

MAYORAL ADVISORY COMMISSION  
ON CITY ART, MONUMENTS, AND MARKERS

Report to the City of New York  
January 2018

## INTRODUCTION

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The Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments, and Markers (“the Commission”) is committed to a process of historical reckoning, a nuanced understanding of the complicated histories we have inherited. Due to the various time periods and methods of its assembly, New York City’s current collection of monuments and markers celebrates some histories and erases others. Redressing this issue should be a process that moves beyond an all-or-nothing choice between keeping or removing monuments. We recognize that public dialogue, opportunities for engagement, and debate about history are essential for democracy and should be nurtured. Like similar reports in other municipalities, this report contemplates confronting or removing monuments. We also acknowledge that sometimes the best option will be to add new works of public art or new educational opportunities.

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## **I. COMMISSION OVERVIEW**

### **Charge**

This Commission was established to advise the Mayor on issues relating to public art, monuments, and historic markers on City-owned property. Specifically, the Commission's charge is to develop non-binding recommendations on how the City should address City-owned monuments and markers on City property, particularly those that are subject to sustained negative public reaction or may be viewed as inconsistent with the values of New York City, by which we mean a just city that prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments, and Markers recognizes its role in advising the Mayor of the City of New York and offers non-binding recommendations prioritizing complex, inclusive histories and opportunities for different future possibilities. The following recommendations are rooted in the Commission's shared values and respect for multiple viewpoints.

### **Composition and Governance**

The Commission was established in the form of an advisory body composed of members with widely recognized expertise in a range of relevant disciplines, such as history, art and antiquities, public art and public space, preservation, cultural heritage, diversity and inclusion, and education. A small number of City agencies with relevant roles and skills provided additional technical and policy expertise. The Commission is co-chaired by NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl and Darren Walker, a nationally renowned leader in art, social justice, and philanthropy and President of The Ford Foundation.

### **Timeframe and Process**

#### *Commission Meetings*

The timeframe for the Commission's activities was 90 days from its establishment, in September 2017. During this period, the Commission held three formal meetings, co-chaired by Darren Walker and Tom Finkelpearl. Over the course of its meetings, the Commission began by setting parameters for discussion and developing a consensus on the general foundation and broader framework of the recommendations. From there, the Commission laid out principles and procedures for considering City-owned public art, monuments, and markers, and ultimately finalized these recommendations and guidelines into this report. The Commission used a limited number of illustrative monuments and markers to show how these proposed processes could translate into practical recommendations.

*Public Input*

The Commission convened five public hearings to solicit input from New York City residents. One meeting was held in each borough. At the beginning of each meeting the Commission introduced itself and laid out its purpose and process. This was followed by the public's opportunity to testify. Speakers were allotted three minutes each to express their views. Every member of the public who came to testify was allowed time to speak. Those who chose not to wait or could not attend had the opportunity to submit written testimony. More than 500 individuals attended the public hearings, with nearly 200 offering verbal testimony.

The Commission also released an online survey for public comment, which received more than 3,000 responses. Respondents were asked to offer their thoughts on the role of monuments in public space, to submit their views on existing monuments and markers, and to propose ideas for additional public artworks.

Many Commission members attended the public hearings and heard firsthand the views expressed. Recordings of the hearings as well as submitted written testimony were presented to Commission members. In addition, the Commission released an online survey to the public and received all responses. The City engaged a consultant to conduct an analysis of the data collected which was presented to the Commission. See Appendix B for links to recordings of the public hearings, the written testimony, the survey questions, and the summary analysis of the data.

*Recommendations*

Having completed this process, the Commission hereby submits a series of recommendations to the Mayor for consideration. These recommendations both respond directly to the charge of the Commission and include additional recommendations as a result of its deliberations and public input.

## **II. LETTER FROM COMMISSION CO-CHAIRS**

Controversy over public art is nothing new. Here in New York, from the equestrian statue of King George III torn down by patriots in Bowling Green in 1776 to Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* over two hundred years later, we have often focused our collective attention on statues and monuments, especially at moments when tensions are running high.

We're living in one of those moments. The past 90 days have been a fascinating journey in which we considered the ways our national character does and does not manifest in our public spaces. "Why?" is the question that has dominated our work on the Mayor's Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments, and Markers. "Why do we have monuments honoring this figure and not that one?" "Why would we even consider taking this down?" "Why would we even consider leaving this up?" And the one we are often asked in individual conversations: "With everything else going on, why are you doing this now?"

Simply put, we agreed to do this at the request of the Mayor because we believe strongly that now is the time to have these open, frank conversations. As weather-beaten statues became flash points for fresh conflicts this past year, we saw that considering what and whom we choose to honor in public spaces is not a purely academic matter – it's something very much alive in our public debates. Furthermore, we are confident that if we approach these difficult issues the right way, they can initiate a process of healing for the old wounds they at first seem to tear open.

This might sound grandiose for a commission with a relatively narrow task at hand: to develop policy recommendations and a framework for New York City to address controversies around objects on City-owned property. But as we've seen, these often-overlooked objects provide entry points to much bigger conversations about history and justice. They tell the world who we are when we build them, and what our society aspires to. When enough time passes these cast bronze figures start to seem like a natural part of the scenery, the green patina blending with trees and moss. But these arrived in our spaces through deliberate, decisive action – and our goal on the Commission has been to unpack these decisions to understand, and help drive our collective conversations forward.

What is the "right way"? That's another one of the central questions we've struggled with alongside our fellow commission members in recent months. At what point should an object come under official review? What should that review consist of? What sort of action would best serve the public interest: added context, or relocation, or maybe nothing at all?

The public hearings opened our eyes to the passions, depth of knowledge, and incredible intelligence that people are willing to bring to this discussion if you are willing to listen. While the diversity of opinion we encountered mirrored that of the Commission members themselves, we came away even more convinced of the shared values that drove our work: the paramount values of art, public space, and civic discourse, and the millions of ways our individual and shared experiences color our view of how they intersect. While we heard from hundreds of New Yorkers live in person and thousands more online, we hope that this continues to be a conversation that everyone has the opportunity to participate in.

An underlying faith in people drove our work forward. Now the conversation is in the hands of residents and their chosen leaders. We hope this moment serves as both a resolution, and sparks an ongoing dialogue as people embrace truth and work toward reconciliation. We're neighbors in a world that's getting smaller all the time through new technology and interactions that transcend national and global boundaries. This is one small, but challenging, way that we can talk to one another, and better understand each other.

Lastly, the members of the Commission felt very strongly that they wanted to make a clear statement, to say something concrete about how to address controversies and omissions, to seek decisive action while acknowledging varying interpretations and meanings, moving toward a more just future.

### Conclusion

The following pages contain the recommendations of this Commission, and a good faith attempt to distill all of the conversations we've had – both as a Commission and with members of the public – informed by our shared principles, that can be applied to objects in our public space. We put these forward for the City to use as guidance to inform future policy.

In addition to a broader policy that can be applied to any art, monument, or marker on City property, the Commission has made recommendations for several existing monuments and markers that are the subject of current debate.

These principles and recommendations are driven by a belief that while we should chart this course together, we understand that it's not realistic – nor is it the goal – for everyone to be on board for every decision. We don't have to agree on every point to give voice to the multitude of voices and narratives that feed into our history. In fact, we believe that debate is necessary to a thriving democracy.

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Finally, we'd like to call attention to the members of this Commission. Each one brought an impressive depth of knowledge and intellectual rigor to the discussions, and approached the process with open minds. Their contributions will guide our public discourse for years to come. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who dedicated their time and effort to the work of this Commission.

Sincerely,

Darren Walker  
President, Ford Foundation

Tom Finkelpearl  
Commissioner, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs



### III. COMMISSION FINDINGS: PRINCIPLES

First and foremost, the Commission recognizes that this project of historical reckoning simultaneously addresses the past and looks toward the future. The Commission's recommendations aim to promote much-needed public dialogue engaging histories of the many peoples that have occupied, currently occupy, or will eventually occupy the area we know as New York City. Markers and monuments have long been erected as visible images of great achievements by heroic figures, as determined by particular civic groups at specific moments in time, but the inherent gaps are clear. As our nation continues to grapple with a challenging legacy of racism, colonialism, ableism, sexism, prejudice, and inequality, the Commission sees the present as a fertile moment. Now is a time for New York City to take bold action, to identify and contend with racial and other intersectional forms of injustice in its monuments, and to make strides toward truth-telling toward the eventual goal of reconciliation.

