



Jason Erik Washington (1973-2018)

Final Report of the Jason Erik Washington Art Committee



*Memorial to Jason Erik Washington
created and maintained by Washington family members, SW College Street, Portland OR*

To: President Steven Percy

From: Patricia Schechter (chair)
Victoria Calderon
Pedro Ferbel-Azcarate
Jaymee Jacoby
Deena Sajitharan
Cindy Starke
Ed Washington
Kayla Washington
Teresa Niedermeyer (staff)

Date: 15 June 2022

Acknowledgement

The work of the Jason Erik Washington Art Committee unfolds on the historic homelands of several bands of Chinook-speaking people including the Multnomah, Clackamas, and Watlata/Cascade villages. The area is also home to the Kalapuya (Tualatin villages) as well as the Molalla people, who live in the Willamette Valley. As such, we situate our work as part of resistance to ongoing colonial violence, of which biased policing is but one expression. Further, we acknowledge the history of Black exclusion in Oregon, and the racial disparities and racist policies in policing and criminal justice that frame Portland's history and contemporary identity.

Special Appreciation

The committee further acknowledges the work of the Washington family in installing and maintaining a beautiful, colorful, and personal memorial for Jason Erik Washington on SW College Street which has done so much to keep his memory vivid for the community. The committee appreciates the generous and thoughtful engagement of Kayla Washington, as well as the spirited and wise participation of the family's legal counsel, Deena Sajitharan.

Executive Summary

The tragic death of Jason Erik Washington happened in June 2018, on our Portland State University campus and at the hands of campus police. The Washington family, along with PSU students, faculty, and staff rallied around this tragedy and demanded accountability. The committee recognizes this trauma and the settlement with the Washington family as part of a larger PSU narrative of being accountable to racial justice and human rights, at our campus and in our community. The committee recommends that an expanded steering committee vested with decision-making authority develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) in the 2022-23 academic year. This proposal should identify and offer generous support to a well-suited local artist to undertake a creative biographical piece on Jason Washington. We further recommend that the development of the RFP and the creation and installation process be embedded in both PSU's Reimagine Campus Safety initiative and connected to appropriate community groups/organizations, including the City of Portland, as part of an encompassing education, accountability, and memorialization project, consistent with the principles of restorative justice.

The Jason Erik Washington Art Committee Vision Statement

The Jason Erik Washington Art Committee's vision statement is intended to guide the university's binding obligation to remember the life of Jason Erik Washington.

The committee sees the work of remembering as part of institutional accountability for Mr. Washington's death at the hands of campus police in 2018. The committee's vision centers on fostering racial justice and is rooted in an appreciation for the life that Jason Erik Washington lived, the people he loved, and the service to community and country that shaped his life. As part of an educational institution, the committee values the learning that can be afforded by a powerful and sensitive work of art in the on-going activity of memorialization. The committee believes that the process of creating a work

of art, its public display, and structured engagement are all activities that, if planned and managed with intention, can support restorative justice on our campus and healing in our community. Restorative justice demands that the needs of those most harmed by a crime be at the center of a reconciliation or reparative process. The committee sees its work squarely in line with the recent reorientation of PSU, articulated by President Percy, as an institution in which “equity and racial justice [are] the top strategic priority” (23 June 2021) and as centrally featured within the Reimagining Campus Safety initiative (following the report of 2022).

Description of Work and Recommendations

The Jason Erick Washington Art Committee met approximately a dozen times between January and June 2022. We focused on keeping the Washington family’s needs and interests central, while engaging as a group in a learning and discovery process. Most of our meetings took place on zoom but included some in-person gatherings.



walking tour & discussion of campus memorials & art installations

Our early meetings were devoted to getting to know each other, holding space for Kayla Washington to share about her father’s life, and reacquainting ourselves with the physical campus. The wisdom of committee member Mr. Ed Washington was critical in establishing trust and rapport in these early meetings. We next completed a photo inventory of existing campus historical markers and did a “walk around” together stopping at many of our existing memorial sites. (see appendix A) At Pedro Ferbel-Azcarate’s suggestion, we collaboratively drafted a vision statement. Thanks to Maryanna Ramirez at the JSMA, the committee enjoyed a semi-private tour of the Black Lives Matter juried exhibition in Maseeh Hall. Based on Kayla Washington’s recommendations, the museum director made arrangements for four of the BLM artists to speak with the committee. Maryanna’s facilitation was transformative for connecting

