

# Public Art and Monuments Advisory Committee

## April 14 Meeting Agenda

- Introductions
- Committee Work Session

Committee member takeaways through March 2018

- Public Comment
- Conclusion

# Historical Context

- Historical context—rigorously analyzed—should be fundamental to the review process. Today’s standards should not be the only guide.
- As a city, our goal is to retain the integrity of the history of our public art and monuments but does not glorify symbols that denigrate segments of our population.
- Louisville’s public art and monuments should strive to educate our children and adults, and visitors to our city, in an honorable and honest manner.

# Confederate Symbols

- It is important to note that during the period when monuments honoring confederate soldiers and the confederacy all citizens didn't have the right to voice their opposition. The NY study commission findings eloquently acknowledge that fact.
- Should the history of the confederacy and what it stood for be reserved for books, along with other history lessons?
- It is important to note that Kentucky may have started as a neutral state, but in fact joined the Union in 1861.

# Original Intent / Change in Meaning

- Installations reflect the dominant or asserted values of their time and times do change.
- Installations both reflect their time of creation but also become an integral part of the public aesthetic.
- Vigorous ongoing historical inquiry frequently transforms today's heroes into tomorrow's fools.
- Can we ignore the historical or contextual values of monuments no matter their original intention? Sometimes monuments come to stand for other things. It is true that monuments become many things to many people. Can we think of monuments only in terms of their original meaning?

# Reflection of Current Values

- Louisville needs to align its public art and monuments with the vision of our city as a progressive, compassionate, and inclusive community.
- Whatever else a monument is or becomes, it is always first and foremost a celebration of a person or event. The formal structures of monuments aim to make them appear timeless. A criterion should be that all “timeless” monuments are monuments we would install in our current times. This does not mean we only have moments to perfect people, but that we only have monuments we currently believe reflect our values. This might mean removing monuments to figures we think do not share our values OR it might mean putting up more monuments so that the city demonstrates the value of all major contributors to various neighborhoods in equal measure.
- How can a city make official recommendations on one interpretation vs. another? In a case where one monument is a historically important artistic artifact to some community members, a symbol of city pride to others, and a symbol of hate to still others, how can a city possibly choose which interpretation to champion and which to dismiss? Is the best path forward not to attempt to validate or accept various interpretations but to limit official interpretation only to commemorative value?

# Considerations for Removing an Artwork/Monument

- Installations in public spaces that are judged offensive cannot easily be removed to a new public site.
- Only in the most extreme cases of offensiveness are installations to be removed.
- It's artistic and public chaos to systematically review for removal a community's entire public art inventory.
- New interpretation is desired before removal.
- Is the work something that contributes to the cultural life of the City of Louisville?
- Is the work important to the field of art?
- Is the work relevant to its site?
- Does this work engage with the public in a dynamic way?
- It is important to consider the expense of continued repairs to damaged statues. Can a more suitable location be identified?

# Emphasis on New Public Art

- New public art and monuments should be made the highest priority. Work should begin immediately on creating a nomination list.
- New installations juxtaposed near or adjacent to an existing piece can be used to establish values balance.

# Public Comments