



## UrbanArt Commission

Percent-for-Art Program

# I AM A MAN PLAZA | REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

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**Release Date:** Wednesday, February 1, 2017

**Budget:** \$700,000

**Deadline:** **THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2017**

**Eligibility:** Any artist currently living in the United States of America. No artist may receive more than two art enhancement commissions in any five-year period. Artists are invited to apply as a team if desirable.

## BACKGROUND

The City of Memphis will commemorate the enduring legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death and the 1968 Sanitation Worker's strike through the building of I AM A MAN Plaza and a dedicated art installation for the plaza. The City of Memphis hopes that the space will serve as a point of reflection and invite all people to a peaceful, interactive and educational experience that supports the advancement of equity, justice and positive social change.

The site for the plaza is adjacent to Clayborn Temple, a strategic center and place of refuge for the 1968 Memphis Sanitation Worker's strike. The famous strike protested discrimination and unsafe working conditions that led to the death of two African American sanitation workers. The Sanitation Worker's strike drew Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to Memphis to help plan and lead marches and during which the iconic phrase "I AM A MAN" was initially coined. It was on this fateful visit that Dr. King was assassinated at the nearby Lorraine Motel on April 4, 1968.

Fifty years later, protestors around the world – from Ferguson, Missouri to Cairo, Egypt- can be seen carrying "I AM A MAN" signs. The battle cry derived from the struggle for dignity and fair wages of 1300 men in Memphis has become the City's defining human rights signature.

## **SITE SPECIFICS**

Clayborn Temple is located in the center of the Memphis Heritage Trail development area in downtown Memphis at the intersection of Pontotoc and Hernando, near FedEx Forum and Robert R. Church Park. A vacant lot adjacent of the Temple will be site of I AM A MAN Plaza.

The temple was built in 1892 for the Second Presbyterian Church. In 1949, it became the home of the African American Episcopal Church and named for the AME Bishop JM Clayborn. Vacant since 1999, a local nonprofit group began an effort to redevelop Clayborn Temple in the fall of 2015.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

The UrbanArt Commission and the City of Memphis are commissioning a public art installation as part of a city-wide commemoration of the Memphis Sanitation Worker's strike and the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The selected artist will work closely with a landscape architect in coordinating the plaza design with the art installation.

The selection committee expresses an interest in a public art piece that will:

- Acknowledge the historical significance of Memphis, the Memphis Sanitation Worker's strike and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the Civil Rights Movement, particularly involving the phrase I Am A Man
- Provide visitors with the ability to interact with the art through tactile or technological elements or other methods
- Create an experience that residents and tourists will want to revisit
- Create a space for peaceful protest and positive change
- Inspire future generations to stand up for social justice and positive change

The commissioned artist will be selected based on previous experience with the design of exterior sculpture projects.

Applicants are expected to have the technical capabilities to design and install such projects, including providing maintenance instructions. The finished project must require as minimal regular maintenance as possible. Final artwork should complement the characteristics and neighborhood identity of the site. The artists or artists teams selected are expected to collaborate closely with site engineers, landscape architects, and any necessary party for the successful installation of the project, including the community. NOTE: Commissioned artists are permitted to work with outside contractors to fabricate the actual work of art.

The UrbanArt Commission and the City of Memphis rigorously pursue excellence in equity and inclusion. To this end, applications from ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, and women are encouraged. As well, it is expected that the selected artist work with minority and female artists, contractors, and/or

subcontractors in the project development.

### **PROJECT TIMELINE**

February 1, 2017	RFQ released
March 16, 2017	RFQ deadline
March 25, 2017	Notify finalist artists and release RFP
April 29, 2017	RFP deadline
Late May 2017	Commission artist
March 31, 2018	Installation complete

### **PROJECT BUDGET**

Project Budget \$700,000; Design \$139,100; Fabrication \$560,900, all-inclusive. Up to three finalists will receive a \$1,500 honorarium for a design proposal.

### **FINALIST REQUIREMENTS**

The art selection committee will select three finalists based on their applications; professional qualifications; ability to work within a budget, meet deadlines; and successful completion of previous public art projects. Each finalist will be asked to prepare a schematic design, followed by a presentation to the artist selection committee. Each finalist will receive a \$1,500 honorarium for an original design developed specifically for the site.

### **GUIDELINES**

Please review the *UrbanArt Artist's Handbook*, for detailed instructions for applying to UrbanArt projects and how the selection process works. A copy may be downloaded from the 'Artists' Toolkit' section of the UrbanArt website – [www.urbanartcommission.org/artists](http://www.urbanartcommission.org/artists)

**Please submit the following materials online by following the “I AM A MAN Plaza” link at [www.urbanartcommission.org/open-projects](http://www.urbanartcommission.org/open-projects):**

- Include a typed letter explaining your interest in the project and your general approach/concept to its design and production. Please do not submit design proposals at this point.
- Up to 20 images of past work including title of work, date, medium, budget and project partners, if any.
- Résumé, not to exceed 2 pages.
- Three professional references, including current phone and email.
- Completed applicant's materials should be uploaded via the UrbanArt website only. Hardcopy packets, digital files, and CD-ROMs **WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

For more information please contact:

Lauren Kennedy, Executive Director

901.552.3934 / [lkennedy@urbanartcommission.org](mailto:lkennedy@urbanartcommission.org)

This RFQ and support materials may be downloaded at [www.urbanartcommission.org/open-projects](http://www.urbanartcommission.org/open-projects)

**Disclaimers**

Applicants will be notified as to the status of their application. Commissioning of artists by UrbanArt and the pursuit of all UrbanArt activities are implemented without preference to racial or ethnic origins, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, disability or age.

UrbanArt reserves the right to modify this solicitation and to request additional information from participating artists.

UrbanArt reserves the right to accept or reject, at any time prior to the commissioning of a work, any or all proposals when the acceptance, rejection, waiver or advertisement would be in the best interest of the project. In addition,

The staff of UrbanArt will be responsible for all correspondence and communication by and between applicants and members of selection panels. Discussion regarding these projects by and between any applicant and any member of a selection panel outside of regularly scheduled meetings during the selection process may be grounds for the disqualification of the applicant. Such determination shall be in the discretion of UrbanArt.

## SITE PHOTOS



Clayborn Temple, downtown Memphis – at the intersection of Hernando and Pontotoc



Vacant lot adjacent to Clayborn Temple – proposed site for I AM A MAN Plaza



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Photo from the Sanitation Worker's Strike, Memphis, TN, 1968 – Ernest C. Withers