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Columbia's Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) Marketing Campaign Features the Artwork of Two Alums



Columbia's Marketing Campaign at CTA Logan Square Blue Line

Columbia highlights the artistry of its alums in a marketing campaign that features an alum's illustration work, commissioned by the college, and an alum's public art installation.

Illustration and Civic Media alum Dean Strauss MA '20 was commissioned to create the artwork for a new Columbia College Chicago advertising campaign featured at several Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) train stations across the city. An installation organized by Photography alum Deanna J. Smith '21 was also featured at the Logan Square Blue line train station as a part of the campaign. The project also features four CTA rail cars on the Blue and Brown train lines, wrapped in Columbia's signature color, Wabash Blue, displaying the college's tagline, *Shape What's Next*.



Strauss' illustration work can be seen on the red line's Harrison and State train stations as well as on the Logan Square blue line. His art features illustrations of Columbia community members in an ad installation at each of the three locations.

"Dean's illustration style is distinctive, and his work is excellent on its own merits, but the fact that he's an alum makes him perfect for a project like this," says Derek Brinkey, Assistant Vice President of Undergraduate Admissions at Columbia.

In addition to Strauss' illustration work, Smith contributed to the campaign by adding her previously organized public photography installation at one of the three locations. *Through Your Eyes* is a community art project that asked Logan Square residents to connect with their neighborhood by submitting photos of the community as they see it. Smith created this project in conjunction with the Photo Social Practice course at Columbia College Chicago.

"The neighborhood's been changing and I wanted to see the perspective of all the different people who live in the area," says Smith. To capture the imagery, Smith provided disposable cameras to community members who were then instructed to take a stroll around the neighborhood taking photos of whatever they like and then return the cameras.

"The cameras are easy enough to use that anybody can pick one up and shoot a picture. People of all ages participated. I wanted to supply people with the disposable cameras because it does kind of engage you more with the picture making process and with being more mindful of what you're taking a picture of because you only have so many frames to use," says Smith. "Not to discourage anything about digital photography, but I think we are very used to endless possibilities of being able to shoot

as much as you want to shoot and the disposable cameras make it a little more thoughtful of a process.”

What resulted, were raw photos of the Logan Square community captured by those residing in and interacting with the neighborhood regularly. “People find beauty in all different kinds of things, and everyone has a different favorite thing about their community,” says Smith. The photos taken were comprised of a variety of imagery including street art and murals, families, and individuals, and street-style photography that depicted trees, wrought iron fences, buildings, and sunlight on sidewalks.

“We saw this campaign as more than just ad space, but as an opportunity to use it as a canvas to showcase the talents of our alumni and their roles in our community,” says Brinkley. “When we recruit our new students, we want to be able to give them a sense of what their future might be. Hiring alums for promotional materials like these means that they’re coming from someone who has lived the Columbia experience and who wants to share their impressions of that experience with future students.”

Columbia’s approximately 6,800 students represent 49 U.S. states, Puerto Rico, Washington, D.C., and 26 foreign countries. Fifty seven percent identify as students of color, 24 percent identify as first-generation college students, and 28 percent identify as members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

EXTRA IMAGES BY DAN ZAMUDIO



CTA BLUE LINE - LOGAN SQUARE



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