

## **Touring Cullen Washington, Jr.: The Public Square**

### **Touring with Young Children:**

- Use platform as a public “square” / rectangle. What message should be communicated from the public square? What is so important that you want everyone to hear?
- Connect to places where students gather (classroom carpet, playground)
- Create a composition on the large black and white “grid” sheets
- Imitate the motion of the lines and shapes. Zig-zag, straight, swooping.
- What’s the difference between public and private conversations? When might you want something to remain private?

### **Touring with Older Children or Adults:**

- Before they enter: What do you expect the work to be about when you hear the title Public Square? What do you expect it to look like?
- Enter gallery. Please explore for 5-7 min. Discuss with each other, or silently observe. Ring a bell when they have approx. 3 min left and can begin to wander back to the center square.
- Discuss initial thoughts: Scale? Medium? Process?
  - Biographical background: Born in Louisiana, his dad was a pastor. Familiar with Greek New Testament, he would trace letters as drawing lines. He traveled in Greece and took inspiration from the city square, a place of exchange and democracy, of many voices.
  - 1. The Grid / The Public Square: The power grid, a grid on a map, a mathematical grid, horizontal plane, design grid for compositional layout, balance. From Cullen: “The grid binds us together. I use the grid as a metaphor for human interconnectivity and to represent the universal framework that undergirds all things. This is both content and composition combined.”
  - 2. Abstraction: Abstraction as hope for universal future - like Bauhaus or De Stijl or post-war movements in Europe that wanted to forget their figurative history. Compare to Abstraction, Color and Politics.
  - 3. Media: Equalizes painting, sculpture, printmaking. He uses ink on purpose, to reference printmaking, yet puts it on a large scale. Dimensional, uses found objects.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1) What do you expect conceptually from an exhibition entitled The Public Square that contains numerous works with the title *Agora*? What issues might it address? What themes might it contain? What values might guide the project?

2) What do you expect visually from an exhibition with these titles?

3) This is a personal political question: What do you want for yourself and others in the public square? What experiences? Guided by what values?

4) How is your encounter with the videos shaped by your previous experience with the installation? Does it seem explanatory about the meaning of the whole show? Or does it seem illustrative (more material to support the message of the show)? Or does it seem tangential to the show? The basic question here is how do the videos change your experience and understanding of the show?



## Young Artist

Cullen Washington Jr., 9, became interested in drawing at the age of three. The young artist's work is on display this week in the library of Mabel Brasher Elementary School. Here he shows his favorite work, entitled "Horse in the Clouds." Story and more pictures on A-3. (Town Talk Photo by Leandro Huebner)