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**The Neo-Monument:**  
**Monuments of Dissent and their Emergence in Western**  
**Culture in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> and Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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# **The Neo-Monument:** **Monuments of Dissent and their Emergence in Western** **Culture in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> and Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

## **Abstract**

This research addresses contemporary art practice and the monument in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In doing this, the notion of the monument in this research is considered to be an art object, conceived by artist(s) to memorialise, remind, instruct, or warn the public, as in the original derivation of the word 'monument'.

The late 20<sup>th</sup> Century started to see, in part, the democratisation of the monument. Here I propose that the traditional monument has always been political and a tool of the ruling elite. However, where previously the 'Establishment' influence was absolute, in recent times, some artists have sought creative space to place more controversial work in the public arena. Released from the restraints of authority, new monuments have been created that question the vicissitudes of our existence and it is this field of artistic practice that is the central issue in this research.

Unlike monuments of the past, although they might have sprung from an historical event, these new monuments are less about memorial and more about the present. Often they ask demanding questions of our culture, our governments and of us, the people. Significantly, they are '*monuments of dissent*' and because of their rejection of the status quo, it is proposed here that they should be termed '*Neo-Monuments*'.

Whereas traditional monuments were normally to be found on the street, in the square or park, these spaces have now been augmented by an increasing number of publicly accessed galleries. We will see that there is now a more open-minded approach to critical, questioning even provocative monuments, and that we are seeing them both in galleries and in the public milieu. It will be argued that they are however still viable forms of communication.

This research is informed by the creation, exploration, experimentation and analysis of my own art practice. Conclusions gained from this practice will be used to inform this research.

Additionally, case studies of other artists engaged with the form and development of the neo-monument will be analysed to understand their rationale, and from this to determine what sets their work apart and allows them to be regarded as a neo-monument. This research will reflect on art-monuments created from the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century until the present.

Douglas Clark

December 2016

# **Introduction**

*"Das Auffallendste an Denkmälern ist, dass man sie nicht bemerkt"*

"The most remarkable thing about monuments is that you do not notice them"<sup>1</sup>

*Robert Musil*

Whilst following an earlier career as a seaman, the experiences gained then exposed me to other societies and cultures. Many of these societies were and are struggling to exist in a post-Colonial World. In places, monuments to the colonisers still look down in their streets. During that time, I witnessed some of the injustices in life: racism, corruption, wars and predominantly the inequalities of wealth, education and healthcare. I saw the desperate lengths that people will go to migrate to a better life that for many, rarely ended well.

Some lessons learnt in life cannot be erased and they have inevitably influenced me and this in turn has shaped my practice. As an artist, I have considered how politically inspired public art could make people think about issues in life. It soon became clear that there were some artists pushing the boundaries of the contemporary monument, radically transforming the way they may be perceived and understood.

This research seeks to investigate innovative forms of production and display, as well as the ways artists have addressed issues raised within contemporary art practice when related to the monument in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and particularly the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## **I.1 The 'Monument' as Considered in this Thesis**

Etymologically, the word 'monument' comes from the Latin, *monēre*: to remind, to warn<sup>2</sup> or in some translations to instruct<sup>3</sup>, thus, in defining the monument in this research, it is understood to be specifically a work of art, conceived by an artist or artists either to remind, or/and to warn, or/and to offer instruction. It is politically

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Musil, 'Monuments' in *Selected Writings*, ed. by Burton Pike, [originally published in German in 1936], (London & New York: Continuum 1998) p.320

<sup>2</sup> *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. by H. Fowler & F. Fowler, (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1964) p.783

<sup>3</sup> *Collins Latin Dictionary*, ed. By W. McLeod, (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd.. 1992) p.207

-centred, public art. If Musil was correct, then the monument is an anachronism belonging to a bygone age, however, it will be argued that the *contemporary* monument's construct is still well positioned to comment on important issues within society today.

My contention is that the monument is always political in nature and here it is important to ascertain what is understood by the word 'political'? Philosophers and writers such as Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Hegel, Marx, et al, have argued over the intricacies and limits of what exactly political means. It is well beyond the scope of this thesis to dissect their writings however, to distil this to a simple form, the word 'political' is taken here to mean influence, democratic or autocratic, through the formal and informal interaction within a social group. It will be argued that the monument is a tool of this interaction, to be used in the reminding, guiding and forming of those decisions within that social group.

The focus of the research will be to the above criteria. The word 'monument' has acquired a descriptive nature implying 'big', as in monumental or 'old' because it has been there for generations. This will be discounted, unless specifically relevant. This research is about the monument that was created as a monument. The Hungarian born art theorist György Kepes, wrote:

'Visual communication is universal and international; it knows no limits of tongue, vocabulary, or grammar, and it can be perceived by the illiterate as well as by the literate...Plastic arts, the optimum forms of the language of vision, are, therefore, an invaluable educational medium.'<sup>4</sup>

In the past, monuments were born out of the glorification of victories or of governing bodies, cultures or entities and conversely, of hardship, grief and death; sometimes all of these. They were invariably commissioned and controlled by what we have come to know as the 'Establishment' which we take here to mean *'The group in society exercising authority or influence and seen as resisting change'*<sup>5</sup> Historically the monument's function was to memorialize and/or make people think in a way that those who commissioned the monument, invariably the Establishment or figures within that group, would see as 'correct'. In other words;

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<sup>4</sup> Gyorgy Kepes, *'Language of Vision*. (New York: Dover Publications, 1995) p.13

<sup>5</sup> *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. Lesley Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) p.856

monuments were created that were favourable to their cause. The monument therefore is a primary means of communication, a physical, visual proclamation with a political edge.

This research was prompted by work that I had made in 2008 entitled '*Architectural Apparatus No.1 [Divisor]*'. This work predominantly focused on the forced division of peoples and the placing of barricades between socially-alienated groups [see Chapter Two]. Subsequently, this led to my questioning if politically grounded, public art was current and still relevant.

It soon became evident that in recent times, some artists had striven to create new forms of monument, producing work that suggested alternative, less jingoistic, even reactionary stances to the public. They managed to squeeze between the bars of the officially-sanctioned, monumentalist cage to create new work that questioned cultural values and policies proposed and imposed by the State and so started a move to democratise the monument.

We shall see in the following chapters that in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century there was a move to envision monuments in a different way. Some monuments memorialising the Holocaust, pursued a different approach that provided a transition and lead-in to the neo-monuments that have been appearing at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This coincides with the creation of new methods of communication and the exponential expansion of the Internet, especially social media, culminating in what has been termed the 'Smartphone Era'. My own practice and the case studies cover work created in the period from 2007 to date.

There is no disputing that traditional forms of monument will continue to be produced. This research looks at some contemporary and alternative approaches to the monument in Europe and the Americas and their intrinsic value to society. A contextual review of artists working within this genre, coupled with research brought about by my own practice, will show that artists can and are, adapting to the creative aspects of these new conventions. These artists have endeavoured to redefine what the monument can be: to reflect new technologies, philosophical

perspectives and artistic practice. Monuments that challenge authoritarian influence and accepted cultural norms are considered here - those monuments that question the status quo. In this regard, it will be shown that the contemporary monument can be a significant statement of existential, *reasoned dissent*; a monument, placed for the appreciation of the public, that prompts *thinking* about the issues raised therein. These monuments are political public entities that I propose to term '*Neo-Monuments*'.

The choice of the term *neo-monument* was selected to differentiate them from those that had been erected in the last two thousand years. Added to that, the context of these neo-monuments was at odds with what has gone before. The Greek word *Neo*, meaning new or lately found or invented<sup>6</sup>, is used as a prefix to modify nouns and adjectives to describe things that exist in the present, yet *differ* from the way they existed in the past. I intend to show that there are monuments being created today that do this. By creating a new term, neo-monument, the meaning is narrowed down to the contemporary monuments with the traits we shall discuss in the following thesis.

Over the millennia, the monument has been seen in the form of a figurative narrative of some description. Whilst little had changed in that regard; over the last one hundred and fifty years, the nature of Fine Art *has* evolved, culminating in what has become the nebulously-termed, 'Postmodernism'. Gallery art was the first to see the effects of the various 'isms' and Cubism, Futurism, DADA-ism et al, bear witness to this. The politics of the 1960s brought forth another change. Resistance to the Vietnam War and racial tensions in the USA, coupled with student unrest in Europe impacted on post-war apathy bringing about a resurgence of politically-motivated art, especially pacifist and feminist art.

The plastic arts, in their broadest terms, were being infiltrated by new ideas. Novel approaches such as film, video, light, refrigeration, sound and other media started to appear, throwing off the idea that sculptures should be of stone, wood or bronze. The idea of what sculpture could be, was being stretched, sometimes to

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<sup>6</sup> *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, p.808

extremes. When writing in 'Mapping the Terrain', Suzanne Lacy talks about and defines 'New Genre' public art as:

*'...new genre public art - visual art that uses both traditional and non-traditional media to communicate and interact with a broad and diversified audience about issues directly relevant to their lives - [it] is based on engagement.... The term 'new genre' has been used since the late [nineteen] sixties to describe art that departs from the traditional boundaries of media.'*<sup>7</sup>

Although public art in general has shown evidence of embracing the latest trends, the monument has been slow to adopt these practices. So can this new genre be adapted into the monument? It will be argued that they already have and although there are exceptions, the monument has climbed down from its plinth. Can complex and tenuous narratives be developed in a non-figurative way, particularly in the face of an audience slow or not able to understand the language of contemporary art? There are artists who demonstrate that with thought and ingenuity it can. There does not appear to have been a unified movement to do this however, some artists have taken it upon themselves to create political public art that asks questions, both of those who seek to govern us, and of the general public. In doing so they embrace the expanded field of contemporary art and place the resulting forms in front of the people.

The monument, whether in classical or neo-monumental form, has a huge amount of competition, all of which seek to attract the attention of the population. We have to ask ourselves that in these days of round-the-clock news and an exponentially expanding media output: Is the monument an out-dated artform?

## **I.2 The Framework of Research**

To explain how this has been approached, the framework of this study is constructed around 'practice-based' research. It is understood that experiential evidence forms the core of the study of what I hypothesize as the 'neo-monument'. This experiential evidence will be drawn from my own constructions and experiments. It will be shown through this practice, the pitfalls in trying to obtain effective public awareness.

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<sup>7</sup> Suzanne Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain*. (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995) p.19

Any issues arising from this field of artistic praxis will be considered and if applicable, comparisons drawn with established artists' work. By looking at and critiquing recent politically-driven public art practice, as well as creating my own, I will take a reflective look at cases that one may consider as being examples of this genre. This thesis will assess the impact of contemporary culture on the art of the monument and in this context, the validity of the term '*neo-monument*'. In doing so, the neo-monument's *raison d'être* will be fundamentally examined, as will its construction, structure and its viability in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

As contemporary art is wide-ranging in style and form, several disparate case-studies will be analysed to gain understanding of the nature of the neo-monument and how the genre is being addressed. Where possible, primary evidence obtained from the artists themselves. These works are shown in Chapter Five of this thesis but, where relevant, they will be discussed in the main body of the work.

It is not the objective of this research to consider specifically the nature of the monument through the ages, much of which is common and intuitive knowledge. However, a succinct description of the historical background of the monument, covering the last two millennia is given. This culminates at a point in the late Twentieth Century where artists, trying to create monuments that emphasised the loss and the tragedy of the Nazi victims of the Shoah, created the memorialising '*Counter-Monument*'. This signified a transition and deviation from the traditional model and becomes the point of departure for the purpose of this research.

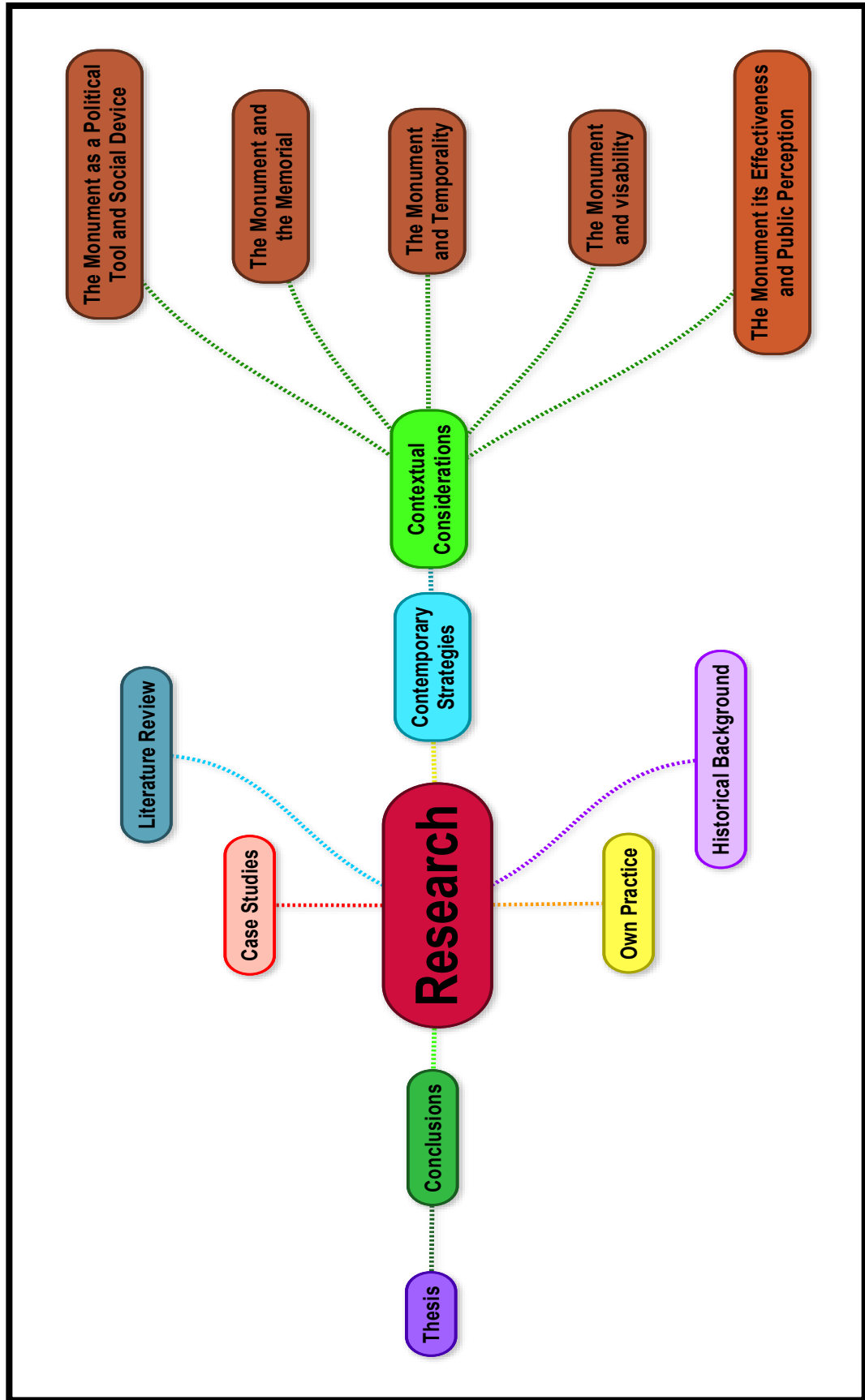
This thesis is not a directory of the neo-monuments in Western culture nor could it be; however, by singling out a cross-section of recent work, a trend may be recognised. The thesis will examine contemporary strategies used to allow a neo-monument to remain current and effective. To ascertain the requirements of a neo-monument within this framework, the following will be critically examined:

- The historical background and evolution to date.
- The monument as a social and political tool.
- The monument and the memorial.



- The monument and temporality.
- The monument and visibility.
- The monument's effectiveness and public perception.

By aligning the neo-monument with a perceived expanded field in contemporary art, no categories of visual art will be excluded; however it is well beyond the scope of this thesis to document every work or practice that could be considered to fit the criteria of the neo-monument.



# **Chapter One**

## **The Historical Development of the Monument: From the Roman Empire to the Modern Era.**

The focus of this research is the contemporary monument in the final twenty years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to recount the history of the monument from antiquity to the present in detail, however, some background to the genre is necessary.

It can be argued that, at its heart, the monument's function has always been as a political instrument in some form or other. It is this that distinguishes it from being solely public art. It will be seen from the following that in the past, the monument's existence was created by and biased to those in power. The struggles of the Twentieth Century have created change and in more recent, enlightened times and places, the monument can also be a vehicle for reasoned dissent. Peter Carrier made the observation, clearly distinguishing the monument from public art, linking it directly to historical time and community:

‘A monument may never lay claim to artistic autonomy from its social and historical context. It is necessarily a product and reflection of its time, derived from the initiative of an individual, group or state.’<sup>8</sup>

Citing Robert Kudiela, Carrier makes the point:

‘...the dual function of the monument as the rendering of information from the past on one hand (‘bearing witness’) and serving the memorial needs of the present and future on the other (‘maintaining consciousness’)’<sup>9</sup>

Undoubtedly, earlier civilisations, the Egyptians, Persians and Greeks for example, had monuments long before those of the Roman Empire but the Romans, expanding their empire into countries with other tongues, refined the idea using triumphal arches, columns and statuary. The use of figurative sculpture contained a narrative that could be understood by all sections of society, whether literate or illiterate. The relief sculptures that adorned these monuments told of battles won

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<sup>8</sup> Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory, France and Germany since 1989*. (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books. 2005) p.32

<sup>9</sup> Robert Kudiela, cited in Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory*, p.99

and the subjugation of annexed civilisations. These monuments glorified the Republic and the subsequent ruling dynasties that had dominated. Their signifying intention was not lost on the public, warning and subduing the Empire's population. An example of this is the Roman arch in the town of Orange in Provence, built during in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Originally, it was heavily decorated and now sadly decaying. As the politician, classicist and writer Boris Johnson describes it:

'High on the front of it we see scenes of battle, barbarians being trampled under the hooves of Roman horses; barbarians being skewered. This arch is a propagandizing reminder to the population of the basic equations of the Roman Empire. This thing they enjoy called peace did not come about by accident. It was the result of extreme violence by the Roman Army.'<sup>10</sup>

This less-than-subtle sign could not be clearer, reminding the Gauls of the consequence of disobedience.



Roman Triumphal Arch with narrative frieze above, 1<sup>st</sup> Cent. BC  
Orange, France  
(Photo: Mary Ann Sullivan)

Religion understood this too. The great churches, mosques, henges and temples are in themselves, also monuments. This is because they are rarely built as other domestic dwellings, being generally much larger and pursuing a different

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<sup>10</sup> Boris Johnson, *The Dream of Rome*, (London: Harper Collins, 2007) p.134

architectural model. They were specifically constructed to glorify and empower whichever god they represented. Yet a cynic would say that, in reality, it is not the gods these monuments uphold but the religious Establishment who wish to control the people with their diktats and selective or perverse readings of the scriptures. In Europe there were significant periods where religious and monarchical authority intertwined. It could be said that the religious monument reached its zenith in the medieval period when religious fervour and illiteracy combined to make the religious monument a powerful tool. Depending on the culture, they could contain visual or textual imagery relating to the stories central to these religions and there is no doubting their signification. Thus art has been a significant device in the evolution of the monument. The underlying reasons for the art in such buildings and the buildings themselves was, and still is, to communicate with the people and in doing so, to instruct and remind them. In effect, these visual stories are propaganda; they only give one side of the story. They bluntly tell the population that for their own good, they should accept what those specific religious doctrines give and allow. With religious monuments, the message, threat or warning is directed at this world *and* the next. They warn that for any transgression that the church regards as deviant or heretical, there will be consequences. These monuments are certainly very political in nature; created to enforce an authoritarian or at the very least a semi-benign, cultural stability.

At the time of the Renaissance, and in the years thereafter, popes, kings, doges and courtiers, embellishing their egos and vying power continued with this practice, commissioning classical, religious and figurative statuary [not to mention, murals and paintings] to enhance reputations, propagate their power and uphold their dynasties. The sculptures were cloaked in the pretence of a cultural gift to the church or community, yet they reflected indirectly on the benefactors, reminding the populace of their wealth, status and authority.

The political potential of the monument was well understood and applied by the governments and courts of 18<sup>th</sup> Century Europe and then continued into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century by the colonising Europeans, ostensibly to show gratitude to influential individuals – some even by public subscription and thus demonstrating a degree of

civic pride and in doing so bolstering the Establishment. In the United Kingdom, national heroes, such as Nelson and Wellington, were well served with monuments. It can be readily seen that reverence for Queen Victoria and her Consort begat many statues in the towns and cities of Britain and its colonies. However, as Head of State, it may be construed that it was also about nationalistic fervour and the status and value of the Empire. In her essay: *'Where We Are. Where We Could Be.'* the critic and writer Lucy Lippard states:

'... art has been used in the past as propaganda for colonialism and expansionism (especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century movement west [in USA]) and much contemporary public art is still propaganda for existing power structures (especially development and banking)...'<sup>11</sup>

The traditional war memorial forms a special case as a monument. It prompts emotional reactions from the public. War memorials are about glory, heroism, and doing one's duty, *'pro patria mori'*. They are also about death, loss and tragedy.



Detail of the *'Royal Artillery Monument'*, by Charles Jagger  
Hyde Park Corner, London. 1925  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

This dichotomy can be seen on some of the monuments dedicated to the British dead of the First World War. Many have stoic, weapon-garlanded, figurative

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<sup>11</sup> Lucy Lippard, *Mapping the Terrain*. Suzanne Lacy [ed.], (Washington: Bay Press 1995) p.119



statuary depicting victory; others depict fallen soldiers and some *Pietà*-like with grieving widows or angels. The horror of this 'War to end all wars' was a major turning point. Such was the traumatic effect of the events in Western Europe the monumental glorification of battles won turned to memorials to attrition and lives lost. Although figurative monumental memorials continued to be created in Western Europe, the heroic stance favoured by the Victorians and preceding societies came to be replaced by a sadness of image and a sense of loss, rather than glorification of wars fought and battles won.



The '*Cenotaph*' by Lutyens  
Whitehall, London 1919  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

Between the wars many of these monuments became non-figurative structures such as Lutyens plinth-like *Cenotaph* in London. Arguably, the *Cenotaph* may be considered a precursor to the minimalist, text-based work seen in contemporary art today, its simplicity underlying the sombre message.

However, the Soviet and later National Socialist regimes continued to produce their own propaganda-loaded 'Socialist Realist' monuments. In the Eastern bloc,

Socialist Realism became State policy and was enforced throughout the Russia and its East European satellite states.



Post-war Socialist Realism in the form of 'Warrior-Liberator' by Jevgenji Vuchetich  
Bronze

Treptow Park, Berlin 1949  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

When writing about Soviet sculpture in post-war Europe, Reuben Fowkes comments:

'The Stalinist attitude to public space reflected its overall colonialist approach. Monumental sculpture was believed to be a significant tool of propaganda and political education; consideration was given in the location and design of monuments to their ability to dominate public space and influence popular beliefs.'<sup>12</sup>

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Reuben Fowkes, *Monumental Sculpture in post-war Eastern Europe 1945-1960*, (Doctoral thesis, University of Essex June 2002) p.338.



Only in Yugoslavia, under the Tito regime, artists were allowed some latitude to produce non-Socialist Realist monuments. Many were abstract in nature and known as 'Spomenik'; yet, as with the statues in Renaissance Venice, their underlying nature was still about aggrandizing the State and consolidating State Power.



*'Monument to the Revolution of the People of Moslavina'*  
A Yugoslavian 'Spomenik' by Dušan Džamonja.  
Podgarić. 1967  
[Photo: Plamen]

After the post-war reunification in Germany and the self-determination of East European states, many Socialist Realist monuments were removed and relocated or destroyed as their respective regimes fell.

### Monuments in the Modern Era – A period of transition

Four decades after the end of the Second World War, the monument in Western Europe went through a transition, especially in a reunited Germany. The Holocaust weighed heavily on Germany's national conscience. There was a determination by the authorities to make some effort to memorialise and atone for the past. The figurative Socialist Realist monuments of the Nazis were now considered an

anathema in Germany and the enormity of the tragedy made some artists consider alternative methods of memorialisation.

By countenancing these monuments, and thus accepting the sins of the past, material efforts were made, not only to seek and signify repentance and redemption but also to remind present and future generations of the dreadful errors and prevent them evaporating into the past.

From this, the most well-known monument is probably Peter Eisenman's vast and controversial *Memorial to the Murdered Jews in Europe* [2004]. Although a modern monument, it's extensive but representative form is still much in the realms of the traditional memorial.



Part of the '*Memorial to the Murdered Jews in Europe*'  
Covering 19,000 sq. metres with 2,711 concrete stelae  
By Peter Eisenman.  
Central Berlin. 2004  
(Photo: Jorge 1767 )

There were however alternative examples of this post-Holocaust genre, an example being Ester and Jochen Gerz's diminishing monument '*Harburger*

*Mahnmal Gegen Faschismus* [Trans: Harburger Monument Against Fascism'] of 1986 in a borough of the German city of Hamburg.

The Gerz's monument was a 12metre high, one metre square lead-clad column that gradually sank into the ground over several months, whilst allowing the public to scrawl graffiti on the lead with a stylus. There was no censorship of the graffiti thus making a record of all attitudes shown during the declination of the column. All that is visible above ground is the top of the column, flush with the pavement, the rest of the column now buried.



*'Harburger Mahnmal Gegen Faschismus'* at the original full height.  
Column of galvanized steel with a lead coating, signatures and graffiti  
By Jochen Gerz & Ester Shalev Gerz  
Harburg. 1986  
(Photo: Kulturbehörde, Hamburg)

Following this, Horst Hoheisels *'Aschrottbrunnen Fountain'* (1987) is another example of the post-Holocaust monument. In this case, it is the restoration of a public fountain in the German town of Kassel, which in 1908, was given to the



people by a local Jewish benefactor. In the tragedy that followed in the 1930's, the anti-Semitic stance of the Nazis caused the fountain to be destroyed and subsequently obliterated. Rather than produce an exact restoration, Hoheisel decided to commemorate this abhorrent act with a full-size but *inverted* fountain, buried in its original position in which everything is reversed, the water welling up from the ground to the base.



*'The Aschrottbrunnen Fountain'*  
The original fountain by Karl Roth, 1908 [left]  
and Horst Hoheisel's upturned copy [right] Kassel, Germany.  
(Photo Left: Stadtarchiv Kassel. Right: Rosmarie Stiehl) [Right-hand photo amended for digital version of thesis]

These last two examples of post-Holocaust monuments have been termed by James E. Young as 'Counter-Monuments' or by others 'Anti-Monuments'.

