



MEMO TO MERIDIAN ARTS COMMISSION

Date: 3-9-23

**RE: March Inclusivity Highlight Topic ~ Presented by Meridian Arts Commission Vice Chair
Natalie Schofield**

In order to continue the Meridian Arts Commission's goals of Arts Access (Goal: Support experiences in the arts for everyone, regardless of age, race, ability or other protected class) the Commission may occasionally include inclusivity highlights at various meetings in order to learn about and promote inclusive arts practices.

The following information was submitted by MAC Vice Chair, Natalie Scholfield.

March 23 is International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. In remembrance of this day, I would like to share the artwork by NY architect, Rodney Leon titled "Ark of Return."

This piece is a permanent reminder of the more than 18 million women, men and children who were taken into slavery. Here are some links for everyone to check out to hear more of Rodney's deliberate symbolism in his piece and a 2022 message from the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations. I found his closing statement still pertinent:

"Today, people of African descent continue to confront racial discrimination, marginalization and exclusion. The political, economic and structural power imbalances rooted in colonial rule, enslavement and exploitation, still deny equality of opportunity and justice.

On this International Day, let us stand united against racism and together build societies based on dignity, equality and solidarity."

Artist's website with information about the piece:

<https://www.rodneyleon.com/the-ark-of-return>

More information from the United Nations Website:

<https://www.un.org/en/rememberslavery/observance/2022>

Five-minute YouTube Video virtual tour:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2vTrsP7k8w>