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**Eugene Giscombe  
Puts On "Ferocious  
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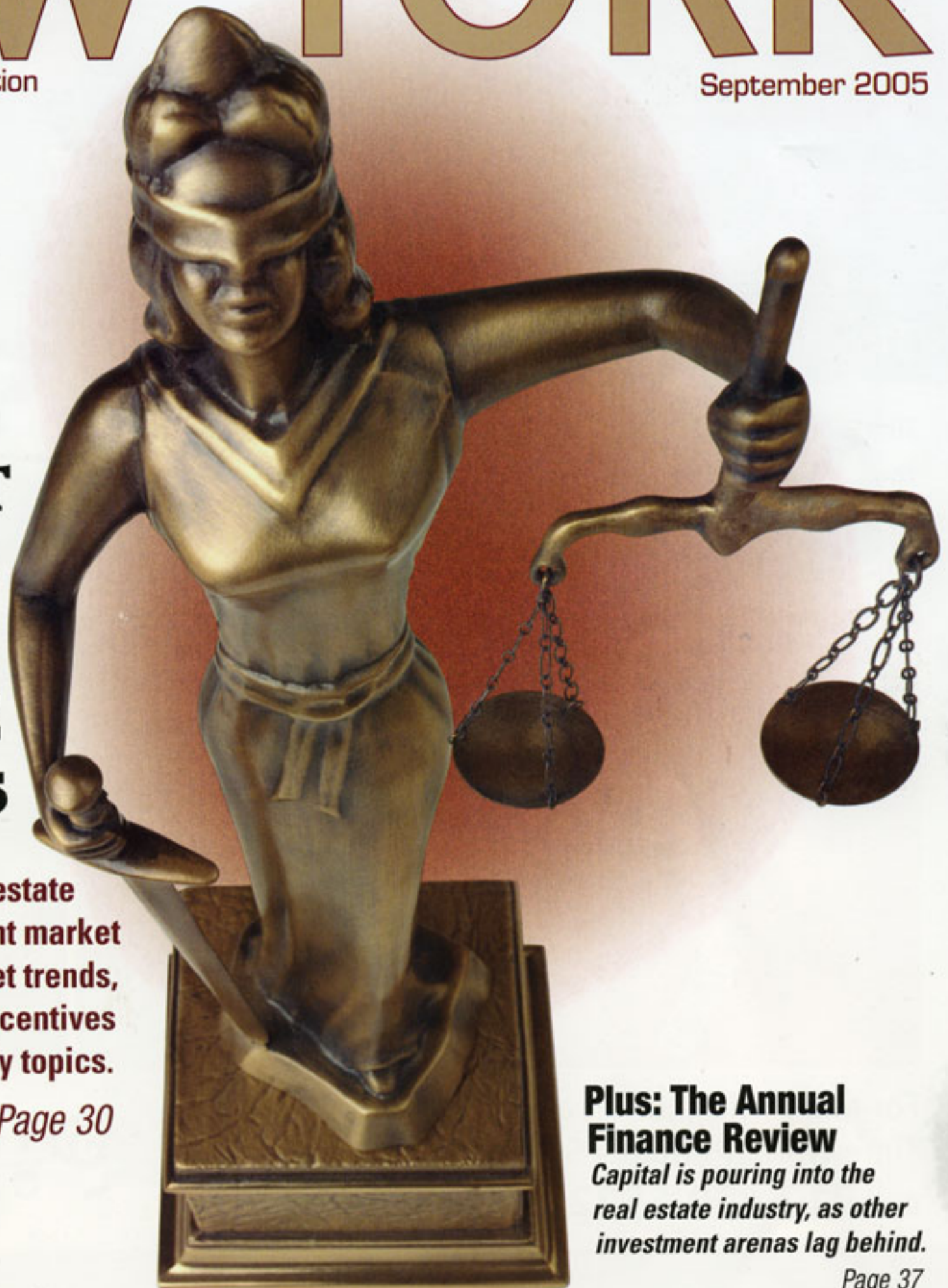
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**Real Estate**

