

acknowledge the connections between slavery and the present is often frustrating and arduous. The historian Tiya Miles, writing in the *Public Historian*, notes that several Black women historians who are leading such efforts described this complex work as fulfilling but also a “burden” (“Campus Meets World,” Nov. 2020, p. 9). The memorial is, as stated in the inscription, “a tribute” to enslaved people. It is a significant point in the ongoing work of repairing the damage of slavery and is not the end of the work itself. For attentive visitors, Isabella Gibbons’s presence in the memorial links enslavement, historical memory, liberation, and how we live, in the words of the scholar Christina Sharpe, “in the wake” of slavery (*In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, 2016).

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Belmar History + Art Project, at the City of Santa Monica’s Historic Belmar Park, 1840 4th St., Santa Monica, Calif. <https://www.santamonica.gov/arts/belmar>.

Permanent outdoor exhibition, opened Feb. 2021. Commissioned by the City of Santa Monica through its Percent for Art Program and implemented by Santa Monica Cultural Affairs and the City of Santa Monica’s Public Works Department in collaboration with historian Alison Rose Jefferson and artist April Banks.

We are at a time in the United States’ history that calls for a recognition of the contributions and achievements of people of color, not only in history books but also in real life, day-to-day events that wipe away stereotypes and privileges based on race and ethnicity. This moment makes the work of the artist April Banks and the historian Alison Rose Jefferson on the Belmar History + Art (BH+A) project extremely important—it documents the history and contributions of the African American community of Santa Monica, California. Banks has a background in architecture and environmental design that she uses to capture her audience’s imagination in several ways, but mostly through art and community engagement. Jefferson’s expertise in African American heritage conservation, and her book, *Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites during the Jim Crow Era* (2020), which includes a chapter about the Black communities of Santa Monica, underscore her relationship with this project. For BH+A, Jefferson also contributed an essay, “Reconstruction and Reclamation: The Erased African American Experience in Santa Monica’s History,” with an in-depth history of this remarkable community (<https://alisonrosejefferson.com/about/publications/>). This site-based exhibition educates people on an overlooked population of the city and places that community squarely at its center. Jefferson and Banks show us that Santa Monica’s history cannot be fully understood without knowing about its diverse beginnings. Moreover, they show site-goers, teachers, and others how we can accomplish this.

The project commemorates the vibrant Black community of what was known as the Belmar Triangle, a constellation of beachside communities at the southern end of Santa Monica, Ocean Park, and along Pico Boulevard (which travels east from the oceanfront). The story of Belmar is an all-too-familiar one to Black families. Black settlers established

homes, churches, and businesses during the first half of the twentieth century only to have them wiped away by racism and white supremacy in the name of eminent domain. Belmar was not the only community that suffered this experience, nor was it first. Bruce's Beach, about twenty minutes south in Manhattan Beach, was a private, Black-owned beach resort in the early 1900s, similarly taken by eminent domain in the 1920s. It became a public park in the 1960s. These are just a few examples of Black histories of displacement from beachside areas that precede and inform the contemporary era of gentrification.

The BH+A project is located where some of Belmar's population was removed and buildings razed to make space for urban renewal projects, including the expansion of the nearby Santa Monica Civic Center in the 1950s. It is adjacent to the Civic Auditorium, just south and east of one of the largest tourist attractions in Los Angeles, the Santa Monica Pier. The installation consists of seventeen interpretive signs along a walking path encircling the new Historic Belmar Park, with a monumental artwork, *A Resurrection in Four Stanzas*, by Banks near the entrance to the park's playing field. Banks reimagines the fluidity of space by combining opportunities for personal reflection, movement, poetics, and visual artistry, which change depending on what time of day and what time of year people visit. Made of painted steel and aluminum, the sculpture represents the kind of family home Belmar's African Americans would have lived in at the time. It is made up of four distinct parts—a door, a window, a truss with two walls, and a porch—that form a shotgun house frame, a vernacular architectural style common in the South that was easy to construct and move. There were many such homes in Santa Monica's beachside areas, including those at this site that were burned down as part of the urban renewal process. The house is red, perhaps as an homage to the Juneteenth holiday (red is an important color that symbolizes the blood African Americans shed fighting for their freedom).

Not only does the artwork "resurrect" the community, as the title indicates, it also provides a meaningful illustration of the history as told by Jefferson. In her essay and the interpretive panels, Jefferson uncovers and celebrates stories of a Black community dedicated to securing decent living conditions and committed to establishing themselves as equal members of society. We learn how Black people resisted Jim Crow and fought against urban renewal and other forms of systemic racism. In doing so, Jefferson challenges the narrative of California as the state where liberal progressivism and equal opportunity reign and shows that the California dream did not apply to all who settled there.

African Americans in Santa Monica carved out their own spaces designed to serve their community, whether by opening resorts such as La Bonita, a bathhouse and lodge for Black visitors that advertised in the *Negro Motorist Green-Book* in 1940, or, as Dr. Marcus Tucker and Dr. George Hurd did, by opening medical offices—important at a time when white doctors refused to treat Black patients. Black women, such as Evelyn Moore, who had her own beauty salon, opened businesses and joined clubs that advocated for their community. During World War II, African Americans migrated from southern states to the West for job opportunities in the auto and defense industries. This allowed the community to come together to challenge discriminatory practices used to prevent Black people from securing jobs in sectors outside of service, as they did in 1947 to boycott the Sears department store in Santa Monica, which refused to hire Black sales clerks. While Black people owned and operated businesses along the beaches, such as the

Gordon Day Work Center, which supplied janitorial services, they were also consistently denied rights. This was the case both in 1922 when Caldwell's Dance Hall was forced to close and in 1959 when the city used eminent domain to condemn Black entrepreneur Silas A. White's building on Ocean Avenue, which he had intended to develop as the Ebony Beach Club. Along the exhibit's walking path, visitors will find stories such as these that reveal a once-thriving Black community in the area—one violently torn down, permanently forcing dozens of families from their homes and businesses.