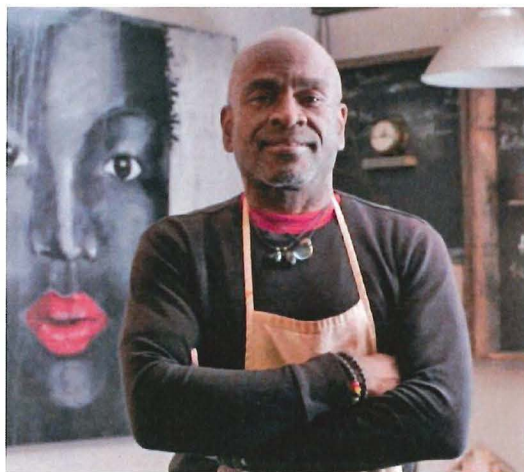
the artists with the committee, and our conversations with them were terrifically enlightening and inspiring.



[Sade DuBoise](#)



[Steven Christian](#)



[Willie Little](#)



[Elijah Hasan](#)

The final section of our work involved calling on other experts and seasoned practitioners of community engagement. At Pedro Ferbel-Azcarate's recommendation, the committee learned about a model local memorial project in NE Portland dedicated to the life of Keaton Otis, who was killed by Portland Police in 2010. Walidah Imarisha, Black Studies faculty member and Director of the PSU Center for Black Studies, gave a thorough presentation. This project greatly impressed the committee by its scope, intentionality, creativity, and respectful community engagement and partnerships. To further our educational process, the committee also made a number of "offline" contacts with the Conflict Resolution Program, Campus Planning, and the School of Art + Design, concerning relevant topics like restorative justice, permitting and placement issues, and social practice in the arts. This report reflects these consultations as well, and some of the salient materials are included in the appendices.

*First Recommendation - **Concept***

The committee demands a formal revision to the settlement agreement between PSU and the Washington family, whose terms severely limit the memorialization and accountability process as we have come to understand it.

*Second Recommendation - **Content***

A sensitive and vivid biographical treatment of the life of Jason Erik Washington is absolutely necessary for a meaningful memorialization of his death. This outcome centers on the Washington family's ongoing work of remembering their family member and their aspirations for the future.

*Third Recommendation - **Context***

Memorialization of Jason Erik Washington must start with fresh thinking about accountability from a human rights perspective, consistent with best practices in restorative justice. The PSU campus hosts a jumble of historical markers, public art installations, murals, and commemorative pieces in a patchwork that lacks integration, coherent storytelling, or the means for consistent engagement.

*Fourth Recommendation - **Commitment***

A well-funded, self-reflective, and inclusive planning process with robust and highly committed follow-through by PSU are essential to success in this project. This theme was hammered home by all of the artists we spoke with, all of whom shared generously of their own experiences.

Discussion

The committee was struck by the contrast between the scattered memorials on our campus and the power of integrated memory and teaching projects in the United States that have centered on racist policing and gun violence. These recent projects represent community members taking control of their own healing and story-telling. Such projects span from the fine arts to grassroots efforts. All are acts of creative, life-affirming resistance through different forms of expression and varying modes of collaboration. Below are two examples, one for Breonna Taylor and one for George Floyd.



[Promise, Witness, Remembrance](#)



[George Floyd Square, Minneapolis](#)

Here in Portland, the now 12-year-long remembrance project for Keaton Otis (1985-2010) shot by police in the NE neighborhood, is finding fuller public expression. The first phase of a multi-site memorial will be unveiled in the summer of 2022.