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**Spotlight**

# A FEROCIOUS FRONT IN HARLEM

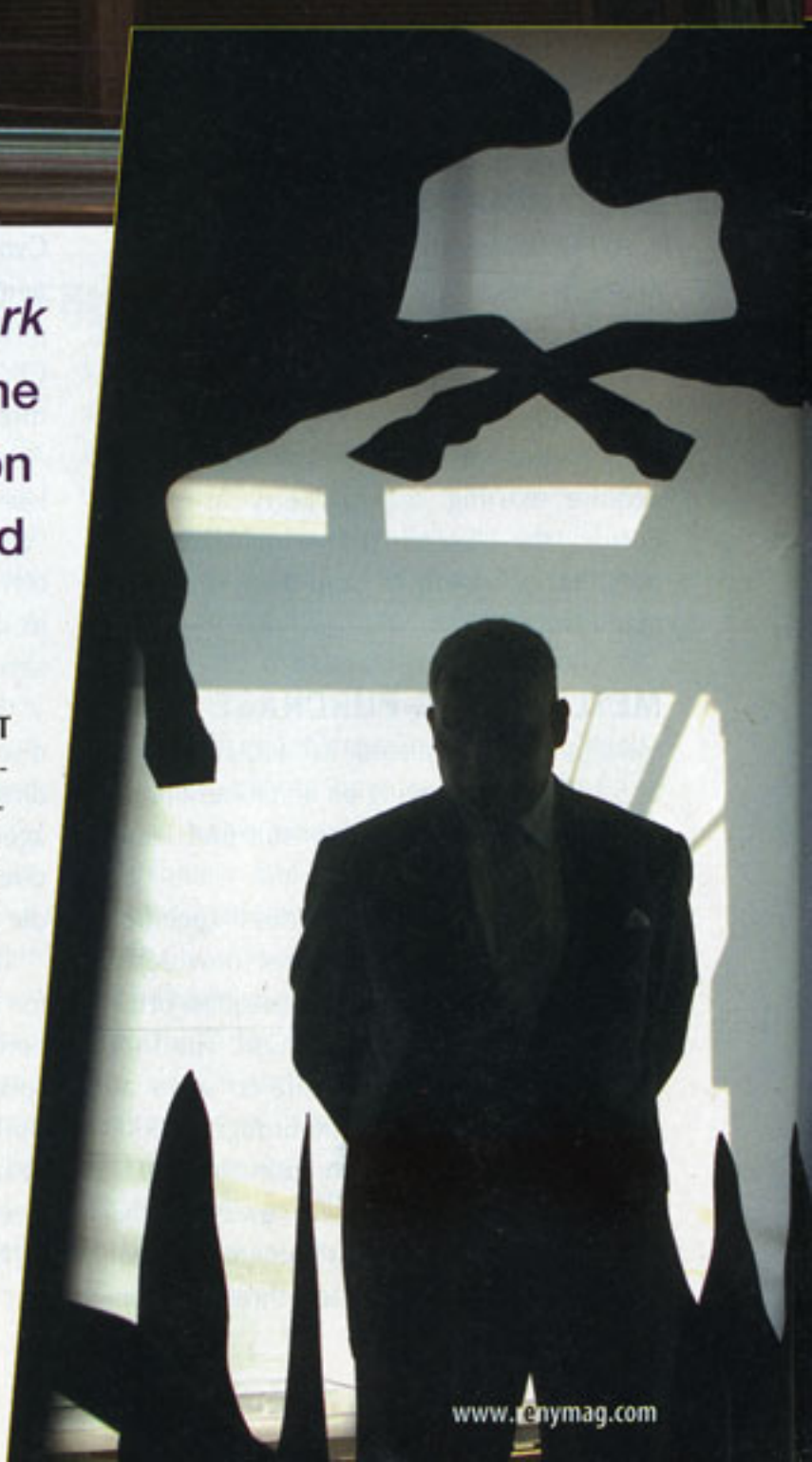


In our debut Spotlight story, *Real Estate New York* features Harlem real estate developer Eugene Giscombe's penchant for business, his passion for his community, his love for exotic animals and artist Grimanesa Amoros who captured it all.

