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'LABYRINTH' SCULPTURE TO RETURN TO THE PLAZA THIS SUMMER

Site Work Now Underway

RoAnn Destito, New York State Office of General Services (OGS) Commissioner, announced that site work is getting into full swing at the southeast corner of the Empire State Plaza in advance of the reinstallation of François Stahly's "Labyrinth," the multi-piece post-modern abstract sculpture made of iroko timber. The majority of the sculpture was removed from the Plaza in 2015 for conservation work required to repair damage caused over the course of nearly 50 years of weathering and exposure.

"We at OGS take our responsibility to conserve and preserve the amazing Empire State Plaza Art Collection very seriously, and we are looking forward to this summer's return of Stahly's "Labyrinth," one of the collection's most widely recognized works," Commissioner Destito said. "To ensure this sculpture will be protected and available for the public to enjoy for years to come, the OGS team will spend the next two months getting work done at the site on the Plaza before the artwork is reinstalled."

Preparation of the site, which will include some routine grounds maintenance more easily accomplished while the sculpture is not there, will take place in May and June. OGS crews will complete the removal of trees that were suffering from Verticillium wilt disease and will replace them with new disease-resistant trees. A new concrete perimeter will be poured, concrete pads for the bases of the sculpture's different elements will be repaired, stained, and sealed, and grass or sod will be planted.

Reinstallation of the sculpture will begin after New York State's Fourth of July celebration at the Plaza.

"Labyrinth" was created by Stahly in 1971-72 and installed adjacent to the Corning Tower shortly afterwards. The work consists of a 39-foot central tower, which is the only piece that remained during the conservation work, along with 39 other assemblies made up of 230 individual wood pieces that were taken off site for repairs.

The goal of the stabilization was to address public safety issues stemming from the sculpture's deterioration while minimizing any loss of the sculpture's original surface. The repair work involved the handling of approximately 95,000 pounds of sculpture that were shipped, disassembled, treated, and reassembled.

The exterior of the sculpture is not expected to look much different once it is reinstalled. Much of the conservation work was done to the interior of the artwork to stabilize the wood and ensure any internal moisture will wick away to prevent damage from reoccurring.

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