Monuments Must Fall

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Cutting and Pasting: The Print Room at Woodhall Park

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Monuments Must Fall
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Monumentality is an aesthetic form of social antagonism. Responding to recent protests against public statues, art historian Nickolas Lambrianou has suggested a "more generalized failure or impossibility of the monument itself", which he describes as "the 'exhaustion' of a specific cultural form that will always be tied to idealized or mythologized individuality and the 'Great Man' theory of historical change".[1] But criticism of such sculptures are only in conflict with them if the statues themselves are read at face value. Perhaps, instead, backlash or iconoclasm is also a constitutive part of what makes a monument monumental. Many monuments are erected to do controversial work, and while they may proclaim a matter resolved or a problem consolidated, the reactions to them (sometimes long after they have been placed on pedestals) actually demonstrate the opposite is often the case. Monuments are not solely statues. Monumentality is the discursive space that surrounds certain public sculptures, including demands they be pulled down or protected, which can erupt into spontaneous or managed removal. Such a discursive space is inherently unstable, which is why most monuments ultimately must fall, physically or

conceptually: either by being toppled or by having their original intentions obliterated and reimagined.

Uncontested public artworks are not monuments. Take Trafalgar Square's fourth plinth in London, home to contemporary sculpture commissions since 1999. The long empty pedestal, built in 1841, was intended to host a statue of King William IV (1765–1837). The square, often a site of mass public protest, is filled with triumphant nineteenth-century monuments to military figures. The contemporary art commissions are in dialogue with the site's history, but only a few have captured an image of monumental proportions. David Shrigley's giant sculpted fist with an elongated upturned thumb, *Really Good* (2016), was not a monument. Whatever the artist's or commissioners' intentions, Samson Kambalu's *Antelope* (2022) certainly is a monument (fig. 1): using resin to mimic the materiality of bronze, the artwork depicts Pan-Africanist and anti-colonial revolutionary John Chilembwe (1871–1915). Kambalu's work sparked an immediate backlash in the conservative press, which declared it "a manifestation of Britain's cultural self-hatred" that "denigrates Britain's image".[2] It elicited renewed calls to end the art commission programme entirely, replacing it with a permanent statue of Queen Elizabeth II on the plinth.[3]

Figure 1

Samson Kambalu, *Antelope*, Trafalgar Square, London, 28 September 2022. Digital image courtesy of Stephen Chung / Alamy Live News (all rights reserved).

Perhaps Shrigley's sculpture was mocking the idea of monuments, but if so, the joke diffused confrontation. Unlike *Really Good*, a new statue of the former monarch would be monumental: because the monarchy as a system of power, indelibly entangled with histories of empire and inequality, is both controversial and contested.[4] Recent republican protests at the ascension of King Charles III to the throne only underscore this point. Monuments are not erected because there is unanimous social consensus and celebration; rather, they are erected in order to try and create the appearance of it, precisely in a situation where forms of social conflict have necessitated the need in the minds of commissioners to craft images of cohesion. Monuments do not fail because they are challenged or toppled. They are challenged or toppled as a mark of their monumentality: it is an aesthetic form that wages social antagonism in the public sphere. Why is it helpful to understand monuments as cultural modes of social conflict? Because I think it helps reframe recent debates, on whether they should be eliminated or erected, riven by misunderstandings and a rather limited menu of options.

It is often said, particularly in the face of any potential removal, that monuments represent memory, history, truth—or perhaps conversely just empty symbolism—and to critique or relocate public statues from their pedestals is to destroy such things. In these accounts, "truth", "history", and "memory" are treated as immutable and uncontested, quasi sacred, substances that transcend social conflict. Journalist Robert Bevan believes the built environment must never be altered as "an erosion of objectivity and historical truth" is at stake: "paving the way for a dangerous Humpty Dumpty populism where truth, including truth in architecture, is whatever you say it is … If we fake or destroy that record, how can we ever learn from it".[5] For him, monuments are somehow simultaneously sole arbiters of reality and yet abstracted from it: "Those calling for the no-plinthing [*sic*] of triggering statues might be buying into the same illusions about the real-world impact of such actions".[6] By contrast, journalist Gary Younge advocates mass toppling: "let us not burden future generations with the weight of our faulty memory and the lies".[7] "Let us not put up the people we ostensibly cherish … Let us subject them to the critiques they deserve", Younge writes.[8] I am sympathetic to his larger argument, but all too often in monumental debates "lies" are constructed as the problem and "truth" is positioned as the solution. There is no truth that transcends politics: knowledge itself is contested in a society shaped by social conflict. If monuments are read at face value, they are cherished or critiqued for their capacity to craft images of social cohesion. But because they are actually erected as aesthetic forms of social violence, they exacerbate social conflict by design. If they are to be toppled, it is because public protest or (para)military violence exerts enough force in a specific place and time: their precarious position on pedestals determined by perpetually shifting social structures. Art history offers a way of reading such monuments as complex and contested objects: both are shaped by the concentrations of power that crafted or toppled them; as well as being in creative tension with their social context as cultural artefacts bound up with an imaginative interpretation of the world, rather than a manifestation of either truth or lies. Cultural meaning is unstable rather than inherent.

Monuments are art-historical objects, made by artists or foundries with artistic materials and techniques. In this feature, *British Art Studies* seeks to capture a barometer of art-historical opinion as a journal of record for its field, and as a space for thinking critically about its subject: dedicated to unpacking and interrogating how visual culture can reproduce or disrupt conventional ideas of both "Britishness" and "art". This Conversation Piece is also envisaged as a contribution to thinking through what the field of British art studies can offer to the recent debates on public monuments. Reading monuments between the lines can reveal a more complex or contradictory picture. After John Cassidy's 1895 statue of slave trader Edward Colston (1636–1721) in Bristol was toppled by Black Lives Matter activists in 2020, conservators at M Shed found a time capsule hidden inside by the original installers: an 1895 annotated copy of *Tit-Bits* magazine.[9] The monument itself contained a secret spectre of its own destruction; as such a gift could only be accessed after it was broken open, it was concealed in anticipation. Those who have called for Colston to be returned to his plinth ignore that the sculpture held a hidden image of its own ruination.

Monuments are not simply physical structures, nor empty symbols, but are shaped by either social support systems that erect and conserve them, or by forms of social conflict which contest and topple them. The discursive space around a public statue, from protest to press coverage, and its translation into material conditions, is the making of its monumentality. Sophie Ernst's *Silent Empress* (2012) illustrates this point both literally and metaphorically: the artist attached a loudhailer, which played historical quotes about British imperialism, to a 1904 statue of Queen

Victoria in Wakefield by Francis John Williamson. Ernst's work, commissioned by Yorkshire Sculpture Park, was removed after 30 minutes by Wakefield Council on the grounds it was "disrespectful".[10] The episode not only reveals the role social dissensus plays in the monumentalisation of public sculpture, but the sound recordings of spoken words about empire also emphasised the discursive quality that makes monumentality, and the ways in which monuments are indelibly interconnected with larger contested systems of power. Monuments are aesthetic forms of social antagonism: protest or toppling are a constitutive part of their monumentality, which is why many must fall.

