

**ART COMMISSION AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE
NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
MONDAY, JULY 14 2003**

SPEECH DELIVERED BY MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG

TODAY IS BASTILLE DAY. MOST OF YOU KNOW WHAT THE BASTILLE WAS: A PUBLIC BUILDING IN PARIS THAT, TO PUT IT MILDLY, NEVER WON EITHER ANY POPULARITY CONTESTS OR DESIGN AWARDS. IN FACT, THE ANNIVERSARY OF ITS DESTRUCTION IS THE GREAT NATIONAL HOLIDAY OF FRANCE.

ON THIS 14TH OF JULY IN NEW YORK, IT'S OUR PLEASURE TO ACKNOWLEDGE PUBLIC DESIGNS OF A VERY DIFFERENT NATURE—DESIGNS THAT PLEASE OUR SENSES, STIR OUR IMAGINATIONS, AND THAT CELEBRATE THE SPIRIT OF A GREAT CITY IN A FREE NATION.

IN A CITY LIKE NEW YORK, EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC DESIGN MEANS EVERYTHING. WE'RE FORTUNATE TO BE MEETING IN A PRIME EXAMPLE. LOOK AT THE DESIGN OF THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY—ITS GRAVITY, GRANDEUR, AND ALSO ITS OPENNESS AND HUMAN DIMENSIONS.

FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY, WALKING BY, OR WALKING INTO, THIS LIBRARY HAS MADE GENERATIONS OF OUR CITY'S RESIDENTS FEEL PROUD TO BE NEW YORKERS. AND WE'RE GRATEFUL TO THE BOARD AND STAFF OF THE NEW YORK

PUBLIC LIBRARY--ESPECIALLY PRESIDENT PAUL LE CLERC FOR MAKING TONIGHT POSSIBLE.

THIS IS DESIGN ON A GRAND SCALE—EXECUTED BY THOMAS CARRÈRE, AN ARCHITECT WHO, FITTINGLY ENOUGH, WAS ONE OF THE MOVING SPIRITS BEHIND THE CREATION OF THE NEW YORK CITY ART COMMISSION BACK IN 1897.

BUT IMAGINATIVE DESIGN OF EVEN THE SMALLEST AND MOST UTILITARIAN PUBLIC PROJECTS ADDS HUMAN AND ECONOMIC VALUE TO OUR CITY’S ENVIRONMENT—WITHOUT NECESSARILY ADDING ANY EXPENSE.

THAT’S NOT AN EASY TASK. THANKFULLY, WE HAVE THE MEMBERS AND STAFF OF THE ART COMMISSION TO HELP US ACCOMPLISH IT. EVERY YEAR, THEY REVIEW AND APPROVE THE DESIGN FOR ART, ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPING ON CITY-OWNED PROPERTY, WHILE ALSO OVERSEEING THE PRESERVATION OF THE CITY’S ART COLLECTION. THEY DO THAT WORK WITH ENORMOUS SKILL AND DEDICATION.

THE STAFF—DEBORAH BERSHAD, KATHERINE ROMERO AND TORY JENNINGS—DO OUTSTANDING WORK. AND THE COMMISSION MEMBERS IN PARTICULAR DESERVE RECOGNITION FOR GENEROUSLY DONATING MANY HOURS OF THEIR TIME AND TALENT TO REVIEW DESIGNS AND VISIT PROJECT SITES THROUGHOUT THE FIVE BOROUGHES.

PLEASE JOIN ME IN THANKING PRESIDENT JEAN PARKER PHIFER AND THE OTHER COMMISSIONERS: THE COMMISSION'S VICE-PRESIDENT, MICHELE BOGART; ESTRELLITA BOGRAD BRODSKY; BUD KONHEIM; JOYCE FRANK MENSCHER; ABBY MILSTEIN; OTIS PRATT PEARSALL; JEAN RATHER; NANCY ROSEN; AND DONALD WALSH, AS WELL AS FORMER MEMBERS OF THE ART COMMISSION WHO HAVE SERVED IN THE PAST.

NEW YORK IS ON THE VERGE OF A GREAT NEW ERA OF BUILDING. THE REDEVELOPMENT OF LOWER MANHATTAN—THE OPENING UP OF THE FAR WEST SIDE—THE RECONSTRUCTION OF PENN STATION—THE TRANSFORMATION OF DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN—THESE AND OTHER PROJECTS WILL CHANGE THE FACE OF NEW YORK, AND KEEP US THE WORLD'S LEADING CITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

OUR ADMINISTRATION IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT GREAT PUBLIC DESIGN WILL PLAY A KEY ROLE IN EVERY ELEMENT OF THIS HISTORIC PROCESS. NEW YORKERS EXPECT NOTHING LESS.

