



For Immediate Release

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Downtown Greenway shares Radcliffe Bailey's design for the Freedom Cornerstone

GREENSBORO, NC (March 22, 2021) – The Downtown Greenway is pleased to share Radcliffe Bailey's design for the Freedom Cornerstone.

Radcliffe will be speaking on Wednesday, March 24 at noon to discuss his work with Public Art consultant, Barbara Peck and Weatherspoon Art Museum Curator of Collections, Elaine Gustafson on Action Greensboro's series *The More You Know GSO* hosted by Candace Martin livestreamed on the Action Greensboro Facebook page.

Radcliffe Bailey's work often celebrates and tells the stories of African American history and culture. In his work for the Freedom Cornerstone, his design incorporates elements including:

- The Dogon ladder – a wooden tool used by people from Mali, along the West African coast;
- Tabby, a material that combines concrete and oyster shells often found in slave quarters in the south;
- a steel railroad track/ladder/bridge – referencing a way of moving up and reaching higher, as well as symbolizing the railroad itself as a means of travel, the Underground Railroad as a route to freedom, and acknowledging how railroad lines have also created divisions in communities;
- hull of a boat as a remembrance of those lost in the Middle Passage;
- a blue neon star representing the North Star helping those find their way along the Underground Railroad and also a nod to the old sign for the nearby Historic Magnolia House;
- and the incorporation of poetry, music, and sound

Radcliffe Bailey, an internationally recognized Atlanta based artist, was selected from a pool of over 65 artists for this commission. He was featured in the recently released HBO film, **Black Art: In the Absence of Light**. Directed by Sam Pollard (Atlanta's Missing and Murdered: The Lost Children), the film shines a light on the extraordinary impact of David Driskell's exhibit on generations of Black artists who have staked a claim on their rightful place within the 21st-Century art world. Interweaving insights and

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context from scholars and historians, along with interviews from a new generation of working African American curators and artists including Theaster Gates, Kerry James Marshall, Faith Ringgold, Amy Sherald, Carrie Mae Weems and Radcliffe Bailey, the documentary is a look at the contributions of Black American artists in today's contemporary art world.

Radcliffe comments "It is my honor to celebrate the victory of freedom for this commission". He notes that "we all will bring our own history to the project, but that history will be seen through the lens through which we each perceive our own experiences."

Downtown Greenway Project Manager notes, "We are so pleased with the thoughtfulness and care that Radcliffe has taken with this theme of Freedom – not only recognizing Greensboro's history with the Sit-In Movement that catalyzed the national Civil Rights Movement, but thinking of what freedom means today to all people. The layers of ideas and symbols will create a very powerful and meaningful piece for this site."

About Downtown Greenway

The Downtown Greenway, a collaborative project of the City of Greensboro and Action Greensboro, is a planned 4 mile walking and biking trail that will encourage economic development, increase the tax base for the city, and will improve quality of life for its citizens. This urban loop around the center city of downtown Greensboro will enhance the urban landscape with a green space that will promote fitness, connectedness and well-being for our residents and visitors in an aesthetically pleasing environment. The loop itself provides a unique opportunity for Greensboro to have the only one of its kind in the state and one of the few in the country. With its emphasis on public art, the Greenway will tell stories and engage users of the trail in a unique and authentic way. In addition, with the connections to the extensive existing and planned trails systems in the city and the county, this loop will connect residents from all parts of the community and beyond. With 3 miles built and open to the public, and the final mile to go under construction this fall, the Downtown Greenway is expected to be completed in 2022/2023.

About Action Greensboro

Action Greensboro, together with the Chamber of Commerce, serves as the city's primary economic and community development group. Formed in 2001, Action Greensboro is comprised of six local charitable foundations. In collaboration with business, higher education, and municipal government, Action Greensboro works to strengthen Greensboro's economy and ensure the continuation of its excellent quality of life.

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