



**For Immediate Release**

**Madison Square Park Conservancy's Mad. Sq. Art  
Endows Curator Post Named For Legendary Director  
Martin Friedman**

**Position To Be Funded By \$2 Million Endowment  
With Capital Campaign Currently Underway**

**Program To Be Launched With A Gala Benefit  
On May 31, 2012  
Celebrating Martin Friedman's Sixty-Year Career In The Arts**

**New York, March 9, 2012--Madison Square Park Conservancy's Mad. Sq. Art** announces the establishment of a new, permanent **Martin Friedman Curator** position, to be supported by a developing \$2 million endowment. The new position, established to further support Mad. Sq. Art's initiatives in bringing contemporary art outdoors within the Park, recognizes **Martin Friedman**, former Director of the Walker Art Center and current member of Mad. Sq. Art's Art Advisory Committee. Mr. Friedman's influence and contributions over six decades to the field of contemporary art have guided artists, curators, and current and former museum directors alike, and this position will provide ongoing recognition for Mr. Friedman's scholarly, curatorial, and museum work. The Martin Friedman Curator at Mad. Sq. Art will play an integral role in conceptualizing, planning, and presenting contemporary art exhibitions for the program and will participate in the selection process of exhibitions with the Madison Square Park Conservancy Art Advisory Committee.

**President of the Madison Square Park Conservancy, Debbie Landau states,** "As the Madison Square Park Conservancy enters its second decade of bringing contemporary art to Madison Square Park, we are excited to secure the future of our program through the endowment of a permanent curatorial post within Mad. Sq. Art. The opportunity to honor one of the foremost museum directors of our time, who has devoted the last decade to strengthening our program and has brought it into international view, has quickly revealed how many artists, arts professionals, philanthropists, and civic leaders have a connection to the program and to Martin personally. Martin is an invaluable resource for us and ardent supporter of ours, and without his hand, the program would not be what it is today."

**Honoree Martin Friedman comments,** "The exhibitions in Madison Square Park provide unrivaled opportunities for artists to make new works in a major public setting. For many artists the Park offers opportunities to create works in a variety of materials

and techniques. It provides an invaluable ongoing educational process for artists and public alike.”

The permanent, named, curatorial position is being funded by the establishment of a \$2 million endowment, the capital campaign for which has also recently been launched. Nearly \$1 million has been raised to date through generous gifts and grants.

The creation of this endowment honoring Martin Friedman will be further celebrated with a gala benefit on **Thursday, May 31, 2012**. The evening will be chaired by Director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, **Adam D. Weinberg**; President Emerita of MoMA and Chairperson of MoMA PS1 **Agnes Gund**; artist **Chuck Close**; philanthropist and curator **Toby Devan Lewis**; President of the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation **Dorothy Lichtenstein**; artist **Ursula von Rydingsvard**; and artist **Mark di Suvero**.

For the benefit, more than 300 invited guests including artists, patrons of the Mad. Sq. Art program, and friends and fans of Martin Friedman will gather at the Prince George Ballroom near Madison Square Park in celebration of this historic occasion. Madison Square Park Conservancy President **Debbie Landau** will pay tribute to Martin, together with Event Chair and Director of the Whitney Museum of American Art **Adam D. Weinberg**, who served as a curator under Friedman at the Walker at the start of his career. Artists and special guests including **Lynda Benglis, Frank Gehry, Philip Glass, David Hockney, Charles Long, Cindy Sherman, Leo Villareal**, and many others will be in attendance for this special evening. The benefit will also feature special performances by artists and performers whose lives and work have intersected with Martin Friedman and his groundbreaking work at the Walker Art Center.

The benefit to support the Martin Friedman Curator position will coincide with Mad. Sq. Art's presentation of ***Pet Sounds***, an interactive, large-scale, mixed-media installation created by California-based artist **Charles Long**, an artist admired and encouraged by Martin Friedman. The installation will be on view from May 2 through September 9, 2012.

Since its inception, Mad. Sq. Art has transformed Madison Square Park into an open-air museum, presenting more than twenty free and open to the public, contemporary art exhibitions by acclaimed artists including: **Alison Saar, Bill Beirne, Jim Campbell, Richard Deacon, Bill Fontana, Ernie Gehr, Antony Gormley, Jene Highstein, Tadashi Kawamata, Mel Kendrick, Sol LeWitt, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Jacco Olivier, Roxy Paine, Jaume Plensa, Ursula von Rydingsvard, Jessica Stockholder, Mark di Suvero, William Wegman**, and more. The program's exhibitions reach a daily audience of more than 50,000 visitors to the Park and continue to garner critical acclaim in New York and internationally.