'One of the most intriguing results of Germany's memorial conundrum has been the advent of what I would call its "Counter-Monuments": memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premise of the monument.'<sup>13</sup>

Whilst reflecting on the monument in the twentieth century, Young highlights the crisis in representation in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century commenting:

'As an intersection between public art and political memory the monument has necessarily reflected the aesthetic and political revolutions as well as the wider crisis of representation, following all of that century's upheaval.'<sup>14</sup>

This then, makes the point that artists were struggling to embrace a form of work that could effectively memorialise the Holocaust and question man's humanity.

<sup>13</sup> James E. Young, 'Memory and Counter Memory'. *Harvard Design Magazine* No.9, Fall, (1999) p.3

<sup>14</sup> James E. Young, *At Memories Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2000) p.3

These counter-monuments are the antithesis of Eisenmans work, they exist but they do not exist. When writing about the artists who produce such work, Young makes the observation:

‘They contemptuously reject the traditional forms and reasons for public memorial art, those spaces that console or redeem tragic events, or indulge in a facile kind of *Wiedergutmachung*, [*Trans*: Atonement] or reparation that would purport to mend the memory of a murdered people.’<sup>15</sup>

The process-oriented counter-monuments appear to be both icon and iconoclast in one conjoined form. The terms ‘counter-monument’ and also ‘anti-monument’ conjure up the idea that they are the negative of the word monument, however this does not appear to be so. The monuments in question actually exist, yet are out of sight. In this respect, they are almost a parody of Musil’s contention. Whereas some would regard these counter-monuments as non-monuments, they still fulfil the function of a monument. A more realistic view would be that they are a subsection of the genus ‘monument’.

These counter-monuments denote a critical deviation from the ‘traditional’ monumental model. Subsequently some artists looked at other ways to innovate and restructure the genre. In many respects, the radical thought behind the counter-monument created a break that became a *transitional* phase toward the neo-monument.

Continuing this evolution from monument to neo-monument, the American artist, Chris Burden, controversially created ‘*The Other Vietnam Memorial*’ [1991]. This work takes the form of a giant ‘Rolodex’ filing system made of copper sheets engraved with the names of three million dead Vietnamese, real and fictitiously named, in the United States’ ill-fated conflict in Vietnam.

Burden was making a point about the desperate futility of the Vietnam War and the duality and ravaging of humanity. It blatantly emphasised that there are two sides to every story, two sides to every war. The work is clearly more than a memorial. Provocatively, the use of some fictitious names suggest it comes close to

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<sup>15</sup> James E. Young, ‘Memory and Counter Memory’, p.3

being a faux-memorial, yet it is still a monument. It is asking the public to question the human cost of war on both sides.

Unlike Maya Lin's public memorial, Burden's memorial was exhibited in an enclosed space and the relative safety of the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. This then raises the question of how and where a monument can be displayed for public view.



*'The Other Vietnam Memorial'* by Chris Burden  
Steel, aluminum, and etched and anodized, copper plates.  
Installed: 447.0 × 302.3 × 302.3 cm  
Museum of Modern Art. Chicago 1991  
(Photo: Nathan Keay)

The Vietnam War itself was controversial creating a huge counter-culture of anti-war feeling in the USA and its allies culminating in a humiliating withdrawal by American forces. Whereas Maya Lin's work was a memorial, in that it represented the loss of real people and was supported by the state, Burden's work, with the inclusion of real and *fictional* victims was making a far more controversial statement, the very antithesis of the veneration of the glorious dead. It was memorialising the 'enemy' dead. One could therefore assert that *'The Other Vietnam Memorial'* is a dissenting monument and in this respect, it could be considered an early example of the neo-monument.

After at least two millennia of 'traditional' monuments, alternative structures and modes of aesthetic representation began to emerge. These late 20<sup>th</sup> Century monuments, created by artists like Hoheisel and Burden, now using the artistic techniques of their generation, established a turning point in the form and interpretation of the monument. Work like this brought about the development of the neo-monument and whilst the traditional, Establishment-sanctioned monument will continue to be made, the neo-monument instituted itself as a representative public voice for nonconformist politicised opinion.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Propositions Derived from My Practice**

I have, through my own practice, looked at how politically significant public art could be conceived and created in this day and age. It immediately became clear, that some artists had taken the opportunity to alter the perception of what a monument could do, which direction the monument could take. These monuments stood apart, using a visual culture that questioned situational aspects of our existence. These monuments seemed contrary to what one normally expected from a monument, both in technique and context [See: Chapter Five - Case Studies]. As discussed in the Introduction, in an attempt to classify this category of monument, I have proposed they be called '*neo-monuments*'.

To gain an insight as to what works as a neo-monument and to understand the problems confronting the neo-monument, I have used 3D drawings, made maquettes and experimental test-rigs [see Appendix]. There have also been publically exhibited completed works, which I will discuss here.

#### **2.1 Architectural Apparatus No.1 [Divisor].**

Bath School of Art and Design. 2008

This was a work about division, of pulling communities apart rather than about integration. To this effect, *Architectural Apparatus No.1 [Divisor]* appropriated a structural form that, in its various configurations, has created cultural and ethnic divisions and continue to do so.

Examples can be found between Israel and Palestine, North and South Korea and in Northern Ireland. In 2016 a U.S. Presidential nominee, later to become President Trump, pandered to elements of American society, by threatening to build a wall between the United States and Mexico. The context of this work is still current as we see with the migration crisis in Europe today.





*'Architectural Apparatus No.1 [Divisor]' by Douglas Clark*  
 Corrugated Steel Sheet . 19 x 4.2 x 3 metres  
 Bath School of Art and Design. 2008  
 (Photo: Douglas Clark)

In this work, the 2.4 metre high steel wall bisected the space. It could not be breached within the space, access to the other side only being gained by leaving the building and re-entering from the other side, analogous to leaving a country to re-enter by another route. In the quiet of that space, one could hear people on opposite sides of this 'wall' talking and carrying on with their lives without seeing those on the other side, rarely verbally interacting with them and maybe without letting them know they were there or who they were.

Although no survey was carried out, most of those who were asked; "What do you think it's about?" understood the references within the work. To those who thought about it, the context was relatively easy to understand. The impact of the work and consequently the meaning was gained by its sheer size and its physical presence. The artist and academic, Andrew Stonyer, wrote this about it:

'...the overall impression of this structure is one of malevolence, the wall signifying a divider with political and psychological associations, more menacing still is the tower that resembles a watch tower conveying all the trappings of surveillance...'<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Andrew Stonyer, *Axisweb MASTars* (2008), <<http://www.axisweb.org/archive/profile/mastars/douglas-clark/>> [Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2016]

This installation was the first of a series of four works. It was this work that raised the question in my mind as to what a contemporary monument might be and in that respect, ask: Could there be contemporary monuments that react against the traditional paradigm? Research, evidenced by those works found and investigated, together with my own practice, demonstrated that this was indeed possible.

Subsequently, *Architectural Apparatus's Nos. 2, 5 and 6* were created in an effort to understand some of the problems facing a conceptual model that one may consider as a neo-monument. These early works sought to attract attention by appropriating the appearance of the classical monument but revising that form. The Palladian façade and the triumphal arches were taken to have the paradigmatic prerequisites to base this work on.

All the Architectural Apparatus series were constructed of new or rusted sheet steel over a modular space frame construction, the size only governed by the ability to produce this work without assistance. The final three monuments were constructed at my Spike Island studio in Bristol, with some structural work undertaken at Bath Spa University's workshops.

## **2.2 Architectural Apparatus Nos. 2 [Fiscal Structure].**

The Octagon Chapel, Bath. 2009

In 2008 the World financial crisis brought an economic downturn and a failure of some famous International banks. *Architectural Apparatus Nos.2 [Fiscal Structure]* was constructed to draw the public's attention to this. It was created for an exhibition forming the central element in the Bath Fringe Festival in 2009.

The Greco-Roman façade has, since the days of the Renaissance, been appropriated by bodies such as governments, financial institutions and even individuals to signify solidity, trust and established values of that body, which they represent. Yet in contrast to this, in the period running up to the financial crisis in 2008, some of these financial institutions' actions demonstrated that they were not operating with the probity they had professed, requiring governmental financial assistance

as well as the forced imposition of restructuring to survive. In *Architectural Apparatus No.2 [Fiscal Structure]*, this is implied by the crude wooden supports shoring up the coarsely-formed reverse to the Palladian portico. The part of the title of the work shown in parenthesis, *[Fiscal Structure]*, was a term well-used by the media at that time and was included in the title to give a clue to the work's context.



*Architectural Apparatus No.2 [Fiscal Structure]*  
Zinc Coated Steel + Timber. 4 x 3.6 x 3 metres  
The Octagon Chapel, Bath. 2008  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

Added to this, there were other clues given within the work; the Palladian structure reminiscent of banks around the world, the shoring up of the structure from behind and the distressed text, *'Integrity Protecting the Works of Man'*, which, although dripping with irony at the time, was more obscure to all of the public who saw it. This text was the title of the relief sculpture by John Adams Quincy Ward within the Palladian pediment on the front of the New York Stock Exchange. Maybe just as obscure was the use of industrial material from which it is constructed recounting the manufacturing might that established and buttressed the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century economies.

The work was shown in The Octagon, a Grade One listed Georgian chapel that in 2008 had been closed to the public for some years. Although the work itself was substantial in size, it was fighting with the building for recognition. The piece itself was shown in what was in effect an ornate gallery space. It was the centrepiece in a mixed show at a Fringe Art Festival.



The façade of the New York Stock Exchange with frieze '*Integrity Protecting the Works of Man*'  
By John Adams Quincy Ward. 1904  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

When questioned, visitors professed to like the work for itself but few tried to understand the conceptual context behind the work, even though the clues were there. There was however, an artist's statement posted near the work.

The lack of recognition of the context of the work may also be related to the site in which it was placed. Why would a monument to financial collapse ever be shown in a building like this? Would it mean more if it had been presented outside in the street? It could be considered that the work would have had more significance if it had been adjoining a fiscally-related space, for instance, the Economist Plaza in London or positioned in a city's financial district. It would thus link it more tightly to the context of the work. In this regard, as a neo-monument, it did not reach its full potential. Unless the public asked or read the artist statement, it is possible that many people saw it only as an art-piece.

To draw some key conclusions from this piece, the first one that stands out is that of *spatial relationship*. Here we have two issues: one is the choice of site as we have discussed above and the other is size and proportion and what might be termed the 'wow factor'. To attract attention to the work it has to compete with its surroundings. To be effective, it has to metaphorically and/or figuratively dwarf any sensorial opposition. At first sight, a large work would have an advantage over a smaller work. In this respect '*Architectural Apparatus No.2 [Fiscal Structure]*' worked, even in an exceptional building. This is not to say a smaller work would fail but for a smaller piece to work, it would have to try harder to compete and attract the curiosity of the casual observer.

Secondly, the subjects of the work may resonate with the public for different periods of time thus determining its 'contextual longevity'. The financial crisis may cease to be a concern should the economy improve, so here we have a temporal aspect to its effective existence. Such is the oscillating nature of economies, that its display in prosperous times may remind the public that the difficult financial periods may well return. Nevertheless, long exposure to the work would lose its initial impact unless a method of reviving or regenerating the work could be found.

Thirdly, serious consideration should be given to how the public might elicit clues from the piece, opening the doors to the monument's real significance. The simple solution is the choice of a title. Contemporary art is riddled with nonsensical titles that may mean something to the artist but be completely vague or ambiguous to the general public. Naming a piece may not have to be blatant. It may be suggested that making inferences in the title to a neo-monument's meaning, would kick-start the viewer's consideration of the piece; one's mind filling in the gaps as to the monument's *raison d'être*. It is important that the title of the piece aids, rather than confuses. It may be key to fixing the message in the heads of the public. However good the work is as an art-piece, if the public do not understand the message, then the work, as a neo-monument is risking failure.



Finally, there is the question of site. In many situations, siting can relate to the context of the work. It can be reasoned that *Architectural Apparatus No.2 [Fiscal Structure]* would have had more impact in an area associated with its context. The other consideration is the demographic; who needs to see it, who do you want to challenge with the piece and in what setting are they likely to grasp its context?

**2.3 Architectural Apparatus Nos. 5 [Inverted Triumphal Arch] .**

Salisbury Arts Centre. 2012

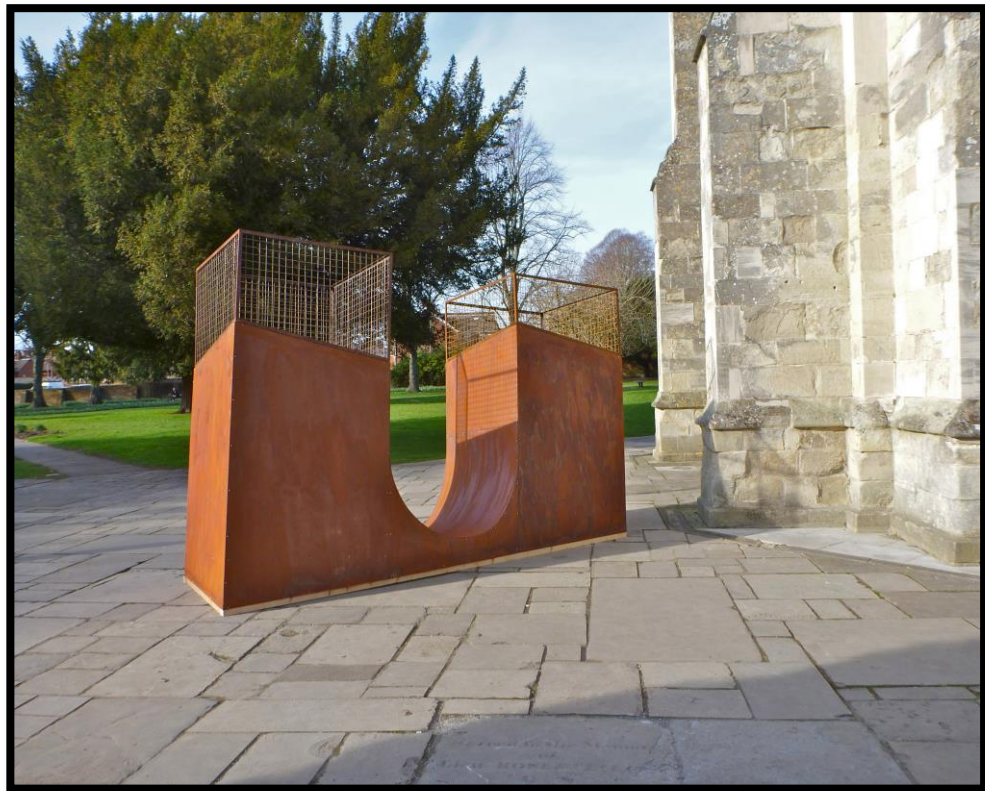
**2.4 Architectural Apparatus Nos. 5 Rev.A [Inverted Triumphal Arch] .**

The Holburne Museum, Bath. 2012

**2.5 Architectural Apparatus Nos. 6 [Inclined, Reclined, Declined] .**

The Holburne Museum, Bath. 2012

All three of these pieces were simulacra, referencing the Roman triumphal arch and using that form as an appropriated model for a monument. The first iteration, *Architectural Apparatus No.5 [Inverted Triumphal Arch]*, was commissioned and first displayed at Salisbury Arts Centre.



*'Architectural Apparatus No.5 [Inverted Triumphal Arch]'* by Douglas Clark  
Chemically rusted steel sheet and mesh. 4 x 1.5 x 3 metres  
Salisbury Art Centre, 2012  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

The concept behind the work was the desire to create a monument to a post-industrial Britain, hit hard by globalisation, where manufacturing plant had been torn down and replaced by vast shopping malls selling imported goods. The intention was to appropriate a clichéd classical monument, in this case characterised by the triumphal arch. The idea was to replicate and fashion it in the rusting materials of the industrial revolution.

This was to transform the honourific signification of a triumphal arch to a non-honourific signification of loss and decay. All three versions of the arch were presented as if ripped up and cast down or as Percy Bysshe Shelley puts it in his sonnet 'Ozymandias', "*Half sunk, a shattered visage lies [...] look on my works ye Mighty and despair.*"<sup>17</sup>



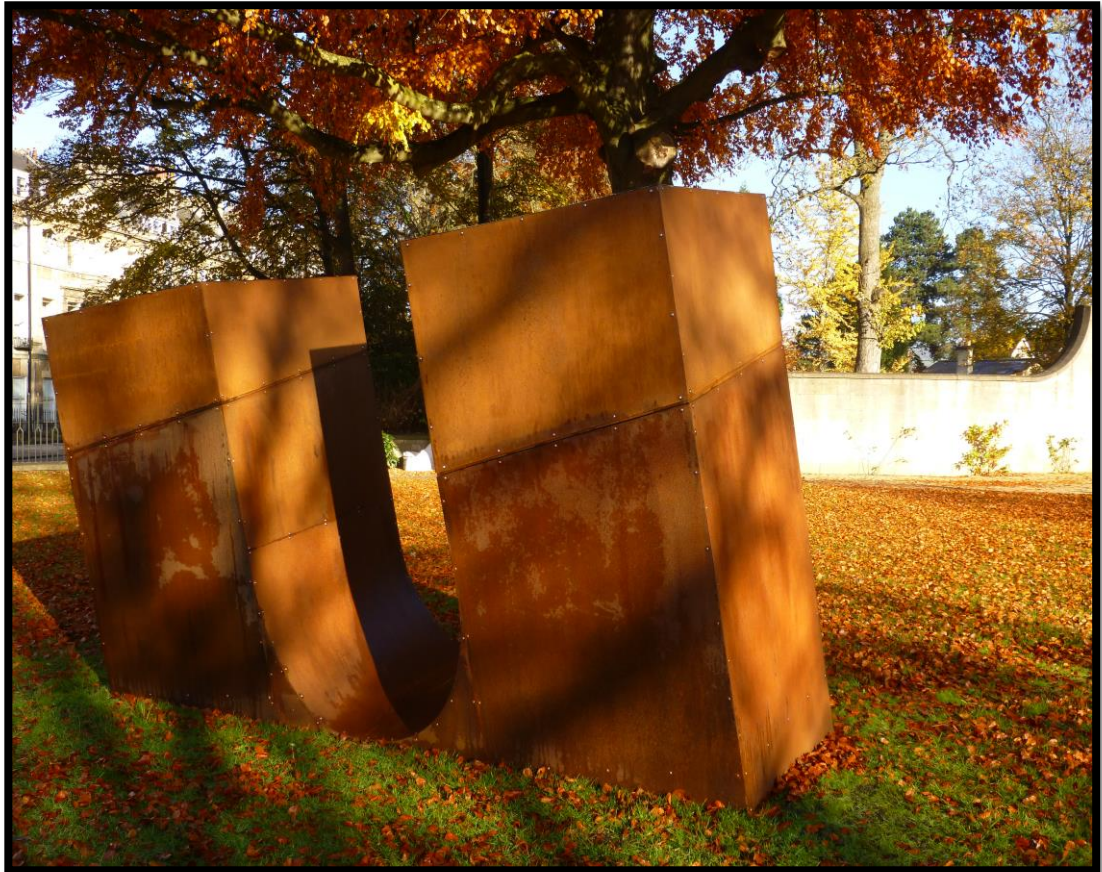
'Architectural Apparatus No.5 Rev.A' (left) and 'Architectural Apparatus No. 6' (right) by Douglas Clark  
Holburne Museum, Bath. 2012  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

In the first version, *Architectural Apparatus No.5 [Inverted Triumphal Arch]* had mesh sections on the 'base' of columns, like withered roots. When shown at the

<sup>17</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, < <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/resources/learning/core-poems/detail/46565> > [Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016]



Holburne Museum the work was modified and structural alterations were made to differentiate it a little from its first presentation. A distinction was made in the title by adding 'Rev. A' (i.e. Revision A), in keeping with the nomenclature of industrial, technical drawings. In this form, it appeared along with another piece, *Architectural Apparatus Nos. 6 [Inclined, Reclined, Declined]*. This latter piece was commissioned as a companion piece especially for the grounds of the Holburne.



*'Architectural Apparatus No. 5 Rev. A [Inverted Triumphal Arch]'* by Douglas Clark  
Chemically rusted steel sheet. 4 x 1.5 x 3 metres  
The Holburne Museum, Bath. 2012  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

Again, with the triumphal arches, people seemed to like the work on an aesthetic level but did not seem to understand the underlying meaning. In retrospect, here it was probably the paucity of clues given in the work. To the public, the context was not easy to determine, there being few signifiers. The only way of promoting the significance was through accompanying signage. Yet however much the public like the work, visual communication is the rationale for all neo-monuments and in this respect, without some kind of explanation, these works would probably disappoint.



It is proposed that it is not necessarily the case that the public should like the work. It was clear in its first iteration that some older members of the public did not understand or find the work aesthetically pleasing. Whilst dismantling the piece in Salisbury, one elderly gentleman's comment to his wife made this abundantly clear to me. Yet although disappointing, at least he had a view. In this respect, it might be reasoned that controversy may in fact work to make the piece more memorable. As with any work of art, if the work can raise some emotion in the viewer then it is more likely to be remembered. This may have no bearing on whether the viewer agrees with any stance proposed by the artist's work, however, to be successful as a neo-monument it should be capable of starting at the very least, an internal or externalised dialogue, even if sections of the public do not particularly like it.

Positioning became an issue with the first version of *Architectural Apparatus No.5 [Inverted Triumphal Arch]* at Salisbury Art Centre. Although the work had a prominent position outside the Arts Centre, as the artist, I became concerned that the Arts Centre's Director was reticent to allow the work to be positioned where it would be visually more arresting. The reason given was he felt it hindered passage along an ancient pathway, his main consideration being the passage of blind people. In the end a compromise was reached. That said, memories came to mind of the heated controversy and court case over the position and removal of Richard Serra's *'Tilted Arc'* in New York. Although finally removed, it is arguably the work for which he will be remembered.<sup>18</sup> This positioning issue highlights the fact that however much a work may be 'of public interest'; practical and 'Health and Safety' considerations may mean significant revisions to the work's siting, its design and even its construction. This concern was reiterated in *'The Humanity Monument'*, which will be commented upon later.

There were no such problems when the two pieces were shown at the Holburne Museum where they were positioned on both sides of the central pathway. Yet here, my observations were that people often walked by without engaging with the work on their way to the Museum's entrance. There was signage placed near the

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<sup>18</sup> PBS Culture <[http://pbs.org/wgbh/cultureshock/flashpoints/visualarts/tiltedarc\\_a.html](http://pbs.org/wgbh/cultureshock/flashpoints/visualarts/tiltedarc_a.html)>, [Accessed 21st June 2016]

work, nevertheless, I thought the physical and aesthetic disjunction between sign and monuments caused any explanation to mean little to the general public, even if they read it. This of course, is not a new problem with conceptual work and it is often said that people spend more time reading artist's statements than looking at the work itself.



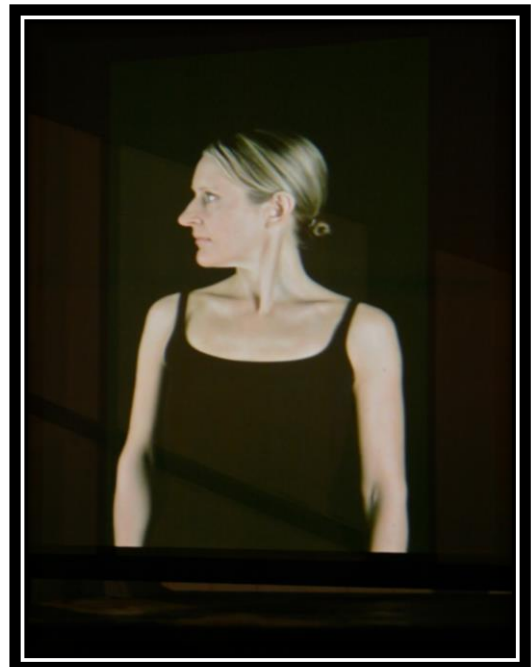
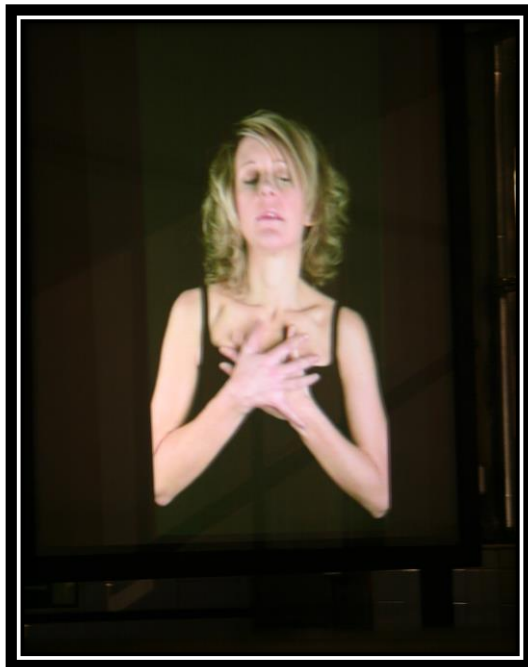
*'Architectural Apparatus No.6 [Inclined, Reclined, Declined]'* by Douglas Clark  
Chemically rusted sheet steel. 3 x 1.5 x 3 metres  
Holburne Museum, Bath. 2012  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

From these observations, conclusions gained from *'Architectural Apparatus No.5 Rev.A [Inverted Triumphal Arch]'* and later *'Architectural Apparatus Nos. 6 [Inclined, Reclined, Declined]'* was that the work was generally well liked, however, as a neo-monument, its message was missed by the majority of the public. For those people, it unknowingly relegated the work to that of public art and a significant failure in as a neo-monument.

## 2.6 Ecstasy of Truth

Redcliffe Bridge, Bristol, 2012

This was an experimental piece, made to examine if and how people engage with video-based art in the public context. *'Ecstasy of Truth'* was a video work created in collaboration with performance artist Marina Sossi. The title of the piece came from a quote by the film director, Werner Herzog but there was no connection to Herzog's work, other than the quote. The videos were shown in a redundant control cabin on a bascule bridge crossing the harbour in Bristol and now used as a 'pop-up' art space.



*'Ecstasy of Truth'* - by Douglas Clark (Artist) with Marina Sossi (Performer).

Video stills of the two videos, each projected on its own screen

Each measured – approx. 1.4 x 1.0 mtrs.

Redcliffe Bridge, Bristol. 2012

(Image: Douglas Clark)

The bridge was a 'pinch point', which people had to pass over on their way home from work. The video piece took the form of two looped and synchronised five-minute videos, back-projected on screens set up in the cabin. There was no spoken dialogue or attendant sound track. Both screens showed a 'life size' image of a woman: one image communicating solely by gesture with the other image in the form of action and response.

With the screening of this piece, consideration was given to how video art could be presented in the public realm. There was an interactive narrative created between the figures on the screen and the two videos endeavoured to be interesting and attractive to watch. No attempt was made to explain the work and there were no pretensions of the work being a neo-monument, however, the experimentation may have a later bearing on how new media can be adapted to create neo-monuments. This work was conceived to examine the reactions of the public to a video shown as public art; hence it was research about communication in the public arena.

