



design for FREEDOM^{by} grace farms

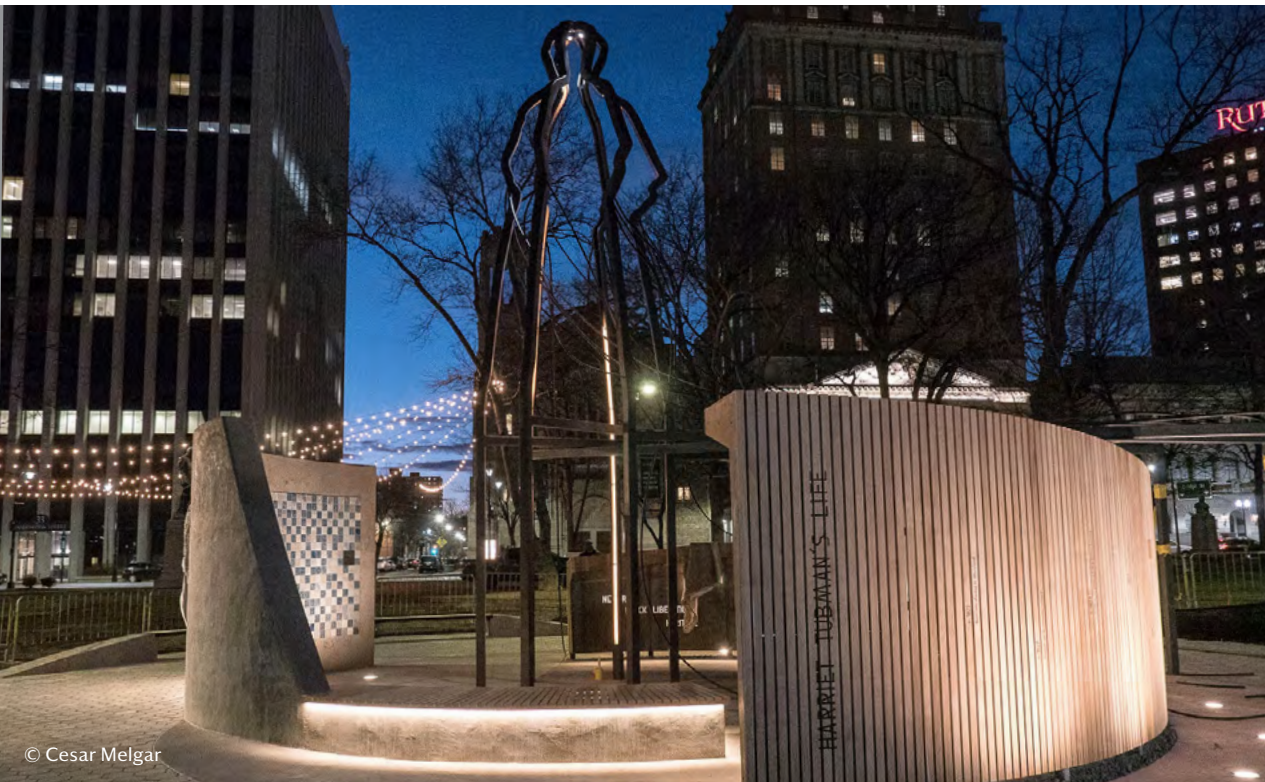


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Design for Freedom Pilot Projects model more transparent and ethical supply chains in built works.

pilot project case study

Shadow of a Face
Harriet Tubman Monument
Studio Cooke John
Newark, NJ
Opened March 2023



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The Harriet Tubman Monument opened in March 2023 in Newark, NJ

The Harriet Tubman Monument honors the legacy of Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad.

Opened in March 2023, the new Harriet Tubman Monument in Newark, NJ, is designed by architect, public artist, and United States Artists Fellow Nina Cooke John. The two-story monument, *Shadow of a Face*, replaces a statue of Christopher Columbus. The Monument provides the opportunity for the public to engage and connect with Harriet Tubman, her story, and extraordinary legacy.

In June 2020, amid calls for racial justice and by order of the Honorable Mayor Ras J. Baraka, the City of Newark commissioned artist and architect Nina Cooke John to design a monument to honor the legacy of Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad. This network of abolitionists and safe houses assisted enslaved people on their journeys north to freedom and had many “stations” in New Jersey, at least one of which was in Newark.

