

Territorial Markers: A Case Study of the Public Art of Bronzeville

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Art producers working in localized ethnic urban communities produce public art and cultural facilities to mark and identify local territory. These producers rely on network relationships based in shared local purposes to attract and involve participants in the production of public art. To illustrate the role of territorial markers in a local community, I provide here a case study of the production of the *Public Art of Bronzeville*¹ in Chicago in the 1990s, with particular focus on the monuments on Martin Luther King Drive that were dedicated in 1996 in conjunction with the National Democratic Convention. The King Drive project was part of nearly ten years of building, renovation, and restoration involving more than \$100 million in public funds invested to build cultural facilities and public art all located in an area once considered to be among Chicago's worst ghettos. Although property values have skyrocketed in this former ghetto, tourists are not pouring into Bronzeville, and there is only limited recognition of the area's importance to African American history.

Typology of Art Production Networks

I focus my analysis on the art production network—that is, the social relationships involved in producing art (Becker 1982). According to network the-

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ory, these relationships are created through repeated and enduring interactions involving trust, reciprocity, or shared interests (Podolny and Page 1998; Powell 1990; Putnam 2000; Schuler 1996). Rather than being a diffuse or disorganized world, an emerging market or an informal organization—all lesser forms of a more developed system—networks are efficient arrangements through which producers access resources necessary to make art. The network structure, based on trust and reciprocity rather than a hierarchical organizational structure, enables efficient identification and exploitation of local resources, survival of individual art producers, and innovation empowering marginalized racial and ethnic cultures (Blau and Schoenherr 1971; Burns and Stalker 1961).

I have identified a total of six network types based on their local purposes: empowerment networks, aesthetic networks, autonomy networks, gentrification networks, problem-solving networks, and youth-service networks (Grams forthcoming). By organizing a typology based on local purpose, I examine how networks of arts producers are involved in defining urban landscapes. In this article, I discuss only the empowerment networks and the territorial markers produced through the Public Art of Bronzeville.

What Are Territorial Markers?

I use the term *territorial markers* to codify the function of public art in local communities. Territorial markers exist in the form of locally produced public art, plaques, and cultural facilities, and they provide public evidence of a local cultural community. In short, they serve to identify and mark the local geographic place. This function contrasts with public art typically produced and supported by, for example, the Department of Cultural Affairs in Chicago, which mobilizes resources to enable tourists and nonresidents to identify landmarks representing the city's national or international cultural position. The production of territorial markers, nonetheless, involves mobilization of political and cultural capital. Territorial markers in local ethnic communities serve to publicly redefine the values, histories, struggles, and hopes of the increasingly powerful members of middle-class ethnic and racial communities, while allowing community members to maintain the power base established through historic struggles of their racial and ethnic communities.

The speech made by Mayor Richard M. Daley at the dedication of the Public Art of Bronzeville just after the 1996 Democratic National Convention revealed little of the processes that led to its creation. The mayor said, "The King Drive gateway project is the keystone of an ongoing program to rejuvenate the Bronzeville Area" (Hill 1996). Spanning 1.5 miles, it includes the *Monument to the Great Northern Migration* by Alison Saar (figure 1), which is a 15-foot bronze statue located in a circular median at 26th



FIGURE 1. “Monument to the Great Northern Migration,” photographed from behind the sculpture facing north to the central “Loop” business district. Sculpture by Alison Saar. Photograph by Diane Grams.

Street and King Drive; the *Bronzeville Walk of Fame*, composed of 91 bronze, diamond-shaped plaques embedded in the sidewalk between 26th and 35th Streets, commemorating more than 104 current and former Bronzeville residents and each bearing the phrase “City of Chicago, Richard M. Daley, Mayor”; a 14-foot-by-7-foot bronze *Map of Historic Bronzeville*, identifying the historic area and historic sites located within it; recognition panels pro-

viding a design motif as decorative fencing; 22 sculptural park benches; and the restored World War I *Victory Monument* and bronze *Doughboy* atop the monument commemorating African American service in the war, located on King Drive just south of 35th Street.