The control cabin was chosen because the public footpath that ran beside it had a high footfall as it was on the commuter route from the business centre of the city to the main railway station and also to a large residential district.

The videos ran for three hours a day, after dark, for seven days and I was at hand for the duration of the presentation. The first observation was that many people were not that concerned with it at all, engrossed in their iPods and phones, walking fast, trying to get home after work, absorbed by their own thoughts. Perhaps this reflects Musil's view that the monument was all but invisible. The ones that stopped to look tended to be couples or groups with time on their hands.

When questioned, some thought it was a commercial advertising video trying to promote something. They seemed to instantly decide they were not interested in it, or had no time to take it in. Some viewers looked completely puzzled seeming to try and work out why it was there in the Control Cabin, others thinking for a brief moment that in the darkness, the figures were real [as they were life size]. Others waved at the images, maybe hoping to get a reaction. Those that took their time seemed to recognise it was a video artwork and realised there was interaction between the videos, although for some, it needed to be explained.

From this it may be deduced that we have become resistant or selective to marketing media. If video images are not to be confused with the similar images found in a retail environment, serious thought should be given to set them apart in relation to that environment.



There was little to advise the public what the work was about and the title did not give much away. As a public artwork, there was no specific message for them to read into the work so people were left to make up their own mind. Some asked what it was about, which indicated curiosity in what they saw. This was a positive outcome. It was also clear that some of the public had a degree of artistic knowledge while others showed no signs of comprehension or even care.



*'Ecstasy of Truth'*  
The video installation in the Control Cabin on Redcliffe Bridge, Bristol.  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

So the question has to be asked: with whom are we hoping to interact? Those who crossed Redcliffe Bridge were from a cross-section of all social strata. Should we accept that the neo-monument only be understood by the art cognoscenti or do we strive to achieve understanding by the lowest common denominator? Whilst *Ecstasy of Truth* is video-based art with no particular political message, it raised the question of knowing - or not - the language of contemporary art. Based on this, if one was to delve further; is education, age or social class; what the philosopher, Pierre Bourdieu referred to as: '*Cultural Capital*'<sup>19</sup>, a limiting factor for the neo-monument?

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<sup>19</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. ed. By John G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press 1986) pp. 241-258 in Marxist Internet Archive.  
< <https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/bourdieu-forms-capital.htm>>  
[Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> December 2016]

A number of technical problems arose whilst setting up. From this point of view the fragility and vulnerability of the video technology was apparent. From this it was indicative of the oversight required to maintain the piece in a viable way. It became clear if one uses a technical platform for a neo-monument, technical stability is crucial.

During the first two days of the presentation there appeared to be a reasonable amount of interest. By the end of day two, the local BBC radio station were alerted to the work and asked for a live interview, which was duly given. Subsequently there was an increase in those stopping to look. It is unclear whether this publicity helped its recognition, but it clearly demonstrated the need for publicity even when a work is in full sight of the public. One was left to wonder if, rather than believing that the neo-monument *competed* with other media, a degree of co-operation is to be welcomed for a successful outcome?

## **2.7 The Humanity Monument**

Trowbridge Arts, Trowbridge. 2016

'*Eight Wonder*'. 44AD Artspace, Bath. 2016

'*Drive Thru*' Exhibition. Q Park, London. 2016

'*The Humanity Monument*' was created in 2016 as a response to the European migration crisis. Having experienced the desperation of those attempting to escape to a better life, both in Africa and South America, the crisis has come as no surprise. Those fleeing from wars and destitution in the Middle East and Africa in overcrowded, unseaworthy boats have, in recent times, caused maritime death by drowning to increase, year on year to the extent that in 2016 an estimated five thousand perished in the Mediterranean alone. Reactions to this crisis have been mixed. While some governments and individual groups have actively helped, others have been unconcerned or even condemned migrants, so stoking nationalism and Islamophobia. Fear of social invasion caused many to create barriers to resist this flow of displaced people, even threatening the break-up of the European Union. The catastrophe has highlighted societal reactions to migration and demands us to question people's empathy with those in crisis.

Taking a cue from artists like Jenny Holzer and Martin Creed I decided to use text. I wanted to ask the general public to look inwardly at themselves by asking a short, direct question: Where Is Your Humanity?

We have seen with monuments like The Cenotaph, the use of text in a monument is not new. The word 'Humanity', as a noun means the human race or 'Mankind', yet it can also refer to the positive aspects of 'Human Nature' in the manner of benevolence,<sup>20</sup> mercy and kindness. It is an *existential* question, the intrinsic nature of the text, probing ones 'authenticity' and 'determinism'. In other words, the phrase, *Where Is Your Humanity?* is about questioning who we naturally are and comparing it to what we think we should be.

The question, "Where is your humanity?" was not meant to be accusatorial; it had a question mark rather than an exclamation mark. It was a proposal that one should look at oneself and one's attitudes. Some however may, and indeed have, considered it to be accusatorial. At least one member of the public let it be known that they felt the text was a reproach. Whether that negates the original question is open to conjecture, nonetheless, it made that person very aware of the question in the first place and hence gave food for thought, which was the intention. In relation to this, György Kepes makes the point that: '*Contradiction is then the basis of dynamic organisation of the associative qualities of the image.*'<sup>21</sup>

Although not a commission, Trowbridge Arts agreed to let me raise this work on the façade of the old Trowbridge Town Hall. As a faded industrial town, Trowbridge has the highest per-capita Moroccan population outside London and a substantial Polish community. In this way, the Town Hall is a poignant place to erect this work. A local Victorian industrialist had given the building to the town and over the years it has been the seat of local government, a law court complete with a large underground jail and latterly a Coroner's Court, conducting inquiries into military deaths during recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is, in short, a place of humanity and inhumanity.

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<sup>20</sup> The Concise Oxford English Dictionary, p.592

<sup>21</sup> György Kepes, cited in 'Toward a Dynamic Iconography' *Design, Critical and Primary Sources Vol.1* ed. by D.J.Huppertz (New York: Dover Publications, 1995) pp.200-202

The nature of the text was conceived to reflect this. It had to be emotive in some way and it had to be effective in making people think about it. To do this, it had to be succinct with the directness of an advertising campaign. It had to connect with the public. It had been ascertained from *Ecstasy of Truth* that it was important differentiate the neo-monument from other urban distractions. Because of the ubiquity of advertising campaigns in public spaces, it became clear that one should not confuse the onlooker by allowing them to think it is just another sales pitch, which could be ignored. By placing *The Humanity Monument* on the façade of a non-commercial building it was hoped that this would not happen.

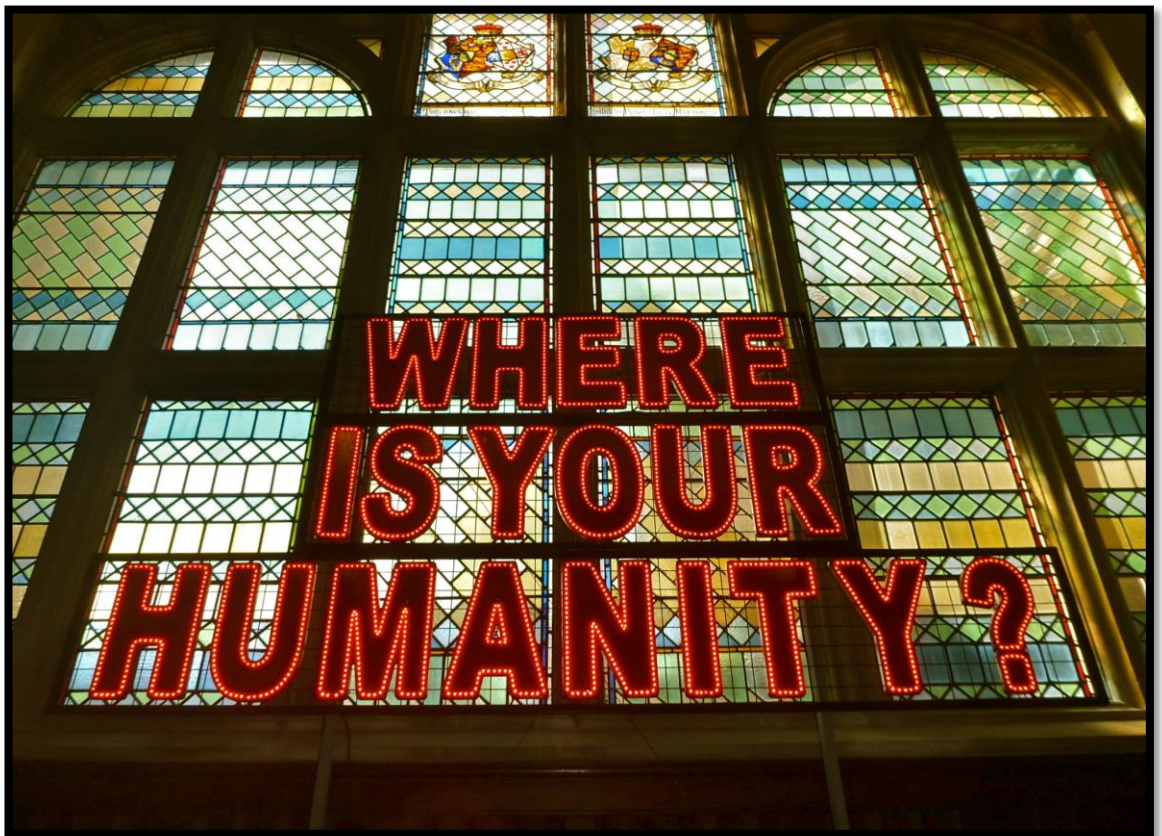
Using a traditional advertising ploy, an illuminated ‘sign’ was devised in the style of the old circus signs. The lighting was to be upgraded from the traditional and rather dim, pygmy lightbulbs. This was to ensure a degree of impact under daylight lighting as well as subdued or dark conditions. When creating ‘The Humanity Monument’, incandescent, fluorescent and neon tubes were considered but disregarded at an early stage because of their fragility. LEDs were far more practical as they have a long service life of fifty thousand hours and the technology is such that the new, ultra-bright LEDs, when spaced at 90 LEDs per metre creates an intensive luminosity, even in comparison to neon. This makes them prominent, even in well-lit environments. This would easily create the visual impact desired. Added to this they are of a low DC voltage with low power draw so they can be driven independently off a battery or solar power giving them the potential for mobility. For this project the 2,360 ultra-bright LEDs drew only 160 watts.

As with any public work, Health and Safety issues needed to be addressed. This created a problem, as the balcony where the work was to be mounted was directly above a busy public walkway. Whilst preparing to mount the work, a fundamental problem became clear. As no fixings were allowed to be drilled into the fabric of the old building, under some circumstances, high winds would create a life-threatening risk to the public below, should the free standing supporting structure become dislodged. To be seen above the balcony, the text would have to be raised almost two metres above the balustrade. Although the text was reduced from three to two lines, there was concern about the physical security of the work, so much



so, that reluctantly, a decision was made to relocate the work inside the building. Although a disappointment, the interior of the building was freely open to the public for arts events and community projects, but although aesthetically this was not a bad move, it clearly had the effect of limiting the work's exposure. Nevertheless, much to the Director and Trustees of Trowbridge Arts relief, it was the pragmatic approach to take in such circumstances. This decision was vindicated some months later when masonry from the balcony that was to be used, fell to the pavement below.

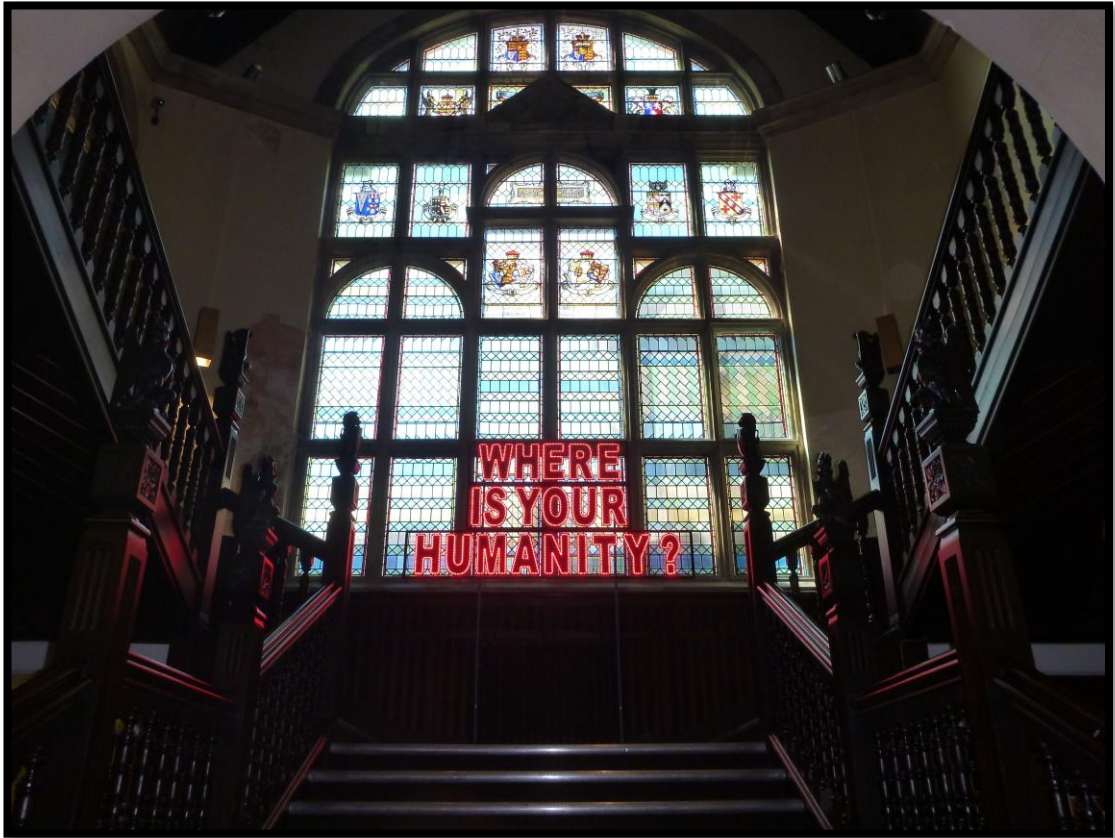
Several options were considered regarding placement of the work inside the building. This included the jail itself which would have created a more specific context altogether. In the end, placing it on the grand staircase leading from the entrance hall seemed to be an appropriate site.



*The Humanity Monument* by Douglas Clark  
Ultra-bright LEDs, Steel and Wood 2.2 x 1.4 metres  
Trowbridge Arts, Trowbridge. 2016  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

I had concerns that the ornate structures and carvings in the surrounding area would visually overpower the work however, when sited, the intensity of the

illumination concentrated the eyes on the text. The space-frame mounting allowed the ornate stained-glass window to be seen between the letters and remained hardly noticeable in the glare of the LEDs. A solid board would have reduced the impact of the text and clearly detracted aesthetically.



*The Humanity Monument.*  
Even with the Sun behind the stained glass window the LED's maintained impact.  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

The positioning of the work on the staircase and in front of the stained-glass window had the effect of giving the space an altar-like countenance to those ascending, the glow giving an intense, red luminosity to the work. The phenomenological impact of the ultra-bright LEDs had a huge effect, causing some to shield their eyes from it as they passed close by. It was visually akin to shouting. Unlike stone or steel letters, the LEDs were so bright that they left a half-life of red luminescence on closed eyelids. This of course is a double-edged sword: on the one hand, getting the monument noticed, but on the other, driving people away. Placing the work at a distance from the viewer, as was the original intention, reduced the negative effects of the LED's intensity. Clearly there is a decision to be

made when locating the work in the future. The intensity of the LEDs has shown to overwhelm all around it, absorbing one's attention even when viewed from afar.

As discussed earlier, attempts to create a neo-monument with *Architectural Apparatus Nos.5 and 6* demonstrated the problem of the public understanding the significance of the monument. '*The Humanity Monument*' clearly showed that text circumvented this problem by going straight to the core message. Positive reactions indicated the work retained an aesthetic credibility, even though it was text and not representational in form.

This positive, critical acceptance of the work prompted an, unsighted offer of a gallery show at an independent public gallery, the 44AD Artspace in central Bath. Referring to *The Humanity Monument*, the gallery Director, Katie O'Brian said:

' "...at this point, via a photograph, I knew it was a powerful artwork. I loved the work's aesthetic, scale, materials - it's brightly demanding conceptual directness. I was delighted! As the visual centerpiece of the exhibition, as a social commentary so relevant today, and as a precursory theme for the exhibiting artists - *The Humanity Monument* can only demand response." '22

This offer allowed the work to be seen in another environment, that of a 'white cube' space. The show itself it was to be curated around this work. An open call, based on the text, "Where is your humanity?" attracted international response from other artists.

When shown at 44AD Artspace the work was placed in its own gallery. Public engagement was good, the predominant comments inevitably being about its brightness. More importantly, there was a substantial acknowledgement of the context and concept behind the work. There was a well-attended 'Private View' and question-and-answer session at the end of the show, which allowed me to propose and explain the term, neo-monument and the public to express their views on the work.

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<sup>22</sup> Katie O'Brian, from an email to the author [Dated 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016]



*'The Humanity Monument'*  
44AD Artspace, Bath 2016  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

As discussed above, the context of the work was not meant to be accusatorial, nevertheless, it was recognized that some might find it so. Those who saw it as a provocation rather than a question were in a minority. Only one out of twenty people who were questioned thought it was judgmental and when asked why he thought this, he replied that he felt it could be seen as a rhetorical question. Either way, the work seemed to have the appropriate contextual impact.

Clearly the context of the work was understood. When asked what it was about, the majority said it was about attitudes to those worse off than themselves, to



migrants or to those struggling around us. One did not have to look far for this. Even outside the gallery in the affluent city of Bath, there is a substantial homeless population.



A dancer totally immersed and absorbed within the space.

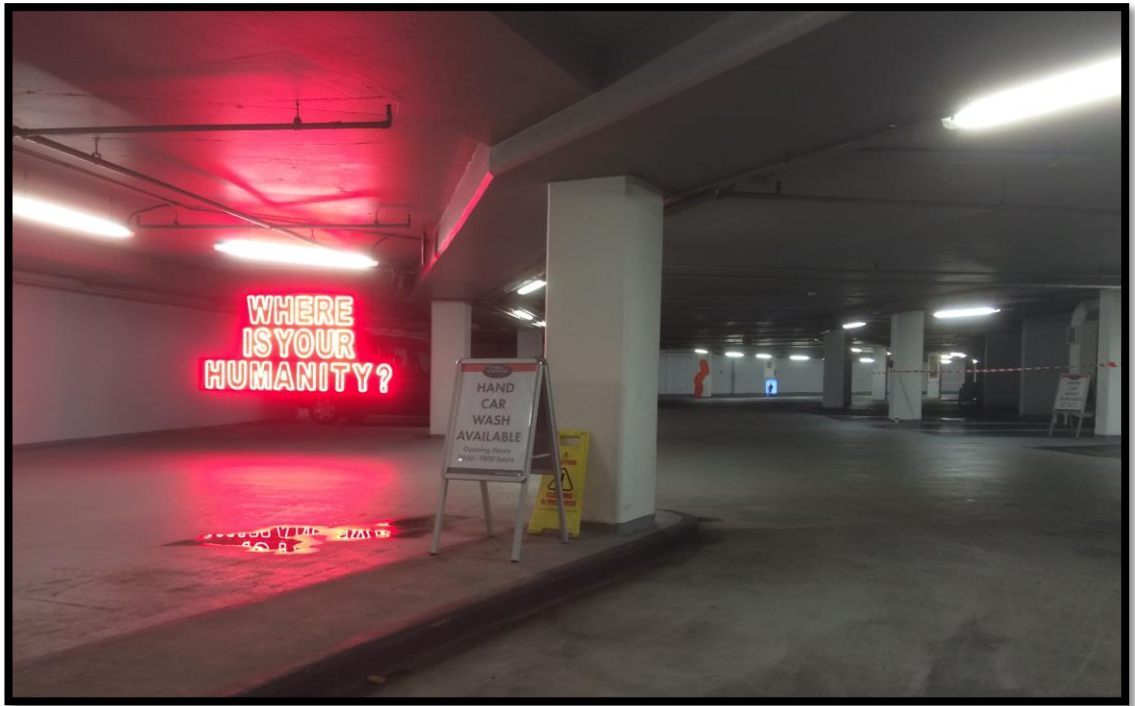
44AD Artspace

(Photo: Simon Le Boggit) [Credit amended for digital version of thesis]

In Trowbridge, after seeing the work in place, a theatre group rewrote sections of a play specifically to relate to the text of *'The Humanity Monument'* and performed the play for an audience in front of it. At 44AD Artspace a dancer, a performance artist and a Hip-hop poet performed their own work in relation to the context: 'humanity'.

When the work had been shown at the old Town Hall, there was a stark contrast between the Victorian gothic interior and the bright intensity of the piece. For some, this visual disparity had the effect of making the viewer question the reason for it being there, most just took it for the question it was. In contrast, at 44AD Artspace, the luminescence of the work caused the white space to become an intense red space, producing a totally immersive, almost visceral experience. This gave the work an added aesthetic dimension and consequently created a different kind of impact. One was absorbed into the space without any exterior distractions, only the question raised in the illuminated text.

The last appearance of *The Humanity Monument* was at a curated group exhibition in a circular underground car park, Q-Park in Marylebone, Central London.



*The Humanity Monument* at the entrance to, and as part of the 'Drive Thru' exhibition.  
Q-Park, Cavendish Square, London. 2016  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

The exhibition was entitled 'Drive Thru' and for a small part of the five-day event, access was limited to cars driving through the exhibition and at other times, pedestrians only. When entering the exhibition by car, one was confronted by the glare of the LEDs as you reached the lower, third floor parking space.

The show attracted a steady flow of people throughout the event. It was noted that *The Humanity Monument* became a much-photographed work during the show, often, with the public having their photographs taken in front of it. Adjacent to the site of *The Humanity Monument*, there was a hand car-wash that employed several African men who worked hard all day, washing some of the very expensive cars in this West End garage. Talking to them, it was clear they understood the context of the text.

It is important to point out that of the venues *The Humanity Monument* has been shown *all* had free public access, although they were time limited during the day.



Q-Park car-wash workers.  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

One of the conclusions to be drawn from this work is that the demographic is an important consideration. Arguably, the exposure that *The Humanity Monument* received at 44AD and from Q-Park was different from that of Trowbridge Arts and more positive. The space at 44AD was more intimate and one felt embraced within a sculpture. Q-Park was totally different and wide open but the work still had intensity and impact. Those who visited 44AD and Q-Park were there because they wanted to see art; they had knowledge of it and wanted to think about it.

Trowbridge Arts presented a more working-class environment and although two other exhibitions took place in the gallery while *The Humanity Monument* was in situ, the Town Hall was also a venue for other activities, not necessarily arts-based. That said, in Trowbridge, a visitor felt the text within the work, brought her close to tears. The fact that the school students altered their play to incorporate the words "Where is your humanity?" and used the work by performing in front of it was also gratifying, knowing that these young people had understood the message. On the other hand, when others saw it at Trowbridge, the question was often,

“What is it?” or “Why is it here?” rather than “What is it about?” suggesting a lack of understanding in contemporary culture. Yet as a neo-monument, the text message was clearer than any of my other work. However, when shown at 44AD Artspace and Q-Park, it appeared that neither of these questions needed to be asked.

From the preceding examples, it was noted that as a method of communication, the neo-monument requires, at least, a degree of visual understanding. I would suggest that, as with much of contemporary art, it is fundamental that when viewing the neo-monument, the observer has to *want* to embrace it and understand it. Some people are more fluent in the language of art than others. When proposing a neo-monument, one has to know who the audience is likely to be, to be effective. The message has to be straightforward, even blatant.

The relative ease of erection of *The Humanity Monument* was a positive outcome. Whereas the *Architectural Apparatus* series took at least a day to install and a truck to move them, *The Humanity Monument* fitted in a car and took less than an hour to install and with a customised support structure, had the potential to be fitted to a mobile platform. This gives it the potential for hit-and-run actions where sites may be difficult to come by, finance or gain the appropriate permissions.

Finally, visual impact was given by *The Humanity Monument* by using the techniques of advertising and making this work brash and bright. As a result, it was almost impossible to avoid and immediately gained people’s attention. This then questions Musil’s assertion given at the start of this thesis: ‘*The most remarkable thing about monuments is that you don’t notice them*’. From this research it is therefore proposed that his assertion was a dated generalisation and not necessarily valid today.



## **Chapter Three**

### **The Contextual Considerations of the Monument and Neo-Monument**

#### **3.1 The Monument as a Political Tool and Social Device.**

We have said that the monument and neo-monument have been, and still are political tools. It is this fact that differentiates them from public art. Until the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century the monument had effectively been a tool of the Establishment. In times of change, rebellion or dissent, iconoclasts would destroy monuments to make political points. We do not have to look far to see that a monument's removal is a huge symbolic gesture, recent examples of this being the removal of Soviet era statuary in countries of the old Eastern Bloc, the toppling of the grandiose statues in Iraq and the vandalism of historic sites in Syria.

It is proposed that the monument can now equally be seen as a tool of the Non- or even Counter-Establishment. It is evident that pressure groups or 'concerned' individuals in countries where free speech is permitted, or at least tolerated, can now consider the construct of the monument as a viable tool for both limited and mass communication and thus the highlighting or advancement of a cause. We will see in the following chapters, that there are artists with leanings toward Anti-Establishment or at least non-conventional beliefs, who have discovered that political arguments may be addressed and points made by the creation of their own monuments.

The memorialisation of the Holocaust is probably unique in history, in that the government of Germany commissioned a grand memorial to those consumed in a genocidal tragedy perpetrated *by that same country*. Yet it was an up-swelling of German public pressure, that demanded it to be created. Whilst referring to Peter Eisenman's vast Holocaust Monument in Berlin, Robert Carrier asserts:

'If we recognise the Holocaust Monument as a product of its social environment and as a focus of public debate with respect to both its artistic and political representative function, we must ask: for whom was the

monument built and what understanding of history does it underpin? The meaning of the monument, as a contribution to historical understanding, thus results from the interaction of artistic and political forms of representation.’<sup>23</sup>

Holocaust monuments are not *just* memorials; the enormity of the story they tell, means that they will continue to signify man’s cruelty to man. They are on-going *commentaries* as they fulfil two criteria for a monument: reminding and warning.