RESPONSE BY
Jodie Dowd and Nathan mudyi Sentance
Noongar curator and Wiradjuri librarian

The Permanence of Country

I wonder if we need monuments at all. Country is living and dynamic. It holds the knowledge we require to enable us to come to terms with our duty to assist in protecting it against the ravages of climate change and ecological destruction. The stories of Country we need to hear, experience and learn from are infinite.
Tony Birch, 2021[11]

As this article is being finalised, lightning slashes through the overcast sky of Gaimaragal Country, over the empty space that was earlier colonised by beach tents, some with the so-called Australian flag draped casually over eskies.

Edwin Coomasaru describes monuments as being an "aesthetic form of social antagonism", but it is also a blind spot and a way of rewriting the history of Country. A history that has existed for millennia, despite repeated and ongoing attempts to replace it, ignore it and rewrite it to focus on the past couple of hundred years by starting in 1788 instead.

We see this on Gadigal Country, where a statue of James Cook is perched on a plinth even though he never set foot in the area now known as Hyde Park (fig. 2). We see it on the lands of the Kulin Nation in the ancestral home of Cook's parents, which was transported from the United Kingdom and rebuilt in the middle of Naarm during 1934—only four years prior to the first Day of Mourning protest led by Aboriginal people in Sydney to Australia Hall on 26 January 1938.[12]

Figure 2

We see it with the moving of so-called Australia Day, established in 1915, from 30 July to 26 January in 1994 by a former prime minister who led the infamous culture wars and was directly responsible for teaching a narrowly focused, watered-down and warped history of this Country.[13] If we look closer at these monuments, we can see past their physical form to the truth: that these statues are on Country that is stolen and that always was and always will be unceded Aboriginal land. No matter how long these statues remain standing, they will topple sooner or later because the ancient land and people remember and will always be here.

As such, we are interested in monumentality only as an opportunity to reimagine what we will value as a collective, as a chance to move from considering monuments as sacred to thinking of Country as sacred. Monumentality in and of itself is uninteresting to us, as we often traverse contested spaces. For the month of January most Aboriginal people exist in a contested, discursive space of history, celebration and anger.

We can be heavy with our demands for social cohesion and national celebration. Being pushed down with the reciting of "get over it". Taking big breaths to engage in the fight again. What makes us feel lighter is having our feet connected to the ground, being surrounded by loved ones. While our critique of monuments can feel ephemeral, it is good to be reminded that monuments are ephemeral as well. We are lifted up with the permanence of Country.

RESPONSE BY
Sasanka Perera
Professor of Sociology
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Monuments: A Burden on Memory

There is a constant reality all monuments must reckon with: beyond the possibility of their spontaneous or managed removal long after the historical conditions that made their presence possible have ended, they are likely to "fall" on their own. They become invisible in transformed historical, political and emotional conditions, and as a consequence end up as cumbersome markers of and burdens to memory, which is already cluttered with more contemporary and proximate anxieties.

The Dawson Tower near Kandy in Sri Lanka was meant to memorialise an important colonial figure and to stand as a sentinel to mark the success of the colonial enterprise itself, while the Cenotaph World War Memorial in Colombo is a monument to the memory of British and Ceylonese soldiers who died in the two world wars (fig. 3). Both still stand but have clearly become invisible even though they are well within the visual field of local people. The Dawson Tower has become invisible as a result of neglect, disappearing from local discourses of tourism and travel, its purpose no longer making emotional and political sense. Similarly, the Cenotaph World War Memorial has become invisible because recent local conflicts have superseded the world wars in the popular imagination, and its physical space is no longer about remembrance but has been taken over by young lovers as a place of leisure.

Figure 3

Sasanka Perera, *The Dawson Tower*, Sri Lanka. Digital image courtesy of Sasanka Perera (all rights reserved).

Figure 4

Jagath Weerasinghe, *The Shrine of the Innocents*, Sri Lanka. Digital image courtesy of Jagath Weerasinghe (all rights reserved).

More recent monuments have also effectively "fallen" in similar conditions. The Shrine of the Innocents, built with state patronage near Sri Lanka's parliament in the early 1990s, was meant to memorialise thirty-three children killed by the military at the height of the country's political violence in the 1980s and as a caution against the political conditions that had given rise to such violence (fig. 4). But its displacement from the actual site of the violence and its minimalist design rendered the monument invisible to many citizens, and it was finally dismantled by the state in 2011. A highly popular open market was built in its place.

In all these cases, monuments have met with what may be called temporally defined deaths resulting from the rupture of their anticipated association with local people. In the discursive space surrounding any monument, such an association can never be taken for granted. It gets disrupted not only by the vagaries of time but also by spatial and emotional distance from the events and people being memorialised, its focus replaced by other events and people. Even where monuments become embedded in military or state "calendar rituals" that are repeated endlessly, their emotional death is a foregone conclusion because, over time, their presence

becomes a burden on both individual and collective memory. In this sense, the social and temporal life of a monument is better encapsulated in the Buddhist dictum *aniccā vata saṅkhārā* ("impermanent, alas, are all formations") rather than in the fragile repositories of memory that monuments are supposed to cater to.

RESPONSE BY
Wendy Bellion
Associate Dean for the Humanities and Sewell Biggs Chair in American Art
University of Delaware

The Return of King George III

In July 1776, American revolutionaries in the British colony of New York toppled an equestrian statue of King George III. At its installation in Bowling Green, officials had performed familiar rituals, raising toasts and parading around the pedestal. But locals soon began to view the great gilded statue as precisely the sort of "aesthetic form of social antagonism" that Edwin Coomasaru describes. As colonial relations soured, the annual parades around the monument began to resemble idolatry: in 1775, nervous participants quickly retreated "amidst the hisses of the people".[14] Months later, a crowd beheaded and dismembered the statue in celebration of their newly declared independence. It was the first equestrian monument to be raised in North America—and the first to be pulled down in an act of political protest.

If monumentality, as Coomasaru argues, is the "discursive space that surrounds certain public sculptures", then iconoclasm is its perpetual motion machine: the mechanism that ensures the return of destroyed things in the cultural imaginary. In New York, it took only one year for George III's statue to reappear. After British troops retook the city, they marked the king's birthday by raising a picture of the statue restored to its pedestal.

Not only did this virtual resurrection project an illusion of uninterrupted colonial rule, it also initiated a cycle of pictorial representations and performative re-enactments that reimagined the statue's demise as a national creation story through the late twentieth century. Over the past decade, museums in New York and Philadelphia have introduced digital and sculptural recreations of the statue to encourage important conversations about the marginalization of Black and Indigenous people in early US history. These include the best-known depiction of the toppling at Bowling Green: in Johannes Oertel's painting, a fictionalized Native American family appears to depart the scene (fig. 5). But in a recent virtual reanimation at the New-York Historical Society (NYHS), the Indigenous boy became a central actor, strolling across the foreground.

Figure 5

Johannes Adam Simon Oertel, *Pulling Down the Statue of King George III*, circa 1859, oil on canvas, 81.3 × 104.8 cm. Collection of the New York Historical Society (1925.6). Digital image courtesy of Wikimedia (public domain).

