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Suzanne DeChillo/The New York Times

A Mosaic Is Bound for the Subway

Kristin A. Jones, one of the two artists who conceived a 20-by-40-foot mosaic for the Chambers Street/World Trade Center subway station, runs a broom over her work at the World Financial Center, where it was completed. Page B7.



Photographs by Suzanne Imboden/The New York Times

Rinaldo Piras, right, a mosaic builder from Italy, and an aide, Germano Sciamanna, smoothing concrete.

Mosaic Is Ready For Rush Hour

For the last two weeks, more than a dozen artists, artisans and workers in Battery Park City have been on their hands and knees piecing together one of the largest pieces of subway art in New York history — an oval-shaped mosaic the length of a city bus containing more than one million bits of Venetian glass and Italian marble, each rectangle smaller than a fingernail.

Commissioned by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in 1993 and completed Saturday, the mosaic will be on display at the Winter Garden of the World Financial Center until tomorrow. The 20-by-40-foot work is then scheduled to be disassembled into 52 plywood "sandwiches" and hand-carried into the nearby Chambers Street/World Trade Center station, where the A, C, and E subway lines connect. It will be installed in the station by the end of next month.

The mosaic, which will be displayed upright, shows drifting continents and a map of New York City centered on an eye. It is part of a larger work called "Oculus," Latin for eye, that includes 300 small mosaics already installed in the station that depict images of 300 eyes taken from photographs of high-school students.

"The eyes aren't Big Brother," said Kristin A. Jones, 43, who, along with Andrew Ginzler, 45, are the New York artists who conceived the work. "They're an attempt to humanize the subway station and give New Yorkers an opportunity to look each other in the eye."

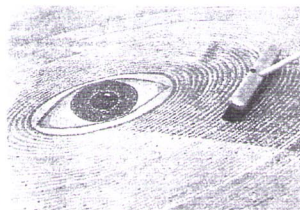
The art form dates from before the ancient Greeks but is strong enough to withstand the subway system's rigors, Ms. Jones said. "It's glass," she added, "but it's set in stone and masonry." For example, she said, mosaics buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79 were discovered intact 1,700 years later.

"They look like carpet laid over rolling earth, but they survived," she said.

ANTHONY RAMIREZ



Mr. Piras peeling away a glued paper holding pieces of tile, setting them in the section of concrete.



The eye at the center of the mosaic is based on the photograph taken of a student at Friends Academy.