

# The Landmarks Of New York

## Exhibition Description & Specifications

### Curator and Author

Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel (biography follows)  
Chair, Historic Landmarks Preservation Center

Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel, writer, television interviewer, and producer, former White House assistant and the first Director of Cultural Affairs of New York City, was also the longest-term Commissioner to have served on the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, from 1972 to 1987.

From 1987 to 1995, she was Chair of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Foundation. Among the Foundation's projects were the design and placement of historic district street signs, descriptive markers and maps in each of New York's 84 historic districts, the creation of bronze plaques that describe each of the more than 1,100 individually designated landmark buildings, as well as public forums, and exhibitions.

In 1987, she was appointed by the President of the United States to the Board of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and was named the Chair of the Subcommittee on Art for Public Spaces (all the original art commissioned for the museum.) From 1990 to 1994, she was a member of the Art Commission of New York City. She also served on the New York City Commission of Cultural Affairs for more than a decade.

In 1995, she became the Chair of the Historic Landmarks Preservation Center, an organization whose projects include the Cultural Medallion program which documents and highlights celebrated New Yorkers, notable occurrences, and other important aspects of New York City's cultural, economic, political, and social history. The Historic Landmarks Preservation Center publishes books, creates exhibitions that are locally, nationally, and internationally circulated; organizes public forums and public outreach about historical events, locations and persons, and seeks to assist and support outstanding cultural resources. She continues to serve as the Chair of the HLPC.

In 1996, she was appointed by the President of the United States, to the U.S.

Commission of Fine Arts, and reappointed in 2001. The Commission advises on matters of design affecting the appearance of Washington, DC, in particular the architecture of public buildings, parks, and memorials, and private structures in certain areas of the capital. She was elected Vice Chair of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts in 2002.

She is currently on the Board of Directors of the Fresh Air Fund, the Museum of Women/Leadership Center, The Friends of The High Line, and the New York State Historic Archives Trust. In addition, she serves on the Drawing Committee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and has served on the Drawing Committee of the Whitney Museum of American Art. She has served on the Board of Directors of Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts, the Film Anthology Archives, the Municipal Art Society, the Central Park Conservancy, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Board of Trustees of the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, The New York Historical Society, PEN-American Center, American Council on the Arts, the Bicentennial Commission, Big Apple Circus, among others. This year, (2004) she has been the juror of the first five borough low cost housing competition to be held in NYC in 100 years; of the competition to build a museum/education center addition to the Vietnam Veterans Wall in Washington, DC; and for the re-use of the High Line as a public park in NYC.

Ms. Diamonstein earned a doctorate from New York University, with high honors, and is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including, in 1990, an Honorary Doctorate from The Maryland Institute, College of Art. In April, 1994, she became the first woman to be honored with the Pratt Institute Founder's Award. In June 1995, she was honored by the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York with its annual "Visionary in the Arts" award. In September 1996, she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Longwood University in Virginia. She is the recipient of the Heritage Trails Award, 1998; Spirit of the City Award Women's City Club, 1998; the HELP Award HELP, USA, 1999; from

The Upper East Side Historic District, Ralph Menapace, Jr. Preservation Award; Miami Beach Art Deco Society Preservation Award; and was named the first woman to be an honorary member of PEN-Slovakia. In 2003, she was honored with the Gen. Milan R. Stefanik Award, which is given to distinguished individuals who in a significant way have contributed to the advancement of public knowledge about the Slovak nation and the Slovak cause. In 2004, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs decorated her for "her remarkable personal contribution to the development of a civil society in Slovakia through culture and communication,

and for the promotion of the bilateral relations between the Slovak Republic and the United States of America,” the Gold Medal was conferred by Eduard Kukan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the SR.

In February 2005, she was named an Honorary Member of the American Institute of Architects. In April 2005, she will be awarded the Humanitarian Award of the Jewish Women’s Foundation in New York.

She is the author of 19 books, including *The Landmarks of New York I., II., and III.*; *Remaking America*; *Handmade in America*; *Buildings Reborn*; *New Uses, Old Places*; *Inside New York’s Art World*; *Collaborations*; *Artists and Architects*; and *Landmarks: Eighteen Wonders of the New World*, a book for young readers. *Inside the Art World: Conversations with Barbaralee Diamonstein*, is a book of interviews with distinguished artists, museum directors, curators, collectors and dealers, with accompanying photographs. She contributes the essay on the history of the U.S. crafts for the book, *The White House Crafts Collection*.

In addition to her numerous civic involvements, she has been the interviewer/producer for six television series concerning the arts and architecture for the Arts & Entertainment Network, as well as many programs for CBS, ABC, Channel 5, and WNYC-TV. She is also the curator of six international museum exhibitions, each based on one of her books, which have traveled nationally and internationally, three sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution. She is also the author of numerous magazine and newspaper articles.

She is married to Carl Spielvogel, the former Ambassador to The Slovak Republic, and a leading international business executive.