In 2019, I concluded a book about the statue by asking: where will it turn up next? The answers came sooner than expected. In summer 2020, Oertel's painting appeared frequently in media coverage about the protests against confederate statues inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement. Independence Day annually summons a burst of Twitter posts connecting 1776 to acts of iconoclasm today. The surviving fragments and many depictions of King George's statue have also fuelled partisan debates: an exhibition at the NYHS in 2022 invited visitors to post sticky-notes honouring historically underrepresented individuals atop a recreation of the Bowling Green pedestal.[15] Meanwhile, a conservative fringe publication selected Oertel's painting to illustrate a chilling call for a far-right revolution.[16]

Such divergent examples suggest that the better question is not *where* King George's statue will reappear—but rather *why*, *when*, and *how*. Moreover, through its digital reproductions, it reveals certain paradoxes about the ways we experience acts of destruction today. Most of us watch such events from a spatial and temporal distance: on the hand-held screens of tablets or phones, where the monumental appears in miniature, and where the easy reposting of a picture or video ensures the continual reproduction of every unique act of iconoclasm.[17] In 2023, the statue of King George doesn't so much fall down as perpetually fall forward, tumbling through the fault lines of contemporary politics and visual culture.

RESPONSE BY
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University of Pennsylvania

Colonialism and White Supremacy Must Fall

Figure 6

Removal of Cecil John Rhodes statue at the University of Cape Town campus, 9 April 2015. Digital image courtesy of Roger Sedres / Alamy Stock Photo (all rights reserved).

In the provocation for this Conversation Piece, Edwin Coomasaru defines monumentality as "an aesthetic form of social antagonism". Like many others, my interest in studying monuments was precipitated by controversy. Throughout my time as an exchange student at the University of Cape Town (UTC), I had walked past the statue of Cecil Rhodes countless times without sparing it a second glance or thought. But after that fateful moment in March 2015 when Chumani Maxwele covered the statue in human waste, shouting: "Where are *our* heroes and ancestors?", thousands were finally paying attention.[18] Why was this statue of Cecil Rhodes here? What did its presence suggest about prevailing social and political values and possibilities in post-apartheid South Africa?

Annwen Bates argued that UCT's Rhodes monument was illustrative of "the stronghold a notably British-Imperialist visual legacy held over architecture, public space and the representation of patriotic identity in South Africa".[19] The spatial legacies of imperialism set the stage for Maxwele's provocative demonstration; conditions in Khayelitsha, the Black township where he would pick up "one of the buckets of shit that sat reeking on the kerbside" was a far cry from the manicured campus grounds and surrounding white neighborhoods.[20] With #RhodesMustFall protests persisting months after the statue was removed (fig. 6), it became clear that the monument was merely a tangible receptacle for broader frustrations with a white supremacist power structure that continues to delimit the roles, opportunities, and economic prospects available to most Black and Brown South Africans. The statue was one material manifestation of this power structure, which Rhodes himself helped develop and instrumentalize through resource extraction, colonization, and Indigenous disenfranchisement. As a fellow student I interviewed during the protests noted, "the statue wasn't necessarily *the* thing; it was a violent image that represented more violence".[21]

The concept of monumentality presented in this Conversation Piece is reflective of Western aesthetic traditions and cultural values regarding materiality, memory, history, place, and power. This canon is rife with violence—statues and sites that celebrate and normalize imperialists, genociders, and armed soldiers on horseback (among other monumental tropes). When members of a marginalized group call for the fall of a monument, it often has less to do with the physical

object than the social violence represented therein. While some, like the statue at UCT, did indeed fall, Cape Town's status as the most segregated South African city suggests that part of Rhodes's legacy remains alive and well.

RESPONSE BY
Stacy Boldrick
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University of Leicester

Acts of Deposition: Afterlives and Social Lives

Historically and geographically, contested monuments are consistently unstable things. They may be physically on the move, as material objects deposed from plinths and broken, removed, and relocated or destroyed, or conceptually mobile, as symbols with meanings remade in discursive space. Their contested situations may generate and disseminate new images. Understanding the monumentality of certain contested sculptures, as Edwin Coomasaru contends, requires that we see monuments as "an aesthetic form of social antagonism". This image from a satirical pamphlet published in 1641 could be seen to exemplify such antagonism in the portrayal of Charing Cross, on the left, clutched by fearful clerics, and on the right, Cheapside Cross, attacked as an idol by Nonconformist Protestants (fig. 7). This image is testament to the long history of collective conflicts over monuments.
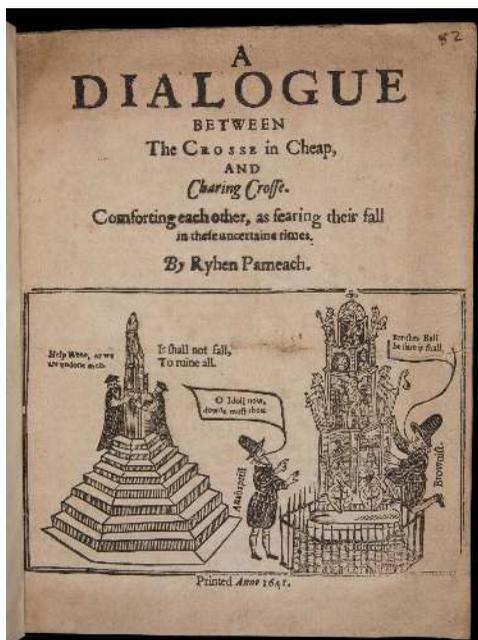

Figure 7

Title page in Ryhen Pameach, *A dialogue between the crosse in Cheap, and Charing Crosse. Comforting each other, as fearing their fall in these uncertaine times*, (London: s.n., 1641). Collection of The Newberry Library (Case C 6526 .664). Digital image courtesy of The Newberry Library / Internet Archive (all rights reserved).

These longer histories of contested monuments are important to consider. As I have noted elsewhere, contested monument narratives demand considered analysis not only into their

material origins, but also into the extensive history of their sites.[22] Yet contemporary accounts often restrict analysis to a brief window of time around when actions against monuments take place, leading to a superficial and partial understanding of the events. For example, when two Confederate monuments were removed in Memphis in 2017, journalists failed to address the historical context of the monuments' origins (in 1904 and 1964) and continued presence within Memphis's segregated and contested urban spaces, which emerged out of the city's history of white supremacism, lynching, and police brutality. This history stretched from the nineteenth century, as evidenced by Ida B. Wells's groundbreaking investigative journalism, to 2017, and beyond, in 2023 with the murder of Tyre Nichols, suggesting that the monuments' removal did not destroy the forces that put them there.[23] As Coomasaru notes, monument toppling can be physical or conceptual, with the analysis of such events generating a "complex or contradictory picture". Certainly, research into any iconoclastic event, from the deposition of a statue to a marked painting, requires a particular scrutiny and speculation as well as a broader historical purview.

