

Finkel, Jori. "Destination Crenshaw Moves Ahead With a First Round of Public Sculptures," *New York Times*, 13 October 2021.

## The New York Times



*Rendering of Destination Crenshaw's Sankofa Park, featuring Charles Dickson's sculpture "Car Culture" with three Senufo ritual figures under a canopy of cars. Credit...Rendering by Perkins&Will, via Destination Crenshaw*

LOS ANGELES – A new, bronze sculpture by Kehinde Wiley of a 21st-century African woman on horseback, part of his popular series that radically updates Confederate war monuments, is heading to South Los Angeles. The city's cultural affairs department voted on Wednesday to approve the placement of Wiley's artwork, along with six others, in a 1.3-mile-long, \$100-million cultural corridor under development. Called Destination Crenshaw, the stretch is devoted to bringing Black art and design to new, outdoor community spaces.

These artworks, by Wiley, Charles Dickson, Melvin Edwards, Maren Hassinger, Artis Lane, Alison Saar and Brenna Youngblood, are expected to be installed by the end of next year. The plan is to commission at least 100 sculptures, murals and other artworks by 2027, creating "the largest public art exhibition by Black artists in this country," Jason Foster, president and chief operating officer of Destination Crenshaw, said.

Destination Crenshaw, a nonprofit organization, has received a mix of public and private funding. So far it has raised \$61.5 million of a projected \$100 million, including a \$3 million grant announced this week from the Getty Foundation. The Getty has also pledged conservation support for the public art. Foster, on the project's website, declared, "Destination Crenshaw is Black design for Black LA." The idea of an economic development project rooted in Black culture grew from concerns that a pending Metro light rail line, built at ground level for this section of Crenshaw Boulevard, would disrupt small businesses. The initiative has facilitated grants for local businesses and will bring greenery as well as art to the area to draw pedestrians, with the planting of 822 trees and the creation of 10 new pocket parks designed by the firm Perkins & Will.

Wiley's monument, for example, will appear in the newly created Sankofa Park at the corridor's northern edge. An earlier bronze from the same series, "Rumors of War," showing a young Black man in

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a hoodie on horseback, was unveiled with great fanfare in Times Square in 2019 before it was moved to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. In a twist this time, the heroic equestrian will be female. For the same park, Hassinger is creating a pink fiberglass sphere and planting motion-sensor LED lights around it to make the sculpture seem alive or alert. Nearby will be Dickson's large stainless-steel sculpture of three Senofort figures under a canopy of cars, celebrating the dealerships that used to line Crenshaw and the lowrider culture still alive today. The artist's plan is to hire local auto body shops to paint the cars different colors.

Further south, Saar is creating a pair of 13-foot-tall bronze sculptures, male and female, with enormous hairdos or "conks" that rise several feet. She is fashioning the hair from a mix of found objects that speak to local creativity, such as a trumpet and frying pan. Participating artists live or work in Los Angeles or did so for at least five years, said Joy Simmons, the project's lead art adviser. She said 30 other artists have been "shortlisted" for future commissions and will be invited to submit proposals.