**By Barbara L. Nelson**  
Editor

STROLLING BY THE LEE BUILDING AT 125TH STREET and Park Avenue after twilight, you will see shadowy creatures and lightening bolts seemingly moving along the backdrop of the second-story windows. The techno-art project, the inspiration of Peruvian-born American artist Grimanesa Amoros, depicts the experiences of Eugene Giscombe in his many travels around the globe hunting wild game.

The art display Frente Feroz (Ferocious Front), was commissioned by Giscombe, owner of The Lee Building and president of real estate company Giscombe Henderson Inc. Giscombe grew up in Harlem's heyday in the 1940s, but his curiosity for the wilderness drew him to rural areas. Many summers spent at his aunt's home in rural Watkins Glen, NY and at Boy Scout summer camp in the Catskill Mountains instilled a thirst to discover the mysteries of nature foreign to city living. Later he became an avid







game hunter, traveling to several countries throughout the world.

Frente Feroz is meant to capture the attention, however fleeting, of passers-by on the street and commuters on the adjacent MTA Metro North platform.

Giscombe realizes that many youths who gaze up the second story windows of The Lee Building will never see the animals represented in their natural habitat. "Time and circumstances allowed me the freedom to explore nature and wild places in the US and abroad," says Giscombe. "This wildlife montage featuring wild animals from every corner of the earth represents my attempt to share with city dwellers the wonders of nature around the world right here in Harlem."

The artwork is part of the ongoing

**Eugene Giscombe stands amongst the artwork created for The Lee Building.**

\$3-million renovation of The Lee Building, the headquarters for Giscombe Henderson. The structure was designed as a cold-storage warehouse for the Lee Brothers in 1901 by noted architect C.P.H. Gilbert, who later designed the Woolworth Building.

A century of exposure to the elements caused the natural breakdown of pointing mortar, roof flashing and steel. To "bring back a bygone era," Giscombe chose architect Jonathan Raible, who suggested he do something different with the second-floor office space, since the windows were especially large.

Apple Restoration and Waterproofing Inc., engineer Edy Zingher of ETNA Consultants and project architect Raible have meticulously restored the pressed-metal cornice and parapet, masonry and cast-iron work on the intricate south and west facades.

"Jonathan said he had this great artist that would give some pizzazz to the building," Giscombe explains.

Raible states his work with Giscombe has been very rewarding. "The project has a lot to do with his passions, the way he works, his chemistry," Raible says. "He's a very good busi-

ness man, but he develops a personal relationship with you. Everything is done on a handshake. He's wonderful to work with. Grimanese has captured a little of his personality in Frente Feroz."



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Giscombe Henderson Inc.

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and trust you," she says.

The sequence begins just before sunset and ends just before sunrise. A lighting controller was necessary to calculate the astronomical events based on the location of New York City (40° 46'N x 73° 58'W). As the seasons change, the controller tracks the exact times of dusk and dawn, as well as accounting for daylight saving time.

The Lee Building, currently 80% leased, is in its third year of renovation. Ahead is the replacement of elevators and the transformation of the lobby that will include a video display terminal and a plate-glass entryway. Washington Mutual is currently building a branch at the building's base. The renovation

she says. "The display creates a desire to return to the location as well as to bring others to view this unique scene."

