



December 22, 2023

Alex M. Smith
The Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway, 1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Alex:

The Office of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy (OACCE) is requesting a conceptual review of the Philadelphia's Permanent Harriet Tubman Statue during the Philadelphia Art Commission meeting on January 10, 2024. The project is described below.

SUBJECT: Philadelphia's Permanent Harriet Tubman Statue

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

In November 2022, OACCE and the City of Philadelphia issued an open Call for Artists to commission a permanent statue to honor the life and legacy of Harriet Tubman on the northeast apron of City Hall. The statue will become the first statue of a Black female historical figure in the City's public art collection. The Harriet Tubman Call for Artists was open from November 30, 2022 to January 26, 2023 and 50 artists applied by submitting their qualifications, past work and answers to questions about the opportunity.

To ensure that diverse voices were represented in the selection process, OACCE assembled the African-American Historic Statue Advisory Committee to guide the selection of the artist, which included relatives of Harriet Tubman; arts professionals and artists; community leaders; historians; educators; and local high school students. The Advisory Committee selected five (5) finalists to provide design proposals, and in August 2023, OACCE distributed a public input survey to collect feedback about the five (5) design proposals, which received nearly 3,000 responses.

In October 2023, the City announced that artist Alvin Pettit was selected by the Advisory Committee as the winning artist. Titled, "*A Higher Power: The Call of a Freedom Fighter*", Alvin Pettit's statue honoring Harriet Tubman's leadership, courage, and legacy will be a full figurative bronze sculpture on granite base and will serve as a powerful reminder of her contributions to Philadelphia and the nation, on the northeast apron of City Hall. Should you require any additional information please do not hesitate to call me at 215.686.4596.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marguerite Anglin".

Marguerite Anglin, RA, NOMA
Public Art Director
Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy (OACCE)

Harriet Tubman Monument

A HIGHER POWER
THE CALL OF A FREEDOM FIGHTER

By: Alvin Pettit



Final Design Renderings

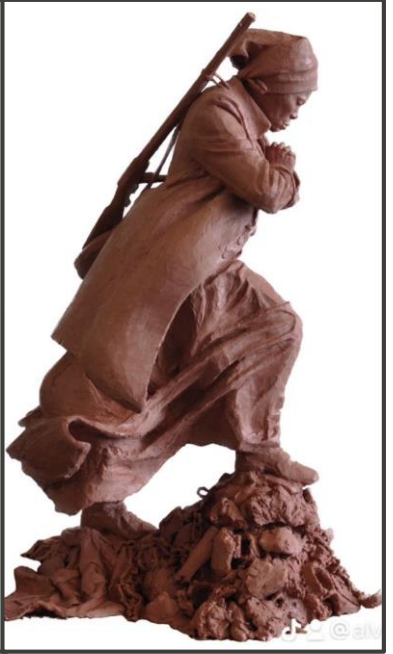


Night View with Installed Lighting



Lighting Plan: Outdoor LED recessed ground lights with rotating spot-light features will be installed around the perimeter of the monument. These lights will provide an attractive and welcoming ambience for evening and night-time visitors. The amount of lights, diameter size, wattage and placement cannot be determined until I have a chance to fully evaluate the site with my architect.

Viewpoints & Details



Concept

I researched many of the Harriet Tubman monuments that currently exist in different areas throughout the country, to determine how I can best approach this project from a unique perspective, while still capturing the spiritual essence of who Harriet Tubman was, and what she represented. One aspect of her history that I found very few depictions of, was her contribution to the Civil War. Many monuments, paintings and stories tell the tale of her as a liberator of slaves, where she is often seen trekking through wooded areas, quietly leading her followers to freedom. However, rarely have we seen her celebrated as a war hero and Union military strategist. My goal is to remind the public that this woman was not only skilled at avoiding, deceiving, and escaping her oppressors, but she was also capable of bringing the fight to them. I chose to highlight a moment in history when tyranny was on the run from *her*.