Secondly, the Commission recognizes that the City must not only opine on controversial monuments but also be proactive in adding representation of overlooked histories to its collection and its storytelling. The City must create initiatives—in and out of public space—for ongoing, participatory education, inclusive of our collective narratives.

Thirdly, when responding to contested monuments and markers, the Commission recognizes that each phase of evaluation will require in-depth knowledge and expertise to inform potential actions. While there are always limits to historical analysis, we must seek to understand the historical context within which monuments were erected and also be authentic to the ideals of equity and justice that mark our present era. When New Amsterdam and New York were founded, certain groups were included as citizens and others not, and not all citizens had equal civic power to make decisions. As various peoples have migrated into New York City over the decades, their evolving roles in the history, politics, and social fabric of the city have contributed to a more complex and more informed historical understanding.

Lastly, the Commission recognizes that more voices are included in our public dialogue than ever before. Therefore, transparency and public input are essential to the process by which new monuments are added and evaluated, to achieve an equitable public collection.

Through a series of in-depth discussions, the Commission formulated a set of shared values to ground its deliberations. These can be distilled into five guiding principles for the Commission's recommendations:

- **Reckoning with power to represent history in public**  
*recognizing that the ability to represent histories in public is powerful; reckoning with inequity and injustice while looking to a just future.*
- **Historical understanding**  
*respect for and commitment to in-depth and nuanced histories, acknowledging multiple perspectives, including histories that previously have not been privileged.*
- **Inclusion**  
*creating conditions for all New Yorkers to feel welcome in New York City's public spaces and to have a voice in the public processes by which monuments and markers are included in such spaces.*
- **Complexity**  
*acknowledging layered and evolving narratives represented in New York City's public spaces, with preference for additive, relational, and intersectional approaches over subtractive ones. Monuments and markers have multiple meanings that are difficult to unravel, and it is often impossible to agree on a single meaning.*
- **Justice**  
*recognizing the erasure embedded in the City's collection of monuments and markers; addressing histories of dispossession, enslavement, and discrimination not adequately represented in the current public landscape; and actualizing equity.*

Where these principles are specifically referred to throughout the report, they will be capitalized.

The Commission recognizes that assessment based upon these principles may produce conflicting results for any specific monument, and therefore proposes that an evaluation will have to make a decision as to which principles to prioritize when making recommendations.

### **III. COMMISSION FINDINGS: A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO BUILDING THE CITY'S COLLECTION OF MONUMENTS AND MARKERS**

The Commission agrees that in order for the City to ensure that public spaces are inclusive for all New Yorkers, it should proactively invest in the addition of new public works, public dialogues, and educational initiatives around historical moments and figures. This process in the past has often been ad hoc, with additions of new works determined on the basis of which groups happen to have the resources to pursue such a goal. But there has not been an overall assessment or guiding vision of what has been included, what has been excluded, and how these decisions impact our collective narrative. Further dedication is needed to redress the foundational gaps and erasure evident within the City's collection. As such, the Commission recommends that the City of New York, either independently or in collaboration with private philanthropy, establish a fund to support in-depth investigation, active public discussion, and the addition of new monuments and markers.

The Commission recognizes that monuments and markers are symbols and/or representations of particular moments in time, and of particular cultural and political climates. In many cases, the values embedded in these monuments are understood simultaneously as symbols of pride by one group and as reminders of systematic oppression for different peoples. For meaningful, positive, and long-term change to take place in this complex situation, solutions must be multi-pronged and inclusive of many points of view.

The City has an opportunity to invest in initiatives that allow its residents to confront these layered legacies in order to facilitate more just and equitable representation in public space. To begin to do this, the Commission recommends that the City:

1. **Conduct a comprehensive assessment of its current collection** of public art, monuments, and markers in order to gain an understanding of what and who are represented and left out; and consider making such an assessment publicly accessible;
2. **Commission new permanent monuments and works about history** to begin a proactive, additive process that rebalances and/or creates a more representative public collection;
3. **Commission new temporary artworks about historical moments** to add more perspectives and to foster public dialogue in public space;
4. **Establish a mechanism for community-generated monuments and markers** to give agency to neighborhoods to decide what and whom to celebrate in their public spaces;
5. **Invest in educational initiatives** through partnerships between the Department of Education, the Department of Cultural Affairs, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Public Design Commission, and relevant cultural organizations to integrate complex and nuanced histories into curricula using monuments and markers;

6. **Host or co-host City-sponsored historical discussions or public programs** to address issues raised by controversial art, monuments, or markers; e.g., a symposium on women’s health at the New York Academy of Medicine, stemming from objections to the Dr. J. Marion Sims monument;
7. **Use digital content and new technologies** to make the City’s collection of art, monuments, and markers more accessible to the public, potentially through VR/AR and interactive works;
8. **Create equity funds** for historically underrepresented communities, offering tangible community investments to address historical exclusions represented by many controversial monuments and artworks over the long term;
9. **Establish an interagency task force on monuments** to deal with this issue moving forward, including representatives of relevant City agencies including, but not limited to, the Department of Cultural Affairs, Parks Department, Landmarks Preservation Commission, Public Design Commission, and Department of Transportation, and one representative from each borough. The Commissioner of Cultural Affairs may serve as a permanent member in an advisory capacity to fulfill the recommendations of this Commission, ensuring expeditious treatment and appropriate resolution.

### **III. COMMISSION FINDINGS: REVIEW OF EXISTING WORKS**

The following guidelines are rooted in the principles described above and reflect multiple voices, though not necessarily unanimous consensus. Some Commission members advocate for transformation of monument sites through artwork removal and/or large-scale artist-led gestures to remediate what they see as exclusionary narratives. Other Commission members believe that monuments should almost never be removed, seeing their presence as a physical representation of the complex histories of the city. And still others promote the idea that monuments and markers in public spaces offer an opportunity to engage in valuable and complex public dialogues. As a result, the Commission recognizes the improbability of a unanimous opinion on these complex historical artifacts. The Commission hopes that New York City policy will allow for nuanced assessment taking into account the unique and specific history and evolution of each monument. The Commission’s process identified several approaches with which to make evaluations and subsequent recommendations for monuments and markers on City-owned property.

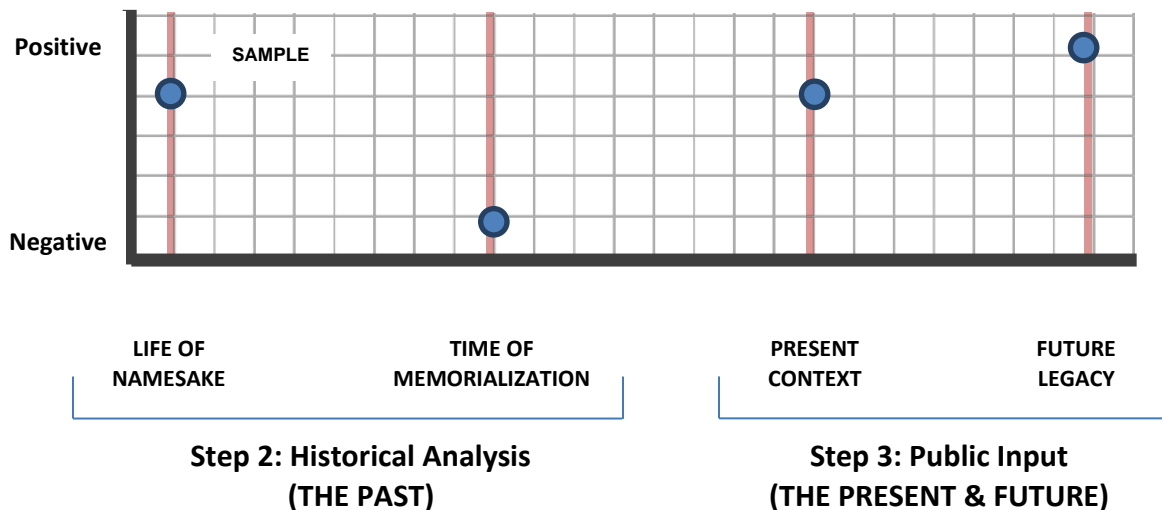
#### **Evaluation Process: Monuments and Public Art**

##### **Step 1: WHAT IS REVIEWED?**

The Commission recommends that the City consider the following factors to determine when City-owned monuments and artworks on City-owned property may be reviewed:

1. Sustained adverse public reaction (two years or more);
2. Large-scale community opposition (as part of larger cultural/political concerns);
3. Recommendation from the local community board (considerations within the community board’s jurisdiction only);
4. Egregious historical oversight, and/or revelation of new, significant information about the monument and what or whom it represents.

