



Monument
Lab

Artist Dossier

REVOLUTIONARY ACTS

New Jersey State Council on the Arts
New Jersey Historical Commission
RevolutionNJ

Prepared by: Monument lab
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ABOUT *REVOLUTIONARY ACTS*

Revolutionary Acts is a new monumental performance series in New Jersey that will animate histories and legacies of the American Revolution in 2026. Commissioned and curated through an open call process aimed at artists who live or work in New Jersey, one final selected artist will collaborate with local partners across three sites—Camden, Trenton, and Fort Lee—to stage a performance-based work throughout the state to connect stories of the state's and nation's past, present, and future. The project is powered by a central curatorial question: What revolutionary stories shape who we are today? ***Revolutionary Acts*** is a project of Monument Lab, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, New Jersey Historical Commission, and RevolutionNJ. Additional support provided by the New Jersey Historical Commission.

Presented by:





OPEN CALL AND ARTIST SELECTION PROCESS

OPEN CALL AND ARTIST SELECTION PROCESS

Monument Lab—in partnership with the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the New Jersey Historical Commission, and RevolutionNJ—is launching an Open Call for Artist Ideas to commission a new monumental performance series in New Jersey that will animate histories and legacies of the American Revolution in 2026. **Revolutionary Acts** invites artists who live or work in New Jersey to propose a performance-based work that will unfold across sites in Camden, Trenton, and Fort Lee. These cities have been selected in collaboration with the State's larger organizing efforts around the 250th anniversary of the United States of America. The selected artist will collaborate with local partners to activate these sites, weaving together stories of the state's and nation's past, present, and future.

The goals of this project include:

- ◆ Producing an innovative and captivating performance series that appeals to a broad audience and showcases cutting-edge commemorative and artistic initiatives
- ◆ Shedding light on untold narratives of the American Revolution and how they shape common knowledge of significant events
- ◆ Highlighting the stories of an expansive group of Revolutionary voices and recognizing the significance of incorporating more histories into places where gaps in the historical landscape are evident
- ◆ Demonstrating that the creation of history and memory is a collective and personal endeavor in which we can analyze, evaluate, and actively participate
- ◆ Reaching out to newer and younger audiences who typically do not engage with historical and commemorative sites and events
- ◆ Facilitating exploration of the complex layers of history found in New Jersey's cities, towns, and landscapes.

This is a project that appreciates and expands upon conventional forms of performance, public art, and public history. Artists of a variety of visual and performance backgrounds are encouraged to apply. Artists are invited to submit their materials via this online form by **Monday, June 16, 2025 at 5:00pm EST.**

An artist advisory committee will make a recommendation to Monument Lab regarding the selection of up to three finalists. Monument Lab will then select three artists to develop full proposals and present them in mid-August 2025. Each finalist will receive an honorarium of \$2,500 to support the creation of a detailed proposal. The selected project will be supported with a total production budget of \$150,000, covering materials, fabrication, and implementation costs. The artist will also receive an honorarium of \$30,000 in recognition of their creative vision and work, with additional support available for programming, signage, interpretive materials and documentation. Over the course of 2025 and 2026, Monument Lab will support the selected artist in adapting the performance to each historic site's geography and historical context.

Performance, in this context, is defined broadly. Potential performance formats include but are not limited to:

- ◆ Activations
- ◆ Block Parties
- ◆ Concerts
- ◆ Dance Performances
- ◆ Gatherings
- ◆ Happenings
- ◆ Fairs
- ◆ Festivals
- ◆ Musical Performances
- ◆ Pageants
- ◆ Processions
- ◆ Reenactments
- ◆ Reimaginings
- ◆ Scavenger Hunts
- ◆ Theatrical Productions
- ◆ Walking/River Tours

This is a unique opportunity to contribute to New Jersey's evolving cultural landscape by activating history, creating an innovative, immersive, and participatory experience that invites audiences to reflect on the Revolutionary era and its ongoing impact. We encourage artists with a passion for storytelling, public engagement, and experimental performance to apply.

For more information and to apply, visit

<https://form.jotform.com/MonumentLab/revolutionary-acts-open-call>.



