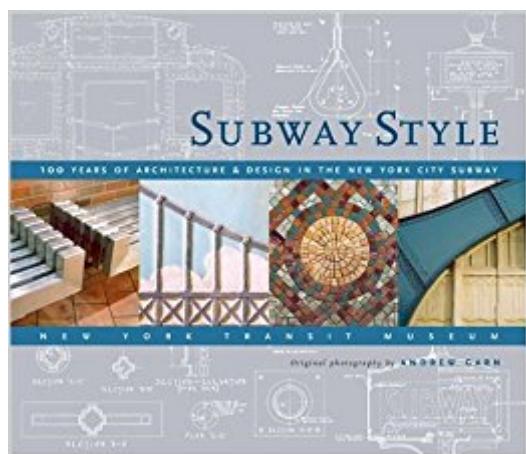


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# **Subway Style: 100 Years Of Architecture & Design In The New York City Subway**



## Synopsis

More than 250 extraordinary photographs--including both newly commissioned color photographs and period images from the New York Transit Museum archives--chronicle one hundred years of architectural and design history from the New York City subway system, including everything from the interiors of t

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Unlikely as it may seem, the 100th anniversary of the New York City subway system was the impetus for a handsome book, *Subway Style: 100 Years of Architecture & Design in the New York City Subway*. Produced by the New York Transit Museum, this abundantly illustrated design history traces the origins and development of subway cars and stations, including ceramic and metalwork detailing, ticket booths, signage, route maps and advertising. Treated in a merely dutiful way, this material would probably be of interest only to subway buffs. But *Subway Style* boasts high-quality photographs, an inviting design, and a succinct and wryly amusing text that relates subway developments to other cultural happenings and isn't too proud to explain specialized terms. It's the kind of book that makes the evolution of turnstiles sound fascinating. With a contractual mandate to instill "beauty" into "a great public work," the IRT--the first of three subway lines--originally featured elaborate Beaux Arts ceramic detailing displaying historical scenes or symbolizing local landmarks. Gracious bronze grilles served as ticket windows, and station names were painstakingly spelled out in glass mosaic tiles. Succeeding generations morphed these features into increasingly streamlined versions utilizing the latest technology and design trends. Wood station seats gave way to cast

terrazzo perches cantilevered from the wall, then to molded fiberglass, polyurethane and finally back to wood. Usable maps were a long time in coming. In 1958, 18 years after the three lines were united, the Transit Authority finally published a single guide showing the entire system. Massimo Vignelli--whose bold, color-keyed station signage was a major innovation--later produced an abstract, all but useless map that was, as the book says, "emblematic of New York's 1970s retreat from urban life." The chapter on subway ads is (naturally) the most fun, ranging from Amelia Opdyke "Oppy" Jones' expressive cartoon characters--caught in the act of dropping gum wrappers or propping their feet on the seats--to head shots of women hoping to be voted "Miss Subways." &#97;Cathy Curtis

This fascinating, smartly executed volume should intrigue and entertain anyone with affection for New York City's "amazingly complex, largely uncelebrated environment," in the words of critic Giovannini. Given a legacy of three separate systems built during different decades and untidily unified in 1940, the 100-year-old subway's multitudinous elements today uneasily harmonize in "systematic uniqueness." Thematic chapters cover ceramic designs, fare collections, signage, advertising and more. Squire Vickers, an architect who served as chief architect of the system from 1906 to 1942, wanted to celebrate the subway's industrial character, yet at the same time used colored tiles to add cheer. A marvelous chapter traces the evolution of subway maps, including the 1972 example of minimalism that turned subway lines into 45- and 90-degree angles. Another surveys subway cars through the years, including rattan upholstery and the beginning of hard fiberglass polyester seats. There's much delight in the old: metal grillwork from the 1930s, the three-dimensional ceramic at Brooklyn's Borough Hall station. There are also stirring signs of the new: freshly commissioned tile mosaics in Chinatown; a restored 1904 station house at 72nd Street and its respectful but better-fed newly built cousin across Verdi Square; funky cast-bronze sculptures at 14th Street. The subway's grittier side is treated somewhat glancingly; a picture from 1970 shows the clutter that led to the ban on vending machines; the new turnstile's design is described as a deterrent to fare-beaters. But this book reminds us that the achievement of the subway, even today, is to function under pressure, above ground and below, with unexpected elements of artistry and grace. Copyright Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Design freaks will love this volume (I am one!). There was so much thought, art and skill combined to make subway architecture people-sensitive. It'll knock your socks off if you're a person who

appreciates others' inspirations... and they are just that.

Excellent! Purchased this for my Aunt whose father was one of the tile experts for the Manhattan Rail system! She was thrilled to have a memory of something her father had done many, many years ago!

Beautiful, beautiful book! Great service from seller. 100% happy!

The architecture of the NYC Subway System has been undervalued and ignored. This book shows the gems of the system. What a real hoot is that I look at the old pictures and realize how much of the stuff I saw in the system in the 1970's was leftover from the 1930's! I can recall riding 1920's and 1930's vintage rolling in the 1970's when the budget crisis was keeping the city from getting new gear.

I love the NYC subway system and when I saw this book decided to buy it immediately. Great story on how the stations were designed, the style for each one, even the fonts for each station. Lot of interesting details and awesome photographs.

This was given as a Christmas gift to my father, a life long New Yorker. It was wonderful to watch him and my mother page through it looking at images of old stations from their childhood. As an architect I knew he would love the blueprints and drawings in there. This is definitely a heavy book but since it is to be used as a coffee table book it looks beautiful when left on the table!

This book is a beautiful catalog of the visuals associated with the New York City subway system. I have seen books with pictures of the cars, but no other book shows the stations, the history of the transit maps, subway advertisements, even the various designs of tokens that have been used. It's a great job and I'm happy to give it a 5-star rating!

Got this for my sister who lived in NYC for years. We always wondered about the designs in the subway and this book is very informative.

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