If the City determines that it will initiate the review of a monument, the Commission recommends that the relevant agency with jurisdiction over the work in question (“the Agency”) complete the following steps.



## Step 2: THE PAST

**The Agency commissions a robust historical analysis, akin to an Environmental Impact Report.**

This analysis should be led by a panel of relevant experts, which may include historians and art historians as well as other qualified individuals. The report should include:

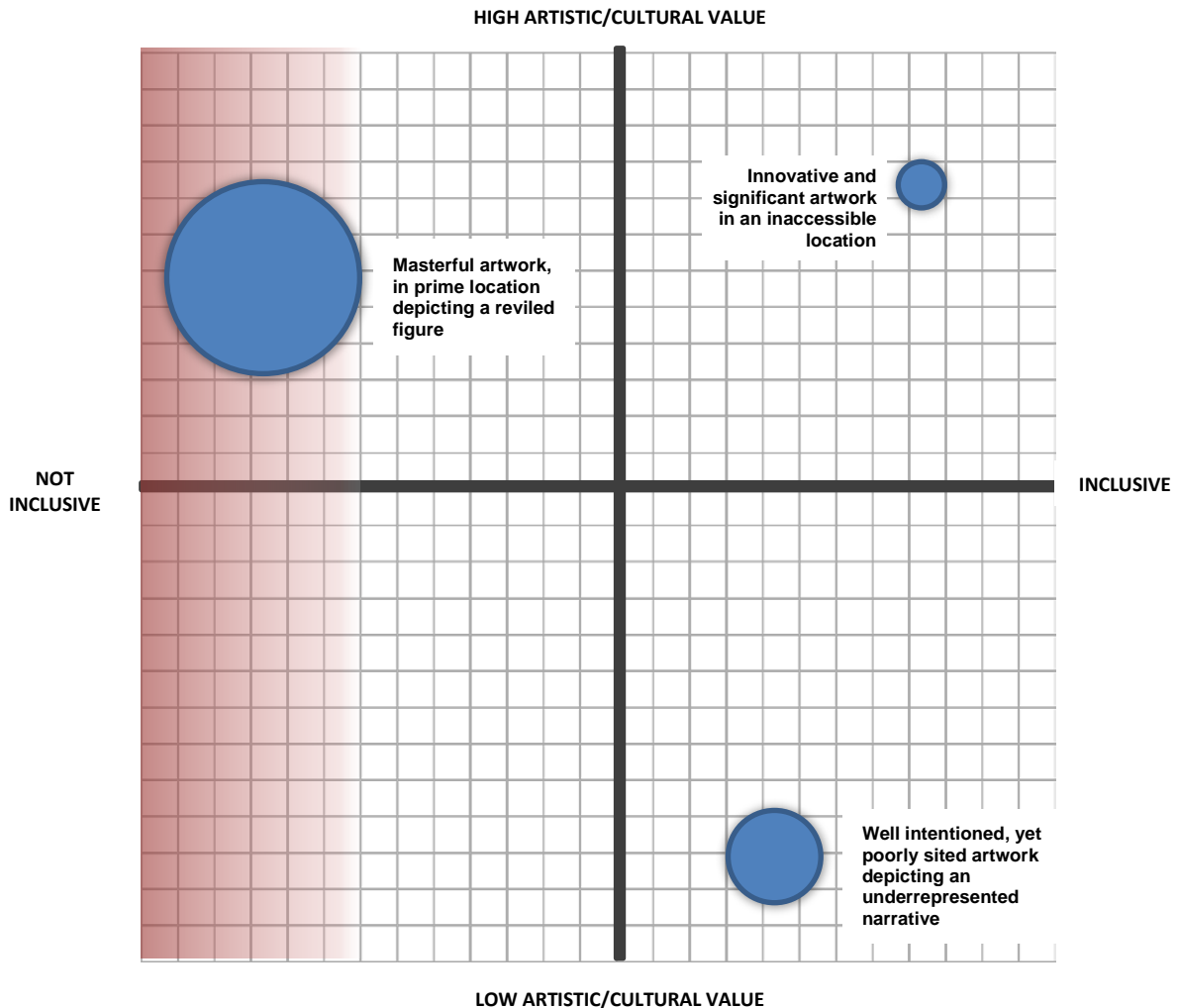
1. Time-based assessment of:
  - a. Era of event or person being memorialized—Inquiry into questions like: Who was the person being commemorated? What did they achieve? How were they perceived during their lifetime?
  - b. Time of memorialization—Inquiry into questions like: What were the circumstances of the commission? Who paid for it? What were the motivations of the commissioning body? Who was the artist and why were they chosen?
2. Assessment of symbolic impact of the monument or its location (including, for instance, considerations of its siting or its historical, cultural, artistic, and/or social value)
3. Assessment of the aesthetic representation, including any historical and political impact and/or considerations of scale
4. An account of counter-arguments and literature review of the memorialized figure and/or event under review
5. Overview of methodology of historical research, with an emphasis on the use of primary sources
6. Cost assessment
7. Legal analysis (ownership, deed restrictions, etc.)

The Commission recommends that the Agency release this report to the public before proceeding to Step 3.

**Step 3: THE PRESENT**

**Public input—where are we now and what do we want our legacy to be?**

1. The Agency holds a minimum of one public hearing about the specific work in question, privileging local input.
2. The Agency releases a public survey. Along with a standard questionnaire, a useful device could be the evaluative matrix pictured below. This matrix allows users to consider multiple issues at once—Is the work inclusive? Does it have high artistic value? What is the scale of its impact (as represented by the size of the circle)? This survey should include considerations of time periods, including both the present context and future legacy.



**Step 4: THE FUTURE**

**Release recommendations in a report incorporating previous research and public input.**

1. Distill historical analysis and public input.
2. Apply the Commission’s five guiding principles, defined on page 8—Reckoning with power to represent history in public, Historical understanding, Inclusion, Complexity, and Justice—to inform recommendations.

**The Commission offers to the City of New York the following considerations for evaluation of controversial monuments in order to deduce recommended action(s) that are embedded in the Commission’s principles:**

- A. Recommendations should draw from one or more of the guiding principles offered by the Commission in this document.
- B. The process recommended above exists to ensure a multiplicity of input and expertise in evaluation, and therefore any proposed action(s) should also ensure transparency in process, narrative, and representation. The Commission strives to ensure an evaluation system of checks and balances so that recommendations are thoughtful and consistent across time and City administrations.
- C. All recommendations will aim to address past concerns while concurrently looking toward future narratives.
- D. The primary focus of all action(s) is to [1] engage in complex and additive evolution of the collective public narrative, [2] foster necessary public dialogue about histories in New York City, and [3] reckon with the power embodied in and expressed by City-owned monuments in public space.

**Three general recommendations are presented by the Commission to the City of New York for consideration:**

1. In cases of public consensus, recommend long-term and/or permanent solutions ranging from simply leaving the monument in place to removal.
2. In cases of polarized debate, recommend short-term and/or temporary intervention at the monument site to encourage participatory, public dialogue, and reevaluate after a period of time.

Based on the above considerations, the City of New York and the overseeing Agency may recommend actions for controversial monuments including, but not limited to:



1. **No action is deemed necessary**—existing monument remains in place without intervention.
2. **Re-contextualization**—provide new or additional context by any means including: install site-specific plaques or signage, update historical information, disclaim endorsement of the acts of historic figures, or provide information electronically.
3. **Relocation**—relocate to another City-owned public site. Alternatives include relocation or long-term loan to cultural organizations, museums, or relevant historical, cultural, or educational settings.
4. **New temporary or permanent works**—commission new artworks in any medium including sculpture, performance, and socially engaged art in order to foster public dialogue on polarizing historical moments and to amplify additional or excluded voices and underrepresented histories.
5. **Removal**—remove offending, controversial, or outdated works from outdoor display on public property.

#### **Step 5: Existing City Process for Reviewing Public Art/Permanent Works**

After Steps 1–4 above, the Agency would follow the existing City process for proposals relating to permanent works on City property, including Public Design Commission review and all required community board meetings and/or public hearings.