Looking again at the image of the two crosses with their protectors and defilers, it offers a glimpse into debates about idolatry and, more specifically, about the Cheapside Cross in the 1640s. The Laudian clerics fear being "undone" and declare that their cross "shall not fall", while the opposing Brownist retorts, "Be sure it shall".[24] And yet the image that superseded this one through widespread dissemination was Wenceslaus Hollar's (1607–1677) etching depicting the destruction of Cheapside Cross in May 1643 (fig. 8). Surrounded by horse and foot guards, ladders, ropes, and hammers, the Cross is portrayed under full-scale attack and accompanied by text that describes the burning of the "Leaden Popes" and the eruption of noise when the top-cross falls: drums beat, trumpets blow amidst "great shouts" of joy, with "no hurt done". Hollar's image had a long legacy, appearing in nineteenth-century textbooks presenting the story of "Old England" and the "triumph" of Protestantism. However, neither of these images alone captures the complexity of the monument's longer history and its relationship to site and social groups.[25] Originally one of the largest of twelve cross monuments commemorating the journey of the body of Eleanor of Castille (Queen of England, 1272–1290) from Harby (Nottinghamshire), the place of her death, to Westminster Abbey in 1290, Cheapside Cross first served as a funerary monument, a political marker, and a royal checkpoint in coronation processions and international visits, later losing its links with Queen Eleanor and accruing more generic associations with the monarchy, the papacy, and religious belief.[26] From the fifteenth century, alterations to its design, including the addition of figures of Edward the Confessor, St. Peter, the Virgin and Child, Diana, a pope, cardinal, and a gilded cross changed its range of meanings, while retaining its significant roles in political pageantry, and civic and royal processions. Its location in Cheapside in London, a busy marketplace, thoroughfare, and place of public performance, violence, and punishment, also contributed to its multivalency.[27]

Figure 8

Wenceslaus Hollar, *The pulling down of the cross in Cheapside, London*, in John Vicars, *True Information of the Beginning and Cause of all our troubles*, 1643, etching, 12 × 9.2 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1854,1113.107). Digital image courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 40).

Unsurprisingly, curatorial and scholarly silos have separated the study of the lost medieval Cheapside Cross from later permutations. Studies of its attacks and destruction in seventeenth-century satirical pamphlets such as "A Dialogue" have received most attention, when writers personified the monument as: anxious, sad, and sick; male, female, androgynous; a cross that is arrested and convicted for high treason, dies, and has a funeral, crying out in its dying moments as it is dismantled.[28] Fictional and actual abusive acts towards the Cross and its statues aligned with public forms of physical punishment within Cheapside.[29]

As we can see, a focus on acts of deposition can overshadow contested monuments in any historic period and, at the same time, it can also metaphorically and materially animate and theatricalise them in different ways. One well-known example can be found in the 1776 toppling of Joseph Wilton's gilded lead monument to George III (1770) in New York City, and the (much later) display of its buried and recovered fragments in the New-York Historical Society. Famously mythologised and recreated over centuries, most recently in 2017 in the Museum of the American Revolution, the monument was remade to scale as an object of attack, with a mannequin scaling it, rope in hand, introduced by a film depicting its collective toppling.[30] Equally, conceptual or visual subversion of a contested monument may unwittingly anticipate its deposition, as with Hew Locke's *Colston* from his series *Restoration* (2006), critically embellished photographs of monuments, including the Bristol Colston monument toppled in 2020. Further still, Sam Durant's 2018 *Iconoclasm* series, life-sized collaborative drawings of iconic documentary photographs of broken and fallen monuments displayed outside in public spaces, portrays the demise of monuments of contested figures from around the world, relocating

the images in completely new sites for collective viewing. As objects of iconoclasm keep moving, so do their representations. Iconoclastic events and their reproduction can encompass the anthropomorphising of objects of iconoclasm, or lead to their temporal and material extension, giving them a kind of agency, or at least more expansive and complex "social lives" to examine. These historic and contemporary examples make clear that not only do contested monuments have longer histories than one iconoclastic moment, but that their afterlives as objects and images of collective conflicts are more often what we remember rather than the monuments themselves.

RESPONSE BY
Joan Coutu
Professor of Art History and Visual Culture
University of Waterloo

Monuments and Systems

Monuments, like national identities, are the thin faces of systems. The focus of our conversation is Britishness and, any way we look at it, empire is inherent.

Some of the first truly public monuments—that is, those commissioned by governments—were erected in London and the colonies in the early years of the British Empire: Wolfe in Westminster Abbey, George III in New York, Rodney in Jamaica, Cornwallis in India, and so on. Then came the plethora of Queen Victoria statues as the imperial system became entrenched. In the case of Canada—with which I am most familiar—Victoria was soon joined by statues of Sir John A. Macdonald, the "father" of Canadian Confederation, a close-to autonomous nation still firmly enmeshed in the empire. Each wave of statue-building coincided with swells of nationalism: at first tentative and occasionally underscored by fear, then more confident and almost matter of fact. Hubris was always along for the ride. It is no coincidence that the same people propagated both statues and nationalism, and they were speaking to Britons and like-minded colonials. The target audiences were not the "others"—as the others simply did not figure in the conversation.

Systems change and regularly collapse. However, their persistent legacies are often—ironically—intransigent. Rather like monuments. One of the first steps in decolonisation is to notice and recognise systems, and, with that, the thinness of their faces is exposed. Macdonald provides a good example: the "father" is now as well known for his systemic genocidal acts and forced assimilation of Indigenous and Métis peoples and discrimination against non-European immigrants and French-Canadians. In 2018, the city of Victoria in British Columbia voted to remove a statue of Macdonald from outside the doors of its city hall, a first step in the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (fig. 9).[31] Almost all statues of Macdonald are now hidden from view: some were torn down in protest, others quietly removed or boarded up (fig. 10). Even then, it took the "hard" evidence of finding children's graves on the grounds of government-sponsored and church-run residential schools to prompt much of that action.

Figure 9

Statue of John A. Macdonald in Victoria, British Columbia, after it was removed from outside City Hall on 18 August 2018. Digital image courtesy of Megan Thomas / CBC Press (all rights reserved).

Figure 10

Head from statue of John A. Macdonald in Montreal, pulled down in protest on 29 August 2020. Digital image courtesy of Graham Hughes / The Canadian Press (all rights reserved).

This segues to the thorny relationship between memory and history in the Eurocentric world, and the place of monuments within. British imperial monuments are about memory, put up by people who recognised only a Eurocentric conception of history. But that history is also just a system, engrained and entwined with empire. In terms of scholarly disciplinary systems, history long dismissed monuments because they were about flaky memory. Likewise, art history ostracised them because art and aesthetics were not the driving force. Both history and art history have changed, and now the discourse about monuments is vigorous.

It is hard to avoid platitudes when talking about monuments, especially old ones. Platitudes are also very thin. Perhaps that is the point and a simple yes–no is the best litmus test: if a monument is hurtful to anyone, take it down. Many people fear erasure, but by keeping old monuments up they do much more harm. They continue, systemically, to perniciously occlude.

RESPONSE BY
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Contested Monuments and their Counterpublics: The Role of the "Counterarchive"

The removal of monuments should not be an end point in and of itself. Through the antagonistic responses they elicit, contested monuments call new publics into being, publics that counter dominant views and opinions. As Michael Warner has theorised, these "counterpublics" generate and circulate antagonistic narratives that unsettle the false consensus around existing norms.[32] There needs to be an "afterlife" for toppled monuments and/or their empty plinths, and this afterlife could take the form of reparative memory sites that build on those dissensual discourses. It is too easy to say that this "afterlife" should take place in the museum. Too often the default proposals for what should happen to fallen monuments is to recontextualise them in a museum display. It is not in the museum's remit to house these fallen monuments, and many do not have the space, the resources, or the appetite to do so. Many museums are also still deeply enmeshed

in their own colonial and imperialist histories, and are therefore not the right place to host such reparative memory sites.