Key Concepts

1. **Love for Keaton. Love for Fred**
2. **Love** for those we've lost to police violence.
3. **Love** that fuels intergenerational family connection
4. **Love** that fuels ongoing fights for justice, healing, & Black survivance, inspiring action
5. **Love** for Black imagination & community thriving

credit: Sharita Towne and Walidah Imarisha @JusticeForKeatonOtis (FB) © 2022

In addition to the biographical focus of the Jason Erik Washington memorial, it is abundantly and irreducibly clear to the committee that an isolated object placed on campus will fail to engage the campus over time, nor will it integrate the memory, learning, and accountability required in this situation. As such, the recommended RFP needs to embrace a multisite, integrated, and “embedded” approach. A few suggestions might include, at a minimum:

1. A detailed, permanent, visible, outdoor account of the incident at the site on SW College Street that clearly identifies an accountable narrative for the nine bullets from a gun held by PSU campus police that e tragedy that ended Jason Erik Washington’s life

2. A second outdoor installation, perhaps at the closed (or limited car access) SW Montgomery Street site, that links the shooting of Jason Erik Washington with other incidents in Portland and/or the nation (examples: public artwork like the *kintsugi* embedded street art to be unveiled this summer for the Keaton Otis memorial with support from Portland Bureau of Transportation; a purposefully inclusive multi-use gathering space between dorms and University buildings, identified by PSU for students, staff, and community reflection and/or celebration)
3. A third clearly designated/created gathering point for the community, possibly near or inside Park Mill building, that hosts the fuller biographical art piece about Jason Erik Washington. This gathering point should be equipped with the capacity to continue the work of storytelling, accountability, and remembering in that space, as a living archive.
4. Clear and explicit connections between these sites, through curricular and library connections for students, as well as through the use of digital technology, QR codes, etc., for the campus community and the general public.

In other words, the Jason Erik Washington Art project must choreograph the actual work of remembering as ongoing praxis for the PSU community in order to actively engage in restorative justice. By making at least some of the elements of the memorial amenable to revision and updating, the Washington family retains a hand in keeping their loved one's memory vivid and "evergreen." By creating clear access points for students, faculty and staff, the campus's engagement in the gathering space can accumulate into knowledge, wisdom, and practice that should inform "reimagining public safety" at PSU through a human rights lens. In other words, none of this "ends" but instead actively builds relationships and understanding into the future.

Space and location are critical dimensions of choreographing memorialization. The committee feels strongly about creating a series of engagements that actively grab peoples' attention, some of which must be located in the South Park Blocks, which is the emotional center of campus. As such, the memorial can re-ignite moral investment and active connection for the community. This moral reinvestment will occur only if the message of Black Lives Matter is clearly demonstrated in the articulation of the memorial's components as well as by making clear connections to other racialized tragedies in our city, state, and nation. For example, the South Park Blocks already has two memorial stones touching Japanese history, one to the lives lost in the atomic bombings at Hiroshima/Nagasaki and one to international relations. The Native American Student and Community Center also abuts the South Park Blocks at the southernmost end. There is now a stone in memory of the police riot against PSU students in the 1970s in front of the Benson House. There is an oblique reference in front of Lincoln Hall to "Vanport College" and the new Vanport Building makes more explicit reference to the racism and classism that permitted the flooding of the city of Vanport in 1948. These "touchpoints" can be integrated into a powerful teaching and reflective opportunity for the campus as part of a narrative of restorative justice.

The committee would like to see a specific artistic residency created for the Jason Erik Washington Art Memorial that can be renewed each year (with varying themes/foci

over time) as part of the university's commitment to creating more welcoming spaces and to centering the lives of Black, Indigenous, People of Color as part of campus culture.

Essential Elements of Process

1. The Washington family's interests and needs must remain central throughout
2. A larger group of stakeholders and/or steering committee must take as part of the agenda the work of active and on-going accountability
3. The stakeholder group/steering committee must embark on a real community involvement plan, not just solicit pro-forma "community input," including visioning sessions in multiple formats (i.e., for those who cannot be on committees or attend meetings regularly)
4. The stakeholder group/steering community could include, at PSU, the Center for Black Studies, the Black Studies Department, the Black Student Union, the School of Art & Design, the History Department and other units. Community partners might include the Pacific Northwest Family Circle, Justice for Keaton Otis, Don't Shoot PDX, Imagine Black, etc.
5. Adequate financial resources for the development of the work of the steering committee as well as robust support (compensation, housing, insurance) for the artist whose proposal is accepted.
6. A clearly worded statement from PSU agreeing to a particular plan of action.
7. Concrete written commitments with agencies and institutions empowered to make decisions.