While the history of African Americans in Santa Monica is uniquely local, it also reflects a larger national story about Black migration and settlement. Jefferson connects the lives and experiences of Black Santa Monicans to those of African Americans throughout the country fighting Jim Crow. She underscores that discrimination and racism were ubiquitous, and, in doing so, she reinforces the need for racial equity and equality for African Americans. This background provides crucial context for touring the site and the nearby neighborhoods where Black people lived, played, and worked. The exhibition includes a map for visitors to follow, which can be done as a walking or bicycle tour, or by vehicle, making it accessible and convenient to visitors of all backgrounds.

The site also contains a time capsule that includes pictures, letters, and several documents that will be opened on Juneteenth (June 19), 2070. Banks worked with high school students from Santa Monica High School and the Crossroads School for Arts and Sciences in Santa Monica to collect archival resources and to write letters to the future. While Jefferson suggested that the time capsule be opened on Juneteenth, the students chose the year to commemorate fifty years from when they participated in the project.

To supplement this exhibition, the project organizers have created an educational and professional development curriculum. Their goal is to reach people ranging from school-aged children to adults. The history presented through the exhibition is so approachable that teachers can develop lesson plans appropriate for different age groups, while adults, no matter what their backgrounds, can find points of connection to the issues of social justice and equitable working conditions.

Perhaps even more noteworthy is the location of the exhibit, around a 3.5-acre sports field. In the era of a global pandemic and civil unrest due to police brutality, the site has a built-in audience that crosses racial, gender, and political lines, of athletes and their friends and families who might come for games and practices. Now they will also have opportunities to learn about the neighborhood's Black history. As an outdoor exhibition, it accommodates some of the challenges of the pandemic, while the playing field also offers space for distanced outdoor events, such as the film screenings hosted there to celebrate Juneteenth 2021. Visitors can also access the exhibit remotely, by going to several web sites, including the City of Santa Monica's on the project itself and Banks's and Jefferson's personal websites. Mobile-friendly and downloadable site guides are online, accompanied by additional resources on the history of the Belmar Black community and videos documenting outreach and engagement events that led up to the project's realization. Many of these, including interviews with community members and activists conducted with the national, nonprofit StoryCorps enhance the other historical offerings and urge contemporary residents to also document and share their stories.

The BH+A Project is a beautiful combination of history and art with a very important social justice message. The project enables people to understand anti-Black racism in a way that is approachable and engaging. Those who experience this exhibit will be

equipped to make positive changes and work toward racial equity and diversity. The project should also serve as a foundation for establishing and teaching more inclusive public histories.

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“When I Remember I See Red: American Indian Art and Activism in California.” Autry Museum of the American West, Los Angeles, Calif. <https://theautry.org/exhibitions/when-i-remember-i-see-red-american-indian-art-and-activism-california>.

Temporary, traveling exhibition through Nov. 2021, organized by the Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento. Frank LaPena (California State University, Sacramento) and Mark Dean Johnson (California State University, San Francisco), co-curators; Kristina Gilmore (former associate curator, Crocker Art Museum) and Jayme Yahr (associate curator, Crocker Museum of Art), additional support.

Indigenous activism since the mid-twentieth century has emphasized the power of asserting “we’re still here” in the face of a history of American Indian genocide. As useful as that phrase is in raising visibility of past injustices and how they affect communities in the present, its repetition can enforce what the Indigenous studies scholar Eve Tuck would call a “damage-centered” approach, a limiting look back at suffering from colonization in an attempt to raise accountability. Much contemporary American Indian art expands beyond “we’re still here” and encourages viewers to consider Native artists as creative agents envisioning a bright future. As Tuck argues in “Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities” (*Harvard Educational Review*, Fall 2009), the antidote to a damage-centered approach is a desire-based framework, which is “concerned with understanding complexity, contradiction, and the self-determination of lived lives” by “documenting not only the painful elements of social realities but also the wisdom and hope.” Combining images, objects, and sound, the exhibition “When I Remember I See Red: American Indian Art and Activism in California” shows how Native artists, as leaders and activists, have continued to push beyond “still here” into Indigenous futurity, ensuring that the traditions nearly annihilated by state violence are preserved and renewed by the next generations.

“When I Remember I See Red” focuses on the work of forty Indigenous artists from California and non-Californian tribes working in the state. The exhibit premiered at the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, California, from October 20, 2019, to January 26, 2020, before traveling to the Autry Museum of the American West in Los Angeles. The seven galleries tackle interrelated issues, from tradition and cosmology (“First Light,” “Native Knowledge”) to land sovereignty (“You Are on Native Land”) and environmentalism (“Interconnectedness”), to the devastation of “California’s Genocide” and creative reinterpretations of tradition in “Cultural Inspirations.” The final gallery, “The World Is a Gift: Remembering Frank LaPena,” is dedicated to the work and memory of one of the co-curators, a Nomtipom Wintu activist artist who passed away during the final stages of creating the exhibit.