

## See The 5 Proposals For The MLK Memorial On Boston Common

September 18, 2018

By [Maria Garcia](#) 



The five finalists for a new memorial in Boston to honor Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King have submitted their proposals to the MLK Boston committee.

The submissions reveal an incredibly varied aesthetic approach to honor the Kings on Boston Common by five renowned artist teams who explore issues of race, colonialism and its legacy, and identity, among other relevant themes. The finalists were chosen from 126 local and international submissions by MLK Boston's arts committee. Each of these teams received a \$10,000 stipend to develop these proposals for the memorial.

The plans are now on view at the Boston Public Library in Copley Square and the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal building in Dudley Square until Oct. 16, where the community can offer input. MLK Boston will also be taking public comment on its [website](#).

MLK Boston, founded by tech entrepreneur Paul English, will review the public comment and pick the final artist in November. The committee is made up of art historians, arts administrators, community members and academics. English said the committee will consider public input, aesthetic value, originality and historical analysis to choose the final artist.

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"We want to make sure that we have a committee of art historians who know what has worked in the last hundreds and thousand years and what's going to work in the next hundreds and thousands of years," English said. "We want something that's beautiful today but something that will also stand the test of time."

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In addition to this memorial site, MLK Boston has three additional components planned: an outdoor memorial on the Boston Common, an educational center in Roxbury to train activists and an endowment for MLK-inspired programming at Twelfth Baptist Church.

MLK Boston aims to raise \$15 million for the projects. So far, the group has raised about \$4.5 million. English said he had donated \$1 million, and the Lewis Family Foundation had also donated \$1 million.

Here's your first look at the final proposals for the Boston Common memorial:

## **'Empty Pulpit Monument'**

**Barbara Chase-Riboud with Michael Rosenfeld Gallery**



A rendering of Barbra Chase-Riboud's proposed memorial (Courtesy MLK Boston)



A rendering of Barbara Chase-Riboud's proposed memorial (Courtesy MLK Boston)

Barbara Chase-Riboud is a well-known artist whose abstract sculptures have memorialized Malcolm X, Marian Anderson, Martin Luther King Jr. and many others. She has proposed a memorial made of light, stone and bronze. At the center is a truncated stone pyramid, which represents the Kings' mission for justice. "The searchlight beacon symbolizes their message from the top of the mountain they climbed together," according to Chase-Riboud's proposal.

The artist says she was inspired in part by a 17th century carved wooden pulpit, likely resembling the pulpit of the first Martin Luther, which she saw in 2014. She wants the memorial to highlight an empty pulpit, representing Martin Luther King Jr.'s silenced voice. From the empty pulpit, the searchlight beacon pierces the darkness. The base of the memorial includes Indian granite, meant to reflect Gandhi's non-violence movement, which MLK studied deeply during his time at Boston University.

"Surrounding the memorial will be a series of undulating landscaped 'waves' — green rolling hills amongst which the public can roam and wander," Chase-Riboud wrote in her proposal. Among the hills, embossed plaques will hold



more of the Kings' quotes, ranging from the war in Vietnam to the march in Selma to the Nobel Peace Prize.

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## 'Boston's King Memorial'

**David Adjaye and Adam Pendleton with FuturePace**



David Adjaye and Adam Pendleton with FuturePace's rendering of their proposed memorial (Courtesy MLK Boston)



David Adjaye, Adam Pendleton and FuturePace's proposed memorial (Courtesy MLK Boston)



David Adjaye, Adam Pendleton and FuturePace's proposed memorial for the Boston Common  
(Courtesy MLK Boston)

David Adjaye has been described as an architect with an artist's sensibility. His biggest project is the the \$540 million National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.

Artist Adam Pendleton is perhaps one of the most well-known contemporary and conceptual artists creating work that explores social justice movements. His conceptual practice, which encompasses painting, sculpture, writing, film and performance, integrates writings by Malcolm X, John Ashbery and Gertrude Stein, among others.

Their proposal is also inspired by the idea of a mountaintop, which King Jr. mentioned in his last speech. "Delivered in support of striking sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, the speech is driven by a spatial metaphor: the mountaintop, the point of view of the struggle from which one can see the history of past struggles, as well as a future community to come," the proposal reads.

Pendleton and Adjaye's plan would build a raised open structure of black stone that would serve as a platform and amphitheater for residents to look onto the Common and the city. On the lawn surrounding the raised structure, the plan calls for sloped stone sculptures, engraved with the words of Coretta Scott King and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., serving as public seating.

