

**Comments and questions from cards received
at the Madame Walker Theatre on October 19, 2010**

It seems that you often represent an historic image that is painful in some way. Could you explain why you think it's important to confront and give new meaning to such figures?

Is it possible to have audio accompaniment with the art work?

Will you modify the statue knowing the unrest of the African-American community?

If a picture speaks a thousand words then why depict a slave to overcome slavery?

How is this different than a monument?

Recommendation: The African-American artist and recipient organizations of art council awards need to be engaged.... Riverside Civic League

Are there any other cultures represented on the Cultural Trail?

I was going to suggest major change, but after your presentation, I like your work. You may wish to consider the reference the "colored" troops in the Indiana Union Army. I am an African-American.

Keyword "Cultural District". Indianapolis never had a slave Culture. One theme is: "Rhythm Reborn" which suggests a creative artistic creation!! Myra Mason

Mr. Wilson-Did you ever consider a representation of culture that was not rooted in the past, but future? A new icon that gives us hope, courage and confidence?

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To the artist: What was the challenge put forth to you by the committee that resulted in your creative response?

The statue reminds me of a castrated people who are afraid to speak their mind. They no they are wrong for this. –Karim

Can we please use the 28 USCT Civil War soldier with a musket instead of a flag with the chains of slavery broken?

Why not use a USCT soldier? –Esther Bowman

Why not have contest and have children design an image? –E. Bowman

Why a slave?

Thank you Fred for considering Indpls as destination for your artwork. It has already helped us, believe it or not. My one question is: Have you considered putting an inspiring phrase like “Never Give Up” on a piece that could be interpreted so many ways?

I love the fact that you’re giving this person some light, some acknowledgement. He represents our struggle and our strength. This “unkown her” should be celebrated.

Can you talk about how this is an artwork, period. And NOT a new monument or new memorial for black people. This is art. Not meant to cure or heal. It just is.

Please talk about how this is meant to bringing a conversation. What do you want to come from the conversation?

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Can you tell us why the figure is being placed in front of the City-County council building? And how you envisioned the relationship between the sculpture + the surrounding buildings?

Why use a slave image to represent decades of contributions of the black race which have launched our society into the 21st century?

Great Black Leaders of the Frontier:

Buffalo Soldiers—Tuskegee Airmen—Col. Powel—Fredrick Douglas—Rev. ML King

Please! Not a slave image!

Can he change it to a different art? –Tony Williams

As a black man and life-long resident of Indiana, I appreciate + support what this work would mean to my city + for my son. Can you speak to how or why art is infused with meaning we choose?

Do you honestly feel that the statute (sic) you want to create is an honest representative of African-Americans, particularly in the City of Indianapolis? If so, why?

Fred, Why do you think some members of our community still view the man as a slave even though you have removed all symbols of slavery?

Good art poses difficult questions. Why confine art and the questions and controversies they pose to the museum? Isn't it of value to bring these hard conversations into the greater public instead of confine them?

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Mr Wilson – Thank you so much for being yourself. These people are here for a different reason. Please ignore their ignorance. Please do not change. Slavery is history—we cannot change it.

Why not a dual statue of a Slave to the Pres.

After hearing the sentiments expressed today, can you make any changes to your final product? Will you? Would you require additional funds?

To the Cultural Trail Representatives or Brian Payne – Why did you have to go to Minneapolis to have Ms. Gwen set the “tone” instead of engaging a well qualified facilitator from Indianapolis?

Fred – Wouldn’t you be doing untruthful revisionist history? – H. Baker

We have a glorious rendition of an African-American @ 17th & Broadway.

Fred: Do you think you have been giving to (sic) much credit to curators, of the art that interest you most, as part of a grand (colonial/racist) conspiracy? – Howard E. “Butch” Baker, AIA

Architect/ (illegible) activist/Advocate Community Organizer/ Planner/ Civil Rights Activist/ Women’s Rights Activist/ Anti-Vietnam War Protester/ Etc.

How about having a stature (sic) of a black family instead of just a single black man?

How much of a chance is there that the statue can be changed or modified?

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Your work re-interprets “issues & objects of how are depicted.” Do you feel at any time that your responsibility in a gallery is different than a public space?

Mr. Fred Wilson – I would like to know if we as a people of Indianapolis can have a sculpture depicting a better character for instance Crispus Attucks?

Has recipients (sic) of other Art Council funds opinions been heard?

Have you done other work in public spaces + what has their reception been?

In a community where African-Americans have contributed a rich history, why is it appropriate to display a unidentifiable and nameless slave on a “Cultural Trail”?

What is the reason for the placement being so close to the City-County building and the County Jail?

Did you anticipate this reaction from the community?

Does the statue depict the endurance of the American slave, and is merely a reminder that America must never allow such horror again between these shores? Thank you – Madelyn Toler

Who wrote the description of the statue? The word empowered was used to describe the slave. Did you come up with that? If so, that says a lot about you or the cultural trails think an empowered black man is.

If the idea includes inspiration, why not a black person who could not be heard i.e. Madam C.J. Walker?