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Uplifting Community and Incorporating Reuse in Conservation Planning for the Noah Purifoy Outdoor Desert Art Museum of Assemblage Sculpture

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Abstract

In 2023 the Noah Purifoy Foundation received a Mellon Foundation Grant to develop, with conservators, an innovative and thoughtful conservation plan for the over 100 sculptures at the Noah Purifoy Outdoor Desert Art Museum of Assemblage Sculpture. Located in the high desert of Joshua Tree, California, USA, it encompasses four hectares of rural art space where Purifoy lived and worked from 1989 until his death in 2004. Although Purifoy was a trained artist, his works also draw from his time as a US Navy Seabee and the tradition of Black self-taught artists from the American South. His artworks were never complete, but alive, and in an ongoing conversation among him, nature, and material. Amidst the physical challenges of addressing found material assemblage in a challenging landscape, the project also requires bringing stakeholders and knowledge bearers into conversation to determine an appropriate "patina" of weathering for the works. To achieve this, the project involves identifying Purifoy's definition of community, reuse, and interaction with the natural landscape into the conservation plan. The project also included drone mapping as a documentation tool alongside condition surveys and photographic documentation. Being led by a group of racially diverse conservators who are centering community involvement in the work helps the team mimic Purifoy's own commitment to community engagement. This project has the potential to act as a model for the development of conservation plans for

other sites of contemporary sculpture, especially those in remote locations or those focused on African American artists.

Introduction

On the Mojave desert floor of Southern California, in the western region of the USA, where 50°C temperatures are increasingly common, and wildfires are becoming a greater threat, sits a four hectare outdoor museum with over 100 sculptures continuously evolving as they interact with visitors, creatures, and the elements. This constant exposure and change were intended when artist Noah Purifoy created, installed, and reworked the large scale and site-specific sculptures that became this Noah Purifoy Outdoor Desert Art Museum of Assemblage Sculpture. Despite this intentional mutability, the Outdoor Museum itself was meant to endure, as evidenced when Purifoy and his trusted colleagues created the Noah Purifoy Foundation (NPF) to maintain stewardship of the sculpture park and promote Purifoy's ideas about community-based art beyond his own lifetime (Smith 2016).

In 2023, the NPF received a three-year \$500,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which will be transformational in efforts to preserve Purifoy's assemblage sculptures. Working with a team of California conservators in partnership with the UCLA/Getty Interdepartmental Program in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage (a graduate training program at the University of California, Los Angeles) and the nonprofit Your Neighborhood Museum (a new organization dedicated to sharing conservation and cultural heritage support with underserved communities), all of Purifoy's artworks at the Outdoor Museum are being assessed as part of this project. Condition reports and comprehensive action plans are being created for the museum as a whole. Along with the large scope of the site, the challenge is to incorporate Purifoy's philosophy around assemblage, reuse, community, and social justice into the conservation project. The overall project has been split into three phases. This publication is largely an account of Phase I activities as well as overarching ethical concerns.

Land acknowledgement

The Outdoor Museum is located on the traditional territories of the Yuhaviatam/Maarenga'yam (Serrano). The Yuhaviatam/Maarenga'yam are indigenous people that historically lived mainly in what is now called the San Bernardino Mountains, and in the Southern Mojave Desert in Southern California.¹ They were forcibly removed to the San Manuel Reservation in 1891 but continue to live in and care for their traditional places (San Manuel Band of Mission Indians 2023).

Noah Purifoy

Artist, theorist, and community activist, Purifoy (Figure 1) was a renegade and an innovator who understood that shared visual language builds strong communities. Born 1917 in Snow Hill, Alabama, in the Southern USA, Purifoy was a high school industrial arts teacher and social worker before becoming an artist. He earned a bachelor's degree from Alabama State Teachers College and a masters in social service administration from Clark Atlanta University. Following service as a US Navy Seabee (Naval Construction Battalions) during WWII, he moved to Los Angeles, California, and enrolled at Chouinard Art Institute (now CalArts), earning a bachelor of fine arts degree in 1956. Purifoy was the founder and first director of the Watts Towers Art Center in the 1960s, and in 1976 was appointed to the California Arts Council, where he served for 11 years. In 1989, Purifoy moved his practice from Los Angeles to Joshua Tree, in the Mojave Desert. From 1989 until his death in 2004, he transformed the 4 hectares of his high desert studio and environment with assemblage sculptures and installations, dedicating the space to his aesthetic pursuits of materiality, volume, and form. As Purifoy would muse, the installations are in the open and, "collaborate with their environment" (Purifoy 1999). This otherworldly environment, constructed entirely from junk materials, is one of America's great art historical wonders.