Martin Friedman has been a leader in the development of the Mad. Sq. Art program as both curator and passionate advisor. He has been the leading force in introducing the work of Sol LeWitt, Ursula von Rydingsvard, Roxy Paine, Mark di Suvero, Alison Saar, Antony Gormley, and many others to the audience and setting of Madison Square Park.

## About Martin Friedman:

Martin Friedman served as Director of the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis from 1961 to 1990. During his directorship, he oversaw the extensive growth of the museum's artistic programs, including the development of its collection, its exhibition and education programs, and performing arts and film offerings. Under his leadership the Walker's new building, designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes, opened in 1971 and, in 1988, the ten-acre Minneapolis Sculpture Garden adjacent to it was inaugurated. During his tenure, numerous artists were regularly commissioned by the Walker to create works for specific sites and occasions, and multiple sculptures were acquired for the museum's collection. Artists championed by Friedman have included Louise Bourgeois, Alexander Calder, Joseph Cornell, Louise Nevelson, Isamu Noguchi, David Smith, Tony Smith, and Sol LeWitt, among others.

Since moving to New York in 1990, Friedman has been a guest curator and consultant on various artistic projects to many museums and institutions including: the Hall Family Foundation (Kansas City); Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art (Kansas City); National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C.); American Center in Paris (Paris, France); Virginia Museum of Art (Richmond); Denver Museum of Art (Denver); Columbus Art Museum (Columbus); Ho-Am Museum in Seoul (Seoul, Korea); Socrates Sculpture Park (Long Island City); and Madison Square Park Conservancy (New York). More recently, Mr. Friedman helped establish JUMP, the US-Japan curatorial fellowship program under the auspices of the Asian Cultural Council in New York and The Japan Foundation in Tokyo.

Martin Friedman served on the National Council of the National Endowment for the Arts from 1979 to 1984, and in 1989 was awarded the National Medal of the Arts in a White House ceremony. In 1999 he received the International Sculpture Center Special Award in Princeton, New Jersey. He has written extensively about George Segal, having organized a major exhibition of that artist's work in 1978 for the Walker Art Center, and he continues to contribute to *Art in America* on artists such as Barry Le Va, Lynda Benglis, Nam June Paik, and others. His book *Close Reading: Chuck Close and the Artist's Portrait* was published by Harry N. Abrams in 2005.

## Mad. Sq. Art and Madison Square Park Conservancy:

Mad. Sq. Art is the free, contemporary art program of the Madison Square Park Conservancy.

Since 2004, Mad. Sq. Art has commissioned and presented more than twenty premier installations in Madison Square Park by acclaimed artists ranging in practice and media. Mad. Sq. Art has exhibited works by artists including **Alison Saar, Bill Beirne, Jim Campbell, Richard Deacon, Bill Fontana, Ernie Gehr, Antony Gormley, Jene Highstein, Tadashi Kawamata, Mel Kendrick, Sol LeWitt, Olia Lialina & Dragan Espenschied, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Jacco Olivier, Roxy Paine, Jaume Plensa, Shannon Plumb, Ursula von Rydingsvard, Jessica Stockholder, Mark di Suvero,** and **William Wegman**, among others.

The Madison Square Park Conservancy, a public/private partnership with New York City Parks & Recreation, is the nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping historic Madison Square Park a bright, beautiful and lively public space. Major Support for Mad. Sq. Art is provided by Liane Ginsberg, Agnes Gund, Toby Devan Lewis, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Irving Harris Foundation, and Anonymous. Substantial support is provided by Raymond Learsy and Melva Bucksbaum, Dorothy Lichtenstein, Melissa S. Meyer, Ronald A. Pizzuti, The Rudin Family, Jerry I. Speyer, Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch, the Henry Luce Foundation, the Joseph S. and Diane H. Steinberg Charitable Trust and the Sol LeWitt Fund for Artist Work.

For more information on the Madison Square Park Conservancy and its programs, please visit <http://madisonsquarepark.org>.

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