

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Time Out

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21 January 2021



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A 10-foot-tall sculpture now looms over NYC's Rockefeller Center Channel Gardens, gazing up at 30 Rock—a stance we've all taken at some point, whether as a tourist or a passerby.

The stainless steel artwork by American artist Tom Friedman was just unveiled at the entrance to the gardens located on Fifth Avenue between 49th and 50th streets, and it'll be standing tall until March 19.

Titled "Looking Up," the humanoid figure was created with crushed aluminum foil pans which, through a process of lost wax casting, retains the imprint of the original materials. The sculpture combines Friedman's interests in the supernatural and experiential, according to Rockefeller Center's developer Tishman Speyer.



Image: Kat Harris, Courtesy Tom Friedman/Tishman Speyer

"People tend to physically internalize figurative sculpture. They mimic the sculpture's gesture. 'Looking Up' represents a request to look beyond oneself and to engage in wonder, discovery, awe, and also positivity," said Tom Friedman.

In 2016, an earlier version of the sculpture that stood 33-feet tall was installed on Park Avenue and East 53rd Street. Since then, versions of it have been installed as public art at the Contemporary Austin in Austin, Texas and Forest Park, St. Louis, Missouri.

"Since its inception, visitors have marveled while 'looking up' at the unmatched architecture and design of Rockefeller Center's campus, from The Rink at Rockefeller Center in the original sunken plaza to Top of the Rock Observation Deck atop 30 Rockefeller Plaza, so it is especially fitting to

feature Tom Friedman's incredible work in our 2021 public art program," said EB Kelly, Tishman Speyer Managing Director overseeing Rockefeller Center.

Friedman, who is from St. Louis, is known for his painstakingly rendered sculptures and works on paper that inhabit "the grey areas between the ordinary and the monstrous, the infinitesimal and the infinite, the rational and the uncanny," Tishman Speyer says. "His work is often deceptive, its handmade intricacy masked by a seemingly mass-produced or prefabricated appearance. Friedman's deadpan presentation implies content and form are seamless; expectations are overturned as the viewer slowly perceives that chasm between illusion and reality."

His work has been shown around the world, including in solo exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, Fondazione Prada in Milan, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, the South London Gallery, and numerous other institutions.