once again welcome residents and visitors alike into an architectural marvel with a monumentality befitting New York.

All permanent installations will be on view when the new Train Hall opens January 1, 2021. More information about each commission follows:

Stan Douglas (b. 1960 in Vancouver, Canada)

Penn Station’s Half Century, 2020

A series of nine photographic panels on view in the seating alcoves of The Ticketed Waiting Room adjacent to the main concourse

Artist Stan Douglas drew on archival research to reconstruct nine remarkable but forgotten moments from the history of the original Pennsylvania Station (1910-1963) that capture the serendipity and poignancy of daily life. He photographed live actors in period costume and seamlessly combined them with digitally recreated interiors of the demolished station. The resulting images pay tribute to McKim, Mead & White’s original station, and to the layers of human experience that bring our civic spaces to life.

The series of photographic panels are located within four seating alcoves in The Ticketed Waiting Room. These vivid evocations of the city’s forgotten history include:

- Bert Williams (singer, comedian, and the first African-American to direct a motion picture) instigating an impromptu vaudeville show with fellow performers stranded in the station during an epic snow storm of 1914.
- Outlaw and folk hero Celia Cooney—the infamous “Bobbed Hair Bandit”— met by thronging crowds at Penn Station in 1924 after being apprehended and returned to New York to face charges
- Thousands of Communist party members and supporters gathering to greet Angelo Herndon, a persecuted labor organizer and champion of racial justice in 1934
- Three scenes from three different decades depicting design interventions in the original station’s Waiting Room. Each scene is shown in the bright morning light of June 20th, and signals broader technological and societal changes. They include: a novelty display of a trimotor plane promoting coast-to-coast air travel (1930); a photo installation celebrating Pennsylvania Railroad professionals service during World War II ranging from conductors to soldiers and “red-cap” porters—an essential occupation filled exclusively by Black men decades before desegregation (1944); and the futuristic Electronic Ticket Sales & Service Bureau (1957) whose design was influential upon airports, an era that ultimately led to the station’s disuse and demolition only six years later
- The final moments of affection between soldiers and their loved ones before being deployed in 1941 for duty during World War II
- The soundstage from director Vincente Minnelli’s 1944 love story “The Clock,” starring Judy Garland, which recreated of the original train station as a backdrop for the lead characters’ meeting and emotional parting

The cinematic quality of each scene revives these historic moments in uncanny detail, revealing the architectural landmark as a grand theater for the millions of human dramas that animate civic spaces and imbue them with memory and meaning.

Elmgreen & Dragset

Michael Elmgreen (b. 1961 in Copenhagen, Denmark), Ingar Dragset (b. 1969 in Trondheim, Norway)

The Hive, 2020

On view on the 31st Street Midblock Entryway Ceiling

The artist duo Elmgreen & Dragset’s fantastical inverted cityscape is inspired by iconic buildings in New York City and from cities around the world, which the artists have woven into architectural designs of their own invention. Choosing to title the work *The Hive*, the artists suggest a link between natural and human-made structures, like the complex and evolving architecture of a hive. They’ve also described the ceiling-mounted buildings as being like luminous stalactites that pay tribute to the cities we live in today while reminding us of our cave-dweller origins. With technological precision, the imaginary city captures the multiplicity and synergy of the world’s metropolises.

Appearing simultaneously monumental and weightless, *The Hive* is composed of 91 buildings that weigh a total of more than 30,000 lbs. The 72,000 LEDs located within the up to nine-foot-tall model buildings illuminate the 31st Street entrance hall from day to night, reflecting New

York's ceaseless energy. As visitors pause on entering the train hall, *The Hive* celebrates the new perspectives and interconnectedness that cities and travel provide.

Kehinde Wiley (b. 1977 in Los Angeles, CA)

Go, 2020

On view on the 33rd Street Midblock Entryway Ceiling

Artist Kehinde Wiley's site-specific installation covers the ceiling of the train hall's 33rd Street Midblock Entrance with a backlit, hand painted, stained-glass triptych that recalls the grandeur of decorative Renaissance and Baroque painting. Offering a modern interpretation of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo's 18th century ceiling frescoes, Wiley's composition features young, Black New Yorkers depicted in poses borrowed from breakdance, the modern dance style which originated on the streets of New York during the 1960s and 70s among African American and Latino youth. In Wiley's composition, the subjects inhabit the sky alongside clouds, pigeons, and a jet plane. *Go* looks to the contemporary urban setting of New York City to create a surrealist dreamscape that advances a narrative of buoyancy, possibility, and survival.

Click [here](#) to see additional images and read more about the three commissions.

@PublicArtFund

About Public Art Fund

Public Art Fund is a non-profit organization that has presented dynamic exhibitions by the world's most compelling and significant artists in New York City and beyond for more than 40 years. These projects set the standard for excellence in the field, giving urban space new meaning, while engaging diverse audiences and making culture accessible to all.

In addition to this core program, Public Art Fund also offers consulting services that bring strategic planning, curatorial, project management, and communications expertise to the world's leading cultural institutions, corporations, and civic organizations through **Public Art Fund: Creative Partnerships**. Amplifying the impact of partners' own initiatives, Public Art Fund commissions permanent installations and temporary exhibitions in line with the unique vision of its partners and the specific parameters of each site, resulting in new artworks that activate public spaces and create engaged constituencies through the power of public art. For more information, visit PublicArtFund.org.

About Empire State Development

Empire State Development (ESD) is New York's chief economic development agency. The mission of ESD is to promote a vigorous and growing economy, encourage the creation of new job and economic opportunities, increase revenues to the State and its municipalities, and achieve stable and diversified local economies. Through the use of loans, grants, tax credits and other forms of financial assistance, ESD strives to enhance private business investment and growth to spur job creation and support prosperous communities across New York State. ESD is also the primary administrative agency overseeing Governor Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Councils and the marketing of "I LOVE NY," the State's iconic tourism brand. For more information on Regional Councils and Empire State Development, please visit www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov and www.esd.ny.gov.

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Image Credits (clockwise from left)

Stan Douglas

22 April 1924 and 7 August 1934, from Penn Station's Half Century, 2020

Ceramic ink on glass. One of nine photographic panels from *Penn Station's Half Century*

Commissioned by Empire State Development in partnership with Public Art Fund for Moynihan Train Hall

©Stan Douglas. Courtesy of the artist, Victoria Miro and David Zwirner.

Photo: Nicholas Knight, courtesy Empire State Development and Public Art Fund, NY

Elmgreen & Dragset

The Hive, 2020

Stainless steel, aluminum, polycarbonate, LED lights, and lacquer

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Photo: Nicholas Knight, courtesy Empire State Development and Public Art Fund, NY

Kehinde Wiley, *Go, 2020*

© Kehinde Wiley. An original work of art commissioned by Empire State Development in partnership with Public Art Fund for Moynihan Train Hall.

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