For this reason, I would advocate that archives are better placed to host reparative memory sites that keep these dissensual discourses and their counterpublics live. It is important to acknowledge however that, not unlike most museums, archives have historically been instrumentalised by power as a means of reproducing the status quo. As Jacques Derrida notes in *Archive Fever*, "There is no political power without the control of the archive, if not of memory".[33] It is crucial then that those counterpublics who are oppressed by these monuments are in control of the archival process. It is also key that the form these "counterarchives" take is not dictated by conventional archives. As Warner also points out, a counterpublic is distinguished by its alternative protocols, which tend not to conform to bourgeois conceptions of "rational-critical debate" and are more open to other forms of expression, including the non-textual and poetic. This is the case because counterpublics seek to highlight, not bracket, their differences; they aim to expand and overturn normative hegemonic assumptions and conventions towards their own goals.[34]

A useful model to consider in the design of a counterarchive is the *Action Archive/Aktion Arkiv* project initiated by architects and researchers Sara Brolund de Carvalho, Helena Mattsson, and Meike Schalk in 2013, which draws on experimental research formats including walks, witness seminars, re-enactments, and collective time–space mappings.[35] Another relevant model is *Contested Fronts: Commoning Practices for Conflict Transformation*, the Cypriot entry to the *15th Venice Biennale of Architecture* in 2015, which operates as an open-source archive for the urban commons focused on conflict transformation in Cyprus.[36] Both projects employ experimental research formats, they are performative and mobile, emerging and evolving in response to new contexts, and most crucially, they enable marginalised groups to tell their own stories in whatever means are most accessible to them.

There is a site in the north inner city of Dublin which comes to mind when I think of the need for a counterarchive around contested histories. Today this site is home to a homage to twenty-first-century neoliberalism and its apolitical discourse of placemaking; a 120 m tall tapering steel spire erected in 2003 and designed by the British engineering company Ian Ritchie Architects. *The Spire*, as it is called, is a public artwork and, as Edwin Coomasaru points out "uncontested public artworks are not monuments". In and of itself, *The Spire* does not produce counterpublics, rather it reduces its publics to what the Freee Art Collective have termed "passers-by" or "disinterested individuals".[37] *The Spire* aims to neutralise what was once a politically charged site. Prior to its erection, the site had sat empty but not silent for thirty-seven years. Before that, again it was home to Nelson's Pillar, a monument to British Imperialism that towered over O'Connell Street (formerly Sackville Street) for 157 years. In the early hours of 8 March 1966 (the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising, which saw the beginning of the end of British rule over Ireland), the monument was blown up by a group of dissident republicans and Nelson toppled to the ground, his head breaking away from his body as it hit the pavement. This was not the first attempt to destroy the monument; there were numerous other failed attempts over the years. There were also multiple proposals for replacement monuments, and a competition that did not proceed beyond the maquettes stage.

Figure 11

Leslie Crowe, *8th March 56 YEARS AGO Nelson's Pillar WAS BLOWN UP*, circa 1966. Lorcan Film Unit, YouTube video, 2:20… Digital image courtesy of Mr Leslie Crow and the Lorcan Film Unit (all rights reserved).

A wealth of material culture exists about this site of political struggle which tells the stories of its counterpublics (fig. 11). It includes newspaper clippings about how "Gaiety and Joie-de-Vivre Prevailed Throughout O'Connell Street" the morning after the monument's toppling, folk songs that sored to number 1 in the Irish charts including "Up Went Nelson" by The Go Lucky Four and "Nelson's Farewell" by The Dubliners. They are stories too of how Nelson's head was stolen by students from the National College of Art and Design (NCAD), who leased it to an antiques dealer to help them pay their college fees, or of how it later appeared on stage during a dubliners concert, and in an advertisement for ladies stockings.[38] Today the "head" is on display in the Dublin City Library and Archive. More recently, Dubliners variously renamed *The Spire* "The Syringe in the Dinge", "The Stiletto in the Ghetto", and "The Stiffey by the Liffey" to reflect the sites' location in an area frequented by drug users and sex workers. There is plenty of material culture on which such a counterarchive could draw, and in so doing it could produce new counterpublics.

RESPONSE BY
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After the Fall

On 9 April 2015, when the statue of the British mining magnate Cecil John Rhodes at the University of Cape Town (UCT) was removed—not toppled or dismantled but neatly lifted by crane off his pedestal—there was euphoria. It was a moment that represented a major victory for progressives in South Africa. Change, in the aspirational sense of the word, was palpable. The fall (or the lift) of the Rhodes statue would catalyse extensive institutional reforms, placing

decolonial accessible education, equity, and the transformation of institutional culture squarely within the agenda of UCT. The platform where the Rhodes statue once stood was covered and the Fallist movement was on the rise. Globally, too, voices coalesced to unveil the ominous normalisation of structural racism by targeting symbols valorising confederacy in the USA, colonialists across the world, as well as slave traders and owners like Edward Colston and Robert Milligan. Indeed, it is the political and social discourse that monumentalises a public artwork, circumscribing a paradox wherein the rise of a monument always already signifies its fall. "Discourses", as the Marxist geographer David Harvey points out, "are the manifestations of power".[39] However, there is another paradox, equally deserving of attention and embedded in the question: what rises after the fall?

Sculpted by Marion Walgate, who was commissioned by the Rhodes National South African Memorial Committee in the early 1930s to produce a commemorative sculpture that would be a gift to the university, the Rhodes statue remains in storage for safekeeping and is still owned by UCT. Interestingly, in 2021, the institution considered leasing the statue to generate funds for student bursaries. This presented a predicament where the desired goal of accessible education for those suffering the consequences of structural racism fostered the possibility of the statue being installed elsewhere again. Likewise, the inclination to move contested statues to museums in other cases does not escape the ironies surfacing from this predicament, especially since museums are also contested spaces, monumentalising fragmented histories. Rather than solving the problem, the resolution to move it elsewhere diffuses the antagonism. All this shows how the configuration of colonially bound racial economic power remains intact, not just in the institution but globally.

In the aftermath of the fall, the language of decoloniality was co-opted, becoming part of institutional mission statements, and driving seminars and public discussions, exhibitions and academic publications. Most activists were quickly absorbed into various institutions. This ingestion of the decolonial struggle and of dissent by institutions which are founded on the proceeds of slave labour, racism, and mineral extraction has also come to signify its watering down and hollowing out. Moreover, it is a reminder of the deceptive and often less conspicuous power in institutions, which reproduces the conditions under which such statues were built. Scholars have argued that statues and memorials become "invisible" in public space—that they are not a way to remember but a way to forget.[40] This argument, however, tends to overlook the legacy of segregation on the experience of public spaces and sites in which statues are located. Monumentality, in addition to being the manifestation of antagonistic discourse, is also the expression of spatial control: who gets to go where, why, and when; who can fully participate in public discourse; who has economic and thus political power over space and the configurations of "the public". That is, the material conditions that enable or suppress social antagonism over visual political symbols are significant. As the activist scholar, Zethu Matebeni puts it:

> The space that Rhodes occupied is not empty. Rather, it is filled with herstories and movements. The plinth where the concrete statue was cemented is still in place. Symbolically this foundation represents the institutional establishment that is based on things that do not change. There may be aesthetic changes, but the core remains intact. The encasing of the foundation is immovable, sanitised and gives the impression that Rhodes has been unseated. Yet, more telling is the shadow of Rhodes painted on the ground. As one poster read the day the Rhodes statue was removed: "Next, the invisible statues". These remain all over university campuses. The shadow, drawn immediately after the removal of the statue by an unknown person, insidiously alludes to this [fig. 12].[41]

This also recalls what Richard Iton called a "potent afterlife, mocking persistence, and resurgence—rather than remission—of coloniality: the state that is 'there and not there' at the same time".[42]

Figure 12

Leslie Crowe, *The empty plinth and painted shadow of the Cecil John Rhodes statue*, University of Cape Town. Digital image courtesy of Anders Björkvall.