This case study of the public art of Bronzeville illustrates how territorial markers are produced through the work of networks of local and nonlocal participants. This particular project created the name and historical narrative linking the area to the historic racially segregated, but economically diverse, black community that was once contained on Chicago's South Side. By placing "blackness" as a central theme into public discourse in the form of permanent public art objects, these territorial markers exist at the nexus of struggles over cultural meanings and the social and economic future of this local area. The project created a social and political identity for the growing population of middle-class professionals, establishing new residences in this area. The people involved, resources accessed, and the local concerns that motivated its production demonstrates how public art deployed as territorial markers redefined a community, connected the community to an historical narrative, and enabled community revitalization.

What Is Bronzeville?

The Public Art of Bronzeville defines "Bronzeville" as a place of significance to black history located on the near South Side of Chicago. It existed in the first half of the twentieth century in the area south of 26th Street, north of 51st Street, and east of what it is today the Dan Ryan Expressway. However, in the post-Civil War United States, *bronzeville* was a generic term referring to a predominantly black town or area. For some African Americans, the term was derogatory, even considered to be "fightin' words" (Bowen 2003). Interviews for this article, tours, and Web sites connect Chicago's historic Bronzeville to present economic development efforts. The link was established by drawing predominantly on one sociological study and one book of poetry. Bronzeville was the place on Chicago's near South Side described by St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton in *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* ([1945] 1993) and by Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and former Illinois Poet Laureate Gwendolyn Brooks in *Blacks* ([1945] 1987). According to Drake and Cayton,

The Negro community in Chicago began as a haven or refuge for escaped slaves. It emerged a century later as Black Metropolis inhabited by the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of slaves. In the years between, it had become a citadel of economic and political power in the midst of Midwest Metropolis—an integral part of the city political machine and a reservoir for industrial labor and personal and domestic servants. ([1945] 1993, 755)

Although Bronzeville was never a city with corporate boundaries, Drake and Cayton's narrative highlighted Bronzeville as "a city within a city" (1993, 12). The concentration of black middle-class people who created Bronzeville developed over two "Great Migrations" in which black people from the southern United States migrated into the area to work in Chicago's rapidly expanding industrial sector. In 1940, Bronzeville's population was 337,000. As Chicago's black population continued to expand to more than 1 million non-Hispanic blacks by 1980, its middle-class members moved south, west, and into the suburbs, leaving Bronzeville with a declining and predominantly poor population of 73,088 residents, 89 percent of whom were African American (2000 U.S. Census). During the 1980s and 1990s, a steady trickle of middle-class blacks began to move back into the area, restoring the greystones and architecturally distinct mansions that remained. However, as 31 percent of its population still lived with household incomes below \$10,000 in 2000, the area was distinguished by its public housing and vacant lots dotted with an increasing number of rehabilitated mansions, two flats, and three flats.

Journalists and policy advocates could observe the increasing advocacy by local residents for investment into the area through accounts published on Web sites and in local papers. Among these accounts are references to the Mid-South Strategic Development Plan (Campbell 1993), which focused on attracting the black middle class back to the area. Their plan to restore Bronzeville had the potential to create a third Great Migration to the area. The plan focused on reviving the area's cultural history and economic diversity. The idea of adopting the name "Bronzeville" for the area and producing cultural monuments and cultural facilities as part of this plan were framed on aesthetic and cultural practices embracing black heritage, black accounts of history, and the tradition of community-based public art focused on black empowerment. Another promoter described the area's history as representing "[t]he jewel of the Southside . . . second only to Harlem in providing a legacy of cultural gifts to America and the world" (Soul of America 2004). Like the Emerald City or Mecca, the name "Bronzeville" was to be a symbol. It referred to a specific place and time where black life, culture, business, and politics thrived as if it were its own city; it was to represent black cultural and economic autonomy.

