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CITY OF CHICAGO LAUNCHES PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PHASE OF "CHICAGO MONUMENTS AND PUBLIC ART PROJECT"

Chicagoans are invited to join a first-of-its kind conversation about monumental sculptures, artworks and commemorative plaques currently being reviewed by independent group of artists, community members and historians.

CHICAGO — The City of Chicago, in partnership with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), Chicago Park District (Parks) and Chicago Public Schools (CPS), today launched the Chicago Monuments Project website at chicagomonuments.org, kicking off the public engagement phase of the Chicago Monuments Project that will conclude in April. The new website identifies monumental sculptures, artworks and commemorative plaques on the public way and in Chicago parks selected by the Chicago Monuments Project Advisory Committee for further review. Chicagoans are encouraged to join the conversation by submitting feedback through the website, virtual events and one-on-one conversations.

"This project is a powerful opportunity for us to come together as a city to assess the many monuments and memorials across our neighborhoods and communities—to face our history and what and how we memorialize that history," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Given the past year and in particular the past summer that made clear history isn't past, it is essential that residents are a part of this conversation. This project is about more than a single statue or mural, it's about channeling our city's dynamic civic energy to permanently memorialize our shared values, history and heritage as Chicagoans in an open and democratic way."

The Chicago Monuments Project is the City's first effort to grapple with the often unacknowledged – or forgotten – history associated with the City's various municipal art collections and provides a vehicle to address the hard truths of Chicago's racial history, confront the ways in which that history has and has not been memorialized and develop a framework for marking public space that elevates new ways to memorialize Chicago's true and complete history.



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Using feedback collected through the upcoming public art and engagement efforts, the City, along with various stakeholder groups, will create a plan to erect a series of new monuments that equitably acknowledge Chicago's shared history.

The Chicago Monuments Project also seeks project ideas from individual artists and/or community groups for the development of new monuments that rethink the place, purpose and permanence of monuments in our public spaces. Deadline for submissions is April 1, 2021.

Leading this review of monuments is the Chicago Monuments Project Advisory Committee, a group of community leaders, artists, architects, scholars, curators and city officials who have dedicated their time, experience and expertise. The committee, announced in August 2020, is co-chaired by Mark Kelly, Commissioner of DCASE, Bonnie McDonald, President & CEO of Landmarks Illinois and Jennifer Scott, Director/Chief Curator of Jane Addams Hull-House Museum.

"The Chicago Monuments Project Advisory Committee has considered hundreds of the city's sculptures and plaques in this critically important process," said DCASE Commissioner and Advisory Committee Co-Chair Mark Kelly. "The City's public art collection is a defining characteristic of Chicago and it should reflect and respect all Chicagoans. The public's input will now help us evaluate the collection and to commission new works."

Out of a collection of over 500 monumental sculptures and commemorative plaques on the public way and in Chicago parks, several have been selected for further review on the projects website. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to share feedback on specific monuments, monuments in general or what monuments might look like in the future. The website is currently accepting public feedback.

Chicagoans are also invited to pre-register to participate in discussions with Chicago Monuments Project Advisory Committee Members, where they can ask questions, share their thoughts and learn more about the Chicago Monuments Project. Space will be limited to 20 community members per drop-in session.

The Chicago Monuments Project also seeks proposals from community partners to host and facilitate public conversations about the city's monuments. Programs can address a specific artwork(s) identified by the Chicago Monuments Advisory Committee and/or present open platforms for a constructive dialogue about previously untold, erased or obscured narratives in the telling of Chicago's history and the development of new monuments. Program proposals will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee, and a select number of proposals will be identified to



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receive a \$1,500 stipend toward program production. Additional public program details will be updated in the upcoming weeks.

The Chicago Park District is excited to help launch and facilitate the Chicago Monuments Project," said General Superintendent and CEO Michael Kelly. "We urge residents and groups to share their perspectives, in a thoughtful and respectful manner. Public participation is critical to our success, not only in examining Chicago's public art collection but also healing our city."

CPS will lead a separate, but aligned, process to review their extensive collection of artworks. CPS is currently in the final stages of creating a Works of Art Steering Committee that will meet quarterly to review concerns about specific works of art raised by members of the CPS community. The committee will work with students, teachers, school leaders and advocacy groups to recommend and advise school communities on actions related to the collection.

"Chicago Public Schools is committed to ensuring works of art in our schools represent the diversity, history and heritage of the communities we serve," said CPS Chief Education Officer, LaTanya McDade. "CPS is proud to participate in this joint effort to better reflect and honor the diversity of our city through public art."

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