Whilst Carrier is referring specifically to the Holocaust monuments, there is no reason why, in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the question, ‘*for whom was the monument built?*’ should not apply to all monuments. In answer to Carrier’s question, the apparent and optimistic answer in a democratic and free society is *the people*. Here, we have the key, not in the words ‘the people’, which we take to mean those who make up the community, but the word ‘democratic’. Democracy - derived from the Greek word *dēmokratia* meaning; ‘*government by the people, direct or representative.*’<sup>24</sup>. So in this case, for those living in non-autocratic liberal democracies, we mean those free to make their own decisions.

One of the main problems of politics is considered to be public *engagement*. The media bombardment of twenty-four hour news, TV dramas, the Internet and mobile phone use have introduced a degree of disassociation with real existential problems and disaffection with those in authority. Relatively loosely controlled Internet applications such as Facebook and Twitter, developed in the last twenty years, have now acquired a political dimension in recent times and their influence has become significant in political campaigning in Britain and the United States. This has seen new phrases being adopted ‘Post-truth’, defined as: ‘*Relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.*’<sup>25</sup> Facing these problems, artists have to develop new strategies to address these phenomena and bring any significant issues raised into the public arena. The strength of the neo-monument is that it is *not* like the mass-media. It has a *physicality* that sets it apart from the media and this distinction serves to create engagement.

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<sup>23</sup> Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory*, p.32.

<sup>24</sup> *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, p.324

<sup>25</sup> *Oxford Dictionaries*, < <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/post-truth> > [Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> November. 2016]

### **3.2 The Monument and the Memorial**

Some writers have questioned the true relationship between memory and the monument, suggesting that the monument supplants memory with its own self. Here lies the paradox, in that the memorial is there to remind, but there is more than enough going on in our lives for us to remember everything. The memorial reboots our memory when that memory has been forgotten.

James Young, writing about memory, cites Pierre Nora. Nora proposes that we delegate memory to external structures:

‘The less memory is experienced from the inside the more it exists only through its exterior scaffolding and outward signs – hence the obsession with the archive that marks our age attempting at once to complete the conservation of the present as well as the total preservation of the past.’<sup>26</sup>

Thus, Nora’s view is that the memorial/monument takes the place of memory and becomes the ‘exterior scaffolding’ of that memory. This has led to some artists questioning the value of the monument when seen as being *solely* a memorial.

When Horst Hoheisel created his counter-monument, ‘*The Aschrottbrunnen Fountain*’ he was highlighting the discourse between memory and history. He was deconstructing the term memorial, pointing out that his inverted simulacrum was about history and not a memorial. Hoheisel’s work is pure conceptualism and he emphasizes this by making this observation:

‘The sunken fountain is not the memorial at all. It is only history turned into a pedestal, an invitation to passers-by who stand upon it to search for the memorial in their own heads. For only there is the memorial to be found.’<sup>27</sup>

Subsequent to his inverted fountain in Kassel, Hoheisel proposed the destruction of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin in the 1995 competition for a fitting Holocaust Monument in Berlin. The Brandenburg Gate had become a symbol of Germany’s reunification thus this was very unlikely to happen. When referring to this Hoheisel’s proposal, James E. Young suggested:

‘Part of its polemic, therefore, is directed against actually building any winning design, against ever finishing the monument at all. Here he seems

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<sup>26</sup> James E. Young, *Memory and Counter Memory*, p.2

<sup>27</sup> Horst Hoheisel, cited in James E. Young, *At Memories Edge*, p.90

to suggest that the surest engagement with Holocaust memory in Germany may actually lie in its perpetual irresolution, that only an unfinished memorial process can guarantee the life of memory'.<sup>28</sup>

Conversely, it has been proposed that the providing of a monument may actually be an aid to forgetting, that the monument absorbs the function of memory. It does our remembering for us so our lives may carry on, unhindered by the past. We may ask, if this has been the case in post-war Germany. Are Holocaust monuments archiving the past and becoming effectively part of the healing process?

In his book, *Les Lieux de Memoire*, Pierre Nora talks about the 'acceleration of history', where events happen with increased rapidity:

'The 'acceleration of history' then, confronts us with the brutal realisation of the difference between memory, social and unviolated... and history, which is how our hopelessly forgetful modern societies, propelled by change, organise the past.'<sup>29</sup>

In Nora's view, the temporal velocity of events concertina and are compressed into history, only to be archived with all-consuming modern technology then filed away as new events continue to happen. There is also a global entity that has taken the role of our memory and that is the Internet.

A memorial can be a simple gravestone or maybe a grand statue to a campaign, a successful General, a writer or philosopher, even an artist; a monument is more than this. Arthur Danto proposed a view inferring a difference between the two:

'We erect monuments so we shall always remember and build memorials so that we forget... Monuments make heroes and triumphs, victories and conquests, perpetually present and part of life. The memorial is a special precinct, extruded from life, a segregated enclave where we honor (sic) the dead. With monuments, we honor ourselves.'<sup>30</sup>

In terms of monuments, this is a simplistic view. Danto talks of the memorial as a work of remembrance and reconciliation and the monument as triumphalist and celebratory. It could be argued that the monument can be both.

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<sup>28</sup> James E. Young, *Memory and Counter Memory*, p.2

<sup>29</sup> Pierre Nora, cited in Paul Williams *Memorial Museums*, (Oxford: Berg, 2007), p.161

<sup>30</sup> Arthur C. Danto, 'The Vietnam Veterans Memorial', *The Nation*, 31<sup>st</sup> August 1986, p.152  
<[http://hettingern.people.cofc.edu/Aesthetics\\_Fall\\_2010/Danto\\_Vietnam\\_Veteran's\\_Memorial.pdf](http://hettingern.people.cofc.edu/Aesthetics_Fall_2010/Danto_Vietnam_Veteran's_Memorial.pdf)  
>[Accessed 16th September 2016]

The derivation of the word 'monument' as discussed in the introduction, indicates that a monument and a memorial can be one and the same. Yet conversely, it can be two different things. Whereas a memorial may be solely a reminder, homage to the dead or past event, it becomes a monument *when it takes a view*, that is to say, when it projects a political message. Monuments are generally created after an event. If there is not a memorialising primacy for a work, there is invariably a historical basis for its creation. It is proposed that a neo-monument engages with the present, and looks to affirm the future.

When we have Maya Lin's, *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* in Washington or the Sir Reginald Blomfield's, *Menin Gate* in Ypres, engraved as they are with the names of tens of thousands of war dead, one can hardly remain emotionally unaffected by their presence, yet these monuments also serve as a warning of the consequences and futility of war. So, when Danto refers to the monument as being '*perpetually present and part of life*' is he correct? Arguably, it may be true of the classical monument, however, we will see it is being questioned by contemporary neo-monuments.

For the neo-monument, where the temporality of the monument is a factor, Danto's view is outdated. It could be suggested that, contingent on its temporality, the neo-monument is less of a memorial than the classical monuments of the past. For the neo-monument, their '*perpetual presence*' and influence on one's life is more dependent upon both the visceral and intellectual impact of the monument at the time of viewing and optimistically, its longer-term effect on an individual's memory. In this respect, the aesthetic impact of the work must have an effective influence on the assimilation of the concept behind the neo-monument.

Memorialisation is not necessarily the priority for a neo-monument but it can be the reason the work is created - the spark that produces the idea to create a neo-monument. It could be argued that the neo-monument is predominantly an existential entity in that, while not disregarding the past, one engages with the neo-monument in 'the present', in other words, how it affects our reality. It could be argued that this contradicts the basis of a memorial and its contextual history.

However, while not dissociating itself from history or memory, the neo-monument is about the present and the future. Danto wrote that memorials honour the dead but '*with monuments we honor ourselves.*' In another way, it is saying that by honouring ourselves, the monument looks to today and the future, whereas the memorial looks to the past.

### **3.3 The Monument and Temporality**

It has been said that three-dimensional work exists in time – they have a fourth dimension. Rosalind Krauss, citing Gotthold Lessing's treatise on *Laocoon* says:

'To his famous distinction between temporal and spacial arts he added an important caveat; '*All bodies, however, exist not only in space*' he had cautioned, '*but also in time. They continue and at any moment of their continuance, may assume a different appearance and stand in different relations. Every one of these momentary appearances and groupings was the result of a preceding, may become cause for the following and is therefore the centre of a present action.*'<sup>31</sup>

This is particularly true with the monument. Memory is a factor of time and the monument is a factor of memory. Consequently, if this is so, then how long does a monument have to stand for? Until the 1980's the perception was that one of the features of the monument was endurance. Citing the art historian Jochen Speilmann, Peter Carrier quotes his definition of the monument:

'A monument is an independent work of art reminding us of people or events. It is erected in a public space by a specific group on a specific site and is designed to endure. In this process a monument fulfils a function of identification, legitimisation, representation, anticipation, interpretation and information. It acts as a symbol in so far as it sustains political and historical discussion in a society, provides a link between cultural formation and institutional communication and is both a manifestation of cultural memory and historical consciousness'.<sup>32</sup>

Over the centuries, the requirement for longevity of a monument appears to have been a 'given'. They were erected in the hope that contemporary and future generations will look back at those memorialised with, at the very least, respect and that they would be protected from desecration and neglect, '*enabling them to*

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<sup>31</sup> Rosalind Kraus, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*. (London: Thames and Hudson. 1977) p.4

<sup>32</sup> Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory*, p.35



*defy the attrition of time*'.<sup>33</sup> Yet with the neo-monument there is a valid argument to assert that this is not necessarily a requirement. If the neo-monument references an historical moment but does not intentionally memorialise it, the significance of that moment, although essential in establishing the monument, may cease to be so relevant. As time passes and vicissitudes of our existence occur, it renders the monument outdated and obsolete.

In their book, 'The Art of Forgetting', Adrian Forty and Susanne Küchler put forward the view:

'The Western tradition of memory since the Renaissance has been founded upon the assumption that material objects, whether natural or artificial can act as the analogues of human memory'.<sup>34</sup>

Further to this, they go on to cite Alois Riegl from his essay 'On the Modern Cult of Monuments' pointing out:

'In his essay [*written in 1903*], Riegl warned that at the time he was writing the quality for which monuments were most venerated was what he described as their '*age value*', their emotional evocation of a general sense of the passage of time, rather than for any specific historical knowledge they might contain. When a monument is considered by this criterion, it's being an object, explained Riegl, "*has shrunk to a necessary evil. These monuments are nothing but indispensable catalysts, which trigger in the beholder a sense of life-cycle, of the emergence of the particular from the general and its inevitable dissolution back to the general.*"'<sup>35</sup>

Riegl was not alone in his views. Theodor Adorno, was also mindful of age-value as his comments regarding museums could also be directed at the monument. He wrote:

"The German word museal [museum-like] has unpleasant overtones. It describes objects to which the observer no longer has a vital relationship and is in the process of dying. They owe their preservation more to historical respect than to the needs of the present".<sup>36</sup>

We therefore have this inconsistency. Although made to signify a person's status or past event, the monument ceases to reflect this and becomes known for its antiquity and thus itself. A memorial ceases to be a memorial, when people have

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<sup>33</sup> Adrian Forty & Susanne Küchler, *The Art of Forgetting*, (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1999) p.151

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p.2

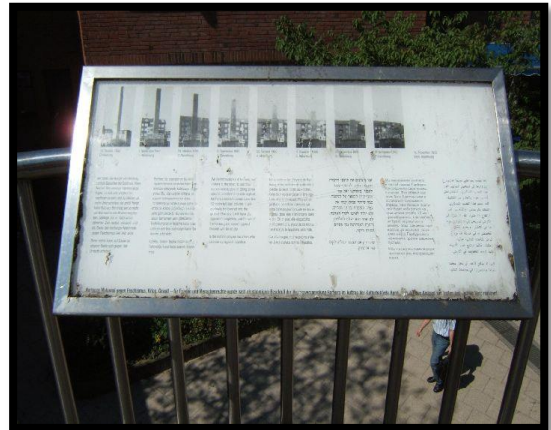
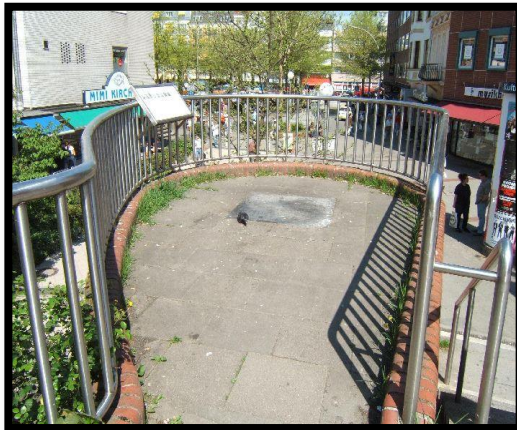
<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, p.4

<sup>36</sup> Theodor Adorno, cited by Douglas Crimp, ed. by Hal Foster in *The Anti-Aesthetic*. (New York: The New Press, 1998) p.49

forgotten what it was for. This is important to keep in mind when considering what we require from a monument. Logically then, a monument ceases to be a monument when people forget what it was all about. If one has to be reminded of what it signifies, does it then become public art, or worse, street furniture?

In this case, we should consider that the neo-monument as an entity should not be created to endure. Perhaps we should consider a neo-monument as time specific; a monument that reflects the fast, throwaway and gigabyte swallowing nature of our times? (The monument to the cyber-whistleblower, Edward Snowden, discussed later in Chapter Five, is an example of this).

The counter-monument, by its nature, has gone some way to question the longevity of the monument to the point where it almost ceases to exist at all. As we have seen in Chapter One, this use of time as a dimension of the monument is clearly demonstrated with Ester and Jochen Gerz's *'Harburger Mahnmal Gegen Faschismus'* [Monument Against Fascism]. As the twelve metre high column, gradually sank from sight, taking its graffiti-scrawled lead skin into the ground and for the most part out of sight, the artists make a clear point about remembrance.



*'Harburger Mahnmal Gegen Faschismus'* by Ester and Jochen Gerz

[Left] In final lowered form, the top of the memorial flush with the pavement

[Right] A sign, explaining the memorial and with time-lapse photographs of process.

Harburg, 1986

(Photo: Mark R. Hatlie)

This monument disappeared from sight a generation ago with only the memories of those who saw it and the signboard explaining its past. Its own history is archived in books and on the Internet. We must ask how effective is the monument

when the memory fades and all we have is a sign on a handrail? Here lies a fundamental problem with the monument.

We shall see in some of the case studies that follow, the ways in which artists have attempted to keep their neo-monuments current.

### **3.4 The monument and visibility**

In the last third of the 20th Century, artists reflected on and grappled with the concept of the temporal dimension of the monument, perhaps being cognisant with Riegl and Musil's pointed comments. By talking about the invisibility of the monument, Musil explains his analysis by pointing out that over time, the monument loses its power to influence and that monuments had to compete to attract attention stating that this could '*effectively precipitate them [monuments] into an ocean of oblivion.*'<sup>37</sup>

In the past, those who wished to preserve the effectiveness of a given monument over time had little to help them in this endeavour, unless it was particularly special in its creative excellence. Secular monuments, more often than not, had to depend on dynastic support of monarchy, dictatorships, or government, whereas monuments of a religious significance had the advantage of an all-consuming culture of reverence that had been developed to worship around these iconic structures.

Some monuments related to the conflicts of the 20th Century retain their significance due to the annual ceremonies that renew their raison d'être. Lutyen's *Cenotaph* in London is a case in point. War veterans and associated groups see it as a rallying point at the annual Remembrance Ceremony. These ceremonies, televised and regularly watched by millions of people generate a cultural memory that perpetuates the monument's potency.

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<sup>37</sup>Robert Musil, cited in Peter Carrier *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory*, p.15

Combined with any artistic component it may have the monument, at a fundamental level, is a means of communication. Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and increasingly since the 1940s, the monument has faced competition for public awareness from other forms of media; radio and television, cinema, newspapers, advertising and now, added to this, there is the Internet. These forms of communication extend well beyond an observer standing in front of a statue. As the speed of life has quickened, our senses are now bombarded by all forms of information, with a constant barrage of visual and aural images as world events change, almost on an hourly basis. The relentless passage of rolling news and political comment is there for all with access to a TV, radio or computer. This huge turnover of media content is there to suck us in and make constant demands on our attention.

Faced with this, a monument with designs to have any degree of longevity has to be exceptional to maintain its position as an important signifier of political comment. The French writer, Paul Virilio writes:

‘... the postmodern period has seen a gradual drift away from an art once substantial, marked by architecture, music, sculpture and painting towards a purely accidental art... This drift away from substantial art has been part and parcel of the boom in film and radio and in particular, television, the medium that has ended up flattening all forms of representation thanks to its abrupt use of presentation whereby real time definitely outclasses the real space of major artworks, whether of literature or visual arts.’<sup>38</sup>

Virilio goes on to put forward the view:

‘To see, without going there to see. To perceive, without really being there ... All this was to shatter the whole set of different phenomena involved in visual and theatrical representation, right up to representative democracy, itself threatened by broadcasting tools that were to shape the standardised democracy of public opinions a prelude to landing us in the synchronised democracy of public emotion that was to ruin the fragile balance of societies emancipated from real presence.’<sup>39</sup>

This may be seen in the heavily-politicised television stations like Fox News, North Korean TV and many others, propagandising from the top down; from the elite to the masses. It is media that is hard to engage with, that will inevitably have the last say. How then do artists produce work likely to draw the public in? In Europe and

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<sup>38</sup> Paul Virilio, *Art As Far As The Eye Can See*. (Oxford: Berg, 2007), p.3

<sup>39</sup> *ibid*, p.8

America, political parties with enormous budgets look to advertising agencies to pursue their manifestos. So could the neo-monument work the other way, from the bottom up? One could argue that, without resorting to public demonstrations, this is one of the few ways socio-political arguments can be made. Can creative people, through thoughtful artistic endeavour, make political points of their own and can the techniques of media overkill actually work for the neo-monument? Gyorgy Kepes, in his observations on advertising and art, presents the proposition:

‘Advertising for its well-conceived interest, learned to use the dynamic plastic organisation of these optical qualities; that is, it became an art.’

He goes on to ask if this visual exposure be used for the public good:

‘Here lies a great challenge for advertising today. Contemporary man-made environment makes up a very large part of man’s visible surroundings. Posters on the streets, picture magazines, picture books container labels, window displays and innumerable other existing or potential forms of visual publicity could then serve a double purpose. They could disseminate socially useful messages and they could train the eye and thus the mind with the necessary discipline of seeing beyond the surface of visible things, to recognise and enjoy values necessary for an integrated life.’

‘If social conditions allow advertising to serve messages that are satisfied in the deepest broadest sense, advertising art could contribute effectively in preparing the way for a positive popular art, an art reaching everybody and understood by everyone.’<sup>40</sup>

Kepe’s opinion that advertising can be transformed from solely commercial interests to ‘*disseminate socially useful messages*’ has opened the door to what a neo-monument could be.

In our overcrowded urban environment, it is clear that any monument has to fight for attention within these shared spaces. Jean Baudrillard writes:

‘... the effect of an omnipresent visibility of enterprises, brands, social interlocuters and the social virtues of communication – advertising in its new dimension invades everything as public space (the street, monument, market, scene) disappears. It realizes, or, if one prefers, it materializes in its obscenity; it monopolizes public life in its exhibition.’<sup>41</sup>

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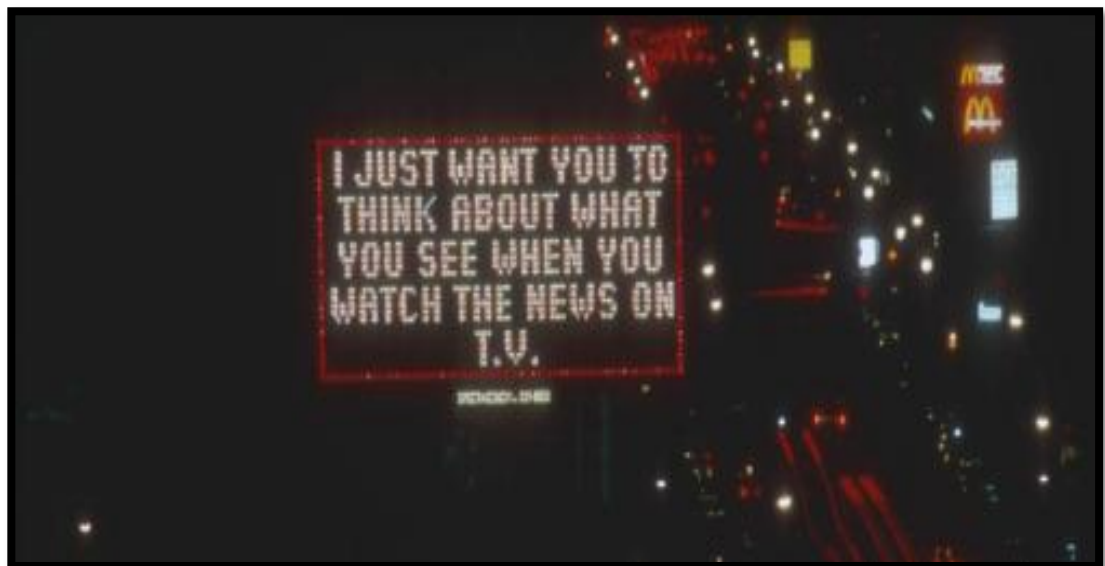
<sup>40</sup> György Kepes, cited in ‘Toward a Dynamic Iconography’ *Design, Critical and Primary Sources Vol.1* ed. by D.J.Huppertz (New York: Dover Publications, 1995) p.128

<sup>41</sup> Jean Baudrillard, ‘The Ecstasy of Communication’ *The Anti-Aesthetic*, ed. By Hal Foster [New York: The New Press, 2002] p.149



The overwhelming advertising in Times Square, New York in comparison to the diminutive statue of Father Francis D. Duffy, in the foreground-left.  
(Photo: Douglas Clark) [Photo amended for digital version of thesis]

In the 1980s artist Barbara Kruger saw the potential for producing thought-provoking art on the famous illuminated signboards in Times Square, New York.



One of the '*Messages to the Public*' by Barbara Kruger  
Shown on large Spectacolor Electronic Hoarding  
Times Square, New York. 1983  
(Photo: Public Art Fund)



The Public Art Fund, a fund initiated to bring contemporary art to the streets of New York, commissioned her work on an 800 square-foot 'Spectacolor' illuminated array. The work went under the title '*Messages to the Public*'. Jane Dickson, a painter who was working for Spectacolor at that time, and who instigated this programme said:

'I picked that title,' she said of *Messages to the Public*, 'because I thought the propaganda potential from this project was terrific.' The board, she noted, was regularly used for 'commercial propaganda.'<sup>42</sup>

The work was run on a twenty-minute loop in conjunction with normal computer-animated commercial advertising.

Kruger, of course, is not the only artist to use simple text or signboards of various descriptions. British artist, Martin Creed, has used this in his practice and so has Jenny Holzer with her '*Truisms*' series.

Artists, like Kruger, have appropriated advertising techniques to present their own agendas, their strategy to be provocative, aberrant, or both. Kruger, in placing work on computerised screens in Times Square was working at extremes. Choosing an environment where the combined use of advertising strategies, coupled with prime location, laid the foundation to create a prominent neo-monument and in doing so, acquired access to real public engagement. Modern methods developed for sport and concerts such as the use of big video screens and LED technology are techniques ready to be tapped and taken out of their usual environment.

The political nature of the neo-monument will, at times, face inevitable situational restrictions imposed by the authorities or the artist(s). This may naturally inhibit both voluntary and involuntary public exposure to a neo-monument. It follows that some of the public will, in consequence, miss or avoid neo-monuments and the propositions they offer. Thus, even in a liberal Western culture, the erection of a monument, criticising authority or cultural attitudes, faces substantial hurdles even before it is placed before the public.

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<sup>42</sup> Jane Dickson, *Public Art Fund*,  
<[http://www.publicartfund.org/view/exhibitions/5552\\_messages\\_to\\_the\\_public\\_-\\_kruger/5552\\_messages\\_to\\_the\\_public\\_-\\_kruger](http://www.publicartfund.org/view/exhibitions/5552_messages_to_the_public_-_kruger/5552_messages_to_the_public_-_kruger)

So to be effective, the contemporary artist must seek out new ways to enable their work be seen. It is clear that when touching on sensitive, possibly counter-Establishment themes, even the work of established artists, like Holzer and Burden, will encounter problems being shown out of a gallery milieu. We generally think of monuments as being in the street, square or park but the time has come when this needs reappraisal. With a degree of curatorial determination, it has been demonstrated, as we shall see, that the public gallery is a viable place for the more polemical work to be shown and reach at least some sections of the population.

### **3.5 The Monument, its Effectiveness and Public Perception**

When confronted with contemporary art, a question often asked is 'what does it mean?' Understanding the neo-monument, as with much contemporary art, does have intrinsic problems for the public. Patricia C. Phillips makes it clear when writing in 'Mapping the Terrain': *'The formation of the audience is the method and objective, the generative intention and the final outcome'*.<sup>43</sup> To be relevant there needs to be engagement. When considering the monument, without neglecting aesthetic concerns, one has to consider public interaction with the conceptual thought behind the work. To this end, the significance of its message must be clear to the observer.

Whilst referring to public art, Philips continued to make the point:

'The 'enabling' atmosphere was also a dilemma from the very beginning [of modernism. Ed.]. The dialogue of public art, was handicapped by exhausted inoperative models from the past – the equestrian statue or war monument. At the same time, the general public had little access to new intellectual resources that contemporary art provided for considering the future.'<sup>44</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to add to the debate on what is 'Conceptual Art'? Many will argue that all art is conceptual. Daniel Marzona made the point that the artist's approach to Conceptual Art has been: *'far too heterogeneous for us to talk of a unitary style'*.<sup>45</sup> However the phrase Conceptual Art was originally coined to describe a work where the concept outweighs the visual and aesthetic values of the work. Thus, much of 'conceptual' art proposes thinking over

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<sup>43</sup>. Patricia C Phillips, *Mapping the Terrain*, p.66

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.* p.67

<sup>45</sup> Daniel Marzona, *Conceptual Art* ed. by Uta Grosenick (Köln: Tashen., 2005) p.6

understanding. In Sol Lewitt's article, 'Paragraphs on Conceptual Art' he defined it as that which '*is made to engage the mind of the viewer rather than his eye or his emotions*'<sup>46</sup>. In this respect, one hopes that with a successful monument, one leads to another.

Whatever Conceptual Art truly is, it must be noted that some artists make the meaning of their work obscure or so multi-faceted as to defy meaning. In this regard, can Conceptual Art be used to create a monument that can be understood without an artist or curator statement explaining the work? In the past, figurative monuments did not need much thinking, just acceptance. The neo-monument however cannot rely on this. If the piece is going to work as a monument the message *has* to be made clear, either by visual clues or attendant media explanation. To be effective the neo-monument must be visually 'readable'. Should this mean that the monument has to assume some degree of dumbing down to be understood? This may depend on where it is to be displayed and to whom it is to be displayed.

