



PRESS RELEASE ON BEHALF OF BLACK ALLIANCE & SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT,
SOUTHERN OREGON BLACK LEADERS, ACTIVISTS AND COMMUNITY COALITION,
AND SOUTHERN OREGON COALITION FOR RACIAL EQUITY

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Local “Say Their Names” Collective Puts Out Final Call for Artists for Permanent Black Lives Art Installation in Railroad Park

[ASHLAND, OREGON] A collective of Ashland community members and Southern Oregon Black-led organizations are putting out a final call for local artists to submit project ideas for a permanent installation to replace the Say Their Names Memorial that currently lines the fence of Railroad Park. Started organically by individual residents in response to the murder of George Floyd in June 2020, the Memorial has gone through multiple iterations due to attempted vandalism and subsequent restoration. Now, with the backing of Ashland officials, a community-driven effort to create a permanent art installation has developed.

The call for artists first went out on March 9, 2021 with submissions being accepted until April 2, 2021. “As we enter this final week of the submission phase, we want to encourage artists who may be hesitant to submit an idea to fill out the application,” says Kayla Wade, Logistics Director of Southern Oregon Coalition for Racial Equity. “There is no experience requirement. You do not have to be a professional artist. We want to hear your vision for this project.” The Collective urges artists of diverse and intersectional backgrounds to submit, especially Black women, women of color, QTBIPOC artists, and young artists.

The Collective is made up of local artists, organizers of the original installation, and representatives from Black Alliance & Social Empowerment (BASE); Southern Oregon Black Leaders, Activists and Community Coalition (SOBLACC), and Southern Oregon Coalition for Racial Equity (SOEquity). “We believe it is extremely important for the actual community to have a voice in the creation of this permanent installation,” says Micah Blacklight, a member of the Collective. “It is because of them that this is even possible, and without them, there is no point in putting it up in the first place. They have made their voices heard, and we are crystallizing their call.”

During the upcoming months, the collective will reach out to grant writers, experienced fundraisers and volunteer coordinators to help secure the necessary financial and logistical support for this project to come to fruition. Once all submissions are received, the Collective will review each proposal and identify a set of finalists who will be presented to the community for a vote. The community-selected artist will be announced on June 19, 2021, also known as Juneteenth.

The deadline for artist submissions is April 2, 2021. More information and the submission form can be found at www.soequity.org/say-their-names. Questions regarding the submission process can be sent to Cassie Preskenis at Cassie@AshlandStudioZ.com.

For media requests, please contact Kayla Wade, Logistics Director of Southern Oregon Coalition for Racial Equity, at 541.214.5849 or Kayla.Wade@soequity.org.