## **Evaluation Process: Markers**

When evaluating historical markers, first consider the accuracy of the facts regarding the event or figure being acknowledged. If accurate, then consider the nature of the marker if it is perceived to be in opposition to the values of New Yorkers.

### **Step 1: WHAT IS REVIEWED?**

The Commission recommends that the City consider the following factors to determine when City-owned historical markers on City-owned property may be reviewed:

1. Sustained adverse public reaction (two years or more);
2. Instantaneous large-scale community opposition;
3. Egregious historical oversight;
4. Revelation of new, significant information about memorialized figures.

If the City determines that it will initiate the review of a marker, the Commission recommends that the Agency presiding over the work in question complete the following steps.

### **Step 2: THE PAST & PRESENT**

**The Agency commissions a robust historical analysis** led by a panel of relevant experts, which may include historians and art historians as well as other qualified individuals to assess the historical accuracy of the marker.

### **Step 3: THE FUTURE**

1. If the marker is accurate, it remains in place.
2. If the marker is historically inaccurate, it must be altered to reflect history accurately.
3. Proactively add markers to express additional or excluded voices and underrepresented histories in City public spaces.

### **III. COMMISSION FINDINGS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SELECTED MONUMENTS AND MARKERS**

The Commission selected three monuments and one historical marker from the City's collection to which to apply its five guiding principles, defined on page 10: Reckoning with power to represent history in public, Historical understanding, Inclusion, Complexity, and Justice. The Commission recognizes that monuments and markers are nearly always political in nature, and thus actions relating to existing monuments and markers (including a decision to take no action) are similarly political gestures. After debate and careful consideration, the Commission presents the following recommendations for:

- **Dr. J. Marion Sims Monument**, Central Park at Fifth Avenue and 103<sup>rd</sup> Street
- **Marker for Marshal Philippe Pétain**, Lower Broadway
- **Equestrian Statue of Theodore Roosevelt**, Roosevelt Park at the American Museum of Natural History
- **Christopher Columbus Monument**, Columbus Circle

## **Dr. J. Marion Sims Monument, Central Park** at Fifth Avenue and 103<sup>rd</sup> Street

### *Information Considered*

In deliberations on the J. Marion Sims statue (by German artist Ferdinand von Miller II, 1894) that now sits on Fifth Avenue at 103<sup>rd</sup> Street, the Commission considered research from a number of scholars of social and medical history. This research situates Sims's practices in the context of dehumanizing and racialized medical norms of the time, notably the experimentation on Black Americans by white doctors from colonial times through the present. Sims has been referred to as "the father of modern gynecology" for medical breakthroughs in treating vesicovaginal fistula, which results from difficult childbirths. The extent of his medical advances with regard to treating the fistula remains under dispute. The NYC Department of Parks and Recreation has been seeking to address the public's contestation of this monument for decades and shared its research with the Commission. In addition, many Commission members came with their own knowledge and expertise about the statue and reviewed public input in the forms of magazine and newspaper articles, books on the subject, public testimony, petitions, and public survey responses. Various groups wrote to the Commission demanding the removal of the Sims statue, including the Black Youth Project 100, the New York Academy of Medicine, the Museum of the City of New York, and Planned Parenthood New York. No person or group wrote or testified to request that the Sims monument remain in its current location.

### *Reflecting the Discussion*

The Commission took into account its guiding principles when deliberating on the Sims monument, especially: Reckoning with power to represent history in public, Historical understanding, and Justice. Nearly all the Commission members agree that the research on J. Marion Sims gave them confidence in the historical understanding of this particular monument and what it represents to the history of medicine, the people of the nearby community, and to the City as a whole.

J. Marion Sims (1813–1883) was a doctor whose most heralded medical advances, most notably his fame for allegedly curing the fistula, were achieved by experiments upon enslaved Black women. There is controversy around the significance of the medical advances he achieved, and some commissioners noted that they may have been significant. But there is no question about the abuse of the women he experimented upon. This monument was dedicated in 1894, a decade after Sims's death, and placed in Bryant Park, and later moved into storage when the park underwent construction. In 1934 it was placed on its current site in Central Park across from the New York Academy of Medicine, a location with strong symbolic presence, a place of honor. The sculpture is clearly laudatory in itself, and the monument presents Sims on a high pedestal in a heroic pose. A portion of the plaque on the left pier of the pedestal reads, "His brilliant achievement carried the fame of American surgery throughout the entire world." There

is no ambiguity to the monument's glorification. The Commission also considered it relevant that the sculpture is not site specific to its current location as the sculpture had been moved in the past.

When considering the Sims monument in relation to the principle of Reckoning with power to represent history in public, the Commission felt it was impossible to evaluate the monument separately from the practices of white doctors experimenting upon Black bodies without consent. Sims had the power to make these experiments, gain fame from the process, and be venerated on a pedestal after he passed away. The enslaved women he experimented upon had none of this power. Free consent to participate in the experiments was not obtainable from women who were not free. The Commission felt that it would be wrong to continue to overlook this distressing imbalance of power.

When moving toward the principle of Justice, the Commission considered the importance of the monument's location. While the celebration of this figure concerns all residents of New York City, there is an additional layer of important local context. The surrounding neighborhood of East Harlem/El Barrio largely consists of communities of color, predominantly Latinx and Black. Many people in these communities have been demanding the removal of this statue for decades, including through a local community board resolution. Taking all this into consideration, the Commission strongly advocates for intervention at the monument site in order to establish a more just and inclusive public space.

In short, especially in its current location, the Sims monument has come to represent a legacy of oppressive and abusive practices on bodies that were seen as subjugated, subordinate, and exploitable in service to his fame. To confront this legacy in accordance with the principle of Historical understanding, the Commission feels that the City must take significant action to reframe the narrative presented in the monument.

### *Recommendations*

The overwhelming majority of the Commission recommends:

1. **Relocate** the statue of J. Marion Sims, without its pedestal, to another publicly accessible site;
2. **Add an explanatory plaque** on the pedestal in its current location as well as the statue in its new home that informs the public of the origins of the monument, including the legacy of non-consensual medical experimentation on women of color broadly and Black women specifically that Sims has come to symbolize; and add the names Lucy, Anarcha, and Betsey (family names unknown), the three women on whom Sims conducted his medical experiments, and their histories if possible, to honor the sacrifice of the women whose bodies were used in the name of medical and scientific advancement;

3. Partner with an appropriate organization to **program in-depth public dialogues** and symposia on the history of non-consensual medical experimentation on people of color, particularly women, based in part on the legacy of J. Marion Sims;
4. With public input, **commission new work** for the existing pedestal that reflects issues raised by Sims's legacy. For example, in collaboration with the New York City Department of Education, issue a call for names of prominent women of color in science and medicine and commission new monuments to these women, so that young people in the community and citywide will be able to see the accomplishments of their ancestors reflected in their public space.

## **Marker for Marshal Philippe Pétain, Lower Broadway**

### *Information Considered*

In deliberations on the marker commemorating the 1931 ticker-tape parade for Marshal Philippe Pétain on Lower Broadway (installed 2004), the Commission considered historical accuracy and the nature of the marker in context. The Commission referred to City records and information provided by the Downtown Alliance. While the Pétain marker was an infrequent topic of discussion during public hearings, a petition calling for the removal of the Pétain marker – as well as the three monuments discussed in this report -- was shared with the Commission, signed by hundreds of scholars and art historians. Many Commission members came to the deliberations with their own knowledge and expertise on the issue and considered public input from testimony, survey responses, and petitions.

Philippe Pétain (1856–1951) was a general in the French army in World War I. Because of his leadership, New York City held a ticker-tape parade in his honor along Broadway in October 1931. Subsequently, from 1940 to 1944, Pétain was the leader of the Vichy government in France, which deported many citizens to their death. After World War II ended, he was tried and convicted of treason. In 2004, the Downtown Alliance installed sidewalk plaques as part of a larger capital improvement project (ongoing, to include the parades since then) recognizing the 206 ticker-tape parades that have taken place along Broadway’s “Canyon of Heroes” starting in 1886. Each event is marked with a granite strip along the parade route, from Battery Park to City Hall.

### *Reflecting the Discussion*

The Commission noted two critical points when reviewing the available information: first, the Pétain marker is one part of a project designed as a whole to acknowledge the history of parades along Broadway; and second, the project accurately records a chronology of events in place. The Commission’s discussions first considered historical accuracy and then the nature of the memorialization. The Commission believes that if a marker is accurate, and not celebratory of egregious values or actions, it should not be removed.