Empowerment Networks

The Public Art of Bronzeville was instrumental in creating the twenty-first-century territory of Bronzeville and today represents the community's capacity to mobilize both political and cultural capital necessary to reify both the idea and the place. However, the process that enabled its creation was not evident in public accounts. Its creation involved networks of middle-class pro-

professionals, which I refer to as an *empowerment network* because they were politically skilled in traditional movement-style politics, seeking equitable distribution of public resources, and had access to information and opportunities through professional, social, or cultural ties.

The work of empowerment networks that ultimately resulted in the creation of the Public Art of Bronzeville was not part of a single-planned and systematically organized development process outlined in the Mid-South Strategic Development Plan, or one that might be typical of “an ongoing program to rejuvenate” a community, as declared by Mayor Daley at the dedication ceremony (Hill 1996). Rather, it provides a vivid account of the social construction of knowledge and art and the networks of people involved. This account began as early as the 1960s when circuits of teachers, involved in the establishment of a museum of African American history, were able to secure increasing legitimacy for African American accounts of history. The next phase, beginning in the late 1970s, involved circuits of historic preservationists who considered the local geographic area to be significant to black history. The result was the establishment, on paper, of the Black Metropolis/Bronzeville Historic District. In the 1990s came circuits of community planners writing a strategic plan focused on restoring Bronzeville, circuits of community advocates urging the importance of the plan to the community, and circuits of artists and arts administrators linking ideas in the work to local artistic traditions. The process of development was one in which chance and informal social ties led various individuals to pieces of information and opportunities necessary to further a personal or group agenda. When the idea was carried as far as it could be carried, another individual or group with an alternative agenda—one that might even have competed with the previous individual or group—picked up the idea and helped move things toward the next phase of the development. In each phase, there was little certainty about what was going to happen next. Each step of development illustrated how an idea traveled through social networks to someone who both needed it and used it to accomplish a task at hand. It was because of this network structure—through which ideas developed and were carried out—that the innovation occurred and that no single person really knew how it happened (for a complete account, see Grams forthcoming).

Creation of a Historic Preservation District

In this section, I take a more in-depth look at the efforts in the 1980s and 1990s to establish the Black Metropolis/Bronzeville Historic District. The effort to link the area to African American history through historic preservation conventions is attributable to Tim Samuelson, who in the 1970s, as a young, white English major at Roosevelt University, became an architectural preservation enthusiast mining the South Side for pictures and artifacts of structures by noted

architects Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan.² His interest in ragtime music led him to make the connection between Joe Jordon, a composer who made \$40,000 from “Lovie Joe,” a song that was used to introduce Fanny Brice at the Ziegfield Follies, and the construction of the first office building in Bronzeville by a black entrepreneur. Considering this investment a significant moment in African American history, Samuelson then traced similar entrepreneurial efforts in the area. Samuelson used a newly secured position approving building permits for the Chicago Commission on Landmarks to propose the Black Metropolis/Bronzeville Historic District. As he described it, “I did an end run on the system,” bypassing much of the traditional local involvement and political support necessary for such historic districts (Samuelson 2003). Samuelson succeeded in getting the Commission on Landmarks to approve his proposal, but he failed to secure approval by the Chicago Department of Planning. He then sidestepped further bureaucratic resistance by getting the listing on the National Historic Register. Although successful at establishing the district on paper, Samuelson was unable to inspire or mobilize any effort to restore the crumbling buildings in this area because it was still considered by some people to be Chicago’s black ghetto. He then exited the picture.

