

Art in America INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

Leo Villareal Lights Up Underground

By Leigh Anne Miller 10/15/12

The days of explaining to confused tourists why they can't transfer from the B, D, F or M train at the Broadway-Lafayette station to an uptown 6 are finally over. What's more, gracing the ceiling of the renovated station, which opened in late September after several years of work, is a pulsating neon light sculpture by Leo Villareal.



The installation, Hive (Bleecker Street), features connected honeycomb shapes that smoothly transition between warm and cool color palettes, drawing commuters' eyes upwards as they exit the new station. According to the MTA's Arts for Transit site, Hive's patterns are inspired by John Conway, a British mathematician best known for inventing the Game of Life, a cellular automata program.

Villareal's high-tech light installations have been shown internationally in galleries and museums, both indoors and out. Later this month, his Buckyball will go on view at Madison Square Park (Oct. 25, 2012-Feb. 1, 2013). An homage to Buckminster Fuller, Buckyball features two spheres, one inside the other, constructed from neon hexagons and pentagons, geometric shapes Villareal has worked with throughout his career.