So what characteristics are required by a neo-monument to be well received and to effectively get its message across? Clearly, the work has to have a visual or emotive 'charisma' to attract public curiosity in the first place. It has to be outstanding enough to distract the public from the 'white noise' of their quotidian existence. Some of these ploys will be examined in the Case Studies in Chapter Five.

By creating politically-inspired art one is courting controversy and argument. Controversy is a double-edged sword, however, as creating controversy can become a self-promoting strategy. On the other hand, the neo-monument can also attract unwanted attention from those who do not agree with the artist's position. More significantly, and maybe pre-emptively, it may attract negative attention from the authorities. Clearly there will be concerns about something that becomes a rallying point, promoting opposition, demonstrations and public order issues. This may even be what the artist wishes however, this may also result in confronting legality.

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<sup>46</sup>Sol Lewitt, cited in *Styles, Schools and Movements*, ed. Amy Dempsey (London: Thames and Hudson. 2002) p.240

When Carrier asks: 'Who is the monument for?' we have said that the monument, by its definition is there for public consumption rather than a collector's study. Can it therefore exist in a gallery/museum environment? Does the public expect to find a contemporary monument in a gallery space; isn't it a place just for art? We have talked about the public gallery as a public space. There are problems here and they relate to the demographic who is likely to use a gallery. Do we only want to challenge the art-literate? If we are democratising the neo-monument as we have outlined, this may not be the only section of the public the artist wishes to address. There are entrance fees in many public galleries especially in Europe, which may dictate that only those with an adequate disposable income can visit. Some large commercial galleries such as the Gagosian Gallery and Hauser & Wirth are free to enter and, in a low-key way, encourage the public to view the work they show. These can be intimidating spaces to those not used to the art milieu however, publicly accessible galleries offer a temporary home for neo-monuments that they might not have otherwise.

In many instances, the site of a monument is integral with the cause of the monument. This is more prevalent in memorial-monuments where they may act as a site of pilgrimage, for example, First World War monuments on the battlefields of France and Belgium. There are however, instances where the neo-monument is used specifically to make a point. Mark Wallinger's *'State Britain'* is a perfect example of this.

Wallinger produced a facsimile of an anti-war 'Peace Camp' that activist, Brian Haw and friends had erected directly opposite the British Parliament building in London. The majority of that Camp had been outlawed and removed after a law was passed that decreed any protest should not be held within one kilometre of the Parliament. This exclusion line was claimed to actually bisect Tate Britain and the work referenced that line.

One can therefore argue that *State Britain* is primarily a neo-monument to the erosion of Civil Rights in Britain. There is, of course, a contributory element, reprising Haw's protest against the war in the Middle East but its siting specifically

highlighted the Establishment's attitude to protest, when placed directly outside the seat of British Government.

[Image redacted in this digitized version due to potential copyright issues]

*'State Britain'* by Mark Wallinger  
Installed in the Dunveen Gallery  
Tate Britain, London 2007  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

So site can work for specific situations, where the landscape is intrinsic to the monument but what if the monument relates to a more general phenomenon, past, present or future? Where would a monument to the fight against racism be sited and would it matter if it was in a 'white' neighbourhood or a black a brown or a neutral one? In reality, it depends on what the issues the monument addresses. Intuition may point to where the problems lie, however, it may have greater effect if it was near the people who could *address* that problem.

The problem of public visibility has always dogged the monument. Historically they tended to be large and expensive to build, as they had to stand out visually; they were symbols of power and conspicuous consumption and they had to make a statement.

If we agree that publicly-accessed galleries are viable spaces for the neo-monument, then placement within the space will become a prerequisite to the effectiveness of the neo-monument. The visual chaos of any space needs to be addressed. In respect to the gallery, it is for good reasons art galleries generally display in white spaces. Conflicting colour schemes and architectural details can undermine the work the artists and curators want the public to focus on. To engage the public, the neo-monument needs to stand out both from the space and other art works that compete for attention.

Incongruity can be an answer, for example, if a radical contemporary neo-monumental piece was placed in a stately home, surrounded with paintings by Rembrandt, the contrasting styles would make it conspicuous and it may draw the eye. As an example, the memorial statue in Times Square to Father Francis Duffy, is completely surrounded by illuminated advertising boards [see Page. 63]. The statue is small in relation and incongruous but it is 'Other' and in this regard, it stands out. We have seen in Chapter Two that this was a consideration when exhibiting *The Humanity Monument* in an ornate Victorian Town Hall.

To summarise, we have seen from historic practice, the political significance of the monument and discussed the possibility of using the monumental form to create a monument of dissent.

Unlike the traditional monument, the neo-monument has, at most, a superficial interest in being solely a memorial and added to this, the short durational aspect of neo-monument does not make it a suitable vehicle for memorialisation. The primary reason for the work is to comment on a specific issue(s) and plant the seed of an idea in the observer's mind. The neo-monument must have effective impact to be assimilated into the viewer's psyche. For this reason, the significance of the work must not be obscure or ambiguous.

Rather than follow the paradigms of the past and suffer the same fate, artists have and should consider alternative modes of production to provide innovative, public political art with power to engage the public. There is no rule that stating the neo-

monument lifecycle should be short. However, to retain public interest, strategies are needed to bring this engagement about. Consideration should be given to regeneration in some way, for example by relocation or revision of content.

As with any public art, there should be recognition of the effect of the 'site'. Apart from contextual considerations, there may be the need to attend to perceived opposition to the significance of a specific neo-monument and this may require a well-considered choice of space, site or access to that site.



## **Chapter Four**

### **Contemporary Strategies**

Whereas the traditional monument has been generally created as a response to the prerequisites of a commission, instigated by an Establishment figure or body, research indicates that the neo-monument is consistently artist driven. Whilst some neo-monuments are subjected to open or restricted competition between artists, others come from an artist's desire to highlight a politically directed question in a way that uses their creative talents to give impact to that question. Asking these questions can signify elements of dissent thus the artist takes on the responsibility of creating and standing-by the context of their work. This may entail fielding criticism, justified or not, from those who have a less than positive view of the questions raised by the artist in their work. These politically aware artists have embraced the task of producing, what maybe to some, controversial or uncomfortable work. They have taken new initiatives to move the genre forward.

We have discussed the fact that the neo-monument is politicised artwork for *everyone*. To engage with the public in general, it would be limited in this regard if it were just for the art-aligned or gallery-going cognoscenti. Although this is true, my experience highlights and confirms an issue regarding accessibility. The dissenting nature of the neo-monument may restrict its display to sites not normally accessed by all in the community.

Clearly, for many, there has been a slow acceptance during the last one hundred years or more that our perceptions of what may be considered 'Art' have changed. Until the advent of photography the only way of reproducing a figurative image was to paint, draw or sculpt. Since then, many artists have striven to find a new reason to create and new ways to do this. Although many artists in the late 19th and early 20th Century pushed their practice well beyond the 'traditional', it took artist Marcel Duchamp to create a seismic shift within the art world with his appropriation and manipulation of everyday objects. What seemed outrageous at the time has, to many, now been accepted as a legitimate expression of original

artistic thought, thanks in part to art education, but also due to the creative nature of youth and pop culture and the expansion in the number of public galleries in the West. Since that time, other artists have continued to expand on the notion of what can be art. As Rosalind Krauss put it:

‘The new is made comfortable by being made familiar, since it is seen as having gradually evolved from the forms of the past. Historicism works on the new to diminish newness and mitigate difference’.<sup>47</sup>

Faced with competition from mass media and other sensory demands, the neo-monument has, paradoxically, the potential to actually gain from media coverage. As we shall see in Chapter Five, when Elmgreen and Dragset placed their monument to the gay victims of the Nazis in Tiergarten, it gained a great amount of publicity from media coverage, both local, international and via the Internet. Their neo-monument was designed to re-invent itself bi-annually and in this way, it had the potential to remain current and accessible internationally for the immediate future.

Historically, one thinks of the monument as a stationary, almost inert entity, but there is no reason why by design the monument should not be mobile. If the people will not or cannot come to the monument, then consider taking the monument to the people. There is the potential here to overcome the problem of finding a viable space to place a monument and to sidestep those who would veto a neo-monument. This guerrilla art, so to speak, works by using referential or non-spaces rather than exhibition spaces to present the work. It disregards ‘authority’ and gains impact by utilising the element of surprise and so creates the circumstances to garner curiosity from the public and to elicit mass communication.

So-called ‘Street Art’ has tapped into the guerrilla tactics of placing two-dimensional politicised art on the walls of our towns and cities. Slogans, daubed quickly on walls, have been a time-honoured tradition. In the 1970s, political public art was brought into sharp focus with the wall art of ‘The Troubles’ in Northern Ireland. This work, always figurative and often militaristic in nature, was

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<sup>47</sup> Rosalind Krauss, ‘Sculpture in the Expanded Field’. *October* Vol.8. 1979, p.30

truly a warning to those who naively wandered into the wrong areas of Belfast and Derry/Londonderry. In less threatening times these political, public murals are now being preserved.

In a similar fashion, the politically-inspired graffiti of artists like 'Banksy' have had popular impact to the extent that some have become art commodities. When one thinks of a monument, a three-dimensional form is the model one generally expects. Surely a two-dimensional public work with a political narrative and created, not-for-profit but as a statement, will fulfil the function of a neo-monument as well. If that work exists on a surface, relevant to the message it carries, one may in fact consider it part of an installation.



*'Beach Boys'.* Attributed to the artist known as 'Banksy'  
Graffiti on the Israel/Palestine Wall. 2005  
(Photo: Trois Tête)

One has to question the premise that monuments should 'endure' in real time. For popular, contentious or a truly original work, there will be an afterlife on the Internet. By creating work specifically *for* the Internet, without prior live public

exposure, it moves a neo-monument into the realms of virtual media and out of physically accessible, public art. Nevertheless, by using the expanding modes of Internet presentation as a tool we have the ability to present a site specific, neo-monument to the world and hence expand its capacity for mass communication. It thus becomes a secondary process for those who have no physical access to the original work.

Another basic consideration is financing. Many artists have become very clever at reducing costs of the work they produce. However the cost of making large bronzes or stone sculpture is very high. Commissioning bodies may be willing to provide the outlay for public art but baulk at more controversial, politicised work. Lucy Lippard wrote: *'With adequate funding resources public artists might set up social and political spaces in which energies could come together, dialogue and alternatives could be concretised.'*<sup>48</sup>

There is funding to be found, mostly through non-governmental organisations, individuals and independent funding schemes. The Internet may also be a friend rather than a competitor when it comes to funding. Not only can the Internet promulgate one's work, but through such initiatives such as 'Hatchfunds' and 'Crowdfunding', finance can be raised for the suitable projects.

There is also a roll for private commercial galleries here. Although there may not be an immediate financial imperative to promote politically dissenting art, there is perhaps, no pressure on them to suppress the work of the artists they support. They may be used to, and even encourage, more politically inspired work by the artists they represent. As agents, they are important in building an artist's reputation to the point where an artist's work reaches a critical level of support and exposure. It could be argued that once a reputation is gained, the potential for finding their work in a public gallery or presented in the form of political public art is enhanced.

One organisation that is prepared to take the risk and finance politically aware artists is Artangel, based in Britain. They are willing to consider work that may

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<sup>48</sup> Lucy Lippard, *Mapping the Terrain*, p.129

otherwise be difficult to create and exhibit. Artangel itself is an independent charity that raises funding from individual sponsors, the United Kingdom lottery and Government. In New York, the 'Public Art Fund' has provided many artists with the wherewithal to produce impressive public art that, for the most part, is of a temporary nature and occasionally, mildly political in nature as we have seen with Barbara Kruger's work, part of *'Messages to the Public'*, in Chapter Five.

Artangel famously brought Rachel Whiteread's rendering of negative space in *'House'* to public attention in 1993. Subsequently, Whiteread went on to create the controversial counter-monument, the *'Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial'* in Vienna. In 2001, Artangel funded Jeremy Deller's video re-enactment, *'The Battle of Orgreave'*. Deller's video recreated a violent confrontation between police and striking British mineworkers in 1984. The video is effectively a performance-piece, using actors, ex-miners and other participants from the original 'Battle' to re-enact the event. This performance was then captured on film. Clearly, it is a very political work and the film of this performance continues to be screened in public galleries and museums.



Video still from 'The Battle of Orgreave' by Jeremy Deller  
Video re-enactment. Video duration 63 minutes.  
Orgreave, Yorkshire. 2001  
(Photo: Jeremy Deller)

To summarise, it can be shown that, whilst being considered elitist by many, much contemporary art has emerged from the grasp of art aficionados to become more accessible to the general public and so breaking down barriers of perception. In addition, if the work is good enough or controversial enough, it may have an afterlife on the Internet.

By not being bound by size or materials, the neo-monument has the potential to use flexibility of form and construction to appear at different sites, expanding its exposure. It is customary to envisage the monument as a 3-dimensional entity however a 2-dimensional form may become 3-dimensional as part of an installation or site, as we will see in the following chapter.



## **Chapter Five**

### **Case Studies**

In this chapter, nine neo-monuments are considered and their strategies in developing politically-charged public art are examined. None of the following artists use 'traditional' methods in producing monuments. We have seen earlier that artists like Ester and Jochen Gerz and Horst Hoheisel changed the way monuments could be visualised and created. In the wake of the post-Holocaust counter-monuments, other artists have come forward to develop other approaches, creating monuments that raise awareness and also resonate with issues of shared concern.

By considering these case studies, inferences may be drawn as to why they may or may not work and the problems and drawbacks of creating in this way. The emphasis in all these works is on communicating a subject of concern and with encouraging the public to *think* about that subject of concern. The case studies are chosen to give a spread of political, social and environmental contexts.

There are clearly elements of memorialisation in some of these cases, the first case below being a good case in point. That said, memorialisation might well be a *foundation* for socio-political reflection of existential concerns.

#### **5.1 Jeremy Deller**

*Spoils of War (Memorial for an Unknown Civilian)*, proposed for 2008,

Later to become:

*It Is What It Is: Conversations about Iraq*, in 2009

Finally retitled as:

*Baghdad, 5 March 2007*, in 2010

*Spoils of War (Memorial for an Unknown Civilian)*, was originally proposed as an entry for the empty Fourth Plinth Project in London's Trafalgar Square in 2008. Sadly, and possibly controversially, it was not accepted for the Fourth Plinth so it only appeared as a maquette, however, it led to something more radical. In this

form of course, it cannot be regarded as having been a monument, neo or otherwise. Had the proposal been accepted, it surely would have been highly effective as a neo-monument, unambiguously focusing the public, remote from the conflict, on the consequences of the Iraq war and the subsequent internecine misery in Iraq.



*'Spoils of War (Memorial for an Unknown Civilian)'* by Jeremy Deller  
Proposal Maquette  
London. 2008  
(Photo: James O. Jenkins)

The reason for its non-acceptance was never made clear to the public, however, the art critic, Jonathan Jones pointedly wrote at the time:

'A real destroyed car, from a real war, in the middle of London on a public square that commemorates a famous naval victory? A square connected to Whitehall, leading to the prime minister's residence and the houses of parliament? Come on, it's not likely. And yet this is by far the best work of art proposed for the Fourth Plinth'.<sup>49</sup>

Jones goes on to say:

'Deller has himself drawn attention to the classical roots of his idea, pointing out that his design, which he titles *'The Spoils of War (Memorial for*

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<sup>49</sup> Jonathan Jones, 'We Should Behold the Spoils of War',  
<<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2008/apr/17/weshouldbeholdthespoils>  
of>, (17<sup>th</sup> April 2008) [Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> May 2013]

*an Unknown Civilian*)', evokes the custom in ancient Rome of displaying war trophies and loot to the populace'.<sup>50</sup>

It is not known whether there was an intention to provoke anything other than reflection, however when discussing the work's rejection, Deller was philosophical about its failure to be selected:

'It didn't happen which is a pity but I wasn't surprised. It was an irresponsible idea to put something like that on the Fourth Plinth, it could have been the target for who knows what kind of behavior and it could have been almost a public order issue...'

Deller went on to say why he felt that people should see a 'relic' of this conflict:

'I felt I wanted to put something in the public eye that you wouldn't get to see unless you were a soldier, or worked for a charity and you'd been to Iraq... Of course, there are strict rules about what you can see on television. You don't see dead bodies but you do see cars that were blown up and in a way, the car has replaced the body... So I wanted to bring something that was really big and ugly and disgusting and just plonk it in the middle of London for thousands of people to see... but as I said, I wasn't surprised and was slightly relieved... [that it was rejected. Ed] from that though, I thought well; why not try and get a car and do something else with it, maybe a museum of the war even though the war was ongoing at the time and maybe tour that around Britain or maybe America?'<sup>51</sup>

Deller's views regarding the possibility of the work causing adverse public reaction to the war in Iraq is interesting and valid. Michaela Crimmin, an academic who was on the Fourth Plinth selection committee at that time, remarked that she felt it was one of the best works proposed at that time.<sup>52</sup> When writing in a pamphlet accompanying the Institute for Contemporary Arts exhibition on the Fourth Plinth she wrote:

'...a number of extraordinary ideas by Artists have not been realized. These include Jeremy Deller's proposal to install the wreckage of a car from the bombed Booksellers Market in Baghdad'.<sup>53</sup>

We may speculate there were political concerns or pressure regarding the prevalent anti-war sentiment to the contemporaneous conflict at that time that

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<sup>50</sup> *ibid*

<sup>51</sup> Jeremy Deller, from a talk given at Wesley Chapel Bristol 4<sup>th</sup> May  
<<http://www.situations.org.uk/watch-jeremy-deller-lecture-public-art-now-live-event/>> [Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> May 2014]

<sup>52</sup> Michaela Crimmin, from conversation with the author during at talk on the Fourth Plinth at the ICA 2013

<sup>53</sup> Michaela Crimmin, 'One Thing Leads to Another', *Fourth Plinth: Contemporary Monument*. (London: Institute of Contemporary Art, 2013) p.9.

caused the work to be rejected. When I asked if he thought outside influence caused his work to be rejected Deller replied:

'I have no idea about the discussions about why it was not selected, I know the debate was heated but that's about it. Sitting on the committee [at the time of writing, Deller now sits on the Plinth Commissioning Group. Ed] its easy to see how things pan out, there are a lot of people involved and sometimes things you think will be popular with others are not, nothing can be predicted when there are eight or so people involved.'<sup>54</sup>

Trafalgar Square has long been a rallying point, perhaps *the* rallying point for civil protest in Britain, so it seems inconceivable that the commissioning body, the Greater London Authority [GLA], would not have a view on this. Subsequent answers to Freedom of Information enquiries to the administrators of the Fourth Plinth at the office of the GLA have said that there are no specific guidelines for proposing or choosing a work for the plinth other than dimensions and a potted history of the Square given to a short-listed artist.<sup>55</sup> It should be born in mind that it also falls to the GLA to control and police demonstrations in the city. Michaela Crimmin writes:

'And yet Trafalgar Square is also famously a place for celebration...as well as a gathering point for democratic protest. It has played its part in recent history, with memorable focal points including the Poll Tax riots and occupation by the Camp for Climate Action in 2009.'<sup>56</sup>

Had this piece been accepted for the Fourth Plinth it would have been placed on a plinth in traditional monumental form, mirroring the statues of Havelock, Napier and George IV on the other three plinths. Given its rusted remains and its political sensitivity, it would be unique in that setting. On a fundamental level, it would have had the context of a memorial to the dead but, at the time of its proposed exhibition, the conflict was still current and thus it was also an existential reproach highlighting the plight of the people of Iraq at that time. It would have completely satisfied the criteria of a monument but not the type of monument one would expect the authorities to readily condone. It would have been a conceptual monument that implied criticism of government policy and its aftermath and thus also a *dissenting* monument that would not glorify conflict and imperialism like the other monuments in the Square. In this regard, it is readily a *neo-monument*.

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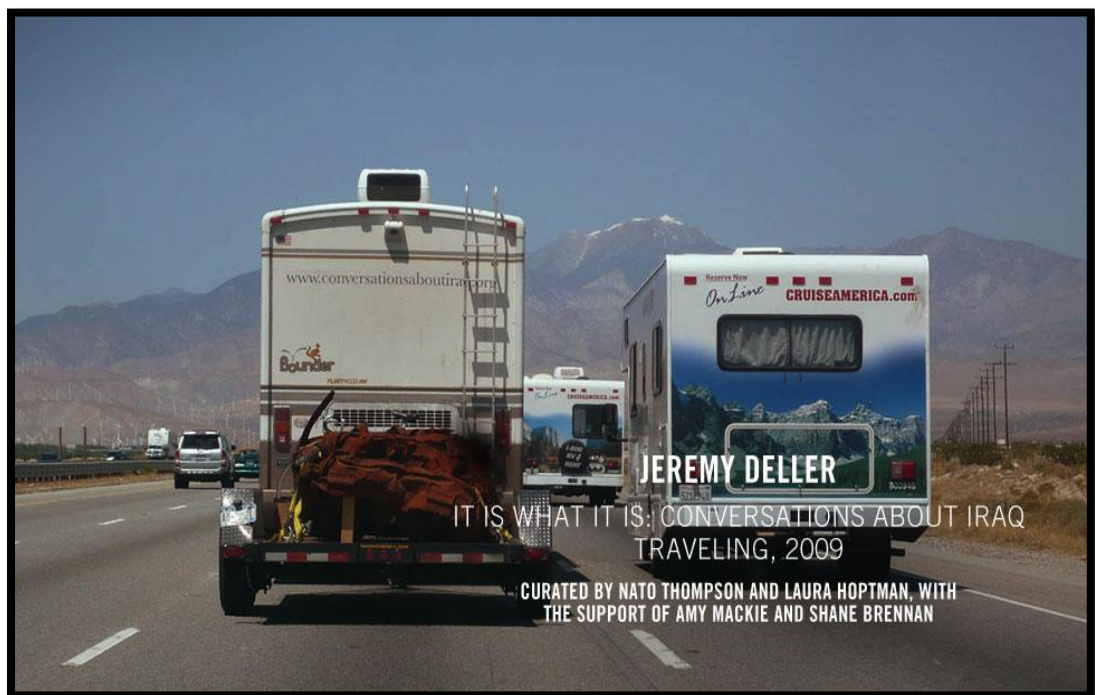
<sup>54</sup> Jeremy Deller, from email reply to the author's query [Dated 21<sup>st</sup> May 2014].

<sup>55</sup> Kirsten Dunne: Senior Cultural Strategy Manager for the Fourth Plinth. Telephone conversation with the author on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2014].

<sup>56</sup> Michaela Crimmin, *Fourth Plinth: Contemporary Monument*. p.4.

Deller's initial proposal for the Fourth Plinth sowed a seed that led to another and more inventive form by taking on another title and more importantly its mode of presentation to the public. This was so original in concept, that this sad carcass of a car had the potential fulfil the principles of this new genre of monument that had at first been denied it.

By 2009, Deller had obtained a wrecked car, destroyed in a terrorist outrage in the Al-Mutanabbi book market in Baghdad where a truck bomb had killed thirty-eight civilians and wounded one hundred more. This occurred and sadly still occurs in the factional instability following the invasion of Iraq by the United States and its Coalition forces. The destroyed car is effectively a metaphor for the human victims of Iraqi post-war urban brutality, yet it serves to signify the civilian cost of all violent conflict.



*'It Is What It Is: Conversations About Iraq'* by Jeremy Deller  
Bombed car from a Baghdad book market on a trailer.  
On the road between venues in the USA. 2009  
(Photo: Jeremy Deller)

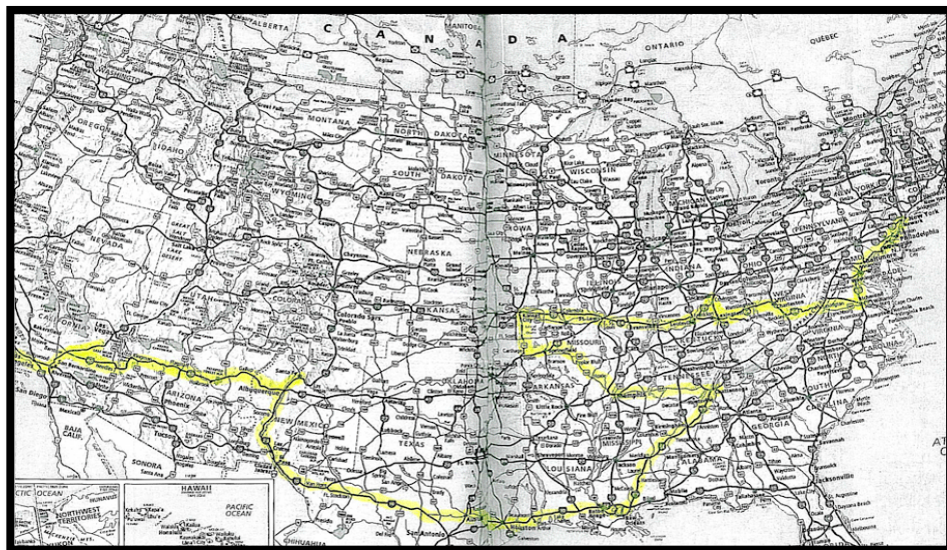
From this initial proposal, the project then morphed into *It Is What It Is: Conversations About Iraq*. After appearing at an anti-war protest in Amsterdam, Deller acquired the car and in its unaltered state, it went on to be exhibited in the New Museum in New York. There, over the period of its exhibition, the public could engage in conversation with one of thirty-three 'experts' on the conflict. From here,

Deller started a road trip across the United States with a recreational vehicle, towing a trailer with the mutilated car, ending in Los Angeles three weeks later.

Deller was accompanied by a recently demobilised US veteran of the conflict, Sergeant Jonathan Harvey, together with an Iraqi refugee, Esam Pasha, an artist who had been an interpreter for the Coalition. The strategy behind the work was to stop at sites along a serpentine route across the country to Los Angeles.

The journey commenced at the New Museum in New York and finished at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. On its trip across the United States it stopped to be displayed in the following places:

Washington DC - Richmond, Virginia - Philadelphia, Pennsylvania - Cincinnati, Ohio - St Louis, Missouri - Kansas City, Missouri - Memphis, Tennessee - Summertown, Tennessee - New Orleans, Louisiana - Houston, Texas - Dallas, Texas - Santa Fe, New Mexico - Phoenix, Arizona - Twenty Nine Palms, California.



Route of '*It Is What It Is*' across the USA  
(Image: Jeremy Deller)

At these stops, Harvey and Pasha would engage the public in talking about the war, so remote physically and culturally to many in America. The basis for the conversation was to create discourse on the issues, both political and social, relating to the people of Iraq, the combatants and those third parties caught up in the conflict. Deller was insistent that this was not specifically an anti-war work but there to open dialogue and to gain insight into the tragedy of Iraq that has affected all those exposed to it.



