

For Immediate Release

***THE GUARDIANS: HERO AND SUPERHERO*
BY ITALIAN ARCHITECT AND DESIGNER ANTONIO PIO SARACINO
ARE TWO NEW PUBLIC SCULPTURES AT GATEWAY TO BRYANT PARK**

**Sculptures to be Unveiled on Tuesday, December 10, 2013
with a
Reception in the Public Plaza at 1095 Avenue of the Americas, from 6-8pm
RSVP to guardiansreception.com**



New York, NY, December 9, 2013— *The Guardians: Hero and Superhero*, by acclaimed Italian architect and designer Antonio Pio Saracino, are new public sculptures that represent two legendary civic heroes. The pair of 13-foot-high statues, one in marble and the other in mirror polished stainless steel, are positioned at the north and south ends of the public plaza at 1095 Avenue of the Americas between 41st and 42nd Streets. *The Guardians* symbolize past and present and are consistent with Saracino's (b. 1976, Puglia, Italy) overarching aim to combine digitally generated architectural compositions with a powerful, timeless message of resiliency and innovation. The sculptures will be unveiled at an opening reception on Tuesday, December 10, 2013, from 6-8pm. They will remain on view indefinitely, creating a new landmark in the center of Manhattan.

Throughout his career, Saracino has designed buildings, monuments, and modern furniture, and his work is part of prominent museum collections internationally. In early 2013, Saracino was presented with two new opportunities: to produce a symbol of Italy in New York on the occasion of the Year of Italian Culture in the U.S., and to create a public art project for the plaza at 1095 Avenue of the Americas at Bryant Park. His idea, *The Guardians: Hero and Superhero*, is the answer to both. *Hero* is a gift from Italy to the United States, donated by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Embassy of Italy, Washington, D.C.; and the Consulate General of Italy, New York; with the support of the worldwide energy company Eni. *Superhero* is commissioned by Equity Office, at 1095 Avenue of the Americas.

Saracino's 8,000-pound marble *Hero*, which is a reinterpretation of Michelangelo's *David*, defender of the city of Florence, will gaze uptown from 42nd Street as a protector from the past. Its counterpart, *Superhero*, who dons a cape as an icon of the present, watches over downtown from 41st Street. It is made of stainless steel and weighs 10,000 pounds. Both sculptures are fabricated in New York City.

Saracino explains, "I was asked by the Italian Embassy to look at Michelangelo's *David* as an inspiration. Clearly that momentous reference was daunting. Yet I was so honored to create a symbol that could represent a gift from my native Italy to New York, that I accepted the extraordinary invitation. I wanted to create two symbolic protectors of New York City that celebrate the superhuman and the inspiration that it channels. The two anthropomorphic layered architectural constructions display the universal ability of mankind to cement its own presence in the world with its perennial construction skills."

The sculptures *Hero* and *Superhero* soar upward through a system of repeated planes of marble and polished stainless steel plates to address the surrounding skyscraper architecture. The materials that form the figures are stacked, creating an outline that suggests the movement of the figures within their environment.

New York/Milan-based curator Helen Varola states, "Together, *The Guardian's* surveillance suggests a vulnerability spanning centuries, politics, and cultures, a space-time dialogue that radiates a contemporary *sacra conversazione* with the island of Manhattan. The stacked planar marble and stainless steel forms are layered as vertical columns to create positive/negative spaces through which we view Manhattan's energy and architecture recalling the way Donald Judd's *Stacks* evoke mystery and sensuality."

The Ambassador of Italy to the United States, Claudio Bisogniero, states, "*David*: such a strong symbol of Italian cultural heritage, and now a Guardian of the friendship between our two countries. The Year of Italian Culture in the U.S. couldn't have left a better legacy."

Adam Goldenberg, Market Managing Director of Equity Office, adds "We are proud to host Antonio Pio Saracino's guardians, *Hero* and *Superhero*, who in the heart of Manhattan offer a gift of international friendship as they greet visitors from all over the world."

About Antonio Pio Saracino:

Antonio Pio Saracino is a New York-based Designer and Italian Architect whose work is featured in the current exhibition *Out of Hand: Materializing the Postdigital* at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York. His work is in museum collections internationally including the Brooklyn Museum, the Museum of Art and Design in New York City and the PowerHouse Museum in Sydney. He participated in the 54th edition of the Venice Biennale and has won numerous awards such as the American Architecture Award from the Chicago Museum of Architecture. He was named one of the world's 25 most interesting trendsetters by ARTnews magazine and recognized as one of the Top Ten Italian Architects under 36 by the New Italian Blood award. Saracino has exhibited his design work with Industry gallery in Washington D.C., Los Angeles and Dubai, as well as other galleries and museums internationally. His work has been reviewed internationally in publications such as *The New York Times*, *Architectural Digest*, *Interior Design*, *Wallpaper*, and *Vogue*.

Among Saracino's past public projects are GATE 150 on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the unification of Italy for the Caraffa Museum in Cordoba Argentina and the MuBE Museum in Sao Paulo, Brazil, the 2010-12 Formula 1 World Championship trophy for Eni and as winner of Brussel's Agorafolly competition, a public installation to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the European Union. In 2003, Saracino graduated cum laude with a Master's Degree in Architecture at 'La Sapienza' University of Architecture in Rome, where he worked as assistant professor of architectural design.

About 1095 Avenue of the Americas:

Owned by Equity Office, the public plaza at 1095 Avenue of the Americas between 41st and 42nd Streets serves as a gateway to Bryant Park. A recent \$10 million renovation of the plaza, designed by architect Dan Shannon of Moed de Armas & Shannon (MdeAS), was conducted by Equity Office, including an initiative for public art to be added. The installation of *The Guardians* in November 2013 completes the plan.

About The Guardians: Hero and Superhero:

Hero is a gift from Italy to the United States, donated by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Embassy of Italy, Washington, D.C.; and the Consulate General of Italy, New York; with the support of the worldwide energy company Eni. *Superhero* is commissioned by Equity Office, at 1095 Avenue of the Americas.

Media Contacts:

Meg Blackburn, FITZ & CO, meg@fitzandco.com, 212-627-1455 x225

Taylor Maatman, FITZ & CO, taylor.maatman@fitzandco.com 212-627-1455, x260

