

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Artsy

See the Installations by Kehinde Wiley, Stan Douglas, and Other Art Stars That Might Actually Make You Want to Go to New York's Penn Station

Sarah Cascone

5 January 2021



See the Installations by Kehinde Wiley, Stan Douglas, and Other Art Stars That Might Actually Make You Want to Go to New York's Penn Station

New York City has at last unveiled its new Moynihan Train Hall.



Image: Elmgreen & Dragset, working on their piece *The Hive*. Photo courtesy of Perrotin, Kukje Gallery and Massimo de Carlo.

Just a few days into 2021 and New York City has already set an architectural milestone with the opening of Moynihan Train Hall, the long-awaited extension of the much-maligned Penn Station. The space, which has 92-foot skylight ceilings, will host a trio of blue-chip art installations

by Kehinde Wiley, Stan Douglas, and artist duo Elmgreen & Dragset.

"As dark as 2020 has been, this new hall will bring the light, literally and figuratively, for everyone who visits this great city," Governor Andrew Cuomo said in a statement. The hall provides access to Long Island Railroad and Amtrak Northeast Corridor trains.

The \$1.6 billion project transforms the old James A. Farley postal building, a 1912 Beaux-Arts-style design by McKim Mead and White. The firm was responsible for the original Penn Station, torn down in 1963 much to the city's regret. Plans to retrofit the post office to make up for some of the deficiencies of the new station, often likened to a subterranean rat maze, were first proposed by the new hall's namesake, the late New York Senator Daniel P. Moynihan, in the early 1990s.

The artworks, which collectively cost \$6.7 million, were commissioned through a partnership between Empire State Development, New York's economic development agency, and the Public Art Fund.

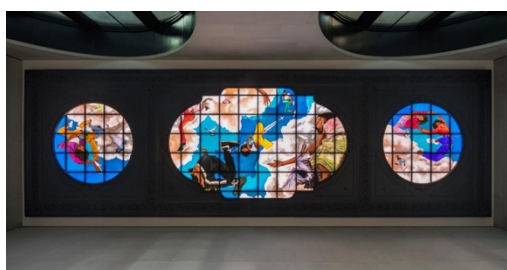


Image: Kehinde Wiley, *Go* (2020) at Penn Station's new Moynihan Train Hall in New York. Photo by Nicholas Knight, courtesy of Sean Kelly, New York; Empire State Development; and Public Art Fund, New York.

For the ceiling at the West 33rd Street entrance, Wiley has created a hand-painted glass triptych titled *Go*. The artist's first permanent site-specific installation in glass, the work depicts young Black New Yorkers frozen in breakdancing-inspired poses, the subjects taken from Wiley's earlier works. The woman pointing her finger is a reference to the Vatican's Sistine Chapel, where Michelangelo famously painted God stretching out his hand in *Creation of Adam*.

No less than 30,000 pounds of futuristic skyscrapers hang upside down at the West 31st Street entry as part of an Elmgreen & Dragset work titled *The Hive*. The 91 buildings are of both real and fictional origin, each window glowing with the tiny lights of 72,000 LEDs.

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Artsy

See the Installations by Kehinde Wiley, Stan Douglas, and Other Art Stars That Might Actually Make You Want to Go to New York's Penn Station

Sarah Cascone

5 January 2021

Douglas, meanwhile, looked to the past, conducting archival research to recreate nine moments from the history of the old Penn Station on an epic scale. He cast 400 actors to dress in period costumes over four days of shooting and then set the scene with digitally recreated interiors of the demolished building based on old photographs.

Douglas's photographic panels, which capture such snapshots of New York City history as the time that Black vaudeville performers staged an impromptu show for passengers stuck at Penn after a 1914 snowstorm, hang along the station's 80-foot-long waiting area.



Image: Stan Douglas, 22 April 1924 and 7 August 1934, from "Penn Station's Half Century" (2020). ©Stan Douglas. Photo by Nicholas Knight, courtesy of the artist, Victoria Miro, David Zwirner, Empire State Development, and Public Art Fund, New York.

"In a global city synonymous with art and culture it is fitting that these works—which dazzle in their beauty, humanity, ambition, and technical mastery—capture the spirit of this remarkable new transit hub," said

Public Art Fund director Nicholas Baume in a statement. "Captivating and powerful, each work is inspired by New York's rich heritage, its diverse and talented people, and its irrepressible creativity."

Cuomo has previously championed spotlighting contemporary art in other major civic transportation projects. Artworks by Chuck Close, Jean Shin, Vik Muniz, and Sarah Sze grace the four new Second Avenue subway line stations, unveiled in 2016, and installations by Sze, Laura Owens, Sabine Hornig, and Jeppe Hein are at the new LaGuardia Airport Terminal B completed last year.

"There's something to be said about a society gathering around an artist, around his or her vision, to say this is something we believe in collectively," Wiley told the New York Times. "New York needs this right now."

See more photos of the new station and its artwork below.



Image: Penn Station's new Moynihan Train Hall in New York. Photo courtesy of Amtrak.

Image: Penn Station's new Moynihan Train Hall in New York. Photo courtesy of Amtrak.



Image: Kehinde Wiley, Go (2020) at Penn Station's new Moynihan Train Hall in New York. Photo by Nicholas Knight, courtesy of Sean Kelly, New York; Empire State Development; and Public Art Fund, New York.

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Artsy

See the Installations by Kehinde Wiley, Stan Douglas, and Other Art Stars That Might Actually Make You Want to Go to New York's Penn Station

Sarah Cascone

5 January 2021



Image: Kehinde Wiley, *Go* (2020) at Penn Station's new Moynihan Train Hall in New York. Photo by Nicholas Knight, courtesy of Sean Kelly, New York; Empire State Development; and Public Art Fund, New York.



Image: Stan Douglas, *22 April 1924 and 7 August 1934*, from "Penn Station's Half Century" (2020), a series of nine ceramic ink on glass photographic panels at Penn Station's new Moynihan Train Hall, New York. ©Stan Douglas. Photo by Nicholas Knight, courtesy of the artist, Victoria Miro, David Zwirner, Empire State Development, and Public Art Fund, New York.