In its third incarnation, the work was presented in the Imperial War Museum in London [to whom Deller donated it]. The museum is known internationally for its collection of 20<sup>th</sup> Century weapons of war and also its war-related art gallery. In this form, it was retitled *Baghdad 5 March 2007* and within this exhibition it was juxtaposed amongst guns, fighter planes and missiles of the conflicts of the 20th Century.



*'Baghdad 5 March, 2007'* by Jeremy Deller  
Steel. Approx 4 x 2 x 1 metres  
Imperial War Museum, London. 2010  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

Whilst exhibited in the Imperial War Museum as *'Baghdad, 5 March 2007'* its siting amongst weapons of war should post a sobering and potent message. Deller feels it is where the wrecked car should be. Yet at the same time, although an admirable attempt to show the consequences of war, does its power to shock and question lose its power by being just another 'exhibit' amongst war machinery? One could ask the question: "Does the Imperial War Museum, in fact, actually glorify war?" In which case, this destroyed vehicle may be considered by some to be misplaced. Deller claims it is not art, neither is it a Duchampian 'found object'. He speaks of the piece as a 'talking point', a catalyst that generates dialogue. It has been said by many artists that *'it is art'* if the say it is, so maybe on that basis it is not art if the artist says it is not. Nevertheless, by comparison to other 'found objects', *art* it is.

Deller has procured this burnt out shell, no longer a car as such, and proposed that it be presented to us on a plinth in a public square. Subsequently he has placed it in two galleries and on trailer, which became effectively a mobile plinth for a visual art and conversational performance piece and finally in a museum that also exhibits art. It is an object that has been converted into a sign. Maybe the claim that it is not art is derived from one of the titles, which is the oft quoted answer to the question, 'Is it art?' - *'It Is What It Is'*. Yet, when asked if he agreed that the work was a monument, Deller's simple reply was *'Yes, as it's a reminder of something and that is basically what a monument is for.'*<sup>57</sup> It is *more* than just a reminder though, it is a manifestation of what war creates and in that respect, it is a *warning*.

One would hope that the shock of a wrecked Iraqi car, turning up in a Mid-West American town, would make some impression on those that saw it. What makes this work special is that it is not a mere representation of the perils of war, this piece has been there. It is a relic and carries with it not only the scars but also the memory. It is 'real', like a saint's bone in a reliquary and it has the potential to bring people closer to the conflict and thus prompt, and hopefully sustain, a dialogue relating to the problems therein. Once attention was gained, interaction with the two witnesses of the conflict had the capability to create debate and present critical reflection to the public. With *'It Is What It Is: Conversations about Iraq'*, Deller has taken this Duchampian 'monument' to the people of the Mid-West of America, thousands of miles from the conflict. By presenting the evidence of war and engaging people in conversation, it is hoped that the impact on those who have been to see the twisted structure on the trailer and talk to Harvey and Pasha will not allow them to forget the event for some time.

*It Is What It Is* presents us with a new *modus operandi* for the monument. Indeed, it is a template for what a neo-monument might be. No longer does it have to stand for hundreds of years, nor does it endeavour to make a point about memory by disappearing from view as with the counter-monuments. To those who were there in a Mid-West car park, its disturbing associations will give cause for it to remain memorable, for a while anyway. *'It Is What It Is'* possesses a temporal and itinerant

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<sup>57</sup> Jeremy Deller. from email reply to the author's query, [Dated 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2013].

element, countering Musil's observation. It does not allow any time to be ignored. With this work Deller not only overcame the stasis of a wheel-less bombed out car wreck but he overcame the traditional stasis of the monument.

## **5.2 Jenny Holzer**

*Monument.* 2008 and reprogrammed 2012

This text/sculpture by Holzer has been shown at the Baltic and Whitney Museum amongst others. In its earliest incarnation it used Holzer's own made-up 'Truisms' however, this was reprogrammed with darker text in 2012 for the Sprüth Magers Gallery exhibition 'Endgame'.



*'Monument'* by Jenny Holzer  
Perspex and Scrolling Electronic LEDs  
Text: US Government Documents  
Sprüth Magers Gallery, Berlin. 2012  
(Photo: Timo Ohler.)

Reading the text, we find that the United States Government has redacted with XXXXXs, all of the individuals' names given in the documents supplied.

As an example of the text Holzer has used we have:

SUBJECT INTERVIEW OF: (UNK) XXXXX DATE/PLACE: 29 JAN 03/GUANTANAMO BAY, CUBA XXXXX, ISN: XXXXX WAS INTERVIEWED AT CAMP DELTA, GUANTANAMO BAY, CUBA, BY SPECIAL AGENT XXXXX, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (FBI) AND XXXXX, NAVAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE (NCIS). THE INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH AND XXXXX WAS ADVISED OF THE REASON FOR THE INTERVIEW. XXXXX WAS QUESTIONED SPECIFICALLY ABOUT HIS CAPTURE BY THE NORTHERN ALLIANCE NEAR KONDOZ, AFGHANISTAN AND HIS SUBSEQUENT TRANSFER TO MAZAR-E-SHARIF.

And later in the text:

XXXXX AND ANOTHER FRIEND, XXXXX (ISN:XXXXX), STARTED WALKING. THEY COULD HEAR GUNFIRE IN THE DISTANCE. THEY ALSO HEARD HELICOPTERS. THE MEN WALKED BACK TOWARDS THE RIVER AND OBSERVED WOMEN CRYING. THE WOMEN WERE LOCALS WHOSE HOMES HAD BEEN DESTROYED BY THE PLANES. XXXXX ESTIMATED THAT EIGHT TO NINE TRUCKS WERE DESTROYED. THEY WERE FULL OF PEOPLE TRYING TO SURRENDER. HE BELIEVES THAT BETWEEN 300 AND 400 PEOPLE WERE KILLED WHEN THE TRUCKS BLEW UP.<sup>58</sup>

There are two alternate bands of text running in a vertical 'toast-rack' shaped structure. The moving text is both purple and pink running in alternate rows, each colour relating to a different document.

By naming this piece '*Monument*', Holzer clearly accepts the monument as a powerful political tool. Besides *Monument*, these exhibitions had other works of hers, notably powerful 2D pieces featuring more redacted documents, as well as other LED 'truism' works.

Whether or not *Monument* carried with it the impact it would have had as a single work is open to conjecture. However, looking at the exhibition in totality, as an installation her work carries a determined message identifying and raising the issue of what governments and specifically in this instance the US government, may do in our names.

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<sup>58</sup> Full text sourced from Ms. Holzer's gallery - Spruth Magers, Berlin. Email to the author, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2014.

Again, if you look at the setting of this work in a Duchampian way, the title alone seems to make it clear that Holzer considers it falls into the category of the monument. By using the redacted text, rather than her earlier 'Truisms', it makes this piece far more significant. Its Anti-Establishment tone and use of text and technology combine to project a clear, and no doubt, controversial message. In its post-2012 form with its conceptual construct, this is indeed a neo-monument.

The juxtaposition of the serious textual content of this work with the attention-grabbing 'fairground' appearance is quite jarring. Visually arresting, if time is taken to read and digest the scrolling text, this is a work that pulls the viewer in and makes them reflect on the tragedies of war and our complicity in it.

When it comes to public display, Holzer is an artist prepared to compete with corporate advertising and the retail world. Along with artists like Barbara Kruger, she has faced this head-on with her text-based work with pieces muscling themselves in between advertising electronica in often confused and chaotic metropolistic centres. Holzer has, over a long career, taken some of the techniques of advertising and used them as a device in her own work from the giant screens in Times Square [see also '*Messages to the Public*' series in Chapter Three] to the 'Marquees' found over the cinema entrances of the 1960s.

Since text-based work has been accepted into the corpus of contemporary art, some artists have seen it as a direct link to the viewer's cerebral cortex as it has the ability to get straight to the point. Nevertheless, as with advertising, considerable thought has to be given to the message if it is to 'stick'. One must consider how a contemporary monument can attract attention when faced with competition from other media, whilst retaining its original concept and still having aesthetic and artistic credibility. Holzer's work is on the cusp of both literary and visual art, generally using electronic media to get a visual message across. Yet we must be careful here to distinguish what may or may not be regarded as a neo-monument as the artist uses both her own musings and found text. They may be just statements of fact or fiction with no intent towards creating a monument. For this we need to trust the integrity of the artist and our own judgement.

Holzer's *Monument* appears to have been created for a gallery space rather than street or park. Although Chris Burdens *Other Vietnam Memorial* shown at MOMA in New York pre-dates this, it confirms a departure to publically-accessed interior spaces for some monuments.

We may ask, "Would the text used in *Monument* for instance, ever be considered as suitable subject for the 'Messages to the Public' series in Times Square?" Maybe not, but a reputable public art gallery or museum would give a contentious neo-monument a degree of protection from Establishment interference. One could contend that as it is an *artwork* as well as a neo-monument, it makes it acceptable and being in a public gallery, softens the blow.

### **5.3 Tue Greenfort**

*Diffuse Einträge.* [Trans. Dispersed Sources] 2007

This work, produced for the fourth Skulptur Projekte Münster in 2007, reflects Greenfort's concern about ecological matters. His installation was positioned in a park at the edge of the Aasee, a man-made lake on the edge of the town of Münster in Germany. This lake, which was formed by the damming of the River Aa, serves as a recreational area for the citizens of the town.

Regrettably, over the years it has become polluted by phosphate rich, agricultural 'run-off'. The pollution manifests itself in the form of algae; cyanobacteria. This in turn can lead to the production of cytotoxins, which may cause allergic reactions or more serious reactions if swallowed. This process is called eutrophication. This has had a direct effect on the community and, as a result of this pollution, swimming had been banned and its use as drinking water, compromised.

The work took the form of an agricultural liquid-fertiliser spreader, spraying water like a dystopian Versailles fountain, into the lake. By spraying water into the lake, the 'fountain' naturally oxygenates the lake to self-heal however, the machine was also fitted with a chemical dosing system, purported to be seeded with Ferric Chloride, a chemical used to counteract the formation of algae.





*'Diffuse Einträge'* by Tue Greenfort.  
Liquid fertiliser slurry spreader with chemical injection tank.  
Approximate dimensions: 8 x 4 x 3 metres  
Aasee, Münster 2007.  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

The irony of this is that it was fertiliser, sprayed from such equipment that contributed to the algae problem in the first place. Here, he has created an agro-industrial fountain, the silver brutality of the tanker trailer and its ancillaries, staged against the still tranquillity of the lake and surrounding parkland.

Greenfort's practice is often about ecological issues and here he has created what may be seen as an 'eco-monument'. It deviates from the usual reasons for erecting a monument as it is not about power, or human conflict but, is none the less, relevant to the ecological basis of our existence in a globalised agro-economy. Pollution of the Earth's infrastructure, be it in watercourses such as the Aasee, the acid-rain polluted lakes of Norway or crude oil polluted mangrove swamps of Nigeria, is clearly worth bringing to the public's attention. It is warning of the consequences of failure to protect or regenerate eco-systems.



*Diffuse Einträge* carries a pretty blunt message, yet the artist has managed to create a thought-provoking work of art. More importantly, it is not what people expect to see. The expectation is that their curiosity will get the environmental message across; that 'thinking' becomes 'understanding', provoking a dialogue between the people and those who have authority to cause reparative action to take place.

Interpreting the neo-monument, as with much contemporary and especially conceptual art, does have intrinsic problems for the public. If the piece is going to work as a monument the message has to be made clear, either by clear visual clues or attendant media exposure. In the case of *Diffuse Einträge*, to the non-ecologically versed, it would be hard to understand without some instructive text or prior knowledge, but having obtained that, it is a challenging neo-monument that questions agricultural policies in the Münster watershed and World agricultural policies in general.

#### **5.4 Elmgreen and Dragset**

*'Monument to the Homosexual Victims of the Nazis'* 2008

To give it its original German title, the neo-monument '*Denkmal für die im Nazionalsozialismus verfolgten Homosexuellen*' is placed in the Tiergarten, the large park in the centre of Berlin. It is a monument to an estimated 15,000 gay men who were murdered by the Nazi regime and the 50,000 believed to be imprisoned.

The first impression of Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset's work is that it mirrors the stelae in the 'Memorial to the Murdered Jews in Europe' (2005) by Peter Eisenman. The Eisenman monument is close by, spanning two-hectares near the Brandenburg Gate. Predictably, both monuments, particularly the Eisenman monument, were controversial when proposed.

Elmgreen and Dragset's monument consists of a single large concrete block in exactly the same proportions as one of the Eisenman stelae; roughly 6 metres long, about 2 metres wide and 4 metres high.



*'Denkmal für die im Nazionalsozialismus verfolgten Homosexuellen'* by Elmgreen and Dragset  
Concrete with Internal Video Screen  
Approximate Dimensions 6 x 2 x 4 metres  
Tiergarten, Berlin. 2008  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

However, within the concrete stela sits a video screen on which the first video to be shown, depicted two men kissing. It is at this point where the work really differs from the huge Jewish memorial. This video will be changed bi-annually. At the time of writing there is no plan to engage the artists in the selection of these videos although it is said that it will be by a 'jury of experts'.<sup>59</sup>

The fact that the 'monument' replicates in form the Eisenman work is intentional. By emulating the Eisenman monument Elmgreen and Dragset are indicating that the fate of the homosexual victims of the holocaust parallels that of the Jews. There may be a dichotomy here in the way the memorial is presented. On the one hand the use of the stele for mirroring the Eisenman monument says that, "we are the same and have suffered a similar fate". However, the fact that the work is separate

<sup>59</sup> *Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* <http://www.stiftung-denkmal.de/en/memorials/memorial-to-the-homosexuals-persecuted-under-the-national-socialist-regime/film-inside-the-memorial.html> [Accessed June 2012]

and 'hiding' in the Tiergarten and the fact that Elmgreen and Dragset's piece comes after the work of Eisenman, signifies that the plight of the Homosexual community in Nazi-controlled Europe was not seen as being as important as that of the Jews.



Video still from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation Video  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

This could also be said of the plight of the Roma, as well as the mentally disabled, the religious and political activists and other minorities the Nazis thought impure, non-Aryan or degenerate. When asked about this Elmgreen said:

‘ “Actually in the beginning when there was first talk of making a monument for the victims of the Nazis, people thought of making a monument for all victims groups all together but in a very disgraceful manner the different victim groups didn’t want to be in the company of each other so it got split out to these different groups with different status and different budgets.” ’<sup>60</sup>

Elmgreen was asked whether the use of the cuboidal form was a satirical critique of the vast Eisenman monument or whether it was a shape that had become, in Berlin anyway, the uniform of the victim? He replied:

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<sup>60</sup> Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset, interviewed by the author at the Royal College of Art (15.1.2013)

‘ “Oh its exactly the same shape, in fact it’s exactly the same producer. It’s also made as one piece, as the concrete stelae of Eisenman. It should be; like we thought it was so disgraceful that the victim groups could not be together and have one monument that our idea was to re-introduce that idea somehow, so we would use the appropriation of the already existing monument, even Eisenman was sympathetic to the idea so it looks like one of the Stelae has been sneaking away from the whole setting away to the other side of the street. [Re. the uniform of the victim? Ed.] Yes, it’s the visual language constituted by Eisenman. We accept that because if people get used to seeing this as the symbol of the victim, we use that language but then we fill it with new and less symbolic content” ’.<sup>61</sup>

The site of this neo-monument raised questions about its positioning. Queried about whether the two artists had a say in the positioning of the work amongst the bushes at the edge of Tiergarten, Elmgreen told me:

‘ “No, it was more or less a group that was taking this initiative and worked for getting this monument for ten years, like lobbying but part of (us) submitting a proposal, was that it was making complete sense to make it just on the other side of the street but making it in the Tiergarten where you already have this gay cruising activity already made this a perfect location so we submitted this proposal.” ’<sup>62</sup>.

The form and material of the piece appears to imply the concrete construction of the gas-chambers themselves. Whether it is by design or not, the video window in the monument emulates the observation peepholes in those gas-chambers. One could ask, is there a relational aspect here? Are we implicated, drawn into the monument by our curiosity, becoming like the Nazi guards looking in on their victim’s fate? To this Elmgreen explained their thinking:

‘ “We wanted the personal confrontation by making this little slat window opening in this concrete block you would have to be [only] one, or you couldn’t be more than two persons at a time looking in and watching the video so it would be a personal dialogue between you and the video” ’.<sup>63</sup>

One may have expected criticism coming from the more homophobic members of the community. Maybe surprisingly, Elmgreen and Dragset’s work also came in for criticism from what might be considered its own side, in that a number of lesbian activists felt that by only showing a male homosexual relationship, they were not

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<sup>61</sup> *ibid*

<sup>62</sup> *ibid*

<sup>63</sup> *ibid*

represented. However, it should be pointed out that sapphism did not appear to attract the same degree of hatred by the Nazis and in fact it was only considered as a crime in Austria.

Yet this criticism appears to have been taken on board as the second-generation video shows both gay and lesbian intimacy. The work has evolved from a memorial to the tragically victimised gay minority, to also embrace lesbianism. By doing this, it demonstrates solidarity with the sister group, still fighting discrimination today. It is therefore more than a memorial; it makes a socio-political point and raises awareness, both for the present and the future as it highlights on-going tensions relating to gender relationships in society. As the BBC put it, prior to the memorial's construction: *'The monument, planned for Berlin will serve as a warning against the discrimination of gays and lesbians'*<sup>64</sup>

Elmgreen and Dragset's monument was always going to be polemical. The decriminalisation of homosexuality in Western Europe occurred as late as the mid-1960s and is still looked upon as morally unacceptable by some, notably those of a religious persuasion. As a result, it has been vandalised on more than one occasion.

The artists understand this and know it will continue to happen but Elmgreen is philosophical about it and said:

' "I was asked what it felt like to have our monument vandalised now and then. I can only say I'd rather have them go berserk on our monument than beat up some homo in the park" ' <sup>65</sup>

Both Elmgreen and Dragset are, unsurprisingly, openly gay and no strangers to political comment in their work. Mary Jane Jacob, writing about public art in 'An Unfashionable Audience', put forward the view:

'Politicized artists – especially those who must defend their place in the art world because of their ethnicity, race, gender or sexual preference – have used the public venue as a potent means of speaking about personal issues of a public dimension.'<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> BBC News,

<<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3271149.stm>> [Accessed June 2012]

<sup>65</sup> Michael Elmgreen, 'How Are You', <<http://youtube.com/watch?v=X7TkLKdM3SU>> (2011) [Accessed 17th September 2015]

<sup>66</sup> Mary Jane Jacob, *Mapping the Terrain* ed. By Suzanne Lacy, p.53





*'Denkmal für die im Nazionalsozialismus verfolgten Homosexuellen'*  
The vandalised video screen taped off.  
(Photo: Karl Andersson)

The choice of video is significant. As this is a memorial to Nazi crimes against homosexuals it would seem that archived film of the concentration camps would be a first choice. When asked about their selection of video, Michael Elmgreen is forthright:

"We thought it was important to have a direct imagery of a love scene, an emotional scene, a passionate scene between two same sex persons because that is the main problem in homophobia, like you can get whatever rights, you can get acceptance on an abstract level but.... they don't want to look at us"<sup>67</sup>

This last point is addressed in the second-generation video, the making of which Elmgreen and Dragset had no hand in, yet had clearly influenced. In this first revision, both gay and lesbian relationships are now addressed. However, mirroring Michael Elmgreen's comments, there is a more nuanced section of the

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<sup>67</sup> Michael Elmgreen 'Associated Press News' <<http://youtube.com/watch?v=GwdfnaUYNik>> (2008)  
[Accessed 12th June 2012]

narrative where a clearly curious young boy, who on seeing gay affection, is smartly turned around and pulled away by his mother.

One must consider the upkeep of this type of monument. For traditional monuments of stone and bronze this is not so much of a problem. With *'Dekmal für die im Nazionalsozialismus verfolgten Homosexuellen'* and work like it, even ignoring the problem of vandalism, they require electrical power for a start and the nature of electro/mechanical modules means that it will need at least periodic replacement, even upgrading to a new system in the future. By upgrading the hardware, there may even be the possibility of developing the monument over time.

We therefore have to ask: "Who will continue the maintenance of the piece?" The artists have made it clear that they will have no input to this aspect of the monument's existence. At the time of writing, the memorial's maintenance is to be financed from the Federal Office for Culture and Media's budget. The Bundesland of Berlin provided the site. The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe Foundation is responsible for supervising the maintenance of the memorial site.<sup>68</sup> It is envisaged that unlike other neo-monuments, this monument will stand for a long time. It is probable that the gay community in Germany [at least] will ensure that this monument is cared for appropriately. However, it asks the question of other projects, where artists seek to use technically demanding media in the future and could be a limiting factor on the longevity of the exposure of the neo-monument.

Prior to Elmgreen and Dragset's neo-monument, there were some traditional memorials to the murder of homosexuals by the Nazis. The *'Frankfurter Engel'* (1994), *'Kölner Rosa Winkel'* (1995), both in Germany and the directly named *'Homomonument'* (1987) in Amsterdam predate this work but feature classical statuary in the former and text-based carving on stone tablets in the latter two works. Whilst these two memorialize the murder of these men, one may contend

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<sup>68</sup> <[http://www.orte-der-erinnerung.de/en/memorials/memorial\\_to\\_homosexuals\\_persecuted\\_under\\_national\\_socialism/?STIL=0druckversion.html&druckversion.html](http://www.orte-der-erinnerung.de/en/memorials/memorial_to_homosexuals_persecuted_under_national_socialism/?STIL=0druckversion.html&druckversion.html) [Accessed June 2012]



that the impact on the present is not as stark as Elmgreen and Dragset's monument.



*'Der Frankfurter Engel'* by Rosemarie Trockel  
Patinated Bronze. Approximately 1.8 metres tall  
Frankfurt am Main, 1994  
(Photo: Reinhard Dietrich)

By introducing a substitutable moving-image component to a sculptural form, the Elmgreen and Dragset memorial is a clear development in the evolution of the neo-monument. Using new media and changing it bi-annually this monument becomes far more contemporaneous than the stone and bronze statues of Musil's day and by so doing, the artists go some way to address and overcome monumental stagnation. Where traditional monuments are cemented in time, Elmgreen and Dragset's neo-monument has the possibility of moving with it, thereby remaining current.

With this particular monument, those who administrate it are using public media to make the population aware of the change of video, which, during a visit I made to Berlin in 2012, was being promulgated by electronic displays on the U-Bahn, thus keeping this monument publically current. Elmgreen and Dragset clearly understand the customary fate of the monument. Their view is:

‘ “The great thing is it will have a different destiny from other memorials who often get forgotten after a while, after the inauguration, [*it is said*] “Now we have dealt with it we can turn our backs”, where with this memorial, every second year there will be another video in it and discussions and debates will pop up again and there will be a renewed interest so it keeps on being alive.” ’<sup>69</sup>

This fact makes it more than an historical memorial. The inertia of deeply rooted anti-gay attitudes means Elmgreen and Dragset’s monument is and will be for the foreseeable future, *a monument to a cause*. The use of looped video coupled to a significant but taboo subject makes it a ground-breaking monument and thus it effectively fulfils the proposed criteria of a neo-monument.

By taking an historical tragedy and linking it to contemporary issues, the monument continues to warn and points a reproaching finger at those who would victimise, not just gay men but lesbians as well. ‘*Dekmal für die im Nazionalsozialismus verfolgten Homosexuellen*’ has taken on a forward-looking dimension by the inclusion of sapphic relationships. Where this monument may be limited to analogous gender-specific issues, it has opened up the possibility of future neo-monuments covering diverse existential concerns.

Of all sculpture, neo-monument is clearly a temporal object, living a parallel existence to ourselves. It is of a time. It lasts for a time. It may look to a future time. So one should ask: how long, i.e. for what time, should a monument remain? Ignoring the practicalities of display, perhaps the answer is, ‘as long as people are interested and are prepared to think about the issues raised, analytically or emotionally’. The strength of this monument is the use of contemporary video and not archived material. Although this is clearly a memorial it also talks to us of

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<sup>69</sup> Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset, interviewed by the author at the Royal College of Art, [15<sup>th</sup> January 2013]

today, 'the now' by relating it to the injustices of the past. By regularly updating the video to 'the now', it has the possibility of continuing to make this a viable monument and not just a forgotten memorial.

### **5.5 Krzysztof Wodiczko**

#### **'Abraham Lincoln War Veteran Projection'**

Union Square Park, NYC.

November 8 - December 9, 2012

Krzysztof Wodiczko, has represented Poland at the Venice Biennale as an artist and is Professor-in-Residence at Harvard Graduate School of Art, Design and the Public Domain<sup>70</sup>. Wodiczko's early work embraced socially-focused performance and his reputation has been established with his large video projections having a clear social and political dynamic. He uses both image and text to bring about public awareness of topics that may not otherwise gain access to the oxygen of publicity.

An early example of this is the '*Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch Projection*' in Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn, New York, 1985. He continued refining this format with the '*War Veteran's Vehicle*' in Liverpool, 2009. In the memorial arch projection, a Russian and a US missile are chained together.

The arch itself is a victory monument to the American Civil War and dedicated to 'The Defenders of the Union 1861-1865'. In appropriating this triumphal arch, Wodiczko has created a *dissident version* of this classic triumphal arch. Unlike Caesar Augustus's triumphal arch advising the Gauls of the repercussions of revolt, Wodiczko's projection onto this military arch warned against the policy of the insanity of the nuclear arms race.

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<sup>70</sup> Harvard School of Design, <<http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/person/krzysztof-wodiczko/>> [Accessed January 2013]



*'Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch Projection'* by Krzysztof Wodiczko  
Video projection onto the existing memorial.  
New York. 1985  
(Photo: Krzysztof Wodiczko)

In *'War Veteran's Vehicle'* a rocket launcher as used in the conflicts in the Middle East mounted on a military Humvee when shown in America or Land Rover when shown in the United Kingdom. The rocket launcher was modified to become a mobile video-text projector. With these works, the foundations for the later projection work, *'Abraham Lincoln War Veteran Projection'*, were laid.





*War Veteran's Vehicle Projection* by Krzysztof Wodiczko.  
 Modified Military Land Rover with video projection.  
 Liverpool. 2009  
 (Photo: Robert Ochshorn)

As with Deller's work *It Is What It Is*, Wodiczko has conceived the *Abraham Lincoln War Veteran Projection* to enlighten the public to the social consequences of the wars in the Middle East. This audio-video witness account using the faces, hands and voices of fourteen American Veterans and family members, was projected onto the Lincoln Memorial in Union Square, New York. In the narrative, those filmed, recount to those watching, the effects the war in Iraq and Afghanistan has had on their lives. The video is played on a twenty three minute loop.