Collaborating with Aferro Gallery and The Newark Museum of Art, Nina Cooke John welcomed members of the community to contribute to the making of the monument, through two hands-on tile and audio recording workshops. Participants were invited to etch onto wet clay and record their stories of freedom and liberation in a private sound booth. The mosaic tiles from these workshops were incorporated into the monument’s interior facing wall surfaces and the audio recordings became a part of the listening experience for visitors. The Harriet Tubman Monument is not a static statue of a woman but a dynamic multi-sensory space that encourages engagement, reflection, and learning.



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A curved wall made of wood slats on the exterior contains a timeline of Tubman's life

“Understanding that humanity touches every single step along the way allows us to reimagine how architecture fits into the rest of our lives.”

– Nina Cooke John, Studio Cooke John

Cooke John's statue portrays Harriet Tubman in two perspectives: as a larger-than-life figure rising over two stories tall, and at eye-level, where her face emerges, putting her bravery and strength of character within reach. The title of the monument, *Shadow of a Face*, refers to a 1962 Robert Hayden poem, entitled *Runagate Runagate*.

Hoot-owl calling in the ghosted air,
five times calling to the hants in the air.
Shadow of a face in the scary leaves,
shadow of a voice in the talking leaves ...

Nina Cooke John's commitment to transparent sourcing of materials is a powerful message about the desire to design a more humane built environment.

“Once we realize that people are the center of architecture ... we can really understand that there were people involved in making these materials.”

- Nina Cooke John, Studio Cooke John



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Featured building materials include paint, timber, steel, concrete and lighting

Pilot Project Program

Grace Farms developed the Design for Freedom Pilot Project Program to model more transparent and ethical supply chains. These projects engage project teams, yield new research and partnerships, and uncover challenges and opportunities of how to build more humanely.

The Materials Examined

Grace Farms worked with Studio Cooke John to trace more than 20 products and five materials including paint, timber, steel, concrete, and lighting. The Harriet Tubman Monument was the first Pilot Project to trace the supply chains of electronics such as lighting. The team engaged with suppliers and manufacturers to trace and document these materials as far upstream in the supply chain as possible.

Building Program

The monument is made of a curved poured-in-place concrete wall with a six foot tall bas-relief of Tubman's face on the side facing the Newark Museum of Art, with a mosaic of blue tiles made by community members on the other. A second curved wall made of wood slats on the exterior and corten steel on the interior contains a timeline of Tubman's life as well as panels that present information on Black liberation history in the city and state.

A 25-foot tall black steel silhouette of Tubman rises from the monument's interior. An abstracted cape made of black steel and plastic conduit floats over the wood slat wall. There is one bench made of concrete and wood slats in the monument's interior and one on the exterior. The monument plays an immersive sound experience for visitors, narrated by Newark native Queen Latifah and voices of Newark community members.



The circular learning wall allows visitors to learn about the life of Harriet Tubman and the city's history of Black liberation

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Pilot Project Process

This Pilot Project process brought awareness of the risk of forced and child labor within the building materials supply chain. A joint method of discovery that focused on both material research and strategic outreach was conducted on each material identified for the Pilot Project Program.

Studio Cooke John entered the Pilot Project Program early in the design process, allowing the opportunity for ethical sourcing to inform the material selection process. Design meetings with project consultants led by Studio Cooke John became a weekly forum to actively vet manufacturers and suppliers as the project was in design.

Timber

Selection of the wood paneling was a pivotal material decision for the monument that would be exposed to the northeast weather year round. The project team was looking for a wood that was a resilient outdoor application and originally selected ipe, a South American hardwood known for its density, durability, and qualities naturally resistant to rot. The Design for Freedom project team suggested a black locust wood as an alternative for its similar aesthetic and resilient

qualities, that could also be sourced in North America lowering the risk of forced labor and the carbon footprint of the material. The wood paneling was sourced domestically from Midwest Black Locust in Wisconsin.