During deliberations, the Commission established that all 206 markers along the historic parade route must be considered in total as they are a complete chronology. It was considered an all-or-nothing proposition: since the markers constitute a list, to maintain historical accuracy the list should remain complete. Therefore, the only two propositions considered were to remove all the markers or to keep them all in place.

The questions then became: is the “Canyon of Heroes” a set of markers or a monument in itself? Is a marker placed in the sidewalk perceived as honorific? The Commission sought to

balance complex and problematic honors with a desire to acknowledge the history of important spaces in the city. In addition, the Commission wants to create opportunities for learning. Clearly, some ticker-tape parades misjudged some so-called heroes whom history later cast in shadows. It is often difficult for us to acknowledge judgments of the past from our perspective in the present, but removal of the vestiges of past decisions risks leading to cultural amnesia.

**A majority of Commission members advocated for keeping and re-contextualizing the markers**

Ultimately, a majority of the Commission members feel that while the ticker-tape parades were honorific, the markers themselves tell this history without a clear element of celebration—in contrast with the clearly celebratory intent of the other monuments the Commission discussed. With this in mind, to promote historical accuracy, the suggested action proposes keeping all 206 markers while re-contextualizing them in place to continue the public dialogue.

**Several Commission members advocated for removing all the markers**

Still, for some Commission members, the negative public response and the horrific histories of Pétain and others whose names are inscribed in the sidewalk offer enough reason to consider the whole project flawed. They characterize the markers as giving a space of honor to Pétain and others with legacies that continue to cause pain to residents of New York City. As a result, these Commission members recommend removal of all 206 markers.

*Recommendations*

The Commission recommends:

1. A majority of Commission members advocate to **keep all markers in place and add context** in order to reframe this list as a teachable moment (e.g., wayfinding, on-site signage, and historical information about the people for whom parades were held);
2. **Remove references to the name “Canyon of Heroes”** from Lower Broadway, as it mischaracterizes the installation as a celebration of heroic figures who, in some cases, do not reflect contemporary values of New York City.



## **Equestrian Statue of Theodore Roosevelt, Roosevelt Park**

### *Information Considered*

In discussions about the equestrian statue of Theodore Roosevelt (by James Earle Fraser, 1939), the Commission brought personal and professional knowledge and also considered City records and expertise from a variety of fields and points of view including art history, American studies, and the history of race and the eugenics movement. Because of the complex history of the Roosevelt monument, a significant portion of the Commission proposed a need for further consideration of questions related to the memorial, its commissioning by the State of New York, its unclear ownership, and the monument's historical yet ambiguous relationship with the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH). The Commission considered historical research that situates the monument within a larger interior and exterior artistic program in relation to AMNH. The Commission also weighed the significance of the contributions of the artist. In addition to receiving public input through testimony and an online survey, the Commission noted that this monument has been subject to sustained adverse public reaction for many decades.

### *Reflecting the Discussion*

The Commission's deliberations on the Roosevelt monument were anchored in the principles presented in this report, particularly Historical understanding, Inclusion, and Justice. Much of the discussion sought to balance the historical perspectives with the contemporary readings of the aesthetics of the sculpture and the physical context of its site. Many on the Commission—both those advocating for the monument's removal and those who see value in maintaining its presence—argued that the Roosevelt monument is inextricably linked to AMNH. There was discussion of the monument's link to the museum as a part of a multi-part artistic program including murals and sculptures designed for the museum's interior and exterior facades—part of a larger scheme including the Theodore Roosevelt Rotunda and the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Hall inside AMNH. Some also see the monument as an image of racial hierarchy and linked this to the museum's early-twentieth-century ties to the eugenics movement; the second and third International Eugenics Congress conferences were held at AMNH in 1921 and 1932, respectively. There was discussion about the motivations and intentions and creative context of the artist, James Earle Fraser—a significant figure in his time—based upon art-historical and cultural-historical research. Some Commission members pointed to art-historical interpretations of the two standing figures as allegorical, representing the continents of the Americas and Africa, emphasized by the animals in relief on the parapet wall behind them. This analysis included evidence that the sculpture was meant to represent Roosevelt's belief in the unity of the races. In this interpretation, the figures are in no way abject. However, other Commission members argued that the progressive-sounding language of the time was part of

the culture of “separate but equal,” “Manifest Destiny,” and a belief in the superiority of Western civilization.

Alongside cultural and art-historical analyses, there was discussion of how people throughout the city experience a work of public art today. The monument consists of a heroic Roosevelt on horseback towering over two men, who walk at his stirrups. An observation repeated several times by the Commission is that height is power in public art, and Roosevelt’s stature on his noble steed visibly expresses dominance and superiority over the Native American and African figures. Whatever the intent at the time of its commissioning, the sculpture reads as a depiction of hierarchy to many viewers in New York City today. Ultimately, the Commission came to an understanding that any recommendation would have to balance an ensemble of issues—the physical representation of the figures and its impact on a viewing public; the motivation for the monument’s dedication and the artist’s intention; the historical values and ideas expressed by this representation—while understanding that these ideas are in conflict.

### *Opinions*

The Commission was unable to reach consensus. The debate stems from the recognition of discord between the significance of Roosevelt as a major figure in American history—a military leader, expansionist, New York State governor, environmentalist (founder of the United States Forest Service), Nobel Prize winner and US president—and the physical representation of the figures in the sculpture at the entrance of AMNH. Many Commission members acknowledged that more exact information could help more fully inform the public about Roosevelt’s complicated and mixed legacy, his relation to the conservation and eugenics movements, those movements’ relation to the Progressive movement and AMNH, along with the considerations that were taken into account at the time of commemoration. Others, however, did not agree that more information would impact the viewing public’s experience of the form of the sculpture, which they consider to be a racist work of public art, a historically rooted image of racial hierarchy. This group of Commission members believes there is ample existing research and scholarship that offers historical understanding to make the decision to relocate the monument.

### *Recommendations*

Opinions were divided across three options, unevenly. All three proposals below are offered for the City’s consideration:

#### Approximately half of the Commission:

- believe that **additional historical research** is necessary before recommendations can be offered. This group of Commission members proposes to the City that this monument be the first considered in the evaluation framework detailed in this report.

#### Approximately half of the Commission:

- advocate to **relocate** the sculpture. Within this group there was a diversity of opinion regarding where and how relocation should occur, and options considered include relocation [1] within the larger Theodore Roosevelt complex, [2] inside the AMNH, [3] to another publicly accessible location so that the monument's prominence and impact on a diverse viewing public are reduced, or [4] re-contextualize within an existing and/or historic collection preferably on City property.

A few Commission members:

- advocate to keep the Roosevelt monument as is and **provide additional context on-site** through signage and/or artist-led interventions that can offer multiple interpretations of the sculpture, the artist's intentions, and the nature of the commission as part of the history of AMNH. The goal would be to re-think how the statue is presented, to frame it in a way that discloses the historical distance we have traveled from once-popular ideas.

## **Christopher Columbus Monument, Columbus Circle**

The Commission considered a range of historical research on Christopher Columbus as a figure in world history and in relation to the indigenous peoples of the Americas and to Italian Americans. Commission members brought their own expert knowledge to the discussion and used City records and historical findings on the monument at Columbus Circle (by Gaetano Russo, 1892). In addition, the Commission weighed the impassioned, highly polarized arguments presented through public testimonies, letters, petitions, and survey responses. What remained clear through the public process is that there are entrenched disagreements about all four moments in time considered in the assessment of this monument: the life of Christopher Columbus, the intention at the time of the commissioning of the monument, its present impact and meaning, and its future legacy. Various historians have focused their scholarship on different aspects of this legacy: There is a wealth of historical research assessing the consequences of Columbus's actions on the Americas. Some research considers the consequences for indigenous peoples, while other research sees his arrival as the precursor of immigration or the spread of the Catholic faith. Separately, there is a body of historical research about the Italian American embrace of Columbus as an American hero as a means of combating anti-Italian and anti-Catholic practices and violence. Weaving these complexities together into an assessment of the Columbus monument posed an enormous challenge to the commission.

### *Reflecting the Discussion*

The Commission began discussions by establishing framing questions: How is the City going to deal for the first time with issues of dispossession of land, historic discrimination against peoples, and enslavement? How does this relate to the Columbus monument? And where does the Columbus monument fit into the City's history and storytelling in general?