Continuing imperatives

The committee views the memorialization of Jason Erik Washington as an opportunity that should not be missed to reckon with racialized violence in our city and state. In this case, showing leadership on restorative justice would demonstrate PSU's core value of letting knowledge serve the city. Portland State University has the opportunity to show genuine and transformative leadership at a moment when such leadership is so desperately needed.

The committee would like to meet with the President to share reflections and make plans for the immediate future. Of special concern is budget and resources. The committee expects a reliable commitment on this matter up front.

Appendices

- Photo inventory of campus outdoor memorials, art works, and installations
- Overview from campus planning office re: siting and permitting
- Sample job description for Project Manager
- Short bibliography on Art, BLM, & Restorative Justice

Survey of PSU outdoor campus art and memorials

for the Washington Art Installation Committee
by Patricia A. Schechter
Department of History
January 2022

Washington Art Installation Committee 2022



Memorial on College Street



Big Street Art



Vanport Building - New



Lincoln Hall "memory stones"



South Park Blocks Art

"Farewell to Orpheus" Frederic Littman (1968)



"Holon" by Don Wilson (School of Social Work, 1977)



More big art (Tom Hardy, Oregon Landscape)



Stephen Epler Commemoration



Memorials

Peace Poles installed by PSU Ambassadors after 9/11



Memorial to Laurie Anne Schmidt from the Center for Science Education



Walk of the Heroines



Important & Recent Civil Rights Monuments & Art

National Memorial for Peace & Justice (2018) Montgomery



The Light of Truth Ida B. Wells National Monument (2021) Chicago



To: Patricia Schechter
From: Bryan Bruckman
Date: 5/23/2022
Re: Jason Washington Art Committee

Publicly displayed outdoor pieces of artwork are subject to an approval and permitting process in the City of Portland. Certain locations, specifically PSU owned property, allow for a more streamlined process. Placing artwork on non-PSU property, such as the South Park Blocks, is possible, but requires a more complicated process of working with the property owner. Recently, PSU has successfully installed signs along the Park Blocks within PSU's property. Some examples of this include the Vietnam protest memorial plaque in front of the Simon Benson House, the Hiroshima Peace Tree by the Millar Library, and the copper beech historically designated tree. Additionally, the Park Blocks have recently been added to the National Register of Historic Places, which further complicates the process of installing something within the Park Blocks. Please see attached map displaying PSU owned property.

The approval process is dependent on the type of artwork being placed. For instance, original art murals have several requirements. PSU resides within the Central City Plan District, where murals are restricted on street facing walls less than 20 feet from the street lot line. Original art murals are defined by the City as "a hand-produced work of visual art that is tiled or painted by hand directly upon, or affixed directly to an exterior wall of a building or structure.". Please see attached information sheet on murals for more information. Exterior plaques are classified as signs by the city and require permits. Signs are regulated by size (total area), height, placement, construction and wiring (if requiring electricity). While signs have several requirements, placement on PSU property has a history of success. Street paintings, which are any large decorative painting applied directly to the street, are only permitted on low-traffic residential streets. Many of the east-west streets on campus are classified as such, including SW College St.

An additional thing to note is the success of student led projects on campus. In the past, the best way to engage the campus community was having the community lead the project. A recent example is "The Courts" skatepark. The project has been student led with administrative support from PSU Campus Planning and is now one of the most lively and activated spaces on campus.



Original Art Murals Information Sheet

What is an Original Art Mural?

A hand-produced work of visual art which is tiled or painted by hand directly upon or affixed directly to an exterior wall of a building or structure.

In addition, Original Art Murals:

- must be maintained for at least two years, and the property owner cannot receive compensation for the display of the mural;
- cannot exceed a height of 30 feet above grade (no other size limits apply); and
- must meet additional standards if located in a Design Overlay Zone or on a noncontributing building in a historic or conservation district.



Artists: Angelina Marino, Gary Herd, Joel Heidel, Marlys Mick: (detail); located at NE 72nd and Sandy



Artist: Bruce Orr: located at NE Williams and Failing

Original Art Murals are not:

- mechanically produced or computer generated prints or images, including but not limited to digitally printed vinyl;
- murals containing electrical or mechanical components; or
- changing image murals.

Original Art Murals are not permitted:

- on sites developed with residential buildings with four or fewer units;
- on sites with historic or conservation landmarks, or contributing buildings in a historic or conservation district; or
- on stormwater facilities.