*'Abraham Lincoln War Veteran Projection' by Krzysztof Wodiczko.*  
 A video Projection onto the Abraham Lincoln Memorial  
 Union Square. New York. 2012  
 (Photo: Krzysztof Wodiczko)

Henry Kirk Brown's statue of Lincoln has been much maligned over the years. Cast in the style of a classical heroic Roman patrician, it is a curious mixture of styles with Lincoln dressed in the clothes of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century, yet with a Romanesque toga over his shoulders and the 'Proclamation of Emancipation' in his left hand. The statue, was erected as a memorial to President Abraham Lincoln soon after his assassination, yet coming soon after the amalgamation of the Union and the Confederacy, it has also come to represent the United States as a complete entity.

Wodiczko has appropriated a monument that was created to venerate the man who ended slavery in the United States yet in doing so, oversaw the bloodiest war on North American soil. The President is at the pinnacle of American society so, by projecting a video of 'the common man' on the statue's head and torso, he is challenging the reverential tone of the original work.





*'The Abraham Lincoln Memorial'* by Henry Kirk Brown  
Bronze. Height 2.4 metres above plinth.  
Union Square, New York. 1870  
(Photo: Wally Godbetz)

Where the original statue implied the statesman's view of America, this video addresses the monument from the other direction. Rather than glorifying a successful outcome from war, Wodiczko focuses on educating those who have never been exposed to the horror of armed conflict. He reminds them of the human and social cost of war through the eyes of those who have suffered loss and the effects of lasting traumas. Without referring to this specific work, Peter Carrier makes the point:

'Direct participants naturally respond to events differently from those who learn about them retrospectively, exclusively via monuments, books, photographs, films or witness accounts. Further relativism occurs when monuments acquire a new function in a political context different from the one in which they were erected.'<sup>71</sup>

With this particular monument, its age suggests that it is not just a regime change. Attitudes to war and its consequences have also changed. Wodiczko is a product of these changes; born in Poland during the Second World War and brought up under communist rule he is well aware of the catastrophic effect conflict has on the

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<sup>71</sup> Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory*. p.33



population. His appropriation and manipulation of Lincoln's statue has done just as Carrier suggests; it has '*acquired a new function*' in a different political context.

Wodiczko's work here is a 'post-iconoclastic act', a type of benign video vandalism, arresting people's attention and eliciting the question, "What and why is this happening?" Some may even be affronted by this desecration. Yet at the time of writing, the problems we have seen in the Middle East are still current. Although we are aware of them, most of us will have not experienced them or the latent effects, giving this work a contemporaneous significance. The Lincoln statue alone refers back to a dim and distant past and its relevance and acceptance is based on how history has been portrayed in the interval between Lincoln's death almost 150 years ago and now. In the way Wodiczko addresses the monument, 'real' people talk about their experiences, bearing witness, albeit through the medium of video, so it is from memory/experience rather than history that issues are raised. To most adults, Lincoln's position in history has been established and hardwired into their psyche by education, reading and more recently, cinema. Yet it may be said that although Lincoln's Memorial was only 'adopted' for a short period of time, those who witnessed this 'video-graffiti' so to speak, are more likely to question and understand the significance of the projection rather than the ubiquity of the donor statue.

Rather than construct a structure to create a monument, Wodiczko arrogates one, discarding its original objective and adapting it to present an alternative view. By projecting onto a monument, he visually manipulates its appearance and context, creating a three-dimensional form from a normally two-dimensional process.

Wodiczko's work has the benefit of being portable, quick to set up and quick to remove. Some projections are determinately site-specific; however the use of video and/or sound, has the advantage of easy portability or even transmission. Its relational setting can enhance or alter its context. A video can be shown on a television, or on the Internet, in a gallery or theatre. Transportable media, when combined with local or urban topography to form neo-monuments, have the potential to extend the public's comprehension and awareness and not be

restricted to one site or to one country. Wodiczko's work is a perfect example of this mobility and should the content of the work be inconsistent with the relevant authority's wishes, this technique would then lend itself to guerrilla-art actions.

### **5.6 Andrew Tider, Jeff Greenspan and Doyle Trankina**

And also

#### **The Illuminator Art Collective**

*'The Prison Ship Martyrs Monument 2.0'* 2015

The original monument was erected as a statue to a controversial American whistleblower, Edward Snowden. Snowden was an IT contractor who leaked classified information regarding the United States and British covert surveillance to the newspapers and was later granted political asylum in Russia. The United States' authorities have pressed for his return to face trial. The controversy comes from the fact that some see Snowden as a libertarian, exposing the gathering of clandestine information by government agencies and thus resisting what they see as State virtual-panopticonism while others see him as an American traitor.



*'The Prison Ship Martyrs Monument 2.0'* by Andrew Tidier and Jeff Greenspan  
The bust of Edward Snowden, placed atop one of the original  
*Prison Ship Martyrs' Monument's* peripheral columns.  
Fort Greene Park, New York. 2015  
(Photo: Aymann Ismail)

This neo-monument was created in the form of a classical bust of Snowden placed in Fort Greene Park in Brooklyn, New York. The bust used an earlier Doric column as a plinth, the column being on the periphery of a memorial known as '*The Prison Ship Martyrs' Monument*', originally dedicated in 1908. The new monument to Edward Snowden was called '*The Prison Ship Martyrs' Monument 2.0*'

Three artists are understood to have produced this 1.4metre high faux bronze bust. They originally remained anonymous but subsequently two of the artists are known to be Andrew Tidier and Jeff Greenspan<sup>72</sup> who were later prosecuted and fined for illegally erecting an unapproved structure in a city park.

At the time the artists are quoted as saying:

'We hope this inspires them to reflect upon the responsibility we all bear to ensure our liberties exist long into the future'<sup>73</sup>

Further to this they said:

'There's a media landscape that has painted him [Snowden. Ed.] as a criminal... You need something theatrical and large to counterbalance the Fox News-iness of the texture of the conversation out there.'<sup>74</sup>

The bust was placed early one morning, however, the park authorities soon noticed it and as a result, it was covered with a tarpaulin then unceremoniously removed later that day. Its exposure to the public had lasted twelve or so hours. Not to be outdone, another supposedly anonymous group calling themselves, 'The Illuminator Art Collective' replaced the missing bust with an ephemeral second representation of Edward Snowden, this time by projecting an image of the now confiscated bust on stage smoke issuing above the same Doric column. As far as is understood, this second iteration remains untitled apart from the projected plaque at the base of the column with the word, SNOWDEN.

These artists/activists issued a statement explaining their position: '*Our feeling is that while the State may remove any material artifacts that speak in defiance*

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<sup>72</sup> Andrew Tider, *Andrew*, <<http://www.andrewtider.com/The-Snowden-Bust>> [Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015]

<sup>73</sup> Alan Yuhas, *The Guardian*, <[www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/apr/06/edward-snowden-statue-bust-brooklyn-park-covered](http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/apr/06/edward-snowden-statue-bust-brooklyn-park-covered)> , (6<sup>th</sup> April 2015), [Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015]

<sup>74</sup> Bucky Turco, *Animal*, <<http://animalnewyork.com/2015/theres-a-massive-illicit-bust-of-edward-snowden-stuck-to-a-war-monument-in-brooklyn/>> (7<sup>th</sup> April 2015), [Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015]

*against incumbent authoritarianism, the acts of resistance remain in the public consciousness.*<sup>75</sup>



The second iteration of the Snowden monument.  
by The Illuminator Art Collective.  
Video projection onto stage smoke shortly after the removal of bust of Edward Snowden.  
Fort Green Park, New York. 2015  
(Photo: Grayson Earle/Illuminator Collective)

Bearing in mind the authorities' reaction to the first Snowden monument, the ethereal projection was not going to be there for long and maybe technical considerations would also conspire to make this a one-off or at least time-limited monument.

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<sup>75</sup> *Illuminator Collective* <http://theilluminator.org/edward-snowden-hologram/>, (7<sup>th</sup> April 2015) [Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015]

Yet this work has gone on to a third iteration, maybe a fitting evolution when one considers the medium of Snowden's original disclosures. The instigators of these monuments appear to be media-savvy and images of the two monuments have since gone viral on the Internet, thus a neo-monument that lasted less than 24 hours will continue to exist in virtual form at least until it is erased from the Web. Whether people will, with the passing of time, still be interested in it is another matter.

In its initial form, it may be viewed as a rather tongue-in-cheek use of the formal style of an aggrandising monument. As *The Prison Ship Martyrs' Monument 2.0* is in the form of a conventional monument, it was clearly placed there by those who wanted to respond to the position held by the United States Government by turning Snowden into a faux national hero. Such was the polarising nature of Edward Snowden that one could predict that the bust would not be there for long. In the later projected form, that created a sort of dime-store hologram, it became another model of what the neo-monument could be. It used technical ingenuity, to quickly replace the missing statue and in doing this it refused to bow to Parks Department iconoclasm. In doing so, for a short time, it raised its rebellious head again to go viral on the Internet.

Here both entities have moved the boundaries of what a monument can be by giving it latent worldwide exposure on the Internet that will continue for a far longer time than its real existence.

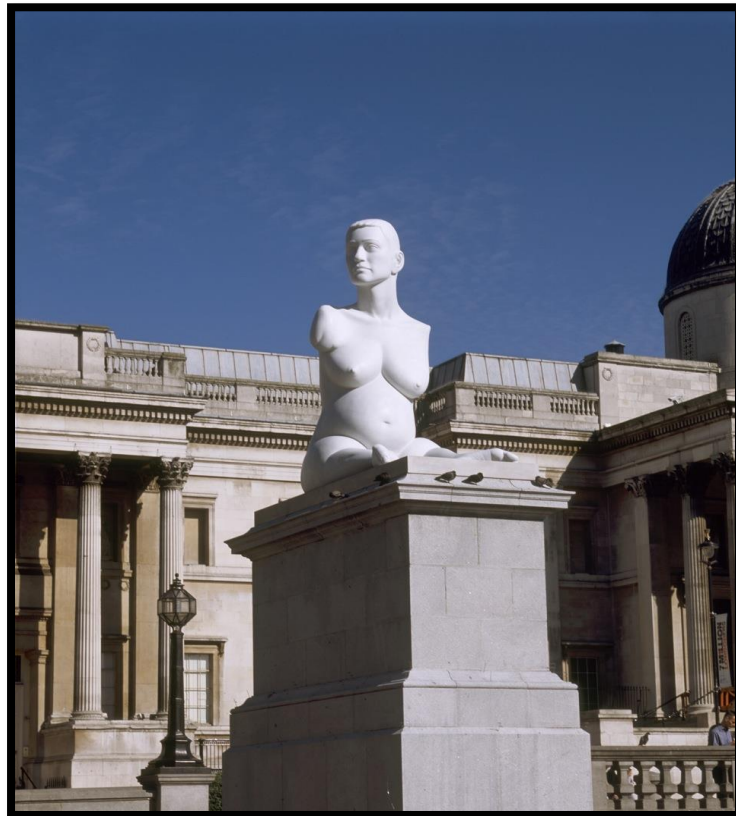
## **5.7 Marc Quinn**

Alison Lapper, Pregnant. 2005

The case studies so far have centred on political conflicts and their consequences and the relationship between man and the environment. The marble statue of the artist Alison Lapper by Marc Quinn confronts another problem; that of beauty and social attitudes to disability. Quinn created the marble sculpture of fellow artist Alison Lapper, disabled from birth, a single mother and pregnant. It was the fourth sculpture on the Fourth Plinth. It was critically acclaimed at the time but was not

without its detractors, some who thought it vulgar and disgusting and out of place in a square dedicated to historical military feats and the monarchy.

Quinn wrote that it was: *'a monument to the future'*, going on to say it celebrated *'someone who has conquered their own circumstances, rather than someone who has conquered the outside world'*.<sup>76</sup>



*'Alison Lapper, Pregnant'* by Marc Quinn  
Carrara Marble  
3.55 x 1.8 x 2.6 metres  
The Fourth Plinth, Trafalgar Square, London. 2005  
(Photo: Marc Quinn)

In short, her statue gives her the same heroic status as the others on their plinths but, unlike the other statues in the square, it is not a memorialising monument. It is about the inclusion and exclusion of a part of society that has enough problems, without suffering a societal disregard by some sections of the community. Quinn has created a provocative monument not only in the form of a disabled woman but a naked and pregnant one too. Robert Rosenblum, writing in *Artforum* said of the work:

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<sup>76</sup> Marc Quinn, *Marc Quinn*, <<http://marcquinn.com/artworks/alison-lapper>> [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> August 2016]

‘A startling transgression for public sculpture, she presides here, seated, with grave dignity as a new kind of earth mother forcing us to rethink our ingrained prejudices about human beings that don’t measure up to the macho standards of Lord Nelson, who, standing still reigns aloft on a megacolumn.’<sup>77</sup>

Being Carrara marble and naturally taking the form of a modern ‘Venus de Milo’ it adapts the classic manner of statuary to signify that ‘beauty’ is purely subjective. This is endorsed by the fact that Lapper is shown pregnant, a normal function of humanity. The sculpture makes a *social* observation, refuting preconceived notions of disability, erasing the dividing line of difference and making the public consider their attitudes to those with physical impairments.

Those not expecting to see a glaringly white statue on the spare plinth may be surprised and when examined more closely, the reproduction of the model’s physical appearance may shock and confront those with a clichéd sense of beauty, almost the breaking of a taboo. It could be argued that these are the members of the public to whom the artist wants to make his point.

Significantly, unlike the rejection of Deller’s proposal of a bombed Iraqi car on the plinth, in this case, the commissioning of this work for the Fourth Plinth was a brave step. Where Deller’s wrecked car was aiming its dissent at governments, Quinn’s monument was pointing an admonishing and questioning finger at the population of Britain and the tourists who flock to Trafalgar Square.

## **5.8 Michael Petry**

*Monument to the Unknown Soldier: Portrait of an American Patriot.* 2007

Never being an artist to avoid the controversial, Michael Petry first exhibited this work as part of his solo exhibition ‘America the Beautiful’ at the Sundaram Tagore Gallery in New York in 2007. Whilst Petry’s ‘monument’ was initially shown at a private commercial gallery in America it was shown again at a public gallery: HDLU in Zagreb, Croatia.

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<sup>77</sup> Robert Rosenblum, ‘The Best of 2005’, *Artforum* Magazine, December 2005. p.254



The work was simple enough; just an American Flag with pearls sewn on to it. The pearls were placed in a form derived from pattern of sperm ejaculate provided by a serving gay American soldier. It could be argued that any state flag flown in public is a monument to national identity and this particular flag had been flown over the Capitol Building in Washington. Whether the immediate significance of the pearls is clear to the average viewer without additional or prior knowledge of its meaning is an open question, however, its controversial nature ensured its reputation preceded it.



*'Monument to the Unknown Soldier: Portrait of an American Patriot'* by Michael Petry  
Detail showing American flag embroidered with real pearls.  
Bunting fabric. 90 x 150 cm  
New York and Zagreb. 2007  
(Photo: Michael Petry)

Petry's work is a response to the 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' [DADT] approach the US military has taken in recent years, in which homosexuality was condoned as long as it did not become public. Anti-gay attitudes to military personnel had been around since the American Revolution and discovery of personnel partaking in homosexual practices would then result in immediate discharge from the military.

Although this work will also have significance to non-judgmental acceptance of an American homosexual lifestyle in general, the title pins it squarely on the problem

of DADT in the Military. Like the traditional monument, the neo-monument, especially related to issues like this, will almost certainly be a victim of the passage of time. The DADT policy, which had been in place since 1993, was eventually repealed by the Obama administration on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011, opening the military to gay and straight alike.

Petry said that as soon as the Obama administration outlawed DADT in the military, he felt the context behind the piece had gone, that the piece was out of time: ‘*“It’s a strange thing, I thought there was no possibility of it being outdated, now homosexuality [in the military. Ed] is legal.”*’<sup>78</sup>

Yet although the repeal of DADT has been a positive move it would be foolish to imagine that in the macho world of the military, any anti-gay attitude would disappear overnight, so the significance of this work is still worth declaring to the world. The arguments regarding ‘gays in the military’ is still a contentious issue amongst some American right-wing conservatives and is likely to remain so. Even outside the military homosexuality is culturally divisive.

Apart from the homosexual elements in the work, the flag itself is a taboo subject with many and specific rituals which have grown up around it. Consequently, this work stirred up considerable controversy and to some is extremely shocking. Sensing the sensitivity of the Americans to the defilement of their national flag, the artist expressly states that the soldier did not ejaculate on the flag itself. When asked about this, Petry said that although he thought it would be provocative, he was ‘*“surprised about the intensely negative reaction to it”*’<sup>79</sup>, much of it emanating from the Internet. Petry writes of it:

‘The work entered the domain of the web and attracted misinformation where it was alleged, for example, that he had ejaculated onto the flag (which he did not) and a storm grew over the appropriateness of his participation in such an artistic endeavour. The act of writing (on the web) collided with the actual making of the work. No matter how much information about its genesis would (or will) convince those who want (for

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<sup>78</sup> Michael Petry; telephone interview by the author on the 12<sup>th</sup> August 2016

<sup>79</sup> Michael Petry, *ibid*

their own political agendas) the flag to be seen as despoiled, even though it wasn't in actual, material fact. In the American military to despoil a flag is seen as sacrilegious, such is the reliquary nature of it. The title, referring to the "Unknown Soldier", another symbol of veneration, also caused upset.'<sup>80</sup>

For centuries, a nation's flag is the ultimate patriotic symbol and rallying point around which a tribal grouping is formed. Defacing it indicates treachery, rebellion and a subversive action.

### **6.9 The Fourth Plinth: Monument or Public art?**

Two of the case studies discussed, relate to the Fourth Plinth and it provides a degree of insight into the status of the monument today. The use of this plinth for contemporary public art is not without controversy. Situated in Trafalgar Square, London, under the gaze of Admiral Nelson atop his column is what has become known as the Fourth Plinth. The plinth itself was left vacant for 150 years, although it was originally planned to place an equestrian statue of King William IV, which remains unrealised. From 1999 to 2016 ten different artists have produced nine sculptures and one multiple-performance piece for this Victorian plinth.

There have been suggestions that the plinth should regain a statue of a monarch, in this case Queen Elizabeth II and even Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, although to date, this proposal is unrealised. Originally, the commissioning group was under the control of the Royal Society for the Arts but latterly the works have been commissioned by a group, under the auspices of the Office of the Lord Mayor of London.

The Fourth Plinth has given an outlet for artists to create work to be shown out of the gallery and fully accessible to the public, in London at least. As the Fourth Plinth is surrounded by monuments of a bygone age, it may be thought that all of the work placed on the plinth should also be regarded as a monument. Is this actually so and have all the works shown so far met this criteria? The answer has to be *No*. The commissions have varied between diverse genres of monument and

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<sup>80</sup> 'Michael Petry Answers FADs Questions', *FAD*, < <http://archive.is/iYcrW> > (2011) [Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> February 2014]

public, even performance art. It has ceased to be just a plinth solely for the erection of a monument. The Fourth Plinth itself has effectively become an open-air 'gallery' space with single works of art occupying the space for varying but relatively short periods of time, at least relative to the statues on the other three plinths.



*'Gift Horse'* by Hans Haake  
Bronze with scrolling electronic LEDs giving Stock Exchange share prices  
Trafalgar Square, London. 2015  
(Photo: Douglas Clark)

So far, the work has varied between a neo-monument in the form of Hans Haake's *'Gift Horse'* and Thomas Schutte's *'Hotel for the Birds'* [Its original title. Ed]. *Gift Horse* alludes to the equestrian statue that was originally planned for the plinth; its skeletal horse and Stock Market scrolling tickertape LED's, suggesting power, history, money and maybe City financial transgressions. In contrast, interesting though it is, Schutte's work is unashameably public art.



*'Hotel for the Birds'* by Thomas Schütte  
Glass and Stainless Steel.  
Trafalgar Square, London. 2007  
(Photo: Derek Harper)

As we have seen in the preceding case studies, two artists, Marc Quinn and Jeremy Deller, have been short-listed for the Fourth Plinth. Quinn was eventually selected and Deller not, but both of their proposals were controversial in their context. The make-up of the members of the Commissioning Group changes but the group has laudably shown its ability to select provocative work. However, with Deller's work it is easy to assume that concerns about reactions to its context may have worked against it. Even if this was not so, are there limits to the largesse the commissioners can dispense? There will be a balance required between selecting cutting-edge art and public responsibility. As Ekow Eshun, the Chairman of the Commissioning Group said: *'We spend a lot of time thinking about the public response'*.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Alastair Sooke. 'Art News', *The Telegraph*, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/art-news/10332075/Why-cant-the-public-vote-for-Fourth-Plinth.html>> (24<sup>th</sup> September 2013) [Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> July 2014].

In recent times the public have been asked to comment, but not vote, on a short-list of six, of which two are chosen for the Plinth. Having asked for comments from the public, it may be assumed that they are taken into consideration; however, when a neo-monument is proposed, would these comments undermine qualified approval and adversely affect the choice of work? Going one step further, it has been proposed, although not effected, that a further step be taken to democratise the Plinth by allowing the public to decide which work is chosen. Sally Shaw, a curator who worked with the GLA, proposed:

‘In the light of our ever-increasing access to broader audiences via social media and new technologies is it time to examine again the role of the commissioning process as well as the scope and reach of invited artists?’<sup>82</sup>

It would be hard to imagine the Greater London Assembly ceding complete control to the people. Antony Gormely’s submission, *‘One & Other’*, may be the nearest it will come to it in that, for an hour each, 2,400 volunteers ‘performed’ their own work on top of the Plinth over a period of one hundred days and which Neil MacGregor, then Director of the British Museum, disparagingly called ‘Twitter Art’<sup>83</sup>.

The Fourth Plinth is an enigma. Whilst it is an admirable stage for the exhibiting of contemporary art, it inevitably possesses a filtration system in the form of the Commissioning Group that has the potential to limit the *extent* of dissenting art to less contentious issues. As we have seen, there have been works of a political nature on the Plinth, however it is not surprising that this filtration system restricts what contexts might be offered to the public as a politicised monument, in fact as a neo-monument.

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<sup>82</sup> Sally Shaw, ‘People, Power’ in *Fourth Plinth: Contemporary Monument*. (London: Institute of Contemporary Art. 2012) p.15

<sup>83</sup> Neil Macgregor, cited in ‘The Birth of Twitter Art’, *The Guardian Online*  
<<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/jul/08/fourth-plinthy-antony-gormley>>

## **Chapter Six**

### **Conclusions Drawn from Research**

One of the most important questions proposed at the beginning of this thesis was to query the validity of the term neo-monument. Rather than outlining a criteria to which the neo-monument should conform, it will be more constructive to highlight the evolution and the areas of praxis that the neo-monument may exhibit. In other words, the development that sets it apart from that which has gone before.

#### **6.1 New Modes of Monument**

Until the last part of the Twentieth Century monuments had changed very little. As Carrier states: '*...the habits of human perception and communication have altered dramatically.*'<sup>84</sup> We have seen over the last forty years that the genus 'monument', as described in terms laid out at the beginning of this study, has developed in a direction away from or even opposed to the classic, recurring sculptural bombast and aggrandisement of past millennia. Contemporary thinking and artistic trends have thrown up other models and alloyed them into politically inspired public art. Driven by catastrophes of war, technological advances, changing attitudes towards art practice, and occasionally political will, the possibilities of an alternative paradigm to that of the past, have been created.

Although the carnage of the First World War opened the public's eyes to loss rather than glory, it was a generational leap, forty years from the end of the Second World War that created a tipping point in the creation of new modes of monument.

The enormity of Germany's post-Holocaust contrition created a desire, in the eyes of some groups, for distinct monuments that, contrary to previous models, neither countenanced nor glorified the past. The advent of the counter-monument became a defining period in the acceptance of a new monumental model. The counter-monument is, first and foremost, a memorializing monument relating specifically to the Holocaust. Yet its sub-context is memory or our will or ability to remember.

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<sup>84</sup> Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory*, p.16



Thus, not only are they memorials, they also exhibit a sub-visual discussion about memory. As Pierre Nora, suggests, the memory of real events fade and is replaced by '*exterior scaffolding and outward signs*' in other words; memorials. The counter-monument removes this scaffolding and results in the *absence* of a monument. It is about focusing the mind on what is not there and has gone forever.

The counter-monument brought a different mode of creative thought to the way a memorialising monument can be conceived. Following on from this, we have seen that at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, a new model of monument that questions and warns, rather than memorialises, has emerged.

## **6.2 Monuments of Reasoned Dissent**

The freedoms and relaxation of cultural norms granted in the West have also allowed 'an element of dissent' to surface, unimaginable in the past. As a mode of communication, the monument had been slow to embrace this new reality. In response to this, some artists began to take a different approach, creating new and arguably subversive forms of monument that we shall call *neo-monuments*. It is proposed that the neo-monuments are rarely true memorials. They are about creating a form of monument that may reference and comment on a continuing or past event but places themselves in the present, making critical observations on existential problems. An effective neo-monument, places before the public, an alternative message for them to consider.

With a monument, a political objective must form part of the concept. If the work is obscure and the artist says, "make of it what you will" it is an abdication his/her responsibility to produce a defensible monument. On the other hand, one must be careful about the message it sends. As Clare Bishop points out: '*The point is not about conversion, for this reduces the work of art to a question of propaganda.*'<sup>85</sup>. The case studies I have given provide the public an opportunity to think about an issue. They are not dogmatic but they provide guidance toward a reasoned outcome.

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<sup>85</sup> Clare Bishop, *Artificial Hells*. (London: Verso Books, 2012), p.282

Deller's *It Is What It Is* was not specifically an anti-Iraq war monument. His point to the observer was: here is a relic of what war does, what do you think?

### **6.3 Sites of Display**

In some countries it is possible to say that some aspects of dissent have become more acceptable or at least a little less unacceptable. This is not to say that there has been no resistance to nonconformist or critical public art. There has not been a rush to erect these monuments of dissent in public squares and parks, and it is not surprising that governments and organisations would disapprove of negative reactions toward their own actions - especially if they are also funding them.

The growth of large public galleries with freedom to commission and curate in their own way, has allowed artists to create neo-monuments and in doing so, to gain a stage and thus, an audience. These public galleries are of course, subject to the will of trustees, directors and curators, maybe even politicians. The bottom line is that they should have the desire and duty to show thought provoking art and not be bound by a commercial imperative. The neo-monument should not be excluded from this and we have seen some public galleries embracing and promoting this genre of artistic practice.

Spatial resonance is important although not crucial. A neo-monument's impact is far greater when it connects to the area in question. This can be seen in many of the cases within this study, Greenfort's anti-algae 'fountain' on the edge of the Aasee being a good example. With my work, *'The Humanity Monument'*, it functioned well visually in a white gallery space, however, it would be more effective as a politicised neo-monument if it was sited outside say, one of the more reactionary newspapers or political parties who ferment opposition to the migration of refugees fleeing from conflict. There are inconsistencies though. By taking 'Mohammed to the mountain' to use a rather ironic turn of phrase, Deller ensured that some US citizens in the Mid-West were brought face to face with the detritus of war that their government waged on their behalf. It may be argued that

the same work lying between the weapons of war may not have the same resonance.

