



Staff Report
 City of Richmond, Virginia
 Public Art Commission

Write legislation/ordinance number here.	Meeting Date: 4/27/2023
Applicant/Petitioner	April Banks
Description	<p>Educated as an architect, April Bank’s sculptural works consider how moving through construction spaces affects how we feel. She is particularly interested in in-between spaces like doorways, thresholds, stairs, bridges and porches. This sculpture, entitled <i>Elevate (Freedom is a Place)</i>—valued at \$150,000—takes its inspiration from the stoop, a common architectural feature of many urban residential areas. The decorative metal work in the sculpture frames the stoop and harkens back to another time, referencing its own history in the urban landscape.</p> <p>Her sculptures create public art that is accessible and that harnesses the power to provoke ideas, conversations and actions about Black erasure, reparations, systematic and institutional removals. <i>Elevate</i> serves as a pedestal, a functional piece of public art, as a stage or seating, for performance or for rest. If located in Abner Clay Park, it will contribute to the community’s identity, foster community pride and a sense of belonging. And ultimately, it will enhance the quality of life for Historic Jackson Ward’s residents and visitors.</p>
Project Location Abner Clay Park (recommended) Brook Road	
Council District(s): <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 <input type="checkbox"/> City-Wide	
(Recommending body) Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions
Staff Contact	Susan Glasser, Secretary, Public Art Commission, susan.glasser@rva.gov
Conditions	<p>The PAC will be required to pay the relocation costs estimated at \$13,500.</p> <p>The City will have the sculpture coated with an artist-approved anti-graffiti coating and—at the request of the neighborhood—consider an unobtrusive solution for closing off the underside of the sculpture to stymie its use as a make-shift homeless structure.</p> <p>If, at the request of the community, Abner Clay Park is an unacceptable location, the sculpture can also be located at the recently relocated Winfree Cottage or at The Shockoe Project.</p>

RATIONAL FOR PLACING ON PUBLIC PROPERTY

The Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities, operates the Abner Clay Park in the heart of Historic Jackson Ward and has been identified as an ideal location for this sculpture. The neighborhood, known for its African-American heritage, is a lively residential area that is home to the Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site, the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia and the iconic Hippodrome Theater that in its heyday hosted the likes of Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

April Banks is an artist, educated as an architect with a creative career that straddles visual art, social practice and exhibition design. Her art practice sits intentionally between image, space and experiences. April's recent work time travels through historical archives and memories, questioning what we think we know of the past and how it informs our cultural positioning systems. She is interested in amplifying lesser known stories, challenging the gaze, and giving narrative to the erased and intentionally forgotten.

Her work has been exhibited in Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area, Chicago, Minneapolis, Cleveland, Daytona Beach, New Hampshire, Maryland, New York, Switzerland, Colombia, Brazil, United Arab Emirates, Senegal and Ethiopia.

CORRELATION TO RICHMOND 300 AND THE PUBLIC ART MASTER PLAN

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.

Public Art Master Plan

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)

Community Gathering Sites

History-Focused Sites

ARTWORK DIMENSIONS

STRUCTURAL DIMENSIONS

7'(H) x 7'3"(D) x 9' (W for bottom of stairs) x 6' (W for top of stairs)

- All risers are 7" H
- All treads are 11" D
- Top platform is 21" D
- Railings are 35" H

WEIGHT

1,500 LBS