Artist: Joe Cotter: (detail); located at NE 20th and Everett

Link to more information

For more information on the Original Art Mural program, log onto www.portland.gov/bds/original-art-mural-permits.

How to obtain a permit for an Original Art Mural

1 Submit mural permit to Bureau of Development Services (BDS)

Applicant

- Application form and fee.
- Site plan and building elevation drawings.
- Description of mural and details of installation.

2 Schedule a neighborhood meeting

Applicant

- Must be at an open and accessible location within the neighborhood boundary.
- Scheduled during an evening or weekend only, and not between 10 pm and 7 am.

3 Send letter to neighborhood association

Applicant

- Letter must be sent at least 21 calendar days before the scheduled meeting to neighborhood association.
- Letter must contain a description of the mural proposal, date, time and location of meeting, and building elevation or photograph showing mural location.
- Certificate of Mailing verifying the letter was sent is required.

4 Post notice of open meeting

Applicant

- Applicant obtains posting board from BDS at time of permit submittal.
- Notice must be posted at the mural location, at least 21 calendar days before the meeting.

5 Notify BDS

Applicant

- After neighborhood contact requirements are completed, applicant must notify BDS in order to finalize the permit.
- A copy of the letter sent to the neighborhood association announcing the meeting must be provided to BDS with the Certificate of Mailing.

6 Issuance of permit

BDS

- BDS will issue the mural permit if all provisions of Title 4, Original Art Murals, and the administrative rule are met.
- Structural review is required if any element weighs more than 7 pounds per square foot, or in total weighs more than 400 pounds.
- BDS review is nondiscretionary; the decision is final, with no local appeal.

7 Create the mural

Applicant



Lead artist: Isaka Shamsud-Din

8 Inspection of completed mural

BDS and Applicant

- The permit holder must email a photo of the mural to BDS after completion of the mural.
- The photo must be sent within one year after permit issuance, or the permit expires.
- Inspections may occur to enforce provisions of Title 4, as needed.

**SAMPLE OF PROJECT MANAGER SKILL SET FOR ENGAGED MEMORIALIZATION
PROEJCT WITH ANTI-BLACK RACISM/HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE**

Ce Scott-Fitts

Biography: Detroit Native Ce Scott-Fitts is an Artist, Poet, Chef, Curator and Arts Administrator. She is the Artist Development Director at the South Carolina Arts Commission (SCAC). Ce was formerly Creative Director and founding staff of McColl Center for Art + Innovation in Charlotte, NC. During her tenure, she established an International Residency Program for North Carolina Artists (South Africa and Ireland), curated Exhibitions and developed the Artist-in-Residence Program. Ce built the Education/Outreach and Artist Services programs which fostered support for local artists as well as connect artists with the local community. In addition, Ce partnered with North and South Carolina Colleges and Universities, Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, Atrium Health, and Charlotte Area Transit Authority (CATS) to develop and fund Residencies and Public Art Commissions. She was program manager for "Chairs on Parade" Charlotte's largest Public Art project. Over the years, Ce has taught at Central Piedmont Community College, served on selection panels for the NEA, North Carolina Arts Council, and the San Francisco Arts Commission. She was also Co-Chair for the Service Committee of Alliance of Artist Communities, Providence, RI and Chair of Regional Project Grant Committee for the Arts and Science Council, Charlotte NC. Ce serves as co-chair of the Individual Artist Support committee for Grant Makers in the Arts. She is part of SCAC's leadership team, Chair of SCAC's DEAL committee and founder of SCAiA (South Carolina Artists in Action), a statewide initiative that focuses on sustainability and support for South Carolina's Black artists. Ce has exhibited at Museums, Public spaces, and Galleries throughout the Southeast. Her work is held in Public and Private Collections in the US, Japan, and the UK. Ce holds her Master of Fine Arts Degree in Painting from Maryland Institute, College of Art in Baltimore, MD.

C.V.

