

Amusing the Zillion

A former carny kid casts an insider's eye on the amusement business, Coney Island, and fun places in between

Photo Album: Coney Island Reliefs by Deborah Masters

April 29, 2011 by Tricia

Deborah Masters' Coney Island Reliefs on Ocean Parkway Viaduct. October 2, 2009. Photo © Bruce Handy/Pablo 57 via flickr

See Queen Mermaid, sideshow performers, sunbathers and Cyclone riders in cast concrete on the gateway to Coney Island! On Saturday, [April 30th](#), MTA Arts for Transit is hosting an event from 2 to 5 pm to celebrate the completion of Deborah Masters' Coney Island Reliefs at Ocean Parkway Viaduct. The station is on the Q line at Ocean Parkway and Brighton Beach Avenue. Masters was awarded the commission in 1992 and the piece was completed in 1994, but the viaduct needed repair before the concrete panels could be hung on its facade. The reliefs were in storage for 15 years!

Coney Island photographer Bruce Handy's [series of photos](#) of the Ocean Parkway sculptures were taken when the installation began in 2009. "They look much nicer now with painted borders and the screw holes filled in," says Bruce who plans to take a new series of photos this weekend.

[UPDATE April 30](#)...Here's a link to Bruce Handy's [flickr slide show](#) of the finished installation. Just beautiful!

Deborah Masters' Coney Island Reliefs on Ocean Parkway Viaduct. September 25, 2009. Photo © Bruce Handy/Pablo 57 via flickr

According to the MTA's [Arts for Transit page](#) on the work...

Sculptor Deborah Masters created the Coney Island Reliefs in cast concrete. The 1260 sq. ft. of relief panels fit within existing recesses in the viaduct. Tinted a terracotta color to harmonize with the sandstone color of the Ocean Parkway viaduct, a massive structure that carries the subway across six lanes of traffic and an Olmstead parkway, the reliefs portray scenes from the history and legends of Coney Island, including Neptune, a mermaid, beach, boardwalk, and amusement park scenes. The designs are based upon photographs, drawings, and interviews by the artist with local residents and visitors to the famed amusement park.

Deborah Masters' Coney Island Reliefs on Ocean Parkway Viaduct. October 2, 2009. Photo © Bruce Handy/Pablo 57 via flickr

The original commission was for the inside of the subway station, but when the artist looked at the Viaduct surface, she noticed indentations she felt sure were intended for reliefs. She felt that the Olmsted Parkway, the widest old road to the beach, and the Art Deco Viaduct decorated with red, green, blue, yellow, and orange deco tiles from 1915 was intended by Frederick Law Olmsted, the founder of

landscape architecture, to be the "Gateway to Coney Island". She proposed adding 1650 sq. ft. of reliefs about Coney Island to the viaduct.

Deborah Masters' Coney Island Reliefs on Ocean Parkway Viaduct. October 2, 2009. Photo
© Bruce Handy/Pablo 57 via flickr

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One Response

1. **Bruce Handy** The gateway to Coney Island, thanks Tricia for good news. Shout out to Deborah Masters for recognizing Mr. Olmsted design and for her beautiful sculptures. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Law_Olmsted