In the case of the Rhodes statue, if one considers the fact that the statue was installed to face the Cape Flats, the areas where Black people were placed following forced removals in the 1950s, the site upon which the statue stood is contraposed to the monumental injustices still so evident in the geography of the city. But even with the statue absent or out of sight, and with the decolonial discourse embellishing the institution, the material practices and presence of structural racism and spatial injustice continue.

The challenge today is to recognise that the mere removal of statues and changing words and names, if not simultaneously linked to ongoing mass transformation of material economic and political relationships, is likely to have episodic significance leading to continued subtle forms of oppression in which the contenders are absorbed into the new elite.

RESPONSE BY
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Head of Fellowship Engagement and Governance
The British Academy

The Complex Afterlives of the Monument: From Tragedy to Farce?

Figure 13

The toppled Edward Colston statue on public display at M Shed, Bristol, 7 June 2021. Digital image courtesy of Polly Thomas/Getty Images (all rights reserved).

There is no doubt that monuments have antagonism at their core, whether social or aesthetic, but I would argue it is multiple and complex. It is there in terms of the conflict or violence they represent, which can be explicitly or implicitly embodied in the subject of the work, and equally, as Edwin Coomasaru rightly points out, in both the physical and discursive spaces they occupy. And, of course, antagonism reoccurs in the current arguments surrounding monuments—both old and new—and their role or value (or possibility) within our shared social fabric, ranging from academic debates to social media storms to full-out culture wars or real iconoclasm.

As such, the rise, fall, rescue, and ongoing "afterlives" of John Cassidy's 1896 statue of Edward Colston will no doubt continue to occupy art historians as an exemplar of such antagonism for some time. Both the narratives around the sculpture and its interventions at its site before and after its toppling make explicit that which is implicit in all monuments: that they are fluid and contested symbolic forms, perhaps better read as cultural symptoms or events rather than as static objects.[43] Furthermore, despite a long history of critiques of monumentalism both before and after modernity, we are only just beginning to address the specific crises that made this work such a unique focal point at this particular time. What mode of social antagonism or counter force was brought forth in that space and why at this moment (in Judith Butler's recent formula, "what world is this" now)?[44]

In addition to the motivating force of the Black Lives Matters movement, there was, I have argued, something radically transformative in the emergency prohibition of public space instigated by lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic. Public sites of assembly and protest, already contested and commercialised, became acutely politicised, revealing a distinct bio-political or even necro-political reality. Framed in this way, the toppling of Colston can be seen as a struggle between two existences or finitudes—"our" own as racialised, gendered, classed, and medicalised subjects, collectively and performatively expressing a right to exist, and that of the monument, the anachronistic yet persistent symptom of societal shame, impervious to contagion. And thus this particular "monument event" was not only a targeted symbolic act (the

toppling of a specific idol) but also just as much a spatialised *territorial* revolt against monumental symbolism and anachronistic values themselves.

Monuments, their toppling, displacement, and various contemporary re-imaginings all manifest forms of symbolic reoccurrence and repetition. But after tragedy should we conceive such repetitions occur as farce, or—perhaps—satire? To return to my specific example, the afterlives of the Colston statue are plural: defaced, submerged, rescued (resurrected?), recontextualised and, latterly, institutionalised. With its dented bronze and spray-painted graffiti carefully preserved, what is most striking in this image is the unconscious symbolism of the display (fig. 13). Displayed recumbent and below eye level, this fallen icon of the COVID-19 era (fittingly tagged with "PRICK", evoking both deflationary insult and medical intervention) is surrounded by the most remarkable architectural construction—a sort of modernist transparent enclosure or anti-plinth, protecting (from what or whom?) yet rendering visible, it evokes something between an aquarium, catafalque, and—with horrific aptness—a cargo-ship's hull. Colston finally takes the position, if not the actual suffering of the tightly packed enslaved people, as if the museum had performed some unconscious poetic justice on his body. Necro-politics becomes necro-aesthetics. Such "demonumentalisation" I would argue, demands new forms of art-historical interpretation, which need to be alert to the institutional-political forces at work just as much as these symbolic reappropriations.

The question remains, can these afterlives *dissipate* the violence or antagonism we have been describing here? Or—a related point raised by Coomasaru—do contemporary ironic or parodic reactivations of the monumental form mean that such works are something other than a "monument" even when they occupy the same plinths and civic spaces? Following the tragedy-to-farce logic (in the footsteps of both Hegel and Freud, we may say), the implicit violence at the heart of the form gets transferred but not entirely lost; comedy or satire is perhaps just conflict aestheticised—think slapstick—and like any joke, can just as easily mutate back into critical or real antagonism, particularly when such broader issues of value, ownership, and propriety are at play. I would argue this is true of the unintended humour found by many in contemporary attempts to make the form relevant as it is in deliberately parodic "anti-monuments".[45]

A few final thoughts on antagonism and monumental form. Michel Serres talked of a "slow and mute lineage" between the ancient and the modern, between the mythic theatre of sacrifice and the modern technological accident. In his reading, both the 1986 *Challenger* disaster and the ancient mobile statues of gods in which living beings were sacrificed are rooted in the same "symbolic memory" of the sculptural form that has death at its very core: "immobile at first, the statue moves and leaves. But the idol and rocket are tombs […] both metallic and hot, black boxes full of humans".[46] The black box here is at once coffin, plinth, and—like the modern flight recorder—that which persists after the tragedy, as both a record and index of real violence. Serres' pan-historical speculative account, despite its rather Western-centric anthropological focus, reinforces my argument that we need to consider monuments as events more than objects, and be alert to the historical conditions of their making, unmaking, and repetitions, no matter how violent or "exhausted" these latter may appear. Otherwise, we may be, as Serres argues, doomed to repeat this cycle of destruction and monument building ("The stone thrown at the idol becomes the idol itself, and this latter in turn becomes a thrown stone") or can we as art historians, creators, and political subjects find new narratives to lay bare and thus undo the ongoing spell of the monument?[47]

RESPONSE BY

Raqs Media Collective

History is Hubris in Drag

In Delhi. 1968 onwards.

There is a retirement park for pieces of a once-empire's statuary; of emperors, generals and viceroys flaunting their marble robes.

In a site called Coronation Park, this statue marks the location where the Imperial Durbar to commemorate the coronation of King George V and Queen Mary as emperor and empress of India was held in Delhi, in 1911. Ex-Imperial statuary from the streets of Delhi have been kept there since 1968.

Figure 14

Coronation Park, Delhi, 2015, photograph. Digital image courtesy of Polly Thomas/Getty Images (all rights reserved).

In Venice. 2015.

This park of imperial relics turns up in the main avenue of the Giardini. Wrecked statues on pedestals, with plaques.

Figure 15

Raqs Media Collective, *Coronation Park, Delhi*, 2015, photograph. Digital image courtesy of Raqs Media Collective (all rights reserved).

Epigrams. 1936.