Purifoy's earliest body of sculpture, constructed out of charred debris from the 1965 Watts Rebellion, a riot in the predominantly African American neighborhood of Watts and surrounding areas that was spurred by racial injustice, was the basis for *66 Signs of Neon*, a landmark 1966 group exhibition on the Watts uprising that traveled throughout the USA for three years. Purifoy knew the community intimately and his *66 Signs of Neon* presented visual narratives of the tensions, traditions, and survival of a people under an oppressive system. Following traditions of Black Southern

outsider artists, Purifoy led a re-defining movement of Black artistic consciousness through assemblage sculpture.

In line with the postwar period's fascination with urbanization, Purifoy's vision married outsider aesthetics with the canonical Duchampian *avant-garde* movement, Dada, that profoundly impacted David Hammons, John Outterbridge, and Senga Nengudi, among other artists coming of age during that time in Los Angeles. Today, contemporary artists including Todd Gray, LaToya Ruby Frazier, Hannah Collins, Cauleen Smith and others make pilgrimages to the Outdoor Museum in Joshua Tree to be inspired by Purifoy's work and use his visual language to signify the breadth and depth of Black American experiences. Purifoy's work was the subject of a Los Angeles County Museum of Art 2015 monographic exhibition, *Noah Purifoy: Junk Dada* (Sirmans and Lipschutz 2015). His art has been included in virtually every major exhibition focusing on Black or outsider art.² In 2015 a faithful replica of a catalogue Purifoy himself had fabricated with photographs and writings in 1997 was published by Steidl (Purifoy 2015). Today, it is the inspiration behind UCLA's Hammer Museum 2023 *Made in LA* biennial.³

Noah Purifoy Foundation (NPF)

In 1998, Purifoy's representative and colleague of many years, Sue A. Welsh, suggested to Purifoy the importance of preserving his Outdoor Museum. The following year, the NPF was formally established as a 501(c)3 non-profit private foundation (Smith 2016).

NPF's mission is to preserve and maintain the site Purifoy developed in Joshua Tree, California as a permanent cultural center and sculpture park open to the public; to promote public recognition and appreciation for the values that Purifoy's work as an artist and educator has embodied; and to pursue these goals in a manner that protects his contribution as an artist and educator.

The primary activities of the NPF are to:

- Preserve and maintain Purifoy's existing works of art
- Maintain the Outdoor Museum for public engagement, tours, and educational programs
- Provide an arts educational experience to urban middle school Black and Latinx students in South Los Angeles through an Urban Arts Initiative (UAI) program⁴

- Provide curatorial assistance giving visitors a coherent explanation of the desert museum project, its development, its relationship to the USA during Purifoy's lifetime and the recognition of Purifoy as a world leader in the genre of assemblage art
- Organize Purifoy's papers and develop research opportunities for national and international artists and scholars to review his *oeuvre*

The Outdoor Museum

There are 163 distinctly catalogued artworks on the site, 115 of which are outdoor assemblage sculptures. A smaller subset of artworks is kept indoors. Each work is constructed of numerous parts and materials. Since Purifoy's passing, the NPF has approached conservation and preservation issues from a reactive position. This approach, though serious and thoughtful, is more along the lines of a Band-Aid®. If the site is to endure and be available for the public, schools, and researcher's enjoyment and scholarship, the NPF must think long-term.