The idea of creating a Black Metropolis/Bronzeville historic district was adopted by a circuit of local activists interested in community development. Efforts spearheaded by the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) and First National Bank of Chicago (later to become Bank One and then Chase) and separate efforts spearheaded by the Chicago Department of Planning and the Clinton administration comprised two separate planning groups that sought involvement by local community members. In 1989, IIT and First National Bank assembled the South Side Partners, a committee of nineteen community members to advocate for “capital investment in communities adjacent to IIT” (CCDT 1999, 14). Meanwhile, in 1990, the McCormick-Tribune Foundation awarded the City of Chicago a \$300,000 grant to prepare a comprehensive community-development plan that would “reflect the needs and wishes of the community surrounding IIT” (Campbell 1993, 13). The grant led to the convergence of the separate efforts under the name, the Mid-South Planning Group, and involved the South Side Partners as part of its assembly of eighty-one local residents and community leaders, five city agencies, seven consultants from an architecture firm, and two real estate consultants. Among the people who were members of both the South Side Partners and the Mid-South Planning Group were local leaders including Sokoni Karanja, executive director of the Center for New Horizons, a Bronzeville social service agency, and a MacArthur Genius Award Winner, Leroy Kennedy from IIT, and Gregory Washington from the Grand Boulevard Federation.

After three years of weekly meetings and two facilitated retreats, Mid-South Planning Group produced the draft of a comprehensive community

strategic plan. The Mid-South Strategic Plan, with its central theme of restoring Bronzeville, focused on land-use development that should occur because of “the rich cultural history the Mid-South enjoys . . . a number of buildings and neighborhoods are designated architectural and historic landmarks” (Campbell 1993, 16). The plan also noted, “Many Mid-South structures are listed on the National Register of Historic Places” (29), but did not cite Samuelson or the report by the Chicago Commission on Landmarks.

This circuit interested in community development completed the Mid-South Plan in September 1993—just in time for an assembly of bureaucrats and politicians led by the Chicago Department of Planning and Development to apply for funds in a new federal program announced by the Clinton administration to be announced the following month. The Empowerment Zone (EZ) program

was established in the Fall of 1993 under the Federal Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act and is the capstone of the Clinton Administration community revitalization strategy. The program is designed to empower people and communities across the United States by inspiring Americans to work together to develop a strategic plan designed to create jobs and opportunities in our nation’s most impoverished urban and rural areas. (City of Chicago 1998)

The EZ designation meant that Chicago received a \$100 million Social Service Block Grant (SSBG) to implement strategic plans for three local community areas. Among these were Bronzeville, Pilsen, and North Lawndale. EZ status meant that each community received priority consideration for other federal programs and direct assistance from federal officials to facilitate implementation of their EZ Strategic Plan. In addition, a range of tax incentives designed to stimulate private investment and job creation would be available to qualified businesses.

Bronzeville was declared part of Empowerment Zone No. 3 in 1993. A granting process was initiated, generating competing initiatives by local groups for funding. Unfortunately, even though the Mid-South Plan played an important role in winning the EZ status, few of its goals were implemented. The problems in part were caused by the complex grant-application process, which essentially meant that only groups already successful at playing the game of government grants were able to successfully compete. Projects that were funded were the result of people skilled in writing federal grants and involved in broad networks through which information traveled, enabling them to identify opportunities and provide solutions to stumbling blocks in the application process. Needless to say, the plan to restore Bronzeville was temporarily lost in the shuffle for money.

By 1995, the South Side Partners reinvigorated the call for the restoration of Bronzeville and establishment of the Bronzeville historic district originally initiated by Samuelson. According to Karanja, “someone got the idea that some of the money generated for the McCormick Place project should be

going to our community” (Karanja 2003). This circuit of community activists defined its role as one to “maintain [the city’s] accountability to the residents of Bronzeville through focused implementation of the Mid-South Plan” (Southside Partnership 1999, 4). The South Side Partners assembled additional leaders representing nearly all local nonprofit social service agencies, community groups, and hospitals and universities in or immediately adjacent of Bronzeville. Following conventions of civil rights activism, they argued for their fair share of public resources. The political pressure exerted by the South Side Partners resulted in a \$10 million allotment from the “McPier” authority to rehabilitate King Drive. The allotment included \$500,000 for a design element that would later become known as the Public Art of Bronzeville.

