

Murals for Racial Justice Project: Community Update

Dear Indianapolis community members:

Thank you for your interest in and support of the *Murals for Racial Justice* initiative. The project, which commissioned 22 Black artists to create 24 temporary murals on boarded-up storefronts in Downtown Indianapolis, started in early June as an immediate response to the worldwide protests calling for racial justice and an end to the police brutality that led to the killings of George Floyd, Dreason Reed, and Breonna Taylor. It has since evolved into an ongoing advocacy platform and a commitment to support the professional development of Black artists.

The project partners--the [Arts Council of Indianapolis](#), [Indianapolis Cultural Trail Inc](#), [PATTERN](#), [St'ArtUp 317](#), and cultural entrepreneur [Malina Simone Jeffers](#)--are pleased to share updates, along with the announcement that [Danicia Monét](#), an artist, equity practitioner, and community-centered design researcher, will manage and facilitate the next phase of the project, including new public exhibition plans.

What is happening with the murals?

The partners and project manager are working with the business owners and a de-installation team to safely remove and store the 24 murals through the end of the year or return them to the artists upon their request. We are also managing requests for acquisitions/permanent displays according to the artists' wishes.

Will there be an exhibition of the murals?

Initially, the project partners planned to exhibit the murals along the Indianapolis Cultural Trail: A Legacy of Gene and Marilyn Glick. But that was before the plywood's fragility was determined to be unsuitable for long-term outdoor display. More importantly, the artists said that such an exhibition was not their main priority. Given the murals' artistic and historical significance, the plan has been modified at the recommendation of the artists, arts community, and project manager.

The new proposal: With the artists' permission (and pending funding), high-resolution images of the works (by PATTERN) will be printed as large banners. These will be displayed at the Central Library, including at the Center for Black Literature and Culture, and be available for educational use by the public and community institutions.

The goal of the artists and the project manager is to see significant, systemic change within the Indianapolis arts sector in which they wish to live, create, and thrive. They have requested actions that will lead to professional development and networking opportunities, increased visibility, structural transformation, community discussions, a commitment to arts and culture administrators' understanding of bias and race relations, and advocacy.

How did the project begin? How were the artists paid?

The idea began organically in late May when Patachou Inc. posted on social media, looking to hire Black artists to paint the boarded-up windows of two Downtown restaurants. Seeing the community's positive response, a group of organizations (including the project partners) and individuals met with a goal of engaging as allies by connecting Black artists to business/property owners and advocating that they be paid.

About \$26,000, which included a grant from the Central Indiana Community Foundation Artist Ambassadors, was raised in two weeks to provide stipends. Media coverage led to more commissions and paid projects that now exceed \$75,000 to Black artists in central Indiana, many of whom participated in the mural project.

What's next for the Murals for Racial Justice project?

The project's partners are committed to centering Black artists in conversations about racial inequities and injustices. With leadership from the project manager, we are using the artists' feedback as our guiding principles. In addition:

- [Danicia](#) is working with the muralists and the arts and culture community to develop programs for this fall that will support Black artists, to include: professional development activities, technical resources, and community conversations.
- [PATTERN](#) has created a digital catalog for exclusive use by the artists, featuring photographs, artist bios, and audio interviews.
- The Arts Council is sharing [digital images/artist information](#) with the public while providing copyright guidance.
- We will soon share information about how the public can access and reserve the banners via the Central Library for educational purposes.

If you have suggestions or would like to learn more about the next phase of the project, please email Danicia Monét at info@daniciamonet.co with the subject "Murals for Racial Justice." Again, we thank the community, partners, volunteers, and artists for their support and involvement as our city comes together to learn, heal, and grow.

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