

SAH's Commitment to Racial Justice

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS

The Society of Architectural Historians mourns the death of George Floyd and the many other people of color who have been murdered by police and those sworn to uphold the law. Three of SAH's newly established affiliate groups (Asian American and Diasporic Architectural History, Minority Scholars, and Race and Architectural History) have composed a statement sharing their pain, anger, scholarly insight, and determination to lead us toward a more just future. Their statement appears in this issue of *JSAH*, preceding this one written by the officers and executive director of SAH.

As a Society committed to inclusivity, diversity, and respect for all, we share the anguish and frustration of many regarding the systemic inequalities, institutionalized racism, and long history of injustice that led to these deaths.

As a Society committed to the highest standards of debate and critique, we stand in solidarity with the peaceful protesters in cities throughout the United States who collectively advance the cause of justice and, by their actions, help keep democracy alive. We admire their courage in standing shoulder to shoulder in a pandemic and before militarized police lines.

As a Society whose membership, reach, and inquiry are global, we are heartened and humbled by the expressions of solidarity with the struggles of people in the United States by people around the world.

As historians, many of us study the past in order to help understand the present and change the future. The murders of Black individuals by police, like the disproportionate deaths in

communities of color attributable to COVID-19, remind us that our past has profound implications for our present. Buildings, cities, and landscapes carry the formidable weight of North American history: slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow laws, and redlining lie behind the inequities in housing, education, economic opportunity, and political power that define too many lives today.

Our discipline, with its long-standing engagements with the social and political histories of architecture, cities, and landscapes, has much to contribute to a broadened understanding of these histories.

Many SAH members occupy positions of extraordinary social and professional privilege. As architectural historians we can do better at voicing the ways in which histories of place affect Black communities and how the built environment has contributed to inequality. We can and should educate people outside the academy and our professions about these histories. And SAH's diverse membership should examine how the wealth that individuals and institutions enjoy today was, like many buildings in this country, built at the expense of Black lives and Black liberty.

With the endorsement of the SAH Board, SAH will do more going forward to include scholars of color at all levels and to plan programs, initiatives, and publications that will shed light on race and the history of the built environment. A diversity of voices and opportunities will add depth of understanding in our Society and push pedagogy forward in ways that have been critically lacking in the past.

Please know that we, the officers of SAH, are eager to hear your thoughts, suggestions, questions, and concerns.

VICTORIA YOUNG, President
PATRICIA MORTON, First Vice President
CARLA YANNI, Second Vice President
MICHAEL GIBSON, Treasurer
KATHRYN O'ROURKE, Secretary
PAULINE SALIGA, Executive Director

Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 79, no. 4 (December 2020), 378, ISSN 0037-9808, electronic ISSN 2150-5926. © 2020 by the Society of Architectural Historians. All rights reserved. Please direct all requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content through the University of California Press's Reprints and Permissions web page, <https://www.ucpress.edu/journals/reprints-permissions>, or via email: jpermissions@ucpress.edu. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jsah.2020.79.4.378>.