While disagreements were not resolved in other areas, the Commission did reach a consensus to introduce an additive approach that acknowledges the complexity of Columbus's symbolic and historic legacy as it pertains to the Americas. This could include new public monuments, new curricula in the public school system, performances, symposia, and other forms of recognition.

Commission members debated vigorously about the symbolic nature of the statue, grappling with the multiple interpretations of Columbus. Columbus serves as a reminder of genocide of Native peoples across the Americas and the onset of the transatlantic slave trade. This view must be balanced against the historic role of Columbus in the United States's national understanding as reflected in numerous place and institutional names (e.g., District of Columbia, Columbia University), as well as an important source of ethnic pride during a time of great discrimination against Italian Americans in New York City and across the United States.

For many marginalized peoples, from indigenous peoples across the Americas including the Lenape and Algonquian-language peoples whose land New York City sits on, to Black Americans, to those of Taino heritage from the Caribbean, and other colonized peoples, Columbus represents a violent past. It is understood that the history of discrimination, dispossession, and enslavement that touches many people in this country resonates in the long, continuing fight for recognition as “equal” and “American”—or “equal” and indigenous—that affects all marginalized groups. Indeed, the public input process illuminated the connection between a discriminatory past faced by Italian immigrants and a struggle to be accepted as fully “American” associated with the origins of the Columbus monument. It was noted several times in the discussions that the City’s Columbus monument was erected in 1892, the year after one of the most egregious acts of anti-Italian violence in American history: the extra-judicial public killing of eleven Italian Americans who had been acquitted of a crime in New Orleans. The depth of pride that some Italian Americans have for Columbus as both a historical figure and a symbol was abundantly clear. The Commission strongly believes that the history of the Italian American community, which this monument encapsulates for some, should be honored and should continue to be told. However, the Commission had a difference of opinion on the use of Christopher Columbus as the vessel for this historical narrative in public space.

The Commission believes that New York City residents should ultimately move toward reckoning. Recognizing the profound work that this entails, the eventual goal is reconciliation and healing around these issues. It is understood that collective reconciliation can only be achieved with collective truth, based on a shared understanding of historical facts. There was consensus on a long-term commitment to evolving dialogue and establishing an understanding around the origins of this nation, grasping the legacy of the Columbian Exchange (the widespread transfer of plants, animals, culture, human populations, and technology that commenced at the time of Columbus’s arrival in the Americas) and its effects on present-day New York City. Therefore, much of the conversation about the Columbus monument centered on what the commission agreed upon—the additive approach—as much as the debate over proposals for the sculpture itself.

### *Opinions*

#### **A majority of Commission members advocated for keeping the Columbus statue and fostering public dialogue**

The Commission members who advocated for keeping the Columbus statue in place feel that, in an effort to move toward collective healing, we must recognize simultaneously the urgency to address past pain, contemporary issues represented by Columbus, and the monument’s importance as a symbol of pride for Italian Americans and others. While some of these Commission members believe that Columbus himself is a centrally important figure for present-day New Yorkers, others believe that the public at large is not ready to reckon with the legacy

of this historical figure. To most, Columbus represents the complexity and contradictions embedded in our representation of our history as a nation.

Consequently, this group of Commission members agreed that while the Columbus statue should remain in place, substantial additive measures should be undertaken to continue the public discourse. Some Commission members felt that time is an important factor to consider in this process of understanding. These members recommend the addition of new temporary artworks, permanent monuments, and robust public dialogue that more fully tells our history, rooted in a nuanced recognition of the pride, trauma, marginalization, and dispossession the monument represents. In time, and with a commitment to innovative public education and public art based on historical facts (both the history of displacement of indigenous peoples and the contribution of Columbus to that shared history), a different point of view could develop, one that is more widely shared and could provide a basis for future evaluation. This group for the most part hailed the value of the principle of Complexity.

Within this group of Commission members who advocate for keeping the Columbus monument in place, there was a wide range of opinions regarding the idea of on-site intervention through new public artworks. Some felt that there is a need for a counter-monument on site. Others argued that a work that is nearby but outside the Circle would be best, while some argued for additional works of historical representation elsewhere in the city, but not on-site.

### **A group of Commission members advocated for removing the Columbus statue and fostering public dialogue**

The Commission members who advocated for removing or relocating the Columbus statue feel that it represents a violent history for many peoples, not only relevant to Native and Italian Americans but for all people residing in this diverse city. These Commissioners perceive the Columbus statue as a mark of unwavering glory through its sheer scale and height and therefore an act of erasure of indigeneity and enslavement. Those so affected carry within themselves the deep archives of memory and lived experience that are encountered at the monument.

For this group of Commissioners, the statue's prominent location confirms the notion that those who control space have power, and the only way to adequately reckon with that power is to remove or relocate the statue. In order to move toward justice, these Commission members recognize that equity means that the same people do not always experience distress, but that this is instead a shared state. Justice means that distress is redistributed. While very cognizant of the Italian American history that includes an attachment to the monument in compelling ways, these Commission members cannot envision keeping the monument without honoring a historic figure whose actions in relation to Native peoples represent the beginnings of dispossession, enslavement, and genocide.

In addition to removing the statue, this group agreed that more work must be done to collectively address and unpack this history including commissioning new monuments and enabling attendant public dialogue with substantial collaboration from the Lenape, Tainos, and other Native peoples living in New York City.

### *Recommendations*

All Commission members unanimously agree that regardless of the action, an additive, relational, and intersectional approach is imperative. The Commission believes that when a monument under review incites polarizing debate, the City should facilitate more public dialogue through a number of actions and then reevaluate the situation after a period of time. As such, in the case of the Christopher Columbus statue in Columbus Circle, the Commission recommends:

1. A majority of Commission members advocate to **keep the monument in place**, with additive measures undertaken to continue the public discourse;
2. **Commission new monuments** across the city within a five-year timeline for groups of people that have been left out, displaced, or erased from public histories and public spaces, beginning with a large-scale monument to Indigenous peoples, a process that should be inclusive of public input;
3. **Commission temporary artworks in response to the legacies and histories represented by Christopher Columbus**, proximate to the monument or throughout the city;
4. Commission a **large-scale re-mapping project to map histories of New York City that are not currently represented in the city's public spaces** including, but not limited to, important Lenape, Algonquian-language, Native New Yorker, and earlier Indigenous sites;
5. Create an annual recognition in New York City: **Indigenous Peoples Day**. Sentiment was split, with a group arguing that it should be explicitly stated that Columbus Day should stay as is, and several members looking to reorient or replace it. But the Commission as a whole saw value in establishing an annual recognition for Indigenous peoples.
6. With the Department of Education and other relevant City agencies, **commit to a literacy/literary campaign to reckon with this important history** (e.g., assign Columbus's diaries to an existing literary campaign like the Gracie Mansion Book Club in which there is an effort to get New York City residents to read the same book and participate in discussions in libraries across the city);
7. Partner with relevant organizations on **public dialogues, performances, and other programming** on the legacies and histories represented by Christopher Columbus.

MAYORAL ADVISORY COMMISSION  
City Art | Monuments | Markers

The Commission wishes to acknowledge and thank the thousands of people who participated in the process with passion and intelligence. In addition, the Commission wants to thank the City of New York and its agencies, the City ex-officio representatives, and staff who provided information and support for the Commission review process and final report. Fervent dialogue and debate are as New York as the multitude of languages we hear on our subway commute. Now is a time to embrace our opportunity to take a critical look at our history, to understand how this history is inscribed on our public spaces, to listen carefully to one another, and to work actively toward a vision of what we wish our legacy to be.



## IV. APPENDIX A: COMMISSION MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

### Darren Walker, Co-Chair



Photo courtesy of Ford Foundation

Darren Walker is President of the Ford Foundation, the nation’s second-largest philanthropy, and for two decades has been a leader in the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors. He led the philanthropy committee that helped bring a resolution to the city of Detroit’s historic bankruptcy and chairs the U.S. Impact Investing Alliance. Prior to joining Ford, he was Vice President at the Rockefeller Foundation, where he managed the Rebuilding New Orleans initiative after Hurricane Katrina, and COO of the Abyssinian Development Corporation, Harlem’s largest community development organization, where he oversaw a comprehensive revitalization program of central Harlem. He had a decade-long career in international law and finance at Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton and UBS, and in 2016 TIME magazine named him to its annual list of the “100 Most Influential People in the World.”

