

Stephen Friedman Gallery

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Image: The mold for Friedman's Looking Up was created with crushed aluminum foil pans.

Looking Up, a 10-foot tall stainless steel sculpture by American artist Tom Friedman, depicting a quasi-human figure gazing up to the heavens, is being displayed at the entrance of Rockefeller Center's Channel Gardens located on 5th Avenue between 49th and 50th Streets, Manhattan, from January 20 – March 19.

The mold for Friedman's Looking Up was created with crushed aluminum foil pans which, through a process of lost wax casting, retains the imprint of the original materials. The magnificent piece, full of awe and wonder, is a perfect example of Friedman's interest in the supernatural and experiential.

"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.

"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.

An earlier edition of the Looking Up sculpture which stood 33-feet tall was temporarily installed on Park Avenue and East 53rd Street in 2016. Since then, two examples of the sculpture have been permanently placed as public artworks at the Contemporary Austin in Austin, Texas and Forest Park, St. Louis, Missouri, as an acquisition of the Gateway Foundation.

Tom Friedman (b. 1965, Saint Louis, MO) makes extraordinary work that explores ideas of perception, logic, and possibility. His often painstakingly rendered sculptures and works on paper inhabit the grey areas between the ordinary and the monstrous, the infinitesimal and the infinite, the rational and the uncanny. 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.

Friedman's work has been long been exhibited both domestically and internationally in galleries and museums, including solo exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Fondazione Prada, Milan; Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall; the Tel Aviv Museum of Art; the South London Gallery, and numerous other institutions. He is represented by Lühring Augustine, New York and Stephen Friedman Gallery, London.