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LEVITATION: SCULPTURE AT WHITEHALL CORPORATE CENTER GARNERS NATIONAL RECOGNITION

CHARLOTTE, NC (September 4, 2007) – *Levitation* by Pavel Kraus is one of only twenty works nationwide that were recently selected by *Art in America* for recognition in their annual “Public Art in Review” issue. The sculpture, which is on display at American Asset Corporation’s Whitehall Corporate Center, features four slightly staggered 10-by-4-foot panels made of 2-inch-thick translucent green glass.

Levitation was conceived during the initial stages of planning for Whitehall Corporate Center. From the beginning, it was important to Riprand Count Arco, founder and chairman of American Asset Corporation, to incorporate art as an integral part of the design for the office park. As a result, the original site plan included space for an art installation in front of each building.

Count Arco approached Pavel Kraus in 2000 and asked him to create a sculpture for 3600 Whitehall Corporate Center, the third building to be completed in the office park, which will ultimately encompass more than two million square feet of Class A office space. After researching the architectural design of the site and the building, Kraus produced a wax model of his concept for *Levitation* that was subsequently approved by Count Arco. According to Kraus, “*Levitation* refers to a phenomenal condition that is outside normal experience...The glass is translucent, appearing ephemeral and vulnerable, yet its physical substance is extremely strong and its weight belies its weightless appearance.” The project was realized in 2006, coinciding with the completion of the 3006 Whitehall Corporate Center building.

A Czech-born painter and sculptor who resides in New York, Kraus is known for creating large-scale works from heavy mediums that explore contradiction through juxtaposition of seemingly incongruous materials. Kraus has gained attention not only for his own work but also for his efforts to elevate the profile of contemporary Czech art in the United States. In fact, he returns to Prague annually to work and collaborate with other artists of the so-called “12/15” group, a generation of Czech artists who were driven underground during the 1970’s and early 1980’s due to the reinstatement of hardline communist rule. Other members of the highly regarded “12/15” group include Jiri Beranek, Václav Bláha, Jiri Naceradsky, Vladimir Novak, Ivan Ouhel and Jiri Sopko.

Other permanent art installations at Whitehall Corporate Center are *1x7* by Romanian sculptor Nicolae Rosu; *Chandelier: the stuff of stars*, also by Kraus; *Flash* by Václav Bláha; and the most recent addition, *Metalmorphosis* by Czech sculptor David Černý.

American Asset Corporation (AAC) is a diversified commercial real estate development and investment company whose services include strategic planning, construction management, leasing, brokerage and property management. Since 1986, AAC has developed projects valued at over \$1 billion and has an additional \$1 billion in projects currently under development. Their operating portfolio, valued at more than \$800 million, encompasses master-planned, retail, office and industrial properties in the Charlotte, Raleigh and Charleston markets.

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