

NEW YORK AVE

SCULPTURE PROJECT

AT NATIONAL MUSEUM
OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS

Fact Sheet

WHAT IS IT?

The New York Avenue Sculpture Project is the first and only major outdoor sculpture corridor in our Nation's capital, featuring changing installations of world-class art by women.

This private-public partnership spearheaded by the NMWA was developed in collaboration with the DC Office of Planning and the Downtown DC Business Improvement District (BID). The Sculpture Project is a revitalization initiative that will change the face of downtown New York Avenue, N.W. between 13th and 9th streets so that it once again becomes a destination point. Not only will this new public art space transform the downtown D.C. area, but it will also promote cultural tourism and provide free access to the arts for the community.

WHY THIS PROJECT?

As any visitor to our nation's capital knows, there is a great deal of traditional public sculpture in Washington, D.C. However, in the area around the museum, no such cultural monuments exist. In addition, of all the sculpture in the nation's capital, little of it is modern or contemporary and precious few works are by women. Working to redress this imbalance, the program also represents a long-term commitment to the artistic beautification of New York Avenue. With temporary sculpture installations that will change every 1 to 3 years, this project will create a visually exciting landmark and a recognizable destination point in the capital city.

As planned, the New York Avenue Sculpture Project also will enable NMWA to bring new meaning to its mission by bringing the museum "out into the street" and into the community.

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WHO IS THE FIRST ARTIST?

French-born artist Niki de Saint Phalle's bold and joyful sculptures have been chosen to inaugurate this project. Saint Phalle (1930–2002) lived in both the U.S. and Europe, traveled the world, and was an avid student of mythology and history. As a visual artist, Saint Phalle was largely self-taught. She allied herself with the Nouveaux Réalistes group in France who used their work to challenge conventional ideas about fine art.

Best known for her Stravinsky Fountain, 1982, in front of the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris (with floating lips, mythical birds, elephants, and other colorfully exuberant creatures), Saint Phalle created scores of outdoor sculptures and public art projects around the world. For her Tarot Garden, 1978–98, in rural Garavicchio, Italy, Saint Phalle built monumental sculptures with bright colors and shimmering surfaces into the rugged hillside. The installation for the New York Avenue Sculpture Project continues Saint Phalle's custom of presenting whimsical yet monumental art in public spaces.

WHEN WILL THE SCULPTURE PROJECT OPEN?

The dedication of Phase 1 of the project will occur on Wednesday, April 28, 2010 with a ribbon-cutting at 1:30 p.m. and an evening celebration inside the museum.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

The New York Avenue Sculpture Project will be created in four phases between 2010 and 2015.

HOW IS THE PROJECT FUNDED?

The project is currently funded through support from NMWA National Advisory Board member Medda Gudelsky, the Downtown DC BID, Wilhelmin and Wallace Holladay, the Philip L. Graham Fund, the Homer and Martha Gudelsky Family Foundation, Fed Ex, Shelia C. Johnson, CEO, Salamander Hospitality LLC, NMWA members and others. The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is also funding the project through its Transportation Enhancement Program. The Enhancement Program provides grant funding for non-traditional projects that are linked to the district's transportation system.

NATIONAL MUSEUM *of* WOMEN *in the* ARTS

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