Although not specific to any one particular event, I drew a large portion of my inspiration from Tubman's brazen 1863 military strike in South Carolina, known as the Combahee Ferry Raid, in which she led 150 Black Union soldiers into battle, resulting in over 700 slaves being liberated, and the destruction of many plantations in that area. History records this battle to be the first time a woman has led an armed military operation in the United States. Although this triumph did not take place in Philadelphia, the theme is still very much sight specific.



The N.E. section of City Hall is metaphorically guarded by two prominent Civil War figures, General George McClellan and Major General John Fulton (shown with finger pointing in the NE direction). Visual they appear to be guarding a "Palace", which in this case is the elaborate City Hall building. Therefore, it is more than fitting that a third Civil War heroine (Harriet Tubman) be added to the rank of guardians. In addition, like her neighboring fellow soldiers, I chose not to show her wielding any weaponry, but instead, in a possible moment that could have taken place immediately following her conquest. Given that she was deeply spiritual, I felt showing this tiny woman in an oversized coat, in the act of calling upon her faith on the battlefield, projects a powerful image. This inspires viewers to imagine what she might have been contemplating at this moment. Perhaps she was feeling the emotional burden of war and slavery. On the other hand, perhaps she was giving thanks to her creator for her victory, as her feet rest on the mound of broken shackles, and ruins of the Confederacy.

My goal was to capture a pose that embodies the mental discipline Tubman had to achieve her goals. Books, films, stories, and art are often inspired by the feats of historic warriors, such as the Sioux, Zulu, Spartans, or Samurai. Harriet Tubman was America's Joan of Arc, and I want to create a work of art that conveys that.

Concept (cont.)



I intentionally played off the gestures of the other two figures at this location to help create the pose for Tubman. Each soldier is leading the battle in their own method. McClellan is gallantly looking forward, Fulton is leading his horse in the Northern direction in which he points, and Tubman will be shown as a prophet calling on ***"A Higher Power"*** for guidance. The line-up of these three guardians along the N.E. area of City Hall will create a very powerful visual landscape. In addition, it will be highly significant to now have an African-American female military war hero amongst her memorialized White male counterparts. This is not only for the sake of showing ethnic and gender diversity, but it also connects Tubman to the constitutional and militaristic theme of the existing monuments and architecture that already surrounds the area of downtown Philadelphia. Alongside the many monuments paying tribute to the Founding Fathers, she will stand as a Founding Mother, who greatly contributed to creating a free society.

Concept (cont.)



Another source of visual inspiration that I borrowed for my concept was from the 1975 version of “**The Prayer at Valley Forge**”, a painting by artist Arnold Friberg, depicting an image of George Washington praying in the forest. Since he is considered by most to be the primary founding father of our nation, I feel it is only fitting to reimagine this famous image with Harriet Tubman as the **Founding Mother of Freedom**.

The setting of this famous painting also provides additional relevance for the Tubman figure. Showing the heroine in her version of Washington’s famous pose, which was originally set in Valley Forge PA, strengthens the connection between the sculpture and the City of Philadelphia evening further.

Concept (cont.)



Below is a list of other pronounced and subtle details that enhance the concept for the sculpture:

Hand & Facial Expressions

At first glance, her hands appear to be in a praying position, however, at closer observation, her fingers are not laced as they would be in a traditional praying position. Instead, one hand overlaps a fist, representing power that is being concealed by docility. Her mood embodies serenity, pain, and determination. Her head is bowed in a praying position, yet her eyes are not completely close, since she is still on the battlefield. Although not obvious in this image, her left eye has a very subtle droop, which tells the story of the head trauma she endured as a child, at the hands of an overseer.



