

Autre Daily Journal Store, April 10, 2018 "City Of Memphis Unveils I Am A Man Plaza: A Tribute To MLK & The 1968 Sanitation Workers' Strike"
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AUTRE

CITY OF MEMPHIS UNVEILS I AM A MAN PLAZA: A TRIBUTE TO MLK & THE 1968 SANITATION WORKERS' STRIKE

April 10, 2018



Sculpture, text and landscape come together to form an important new American Civil Rights memorial. The I AM A MAN Plaza, designed by Cliff Garten, is a large-scale experiential public sculpture commissioned to pay tribute to the members of the pivotal 1968 Sanitation Workers' Strike and the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Garten and his studio led a design team with Memphis-based landscape architect John Jackson of JPA, Inc. for the 54,000-square-foot memorial plaza. As part of Garten's plan, spoken word artist Steven Fox held an open dialogue with the greater Memphis community, who through a series of public workshops organized by the UrbanArt Commission, selected pertinent historical text and created an original contemporary text which is etched into the marble gates to the plaza's entry. The texts combine as a meditation on America's struggle and progress with racism and class inequity since the sanitation workers and Dr. Martin Luther King took their historic stand in Memphis. Present at the ribbon cutting were Reverend James Lawson, Cliff Garten, Congressman Steven Cohen, Bill Lucy, Elmore Nickleberry and many of the original sanitation workers who went on strike 50 years ago. Elmore Nickleberry has been a sanitation worker in the city of Memphis for 63 consecutive years. *photographs by Lisa Buser*