

Iconic Robert Moses Panorama Will Be Repurposed to Honor NYC Landmarks

Language
English



Courtesy of NYC Landmarks50 Advisory Committee
NYC Landmarks50's "Marking Spaces: New York City's Landmark Historic Districts" exhibition
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David Grainger of the Queens Museum of Art

On April 19, 1965, New York City mayor Robert Wagner enacted the city's Landmarks Preservation Law, and the **New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission** was formed, tasked with safeguarding the city's rich architectural history by identifying and protecting historically significant buildings. The law came about a year and a half after **McKim, Mead & White's** Beaux-Arts Pennsylvania Station fell to the wrecking ball, a cultural blunder few can imagine transpiring today — in no small part due to the law penned in response to this urban tragedy.

Though the city has come a long way, there is no overestimating the importance of the 1965 legislation in a society entranced by economic growth and often willing to sacrifice its own heritage to pay the price. With the Landmarks Preservation Law approaching its 50th anniversary, now is an important time to do precisely what the law has taught us to do: pause and reflect. A newly formed civic group known as the **NYC Landmarks50** has emerged with this task in mind, and on Sunday, April 14, they are set to begin their two-year countdown to the 50-year mark with an exhibition at the [Queens Museum of Art](#) that — in nifty preservationist style — utilizes one of the city's oft-overlooked treasures: the museum's famous 1964 **Robert Moses**-designed Panorama.

Built by Robert Moses for the 1964 World's Fair, the Panorama is a 9,335-square-foot architectural model of every building in the five boroughs constructed before 1992, viewed by visitors from above. Inhabiting this sprawling sculpture are 895,000 individual models, and for the NYC Landmarks50 exhibition "[Marking Spaces: New York City's Landmark Historic Districts](#)," the city's 109 historic districts will be highlighted with yellow flags, creating a stunning three-dimensional graphic that emphasizes the architectural eclecticism the Landmarks Preservation Law has striven to protect for almost five decades.

"The Panorama has always been intended as a vehicle to educate and celebrate the built environment that is New York City," said executive director of the Queens Museum of Art **Tom Finkelpearl** in a public statement. "What better way to commemorate 50 years of the Landmarks Preservation Law than to gaze upon the five boroughs and think of what our evolving city would be today were it not for those with the foresight to preserve our City's past while also looking to its future." Finkelpearl appropriately emphasizes the powerful visual effects of Moses's Panorama, which — apart from celebrating the city's infrastructure, the project's primary ambition — conveys the density and cultural heterogeneity of New York.

"Marking Spaces" kicks off two years of events programmed by NYC Landmarks50 to raise awareness of the conservationist and landmarking efforts in New York. "There is hardly a neighborhood, or a New Yorker, not touched by New York City's preservation movement, which so reflects the great diversity of our city," said committee chair **Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel**. "We are committed to developing

future preservationists who will take responsibility for protecting our history, and the continuity of the New York Cityscape.”

“Marking Spaces: New York City’s Landmark Historic Districts” will open with a reception on Sunday, April 14, 2013 from 3 - 6 pm at the Queens Museum of Art in New York.

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