The NPF conservation project

The lead conservators for the Mellon-funded project are Jennifer Kim (Your Neighborhood Museum) and Anya Dani (UCLA/Getty). The diverse Conservation Project team also includes UCLA anthropology graduate student, Robin Meyer-Lorey, as well as UCLA/Getty Conservation Program graduate students. Additional support was provided by the UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology's Digital Archaeology Lab, UCLA Libraries, and the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture. During this project, all of the artworks on site are being assessed. Condition assessments and comprehensive preservation plans are being created. Part of the grant will fund building a conservation and gallery facility at the Outdoor Museum site to house Purifoy's smaller sculptures while also providing a conservation workspace. NPF aims to create a conservation planning and implementation program that can serve as a model for other groups or institutions facing similar challenges. The conservation facility will also be available as a community resource for collaborative opportunities with students, local cultural organizations, and tribal communities. The conservation project will be executed in three phases. The authors completed Phase I in 2023 and are in the midst of Phase II.

Phase I

Assessment and survey execution

The conservation team performed an assessment of the Outdoor Museum. Both conservation leads were familiar with performing preservation assessments for traditional museums. However, the Outdoor Museum functions uniquely and is in large part self-sufficient. While the museum is technically open daily only during daylight hours, there are no fences or gates to prohibit the public from entering or interacting with the artworks. Staffing is intermittent and any admission fees collected are received digitally *via* a QR code. A visitor center across from the sculpture park is open part-time. The site itself is off a series of unpaved roads. Several assessment models and questionnaires (FAIC 2023; Dardes *et al.* 1999; Patkus 2003) were reviewed and considered during project planning. Ultimately, a fluid, customized protocol was deemed necessary for this unique context.

Work began with a first preliminary walkthrough in winter 2022 and conversations with NPF board members to begin planning for a longer work period on site for documentation and assessment. Major concerns noted in these early conversations included the lack of formal collections or conservation policies, sparse condition reporting or conservation documentation, and the lack of collections numbering systems or sculpture location mapping. Additionally, NPF institutional and Purifoy's personal archives exist but are not easily accessible. A great deal of knowledge of the artworks, their locations and movements, site history, and maintenance or restoration history exists, but mostly in the memories of individual board members, friends, and colleagues of Purifoy.

A Phase 1 itinerary was created for winter/spring 2023 that included document gathering, research, and on-site assessment of the Outdoor Museum, ending with all findings summarized in a preliminary report. Conservators gathered information on Purifoy and his artworks from the NPF board, the site, foundation and collections records, management practices, as well as conducted preliminary art historical research on his *oeuvre* and impact, and climate and site research for the region. Overall assessment of the site included walkthroughs of the location and artworks, a drone survey of the entire site, and a more detailed condition assessment of works displayed and stored indoors in a Quonset hut, workshop, and visitor center

at the desert site. A more detailed conservation survey of these indoor works was performed both to aid the assessment and as a paid learning opportunity for UCLA/Getty conservation graduate students (Figure 2).

Due to the extreme weather worsening with climate change (Hopkins *et al.* 2018), very low rainfall with occasional flood risks, and the Southern California fire season, site work has significant seasonal limitations. Major limiting factors are the reasonable safety and comfort of the team working largely outdoors, and extreme weather or fire events that can cause road closures in an already remote area. To demonstrate the reality of these risks, two months after the site assessment, the region was struck by the massive York wildfire which ultimately scorched an estimated 40,000 hectares. The York Fire began on 28 July in the New York Mountain Range of the Mojave National Preserve located in eastern San Bernardino County (Inciweb 2023). This wildfire was ultimately contained on 19 August, when the area was doused by the first tropical storm to hit California for decades. Heavy rainfall from this storm hit inland desert areas particularly hard, including Joshua Tree, causing significant destruction from flash flooding, mudslides, and debris flow, stranding many communities in the area (Fonseca and Li 2023, Solis and Toohey 2023). Although these events occurred in the same region as the Outdoor Museum, thankfully they did not cause significant direct damage to the site and artworks. However, the risk remains real.

A temporary object numbering system was introduced to track the artwork and assessment during the indoor work survey. A survey custom format created using the Airtable online hybrid database and spreadsheet platform was used by the survey team to enter all condition notes, treatment or other intervention suggestions, as well as photo-documentation. In addition, an overall five-step condition ranking system was created to tease out physical stabilities of artworks from highest to lowest risk of instability or catastrophic damage.⁵

Drone survey and mapping

The Phase I photogrammetric drone survey of the Outdoor Museum was carried out on 6 May 2023, to quickly and fully document the location and basic physical characteristics of all 115 outdoor assemblage sculptures.⁶ The resulting map (Figure 3) will be used to track changes (deterioration and movement due to wind/weather) and can be built upon with additional technology in the future. The survey team utilized a DJI Phantom 4 RTK Drone, DJI D-RTK 2 GNSS Mobile Base Station, and an iPhone 12 Pro WIFI Hotspot. Under sunny skies, no clouds, light to negligible wind, a

temperature averaging 21°C, and low relative humidity, the survey conditions were ideal.