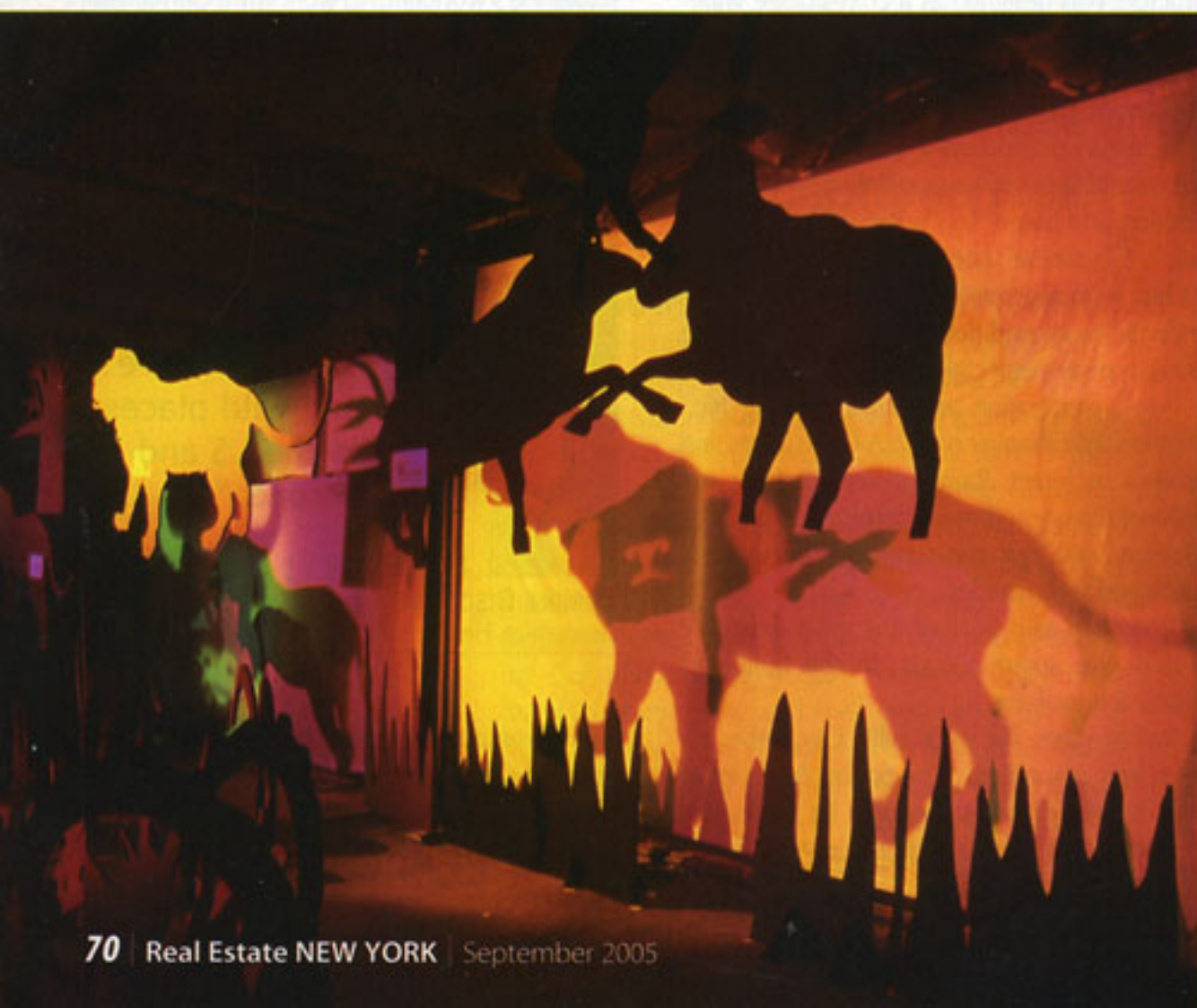
The montage was created by projecting colored lights in a deliberate, looped sequence, controlled by a computer onto rear-projection screens covering the large windows. Over-sized silhouettes of animals made of black foam board create moving shadows in the windows.

"I wanted to say something about Eugene that was personal," Amoros explains. "He loves the animal — yes, he shoots them but he loves them too. They are not just trophies to him."

As with any innovative idea, a leap of faith in the final product and the artist's ability to create it was involved. "No matter how many renderings you do, they have to put it into your hands



Artist Grimanesa Amoros with Harlem real estate developer Eugene Giscombe inside Frente Feroz.



will be completed in late 2006.

Giscombe, also the chairman of Harlem's 125th Street Business Improvement District, is quite pleased with Amoros' creation. "We were looking for ideas to put 125th Street on the map," he says. "I think this will be like a light bulb to this area. It's no Times Square, but it gives light to the corner." —RENY

*Giscombe Henderson is a full-service real estate company that manages more than 500,000 sf of retail, office and residential in the New York metropolitan area.*

*Amoros has lived in New York City since 1984. She has exhibited throughout the US, most recently at Artspace in Raleigh, NC. Next year, she and Peruvian-singer Susana Baca will be collaborating on a multi-disciplinary project at the Hostos Center for the Arts and the Longwood Gallery at Hostos College in the Bronx.*