

PRESERVATION FORWARD



2023 LANDMARKS ILLINOIS INFLUENCER

AMANDA WILLIAMS

Artist, Architect

Amanda Williams is a visual artist who trained as an architect. Her creative practice employs color as an operative means for drawing attention to the complex ways race informs how we assign value to the spaces we occupy. The landscapes in which she operates are the visual residue of the invisible policies and forces that have detrimentally shaped much of the United States. Williams' installations, sculptures, paintings, and works on paper seek to inspire new ways of looking at the familiar and in the process, raise questions about the state of urban space and ownership in America.

Her breakthrough series, Color(ed) Theory, was recently named by the New York Times as one of the twenty-five most significant works of postwar architecture in the world. For the series, she gathered friends and family to paint the exterior of several condemned houses on the south side of Chicago. The unsanctioned project saw Williams' cover each structure in a monochrome palette from culturally coded color associations. The project garnered international acclaim and interest. What Black Is This You Say?, a multi-platform project that explores the wide range of meaning and conceptual color that connotes blackness. Using her Instagram account as an initial platform to challenge and celebrate black lives, the work has evolved into a series of paintings, soundworks and a year long public work in New York's SoHo neighborhood. In her most recent participatory artwork at the Museum of Modern Art in NY, Embodied Sensations, Williams considers how COVID-19 has reshaped how we move, and how we relate to one another. She examines questions of race, ability and power, highlighting the stark inequities and systemic injustices that underlie such shifts; asking us to reflect on control and freedom, isolation and community, prejudice and violence, love and fear.

Amanda has exhibited widely, including the Museum of Modern Art in NY, the Venice Architecture Biennale, the MCA Chicago, and a public commission at the Pulitzer Arts Foundation in St. Louis. She is co-designer of a forthcoming permanent monument to Shirley Chisholm in Brooklyn NY and part of the Museum Design Team for the Obama Presidential Center. Williams has garnered critical acclaim and been recognized as a USA Ford Fellow, a Joan Mitchell Painting and Sculpture grantee, a 3Arts Next Level awardee, and is the inaugural Artist-In-Residence at Smith College. She is a highly sought after lecturer, including a mainstage 2018 TedTalk. Amanda sits on the boards of the Graham Foundation, The Black Reconstruction Collective, and the Pulitzer Arts Foundation. Her work is in several permanent collections including the Art Institute of Chicago, the National Museum of African-American History and Culture, and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA, NY). Her projects have recently been published in 'Black Futures' and 'Radical Architecture of the Future'. Amanda lives and works on the south side of Chicago.