

— For Immediate Release

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Tishman Speyer Properties presents...
Jonathan Borofsky's *Walking to the Sky*
At Rockefeller Center
Organized by the Public Art Fund
September 14 – October 18, 2004

NEW YORK, August 12, 2004 – This September, internationally renowned artist Jonathan Borofsky will exhibit a monumental sculpture at Rockefeller Center, his first-ever major outdoor work in New York City. *Walking to the Sky*—the latest work in Borofsky's ongoing exploration of universal human forms—depicts a number of different people scaling a soaring 100-foot-tall stainless steel pole. *Walking to the Sky*, presented by Tishman Speyer Properties and organized by the Public Art Fund, will be on view on the plaza at Rockefeller Center from September 14 through October 18. This will be the artist's first solo show in New York in almost a decade.

The piece, *Walking to the Sky*, stands 100 feet tall and sprouts out of the ground like a contemporary counterpart to Jack's fairytale beanstalk. The stainless steel pole tilts at an impossibly steep 75 degree angle, but several figures have undertaken the climb, striding purposefully upward, among them a little girl with pigtails, a businesswoman, a young man in a t-shirt, and several others. Three people stand at the bottom, looking up. The work is inspired by a story that Borofsky's father used to tell him when he was a child about a friendly giant who

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lived in the sky. In each tale, father and son would travel up to the sky to talk to the giant about what needed to be done for everyone back on earth. The sculpture is, the artist says, a “celebration of the human potential for discovering who we are and where we need to go.”

Jonathan Borofsky’s large-scale sculptures—which include permanent outdoor commissions in Berlin, Minneapolis, Baltimore, and other cities around the world—depict the human form in simple, universally appealing ways. The figures often begin as spontaneous, almost-childlike sketches made from his dreams or subconscious doodles, which he then develops in his works on paper, paintings, small sculptures, wall drawings, and installations. From *Hammering Man*—a two-dimensional figure whose mechanized arm swings perpetually up and down, a stand-in for the artist himself as well as an archetypal representation of the “worker in all of us”—to *Molecule Man* and *Briefcase Man*, Borofsky’s recurring characters are all part of the artist’s larger search for human understanding.

Walking to the Sky has two direct predecessors: *Man Walking to the Sky*, shown at Documenta IX in Kassel, Germany in 1992, and *Woman Walking to the Sky*, which Borofsky made for Strasbourg, France two years later. For this exhibition, Borofsky has transformed these intrepid solo figures into a multitude. “It is all of humanity rising upwards from the earth to the heavens above—striving into the future with strength and determination....We are all learning to be free and ultimately this sculpture is a symbol of our collective search for wisdom and awakened consciousness.”

About Jonathan Borofsky

For an artist who has personalized public spaces all over the world with some of contemporary art’s most recognized icons, Borofsky’s earliest work is remarkably introverted. As a young artist living in New York, he began writing down sequential numbers on loose sheets of paper, beginning 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and so on. By the time he exhibited the ongoing work, *Counting*, at Artists Space in Soho in 1973 (his first solo exhibition), the stack of paper was several feet tall; in 1994, he had counted up to almost 6 million. He began the work as a mind-clearing activity, and after several years of simple numbering, found himself doodling on the margins. In 1972, Borofsky decided to make a painting of one such doodle, and instead of an artist’s signature, he included the number where the original image appeared in his counting. He continued to do this

for some time, creating representational works and assigning them the corresponding number from *Counting*. Wedding the rigorous discipline of Minimalist and Conceptual art—two art movements at their height in the late 1960s and early 1970s—with his own deeply introspective imagery, Borofsky created a singular system to anchor his works to one another and to a moment in time.

Borofsky became a central figure of American contemporary art around 1975, when he first exhibited at Paula Cooper Gallery, filling the space with a dense assortment of artworks and found objects. Some of his best-known imagery, including *Running Man*, made its first appearance in that exhibition. Since that time, Borofsky has continued generate and reiterate images, creating a constellation of personal icons. He exhibited internationally throughout the 1980s, becoming one of a handful of artists first associated with the installation art movement. Near the end of that decade he began to create his large-scale public sculptures, as a way of “making symbols people can work with in their daily lives.”

Boston in 1942, Jonathan Borofsky studied at the Carnegie Mellon University (BFA) and the Yale School of Art and Architecture (MFA). He has created more than 30 permanent and temporary public sculptures for cities around the world, including *Ballerina Clown* (1989) in Venice California; the 100-foot-tall *Molecule Man* (1999) which stands in the Spree River in Berlin; and the 70-foot-tall *Hammering Man* (1990) in Frankfurt, Germany. His most recent permanent public sculpture, *Male/Female* (2004), was installed in front of Baltimore’s Penn Station earlier this year. Borofsky’s last New York exhibition of new sculpture took place in 1995 at Paula Cooper Gallery. He currently lives in Maine.

About Public Art Fund

Public Art Fund is New York’s leading presenter of artists’ projects, new commissions, installations and exhibitions in public spaces. For more than 25 years, the Public Art Fund has been committed to working with emerging and established artists to produce innovative exhibitions of contemporary art throughout New York City. By bringing artworks outside the traditional context of museums and galleries, the Public Art Fund provides a unique platform for an unparalleled public encounter with the art of our time.

About Tishman Speyer Properties

Tishman Speyer Properties is the co-owner and manager of Rockefeller Center, which is the home to NBC Universal, Christies Auction House, Radio City Music Hall and the Rainbow Room among many other famous restaurants and retailers. Rockefeller Center is the site of numerous public exhibits and events, including annual installations of public art, the New York International Orchid Show, the Christie's Collector's Car Show, and live broadcast of the U.S. Open tennis championships. The annual art installation at Rockefeller Center is consistent with Tishman Speyer's commitment to bringing world-class art to the public in its more than 40 buildings around the globe. Tishman Speyer has earned a worldwide reputation for innovative utilization of public art in its signature commercial properties, which include Rockefeller Center and The Chrysler Center in New York City, and the Sony Center in Berlin.

Tishman Speyer Properties and Public Art Fund have presented other major works of art to the millions of people who visit and work at this New York landmark. Last fall, Takashi Murakami's *Reversed Double Helix* featured *Mr. Pointy*, his largest freestanding sculpture to date, two giant floating balloons suspended over the center, and a forest of mushroom seating. Nam June Paik's *Transmission* broadcast a nightly laser display around the plaza in the summer of 2002. In 2000, Jeff Koons' monumental topiary *Puppy* blossomed at the foot of 30 Rockefeller Plaza, and the following year, Louise Bourgeois presented three massive bronze spiders, including the thirty-foot-tall *Maman*. Each day an estimated 250,000 people walk through the Rockefeller Plaza complex, which is home to the most famous Christmas tree in the world.