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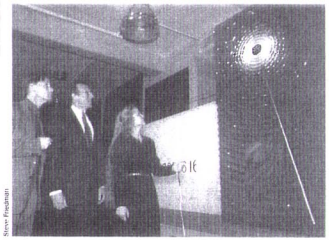
# A timepiece for the millennium and beyond

## Jones and Ginzel win the Union Square South Competition

The Public Art Fund is proud to announce one of New York's most ambitious public art commissions in decades: Kristin Jones and Andrew Ginzel's monumental project for Union Square South. The $1.5 million commission is the result of a year-long proposal and selection process organized by the Public Art Fund on behalf of the Related Companies.

Building upon an architectural competition organized by the Municipal Art Society that resulted in the winning design of Davis Brody Bond L.P., the Public Art Fund was asked to find an artist to fulfill the developer and architect's aspirations for the central panel of the building. The Davis Brody Bond design incorporated a 60' wide and 100' tall brick wall providing a unique opportunity for an artist to create a work of monumental proportions. Their stated aim was "the creation of a grand, landmark work of art that would excite, engage, delight, calm or otherwise affect the human eye, mind and spirit."



Steve Friedman

**Artists Andrew Ginzel and Kristin Jones demonstrate the model for their winning Union Square South project to Steve Ross (center), Chairman of the Related Companies. The Jones and Ginzel commission was announced at the landmark Union Square Barnes & Noble Bookstore, restored by the Related Companies in the fall of 1995.**

Following a national search, six artists were selected by an Advisory Panel of civic leaders, local representatives and art experts. Artists Ivan Chermayeff, Clyde Lynds, Matt Mullican, Tom Otterness, Frank Stella, and the Jones/Ginzel team were commissioned to make proposals and after an in-depth deliberation process the winning design of Jones and Ginzel was selected.

The selected project embraces the past, present and future of Union Square while making reference to the very notion of time. Its parts combine to evoke contemplation of a city in constant flux, its daily rituals and its position in geological as well as cosmic time. At noon, the artwork will provide a new and unexpected measure to mark the passing of the day.

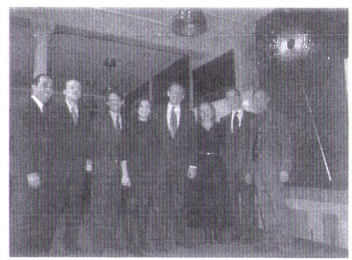
At the center of the building's facade, the artists have designed an undulating brick wall with a wave-like pattern that ripples upward from Union Square South's glass and metal fronted retail base below to its brick residential tower above. In the upper center of the wall is the "eye" or "heart" of the work - a four foot void that gently percolates with a corona of steam. Surrounded by a field of rings that collects then dissipates gold fragments, the void provides the centerpiece for the work's noontime event: a cloud of steam that is discharged into the air while a 60 foot long tapered horn rings the passing hour.

At the base of the work is a geological formation that grounds the work, referencing the geological origins of Manhattan island. Above the "eye" of the work, the hand of George Washington enlarged to three feet in length gestures to the world below. The hand represents a fragment of Union Square Park: it's a direct reference to *Washington*, a statue sculpted by Henry Kirke Brown in 1856 after Houdon's original horseback eulogy that now faces 14th Street.

The artwork expands across the building with two very different measures of time. East of the brick wall, a digital clock counts the 24 hours of the day, while simultaneously subtracting the hours remaining in the day. For example, at noon the clock reads 1200000000,0000000012. The counters of each time sequence converge in a mid-point of blurring milliseconds.

If the digital clock embodies the frantic activity of a day in the life of New York, the astrological clock mirrors the celestial movements of the cosmos. Moving imperceptibly, this half-gold and half-darkened orb turns to reflect the phases of the moon.

Speaking at the official launch of the Union Square South project, Susan Freedman, President of the Public Art Fund, said: "This multi-dimensional artwork situated on axis with the clock of Grand Central Station will become a stunning addition to the city, providing an exciting and appropriate timepiece for the millennium and beyond."



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**At the Union Square South unveiling of the Jones/Ginzel commission (left to right): David Wine, President, the Related Management Companies, Tom Eccles, Director, Public Art Fund, Steve Davis, Partner, Davis Brody Bond L.P., Susan K. Freedman, President, Public Art Fund, Steve Ross, Chairman, the Related Companies, Kristin Jones, Artist, Al Butzel, Member, Planning Committee of the Municipal Art Society, and Andrew Ginzel, Artist.**

Image courtesy Davis Brody Bond Architects, rendered by Daniel Wolfe

**Davis Brody Bond's award-winning design for Union Square South, complete with a rendering of the Jones & Ginzel project.**

### Union Square South: Partnership and Precedent at the Municipal Art Society's Urban Center Galleries, 475 Madison Avenue (at 51st Street).

On view through the end of May, don't miss the exhibition of Jones and Ginzel's stunning 20' x 10' model of their Union Square South project. Also on view are the study models and visual documentation showing the evolution of the Davis Brody Bond design.