In "Shooting the Elephant", George Orwell recalls his inability to enforce order in colonial Burma; he is unable to shoot the rogue elephant. He writes Epigrams.

Text from this essay is paraphrased and included in the design of a plaque placed on one of nine plinths for statues in the installation *Coronation Park* (2015), highlighting the limits and fragility of colonial power.

THE CROWD WOULD
LAUGH AT HIM.
AND HIS WHOLE LIFE,
WAS ONE LONG
STRUGGLE NOT TO BE
LAUGHED AT.
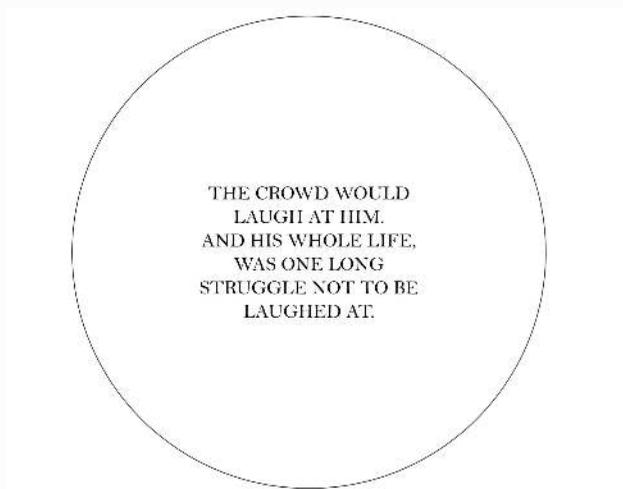
Figure 16

Raqs Media Collective, *Design of a plaque for the installation Coronation Park*, 2015. Digital image courtesy of Raqs Media Collective (all rights reserved).

The Last Plaque. 2015.
It read, simply, "*In the end he could not stand it any longer and went away*".

Figure 17

Raqs Media Collective, *The Bending Man*, installed on the grounds of The Whitworth, Manchester, 2017, one of nine assemblages of plinths, sculptures, and plaques in *Coronation Park*. Digital image courtesy of Raqs Media Collective (all rights reserved).

* ------------* ---------------*

Every monument has one foot in ephemera.
And, sometimes, that foot slips.
Monuments fall.
A robe, frozen, and empty of the figure it had clothed.
In search of a new costume designer or perhaps a sudden awareness of nakedness?

Figure 18

Raqs Media Collective, *The Emperor's Old Clothes*,
2017, shortlisted design for the Fourth Plinth
competition. Digital image courtesy of Raqs Media
Collective (all rights reserved).

Andersen's child appears from anywhere. He calls out.
The sovereign is naked.

Figure 19

Raqs Media Collective, *Hollowgram*, 2017, still from a
holographic video projection. Digital image courtesy of
Raqs Media Collective (all rights reserved).

A petrified fancy-dress power turned into a hollow telegram from the future.
A melting hologram.
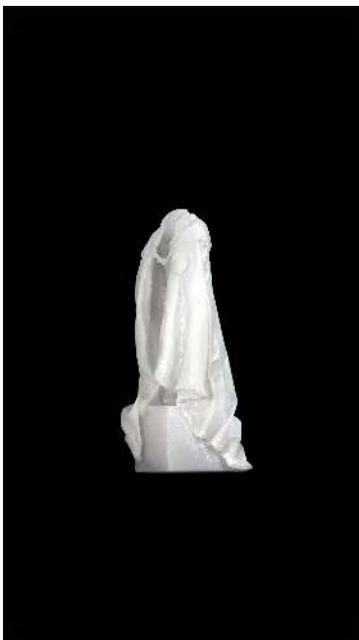
Figure 20

Raqs Media Collective, *Hollowgram*, 2017, still from a
holographic video projection. Digital image courtesy of
Raqs Media Collective (all rights reserved).

A hollow-gram.
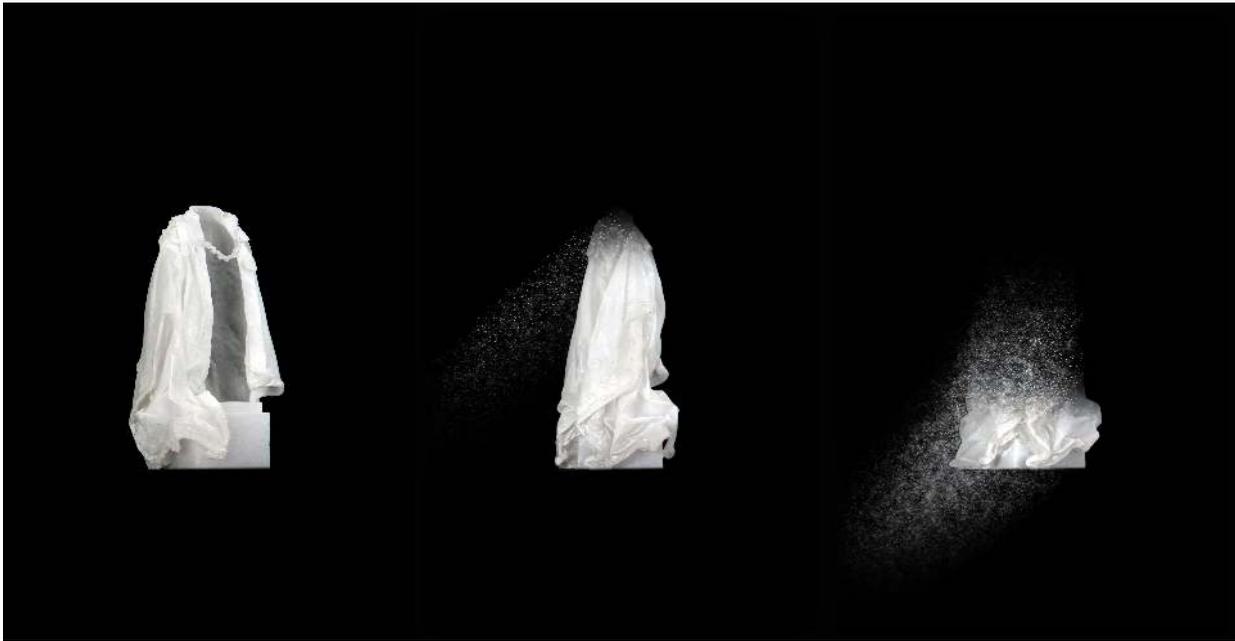
Figure 21

Raqs Media Collective, *Hollowgram*, 2017, still from a holographic video projection. Digital image courtesy of Raqs Media Collective (all rights reserved).

Figure 22

Raqs Media Collective, *Hollowgram*, 2017, still from a holographic video projection. Digital image courtesy of Raqs Media Collective (all rights reserved).

Figure 23

Raqs Media Collective, *Hollowgram*, 2017, still from a holographic video projection. Digital image courtesy of Raqs Media Collective (all rights reserved).

About the author

Dr Edwin Coomasaru is a historian of modern and contemporary British, Irish, and Sri Lankan art; his research considers the politics of gender, sexuality, and race. Coomasaru is an editor of the journal *Visual Culture in Britain*. He has been awarded Postdoctoral Fellowships at the University of Edinburgh, The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, and The Courtauld Institute of Art (where he earned his PhD and co-convened the Gender & Sexuality Research Group). He previously worked as a Research Assistant on the Association of Art History's anti-racist and decolonial resource portal. Formerly a Contributing Editor at *British Art Studies*, Coomasaru has also co-edited a book on *Imagining the Apocalypse: Art and the End Times* (Courtauld Books Online, 2022). He has written articles and book reviews for peer-review journals (*Art History*, *Third Text*, *The Irish Review*, *Irish Studies Review*, *Oxford Art Journal*), alongside exhibition essays for museums and galleries (Barbican Centre, Autograph, Jhaveri Contemporary, Saskia Fernando Gallery, Belfast Exposed, Townhall Cavan).