Wind

I borrowed from the philosophical paradox “When an Unstoppable Force meets an immovable object”. Tubman’s clothing is being blown back by fierce winds, that represent the “Unstoppable” brutal onslaught of racial oppression that were against her, while she stands as the opposing “Immovable Object” that refuses to be tumbled...an unyielding guardian to those who followed behind her during her journeys. In addition, from the rear perspective of the monument, the viewer now becomes the follower, being shielded by an archangel-like figure who acts as a silent protector against the oncoming forces.

Concept (cont.)



From the rear view, the edge of the Confederate Flag, can be seen lying under Tubman's foot, submerged in the pile of rubbish and broken shackles.

Confederate Flag, Chains & Shackles

Showing this flag as a fallen relic is relevant to the modern-day controversies surrounding this symbol. For the last several years, government institutions have been removing this image of oppression from publicly owned spaces. The way it has been depicted in my sculpture, symbolizes the abolitionist spirit that the City of Philadelphia has displayed throughout most of its history.

The figure of Tubman is also seen standing on a mount of debris and broken shackles, which is metaphoric for not only the end of slavery, but also the atrocities that war brings, and the post-apocalyptic world that former slaves had to endure afterwards.

Materials, Colors and Finishes



Quote on Back:

"For no man should take me alive; I should fight for my liberty as long as my strength lasted."

Quote on Opposite Side:

"I would give every drop of blood in my veins to free them."



5ft

11ft

2.5ft



Bronze finish will be finalized in a warm greyish-brown patina. Texture from the sculpting process will remain visible on the finished surface.



Pedestal base will reflect the style of the surrounding monuments, with a slight modern twist. Material will be a smooth grained matted black granite.

Fabrication and Procedures



Mold-Making: Making the molds is the second most important procedure. If the molds are sub-par, the piece is potentially ruined. Therefore, I work with a team of highly skilled mold-makers to ensure that my details will be transferred to the casting as precisely as possible.

Bronzing: I only work with reputable foundries that have been in the business for many years. Once the sculpture has been poured in bronze and welded together, I then personally perform the chasing, touch-ups, and finishing to ensure that the finish piece reflects my original vision down to the finest details.

My work is cast in a Silicon Alloy Bronze. Historically this has been the standard grade of bronze used for centuries, and is recommended for conservation. The bronze figure will also be given a patina, then coated with a layer of Renaissance Sculpture Wax to create subtle variations in tone and color. The wax also protects the sculpture from premature tarnishing and/or any paint vandalism that might occur. Usually, most foundries recommend a professional cleaning annually in order to maintain the bronze's original vibrancy.

However, this frequency of up-keep is usually unrealistic for any owner, organization, or municipality. Therefore, I would recommend a cleaning and re-waxing approximately every 3 years. It is inevitable that the bronze will tarnish over time, since it contains copper, which will oxidize from the moisture in the air and rain. However, these natural color changes are not always a negative. Personally, I feel that the greenish color that eventually appears in bronze over time adds to its natural beauty. But, having the proper treatments that I have described will ensure that the metal ages gracefully.

Installation Method



Example: Mary McLeod Bethune Monument Installation, NJ. 2021

I partner with professional contractors, who I have a history of collaborating with. I will be hiring these individuals for this project to recruit and collaborate with the top talents in the Philadelphia, PA. area, in order to execute the site construction for the base installation. The monument installation will be handled by a highly skilled company that I have worked with before. They will also be responsible for picking it up from the foundry and delivering it to the site. It will be secured to the base in a way that prevents any instability from heavy wind, or possible extra weight from being climbed on, bumped into with heavy objects.

Conservation & Maintenance



Upon completion, a wax coating will be applied in order to protect the sculpture from premature tarnishing and/or any paint vandalism that might occur. Usually, most foundries recommend a professional cleaning annually in order to maintain the bronze's original vibrancy. However, this frequency of up-keep is usually unrealistic for any owner, organization, or municipality. Therefore, I would recommend a cleaning and re-waxing approximately every 3 years. It is inevitable that the bronze will tarnish over time, since it contains copper, which will oxidize from the moisture in the air and rain. However, these natural color changes are not always a negative. Personally, I feel that the greenish color that eventually appears in bronze over time adds to its natural beauty. However, having the proper treatments that I have described will ensure that the metal ages gracefully.