Ce Scott-Fitts
(704) 737-4742
ceceliascott928@gmail.com

Education

MFA, Painting, Hoffberger Fellow, Maryland Institute, College of Art, Baltimore, MD
BFA, Printmaking, French minor, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI
Catering Certification, Central Piedmont Community College, Charlotte, NC

South Carolina Arts Commission, Columbia, SC

2019-present

Artist Development Director

- Works collaboratively with diverse constituency statewide
- Develops, manages and oversees a portfolio of SCAC programs/projects statewide
- Researches grant and fellowship funding trends
- Manages individual artists grants programs
- Creates and implements new programs and initiatives

- Negotiated loan forms/contracts with artists, curators, lending institutions/galleries
- Supervised program interns as needed
- Initiated and developed collaborative opportunities with other Cultural or Civic organization as well as area Universities and Colleges
- Established a partnership with Charlotte Area Transit System to sponsor 3 artists to create public art for the new Light Rail system
- Participated in the Center's Executive committee and Board of Directors Meetings
- Represented the Center at local public meetings, national and international conferences
- Led and conducted tours for current and potential donors
- Solicited collectors and Foundations for financial support for programs
- Participated in the production of 1-2 annual fundraisers, raising \$200,000- 349,000 each
- Prepared 4-5 course Italian or French dinners monthly for artists, donors, government officials,

Board and staff

- Created and implemented Continuing Education Visual Arts classes
- Hired, evaluated and managing staff of 15 f/t and five p/t teachers
- Developed curriculums, wrote prospectuses for classes and workshops
- Developed outreach programs for incoming artists-in-residence
- Created and maintained an artist email data base
- Conducted portfolio reviews and taught grants writing workshops for artists
- Directed marketing efforts for programs
- Implemented and managed the Center's scholarship programs
- Established an international residency program (South Africa and Ireland) for NC artists and writers
- Researched, developed, and implemented an artist lecture series, *Art Talks* featuring nationally known artists and critics
- Worked as Project Director for the City of Charlotte's largest temporary public art exhibit, *Chairs on Parade*, worked with over 250 participants including artists, public schools, city officials, business and Civic leaders

Community School of the Arts

1997-1998

Arts Reach Director

- Developed and implemented classes for children and adults for 18 Parks and Recreation sites and Spirit Square Art Center in visual art, theater, music, and dance
- Wrote class descriptions and designed brochures
- Managed Artist-in Residence program (Visual Art and Music) at Piedmont Courts Housing Development and Hemby Children's Center, Presbyterian Hospital
- Hired and evaluated staff of 30-50 instructors
- Managed a budget of 85,000

Visual Artist/Art Consultant

1981-present

Exhibited regionally and nationally in Alternative spaces, Galleries and Museums. Artwork is held in private and public Collections in the USA, UK and Japan. Art Consultant for Non-Profit organizations, Corporate Clients, and private individuals.

Short Bibliography on Public Art, Black Lives Matter, and Restorative Justice

- Boucicaut, Tanya. "Introduction to the Special Issue on African American Expressive Culture and Protest." *The Journal of American Folklore* 134, no. 534 (2021): 375–537.
- Brooks, Robin. "R.I.P. Shirts or Shirts of the Movement: Reading the Death Paraphernalia of Black Lives." *Biography* 41, no. 4 (2018): 807–30. <https://doi.org/10.1353/bio.2018.0080>.
- Brown, Amelia. "Black Lives Matter Art: Creating Possibilities in Emergencies." *Public Management* 102, no. 10 (2020): 49-53.
- "Chouliaraki, Lilie, Michael Orwicz, and Robin Greeley. 'Special Issue: The Visual Politics of the Human.' *Visual Communication*. 18, No. 3 (2019): 301-09.
- Edwards, Elise M. "'Let's Imagine Something Different': Spiritual Principles in Contemporary African American Justice Movements and Their Implications for the Built Environment." *Religions (Basel, Switzerland)* 8, no. 12 (2017): 256-. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel8120256>.
- Johnson, Stephanie Anne. "Education, Art, and The Black Public Sphere." *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 12, no. 9 (2019): 41–58.
- McGonigle Leyh, Brianne. "Imperatives of the Present: Black Lives Matter and the Politics of Memory and Memorialization." *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights* 38, no. 4 (n.d.): 239–45.
- VanDiver, Rebecca. "Art Matters: Howard University's Department of Art from 1921 to 1971." *Callaloo* 39, no. 5 (2016): 1199-1218. <https://doi.org/10.1353/cal.2016.0154>.