

HIGH SIGNS

AND BEACONS

#wagemyth

#wagelove

#wagefutures

If an African identity is to empower us, what is required is not so much that we throw out falsehood, but that we acknowledge first of all that race and history and metaphysics do not enforce an identity: that we can choose within broad limits set by ecological, political, and economic realities what it will mean to be African in the coming years.

- Kwame A. Appiah

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

How can creatives help expand our identities as Black people?

What myths have been adopted that no longer serve us?

How do we weave narratives from history, myth, and literature that will cultivate abundant futures?

And how has this moment laid bare all that is broken?

High Signs & Beacons is a project of CarverMuseumATX, Six Square, and the City of Austin Equity office that calls on artists, poets, scholars, and writers of African descent to join in a mutual aid effort. More than ever, people need help grounding in this moment and visualizing a collective future. This is an invitation to engage with the isolation, uncertainty, and essential chaos of these times.

What we know is that communities of color are disproportionately impacted by the current pandemic, and African Americans are some of the least likely to recover once they have contracted COVID-19. **While this is real, how do we (un)speak this onto ourselves?** How do we speak health and wealth onto all people when we are blessed and plagued by the pre-existing condition(s) of Blackness? We are in the midst of a system reset, *and we need your help to prepare for and imagine this future.*

Selection Process Overview

This project will select 8-12 creative teams consisting of one visual artist and one writer/poet/scholar to co-develop one large scale outdoor sign. These signs will be made of materials typically used for political campaigns and placed in people's front yards. The final works will then be installed and displayed throughout the African American Cultural Heritage District.

The signs will be 4ft x 8ft (or larger) with 33% - 50% of the visual real-estate dedicated to text in the form of a proverb, haiku, or short phrase that **literally** or **subjectively** responds to the following questions and prompts:

Define the term essential.

My present is _____.

My future is _____ .

What myth and/or folklore will become reality?

Who benefits?

What will it mean for us to live in the aftermath of this global pandemic?

What does it mean to re-evaluate our relationship to living and living amongst other people?

Art heals, instructs, riots, and activates_____.

Old world or new?

Artists will then develop visual iconography that complements, contradicts or otherwise inspires deeper understanding of the written text.

Selected creative teams will receive an honorarium of \$1,000.00 (\$500.00/each) to be paid once the final design files have been approved by the curatorial team. The Carver Museum & Cultural Center and its partners will cover the cost of printing and installation.

Additional project parameters are detailed in the application. Apply to learn more!

PROJECT TIMELINE

Submission Deadlines: Friday, May 22, 2020 at 11:59 pm CST

Notification of Acceptance: May 29, 2020 at 5:00 pm

Final Text/Artwork Deadline: June 5, 2020

Honorarium Disbursement: June 8th – June 12th

Installation: June 12, 2020 – June 18, 2020

Walk/Bike/Drive Tour Launch: Friday, June 19, 2020 at 5:00 pm

APPENDIX A

If selected, final images should be submitted in TIFF format with a minimum resolution of 600 dpi. Accompanying text can be submitted via PDF or Word Doc. Suggested orientation of text and visuals can be submitted via pdf, tiff, or jpeg.

Please Note

Final images and text will be assembled by a design team that will be responsible for developing a style guide. This style guide will dictate the final placement of images and text once all creative teams have been selected. Artist suggestions around the overall design are welcomed and encouraged, but please keep in mind that we may not be able to incorporate your feedback.

All creative teams will be asked to participate in a virtual summit following the final installation of the project, tentatively scheduled to take place on Saturday, June 27, 2020 from 1:00-4:00 pm.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Eligibility

Participating artists must identify as people of African descent. Women, people living with disabilities, immigrants, and people who identify as LGBTQIA+ will be given additional consideration. Priority will be given to artists living in Austin/Travis County. A small number of applications will be considered from teams living within the state of Texas. Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- artistic merit, clarity of concept, and adherence to project guidelines
- statement of impact related to COVID-19
- scalability and readiness of project to move into production

Submission Requirements

Artists must apply in teams of two and will need to submit the following:

- a working title of the proposed collaboration
- 50-100 word bios
- Two hi-resolution headshots
- Statement of Impact
- Website and/or Instagram Links
- 5-7 sentence description of the submitted proposal

FAQ

Can I apply to High Signs & Beacons by myself?

Not at this time, the goal of this project is to foster collaboration and to provide compensation to as many artists as possible.

Can my work be printed on a different material?

As resources are limited, we selected the material for both impact and affordability to ensure a majority of project resources are dedicated to paying artists.

I was selected as a finalist, but I am not struggling financially. Can I decline my honorarium to allow for additional artists to participate?

Absolutely, but only pay it forward if you know you can.

Who is on the selection committee?

Representatives from all sponsoring organizations will participate in the selection process.

What if I am unable to scan high resolution copies of my work for the final submission?

Great question! If you are selected as a finalist, the Museum will work with you to get your work scanned.

Why are creative teams not allowed to submit a final layout?

We want to ensure that the project remains cohesive in both messaging and final visual presentation. Think of this as an ad campaign, we want to make sure people understand that your work is a part of a larger project. **Think brand identity: unique, adaptable, and recognizable.**

Why is this open call only for people of African descent?

This project is about equity and it is our mission to elevate the culture, ideas, and people of the African and African Diaspora.

How can I help support this project?

So happy you asked! (1) You can share this project with artists that you know and on your social media. (2) You can provide in-kind assistance. (3) You can donate your time to help install these projects across the African American Heritage district. (4) You can donate directly to Six Square. Got a better idea? Drop us a line.

I have another question that is not included on this FAQ?

No problem, please email regine.malibiran@austintexas.gov. You should expect a response within 24hrs during regular business hours.