### Tom Finkelpearl, Co-Chair



Tom Finkelpearl is the Commissioner of the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs. He was appointed in 2014 by Mayor Bill de Blasio. In his tenure, he has overseen an array of initiatives to enhance the health of the cultural sector and the cultural life of New York City including: Affordable Real Estate for Artists (AREA); Public Artists in Residence (PAIR); and the City’s first comprehensive cultural plan, CreateNYC. Prior to his role as Commissioner, he served as Director of the Queens Museum, Chair of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG), Deputy Director at P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, and Director of the DCLA Percent for Art program. Based on his experiences in public art, he published *Dialogues in Public Art* (MIT Press, 2001) and *What We Made: Conversations on Art and Social Cooperation* (Duke University Press Books, 2013).

**Ex-Officio City Agencies:** Public Design Commission, Law Department, Department of Education, and Department of Parks and Recreation

### Richard Alba



Dr. Richard Alba is an American sociologist and Distinguished Professor at the City University of New York, Graduate Center. He is known for developing assimilation theory to fit the contemporary, multi-racial era of immigration, with studies in America, France, and Germany. Alba has also written about the historical realities of assimilation exemplified through the experiences of Italian Americans. His book *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America* (1990) summarizes his thinking on the assimilation of the “white ethnics,” and *Blurring the Color Line: The New Chance for a More Integrated America* (2009) applied these ideas to non-white Americans. He is a fellow of the Radcliffe Institute and former Vice President of the American Sociological Association. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2017.

### Michael Arad



Photo courtesy of Handel Architects

Michael Arad is partner at Handel Architects and designer of the World Trade Center Memorial titled “Reflecting Absence,” which was selected by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation from among more than 5,000 entries submitted in an international competition held in 2003. In 2006 he was one of six recipients of the Young Architects Award of the American Institute of Architects and received the 2012 AIA Presidential Citation award for his work on the National September 11 Memorial. Previously, he worked for Kohn Pedersen Fox and the Design Department of the New York City Housing Authority. Most recently, Michael was selected to design a memorial to the victims of the 2015 Charleston church massacre at the Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

### Harry Belafonte

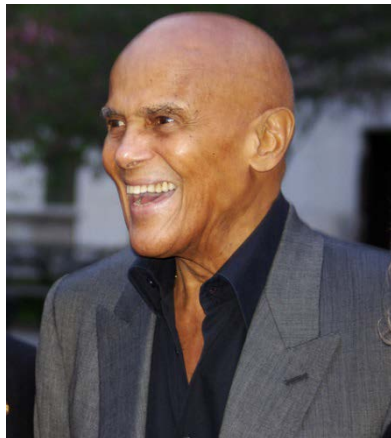


Photo by David Shankbone

Harry Belafonte is an American singer, songwriter, actor, and social activist. One of the most successful African-American pop stars in history, he was dubbed the “King of Calypso” for popularizing the Caribbean musical style with an international audience in the 1950s. Belafonte has won three Grammy Awards, including a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award; an Emmy Award; and a Tony Award. In 1989, he received the Kennedy Center Honors. He was awarded the National Medal of Arts in 1994. Throughout his career, he has been an advocate for political and humanitarian causes, such as the anti-apartheid movement and USA for Africa. Since 1987, he has been a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) celebrity ambassador for juvenile justice issues.

### John Calvelli



John Calvelli is Executive Vice President for the Public Affairs Division of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) headquartered at the Bronx Zoo and specifically oversees the work of WCS in Government and Community Affairs, Policy, Marketing, Communications and Public Engagement. He is the founder and Chair of the International Conservation Partnership and the Cultural Institutions Group while serving on the board of the National Italian American Foundation, New York City and Company, and the Italian American Forum, among others. In 1999, he received the honorific title of Knight in the Order of Merit for his work promoting stronger US-Italy relations. Previously, he served as legislative counsel for the New York State Assembly and, for more than a decade, as the Senior Washington DC staff person for Congressman Eliot Engel.

### Mary Schmidt Campbell



Photo courtesy of Spelman College

Dr. Mary Schmidt Campbell began her tenure as the 10th president of Spelman College in 2015. A leading liberal arts college for women of African descent located in Atlanta, Georgia, Spelman has long enjoyed a reputation as the nation's leading producer of Black women scientists. Prior to arriving in Atlanta, Mary was a major force in the cultural life of New York City including a decade of service at the Studio Museum in Harlem. When she took the helm of the organization, the city was on the verge of bankruptcy and Harlem was in steep decline, and under her leadership, the museum was transformed from a rented loft to the country's first accredited Black Fine Arts Museum. Currently, she is completing a book on Romare Bearden for Oxford University Press. She is former vice-chair of President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

### Gonzalo Casals



Photo ©Victoria Will

Gonzalo Casals is the Director of the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art in New York. His experience ranges from innovative programming, authentic engagement strategies, and progressive cultural policy. Gonzalo was part of the consultant team that led CreateNYC, the city's first comprehensive cultural plan. He also teaches Arts, Culture and Public Policy at the Roosevelt House, Hunter College's Policy Institute. As Vice President of Programs and Community Engagement at Friends of the High Line, he led the organization in a transformative process that shifted the focus of the organization to equitable cultural practices. For over 8 years, he held various roles at El Museo del Barrio and is a member of Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts New York (NOCD-NY) where cultural production is understood to be a vehicle for empowerment and civic participation. Gonzalo has taught Museum Education and Arts Administration at CUNY and is a regular guest speaker on issues around arts, culture, and equity and inclusion.

### Teresita Fernández



Photo courtesy of John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Teresita Fernández is a visual artist best known for her prominent public sculptures and unconventional use of materials. Her experiential, large-scale works are often inspired by landscape and natural phenomena as well as diverse historical and cultural references. Through her work she has explored issues in contemporary art related to perception and the fabrication of the natural world. She is a 2005 MacArthur Foundation Fellow and the recipient of numerous awards including the Aspen Award for Art in 2013, the 2003 Guggenheim Fellowship, and the Louis Comfort Tiffany Biennial Award in 1999. Appointed by President Obama, she is the first Latina to serve on the 100-year-old U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, a federal panel that advises the president, Congress, and governmental agencies on national matters of design and aesthetics.

### Amy Freitag



Amy Freitag is Executive Director of the JM Kaplan Fund and brings more than 24 years of professional and personal experience in greening, conservation and historic preservation. Prior to this she served as Executive Director at New York Restoration Project and as Deputy Commissioner for Capital Projects in the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation in the Bloomberg Administration, where she administered a \$3 billion capital program including the first LEED-certified projects. She has facilitated and led large-scale park projects and programs in New York City, Philadelphia, and throughout the United States. She serves on the board of and is former U.S. Program Director for the World Monuments Fund (WMF). She currently serves on the boards of the James Marston Fitch Charitable Foundation and the New York Preservation Archive Project.

### Jon Meacham



Jon Meacham is a renowned presidential historian, contributing writer to *The New York Times Book Review*, contributing editor at *TIME*, and Pulitzer Prize-winning author. He is the author of several *New York Times* bestsellers including *Destiny and Power: The American Odyssey of George Herbert Walker Bush*, *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House*, *Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power*, and *Franklin and Winston: An Intimate Portrait of an Epic Friendship*. He is currently at work on a biography of James and Dolley Madison. Jon is a distinguished visiting professor at Vanderbilt University and The University of the South and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and of the Society of American Historians. He had a two-decade journalism career at *Newsweek*, *The Washington Monthly*, and *The Chattanooga Times*.

Photo courtesy of Gaspar Triangle

### Catie Marron



Catie Marron's career has encompassed investment banking, magazine journalism, and public service. She is currently chairman of the board of directors of the High Line and a longtime contributing editor to *Vogue*. She is the creator and editor of two anthologies exploring the value and significance of urban public spaces: *City Squares* (2016), and *City Parks: Public Places, Private Thoughts* (2013). She is a member of the Columbia Journalism Review advisory board and CEO and Founder of For Good, a not for profit enterprise and website. Catie was chairman of the board of The New York Public Library from 2004 to 2011, where she is now chair emeritus and a trustee. In addition to serving on other boards, she has been a trustee and vice chair of Thirteen/WNET New York.