SHORT RESPONSE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In addition to providing basic information, references, and a portfolio, artists will be asked the following questions. In 150 words or fewer each, please respond to the following prompts:



1. *What about this opportunity to create a performance-based public artwork engaging with histories and legacies of the American Revolution in New Jersey interests you?*

2. *What core values guide your artistic practice, and how would you apply them to developing a performance that engages with history and community?*

3. *What specific themes, stories, or historical perspectives related to the American Revolution and its legacies in New Jersey would you be most interested in exploring through this project? Pick one or more of RevolutionNJ's key themes to guide your response.*

- ◆ Inclusion/Exclusion
- ◆ Property and Sovereignty
- ◆ "Revolutionary Ideals"
- ◆ Political Participation
- ◆ Movement of People
- ◆ New Jersey as a "Battleground"
- ◆ The Historical Process

4. *What are your initial thoughts or general ideas for a performance-based artwork engaging with the histories and legacies of the American Revolution in New Jersey?*

5. *Is there anything else you'd like to share with us? (Optional)*

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applying these criteria ensures that the selected artist delivers a compelling and historically grounded performance series and fosters meaningful public engagement, critical reflection, and a more expansive understanding of American Revolution narratives across New Jersey.

Eligible applicants must be:

- ◆ Professional visual artists or artist teams, working in any and all media
- ◆ If applying as an artist team or collective, please identify in your application materials the team member who will serve as the project lead and primary point of contact.
- ◆ Legally authorized to work in the U.S.
- ◆ At least 18 years of age.
- ◆ Artists must be permanent residents of the State of New Jersey, permanently employed in the State of New Jersey, or lease studio space in the State of New Jersey. Proof of residency or permanent employment must be submitted if the artist is selected as a finalist.
- ◆ The artist whose original work is represented in the work samples.



SELECTION STANDARDS



- 1. Artistic Vision and Historical Relevance** – The artist’s work should align with the performance series’ mission to expand narratives of the American Revolution and its legacies.
- 2. Engagement with Sites** – The artist should connect their work to the three chosen cities’ layered histories and present-day realities. Their performance visions should be grounded in/across places, inviting public participation, fostering dialogue, and responding to the lived experiences, memories, and narratives tied to the site.
- 3. Past Body of Work** – The artist should demonstrate a practice of visual, live, or performance-based public work that adapts across sites and engages diverse publics. Their portfolio should reflect a commitment to storytelling, accessibility, and collaboration. Experience with large-scale projects is welcome, as is a clear vision for how this opportunity advances their practice.



SITE SELECTION

EXPLANATION OF SITE FRAMEWORKS

Three key cities—**Trenton**, **Fort Lee**, and **Camden**—have been identified as the primary locations for this project. These cities have been selected in collaboration with the State’s larger organizing efforts around the 250th anniversary of the United States of America. Each of these locations holds powerful ties to both the American Revolutionary War and New Jersey’s enduring spirit of transformation, resistance, and revolution. Together, they offer a compelling cross-section of the state’s geography, history, and contemporary communities.

The selected artist will work closely with Monument Lab, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, New Jersey Historical Commission, and RevolutionNJ to align their creative vision with existing and potential local partners of the state agencies in these three locations. Through this collaborative process, we will identify specific sites within each city that not only support the artist’s goals but also deepen engagement with the layered histories and lived experiences of New Jerseyans today.

This approach allows room for creativity, responsiveness, and community connection, ensuring each site becomes a meaningful stage for public memory, dialogue, and revolutionary storytelling as the artist’s vision unfolds.

POTENTIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

New Jersey is home to countless sites of resistance and reinvention; this selection of American Revolution and other revolutionary moments serves as a potential starting point in considering historical significance and resonance across the state.

CAMDEN

Foraging and Skirmish at Cooper's Ferry (February and March 1778)

Continental forces disrupted a British foraging expedition for cattle and hay near Cooper's Ferry.

British Retreat Across New Jersey (June 18, 1778)

The British absconded from Philadelphia, crossing to Cooper's Ferry before a march across New Jersey into the Battle of Monmouth, where integrated regiments fought on both sides.

Black Student Unity Movement at Camden High School and Rutgers-Camden (1969)

Camden High School and Rutgers-Camden students in the Black Student Unity Movement led protests for demands around curriculum, hiring, enrollment, and scholarships.



FORT LEE

Continental Army Retreats from Fort Lee to Trenton (November 20, 1776)

The Continental Army began a twelve-day retreat from Fort Lee after a surprise British attack, leaving tents, tools, artillery, and a large amount of food.

Twenty-Nine People Escape Enslavement in New Barbados in Bergen County, NJ (June 1780)

Twenty-nine people escaped enslavement through Fort Lee with the help of Major Tom Ward, a Black loyalist who led an integrated group of woodcutters, foragers, and raiders.