Lighting

Edward Bartholomew of Bartholomew Lighting suggested the work of Q-Tran, a supplier known for customizable lighting fixtures ideal for the complex form of the monument. After the supplier was selected, the Design for Freedom team visited Q-Tran's facility located in Milford, Connecticut to learn more about their local work in Connecticut and supply chain due diligence processes. The discussion focused on the road to transparency and the pathway towards incremental change throughout the supply chain by employing digital tools and questionnaires.

The in-house manufacturing at the location offers products suitable for Made in America and Buy-American programs meeting the guidelines necessary for government contracts. These due processes decrease risk in their supply chains and provide a more ethically sustainable product for their clients.



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Metal workers in Brooklyn and Belleville, New Jersey created the larger-than-life form of Harriet Tubman overlooking Tubman Square

Steel

The handprint of the local community can be seen throughout the Harriet Tubman Monument. Crafted as a lasting icon in the city of Newark, many people came together to realize Nina Cooke John’s vision. Metal workers in Brooklyn and Belleville, New Jersey created the larger-than-life form of Harriet Tubman overlooking Tubman Square.

The project team was able to trace 10 steel suppliers which created the structural framework of the learning wall, base and silhouette figure.

Suppliers were tracked from across Canada and the United States through required Certified Material Test Reports. From these documents, the project team was able to track recycled content, post consumer content and products that were 100% harvested within a 500-mile radius, ultimately tracing the supply chain back to the extraction level for one of these suppliers.

Paint & Coatings

The Harriet Tubman Monument developed a partnership with global paint and finishes manufacturer Sherwin-Williams, who has instituted internal educational programs to staff about the veritable risk of forced labor and created steps toward incremental change in their global supply chains.

Sherwin-Williams utilized tools from the Design for Freedom Toolkit including the Supplier Questionnaire and Material Tracking Schedule. Supplementary documentation were also provided including EPDs, Environmental Data Sheets, Supplier Code of Conduct and The Global Slavery & Trafficking Risk Template which surveys compliance-related data across supply chains.

Concrete

The cement was quarried and manufactured in the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania. The Design for Freedom project team was able to understand the supply chain through a Cradle to Gate EPD which provided information regarding the extraction and upstream production, transportation to factory and manufacturing stages of the Portland cement prior to its arrival on the jobsite. Utilizing a prepared Life Cycle Analysis was helpful to understand the domestic and locally-sourced supply chain.

Ultimately, the most impactful information was provided when individuals on the team were able to have direct conversations with sustainability and supply chain leaders for each supplier or manufacturer. Creating an active dialogue with industry leaders, the team was able to understand the current state of the market regarding ethical material transparency and the roadmap for change within the manufacturing process.



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The Honorable Ras J. Baraka, Newark Native Queen Latifah, and Nina Cooke John, and community members officially open *Shadow of a Face*

Galvanizing Change

Pilot Project Outcomes

Visitor Engagement

The installation of the monument and renaming of Tubman Square ushered in a new era for the central hub in downtown Newark. Design for Freedom is featured in the informational signage explaining the throughline from the history of Harriet Tubman to the role modern slavery plays in our built environment. Permanent recognition of Design for Freedom Pilot Project will spread awareness of the movement to all visitors for years to come.

Global Recognition

Nina Cooke John was honored at the 2022 Grace Farms Benefit for the integral part Studio Cooke John has played in propelling the Design for Freedom movement forward. She was also recognized for this significant monument and its brilliance, as well as the opportunities it has provided for so many communities to come together and collaborate for good.

Studio Cooke John has received national media attention with articles by *The New York Times*, NPR and CNN. Nina has presented her work at industry leading organizations that include The National Building Museum, NOMA National Conference, and the Center for Architecture in New York City.

With Every Fiber Exhibit

From the successful collaboration of the Harriet Tubman Monument Pilot Project, Grace Farms invited Nina Cooke John to design a permanent installation at Grace Farms demonstrating ethical design principles in action. The Design for Freedom Exhibit challenges the industry and public-at-large to consider where the materials that go into buildings come from and reimagines the future of the built environment. Sherwin-Williams continued their commitment to Design for Freedom by providing paint traced for fair labor for the installation alongside other successful Pilot Project partners.