THE PUBLIC'S INTENSE INTEREST IN THE DESIGN COMPETITION FOR THE WORLD TRADE CENTER SITE DEMONSTRATED THAT THE PEOPLE OF OUR CITY CARE PASSIONATELY ABOUT THE DESIGN OF OUR PUBLIC SPACES. IT WAS AN ENORMOUSLY STIMULATING PROCESS—ONE THAT SHOWED THAT THE

WORLD'S GREATEST ARCHITECTS ARE EAGER TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF NEW YORK.

WE'RE ALSO FORTUNATE TO BE ABLE TO DRAW ON THE TALENTS OF THOSE ARCHITECTS, IN BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS, FOR MANY OF THE PROJECTS THAT COME BEFORE THE ART COMMISSION—INCLUDING THOSE WE HONOR TONIGHT.

ALL OF THESE PROJECTS DEMONSTRATE A COMMITMENT TO THE KIND OF EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN THAT IS PART OF WHAT MAKES NEW YORK THE WORLD'S MOST EXCITING AND BEAUTIFUL CITY.

AND NOW, LET'S SHOW THE PROJECTS. *[POWER POINT PRESENTATION BEGINS]*

SINCE 1899, THE BROOKLYN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM HAS BEEN A WELCOMING DESTINATION FOR YOUNGSTERS AND THEIR FAMILIES. IT PROVIDES HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES WITH MUSIC, ART AND THE NATURAL SCIENCES. THE MUSEUM'S \$39 MILLION EXPANSION WILL RENOVATE AND UPDATE EXISTING SPACES AND CREATE NEW, FIRST-CLASS EXHIBITION AREAS. A LONG-NEED CAFETERIA WILL BE ADDED; SO WILL PARKING. THE MUSEUM'S STREETScape WILL BE ENLIVENED BY A COLORFUL FAÇADE, AND

NEW GARDENS WILL MORE CLOSELY INTEGRATE THE MUSEUM WITH ITS SETTING IN BROWER PARK.

ACCEPTING THE AWARD FOR THIS DESIGN ARE:

RAFAEL VIÑOLY AND LAURA GELSO OF RAFAEL ARCHITECTS; DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION COMMISSIONER KEN HOLDEN; DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER KATE LEVIN; AND CAROL ENSEKI AND PAUL GANGSEI OF THE BROOKLYN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM.

AS MOST OF YOU KNOW, KEN IS LEAVING CITY GOVERNMENT FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR. HIS SERVICE TO NEW YORK HAS BEEN OUTSTANDING. WE'LL MISS HIM—AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING TO WORK WITH HIM IN THE NEXT PHASE OF HIS CAREER.

IN THE LAST 18 MONTHS, RIDERSHIP ON PRIVATELY OPERATED FERRIES IN NEW YORK CITY HAS MORE THAN DOUBLED—AND OUR ADMINISTRATION IS COMMITTED TO KEEPING THOSE NUMBERS CLIMBING. THE NEW MANHATTAN EAST RIVER FERRY LANDINGS AT 34TH, 62ND, AND 75TH STREETS WILL ENCOURAGE RIDERSHIP. THE USE OF LUSTROUS, REFLECTIVE METAL WILL GIVE THE TERMINALS A SHARED DESIGN THEME; AT THE SAME TIME, CARE HAS BEEN TAKEN AT EACH SITE TO MAKE THE MOST OF VIEW CORRIDORS. F. SCOTT FITZGERALD DESCRIBED THE EXCITEMENT OF CROSSING THE EAST RIVER INTO MANHATTAN AS BEING LIKE “SEEING THE CITY FOR THE FIRST TIME, IN ITS FIRST WILD

**PROMISE OF ALL THE MYSTERY AND THE BEAUTY IN THE WORLD.”
FERRY RIDERS DOCKING AT THESE TERMINALS WILL EXPERIENCE
THAT SAME THRILL.**

**ACCEPTING THE AWARDS ARE: FRANO VIOLICH OF KENNEDY &
VIOLICH ARCHITECTURE; KEN SMITH, WORKSHOP: KEN SMITH
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT; MALCOLM MCLAREN OF THE MCLAREN
ENGINEERING GROUP; ANDREW ALPER, PRESIDENT OF THE NEW
YORK CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION; AND
COMMISSIONER IRIS WEINSHALL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION.**