How the money was appropriated was not publicly traceable after the fact. No one that I interviewed really knows how or who accomplished the task. Some accounts point to it as a streetscape project, others as an infrastructure project that called for funds to improve the major transportation feeder from the South Side to McCormick Place Convention Center; still others point to it as part of community redevelopment priorities in line with the city’s “Life Along the Boulevards” project, which focused on rehabilitation of the network of boulevards that connect city parks. According to Mike Lash, then Director of Public Art for the city, “It must have come out of project development in Zoning. The Hyatt [McCormick Place hotel] and new Donnelley [access route] were being done, and they must have given some directive stating that you ‘have to provide better transportation to McCormick from the South Side feeder,’ [or] something like that” (Lash 2003).

Once the money was appropriated, there was no mechanism to distribute it or manage an art production effort. According to Lash, “We were hired to run a Percent for Art-type program. This was a test balloon, as it was not really a ‘Percent for Art’ project,” which applied only to the construction of buildings. However, Lash said, “this was to be a community-based public art project” (2003). The Chicago Percent for Art program, created by municipal ordinance in 1978, required 1 percent (now 1.33 percent) of the construction cost of public buildings to be budgeted for the purchase of artwork. However, the ordinance did not apply to transportation infrastructure or street beautification projects like the King Drive Project.

The Public Art Program

The Public Art Program of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) assembled the next circuit of people to the empowerment effort. This network oversaw the selection and production of art for the King Drive renovation project. The Public Art Program would manage the creation and installation of the art. By now, the network of people involved in the project had grown to

include participants from the federal government's Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the city's landmarks commission, and the Chicago Departments of Transportation, Economic Development, Education, Health, and Public Safety, as well as eighty-one local community members.

Among the Public Art Program's committee members were nine community representatives, two who were listed among those involved in drafting the Mid-South Plan: Jeff Johnson, property manager at Prairie Shores Apartments (located on King Drive), and Susan Campbell, from Wendell Campbell Associates (the black-owned architectural firm that wrote the strategic plan and ultimately designed the streetscape project). Among the other committee members were local residents, members of the Gap Neighborhood Association, (which had won historic landmark designation for its residential homes); the principal of Dunbar Vocational High School also located on King Drive; the librarian for the Martin Luther King Branch Library; and Kerry James Marshall, a African American painter and MacArthur "genius award" winner whose studio was located on Indiana Avenue, a street that runs parallel to King Drive in Bronzeville. The committee made decisions regarding the content of art projects and the selection of artists. Barbara Koenen, project manager for the Public Art Program, guided the process. According to Koenen,

Originally, it was going to be one big, expensive piece, like a Richard Hunt sculpture [Hunt is a noted Black Chicago sculptor]. That kind of top-down management of some single design element, directed by the architecture firm, is typical in streetscape projects. I am not sure who said it, but someone said you can get a lot more art than one piece of art for \$500,000.(2003)

Koenen later credited Alicia Mazur (Berg), then a preservation planner (who later became the Commissioner of Planning and Development for the City of Chicago), with making the suggestion that ultimately meant activating the community through the development of art. "From my mind, the art was to bring history and the potential vitality of Bronzeville into the public sphere," said Koenen (2003).

