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Centrepiece of Destination Crenshaw, a sculpture-filled public space in south Los Angeles, to open in early autumn

The space, which will feature works by Maren Hassinger, Kehinde Wiley and others, also has the support of local celebrities Issa Rae and DeMar DeRozan.

[Torey Akers](#)

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Rendering of Sankofa Park with Kehinde Wiley's *Rumors of War*
Rendering by Perkins&Will, courtesy of Destination Crenshaw.

Destination Crenshaw, the largest Black-focused public art programme in the world, is on track to permanently change the landscape of Los Angeles. Launched in 2017, the initiative seeks to bring world-class art to a historically under-served area of South Los Angeles while driving career opportunities for local residents. The largest component of the initiative, dubbed Sankofa Park, is on track to open in early autumn.

All in all, the project aims to commission more than 100 works by Black artists with ties to the city thanks to \$100m in funding, a mix of public and private support, including funds from the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, The Foundation, and the Destination Crenshaw Sankofa Circle support, led by professional basketball player (and Crenshaw native) DeMar DeRozan and entertainment innovator Issa Raw (who hails from nearby Inglewood).

Sankofa Park, situated at the northernmost end of the Destination Crenshaw site and designed by architects Perkins & Will, draws on the tradition African Symbol of the Sankofa bird, which flies forward through the air while glancing backwards toward the past, as its primary inspiration. This motif will be reflected in the elegant, sloping design of the park, as well as the rich collection of site-specific sculptural installations by Charles Dickson, Maren Hassinger, Artis Lane and Kehinde Wiley.



Overhead view of Sankofa Park. Rendering by Perkins&Will, courtesy of Destination Crenshaw

“Since we broke ground in February 2020, Destination Crenshaw has continued to grow in scope and ambition,” Jason W. Foster, the president and chief operating officer of Destination Crenshaw, said in a statement. “Responding to our community, we have been support Black-owned businesses and hiring local workers, resisting the erasure of Black culture and designing a vibrant, green urban corridor that, when completed, will be bursting with storytelling and magnificent public artworks”.

In the months following the park’s opening, additional outdoor works by Melvin Edwards, Alison Saar and Brenna Youngblood, alongside murals by local artists Patrick Henry Johnson, Anthony “Toons One” Martin and Kissai Ramsess, will be installed along the 1.3-mile project area.

Sankofa Park is intended not only as a haven for Black expression, but also a testament to Black resilience, a theme lead architect Zena Howard emphasized in Perkins&Will’s designs for the Destination Crenshaw streetscape. The streetscape’s blueprint was inspired by African Giant Star Grass, the plant that was used as the bedding on slave ships traveling across the Middle passage. This underlying symbol of diasporic grit underscores the intended social impact of Destination Crenshaw.

“This project, which is for us and by us, illustrates how Black Angelenos are investing in our own neighbourhoods, supporting Black businesses and entrepreneurs,” Issa Rae said in a statement. “We’re simultaneously honouring the cradle of Black arts and entertainment – which has historically been in the heart of South LA.”