

# Paul Rucker

Born 1968 in Anderson, SC. Lives and works in Richmond, VA

## BIOGRAPHY

Paul Rucker is a multimedia visual artist, composer, and musician. His practice often integrates live performance, original musical compositions, and visual art installation. For nearly two decades, Rucker has used his own brand of art making as a social practice, which illuminates the legacy of enslavement in America and its relationship to the current socio-political moment. His work is the product of a rich interactive process, through which he investigates community impacts, human rights issues, historical research, and basic human emotions.

Rucker has received numerous grants, awards, and residencies for visual art and music. He is a 2017 John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship awardee, a 2012 Creative Capital grantee in visual art as well as a 2014, 2018, 2019 MAP (Multi-Arts Production) Fund grantee for performance. In 2015 he received a prestigious Joan Mitchell Painters & Sculptors Grant as well as the Mary Sawyer Baker Award. In 2016 Paul received the Rauschenberg Artist as Activist fellowship and the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship, becoming the first artist in residence at the National Museum of African American Culture.

Residencies include the Rockefeller Foundation Study Center in Bellagio, Italy, MacDowell Colony, Blue Mountain Center, Ucross Foundation, Art OMI, Banff Center, Pilchuck Glass School, Rauschenberg Residency, Joan Mitchell Residency, Loghaven, Montalvo, Hermitage, Hemera Artist Retreat, Air Serembe, and Creative Alliance. He will be a Master Teacher at the Atlantic Center for the Arts in 2026. In 2013-2015, he was the Robert W. Deutsch Foundation Artist in Residence and Research Fellow at the Maryland Institute College of Art. He has been awarded a 2018 TED Fellowship, a 2020 TED Senior Fellowship, and the 2018 Arts Innovator Award from the Dale and Leslie Chihuly Foundation and Artist Trust. He has received support from Ford/Art for Justice Fund for 2000 and 2022, and the Mellon Foundation for 2022.

Rucker is an iCubed Arts Research Fellow and Assistant Professor at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia and Curator for Creative Collaboration for VCUarts.

Paul Rucker is the founding and executive director of Cary Forward Museum in Richmond, VA, opening in 2026.

## SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 *Unfinished Republic: America at 250*, Goya Contemporary Gallery, Baltimore, MD,  
Curator: Amy Eva Raehse
- 2025 *Paul Rucker: Rewind Resurrection*, 545 W 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, New York, NY (solo)
- 2023 *No Justice Without Love*, The Ford Foundation Gallery, New York, NY
- 2022 *Paul Rucker: Banking While Black*, Sun Devil Stadium, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ (solo)
- 2021-2023 *The Dirty South: Contemporary Art, Material Culture, and the Sonic Impulse*, Organized by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; traveled to: Contemporary Arts Museum

- Houston, TX; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR; Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, CO (catalogue)
- 2021-2022 *Undoing Time: Art and Histories of Incarceration*, Arizona State University Art Museum, Tempe, AZ
- 2020 *Storm in the Time of Shelter*, Virginia Museum of Fine Art, Richmond, VA (permanent collection)
- 2019 *Red Sun: Paul Rucker*, The Gund, Gambier, OH (solo)  
*Paul Rucker: FOREVER*, Greg Kucera Gallery, Seattle, WA (solo)  
*Disruption! Art and the Prison Industrial Complex*, Pitzer College, Claremont, CA
- 2018 *Declaration*, Institute for Contemporary Art, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA
- 2017 *Paul Rucker: REWIND*, York College of Pennsylvania, York, PA (solo)  
*Paul Rucker: REWIND*, Sculptureworks, Ferguson, MO (solo)  
*Paul Rucker: REWIND, Gallery One*, Ellensburg, WA (solo)  
*CoCA Legacy Show*, Center on Contemporary Art, Seattle, WA
- 2016 *Baltimore Rising*, Maryland Institute and College of Art, Baltimore, MD  
*States of Incarceration*, Greensboro Project Space in collaboration with UNCG's Department of Public History and the International Civil Rights Center & Museum, Greensboro, NC  
*Rendered Visible*, Arcade Contemporary Art Projects, Webster University, St. Louis, MO  
*What You See is What You Sweat*, Center on Contemporary Art, Seattle, WA  
*American Power*, Center on Contemporary Art, Seattle, WA  
*SEEING NOW*, 21c Museum Hotel, Cincinnati, OH  
*a cat. a codpiece. a crime.*, The Creative Alliance, Baltimore, MD  
*A Walk in the Light of a History*, Baltimore Light City Festival, Baltimore, MD  
*Prison Obscura*, Newspace Center for Photography, Portland, OR  
*Prison Obscura*, Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA
- 2015 *Paul Rucker: REWIND*, The Baltimore Museum of Art, MD (solo)  
*Prison Obscura*, Duderstadt Center Gallery, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI  
*SEEING NOW*, 21c Museum Hotel, Durham, NC  
*Paul Rucker: REWIND*, The Creative Alliance, Baltimore, MD (solo)  
*Prison Obscura*, Sheila C. Johnson Design Center, Parsons School of Design, New York, NY
- 2014 *Prison Obscura*, Alfa Art Gallery, New Brunswick, NJ  
*Prison Obscura*, Rutgers College, NJ  
*Prison Obscura*, Clark Humanities Museum, Scripps College, Claremont, CA  
*Recapitulation*, 21c Museum Hotels, Louisville, KY  
*Prison Obscura*, Hurford Center, Haverford College, PA  
*The Empathy Project*, The Maryland Institute and College of Art, Baltimore, MD (solo)  
*Proliferation*, Arizona State University Museum, Tempe, AZ
- 2013 *Recapitulation*, Catherine Clark Gallery, San Francisco, CA  
*American Voices: Thelma Jackson and Paul Rucker*, University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA
- 2012 Northwest Biennial, Tacoma Art Museum in Tacoma, WA
- 2009 *Four Score*, Cornish College of Art, Seattle, WA (solo)

