

**Artist Call & Request for Qualifications**  
**Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation**  
**Inclusive Public Art Initiative**

**N.C. African American Heritage Commission | *Africa to Carolina* Project**

**Artist Call**

The North Carolina African American Heritage Commission and its partner, the North Carolina Museum of Art, are seeking a community-engaged artist for *Africa to Carolina*, a semi-finalist project of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation's Inclusive Public Art Initiative. The artist will collaborate with communities to design a public art piece commemorating the lives and lasting legacies of those who disembarked from the African continent onto North Carolina's coastal shores.



**Background**

In 2018, the NCAAHC accepted a charge from the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture to identify, acknowledge, and physically memorialize sites where enslaved persons disembarked from the African continent. The *Africa to Carolina* project was born as a result of this charge.

In the sixteenth century, people of African descent stepped foot on land that would later be known as the colony of North Carolina. Most historical resources situate the colony as a lesser player in the human trafficking enterprise of the Global Slave Trade and perpetuate false facts - namely that North Carolina's complicated coastline made it challenging for slave vessels to import enslaved Africans into most places outside of Wilmington. North Carolinians have accepted these falsehoods, obscuring the complicated realities of the slave trade. A more nuanced—and honest—interpretation of history offers a different reality: North Carolina's coast featured a complex network of ports, and planters, merchants, companies, and corporations corroborated legally and extralegally to import enslaved persons into the colony via this port system. At least a dozen of these voyages transported people from the African continent directly to the shores of North Carolina. Over 2,000 survivors disembarked from ships called *Nancy*, *Hannah*, *Granville*, *Squirrel*, *Harlequin*, *Newmarket*, *Hope*, *Camden*, *Jennet*, and other un-named vessels between 1759-1787. *Africa to Carolina* shares their stories.

**Project Overview**

*Africa to Carolina* has been executed in a series of thoughtful, collaborative phases since 2018. The NCAAHC relied upon research and innovative public engagement to learn more about disembarkation sites, to create a community-informed path forward for *Africa to Carolina*, and to connect deeply with disembarkation communities across the state. This work has birthed many ideas for memorializing sites of disembarkation, as well as educational and informational resources like mobile exhibitions and digital tools. The NCAAHC is now positioned to work alongside collaborators, new and old, to physically commemorate North Carolina disembarkation sites. Thus, we seek an artist from North Carolina to serve as the lead designer of a public art piece commemorating the memory and legacies of those persons who disembarked from the African continent to North Carolina.

***Phase I (Current Phase)***

The selected artist will create renderings of a public art piece that commemorates disembarkation in a coastal community where enslaved persons disembarked. We expect these renderings to be community informed. As such, the artist will incorporate feedback and concepts shared by stakeholders during community engagement sessions. The renderings will be submitted as part of the full application to the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation's Inclusive Public Art Initiative in January 2023.

If *Africa to Carolina* is selected for full funding, the artist will be retained for Phase II of the project.

***Phase II***

The selected artist will shape an additional series of community engagement sessions to create and refine public art designs in collaboration with stakeholders; and share final memorial designs with stakeholders for approval. These community engagement sessions will be designed in collaboration with the project's lead facilitator, Facilitate Movement. Pending stakeholder approval of public art designs, the selected artist may proceed with fabricating and installing the public art piece.

## Compensation & Requirements

A stipend of \$2,000 will be provided to the selected artist as compensation for Phase I, and the artist will be reimbursed for mileage and lodging. This funding will be provided by the NC Museum of Art.

If full funding for the *Africa to Carolina* project is received, a new contract and compensation package will be developed to align with the goals and budget of Phase II of this work.



Phase I artist expectations are as follows:

1. Attend community engagement sessions.
2. Review and familiarize self with materials associated with the *Africa to Carolina* initiative.
3. Create three proposed designs to be reviewed by the *Africa to Carolina* Advisory Committee.
4. Finalize one selected design; prepare professional rendering to be included in final grant submission to the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation's Inclusive Public Art Initiative (January 2023).
5. Prepare a budget and scope of work for public art piece to be included in the final grant submission.

## Selection Criterion & Process

We welcome applications from artists and designers working in all media. Artists must be 18 years or older to apply. Preference will be given to artists who meet the following criteria:

- Are working in North Carolina and are based or rooted in Eastern or Coastal North Carolina
- Are Black
- Have experience engaging communities (especially descendant communities)
- Have experience with public art or large art installations
- Are experienced collaborators

Applications will be reviewed, and the artist will be selected, by a cohort of arts administrators, artists, and public historians rooted in North Carolina.

## Deadline and Milestones

**Artist application submission deadline: October 7, 2022**

**Selected artist notified: October 24, 2022**

Phase I community engagement sessions: October-November 2022

Draft renderings shared: December 2022

Final rendering, budget, and scope of work shared: January 2023

## How to Apply

Artists should submit application materials to: [AfricatoCarolinaApp@ncartmuseum.org](mailto:AfricatoCarolinaApp@ncartmuseum.org).

*Application materials:*

1. A Statement of Interest  
A statement, up to 500 words, sharing more about your interest in this work, describing past public art projects and community engagement experience, and outlining how your work might translate to this specific project
2. Professional Resume  
Up to three pages, including information related to commissions, exhibitions, installations, awards, public art projects, and community engagement
3. Four digital images of artist's work  
Four images of previous work (created within the past five years); images should include title, year, media, location, dimensions, commissioning group, project budget, and (if applicable) collaborators

## About the Organizations

### *N.C. African American Heritage Commission*

Created in 2008, the African American Heritage Commission is a division of the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. The commission works across the department to preserve, protect and promote the state's African American history, art and culture for all people. Its endeavors include the identification of heritage sites, compiling resources for educators, extending the work of national programs such as the National Park Service's Network to Freedom Underground Railroad, and independent initiatives including the N.C. Civil Rights Trail and Oasis Spaces: North Carolina Green Book Project.



### *N.C. Museum of Art*

The North Carolina Museum of Art's collection spans more than 5,000 years, from antiquity to the present, making the institution one of the premier art museums in the South. The Museum's collection provides educational, aesthetic, intellectual, and cultural experiences for the citizens of North Carolina and beyond. The 164-acre Museum Park showcases the connection between art and nature through site-specific works of environmental art. The Museum offers changing special exhibitions, classes, lectures, family activities, films, and concerts. The Museum is located at 2110 Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh and is home to the People's Collection. It is the art museum of the State of North Carolina, under the auspices of Governor Roy Cooper; an agency of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, guided by the direction of Secretary D. Reid Wilson; and led by Director Valerie Hillings.

### *North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources*

The N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNCR) is the state agency with a vision to be the leader in using the state's natural and cultural resources to build the social, cultural, educational and economic future of North Carolina. NCDNCR's mission is to improve the quality of life in our state by creating opportunities to experience excellence in the arts, history, libraries and nature in North Carolina by stimulating learning, inspiring creativity, preserving the state's history, conserving the state's natural heritage, encouraging recreation and cultural tourism, and promoting economic development.

NCDNCR includes 27 historic sites, seven history museums, two art museums, three science museums, three aquariums and Jennette's Pier, 41 state parks and recreation areas, the N.C. Zoo, the N.C. Symphony Orchestra, the State Library, the State Archives, the N.C. Arts Council, the African American Heritage Commission, the American Indian Heritage Commission, State Preservation Office and the Office of State Archaeology, and the Division of Land and Water Stewardship.