***Within Our Gates* Filmed in Fort Lee (1920)**

Oscar Micheaux directed *Within Our Gates*, one of the first feature-length films by a Black director and with a majority Black cast. At the time, Fort Lee was the hub of the US film industry.



TRENTON

Public Reading of Declaration of Independence (July 8, 1776)

Trenton held a public reading of the Declaration of Independence on the steps of the Hunterdon County Courthouse just four days after the document's signing. The city was one of three involved in this first day of public readings along with Philadelphia and Easton, PA.

Crossing the Delaware (December 25, 1776)

Continental forces crossed the Delaware River, ferried by the "Marbleheaders," an integrated regiment of Black, White, and Indigenous sailors. The crossing led to the first and second Battles of Trenton, on December 26, 1776, and January 2, 1777, respectively.

Cuban Giants in Trenton (1886-1889)

The Cuban Giants were the first salaried Black baseball team. For four years, the team played home games in Trenton at Chambersburg Grounds and East State Street Grounds.

Hedgepeth-Williams v. Trenton Board of Education (1944)

Twelve-year-olds Janet Hedgepeth and Leon Williams, and their respective mothers—Gladys Hedgepeth and Berline Williams—fought the Trenton Board of Education to desegregate their neighborhood school. The New Jersey Supreme Court's ruling in favor of Hedgepeth-Williams integrated all schools in the state and became a precedent for the landmark Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court case in 1954.





KEY PARTNERS

MONUMENT LAB

Monument Lab is a nonprofit public art, history, and design studio that is a leading voice in how monuments live with us in public spaces. As a team of artists, curators, and researchers, Monument Lab critically engages our inherited symbols in order to unearth the next generation of monuments that elevate stories and systems of belonging. Monument Lab has been recognized for producing groundbreaking public art exhibitions, participatory research initiatives, media projects, civic and municipal partnerships, and site-specific commissions and workshops. Monument Lab works with artists, students, educators, activists, municipal agencies, and cultural institutions on participatory approaches to public engagement and collective memory. Monument Lab is based in Philadelphia, with team members and collaborators located across the United States, its territories, and beyond.

For more information and to support, visit MonumentLab.com.

NEW JERSEY STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS (ARTS COUNCIL)

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts (Arts Council), created in 1966, is a division of the New Jersey Department of State and a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. The Arts Council was established to support, encourage, and foster public interest in the arts; enlarge public and private resources devoted to the arts; promote freedom of expression in the arts; and facilitate the inclusion of art in every public building in New Jersey. For more information about the Arts Council, visit: www.artscouncil.nj.gov.

NEW JERSEY HISTORICAL COMMISSION (NJHC)

