



Hon. Marquis A. Harrison
Chairperson
Minah Whyte
District Manager

CITY OF NEW YORK MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10

215 West 125th Street, 4th Floor New York, NY 10027
T: 212-749-3105 F: 212-662-4215
Website: <https://cbmanhattan.cityofnewyork.us/cb10/>

May 15, 2024

David Mandel
Community Liaison, Public Art
NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, Percent for Art Program
31 Chambers Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mr. Mandel,

The Manhattan Community Board 10's **Arts and Culture Committee** is responsible for advocating, promoting, and supporting arts and cultural initiatives within the community. It supports funding for arts organizations, public art projects, and arts education programs that enrich the community's cultural landscape while working to preserve and celebrate the cultural heritage of the community.

This involves identifying and promoting historical sites, landmarks, and cultural traditions that contribute to the community's identity and sense of place. It helps coordinate and facilitate arts and cultural events, exhibitions, performances, and workshops within the community including collaborating with local artists, arts organizations, and cultural institutions providing opportunities for residents to engage with and participate in artistic activities.

This Committee engages with community members to gather input and feedback on arts and cultural initiatives, supporting arts to provide access to arts learning opportunities for residents of all ages, while advocating for arts education funding, curriculum development, and partnerships with local artists and arts organizations to enrich educational experiences for cultural equity and inclusion within the community's arts and cultural sector in Central Harlem. This includes promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in arts programming, funding, and representation to ensure that all members of the community have access to and can participate in cultural experiences.

Thank you for your presentation of the Percent for Art – Beyond Sims public artwork conceptual design. Arts and Culture Committee on May 13, 2024. It highlights how in In January 2018, in response to sustained widespread criticism of Sims legacy as achieved by the exploitation of a vulnerable population, and now at odds with our contemporary values and ethics, a Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments and Markers recommended to: Remove, Relocate, Replace the space with the proposed Victory, a partnership with Vinnie Bagwell an inductee for 2022-23 Who's Who in America for sculpture.

A representational-figurative artist, Vinnie uses traditional bas-relief techniques as narratives to expand her story-telling. She has won numerous public-art commissions and awards around the United States. Vinnie Bagwell is an untutored artist and began sculpting in 1993. Her first public artwork: “The First Lady of Jazz Ella Fitzgerald” was commissioned by the City of Yonkers in 1996 including Americans for the Arts inaugural José and Darlene Pérez Prize for civic engagement. Bryce Turner, FAIA, CEO of BCT Design Group is enthusiastic about pedestrian-oriented public spaces and the built environment that interacts with them. Licensed in 20 U.S. states, he is well versed in the cultural and commercial amenities that accentuate public spaces and the design and planning that creates them. Together, they are creating memorable destinations.

It will be an asset to Central Park and New York City as it rectifies the horrific ordeals memorialized from Dr. James Marion Sims Sculpture on 5th Avenue and E 103rd Street, at Central Park from 1934-2018 Dr. James Marion Sims (1813–1883), who has been referred to as the “father of modern gynecology”. Sims has been the subject of much discussion, with some condemning the physician for his medical practices, and with others defending his record within the context of his time. Sims’ medical advances were achieved through practice of surgical techniques on enslaved Black women, who were his principal subjects in the South where he initially practiced.

Vinnie Bagwell preserves African American history by creating art for public places. She is an inductee for 2022-23 Who’s Who in America for sculpture. A representational-figurative artist, Vinnie uses traditional bas-relief techniques as narratives to expand her story-telling. She has won numerous public-art commissions and awards around the United States, including Americans for the Arts inaugural José and Darlene Pérez Prize for civic engagement. Bryce Turner, FAIA, CEO of BCT Design Group is enthusiastic about pedestrian-oriented public spaces and the built environment that interacts with them. Licensed in 20 U.S. states, he is well versed in the cultural and commercial amenities that accentuate public spaces and the design and planning that creates them. Together, they are creating memorable destinations.

Vinnie Bagwell is an untutored artist and began sculpting in 1993. Her first public artwork:

“The First Lady of Jazz Ella Fitzgerald” was commissioned by the City of Yonkers in 1996. The life-sized bronze is the first sculpture of a contemporary African American woman to be commissioned by a municipality in the United States.

In 1982, Local Law 65, the Percent for Art Law was passed, which states that 1% of the capital funds appropriated for newly constructed or reconstructed City-owned buildings or sites must be allocated for works of art.

Commissions are installed in new or reconstructed City-owned buildings and structures, such as:

COURTHOUSES • PARKS • CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS • POLICE PRECINCTS • FIRE STATIONS • STREETSCAPES • PLAZAS • LIBRARIES • SCHOOLS • HEALTH CENTERS

Considering the above, without further ado, The Arts and Culture Committee presented and discussed the provision of a Letter of Support for the proposal.

“Victory Beyond Sims” by artist Vinnie Bagwell which was enthusiastically received and approved as it will be an asset to Central Park and New York City. We look forward to the completion of the project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marquis A. Harrison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Marquis Harrison
Chairperson, Manhattan Community Board 10