Post-flight, the collected images were processed in Agisoft Metashape Professional. This software facilitated the creation of a georeferenced orthomosaic of the entire site, at a resolution of 1 cm per pixel. Additionally, a georeferenced digital elevation model (DEM) was generated, providing a detailed representation of the terrain, vegetation, and sculptures, with a resolution of 2.7cm per pixel. These outputs enable precise measurements of GPS locations, dimensions, and heights of sculptures, vegetation, and buildings within the museum grounds as of the survey date. GIS software was used to label the photogrammetric map and create a detailed list of all sculptures, with their GPS coordinates and dimensions.

Results

The key recommendations were:

Collections Management improvement Needs. The preservation and maintenance of Purifoy's existing works of art require the incorporation of more robust documentation and research, strengthening of broad stakeholder participation, and changes to intervention modalities to better meet current standards of best practice. In particular, preserving the primary evidence of Purifoy's hand in the physical construction of his artwork requires immediate attention.

Codifying Ethics and Values. A cohesive overarching preservation and collections management plan that aligns with and can be incorporated into the NPF Board's strategic plan and values is needed.

Education. Aspects of the preservation and maintenance practices of Purifoy's artworks are well suited for incorporation into an arts educational experience either with or adjacent to the NPF UAI program.

Archives. Purifoy's papers and archives should be assessed urgently as they provide critical contextual history to the site.

The scopes of the third and fourth points are straightforward and will be actualized in Phases 2 and 3 of the Conservation Project. However, the first two recommendations will require further investigation and deliberation.

Conservation and collections management improvement needs

During the assessment process it became clear that the Outdoor Museum could benefit from the introduction of collections management policies as part of an overall preservation plan. Therefore, it was recommended that the NPF create an object numbering system, and that they follow American Alliance of Museums standards (AAM 2023) by writing, formalizing, and implementing the following additional core documents: *Institutional Code of Ethics*, *Strategic Plan*, *Collections Management Policy*, *Disaster Preparedness*⁷ and *Emergency Response Plan*. Formalizing policies would help give clear guidance and expectations to the site's caretakers, and may assist with future grant solicitation.

Codifying ethics and values

In order to incorporate Purifoy's values into an overall preservation plan and into interventive conservation treatments, it was important to delve into the artist's views on art and preservation. Purifoy felt that assemblage was the artform closest to human existence. In many ways the process of creating art was his true fascination and superseded the final outcome. At the same time, he did care about the longevity of his artworks and performed some repairs himself.⁸ Purifoy himself said:⁹ "Art and the creative process are not one and the same thing. My idea is to interrelate them if I can, like I attempted to interrelate my mind with my body to make one whole person". It soon also became part of the project's mission to integrate preservation of the artworks and the creative process into the developing conservation plan. We attempted to reconcile these seemingly contradictory values as we moved forward with the project.

Managed loss and patina

Deciding on appropriate patina for the artworks is critical before proceeding with conservation treatment. When Purifoy originally created the sculptures, he meant for them to interact with the natural landscape and undergo natural wear (Figure 4). However, at the same time he did not mean for the sculptures to be temporary. One way this is evident is the fact that he approved and was involved in the creation of the NPF whose mission includes site preservation (Welsh 2023). Given this, what level of wear is acceptable and when should either stabilization or restoration treatments take place? After research and interviews, the project conservators recommended that

most surface weathering be allowed to continue naturally. This could take the form of weathering of wood surfaces, metallic surface corrosion, paint loss, etc. According to Purifoy's friend and colleague, Sue Welsh, Purifoy described some of his own repairs as "stabilization".¹⁰ Given this, incorporating the value of stabilization to maintain structural integrity seems appropriate.

