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Contact: Jessica Murray

Tel: 212-832-4540

Email: jessica.murray@rioc.ny.gov

Ulla and Gustav Kraitz to Unveil *Blue Dragon* on Roosevelt Island

Creator of the United Nations' Wallenberg Monument gifts Roosevelt Island with sculpture after a memorable tour

Roosevelt Island, NY- A dedication ceremony for the *Blue Dragon* sculpture, donated to Roosevelt Island by world renowned Swedish artists Ulla and Gustav Kraitz, will be held at Southpoint Park on Tuesday, April 26, 2016 at 11 a.m.

The *Blue Dragon* embarked on a long voyage to its new home, departing from Hamburg, Germany on March 6, 2016 and arriving on Roosevelt Island on March 30, 2016. Cut from a Swedish quarry, the polished black granite diabase sculpture weighs just over 4,400 lbs. (2,000 k) and is 10 feet long.

In May of 2014, while working on repairs at the Wallenberg Monument, Hungarian-born Swedish sculptor, Gustav Kraitz was given a tour of Roosevelt Island by local resident Elisabeth Stapen and Roosevelt Island Visual Arts Association (RIVAA) president, Tad Sudol. Kraitz was very taken by the island's beauty, history, and family atmosphere.

"He'd made a few children's sculptures, including the *Blue Dragon* which he'd initially intended to sell to a museum." Stapen recounts. "It was quite a bit of fate, his visit to the island. Right then he decided to donate a sculpture."

Sudol adds, "When we gave Gustav a tour of the island, including the RIVAA Gallery and the murals at Motorgate Gallery, he saw not only the uniqueness of our location between Queens and Manhattan, but also our vision of being a community for art and embraced it. That was something! This famous artist donating his work to our small but vibrant community."

Susan Rosenthal, acting President/CEO & General Counsel of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), says, "After many months of coordination with the Kraitz's and RIVAA, a scenic location in Southpoint Park was chosen to display this generous gift, which we are delighted to accept from our neighbors across the Atlantic. Positioned directly towards the United Nations, the *Blue Dragon* is flowing out to the East River, connecting it to Kraitz's symbol of hope."

Ulla & Gustav Kraitz, whose careers have been interwoven since their marriage in 1961, are among the world's foremost sculptors and ceramicists, having their work featured in nearly 100 exhibitions internationally, including the United States; in Washington D.C., Chicago, and New York. The technique they have developed for firing large pieces in kilns modeled after those of the ancient Chinese style has allowed them to achieve shimmering ceramics in classic glazes, such as oxblood, cobalt, and celadon.

RIOC and RIVAA are honored that the Roosevelt Island community has been presented with this gift. Visitors and residents alike will enjoy the *Blue Dragon* as a beautiful new landmark and a continuing representation of the island's commitment to the arts.

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The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) was created in 1984 by the State of New York as a public benefit corporation with a mission to plan, design, develop, operate, and maintain Roosevelt Island. With a focus on innovative and environmentally friendly solutions, RIOC is committed to providing services that enhance the island's residential community. RIOC manages the two-mile long island's roads, parks, buildings, a sports facility, and public transportation, including the iconic aerial tramway. Additionally, RIOC operates a Public Safety Department that helps maintain a safe and secure environment for residents, employees, business owners, and visitors.

The Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association (RIVAA) is a non-profit organization comprised of an internationally diverse group of artists. RIVAA opened the first gallery on Roosevelt Island in March 2002 and is dedicated to elevating the quality of life in the community through art, music, poetry, dance, events and workshops.