Footnotes

1. Nickolas Lambrianou, "Monumental Failures: The Contested Bodies and Sites of Public Art Under Lockdown", *Sculpture Journal* 31, no. 1 (2022): 78.

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3. "Queen Elizabeth II Statue in Trafalgar Square gets MPs' Support", *BBC News*, 22 September 2022, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-62995442.

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5. Robert Bevan, *Monumental Lies: Culture Wars and the Truth About the Past* (London: Verso, 2022), 14 and 19.

6. Bevan, *Monumental Lies*, 17.

7. Gary Younge, "Why Every Single Statue Should Come Down", *The Guardian*, 1 June 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2021/jun/01/gary-younge-why-every-single-statue-should-come-down-rhodes-colston.

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9. Harriet Brewis, "Edward Colston: 125-Year-Old Magazine Discovered Hidden Inside Toppled Bristol Statue", *Evening Standard*, 12 June 2020, https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/edward-colston-magazine-found-hidden-statue-bristol-a4467926.html.

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13. See: Unknown maker, *Fund Raising Ribbon: Australia Day, 30 July 1915*, 1915, silk. Collection of the Australian War Memorial (REL33602). https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1106639.

14. Wendy Bellion, *Iconoclasm in New York: Revolution to Reenactment* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2019), 95.

15. "Monuments: Commemoration and Controversy", New-York Historical Society, 28 January–4 July 2022, https://www.nyhistory.org/exhibitions/monuments-commemoration-and-controversy.

16. John Daniel Davidson, "We Need to Stop Calling Ourselves Conservatives", *The Federalist*, 20 October 2022, https://thefederalist.com/2022/10/20/we-need-to-stop-calling-ourselves-conservatives.

17. On this point, see Ömür Harmanşah, "ISIS, Heritage, and the Spectacles of Destruction in the Global Media", Special Issue: The Cultural Heritage Crisis in the Middle East, *Near Eastern Archeology* 78, no. 3 (September 2015): 170–77.

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19. Annwen Bates, "The Fall of Rhodes in Cape Town: No Longer Watching Over Heath or Man", *Art UK*, 28 May 2015, https://artuk.org/discover/stories/the-fall-of-rhodes-in-cape-town-no-longer-watching-over-heath-or-man.

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21. James Clacherty in discussion with the author, November 2015.

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24. Alexandra Walsham, "'O Idoll now, downe must thou': The Fall of Cheapside Cross 1643", *Sites of Memory: Remembering the Reformation*, University of Cambridge Library, 2017, online exhibition, https://exhibitions.lib.cam.ac.uk/reformation/artifacts/o-idoll-now-downe-must-thou-the-fall-of-cheapside-cross-1643.

25. See Joel Budd, "Rethinking Iconoclasm in Early Modern England: the Case of Cheapside Cross", *Journal of Early Modern History* 4, nos. 3–4 (January 2000): 379–404, DOI:10.1163/157006500X00051; and Christine Stevenson, "The Destruction of Cheap Cross, London (1643)", in *Architecture and Armed Conflict: The Politics of Destruction*, ed. JoAnne M. Mancini and Keith Bresnahan (London: Routledge, 2014), 89–102.

26. Budd notes that Edward I (King of England, 1272–1307) may have used the two London Eleanor Crosses to antagonise the civic oligarchy; Budd, "Rethinking Iconoclasm in Early Modern England", 385.

27. On Cheapside, see Budd, "Rethinking Iconoclasm in Early Modern England"; Stevenson, "The Destruction of Cheap Cross, London (1643)"; and David Cressy, "The Downfall of Cheapside Cross: Vandalism, Ridicule, and Iconoclasm", in David Cressy, *Agnes Bowker's Cat: Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 234–50. I discuss this in more depth in Boldrick, *Iconoclasm and the Museum*.

28. Cressy, "The Downfall of Cheapside Cross", 234–50.

29. See Budd, "Rethinking Iconoclasm in Early Modern England"; Stevenson, "The Destruction of Cheap Cross, London (1643)"; and Boldrick, *Iconoclasm and the Museum*.

30. Wendy Bellion, *Iconoclasm in New York: Revolution to Reenactment* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019).

31. See *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (2015), Government of Canada Publications, https://publications.gc.ca/site/archivee-archived.html?url=https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/trc/IR4-8-2015-eng.pdf.

32. Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002), 56 and 66.

33. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 11.

34. Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 51 and 116.

35. Sara Brolund de Carvalho, "About". *Action Archive/Aktion Arkiv*, 2013, https://sarabrolunddecarvalho.com/action-archive.

36. Socrates Stratis, "Contested Fronts: Commoning Practices for Conflict Transformation, Pavilion of Cyprus At the 15th International Architecture Exhibition—La Biennale di

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38. Hugh Linehan, “The Night Nelson’s Pillar Fell and Changed Dublin”, *Irish Times*, 5 March 2016, https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/the-night-nelson-s-pillar-fell-and-changed-dublin-1.2560650.

39. David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 78.

40. Martin Murray, *Commemorating and Forgetting: Challenges for the New South Africa* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

41. Zethu Matebeni, “#RhodesMustFall—It was Never Just About the Statue”, Heinrich Böll Foundation, 19 February 2018, https://za.boell.org/en/2018/02/19/rhodesmustfall-it-was-never-just-about-statue.

42. Richard Iton, *The Black Fantastic: Politics and Popular Culture in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 135.

43. As Freud himself employed the monument as a simile of the workings of the unconscious, it is tempting to pursue the “symptomatic” analogy further, as others already have; see, in particular, Joseph Leo Koerner, “On Monuments”, in *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 67–68 (2016–2017): 5–20, DOI:10.1086/693701.

44. Judith Butler builds upon Max Scheler’s reflection on the tragic loss of values following another world crisis, the First World War. Hence, there are two questions hidden in the simple formula: “‘What kind of world is this in which such a thing can happen?’ and […] *how are we to live in this world?*” See Judith Butler, *What World is This: A Pandemic Phenomenology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2023), 24–29.

45. At the time of writing, a new “monument event” took place in Boston, with the unveiling and instant critical backlash over *The Embrace*, Hank Willis Thomas’s memorial sculpture in honour of Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King. As a model of invective and witty critical analysis, Leslie Jones and Dulcé Sloan’s seven-minute diatribe on *The Daily Show* will be hard to beat; “Leslie Jones Tackles Accidentally Erotic MLK Jr. Statue”, @TheDailyShow, 18 January 2023, https://twitter.com/TheDailyShow/status/1615542095607132160?s=20&t=VpGtUFevaHI2vimUgS7iVA.

46. Michel Serres, “The Rocket: First Foundation”, in *Statues: The Second Book of Foundations*, trans. Randolph Burks (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 5–6.

47. Michel Serres, “The Hammer: Homo Faber”, in *Statues: The Second Book of Foundations*, trans. Randolph Burks (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 114.

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