Photo by Sebastian Kim; courtesy of HarperCollinsPublishers

### Pepón Osorio



Pepón Osorio is a visual artist, Laura Carnell Professor of Community Art at Tyler School of Art, Temple University, and a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation MacArthur Fellow. His work combines Latino popular culture and traditional aesthetic sensibilities to explore culture and community dynamics. He has worked with communities across the U.S. and internationally, creating installations based on real life experiences. For almost two decades Pepón has been presenting work in unconventional places prior to exhibiting in a museum setting. His major works include *The Scene of the Crime (Whose Crime?)*, featured in the 1993 Whitney Biennial, *No Crying in the Barbershop* (1994), *Badge of Honor* (1995), and *Los Twines* (1998), an installation focusing on conflict resolution between South Bronx youths. He was nominated by President Obama to serve on the National Council for the Arts.

### Harriet F. Senie



Dr. Harriet F. Senie is professor of art history and director of the M.A. program in Art History and Art Museum Studies Program at The City College of New York. She also teaches at the CUNY Graduate Center. Her most recent book is *Memorials to Shattered Myths: Vietnam to 9/11* (2016) and the co-edited volume *A Companion to Public Art* (2016), which contains her essay “The Conflation of Heroes and Victims: A New Memorial Paradigm.” She was appointed Visiting Distinguished Professor at Carnegie Mellon University and previously served as Associate Director of the Princeton Art Museum and Gallery Director at SUNY, Old Westbury. She co-founded *Public Art Dialogue* with Professor Cher Krause Knight, an international organization that is also a College Art Association (CAA) affiliate. Together they also started and co-edited *Public Art Dialogue*, a journal published twice annually since 2011, which remains the only peer-review publication devoted to public art.

### Shahzia Sikander



Shahzia Sikander is a Pakistani-born, internationally recognized, visual artist whose pioneering practice takes Indo-Persian miniature painting as a point of departure. She challenges the strict formal tropes of miniature painting as well as its medium-based restrictions by experimenting with scale and media. Such media include animation, video, mural, and collaboration with other artists. Her process-based work is concerned with examining the forces at stake in contested cultural and political histories. Her work helped launch a major resurgence in the Miniature Painting department in the Nineties at the National College of Arts in Lahore, inspiring many others to examine the miniature tradition. She has been the recipient of numerous awards, grants and fellowships, including the Asia Society Award for Significant Contribution to Contemporary Art (2015) and a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation MacArthur Fellowship.

Photo courtesy of the John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

### Audra Simpson



Dr. Audra Simpson is Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University who researches and writes about Indigenous and settler society, politics and history. She is the author of *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Duke University Press, 2014), winner of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association's Best First Book in Native American and Indigenous Studies Prize, the Laura Romero Prize from the American Studies Association, and the Sharon Stephens Prize from the American Ethnological Society (2015). She is co-editor of *Theorizing Native Studies* (Duke University Press, 2014). She has articles in *Postcolonial Studies, Theory & Event, Cultural Anthropology, American Quarterly, Junctures, Law and Contemporary Problems* and *Wicazo Sa Review*. In 2010 she won Columbia University's School for General Studies Excellence in Teaching Award. She is a Kahnawake Mohawk.

### John Kuo Wei Tchen



Dr. John Kuo Wei Tchen is an urban cultural historian, Associate Professor at New York University, and in 2018 the inaugural Clement A. Price Chair of Public History and Humanities, Rutgers at Newark. He is the founding director of the Asian/Pacific/American Studies Program and Institute at NYU. He co-founded the Museum of Chinese in America in 1979–80, where he continues to serve as senior historian and authored the award-winning books *New York before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776–1882* and *Genthe's Photographs of San Francisco's Old Chinatown, 1895–1905*. He co-authored, along with Dylan Yeats, *Yellow Peril! An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear*. He has been the senior historian for the New-York Historical Society exhibition "Exclusion/Inclusion" and the Steeplechase Films "Chinese Exclusion Act" showing on PBS's American Experience. He was awarded the Charles S. Frankel Prize from the National Endowment for the Humanities and, in 2012, received the NYU MLK Jr Humanitarian Award.

### Mabel O. Wilson



Photo by Justin Beck

Dr. Mabel O. Wilson, Professor of Architecture at Columbia University GSAPP and Research Fellow at the Institute for Research in African American Studies, co-directs Global Africa Lab and leads a transdisciplinary practice *Studio &*. She is a founding member of Who Builds Your Architecture? (WBYA?), an advocacy project educating about the problems of globalization and labor. She is the author of *Negro Building: Black Americans in the World of Fairs and Museums* and is currently developing the manuscript *Building Race and Nation: How Slavery Influenced Antebellum American Civic Architecture* and collaborating on a collection of essays on race and modern architecture. Mabel has received numerous awards, fellowships, and residencies, including from the Getty Research Institute and the New York State Council for the Arts, and was Ailsa Mellon Bruce Senior Fellow at the National Gallery of Arts Center for Advanced Study in Visual Arts and United States Artists Ford Fellow in architecture and design.

#### **IV. APPENDIX B: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**

The Commission created many opportunities to hear from the public and received comments from thousands of New Yorkers at public hearings, through written testimony and correspondence, and via an online survey.

The Commission also received thousands of petitions from New York State Senators and Assembly Members and scholars.

Public hearings were recorded and are available through the following links: [Queens](#), [Brooklyn](#), Manhattan ([part 1](#) and [part 2](#)), [Bronx](#), and Staten Island ([part 1](#) and [part 2](#)).

[Click here](#) to download a summary of survey data produced by a consultant engaged by the City on the Commission’s behalf, and [click here](#) to download public testimony received by the Commission. The original survey questions follow.

- 1. What do you think is the role of public monuments in our city’s public spaces?**
- 2. When considering the role of public monuments in NYC, what do you think is the best way to achieve public space that is open and inclusive?**
- 3. What factors should the City consider when reviewing a monument?**  
Consider historical and contemporary context, intention and time of installation, and the values to which New Yorkers aspire.
- 4. Does your comment relate to a specific, existing monument in NYC?**  
Yes / No

**If yes, tell us which of the following best describes your proposal:**

- Re-contextualize existing (e.g. site signage)
- Develop educational component
- Relocate existing
- Remove existing
- Keep, no change

Monument / Subject  
Location (street, park, plaza, zip code)  
Proposal considering feasibility and cost

**5. Does your comment relate to a proposal for a new monument in NYC?**

Yes / No

**If yes, tell us your idea:**

Monument / Subject

Location (street, park, plaza, zip code)

Proposal considering feasibility and cost

**6. If a particular monument is preserved, altered, or removed, what do you think the effect will be in the future?** What would be the effect on your experience in New York City with or without changes to a particular monument? What would be the effect on our collective experience with or without changes to a particular monument?

**7. There are many possible ways to address the meaning of public art and monuments, such as adding supplementary and educational materials like a plaque, relocating objects to another public or private space, or commissioning new public art either in response to an original or on its merit. How might you best add context and tell a more complete story of a particular monument?**

**Name (first, last)**

**Email Address**

**Zip Code**



## **IV. APPENDIX C: COMMISSION MEETING SUMMARIES**

The Commission held three meetings during the 90-day period. These were the meeting agendas:

### **FIRST MEETING**

The Ford Foundation

Tuesday, October 10

In this first meeting of the Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments, and Markers we will aim to review background and commission charge, scope, process, schedule; and discuss guiding principles or framework as a starting point.

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Commission Overview
3. Background
4. Discussion
5. Questions + Next Steps

### **SECOND MEETING**

Public Design Commission

Tuesday, November 9

In this second meeting of the Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments, and Markers we will aim to discuss guiding principles for final commission report; evaluation framework for monuments and markers; and illustrative monuments and markers to test principles and framework.

1. Welcome
2. Public Meetings + Survey Snapshot
3. Values + Guiding Principles
4. Proposed Evaluation Framework
5. Illustrative Monuments and Markers for Discussion
6. Discussion
7. Questions + Next Steps

### **THIRD MEETING**

The Ford Foundation  
Wednesday, December 6

In this third and final meeting of the Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments, and Markers we will aim to discuss guiding principles for final commission report; evaluation framework for monuments and markers; and illustrative monuments and markers to test principles and framework.

1. Welcome
2. Review of Public Input
3. Review of Commission Report
4. Illustrative Monuments and Markers for Discussion
5. Issuing Final Commission Report
6. Next Steps + Ongoing Work