

Fall Semester 1968-69
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PROJECTION FOR A PROPOSED MONUMENT
TO THE STRUGGLE OF BLACK PEOPLE IN AMERICA

What:

We propose the erection of a plaza and monument celebrating the Heroic struggle of Black People in America. The said monument would consist of several tastefully sculptured free standing walls collected on a small paved plaza. It would be entered by a way of ascending spiral steps from both streets which border it. On each wall, episodes from the dramatic fight for freedom would be depicted via low relief or painted murals. The plaza would be open for pedestrian passage with provisions for seating small gatherings. A concave wall near its rear would form a shell suitable for a staging area. We believed such a monument would be unique in the United States and a major attraction to and asset of the Atlanta University Center. Thus the monument would be at the same time aesthetically attractive, informative, commemorative and practical.

Where:

We suggest that an ideal site for the erection of the monument would be the parking lot at the corner of Chestnut and Fair Streets diagonally across from the Clark College campus. The size of the plot is perfect, and its location would make the plaza accessible to all students in the Center as well as the community. In addition, it would be in the heart of the Atlanta University Center where so much of the movement was inspired and actually took place.

How:

We propose to establish a committee made up of businessmen, local people, faculty and students to solicit funds from individual patrons, students, businesses and other contributors. In some cases, the contributions might take the form of labor or material. We are confident that the necessary fees for the execution of the project could be raised. Individual walls might be separately funded by persons or groups, in which case the names of these patrons would appear on a plaque attached to the monument as well as in the souvenir program to be published. A documentary film of the complete project could be used for fund raising as well as for providing a valuable historical record of the construction of the said monument. Moreover, the Ford Foundation has recently announced their willingness to award grants for the acquisition of land for aesthetic purposes.

Design:

Invitations will be extended to sympathetic black architects and sculptors to submit plans or models for the design of the monument. We anticipate that the project could involve several generations of artists from, for example, Hale Woodruff and Aaron Douglas to Herman Bailey. The committee previously cited would make the final choice of designs.

Construction:

Out of the funds raised, the construction could be financed. However, we anticipate contributions of material and/or labor from students, business, and civic groups. The basic construction is viewed as a community project in cooperation.

Decoration:

A board of historians would be created to work out an iconography for the entire monument. The corps of this group will be selected from the A.U. Center faculty.

Execution:

Some financial support should be provided for sympathetic black artists from the funds solicited. We believed that many major black artists would be enthusiastic enough about the project to contribute to it for only modest monetary rewards. Furthermore, art students in the Center could serve as apprentices to major painters and sculptors while working together on the monument. Academic credit could be given for their artistic activity.

Time Table:

The projected completion date would be June, 1970. The deadline for all final plans would be November, 1969, basic construction would extend through the summer and fall of 1969, and the artists would be at work by the spring of 1970.