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# Mayor de Blasio Names Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments and Markers

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**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced the members of the Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments and Markers – a group that will advise the Mayor on issues surrounding public art and historic monuments and markers on City-owned property. The Commission will be co-chaired by the President of the Ford Foundation, Darren Walker, and the Commissioner of Cultural Affairs, Tom Finkelpearl. Over the next 90 days, the Commission will develop guidelines on how the City should address monuments seen as oppressive and inconsistent with the values of New York City. The Commission will also review and offer recommendations for a select few items, including pieces that have been the subject of significant public discussion.

“There’s an important conversation taking place right now about history and representation in public art, monuments and markers. This diverse group of experts will be creating a thoughtful set of guidelines that acknowledge the complexities of history and the values that matter to us as New Yorkers. The commission will also make specific recommendations for a select few monuments and markers that have prompted understandably passionate public discourse,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “I’m confident that this process will produce a conversation capable of examining our public art through the accurate, contextual historical lens that it deserves.”

“I am thrilled and honored to be co-chairing this commission with someone of Darren Walker’s intelligence and stature” said **Cultural Affairs Commissioner and Co-Chair of the Commission Tom Finkelpearl**. “The members of the commission bring an incredible range and depth of knowledge to this important task, and I am sincerely grateful for their service.”

“I look forward to working with Tom Finkelpearl and the rest of the distinguished commission to assess the symbolism and significance of specific art, monuments, and markers that detail our city’s and country’s complicated historical legacy,” said **Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation and Co-Chair of the Commission**.

The Commission’s final recommendations may include proposed principles for the City’s public works collection; policies and actions the City may consider to review and address City installations; and additional initiatives to advance positive change and further City goals.

The Commission will be in the form of an advisory body composed of members with widely recognized expertise in a range of relevant disciplines, including history, art and antiquities, public art and public space, preservation, diversity and inclusion, and the law. A small number of City agencies with relevant roles and skills are expected to provide additional technical and policy expertise. The Commission’s process will include opportunities for public and community engagement, including a public forum and a digital survey available on DCLA’s website. The Commission will issue its recommendations by the end of the year. All recommendations to the Mayor will be posted publicly on the City’s website, along with a description of the Mayor’s final decision.

The members of the Commission include:

## Co-Chairs

**Darren Walker** - *President of the Ford Foundation; longtime leader in nonprofit and philanthropic sectors*

**Tom Finkelpearl** - *Commissioner, Department of Cultural Affairs*

## Commission Members

**Richard Alba** - *Distinguished Professor at CUNY Graduate Center; former vice president of the American Sociological Association*

**Michael Arad** - *Architect; designer of the World Trade Center Memorial*

**Harry Belafonte** - *Singer; songwriter; actor; and civil rights activist*

**John Calvelli** - *Executive Vice President for Public Affairs of the Wildlife Conservation Society; Vice Chair of International Affairs at the National Italian American Foundation*

**Mary Schmidt Campbell** - *President of Spelman College; former vice-chair of President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities*

**Gonzalo Casals** - *Director of the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art; adjunct faculty at CUNY Hunter College in arts administration*

**Teresita Fernandez** - *Visual artist with experience in public art; MacArthur Fellow*

**Amy Freitag** - *Executive Director of the JM Kaplan Fund; former Executive Director at New York Restoration Project*

**Catie Marron** - *Editor of books on urban parks and public spaces; chair of the board of Friends of the High Line; trustee of the New York Public Library*

**Jon Meacham** - *Vanderbilt professor; Pulitzer prize-winning biographer of Jefferson and Jackson*

**Pepón Osorio** - *Visual artist with experience in public art; MacArthur Fellow*

**Harriet Senie** - *Public art scholar; author; professor of art history and director of the Art History program and Art Museum Studies at City College of New York*

**Shahzia Sikander** - *Visual artist with experience in public art; MacArthur Fellow*

**Audra Simpson** - *Mohawk anthropologist; Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University*

**John Kuo Wei Tchen** - *Historian of Chinese Americans in New York City; Associate Professor at New York University*

**Mabel Wilson** - *Architect; scholar of race, memory, and urbanism; Associate Professor at Columbia University*

**Ex-Officio City Agencies** - Public Design Commission, Law, Education, and Parks

Additional members may be announced before the first meeting of the Commission, which will be scheduled for later this month.

***pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov***

*(212) 788-2958*