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## Richard Hunt Legacy Foundation Welcomes Inaugural Executive Director

**As Richard Hunt's biographer, Jon Ott will bring expertise and guidance  
to the foundation and the artist's legacy.**

**(Chicago, July 28, 2025)** – Jon Ott has been appointed as the inaugural executive director of the Richard Hunt Legacy Foundation. With his deep knowledge of Richard Hunt's art and life, a successful career as an executive in the tech industry, and decades-long friendship with the artist, the foundation is thrilled to have Ott at the helm.

"Ott's definitive expertise on Richard Hunt combined with his board leadership at the International Sculpture Center made him the most ideal candidate for this critical appointment," says BK Fulton, chair of the Richard Hunt Legacy Foundation. "Richard Hunt is truly one of this country's greatest artists, and with Ott's vision for leading the organization, Hunt's elevated recognition in the canon seems assured."

Ott transitions to the executive director role after serving as a founding member and vice chair of the Richard Hunt Legacy Foundation for two years. Through Ott's leadership, the foundation has already established key partnerships with arts organizations, including the [Public Art Archive](#) to document nearly all of Hunt's 160 public works across the U.S. Ott has acted as an exhibitions advisor for museums and galleries, as well as an editorial advisor for various exhibition catalogues and publications.

"My role as the executive director is the culmination of my life's work in service of my dear friend's legacy," says Ott. "Richard Hunt's sculptures embody expressions of growth, movement, and emancipation. Everyone has something to learn from Richard Hunt, whose works epitomize a universal desire for freedom and continue to inspire us all."

Established in 2023, the Richard Hunt Legacy Foundation's mission is to advance the public's awareness, education, and appreciation of sculptor Richard Hunt through expert knowledge of his public and studio works and support for exhibitions, research, and scholarly publications.

As the foundation grows, Ott will develop and implement a strategic plan to build the infrastructure, leadership, and systems necessary for long-term success. The foundation plans to continue digitizing Richard Hunt's extensive archive, conduct oral histories, and launch a catalogue raisonné project to become a central hub for scholarly information—building upon the extensive archival material acquired by the [Getty Research Institute](#) in 2022. In addition, the foundation will support exhibitions at museums, galleries, and public places, as well as projects to educate viewers about Richard Hunt.

Ott has been Richard Hunt's friend for decades, and their relationship strengthened during the production of the artist's monograph, [Richard Hunt](#) (2022), which is considered the definitive survey of his work. Interviewing Richard Hunt for hundreds of hours provided Ott with key stories and biographical history to create a comprehensive illustrated chronology of the artist's life and career for the publication.

"Your research and our dialogue put you in the unique position of being more knowledgeable of my history than any other person," said Richard Hunt in a March 2023 letter to Ott. "I recognize I will not live forever, and that biographical evidence, interpretation and characterization of my works and life will be important for future generations to more fully appreciate my times and my art. I most fervently hope you will continue to tell my story."

As Richard Hunt's official biographer, Ott has appeared as speaker at the Chicago History Museum, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (ALPLM), and White Cube. Recently, he authored an essay, "Richard Hunt: Sculpting Freedom," for the ALPLM exhibition catalogue, *Richard Hunt: Freedom in Form*, and was the exhibition advisor for *Richard Hunt: Early Masterworks* at White Cube New York and *Richard Hunt: Metamorphosis – A Retrospective* at White Cube Bermondsey in London.

Ott's latest essays will be included in the second edition of *Richard Hunt: Synthesis*, an exhibition catalogue by the Georgia Museum of Art, and *820 Ebony/Jet: Visions of an African American Icon*, *The Johnson Publishing Company*. He is featured in the documentary film, *The Light of Truth: Richard Hunt's Monument to Ida B. Wells* and is an advising producer of the forthcoming documentary, *Richard Hunt: A Monumental Life*.

**About Richard Hunt**

Richard Hunt (1935-2023) was a celebrated American metal sculptor who was the subject of more than 160 solo exhibitions, countless group exhibitions, and featured as the first African American sculptor to have a retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in 1971. His metal sculpture is notable for its widespread presence in more than 125 museum collections. Hunt made the largest contribution to public sculpture in the United States, with more than 160 commissions gracing prominent locations in 24 states and Washington, D.C.

Richard Hunt considered artistic freedom to be the most important aspect of his career: “I am interested more than anything else in being a free person. To me, that means that I can make what I want to make, regardless of what anyone else thinks I should make.”

Richard Hunt served on dozens of boards, committees, and councils during his lifetime, including serving as a Commissioner for the National Museum of American Art, part of the Smithsonian Institution, and as the first African American visual artist to serve on the National Council on the Arts. In addition, Hunt received more than 30 major awards, including the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Sculpture Center, the Fifth Star Award from the City of Chicago, and the Legends and Legacy Award from the Art Institute of Chicago.

Among his works, Hunt paid tribute to some of his nation’s greatest heroes, including Martin Luther King, Jr., Mary McLeod Bethune, Jesse Owens, Hobart Taylor, Jr., and Ida B. Wells-Barnett. In 2022, Barack Obama commissioned Hunt to create a sculptural work for the Obama Presidential Center in Chicago. *Book Bird* (2023) will grace the Library Reading Garden outside the new Chicago Public Library branch on the campus when the center opens in 2026.

**About the Richard Hunt Legacy Foundation**

The Richard Hunt Legacy Foundation was founded by Richard Hunt in 2023. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the foundation advances public awareness, education, and appreciation of the art and life of American sculptor Richard Hunt. The Richard Hunt Legacy Foundation's vision is to ensure that future generations fully appreciate Richard Hunt by encouraging, inspiring, facilitating, educating, and supporting the public’s understanding of his work and his place in American and art history. In addition, the foundation aims to support the next generation of sculptors and artists.

***"I have founded the Richard Hunt Legacy Foundation in hopes that what I have accomplished in my life will transcend my time on earth. I sincerely hope that people continue to find my art useful for whatever use they have of it. And more so, I hope that my art provides a way to improve their lives and the communities where they reside."***

– Richard Hunt

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For more information about the Richard Hunt Legacy Foundation, please visit:

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