

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MUSEUM & LIBRARY

**New-York Historical Society and the Diamonstein-Spielvogel Foundation
Announce the Creation of a New Division of New-York Historical,
the Diamonstein-Spielvogel Institute
for New York City History, Politics, and Community Activism**

**Generous Gift from the Diamonstein-Spielvogel Foundation to Support
Scholarly Programs, Fellowships, and New Archive
Focused on 20th and 21st Century New York City History**

New York, NY, June 24, 2021 – The New-York Historical Society, the oldest museum in New York City (1804), has announced plans to create the Diamonstein-Spielvogel Institute for New York City History, Politics, and Community Activism—a new division within New-York Historical initiated and funded by the Diamonstein-Spielvogel Foundation. The Institute will create a new historical archive, including a focus on New York City’s marginalized communities and inclusive voices that reflects important political, social, and cultural moments from the mid-1900s to the present; it will also offer scholarly programs, a resident fellowship, and short-term fellowships. Among the first archives to be added to the Institute are Dr. Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel’s papers and the High Line archives. Several archives already in New-York Historical’s library and museum collections, including materials relating to the Occupy Wall Street movement, will be archived in the Diamonstein-Spielvogel Institute as well. A national search for an executive director with a professional background and experience in the Institute’s fields of study and research, will be undertaken immediately.

“We are so grateful for the initiative and support of the Diamonstein-Spielvogel Foundation for this new endeavor, which will help scholars and the general public to understand how political and social movements, focused on balancing individuals’ right to self-determination with their responsibility to one another, have shaped our city’s history,” said Dr. Louise Mirrer, New-York Historical’s president and CEO. “The emphasis of the new Diamonstein-Spielvogel Institute on studying, disseminating, and contextualizing New York City’s history, politics, and community organizing will also make patent the local story’s implications for the nation and world.”

“The Diamonstein-Spielvogel Foundation is very pleased to initiate this vital enterprise,” said Dr. Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel. “The Diamonstein-Spielvogel Institute for NYC History, Politics, and Community Activism addresses key issues in New York City. We will bring together collective memory and experiences for research and manifestations, so that present and future historians can place these multiple histories within a meaningful context.”

An important component of the Diamonstein-Spielvogel Institute’s mission will be the collection of relevant materials that relate to 20th and 21st-century local history, including the civil rights movement, women’s rights, climate concerns, the drive for LGBTQ+ rights, and the historic preservation movement. A selection of historic documents associated with the High Line and its transformation from disused rail structure to public open space by the Friends of the High Line, the organization that championed the project starting in 1999, will be among the first pieces in the Institute’s archive.

"It's an honor to have items from the High Line's history become a part of the archives of the Diamonstein-Spielvogel Institute," said Robert Hammond, co-founder and executive director of the High Line. "As the history of the High Line reflects the diversity and innovation of New York City, it's a critical effort to have these materials preserved and accessible to scholars and New Yorkers alike."

Dr. Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel's papers document the formation, development, and activities of the NYC Landmarks50 Alliance, a still-active consortium of organizations, originally created in 2012 to commemorate and draw public attention to the major anniversaries of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Foundation (including plans for an exhibition at New-York Historical to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the NYC/LPC). They also include materials on the Historic Landmarks Preservation Center's Cultural Medallions Program, which commemorates the contributions of New Yorkers from all walks of life with the placement of descriptive markers on buildings where they lived and worked; and "Notable New Yorkers," a 2018 publication that documents the history and evolution of the Cultural Medallion program. Materials also reflect Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel's service on local, state, and national commissions and boards, including the American Battle Monuments Commission, the Corcoran, the U.S. Commission on Fine Arts, Trust for the National Mall, the National Gallery, the New York State Council on the Arts, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, Municipal Art Society, NY Landmarks Conservancy, NYC Commission of Cultural Affairs, first director of New York City's newly-created Cultural Affairs Department, and her involvement with many other organizations. The collection will be digitally linked to the extensive Diamonstein-Spielvogel Archives at the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University, consisting of more than 650 boxes of documents and approximately 200 videos that highlight Diamonstein-Spielvogel's work as a writer; interviewer/producer, and offer a unique window into the art, architecture, photography, crafts, and culture of the 1970s through the present.

"We are gratified that the New-York Historical Society will become a repository of materials that relate directly to the intersections between history, politics, and community involvement in New York City," said Dr. Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel. "It is fitting that these documents will become part of what we hope will be a significant, useful collection for current and future generations of scholars and citizens."

A substantial outreach program will be undertaken to invite individuals and institutions to submit archival material so that a range of voices will be preserved for future generations. Attention will be also paid to topics such as public health, municipal infrastructure, housing, and the relationship between the development of grassroots movements and the individuals whose work have impacted the city's history. A timeline for the launch of the Institute will be announced in the future.

About New-York Historical Society

New York City's oldest museum, the New-York Historical Society Museum & Library was founded in 1804. The Patricia D. Klingenstein Library—one of the most distinguished in the nation—fosters research through its outstanding collections, which include more than 10 million items. The Museum presents groundbreaking history and art exhibitions as well as public programs that convey the stories of New York and the nation's diverse populations to the broadest possible public.

The New-York Historical Society is located at 170 Central Park West at Richard Gilder Way (77th Street), New York, NY 10024. Information: (212) 873-3400. Website: nyhistory.org. Follow the museum on social media at @nyhistory on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/nyhistory), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/nyhistory), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/nyhistory), [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/nyhistory), and [Tumblr](https://www.tumblr.com/nyhistory).

About Diamonstein-Spielvogel Foundation

The Diamonstein-Spielvogel Foundation was founded by Dr. Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel and Ambassador Carl Spielvogel to continue and extend their long-term commitment to the common good and the public interest. With this focus, deeply rooted in inclusiveness, social equity, and community service, the Foundation creates and supports original projects based on results-driven and innovative strategies. The Foundation funds projects which demonstrate creative promise in four priority areas: projects focused on civic leadership, public affairs, and diplomacy; projects of cultural merit; original educational initiatives; and science and medicine, in support of the advancement of the field of health. All funding initiatives are by invitation only. Learn more at diamonstein-spielvogelfoundation.org.

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