



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



City Planning Commission

Write legislation/ordinance number here.	Meeting Date: 10/1/2024
Applicant/Petitioner	Public Art Commission
Project Description	<p>Richmond’s Public Art Commission is commissioning a permanent public art installation for the Trailhead to Richmond’s Trail of Enslaved Africans. As part of the Shockoe Project, Baskervill will install a unique historical and architectural feature referencing the iconic diagram of the Brooks slave ship at this site. The public art installation commissioned by PAC will be in conversation with the Baskervill installation, which is intended as a place of interpretation, designed to both orient visitors to the start of the trail as well as offering context and interpretation to the aspects of the story that came before.</p> <p>The City requested public art proposals for this site honoring the African cultural traditions left behind—and carried forward—by African women, men, and children who were forcibly removed from their ancestral homes in Africa and enslaved in a far away and foreign place. By memorializing a sampling of the cultural traditions of their original homes, the City aspires to tell the larger story of the myriad cultures that merged to form an amalgamated culture of enslaved people in the United States, a culture that continues to influence the daily lives of all Americans. Project funding is \$300,000.</p> <p>Goals outlined on the Request for Proposals include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a creative intervention that commemorates a sampling of the cultural traditions that African women, men, and children left behind and that continue to influence life in the United States today. • Demonstrate historical accuracy • Enhance the main entrance to the Trailhead • Reinforce the contemporary communal nature of the Trail of Enslaved Africans and safely accommodate visitors of all ages and abilities • Actively engage the community in the pre-planning, design and/or installation of the work • Ensure durability and easy maintenance <p>Thirty-two artists responded to the call. The Artist Selection Panel selected five applicants who were invited to submit a full proposal. The panel recommended Tanda Francis as the finalist for the Trailhead Project and the Public Art Commission recommends approval of this artist and their proposal for this project, with conditions.</p>
1200 Brander Street Richmond, VA 23224	
Ancarrow’s Landing	

Council District(s): <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 <input type="checkbox"/> City-Wide	
PAC Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions
Staff Contact	Monica Kinsey, Planner/Secretary, Public Art Commission, (804) 646-3303, monica.kinsey@rva.gov
Conditions for Approval	The artist shall be responsible for meeting all the terms of the City contract as well as making minor alterations to the final design based on consultation with the Artist Selection Panel.

ARTIST'S QUALIFICATIONS

Tanda Francis is a Brooklyn- based artist with a primary focus on creating public art, including monumental African heads. Her work addresses diasporic African people who are too often underrepresented in public art. She sees the rituals and customs rooted in a spiritual and ancestral past as a significant means of understanding and addressing the contemporary and future conditions facing humanity. She uses her work to activate a dialogue of universal origin to cross cultural barriers.

Francis explores digital and traditional forms of art while working and exhibiting her art in solo and group exhibitions locally and internationally. She has created several site-specific monumental public art pieces including *RockIt Black* (2021), *BIGGIE* (2014), New York City; *Everyone Breaks*, Riverside Park, New York City (2015-2016); *And We Breathe* (collaborative), Van Cortlandt Park, New York City (2015-2016); *Take Me With You*, Socrates Sculpture Park, New York City, (2017-2018), *Adorn Me*, Fort Greene Park, Brooklyn (2017-2018) among others. Francis currently has a commission underway for a Marian Anderson sculpture in Philadelphia and is a recent recipient of the Kohler Arts/Industry Residency.

OVERVIEW OF ARTIST'S PROPOSAL

Tanda Francis has proposed a 12 foot tall bronze sculpture comprised of a colossal head topped with graduated vessels atop a concrete base covered with vertical steel panels. The stacked vessels, representing the abundance and richness of West African markets and culture, reference what one symbolically carries with them as they move from one place to another. The bronze head will feature a matte finish with the exception of a highly polished face referencing water and its power to transport and to disrupt, as well as to heal and cleanse. The vertical steel panels that wrap around the concrete base incorporate a design modeled after the shape of the Brooks slave ship diagram, which will be echoed in the nearby Baskervill installation. The artist envisions the sculpture installed in the walkway in front of the Baskervill structure.

CORRELATION TO THE PUBLIC ART MASTER PLAN

The PA Master Plan states: Distribute Public Art Equitably (p. 55)

. . . To engender interest and enthusiasm about public art in the city, the program must be active in neighborhoods outside of the downtown core to engage more citizens. Smaller-scale projects created by artists that interact with neighborhood residents can contribute to the texture and identity of an area and help provide a sense of community by adding landmarks, touchstones, and a unique character.

Priority Sites & Projects (pp. 83-89)

Historically significant sites and events: Honoring people and their stories

CORRELATION TO RICHMOND 300 MASTER PLAN

Goal 4: Urban Design (p. 99)

Public art is critical to showcase a place's uniqueness, culture, and history. . . . Future public art projects and improved streetscapes in all parts of the city set the tone for high-quality development and create pride for residents as they look forward to the future prosperity of their neighborhood and their personal household.

Objective 4.2 (p. 102)

Integrate public art into the built environment to acknowledge Richmond's unique history and neighborhood identity, and engage the creative community, focusing public art efforts in areas that do not have public art today.

ATTACHMENT(S)