Representation of the Community

The Public Art Program interpreted "community-based" to mean involving the community representatives in the art planning and selection process. According to Lash, the Public Art Program's role followed its role established through the Percent for Art Program:

We bring the group together, seven people. We find out what their needs and wants are. This community thought they needed a gateway. They immediately thought of the Puerto Rican flag [an arch that marks the entrance to Humboldt Park]. "We need a transition element," they said. They wanted a gateway, but we [at the Public Art Program] don't like that kind of thing [like the Puerto Rican

flag/arch]. It's not art. It is contrived. It is not timeless. But the main thing was the cost. King Drive is a double boulevard. The Doughboy [*Victory*] monument was built in 1926. It holds the same power and sway today as when it was opened. The Alison Saar monument does the same thing. Bronzeville isn't about a country. It is about a neighborhood. It's about Diaspora, the Gap, redlining, and the Great Migration. That is what public art should do. It is for the community. [Bronzeville] wanted people to know there was culture and history here. They wanted to give a sense of the culture and history. (2003)

According to guidelines under which the Public Art Program typically operated, representation of the community usually meant including representatives from the community on the advisory committee. But in this situation, the boundary was expanded to involve the community in the interpretation of the history of the community through the creation of its public art.

Koenen managed the community-involved art selection process and the creation and installation of artwork as part of the King Drive project. She said, "The main elements of the public art—the map, the Walk of Fame, the park benches and the monument—were all based on success stories from other cities. The committee had been selected, but I assembled them for the first meeting" (2003).

As an artist and activist who had worked on several art projects designed as community-empowerment projects, Koenen, now in the role of a bureaucratic functionary, wove together activist art conventions from the community-based mural movement with bureaucratic conventions typical of the Percent for Art program. The result was the Public Art of Bronzeville. It was not a typical product of the Percent for Art Program, according to Jon Pounds, director of the Chicago Public Art Group (CPAG), an arts group specializing in community-based art projects. Pounds acknowledged that this project was the exception, not the standard approach for the program: "In most public art commissions handled by the Public Art Program, there is not an expectation of dialogue with the community. There is minimal community engagement only at the lowest level, where one or two community members are invited to participate in the viewing and selecting of slides presented by the program staff" (Pounds 2003).

The project included the intent, the process, and imagery typical of activist murals produced in the Bronzeville area in the 1960s and 1970s. Koenen acknowledged that she used what has become known as a "dialogical framework," which was typical of these activist artists and later of CPAG as well as other contemporary artists groups and collectives. They all approach art-making as an opportunity to engage the community. "It was *my* mission, not the mission of the Public Art Program," Koenen emphasized (2003). However, unlike the activist murals of CPAG, this community-engagement effort emerged through the bureaucratic process.

The fifteen-member selection committee included nine community members, two art representatives, four city government representatives, plus Koenen, the project coordinator who worked for the Public Art Program. The

committee looked at slides that, as Lash pointed out, “Barb slogged to meetings at Griffin Funeral Home” (2003), a historic funeral parlor run by an African American family on King Drive. The primary involvement by community representatives on the committee was the identification of the types of art and artists to be included in the project and then in the approval of artists’ proposals. One important discussion was about what name to put on the community that was to be illustrated in the 14-foot-by-17-foot bronze map of the area. The debate was between “Black Metropolis” or “Bronzeville.” The approval of “Bronzeville” was accomplished through an extensive advocacy effort led by community activists Harold Lucas and Paula Robinson.

The committee wanted to highlight the work of nationally known and locally known black artists. At least one committee member identified a local artist unknown to the Public Art Program, who ultimately was chosen to create a bench. The committee also played an important role in who was to be featured on the *Walk of Fame*. It solicited nominations from the community at large, compiled a list of recommended honorees, and made the final selections. Although an African American graduate student in history identified by the committee was employed as a consultant, there was no systematic historical research done to inform the selection process.

Direct interaction between the committee and the artists was limited; Koenen and Lash could recall only two such interactions. One involved the *Monument to the Great Northern Migration*, when artist Alison Saar presented a miniature wax model of the traveler who represented all the souls who migrated to Chicago. Originally, the traveler’s hand was outstretched in a way that one committee member negatively interpreted as begging. Saar took the arm and twisted it up so it looked like he was waving and asked, “How about this?” The committee approved this new pose. In another instance, committee members unsuccessfully tried to get one artist to make a bench out of a metal that would not rust.