## SELECTED AWARDS & GRANTS

- 2022 Mellon Foundation  
Art for Justice, Ford Foundation
- 2020 Art for Justice, Ford Foundation
- 2019 Multi-Arts Production Fund Performance Grant

- 2018 Creative Catalyst Award – Artist Trust, WA
- 2018 Multi-Arts Production Fund Performance Grant
- Arts Innovator Award, Dale and Leslie Chihuly Foundation and Artist Trust
- Rauschenberg Foundation Artist as Activist Fellowship
- TED Fellowship
- Multi-Arts Production Fund Performance Grant
- 2017 Rauschenberg Foundation Artist as Activist Fellowship
- Tiffany Comfort (Nomination)
- John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship
- 2016 Rauschenberg Foundation Artist as Activist Fellowship
- Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship
- MacDowell Fellowship in Visual Arts, Peterborough, NH
- Rubys Artist Project Grant in Performing Art
- 2015 Joan Mitchell Painters and Sculptors Grant
- Mary Sawyer Baker Artist Award, Prize Winner
- Creative Alliance, Baltimore, MD
- 2014 Multi-Arts Production Fund Performance Grant
- 2012 Creative Capital Grant in Visual Art
- Artist Trust GAP Grant
- Headlands Center for the Arts, AiR Award
- Conductive Garboil Grant
- 4Culture Project Award
- 2000 Art for Justice Fund Fellowship

## SELECTED RESIDENCIES

- 2025 Atlantic Center for the Arts, Master Visual Art Teacher, New Smyrna Beach, FL
- 2024 Hermitage Retreat, Sarasota, FL
- 2019 Loghaven Artist Residency, Knoxville, TN
- Lucas Artists Fellowship in Visual Arts, Architecture & Design, Montalvo Arts Center, Saratoga, CA
- Hermitage Retreat, Sarasota, FL
- 2017 Joan Mitchell Center
- MacDowell Colony Residency
- Rauschenberg Retreat Center, Captiva, FL
- Hemera Foundation Retreat Center, CO
- Creative Alliance, Baltimore, MD
- 2015 Air Serembe, Georgia
- Blue Mountain Center, Blue Mountain Lake, NY
- 2014 Creative Alliance, Baltimore, MD
- 2013 Robert W. Deutsch Foundation Artist in Residence and Research Fellow
- 2012 Headland Center for the Arts
- 2010 Pilchuck Glass School Residency, Stanwood, WA
- 2009 Blue Mountain Center, Blue Mountain Lake, NY
- 2006 Bellagio Residency, The Rockefeller Foundation, Italy
- 2004 Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Alberta, Canada
- Ucross Foundation, Sheridan County, WY
- Blue Mountain Center, Blue Mountain Lake, NY
- 2003 Art OMI, Ghent, NY

## SELECTED PUBLIC COMMISSIONS

- 2022 Banking While Black, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ
- 2021 Vulcan, 45 large outdoor sculptures, Seattle, WA
- 2019 First Central Station, Seattle, WA
- 2018 First Central Station, Seattle, WA
- 2017 First Central Station, Seattle, WA
- 2016 Baltimore Light City Festival, *In Light of History*, Baltimore, MD  
First Central Station, Seattle, WA
- 2013 Human Rights Legacy in Tacoma, WA
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- 2011 Human Rights Legacy in Tacoma, WA
- 2010 4Culture: King County Trails Projects Commission
- 2008 Museum of Flight: 32-Channel Sound Installation, T. Evans Wyckoff Memorial Bridge, Tacoma, WA

## SELECTED COLLECTIONS

- 21c Museum Hotels
- Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, WA
- Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA

## SELECTED PERFORMANCES

- 2012 University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA
- 2011 Monroe Correctional Complex, Monroe, WA  
Alcatraz Prison, San Francisco, CA

## SELECTED LECTURES & ARTIST TALKS

- 2024 *Paul Rucker: We were lied to*, TED Talk
- 2023 *Storm in The Time of Shelter: A Conversation with Paul Rucker*, interview with Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond
- 2021 *Paul Rucker, Banking While Black*, Virginia Commonwealth University Arts Faculty Lecture Series
- 2020 *Paul Rucker, "Facing Racism: Art and Action"* Symposium, Blanton Museum of Art, TX
- 2018 *Paul Rucker: The symbols of systemic racism — and how to take away their power*, TED Talk  
*How my mom inspired my approach to the cello: Paul Rucker*, TED Talk
- 2014 *How an artist copes with reality: Paul Rucker, "Rethink. Redefine. Recreate,"* TEDxBerkeley
- 2012 *Why do we assume all the elephants in the room like peanuts?*, Paul Rucker at TEDxTacoma