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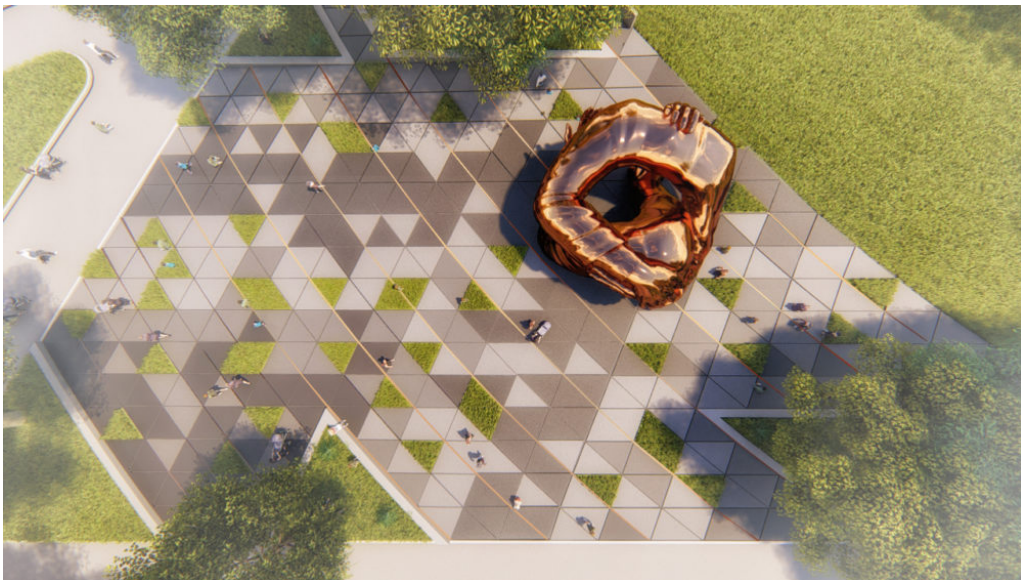
## 'The Embrace'



## Hank Willis Thomas with MASS Design Group



Hank Willis Thomas and MASS Design Group's proposed memorial (Courtesy MLK Boston)



Hank Willis Thomas and MASS Design Group's proposed memorial (Courtesy MLK Boston)



Hank Willis Thomas and MASS Design Group's proposed memorial (Courtesy MLK Boston)

Hank Willis Thomas, who is working with MASS Design Group, is inspired by the idea that protests offer a sense of togetherness — both physically and spiritually. "On multiple occasions, the nation witnessed the Kings locked together at the frontlines of a march. A monument that captures this embrace declares that love is the ultimate weapon against injustice," Willis Thomas' proposal states.

Willis Thomas and MASS Design Group propose a 22-foot-high sculpture of the arms of the couple embracing each other and thus also enveloping visitors below them. Participants will be "simultaneously vulnerable and protected," reads the proposal.

## 'The Ripple Effects'

**Wodiczko + Bonder and Maryann Thompson Architects**





Krzysztof Wodiczko, Julian Bonder and Maryann Thompson Architects' proposed memorial (Courtesy MLK Boston)



Krzysztof Wodiczko, Julian Bonder and Maryann Thompson Architects' proposed memorial (Courtesy MLK Boston)

Cambridge-based artist and professor Krzysztof Wodiczko and architect and professor Julian Bonder explore issues of social memory and survival through public space. Their proposal calls for a large space with two Beacon Towers equipped with special bell sounds and "pulses of light-monitoring."

On the ground surrounding the towers are ripples of light that reflect the impact of the Kings' words and activism. Across from the beacons is a mound with an amphitheater and a seating area for the public, plus a large bridge leading to the Robert Gould Shaw And The 54th Regiment memorial across the Common. Below the bridge, a glass wall "offers a more intimate and self-reflective encounter with written and spoken texts that teach and inspire," according to the proposal.

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## 'Avenue Of Peace'

**Yinka Shonibare**





Yinka Shonibare's proposed memorial (Courtesy MLK Boston)



Yinka Shonibare's proposed memorial (Courtesy MLK Boston)

Yinka Shonibare's proposal examines race and class through painting, sculpture, photography and film, often questioning cultural and national definitions. He proposes a memorial walkway, sculpture and water feature. The walkway would be lined with a series of 22 inscribed benches where people can sit and learn about the Kings.

The center of the walkway will hold a 30-foot-high fountain covered in colorful mosaic, on top of an oval pool lined with black granite. The fountain's mosaic, which incorporates the Kings names, is meant to shimmer in the pool below.

Visitors will also be able to download a mobile app, through which they could watch and listen to accounts of some of the key moments in the Kings' life

together.

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*Let us know what you think of these proposals in the comment section below.*

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