The Second Avenue Subway has been on the drawing boards for nearly a century, and for most of that time, it was considered a pipe dream as depression, war and municipal bankruptcy seemed to put off plans for the line for good. But in 2007, the MTA finally started digging in earnest, and now, after a decade of various delays, snafus and interminable equipment testing, the SAS is poised to open. Had it been built when first proposed, it probably wouldn’t have been much to look at. But this being 21st-century New York, the subway has plenty of what is now deemed an essential amenity for most big new construction projects: Public art. With just four stations in operation, the Second Avenue Subway boasts more public art than several existing lines put together, with mosaic installations by art-world heavyweights Chuck Close, Sara Sze, Vik Muniz and Jean Shin. As the Governor Cuomo’s Flickr page just revealed, each artist has been assigned a station to decorate, with the break down as follows.
Jean Shin revisits the olden days of the Second and Third Avenue Elevated Trains that the SAS was originally meant to replace. Her tile murals are based on photos of street scenes from the 1930s and 1940s, including one showing the El being dismantled.

The Governor swears honest-to-God that the Second Avenue Subway will open January 1.