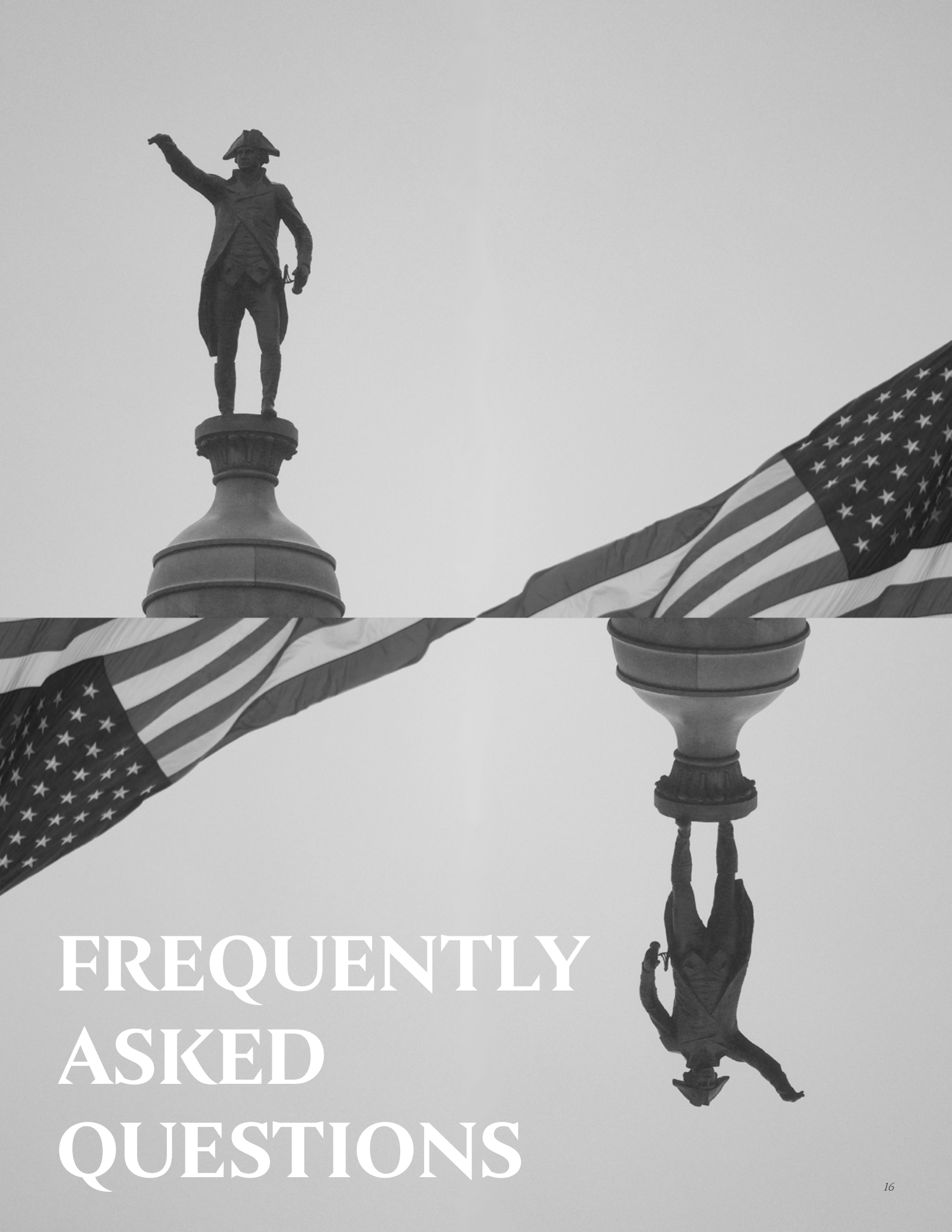
The New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC) is a state agency dedicated to the advancement of public knowledge and preservation of New Jersey history. Established by law in 1967, its work is founded on the fundamental belief that an understanding of our shared heritage is essential to sustaining a cohesive and robust democracy.

The NJHC receives its funding primarily by legislative appropriation. It fulfills its mission through various initiatives, as well as an active grant program. The goal of the grant program is to engage diverse audiences and practitioners in the active exploration, enjoyment, interpretation, understanding, and preservation of New Jersey history. In addition to other awards and prizes, the NJHC offers a free archival evaluation service called Caucus Archival Projects Evaluation Service (CAPES).

RevolutionNJ

RevolutionNJ is a partnership between the New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC), a division of the New Jersey Department of State, and the nonprofit Crossroads of the American Revolution Association to plan the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution in New Jersey.

RevolutionNJ advances the role that history plays in public discourse, community engagement, education, tourism, and scholarship in New Jersey. Through a series of initiatives that explore the history of the American Revolution, its context, and its legacy, RevolutionNJ galvanizes diverse audiences statewide into embracing the enduring value and relevance of history.



FREQUENTLY
ASKED
QUESTIONS

What is the timeline for the open call, announcement, and creation of the work?

The open call is live through Monday, June 16, 2025. In July 2025, up to 3 finalists will be invited to craft and submit proposals, due in August 2025. The selected submission will be announced in late Summer of 2025 following review by the Monument Lab, Arts Council, NJHC, and RevolutionNJ.

I have an idea beyond the list of types of performances in the About the Project section.**Can I still apply?**

Yes! So long as your work is grounded in a concept of live engagement and can be adapted to multiple locations, we welcome your innovative interpretations of the idea of performance!

Will there be an interview stage in the application process?

No. Applications will be evaluated based on each applicant's past experience, work samples, and references. Interviews will not be offered to applicants.

Do I need to be a New Jersey resident or worker to apply?

Yes, you must either be a resident of the state of New Jersey or have permanent employment in the state. Additionally, in order to be eligible to apply, you must be able to legally work in the US and be at least 18 years old.

Are artist collectives welcome?

Yes! Artist collectives are welcome to apply. Please elect one person to apply on behalf of the group. Additionally, kindly note that the stipends and production amounts remain the same for individuals and collectives. The majority of the members of the collective must meet the New Jersey resident/employment requirements.

I'm having difficulty with the application. What additional resources are available for applicants?