Committee member and local community activist Paula Robinson reported that she “rode herd on the *Walk of Fame* project,” overseeing every step of the development—from selection of featured names, to work with the artist and foundry—but was shocked when the final plaques came back with Mayor Richard M. Daley’s name on every plaque. “By putting his name on every one, they treated these things as if they were manhole covers. But they were art for God’s sake. They should not have put his name on every one!” she said (Robinson 2005). However, with the plaques ready to be set in the concrete sidewalk, there was little she could do at that late date to change the outcome.

Unveiling the Largest Public Art Piece in Chicago

Two nationally known African American women artists who live outside of Bronzeville were commissioned by the city to create the *Monument* and the *Walk*

of Fame. As already mentioned, Alison Saar from Los Angeles designed the *Monument to the Great Northern Migration* and Geraldine McCullough from Oak Park, a Chicago suburb, designed plaques used in the *Bronzeville Walk of Fame*. Gregg LeFevre, an artist from upstate New York, designed the map of Bronzeville, with the support of a cadre of local research assistants who worked under Koenen's supervision. Fourteen other artists, nine from the greater Chicago area, created sculptural park benches and decorative fencing referred to as recognition panels. Of these, two artists, Apache Wakefield and Kimberli Johnson, were African American artists from Chicago's South Side. Unlike most community-based, community-engagement art projects made typical by Bronzeville muralists, these artists had little direct interaction with the community or the committee. In fact, only a few of the artists even came to Chicago.

The 15-foot statue that is the *Monument to the Great Northern Migration* was made of cast bronze. It depicts an optimistic male traveler facing north toward the Chicago Loop with one hand raised, carrying a suitcase bound with rope in the other. The diamond-shaped plaque just north of the statue reads:

This bronze monument depicts a man wearing a suit of shoe soles rising from a mound of soles. The soles, worn and full of holes, symbolize the often-difficult journey from the south to the north. It commemorates all the African American men and women [souls] who migrated to Chicago after the Civil War. [attribution:] Alison Saar, Sculptor. City of Chicago, Public Art Collection, Richard M. Daley, Mayor. 1996.

Today, it is evident that this monument, as part of the Public Art of Bronzeville, serves many purposes: it established a place called "Bronzeville" in contemporary life; it is the gateway to this place, particularly from the Chicago's McCormick Place Convention Center; it was among the mayor's beautification projects installed in time for the 1996 Democratic National Convention; it identified and marked the area as an important historic area; and it emphasized the cultural contributions of blacks who migrated to Chicago in the early twentieth century. According to Saar, it represented the creative spirit that blacks brought to Chicago: "Though the case appears to be bursting with its contents, upon closer inspection it is empty . . . except for the creative spirit and culture brought from the South. The man's eyes also reflect each individual's personal hopes and aspirations for a new life in a new land" (Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs 1996, 7).

Mike Lash, then director of Chicago's Public Art Program, said, "The sculpture is both loved and hated" (2003). It is loved because it commemorated the African Americans who migrated to Chicago. It placed blackness into public discourse in the form of a permanent monument. It linked the South Side of Chicago to African American history. The sculpture was hated in part because its folksy appearance lacked the nobility and glory typical of monumental commemorative sculptures. Charles Bowen, a Bronzeville collector and one of

Daley's closest advisors, said, "It could have been more dignified" (Bowen 2003). Furthermore, the souls that cover the traveler appear to be scales or feathers—reminding some local critics of the historic torture of blacks who were tarred and feathered. The sculpture also could be interpreted as an image of a man who is facing the downtown loop and Chicago's North Side. Rather than being interpreted as a welcome sign, the hand gesture is also interpreted as "stop," a symbolic gesture to keep out unwanted developers and gentrifiers.