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Sharon Prince and
Nina Cooke John
at the unveiling of
Shadow of a Face
on March 9, 2023

***With Every Fiber* Exhibit Nina Cooke John's Artist Statement:**

With Every Fiber responds to the Design for Freedom movement's efforts to remove the veil covering the reality of unethical labor practices in the construction industry. The exhibit draws visitors to Grace Farms - neighbors from across the street and design professionals from around the world - into the space and invites them to contemplate what goes into making our homes, places of work, cultural spaces, and sites for commemoration.

The West Barn gallery walls are covered with fabric drawing attention to the room's perimeter and reminding visitors of the physicality of the spaces that they inhabit. Portions of the new walls pull away from the existing West Barn structure, revealing different at-risk materials, as well as promising new ones, within the construction supply chain. These pockets around the room are concentrated hubs of information that describe the potential for forced labor in relation to the production and procurement of materials including steel, timber, and textiles.

The displays also tell the story of the strides that the Design for Freedom movement is making to open the eyes of industry professionals through pilot projects that demonstrate progress - with a wide range of models related to those exemplary efforts also on view. The story is hopeful, particularly in the biomaterials section which features the results of exciting textile experiments that take the form of a large-scale tapestry woven together by a team of ecologists and architects. The blue of the Design For Freedom hummingbird holds all the elements together.

The exhibit is a space for both education and contemplation. Throughout the room, materials are displayed to encourage tactile engagement. Audio content, inspirational quotes, poetry, and photography, reinforce the need to examine what seem to be abstract construction practices. The project is an act of acknowledging the humanity of the people whose hands create the materials that make up the spaces we love and in which we build families."



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Members of the community applied their creative talent to design clay tiles for the interior facing surfaces behind Tubman's face

Project Data

Pilot Project Team

Studio Cooke John, Bartholomew Lighting, KSI Engineering, City of Newark, Newark Museum, Newark Public Library, Newark Arts, Audible, Arup, 618 Design, Fire Art, Ferrous Research, Marcan Construction, McGaughey Studio, Any NYC

Project Size 2163 SF / 201 SM

Materials Examined Timber - Black locust paneling. Steel - Weathering steel, steel tube, steel plate. Concrete - Foundation and Facade. Paint - Weather Resistant Exterior Finishes. Lighting Equipment - Technology to enhance immersive art experience.

21+ Suppliers/Manufacturers in the supply chain of these products

Materials Sources from (countries) Mexico, Thailand, Canada, United States, and China

Certification and Transparency EPDs, ISO 14001, Cradle to Grave, Declare

Suppliers provided the following documentation:

Responsible Sourcing & Timber Purchasing Policies, Compliance with the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and the California Transparency in Supply Chains Act, Slavery & Human Trafficking Statements, CSR & ESG Policies, Codes of Conduct, Human Rights Policies, Codes of Ethics



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Grace Farms brings together people across sectors at the SANAA-designed River building and Barns, situated on 80 acres of publicly accessible, preserved natural landscapes

Design for Freedom Pilot Projects

Design for Freedom by Grace Farms reimagines architecture by raising awareness and inspiring responses to disrupt forced labor in the building materials supply chain. Grace Farms developed the Design for Freedom Pilot Project Program to model more transparent and ethical supply chains. These projects engage project teams, yield new research and partnerships, and uncover challenges and opportunities of how to build more humanely. This process challenges each team to examine their supply chain for fair labor and galvanize change to create new outcomes for the industry.

Learn More about Design for Freedom

Read the [*Design for Freedom Report*](#) to understand the scope of the problem and challenges facing the eradication of forced and child labor from the built environment. For material specific information, explore the [*Design for Freedom Toolkit*](#) to learn more about the 12 high-risk materials within the built environment and utilize tools to start tracing materials.

About Grace Farms Foundation

Grace Farms is a center for collaboration and culture in New Canaan, Connecticut. Grace Farms bring together people across sectors to explore nature, arts, justice, community, and faith at the SANAA-designed River building and Barns, on 80 acres of publicly accessible natural landscapes. Grace Farms' humanitarian work to end modern slavery and foster more grace and peace in local and global communities includes leading the Design for Freedom movement to eliminate forced labor in the building materials supply chain.

For more information visit gracefarms.org