**SINCE 1971, THE BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS HAS EXHIBITED
THE WORKS OF CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS, WITH A FOCUS ON THE
BRONX. A RECENT EXHIBIT, FOR EXAMPLE, LOOKED AT THE
IMPACT OF HIP-HOP MUSIC ON CONTEMPORARY ART. IT HAS ALSO
BEEN THE PROUD FLAGSHIP OF THE REVIVAL OF THE GRAND
CONCOURSE. AN \$8.2 MILLION EXPANSION AND RENOVATION WILL
DRAMATICALLY ENHANCE THIS IMPORTANT MUSEUM. A FACETED,
ORIGAMI-LIKE ADDITION WILL HOUSE NEW GALLERIES AND PUBLIC
SPACES. IT WILL COMPLEMENT THE OUTSTANDING ARCHITECTURE
OF THE GRAND CONCOURSE.**

ACCEPTING THE AWARD ARE:

**BERNARDO FORT-BRESCIA OF ARQUITECTONICA; COMMISSIONER
KEN HOLDEN OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN AND
CONSTRUCTION; COMMISSIONER KATE LEVIN OF THE**

**DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS; OLIVIA GEORGIA,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS
AND JENNY DIXON, FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
MUSEUM.**

**THIS CITY OF ISLANDS HAS MORE THAN 2,000 BRIDGES—AND
WE’RE STILL BUILDING THEM. THE NEWEST BRIDGE WILL BE ONE
OF THE MOST ARCHITECTURALLY STRIKING: THE FOUR-LANE
CABLE-STAY BRIDGE ON EAST 153RD STREET, LINKING THE GRAND
CONCOURSE AND PARK AVENUE IN THE BRONX. IT WILL REPLACE
A BRIDGE DEMOLISHED SOME 20 YEARS AGO; ITS CONSTRUCTION
WILL HELP REVITALIZE THE MELROSE COMMONS AND
CONCOURSE SHOPPING PLAZA AREAS. AND THE BRIDGE’S
SLENDER CABLES AND GRACEFUL TOWERS WILL CONVEY A
MODERN, MINIMALIST LOOK THAT IS DESTINED TO MAKE IT A 21ST
CENTURY ICON IN OUR CITY.**

**ACCEPTING THE AWARD IS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSIONER IRIS WEINSHALL; HENRY PERAHIA, AND
LAWRENCE KING OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION;
ALIM BAYCORA AND NEAL FORSHNER OF CTE ENGINEERS; AND
JEFFREY HAN OF DANIEL FRANKFURT.**

**THE HANDSOME AND DIGNIFIED DESIGN OF THE NEW FOUR-STORY
SANITATION GARAGE AT 12TH AVENUE AND WEST 57TH STREET IN
MANHATTAN HONORS THE HARD AND VITAL WORK OF ONE OF**

OUR CITY'S MOST IMPORTANT AGENCIES. ITS HIGH-PROFILE LOCATION WILL MAKE IT THE DEPARTMENT'S "FLAGSHIP" BUILDING. AN ATTRACTIVE GRANITE, LIMESTONE AND GLASS CONSTRUCTION INTEGRATES THE BUILDING WITH ITS MIDTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD, AND A CURVED "WAVE WALL" PICKS UP THE ENERGY OF THE TRAFFIC ON THE WEST SIDE HIGHWAY AND THE FLOW OF THE NEARBY HUDSON RIVER.

ACCEPTING THE AWARD ARE:

COMMISSIONER JOHN DOHERTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION; MIKE FRIEDLANDER AND DANNY WALSH, DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION; AND KEVIN McMAHON, OF IFFLAND KAVANAGH WATERBURY.

IN EVERY BOROUGH, OUR ADMINISTRATION IS OPENING UP NEW STRETCHES OF OUR MORE THAN 600 MILES OF SHORELINE TO PUBLIC USE AND ENJOYMENT. THE NEXT PROJECT, BARRETTO POINT PARK, WILL TRANSFORM A "BROWNFIELD" IN THE SOUTH BRONX INTO THE COMMUNITY'S FIRST WATERFRONT PARK. IT WILL HAVE A BEACH—OR, EN ESPAÑOL, "PLAYITA." THERE WILL ALSO BE A SHOREFRONT PROMENADE AND AN AMPITHEATRE OVERLOOKING THE EAST RIVER. THE DESIGN FOR BARRETTO POINT PARK IS AN OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF RECLAIMING A NEGLECTED STRETCH OF WATERFRONT AS AN ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY RESOURCE.

ACCEPTING THE AWARD FOR THIS PROJECT ARE:

RICARDO HINKLE, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, AND RACHEL KRAMER, AND COMMISSIONER ADRIAN BENEPE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION.

AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS WAS A TRUE NEW YORK ORIGINAL. THE SON OF WORKING CLASS IMMIGRANT PARENTS, HE ALMOST SINGLE-HANDEDLY PUT AMERICAN SCULPTURE ON THE INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL MAP WITH PUBLIC SCULPTURES THROUGHOUT OUR CITY. HIS FIRST MAJOR PUBLIC COMMISSION, IN 1881, WAS HIS STATUE OF THE “DAMN THE TORPEDOS, FULL SPEED AHEAD!” CIVIL WAR HERO, ADMIRAL DAVID FARRAGUT. IT WAS A COLLABORATION WITH THE RENOWNED ARCHITECT WILLIAM STANFORD WHITE, WHO DESIGNED THE STATUE’S SETTING IN MADISON SQUARE PARK. THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF THE MUNICIPAL ART SOCIETY AND ITS PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY THROUGH THE ADOPT-A-MONUMENT PROGRAM, THE FARRAGUT MONUMENT HAS BEEN BEAUTIFULLY RESTORED BY A TALENTED CONSERVATION TEAM.

ACCEPTING THE AWARD ARE:

JACKIE AND CAMERON WILSON OF WILSON CONSERVATION; KENT BARWICK, PRESIDENT, AND PHYLLIS COHEN, PROGRAM DIRECTOR FOR THE MUNICIPAL ART SOCIETY; AND

**COMMISSIONER ADRIAN BENEPE AND ART AND ANTIQUITIES
DIRECTOR JONATHAN KUHN OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND
RECREATION.**

**P.S. 1 IS PART OF THE CONSTELLATION OF ARTS ORGANIZATIONS
THAT IS MAKING WESTERN QUEENS ONE OF NEW YORK'S MOST
EXCITING CULTURAL DESTINATIONS. IT IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S
OLDEST ORGANIZATIONS DEVOTED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF
CONTEMPORARY ART. THAT PROGRESSIVE MISSION IS ECHOED IN
THIS SPECTACULAR DESIGN FOR THE MUSEUM'S NEW FAÇADE
LIGHTING. IT WILL DRAMATICALLY ILLUMINATE THE BUILDING'S
ENTRANCES AND DECORATIVE TERRA COTTA PEDIMENTS. IT IS A
LIGHTING SCHEME THAT IS AS MODERN AS THE ART INSIDE THIS
HISTORIC BUILDING.**

ACCEPTING THE AWARD ARE:

**BRAD GREENWOOD AND KAREN DAVIDSON OF PS 1;
HERVE DESCOTTES AND NATHALIE BARENDS OF
L'OBSERVATOIRE; COMMISSIONER KEN HOLDEN OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION; AND
COMMISSIONER KATE LEVIN OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL
AFFAIRS.**

**THE LAST AWARD OF THE EVENING CELEBRATES THE 20TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE "PERCENT FOR ART" PROGRAM.**

ESTABLISHED IN 1983, IT PROVIDES THAT ONE PER CENT OF CAPITAL FUNDS FOR CIVIC AND COMMUNITY PROJECTS ARE ALLOCATED TO PUBLIC ART THAT IS INTEGRATED INTO THE FACILITY DESIGN. THE PROGRAM HAS COMPLETED 177 PROJECTS IN ALL FIVE BOROUGHES, WITH ANOTHER 50 IN PROGRESS. THEY GIVE PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND BACKGROUNDS THE OPPORTUNITY TO COME INTO CONTACT WITH PUBLIC ART AS PART OF THEIR DAILY LIVES.

THE ART COMMISSION AND I SALUTE THE WORK OF THE “PERCENT FOR ART” STAFF OVER THE LAST TWENTY YEARS, INCLUDING THE LEADERSHIP OF PAST DIRECTORS JENNY DIXON, JENNIFER MCGREGOR AND TOM FINKELPEARL, AND CURRENT DIRECTOR CHARLOTTE COHEN. WE ALSO RECOGNIZE KATE LEVIN, COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS, FOR HER SUPPORT OF CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC ART IN THE CITY’S CAPITAL PROGRAM.

ACCEPTING THE AWARD ARE: COMMISSIONER KATE LEVIN; SUSAN CHIN, AND CATHIE BEHREND OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS; CHARLOTTE COHEN, DIRECTOR, PERCENT FOR ART PROGRAM, AND FORMER DIRECTORS JENNIFER MCGREGOR, TOM FINKELPEARL, AND JENNY DIXON.

- THAT ENDS OUR EVENT FOR THE EVENING. I WANT TO THANK ALL OF YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT FOR EXCELLENCE IN**

**DESIGN IN NEW YORK CITY. PLEASE JOIN US IN THE GREAT
HALL FOR A RECEPTION.**

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