The ninety-one plaques that made up the *Bronzeville Walk of Fame* commemorate Bronzeville residents who "have made a significant contribution to the community" (Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs 1996). The 17-inch, diamond-shaped bronze plaques were embedded in the sidewalks and medians along King Drive every two hundred feet between 26th and 35th Streets. Among the named are Margaret Burroughs, founder of the DuSable Museum; St. Clair Drake, University of Chicago scholar and coauthor of *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* ([1946] 1962); jazz pianist and singer Nat "King" Cole; Vaudeville comedy team Butter Beans and Susie; Chicago city councilman and later congressman Oscar De Priest; author Langston Hughes; author Richard Wright; Major Robert H. Lawrence, Jr., the first black astronaut; journalist and activist Ida B. Wells; boxer John "Jack" Johnson; Carter G. Woodson, scholar and organizer of Negro History Week in 1926; and Theresa Needham, owner of Theresa's Blues Club.

The *Historic Bronzeville Map*, a 14-foot-by-7-foot bronze slab inset in the King Drive median at 35th Street, highlights landmarks, historic buildings, and places of significance from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries including "The Stroll," an entertainment district along South State Street, and the nine landmarked buildings that comprise the Black Metropolis/Bronzeville Historic District. Inset in the map are relief artifacts including records, sheet music, instruments, and club banners recalling famous people, historic sites, and events in Bronzeville. The naming of the map "Bronzeville" instead of "Black Metropolis" led to the area's official adoption of the name "Bronzeville."

Conclusion

Black scholars such as Manning Marable ([1995] 2003) speak of the "paradox of desegregation" ([1995] 2003, 31) and call for strategies that enable greater involvement by the black middle and upper classes in the struggles of the black working class, poor, and unemployed. The story of the Public Art of Bronzeville represents one way this is being accomplished and is a testament to the increasing influence and involvement of the educated, black middle class in the creation and ownership of local communities. The tactic of using a publicly funded art project to establish ownership of local territory is new for predominantly black communities. The process of producing the artworks

on King Drive not only engaged local residents in selecting artists and researching subjects, it also reanimated the history of the black community while connecting the development of Bronzeville, for better or for worse, to Chicago's citywide planning and cultural efforts and to federal community revitalization efforts. The Public Art of Bronzeville represented the efforts of an empowerment network that identified and mobilized local cultural capital in innovative ways to claim local territory and empower the local community with ownership of its geographic and historic place. Network participants accessed external resources earmarked for economic development and deployed those resources to establish a new community identity.

The artworks employed an amalgamation of conventions drawn from history-writing practices, community-organizing practices typical of civil rights efforts, and public art production practices. Ironically, the artists named in the brochure as the creators of specific objects were the last participants in a production process of the Public Art of Bronzeville, and possibly the least important: although an individual artist's withdrawal from the project would have required the committee to secure a replacement, the invisible work of this empowerment network—a group of people brought together by their shared interest in the local area—was unique and irreplaceable. This level of involvement by both local community members and city bureaucrats represents a level of participation that few other public art efforts can claim.

This case study demonstrates that, without formal cultural policy to guide the project from beginning to end, shared local interest brought producers together. Their work succeeded in marking the near South Side as the territory significant to black history and representative of the concerns and identity of the growing population of the black middle class. This shared interest enabled disparate networks to converge and individuals to work together in a surprisingly collaborative way as informal policymakers, project managers, and community advocates in the creation of a series of public artworks. As other local communities seek to accomplish similar goals, a useful cultural policy to enable similar projects should include a method and agency through which to appropriate funding and manage the project; guidance to convene people who share belief in the meaning of community involvement; a strategy to involve more members of the community in the every day aspects of production; a strategy to develop and sustain the knowledge-building and understanding of the historic content of the artwork during and after the production process; and a better strategy for ongoing maintenance of the public art itself.

NOTES

1. From the brochure, "A Guide to the Public Art of Bronzeville" by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, 1996.
2. He later became the cultural historian for the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs.

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