

ARTS & CULTURE NEW YORK NEWS

NEW BOWERY MURAL BY JAPANESE ARTIST TOMOKAZU MATSUYAMA “MATZU” UNDERWAY



Untapped Cities by John Tyler Marshall



MICHELLE YOUNG

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The latest artist to grace the [Bowery Mural](#) on Houston is Japanese artist Tomokazu Matsuyama "Matzu" who started working on the mural last week and is close to wrapping up. Matzu was born in Japan but moved to New York City in 2000 and currently lives and works in Brooklyn. He will be doing a high profile installation for the 2020 Summer Olympics in Japan, building a 24-foot tall sculpture at JR Shinjuku Station consisting of stainless steel. Yesterday, we had a chance to catch up with the artist while at work on the mural.

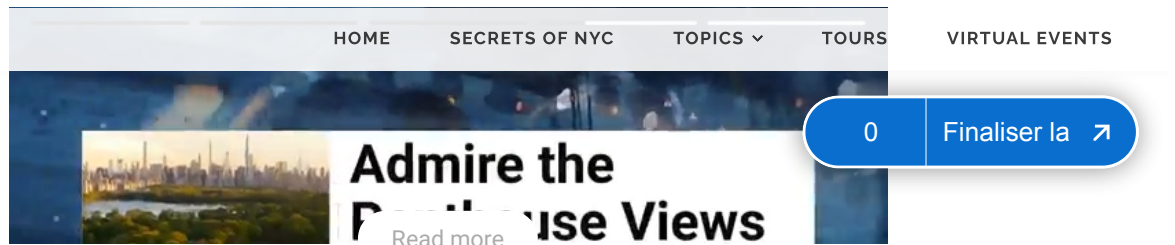
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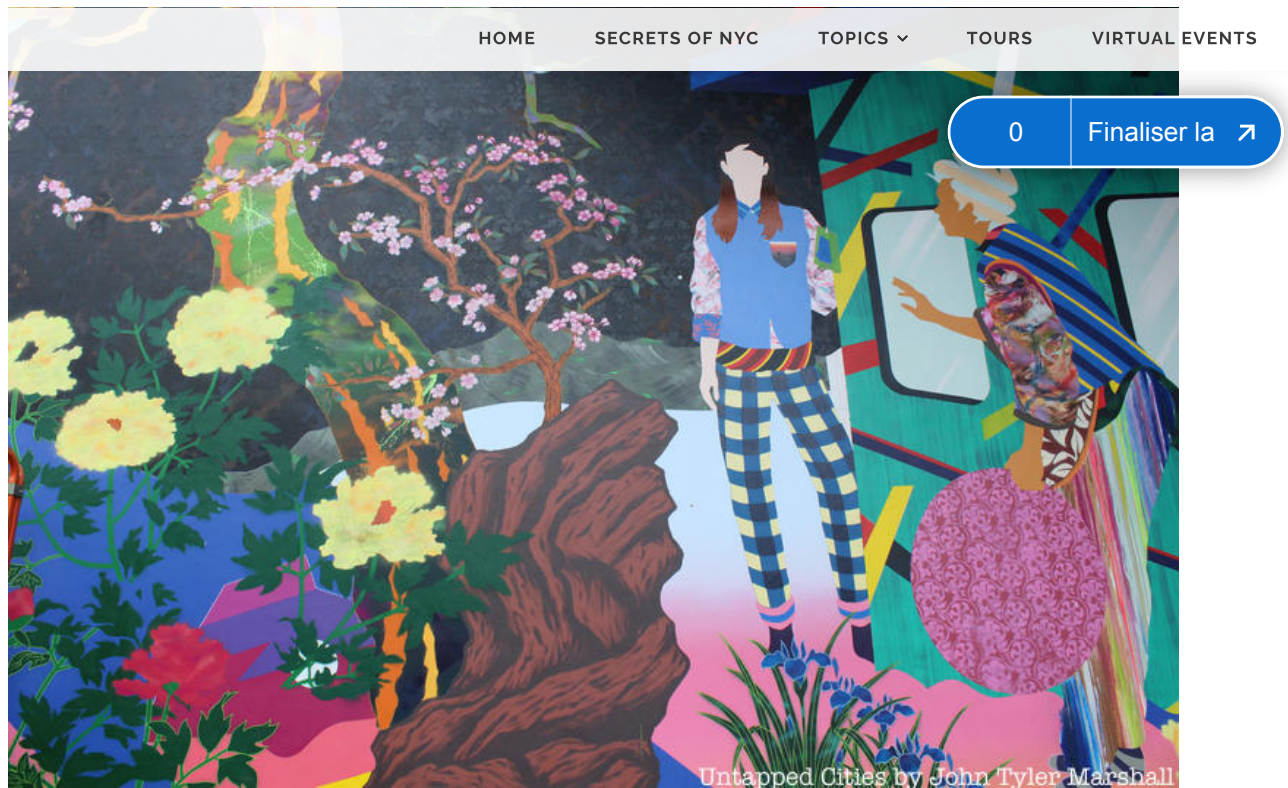
When asked how he felt about getting the opportunity to paint the mural, Matzu told Untapped Cities that this will be his biggest mural and that "it is something great because, as every artist knows, this wall is a significant monument for the world. It almost feels like you are contributing to the New York Arts culture in general. Without [SoHo](#) you can't really talk about the arts in New York and arts in the world in general." Though Matzu speaks humbly about this opportunity to paint the Bowery Mural, Shantelle Rodriguez, Director of Arts for Goldman Properties and Goldman Global Arts, tells us that "Matzu is an artist that we have been eyeing for a long time...we knew we were going to give him this wall eventually...we felt it was his time." Rodriguez said Matzu especially noted the historical link to Keith Haring, who was the first to paint this wall in the 1980s.