More comprehensive restoration treatments are deemed appropriate for the most vulnerable materials that disintegrate so quickly that their absence negatively affects visitors' interactions with the artworks (i.e. textiles, paper, and some plastics). The textiles in particular already have a history of being replaced by site caretakers as seen in the *Three Witches* sculpture (Figure 5). Therefore, a regular renewal schedule should be created for these sensitive materials where they can be replaced. This replacement process should be documented extensively and executed using historical evidence as an aesthetic guide. Recycled materials should be used as often as possible while adhering to Purifoy's aesthetic.

One could view a simple Google image search of images taken by visitors of the sculptures at the Outdoor Museum as an informal survey of what the community sees and values from their experience. These images generally always showcase two key themes: the landscape, and weathering of the material from that landscape. When the works are restored to "new" the effect can be jarring. Furthermore, wholesale repainting is for all intents and purposes irreversible, obliterates any vestige of the artist's hand, and strays from Purifoy's vision of natural weathering.

Repainting of sculptures has been done in the past (Figure 6) but should now be given significant thought and only be done in extreme cases. Color choice, material choice, layering, the use of conservation barriers, surface preparation, and application should all be considered. The appearance of paint with natural weathering is acceptable and even welcomed, thereby making repainting an uncommon activity going forward.

Reuse discussion

Purifoy believed deeply in assemblage, using found, discarded, and recycled materials in his work. As the creative process is at the crux of Purifoy's ethos, attempts should be made to integrate his beliefs into the conservation process as well. To accomplish this, the project conservators recommended

that reused materials be incorporated into any future conservation treatment. This would include the incorporation of materials that are currently in the *palette* area of the site. This is a designated area at the Outdoor Museum where Purifoy himself kept found materials and allowed them to weather. If the purchase of new materials is unavoidable during conservation treatment, then those materials too can be left for a time in the *palette* area to facilitate aging. Calls for community donations to the *palette* should be encouraged and would be in line with Purifoy's own practices. With this model, materials similar to the original materials may need to be incorporated into the conservation process. Given this, it makes documentation and discrete labeling of any added materials that much more important in order to be able to distinguish between original vs added material in the future. The use of conservation "barrier layers" can also facilitate differentiation. Although we do not suspect that Purifoy's assemblage philosophy was driven by environmentalism, the planned efforts to reuse found and donated materials has the added benefit of being environmentally friendly and limiting waste.

Natural landscape

Purifoy intentionally did not significantly manipulate the site while he lived in Joshua Tree, and must have appreciated the juxtaposition of his artworks with the surrounding landscape.¹¹ The desert views surrounding the artworks are certainly striking. A variety of desert plants can be seen at the site (shrubs, succulents, cacti, grasses, trees, and flowers). Although the vegetation is sparsely distributed, some of it is in close proximity or touching artworks. In order to continue this relationship between the landscape and the artworks, the conservators recommended continued minimal manipulation of the vegetation. The only exception would be to slightly trim branches directly touching artworks for fire safety and pest management reasons.

Council of Black Artists

The context that informed Purifoy's practice and continues to inform his extant work is deeply intertwined with his commitment to Black and underserved communities. His philosophies were informed by his experiences as a Black man and by his social work background (Choi 2023).

NPF has already been involved in community engagement through their UAI. In alignment with Purifoy's ethics and evolving contemporary conservation ethics, the conservators recommended that NPF convene an advisory council of Black artists whose art practices are influenced by Purifoy to help guide long-term preservation planning in conversation with conservators and the Board. This idea is still under consideration by NPF. Such a Council of Black artists would incorporate the public and community stakeholder voice in an informed and fruitful manner.

Conservation team

Aligning with Purifoy's ethics, the conservation/preservation team will strive to include representation from Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) preservation professionals and community members to ensure perspectives that are rooted in the marginalized experience. The team will have strong representation from conservators whose lived experiences can help them to better understand Purifoy's experience. This is not an easy task given the lack of diversity in American cultural heritage conservation (AIC/FAIC 2022). Despite this reality, the team is committed to diversity and an expansive view of conservation at the Outdoor Museum that prioritizes the preservation of Purifoy's creative process and incorporates community engagement. This is innovative as it is uncommon to consider the lived experiences of the conservation professionals involved in a project and not just their skills as practitioners, scientists, or scholars.

