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Hank Willis Thomas Selected to Design Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial in Boston

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Hank Willis Thomas's design for *The Embrace*.

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The organization King Boston has named Hank Willis Thomas the winner of a competition to design a new monument to the married activists Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King. Thomas's monument will appear on Boston Common in the Massachusetts capital, where it is currently expected to be unveiled in 2020.

The New York-based artist's sculpture is called *The Embrace*, and it features pairs of arms and hands that appear to clasp one another. Thomas has previously said that the work is inspired by images of protesters walking arm-in-arm during civil rights movement-era marches. Visitors to Boston Common will be able to walk under and around the sculpture, which was conceived in collaboration with the Boston-based firm MASS Design Group.

In a statement, Thomas said, "Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King are monumental examples of the capacity of love to shape society. I can only hope *The Embrace* can be a reminder and a call to action to each of us to never forget what they've taught us."

*The Embrace* was picked as the winner of King Boston's competition for the monument over one design by Krzysztof Wodiczko, Julian Bonder, and Maryann Thompson Architects with Walter Hood, and another by Adam Pendleton and David Adjaye's firm in collaboration with Future/Pace and David Reinfurt. Other finalists included artists Yinka Shonibare MBE and Barbara Chase-Riboud.

Thomas has previously designed public artworks, among them *All Power to All People*, an oversized aluminum and steel Afro pick that was placed near Philadelphia's City Hall in 2017. In addition, working with the Cause Collective, Thomas, who also creates photo-based pieces about representations of blackness, has traveled nationwide the work *The Truth Booth*, a large speech bubble where visitors can record their thoughts on a variety of political issues.

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