

CITY OF LOWELL
PETITION

TO THE
CITY COUNCIL

*Christian Walker
(Building Authority)
Peg Anderson of
Loyal at Lowell
City Hall for Public
Use*

In City Council

July 27, 2001

Read and

Clerk

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RCYD LOWELL CITY CLERK



July 21, 2021

City Council Chamber
375 Merrimack Street
Lowell, MA

To Lowell City Council:

I am writing to request a dedication of land space at Lowell City Hall for a public art installation imagined by Lowell youth a part of Building Audacity's Say Their Name project. The Say Their Names project originated from a discussion that I, Christian Walkes, Building Audacity "Engineer" (youth organizer), had with our founder, Nakia Navarro regarding a peaceful way to take action against the violence he was seeing in his community. I proposed using permanent public art to remember and honor Black individuals who have lost their lives due to violence and inspire communities to move towards healing and justice.

Say Their Name is a collective effort of youth across Boston, Lowell, and Lynn. The Lowell art project was created by local high school students to highlight the pain suffered by the diverse community of members residing in Lowell. The students involved in the Lowell Say Their Name project have decided to transform pain and fear into a vibrant expression of loving memory to pay tribute to victims and empower our community to use art as a form of healing and bring joy and growth into the Lowell community.

Since the fall of 2020, a team of 9 "Accomplices" have been meeting consistently to bring the Say Their Name project idea to reality in Boston, Lowell, and Lynn. In each community, we have empowered youth to build local movements for equity and justice using art, place-making, and other community organizing strategies. Because of our commitment to youth leadership, we trained college student leaders to lead the project and engage high school students. These leaders, known as "Accomplices" led weekly virtual workshops for high school students. These workshops are designed to help youth understand, name, and act on the compounding impacts that racism, COVID-19, and violence have had on their communities.

After developing a shared understanding of power and oppression, youth researched Black individuals who have lost their lives from violence to inspire dialogue about inequality through art. Youth have considered which narratives are told about the Black community and begin to construct counter-narratives they will share through their public art. The youth have also engaged community members, nonprofits, and small businesses to identify potential locations for the art, keeping in mind considerations such as cultural significance and visibility and traffic. Although we are there to guide and support youth, the youth determines what will be featured

in the art. We want those who live, play, and experience these public spaces daily, to determine the people, places, stories, and ideas they want to honor.

The resulting art installation entitled "Watchful Generation" stands to unite Lowell through this harrowing time and hopes to offer a beacon of assurance through trauma that will stand the test of time even after this chaos has settled. The design for this project was created by the youth with the mentorship of local Boston-based, L.A.-raised artist Cicely Carew. Carew's work wields the formal, material, and sculptural aspects of painting to evoke radical joy, hope, and liberation. Carew received her MFA from Lesley University's College of Art + Design in 2020. Carew's work is included in the permanent collections of Northeastern University, Simmons University, Boston Art Inc., and the Cambridge Arts Council, and Fidelity Investments. Her work was recently featured in the Newport Art Museum's 2020-21 exhibition "Call & Response," and at the Prudential Center in collaboration with Now + There.

The resulting "Watchful Generation" sculpture reflects the youth's perspective that as time passes, our views change and grow with our experiences. That regardless of each individual's point in their journey of life, the desired result is the same; we all aspire for change and movement which varies and is portrayed by the clock hands pointing to different years in recent history. We live and think so much in the future we forget to enjoy today. We must learn to configure our minds to change with time so we're not stuck trying to see into an uncertain future. We must stop turning a blind eye and start to hold each other accountable so the values of truth, community, and healing begin to resound throughout Lowell. We included three questions with the art to be an interactive piece and challenge the audience to think critically about their role in our community.

The installation will be fabricated by Jay W. Hungate in collaboration with BRM Production Management. Jay is a mixed media sculptor with a wide variety of skills. Over his career, he has produced a multitude of work for both private collections and public venues. He graduated with a degree in Sculpture from Massachusetts College of Art & Design in 1991. Jay is the founder of both Hungate Sculpture and Design; producing fine art and design work, and JWH Studio; a commercial company producing Jay's original sculpture designs for the home and garden for over 25 years. He continues to take on commission work from private individuals, companies, and churches as well as sculptural restorations for school and church statues. Jay has enjoyed working in collaboration with a number of non-profit organizations, like the Revolving Museum, the Lowell Conservation Trust, and Contemporary Arts International, to produce public sculpture and create community awareness and involvement through Art.

Please find attached the proposed site location and installation concept. We at Building Audacity thank you for taking the time to review and consider this proposal inspired by the city's youth.

Sincerely,

Christian Walkes
CHRISTIAN@buildingAudacity.com

Proposed Location - Merrimack Street



Concept Sketches