Matzu's wall will take two weeks and he said he had to adapt his usual technique, which involves multiple layers of highly detailed images, to the size and time constraint. He is working with a twelve-person team, working between 12 and 16 hours a day. When asked about his technique Matzu tells us, "This is where I categorize myself as a fine artist not some muralist. In this case a lot of street artists would use spray cans. I am bringing in a lot of materials that you are not supposed to use in an exterior setting like markers, lots of stenciling, pouncing (transferring an existing sketch to a specific scale). However, I went about [the mural] differently by going extremely detailed. I bring in everything. Acrylic paint, oil paint, markers, stenciling; and with the compilation of all that will come one strong, intense imagery."





Matzu melds Japanese and American imagery and fine art techniques together with contemporary textile design that speaks to New York City's diverse and global culture. Look carefully and you will see Japanese trees, like the cherry blossom, a painted New York City subway car, and interesting fabric patterns that can be used as detail on clothing, as background, or as the formative element. Matzu's mural should be complete by Monday but you can get a pretty complete view of the mural already!

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Michelle Young

Michelle is the founder of Untapped New York. She is the author of *Secret Brooklyn: An Unusual Guide*, *New York: Hidden Bars & Restaurants*, and *Broadway*. She is a graduate of Harvard College in the History of Art and Architecture and holds a master's degree in urban planning from Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, where she is an Adjunct Professor of Architecture.