Community engagement as an integral element of preservation

Future stages of the conservation project will build upon the NPF's existing community engagement framework to hand down knowledge to community members and emerging artists. In addition to Purifoy's commitment to Los Angeles artists and the predominantly BIPOC Watts community, he was also dedicated to his Joshua Tree community, making it reasonable to involve locals from both of these locations in the conservation or recyclable collection process. The team also plans to involve representatives from local Indigenous groups into the process, as they were Purifoy's neighbors, and the traditional caretakers of the surrounding landscape that continues to be so important to the life of the artworks.

Who ultimately decides the approach taken?

Ultimately, the preservation approach taken will be decided by the NPF Board members. One shift currently underway from previous practice is that all future conservation treatments will be agreed upon by the Board before they commence. These decisions will be informed by predetermined criteria regarding patina, reuse, and landscape interaction.

Phases II and III planning

Phases II and III will invite community participation to further document the sculptures, begin structural assessments of the outdoor works, and to begin hands-on conservation treatment in a communal setting. Interviews with Purifoy's friends and colleagues are continuing in order to further uncover artist intent and to evolve the project's ethical framework.

Preliminary efforts to connect with local Indigenous tribes began during Phase I by leveraging a pre-existing relationship between Your Neighborhood Museum and the Malki Museum¹², which serves the numerous local Southern California tribes, and operates the Malki Ballena Press, an academic outlet for publishing current Native American research. An outreach avenue was established to reach intertribal audiences for participants and partners through their museum network.

During subsequent phases we will continue building on information and assessments gathered in Phase I. The conservation team, with a structural engineer and mount-fabricator, will review select outdoor sculptures that have pre-eminent structural stability and safety concerns. Conservators will perform an in-person assessment of the physical Noah Purifoy Archives. The preservation of the archives is critical not only to ensure Purifoy's legacy, but also because they are an original resource that can help us understand the artist's creative process and original constructions. Finally, there will be a condition survey of the 115 distinctly catalogued outdoor sculptures by conservators, and a team comprised of conservation students and community members. In addition to assessment work, five priority pieces determined by the assessment to have greatest structural instabilities and art historical importance will be treated by UCLA students under guidance of the lead conservators. This work can potentially begin at the new conservation facility being built on the Outdoor Museum site with Mellon funding. Ahead of site work, dataloggers will be purchased and introduced

into all buildings on the site. Based on the results of Phase II, direct interventions that ensure the stability of the outdoor sculptures through mount fabrication and stabilization treatment are likely to be incorporated into Phase III. In the end, a tailored and clear conservation values document and overall preservation plan will be created.

Conclusions

In 2023, Phase 1 of the Noah Purifoy Conservation Project was completed by a racially diverse team of conservators and students working in collaboration with the NPF Board. An overall general assessment of the site has been completed along with more detailed examinations of the 41 indoor sculptures. Amidst the physical challenges of addressing found material assemblage in a challenging landscape, the project also required bringing stakeholders and knowledge bearers into conversation to determine an appropriate "patina" of weathering for the works. Following Purifoy's lead, natural surface weathering of sculptures will be allowed to continue. Instances where stabilization treatments, repainting, or the replacement of materials will be utilized will be clearly defined. Adhering as close as possible to Purifoy's philosophy, materials will be reused and recycled. Community donations will be welcomed. This all has the added benefit of promoting environmental sustainability of conservation activities on site. These artworks are not meant to be static as change is just part of the ongoing conversation among Purifoy, nature, and material. However, instituting conservation documentation procedures will help the team track these natural changes and make informed preservation decisions. Most important to this project are the incorporation of Purifoy's ethics fused with evolving modern conservation ethics and social justice. Promoting diverse conservation teams and connections to Black stakeholders will ultimately help ensure that the Outdoor Museum remains relevant and promotes cultural sustainability.

Notes

. The Outdoor Museum is located in the area of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians. They use the name *Yuhaviatam*, or "people of the pines". In 1891 the USA established the San Manuel Reservation for the Serrano people, which took its name to honor Chief Santos Manuel.

2. *Outliers and American Vanguard Art*: National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 2018, *Now Dig This!: Art and Black Los Angeles 1960–1980*: Hammer Museum, Los Angeles 2011–12; MOMA PS1, Long Island City 2012–13; Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown 2013, *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power*: Tate Modern, London, UK 2017; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville 2018; Brooklyn Museum, New York 2018–19; Broad Museum, Los Angeles 2019; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, de Young, San Francisco 2019–2020.

