

# MTA to Bushwick Open Studios: Drop Dead / artcritical

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**A major cultural event is being let down by the Metropolitan Transit Authority. The Bushwick Open Studios is turning into a No Subway Series every year.**



Cynthia Hartling, *Split*, c.2011. Oil on linen, 37 x 31 inches. Courtesy of the Artist. The work is on view in the Bushwick for Open Studios, June 4th to 5th, at Centotto Annex, 1 Grattan Street, Studio #225 (hours: 11am.-7pm.) and Centotto, 250 Moore Street, #108 (hours: 3-7pm.)

For the third time in its five years history,

the annual Bushwick Open Studios festival will be hit this weekend with a recurring mass transit nightmare, a shuttered L-train. The L line on the MTA subway system is the lifeline from Bushwick to civilized points west, whether Williamsburg, Manhattan or – to adopt a Brooklyncentric, Saul Steinberg-style geography – the rest of the USA and the world. No L and Bushwick really is the bush —although artistically the neighborhood is increasingly self-sufficient.

And it isn't just Bushwick's artists and musicians who view their 'hood as the new epicenter. Bushwick Open Studios is a major cultural event with statistics that speak for themselves. The festival comprises over 380 shows in over 180 locations, all within a three square mile area, and many of these events are large studio complexes with dozens of presenting artists in each venue. Based on prior years' attendance, the organizers of the event, Arts in Bushwick, expect a turnout of over 10,000

The Metropolitan Transit Authority explains that it has little alternative to closing the L for summer weekends. Because the 100 years old L is a two-track line the whole system has to close for the removal of its old signals system. They can't work at night for visibility issues, as a span of the line is above ground, nor in winter for the same reasons. Working during the week is ruled out.

But the signals system between New York's mass transit authority and its cultural organizations also needs to be upgraded. A call is sent out to political leaders around a year ahead to ask of weekends when major events are planned; the appeal needs to be broader and the timing realistic. So too should alternatives if the subway is shuttered: three shuttle buses and a spell on the J is not feasible. (click [here](#) for Arts in Bushwick's alternative alternatives.)

The mentality that subways only exist to take people from the outer boroughs to Manhattan to work is an anachronism: Manhattanites also need to get to Brooklyn – to see art.