

Walter Martin and Paloma Muñoz

A Gathering

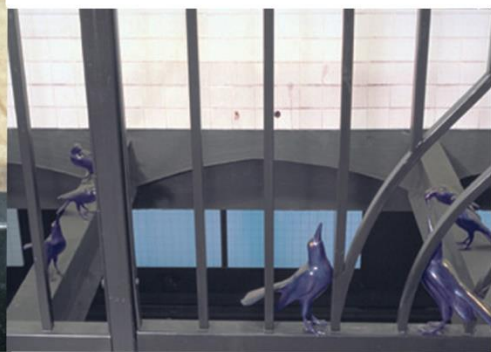
Canal Street Subway Station, New York
The recent renovation of the Canal Street subway stop has provided commuters with better sight lines, new floors, brighter lighting, and unexpected companions during their stay in the station. The new subway station “furnishings” make for comfortable bird perches, and on first entering, some travelers might think that they’ve walked onto the set of a remake of *The Birds*. But there is no danger here

of humans and birds—another naturally communal animal. Subway riders might see something of themselves reflected in the “lively, cocky, quizzical interaction of these birds.” Martin and Muñoz created 14 distinct poses for their 174 grackles and blackbirds and seven crows, attempting to capture the characteristics of each species. All 181 birds are rendered in bronze and finished with a shiny black patina. According to the artists, *A Gathering* seeks to re-introduce an awareness of natural surroundings to this “retail

Astrovision, Creative Time has placed three video works by internationally recognized artists on the highly visible screen at Times Square. Marco Brambilla’s *Superstar* was shown from February 28 to April 15; *Cat Drinking Milk* by the team of Fischli and Weiss appeared from April 16 to May 20; and William Kentridge’s *Shadow Procession* was shown from May 21 to June 30. Screenings were scheduled for the 59th minute of every hour between 9:59 a.m. and 5:59 p.m., continuing between 8:59 p.m. and 12:59 p.m.

Times Square’s Astrovision, “the world’s most famous TV screen” measures nearly three stories high and four stories wide; it contains 1.5 million light-emitting diodes (LEDs), which are capable of generating

Below and detail: Walter Martin and Paloma Muñoz, *A Gathering*, 2000. Bronze sculptures placed throughout the Canal Street Station, New York.



from the winged creatures. One particularly social individual, unaffected by the thousands of people who enter and exit the station daily, sits casually on a turnstile. Several groups roost in the mezzanine, on the station booth, and high above the crowds on the gate railings.

A Gathering, by the team of Walter Martin and Paloma Muñoz, was commissioned by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s (MTA) Arts for Transit and New York City Transit. The permanent installation draws a comparison between the social behavior

neighborhood, rich in businesses, stores, and heavy traffic—a business zone out of touch with nature.”

“The 59th Minute: Video Art on the Times Square Astrovision”

Creative Time

Times Square

Since 1973, Creative Time has encouraged artists who produce alternative public art “to approach the city as their canvas and their stage.” For its latest project, “The 59th Minute: Video Art on the Times Square Astrovision,” co-sponsored by Panasonic, maker of

a billion different shades of color. Showing video art “within the context of the most exciting center of media culture in the world” allowed Creative Time and the participating artists to take on issues of mass communication. Veteran filmmaker Marco Brambilla’s *Superstar* focuses on a man who is free-falling from a building. Brambilla doesn’t explain why or show from where the man jumped; nor does he let us see the character’s inevitable crash into the earth. The man is frozen in mid-air, caught in a centripetal spin while the

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