3. *Made in LA 2023: Acts of Living*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles 2023.

4. This addresses the critical lack of arts curriculum centered on artists of color who use innovative practices to address issues faced in their communities. These students face not only housing and food insecurities, but during and post-pandemic, were and remain bereft of arts education and engagement. Like Purifoy they continue to face racial and economic hardships. The UAI meets California's Department of Education, Visual and Performing Arts Standards and utilizes visual thinking strategies. The Foundation offers this curriculum free of charge to educators wishing to incorporate these ideas into their programs.

5. For the For 41 indoor artworks: 5 items scored 5 (major structural damage); 10 items scored 4 (minor structural damage); 9 items scored 3 (significant rehousing/storage improvement needed); 24 items scored 2 (aesthetic issues only); and 0 items scored 1 (no treatment or major rehousing necessary).

6. Photogrammetry is a process for creating 3D models and large 2D images by stitching together overlapping photographs. Accurate 3D models can be generated due to the parallax effect. Handheld cameras are often used to generate 3D photogrammetric models of small objects and sculptures, and drone photogrammetry is often used to generate topographic data and detailed maps over large areas. However, we used an innovative approach by using drone photogrammetry to 3D model many sculptures in a short period of time. This approach was made possible by the outdoor nature of the Noah Purifoy museum and its unique spatial characteristics as a cultural landscape.

7. The degree to which the site is susceptible to disasters was considered. There is seismic risk: the nearby San Andreas Fault is capable of a catastrophic earthquake. Wildfire danger is real and serious. Regional wildfires may also contribute to periods of poor air quality. Power cuts are possible due to fire damage to the power infrastructure, preemptive power cuts due to fire risk, or power cuts in an overtaxed power grid situation (extreme heat).

8. Sue Welsh, Interviewed by Anya Dani, 28 June 2023 at Welsh's home in Los Angeles, California. Uncatalogued, NPF.
9. *Noah Purifoy*, interview by Karen Anne Mason, transcript. African American Artists of Los Angeles, Oral History Program, University of California, Los Angeles, Charles E. Young Research Library, Department of Special Collections, UCLA.
10. See note 8.
11. See note 8.
12. Started in 1964, the Malki museum is an intertribal museum located on the Morongo Reservation. The Malki Museum was founded by Jane K. Penn (Wanikik Cahuilla), and Katherine Siva Saubel (Cahuilla), and a group of dedicated community members.

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Figure captions

Figure 1. Noah Purifoy. Image: Harry Drinkwater. Courtesy the estate of Harry Drinkwater.

Figure 2. Quonset Hut gallery indoor conditions. UCLA/Getty Conservation students participating in the site survey. Left to right: Kathryn Peneyra (MA), Moupi Mukhopadhyay (PhD), and Makayla Rawlins (MA).

Figure 3. Noah Purifoy Outdoor Desert Art Museum of Assemblage Sculpture. Copy of orthomosaic by Robin Meyer-Lorey, 2023.

Figure 4. Regarding his work *Gas Station*, Purifoy wrote in 1992 (Purifoy 2015: 124): "This piece is primarily made of wood and leather. It was a piece made for indoors but placed outside to observe what effect the weather would have upon it."

Figure 5. Noah Nurefoy, *Three Witches* 1994. Left: historic, undated image from NPF records. Courtesy of Noah Purifoy Foundation ©2023. Center: presumed to be after a November 2020 restoration which NPF records describe as "Layer of burlap attached, new guy wires." Right: in May 2023.

Figure 6. Noah Purifoy, *The White House* 1990-93. Courtesy of Noah Purifoy Foundation ©2023. Top: Undated historical image in NPF records. Bottom: presumed to be after a November 2013 restoration campaign which "Stabilized elements of interior, added four piers below floor. Repaint."

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Data availability statement

The UCLA Dataverse, maintained and managed by the Data Science Center in the UCLA Library, will serve as the long-term preservation repository for the data generated by this project. The data has not yet been formatted and uploaded to the Dataverse. After it is archived, the hyperlink and DOI will be provided.