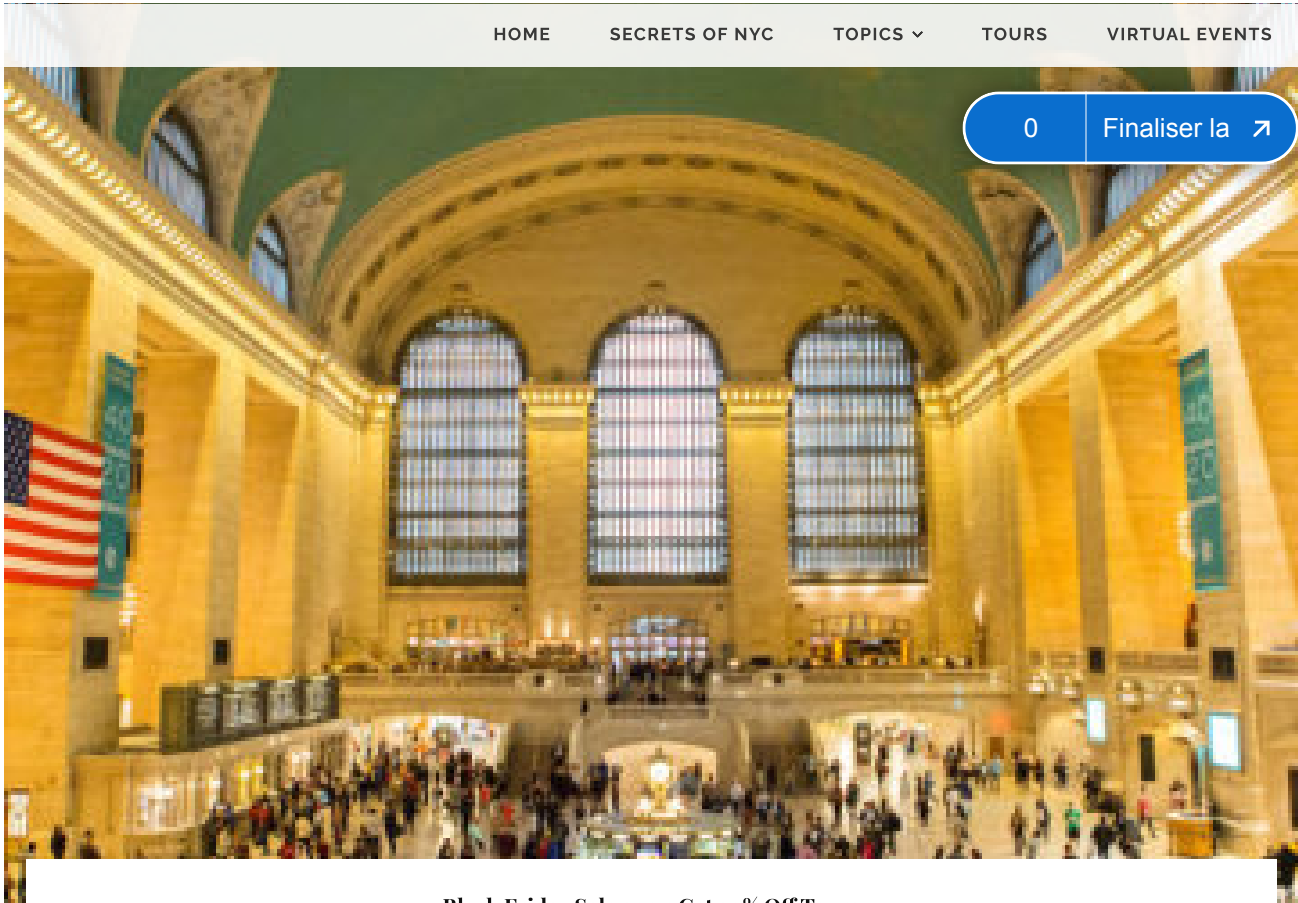


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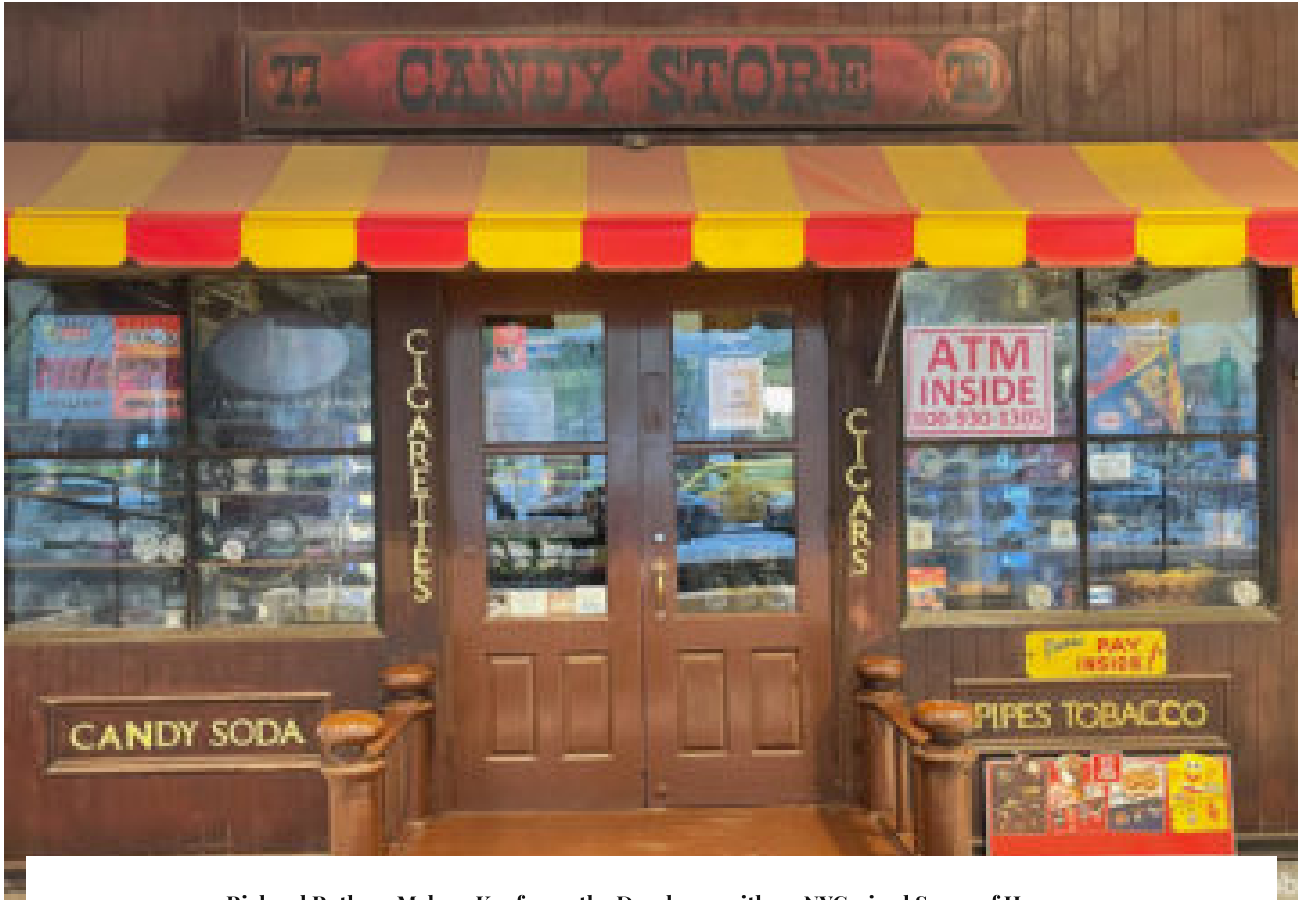
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