

Texte de Tony Goldman le mécène du projet

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It all started in 1978 when I met a very young and unusually special ambitious artist named Françoise Schein. I was planning to open my first of what would be 14 restaurants over the next 30 years. I considered Françoise to be the sole painter to create a 60 foot mural some 20 feet high to wrap the main wall of a magnificent, cavernous space that was a truck garage, soon to be Soho's first and only restaurant super club called The Greene Street Café. I told her the feeling of what I wanted, the subject and mood. I sat her down in the subject space and told her I'd be back in two hours to see her presentation. Certainly a daunting challenge for anyone, but to me a test of talent. She passed and soon began work on the piece that became the key aesthetic to a great place.

We developed a great collaboration and lifelong friendship from that moment on. Our next project was quite different. The same year I opened Greene Street Café in 1979, I bought the tallest building in Soho across the street from the Café and named it "the Soho Building". It was a factory warehouse structure that I wished to convert to Soho's first mixed use office building. Several years later we needed to reconstruct the 88 foot long sidewalk in front of the building. I wanted to create a sculptural form into the sidewalk to make an appropriate artistic statement for Soho and for the building. I reached out to "Frankie" (Françoise) and challenged her to design a treatment that would represent New York City and Soho in the sidewalk, Soho being the only cast iron historic architectural landmark district in the world, needed something tough yet elegant in order to first meet my expectations, not to mention the many municipal agencies we needed approval from in order to get the permission to proceed with our project. At the time in 1982 when we began the process there was only one decorative sidewalk in all of New York City, that being the Alexander Calder sidewalk at 78<sup>th</sup> and 79<sup>th</sup> Streets and Madison Avenue.

We agreed that we would stand a better chance of success if Françoise would present the plan to be sponsored by me than if I presented it. The plan was perfect, once again Frankie nailed it. "A floating map of the New York City (Manhattan) subway lines market with the 144 express stops. The map was constructed out of welded stainless steel with the stops made of crystal glass embedded into a dark charcoal grey asphalt base. It was and still is stunning and in 1984 when it was complete it won the City Arts Commission Award of the Year. Today it sits proud and elegantly in front of Soho's premier office building. At night its stops light up from underneath the sidewalk and daytime or night time has become a focal point in Soho to the millions of people who have searched to see it or just happen upon it. I am eternally grateful to Françoise for her talent, her vision, dedication and remarkable perseverance. I am indeed proud and privileged to have been a part of advancing Françoise's uniquely and meaningful journey.

Tony Goldman  
Chairman/CEO