Example (Picture to Left): Protective wax coating being applied to Mary McLeod Bethune Sculpture 2021

Community Engagement & Strategy Ideas



- Apprenticeship for high school students to get a trip to Jersey City studio to either work on Harriet Tubman, tour Alvin's studio.
- Essay contest for art teachers to submit for expense-paid trip to studio
- Virtual Studio visits and/or school visits to engage younger students.
- Public survey: Feedback on quotes from Harriet Tubman that are connected to Philadelphia to include in design of the base
- Public speaking engagements at educational and corporate institutions to emphasize the social relevance of the Tubman project as well as the impact of art on communities.

Project Time Schedule

Dates are best-guess estimates, and are subject to change until a contract is executed. Variables such as weather delays, material shortages, or other unforeseen circumstances might result in delays.

Description	Duration
Phase 1 – Refine images, finalize specs, and make studio preparations	Approximately 3 Weeks
Phase 2 –Begin and Complete 11’f. Clay Sculpture	Approximately 8 Months
Phase 3 –Mold-Making Process	Approximately 1 Month
Phase 4 –Bronze Casting / Fabrication & Site Preparation / Construction	Approximately 6 Months
Phase 5 –Delivery & Installation	1 Day
Phase 6 - Unveiling Ceremony / Dedication	1 Day

Budget

Alvin Pettit Studios

930 Newark Ave.
Jersey City, NJ 07306

Budget

Project: Harriet Tubman Monument for Philadelphia PA

Disclaimer: The prices listed in the preceding table are an estimate for the services discussed. This summary is not a warranty of final price. Estimates are subject to change if project specifications are changed or costs for outsourced services change before a contract is executed.

Services Cost #1	Price
Artist Fee (18%): Research and concept renderings. Creating (1) 2'ft clay Marquette, which will be completed to finalize design. Creation of full-scale sculpture, approximately 11ft' h x 9ft' w x 5.5ft' d.	\$90,000.00
Sculpting Materials: Includes cost of oil base clay, armature metals, foam, and plywood base.	\$15,000.00
Assistant Labor and Services: Project management. Hired help for moving of large structures, clay application, material pick-ups and drop-offs, etc.	\$20,000.00
Live Modeling	\$5,000.00
Studio Space Expenses: Estimated for a 7month time period.	\$25,000.00
Fabrication Process #2	
Bronze Casting: Producing wax castings of sculpture from rubber molds. Baking wax and creating plaster mold. Pouring molten metal into molds. Acid washing bronze castings. Assembling, welding, chasing completed bronze sculpture. Adding patina finish and waxing	\$85,000.00
Mold-Makin Process: Labor. Creating a multi-piece mold from 11ft' x 9ft' wide sculpture. Cost of silicone rubber and resin materials for mother-mold, as well as transporting mold pieces to bronzing foundry is included.	\$25,000.00
Engineering #3	
Architectural Renderings	\$5,000.00
Site Preparation: Cutting section, pouring concrete, etc.	\$70,000.00
Pedestal Platform: Material will be granite or steel. Installation process	\$60,000.00

Construction Management: Oversees hiring of contractor and ensures quality control of all construction related matters. \$10,000.00

Lighting Installation \$25,000.00

Delivery and Installation #4

Delivery and Installation: Drive crane truck to bronzing foundry, and load 11ft' x 9ft' sculpture. Transport to location at City Hall in Philadelphia, PA. Install on base using provided template to drill holes. Epoxy threaded rods into holes. \$10,000.00

Insurance (1%): For Transportation

Plaque or Platform Engraving \$5,000.00

Miscellaneous & Unanticipated Cost: \$50,000.00

Subtotal \$500,000.00

\$500,000.00