Please email us at RevolutionaryActs@MonumentLab.com if you have difficulty accessing or filling out the application.

CONTACT

If you have any questions that were not answered in the FAQ section, please contact us at RevolutionaryActs@MonumentLab.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

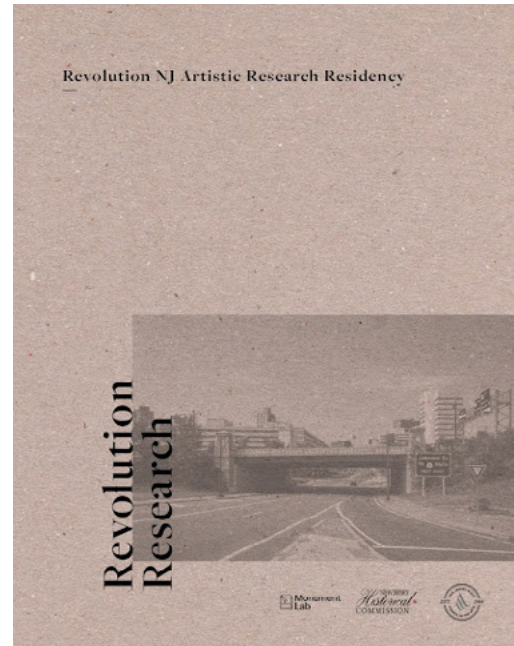


APPENDIX

RevolutionNJ

Since 2019, Monument Lab has been working in collaboration with the New Jersey Historical Commission and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, both divisions of the New Jersey Department of State, to envision and develop a multi-site public art and history project to mark the 250th anniversary of the formal founding of the United States in 2026. Under New Jersey's larger initiative to mark this anniversary, Revolution NJ, this project engages numerous historic sites related to the Revolution and explores how they could be remembered, connected, and layered with other historical narratives in the contemporary landscape of New Jersey.

We began the process of proposal design by hosting an exploratory artistic research residency. The research residency brought together an invited cohort of 9 New Jersey-based practitioners including Tyrese Gould Jacinto, Elaine Buck & Beverly Mills, the Harriet Tubman Museum, Sankofa Stitchers (Juandamarie Gikandi & Mada Galloway), Kristyn Scorsone, Wendel White, Amber Wiley, Marisa Williamson, and Layqa Nuna Yawar to reflect on the multiple genealogies of the American Revolution, legacies of Indigenous and African American historical figures and stories, and connections to contemporary revolutionary movements.



Research residents were invited based on previous critical and creative work on the Revolution, as well as other participatory and contemporary approaches to art and history. As a deliverable, each resident was to produce a written and visual site-specific case study of a revolutionary site in their own community or that is important to their life's work. This report reflects their key findings, summaries of their independent projects, and insights into how this brain trust inspired a new path for Monument Lab to come together for revolutionary pasts and futures.

[Download PDF](#)

The Stories We Tell



Monument Lab presented *The Stories We Tell*, a film series that illuminates untold histories of the American Revolution, as part of a long-term partnership with the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the New Jersey Historical Commission.

Informed by a larger collaborative Artistic Research Residency with New Jersey-based artists, educators, and historians convened by Monument Lab in Summer 2020, this series explores the process of history making, decontextualization and historical erasure as it manifests at sites associated with the American Revolution.

Our collaborators approached commemorating the Revolutionary period through unearthing the legacies of Black and Indigenous historical figures and places, interrogating the motivations of previous generations of formal and informal storytellers, and making connections to contemporary revolutionary movements. In each video in the series, the featured participants explore the question: What would advance a fuller and transformative history of this place, and examine the processes of history making, memory keeping, erasure, and restoration.

The Stories We Tell series includes three installments:

Elaine Buck and Beverly Mills on Black “Marbleheaders” at Washington’s Crossing, focusing on the multiracial Massachusetts militia regiment who enabled General Washington’s historic journey across the Delaware River. [Watch here](#)

Tyrese “Bright Flower” Gould Jacinto on the legacy and endurance of the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape people along the Cohansey River, countering generations of theft and bureaucratic management, by reframing land and water as integral parts of the Lenape to shed light on the rivers’ past, present, and future. [Watch here](#)

Layqa Nuna Yawar in Newark’s Military Park, on reimagining the numerous stories of conflict, consequence, and resistance, often obscured by conventional monuments and memorials, through innovative approaches to public memory. [Watch here](#)

The Stories We Tell was created with support from Revolution NJ, New Jersey’s commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.