#### **6.4 Who is the Audience?**

As a means of communication, it is probable that the neo-monument will embrace a greater cross-section of society if it placed where the public transit on a daily basis. The *Ecstasy of Truth* was only shown for three hours a day during the evening rush but in that time, several hundred people passed; from all sections of society. This is not to say that for reasons discussed earlier in Chapter Two, that all the people who passed, stopped to look at the videos.

While the more conservative public may find it hard to accept post-Duchampian aesthetics as 'Art', a significant number of people have embraced newer concepts in which artistic endeavour may be realised. The proliferation of 'Modern Art' museums, art education, media exposure, the internet and a desire to look to the new or novel for gratification and inspiration has led more people to give credence to contemporary artistic endeavour.

The demographic break down of visitors to a public art gallery is beyond this thesis and will vary but it could be put forward that public contemporary art galleries attract an audience, of whom many are young and have been tutored in contemporary art practice or of older individuals, who have been exposed by education or in some other way to art practice.

Resorting to exposure through a public gallery may actually be advantageous in some respects. Contrary to Musil's opinions regarding a monument's metaphoric invisibility, most people who go to galleries *want* to see inspiring and thoughtful work. Some versed in the language of contemporary art may go there to be involved and challenged, others just to look but this desire to visit a public gallery indicates, at the very least, a degree of curiosity. This will vary from country to country and reflect the cultural values of those countries. It may also reflect other restrictions to access, such as entrance fees or disability access. This choice of

demographic has to be reflected upon when selecting a space in which to place a monument and indeed, the form of the monument itself.

### **6.5 Language as a Neo-Monument**

Neo-monuments using language, be it textual-visual and/or aural communication, have an advantage in some respects. When we see two and three-dimensional forms in a space we can visually take in and instinctively react to them, picking up on clues and drawing conclusions as to their meaning. With textual work, whilst ignoring differences in language and literacy, we already have a code which the majority can quickly decipher, thus with text based monuments, the seeds can be quickly sown on the path to understanding.

Some would argue that a text-based work is no more than a placard, a shop sign or hoarding. This of course has some credibility. Yet, at a fundamental level, text is mark making, one of the basic skills you learn at art school. It is the artists job to create a work that by its use of text, surpasses *just* text. Holzer's work is a good example of this and Wallinger's *State Britain* even uses the written placard within the monument. It was found that when showing *The Humanity Monument*, the use of succinct wording, combined with visual impact and careful placement of the work created the attentiveness for the viewer to read, absorb and comment on the message.

### **6.6 Time and Obsolescence**

A defining characteristic of the neo-monument is temporality. As a result, the contemporaneous issues represented by a neo-monument may have a basis in history and/or to be current to have any significance to the public. Contextual longevity is more important than exhibited longevity. It is an immutable fact that in the consumer and commodity augmented economy of present day, Western society, we live for the 'new'. When Apple Computers launch a new iPhone or iPad out there is a queue outside the shop to acquire this latest gadget. Many things are not viably 'mendable' anymore. In the West we just throw them away or recycle them and buy the latest model. Such is the same with the media. A migration crisis

supersedes a tsunami, which in turn superseded a war etc. etc. on each evening news bulletin. An advertisement for a product is constantly revised to keep that product in the public eye. Life sweeps by consigning this weeks news to the archive and the bin. Why should the neo-monument be different? This research identifies and proposes that a neo-monument can only make an impression in today's society by making a smash-and-grab raid on a public's capacity to engage.

The neo-monument is a product of the times we live in and itself is governed by time. The neo-monument can be a victim of time as the context of its creation fades into history. This is evident to a degree with Petry's '*Monument to the Unknown Soldier: Portrait of an American Patriot*' subsequent to the DADT law reform. As work that reflected on the collapse of some high-profile financial institutions in 2008, it is doubtful that *Architectural Apparatus No.2 [Fiscal Structure]* would be as effective now as it was then even though, to a lesser extent, it would seem we still are affected by the repercussions of that period today.

One of the advantages of the neo-monument is that it has the possibility of flexibility of action, that it is not necessarily a static entity. Should one seek to give the neo-monument a degree of longevity and protect it from the perils of in consequence, strategies should be in place to regenerate its message. An example would be the biannual updating of the video in *Denkmal für die im Nazionalsozialismus verfolgten Homosexuellen* in Berlin. Others retain their impact by moving to different sites.

## **6.7 Elements of Surprise**

If the neo-monument gains exposure in some degree by guerrilla-art action, the social demographic may be expanded. In doing so it may embrace those who never visit galleries, have no comprehension or liking of modern art, or even art in general. Deller's *It Is What It Is* used surprise and short durational display to make an impact on the people of the mid-West, Wodiczko's projections on appropriated monuments in the cities did the same. By being in the open, with freedom of site, guerrilla-art exposure can make an impact and cut across social boundaries.

As with the Snowden monument, guerrilla actions may result in the rapid removal of the monument by police or official bodies. However, video documentation may prolong its virtual existence, until search-engines allow it to disappear into the seemingly infinite space of the Internet.

Unlike the traditional monument, neo-monuments are rarely concreted in place leaving artists to exploit the mobility that technology allows them. This became apparent with *The Humanity Monument*. The work was relatively easy to transport to other venues yet it had a bigger impact than one would expect from its actual size. Whilst Deller went to the extreme of towing his neo-monument across a continent, Wodiczko needed only a DVD player, a projector and a power source. The equipment needed to project *Ecstasy of Truth* could be carried in a suitcase. This mobility, of course gives the neo-monument versatility of spatial impact as well as gaining an increased or diverse public awareness.

Artists who have gained a reputation for their work and have commercial gallery support may have enough impetus behind them to place their work in important public spaces, galleries and biennales. When displayed in a gallery or museum setting, the function of such places, coupled with an economic imperative, will almost certainly cause the monument to be placed in a temporary manner. This will be even more so with a commercial gallery. A public museum may well buy or be donated a work – a case in point being *Baghdad, 5 March 2007* at the Imperial War Museum. In this case its display may be recycled for a new audience. This re-energising of an existing monument is an interesting concept to consider. It could mean that although, in the passing of time, a monument's significance will inevitably lose its impact, a period of respite would allow a work to reappear on another occasion, even in a new place, with a new audience. A good example of this would be Holzer's *'Monument'*, whose use of redacted Guantanamo Bay text has now been recycled in other work by the artist.

### **6.8 Do the Public Have to Like It?**

Neo-monuments have the potential to both provoke and to polarise the public. In that vein, they can cause controversy due to the fact that they are dissenting or

nonconformist in nature. All the case studies mentioned have done this and some have suffered for it. Elmgreen and Dragset's *'Monument to the Homosexual Victims of the Nazis'* has been vandalised, its toughened glass and bunker-like concrete structure being more resistant than most. Michael Petry suffered a 'patriotic' backlash via the Internet even though it is improbable that those who reacted never actually saw the offending flag. Whilst the point of a neo-monument is to persuade people to recognise a certain attitude, or course-of-action, there will be those who disagree. Although desirable, a positive reaction to the work it is not an essential requirement for a neo-monument. An adverse response may not be counter-productive as it has the potential to publicise the cause and consequently, give it exposure. The Internet and the media in general, hungry for controversy, can then promulgate the work with its provocative message around the world. The artist therefore would be wise to have a degree of mental resilience, especially when tackling subjects such as religion and gender where controversy may even bring death threats or worse, as with the murder of the journalists working for the French satirical magazine, Charlie Hebdo.

#### **6.9 Public Understanding and Acceptance.**

We now see that there are artists prepared to make public, socio-political statements with their art. Getting their work shown may not always be straightforward. Their work may buck the trend of the commodification of art and their views merit polemical dialogue with public and Establishment alike. As the public become more aware of the language of contemporary art and access to galleries and art spaces grow, there is an increased potential to make more thought provoking, politicised public art, which promotes alternative existential viewpoints. These are not the glorifying, jingoistic monuments of the past or indeed pure memorials.

Coupled with the public's increasing acceptance of what art may be, we have seen that the monument can be released from the restraints of stone and bronze. The use of new technology such as video and found or recycled objects have pushed the envelope of what concepts and materials can be used in the creation of a new and evolving forms of monument.



Conceptual art is a much-debated phrase but, as discussed in Chapter Three, in its basic form it can be taken to mean *thought* taking precedence over *aesthetics*. Aesthetics too, has often been dissected and written about. To put it simply and for the purpose of this proposal, it is taken to be an emotion-driven value judgement about degrees of attractiveness and taste.

When it comes to the neo-monument, its *raison d'être* *must be*, thought taking precedence over 'aesthetics'. My own practice has shown that one must not lose sight of the fact the work has to be readily understandable by the general public. While not decrying public art, if the neo-monument loses its meaning, aesthetics is all that is left. Even if the work is visually obscure, or aurally with sound art, clues given within the work or title will ease the way to comprehension. This was apparent in *Architectural Apparatus No.1 [Divisor]* and possibly, depending on site, *Architectural Apparatus No.2 [Fiscal Structure]* where the clues were given. However, the failure to do this effectively was evident in *Architectural Apparatus No.5 [Inverted Triumphal Arch]* and *Architectural Apparatus No.6 [Inclined, Reclined Declined]*. Arguably the most successful work was *The Humanity Monument*, which was more immediately comprehensible.

The idea of the neo-monument is to sow that seed of an idea. Holzer's '*Monument*' is not saying 'You should think like this' but it is narrowly providing and directing the evidence as she sees it, allowing an audience to come to their own conclusions. The neo-monument *is* conceptual art. The message within the work is the primary purpose of the work and any aesthetic realisation is a means to this end. It is vital that for the neo-monument to fulfil its obligation to communicate, the message is clear to those who are the target for this message.

With the 'acceleration of events' and our inability to keep up with them, humans have much to absorb on a daily basis consequently a great deal gets lost, like passing trees seen through the window of a fast train. Observations, based on my own practice, together with conclusions drawn from the case studies presented here, indicate that the neo-monument will only work for some people, people whose curiosity outweighs the weight and concerns of their personal existence.

## **6.10 Viability**

At the beginning of this thesis it was asked if the monument was an outdated concept. We strive to archive every item of our existence, packing away our memories on shelves and in computers in the belief that with this knowledge we can build a better world. Yet the reality is that history continues to repeat itself; we may know it, but never seem to learn from it, therefore memorials and monuments will continue to be built to absorb and forget our accumulated grief. Nevertheless, the fact is that new kinds of monument; neo-monuments, are now being created and the most successful of them radiate a recalcitrant appeal and demand people to take notice. These monuments of dissent have evolved to be viable models of free speech; reminding, warning and sometimes instructing. Although rooted in past events, neo-monuments are about the present and the future. They are a voice of reasoned dissent and their ability to make a valid and creatively presented point, understood by many is, without a doubt, possible.

There is no question that the monument, presented on the street, in the park, square or public gallery, has a lot of competition for our acknowledgement and response. The speed and complexity of life dictates that we take and absorb things quickly and move on.

That is not to say that public art in general, and neo-monuments in particular, are irrelevant, very much the opposite. It is my contention that they are vitally important, both culturally and politically, but to succeed they have to reflect and react to contemporary life however, all but the best will suffer the attrition of our attention over time.

There is still the potential to create ground-breaking neo-monuments, that make important observations that reflect existential issues. As has always been the case, whether or not public art, a traditional monument or a neo-monument is successful, depends on the artist's ability to create imaginative work that attracts and impacts upon the public.

Yet in this competitive arena, the artist needs to combine creativity with contemporary techniques of construction and presentation to expand into different areas of display. If we understand this, we can adapt and develop strategies, some of which are highlighted in this thesis. Successful strategies have the potential to circumvent irrelevance and create work that strikes a chord with the public.

If the neo-monument has one advantage, it is the ability to tap into the public's current, but often fleeting concerns. These public concerns are brought about by a tidal-flow of media. The media however, is typically two-dimensional and with its constant assault it is often said that we have become inured to it. The neo-monument has the ability to confront the public with a solid physical and creative presence within that tidal-flow. It is this physical presence that will stand out from the rest of what is transient in our lives.

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*All images in Appendix by Douglas Clark*

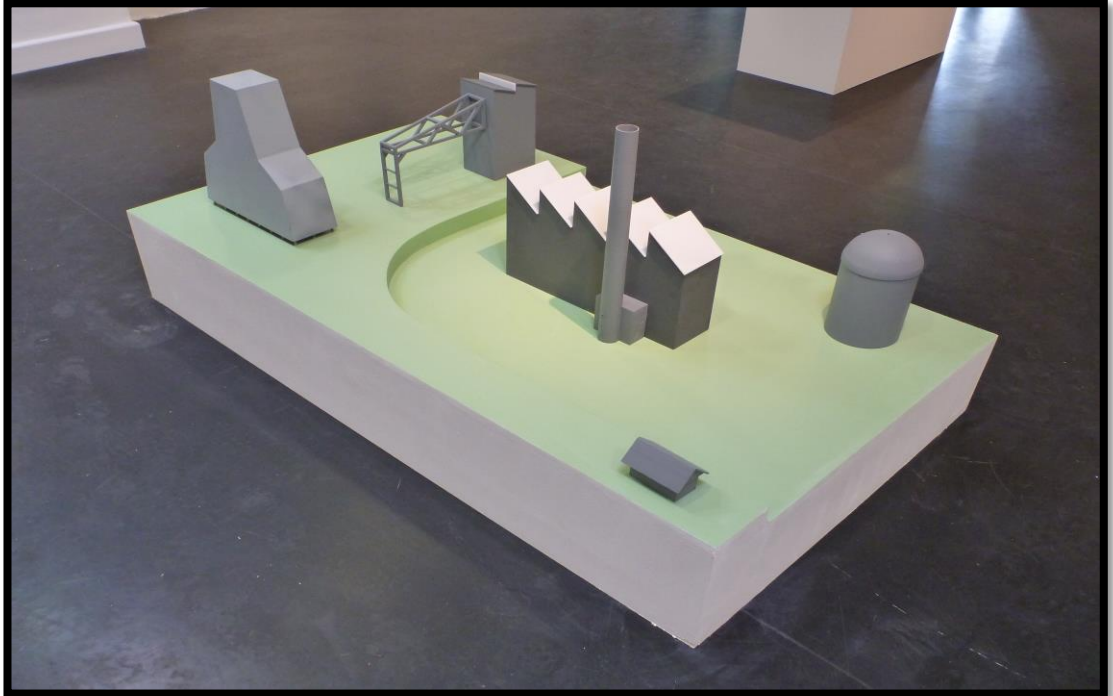
## **Appendix**

The method adopted for the creation of my work is a mixture of drawings, both by hand and using a 3D computer modelling, the production of maquettes and experimental work to test the viability of materials.

All the work from the drawings and maquettes through to final work that was constructed during this research was made, with the exception of some CNC and laser cutting for *'The Humanity Monument'*, which was undertaken by a specialist technician to designs supplied by myself.

## **A1. Maquettes and Test Pieces**

All images: Douglas Clark



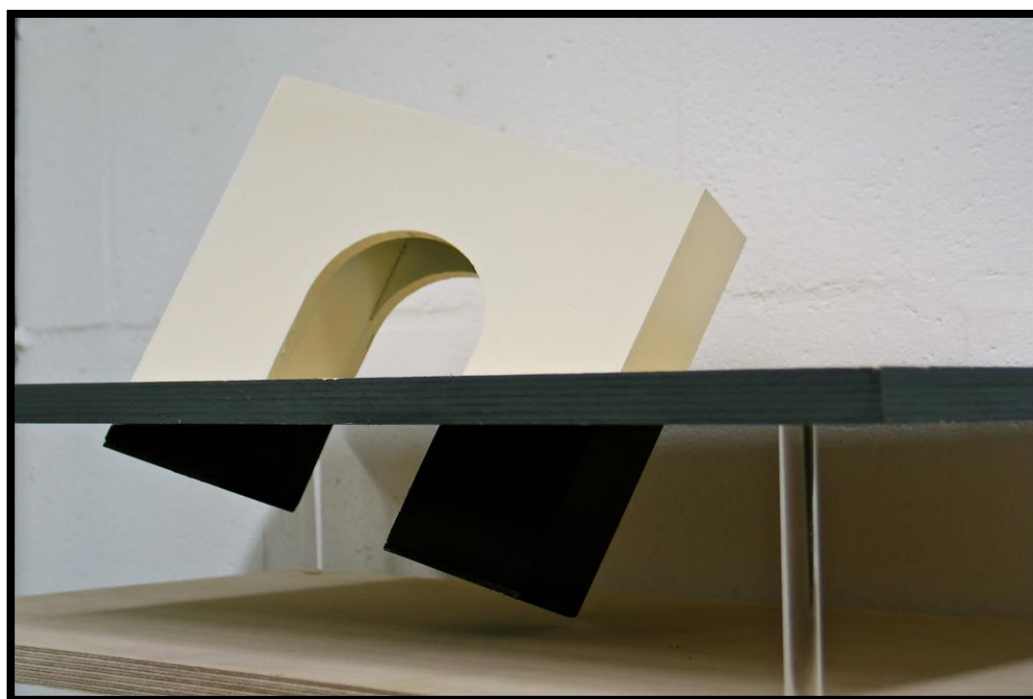
Large maquettes for unrealised proposal, that of a full size '*Industrial Monument*'.  
Exhibited at Salisbury Arts, Aberystwyth and Bath Spa Universities. 2013  
MDF. 1.8 x 0.9 x 0.6 metres



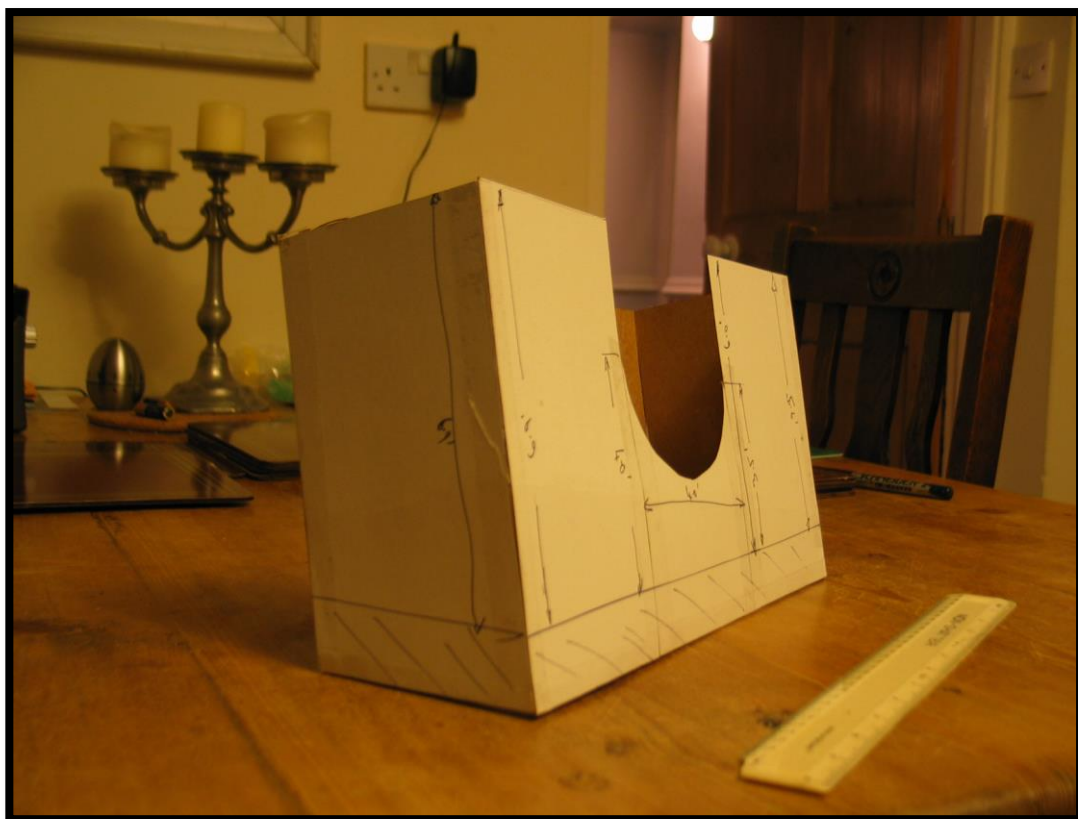
Second maquette for '*Industrial Monument*'  
MDF and Steel. 1.8 x 0.9 x 0.6 metres



Maquette for lighthouse project.  
Perspex, steel and wood. 60 x 15Ø cm.



Maquette for unrealised Triumphal Arch on two floors. Mottisfont Priory Barn  
Plywood, Perspex and MDF. 60 x 30 x 30 cm.

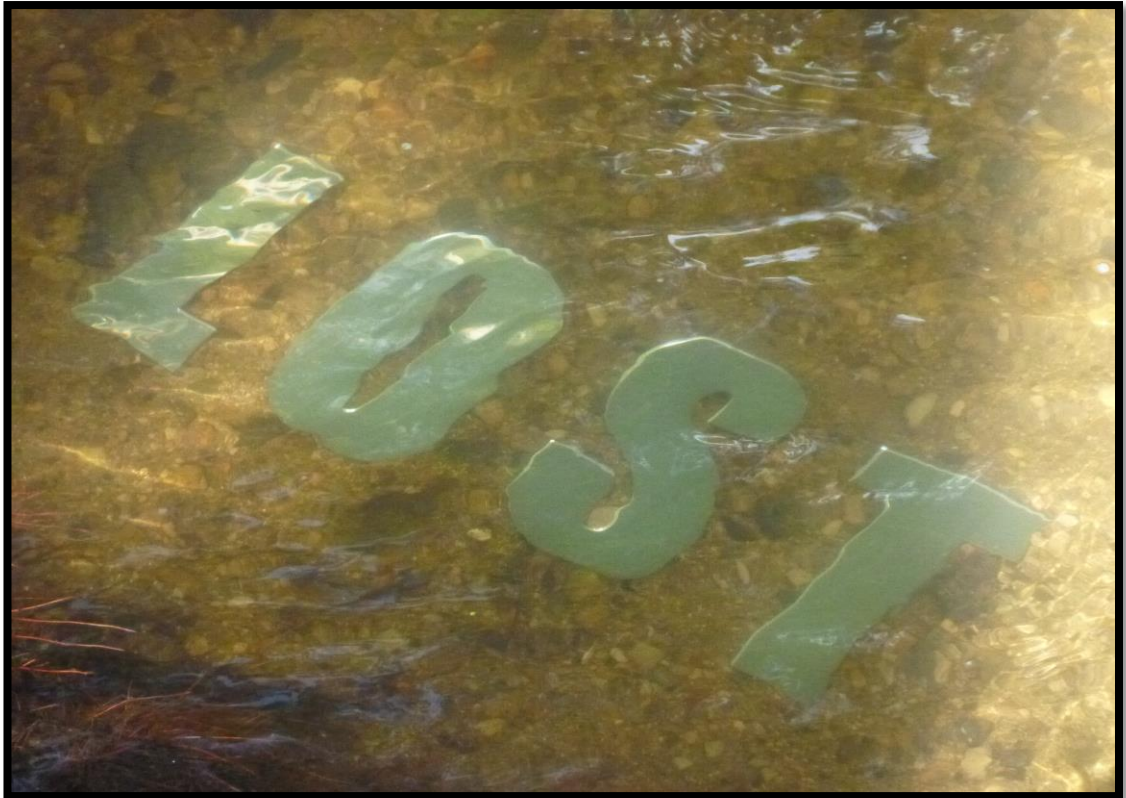


Maquette for '*Architectural Apparatus No.5*' for Salisbury Art Centre.  
Cardboard. 30 x 15 x 20 cm

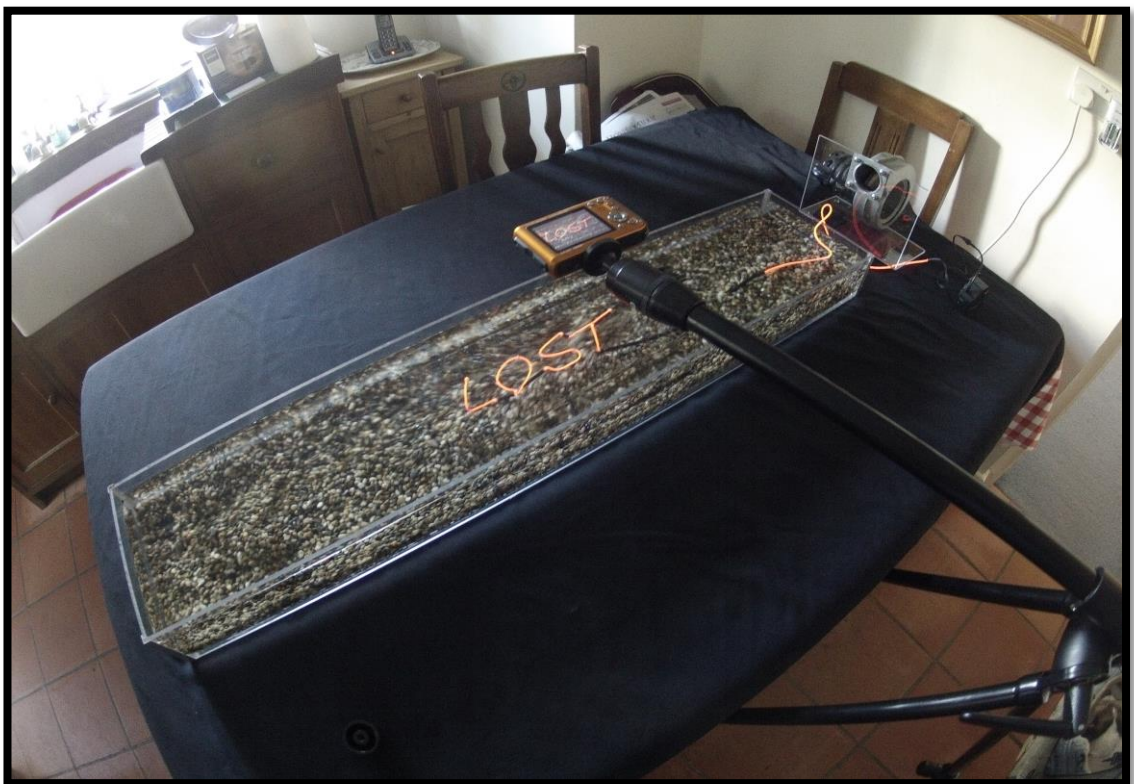


Maquette for '*Architectural Apparatus No.6 [Inclined, Reclined, Declined]*'  
for the Holburne Museum.  
Cardboard. 30 x 24 x 8 cm



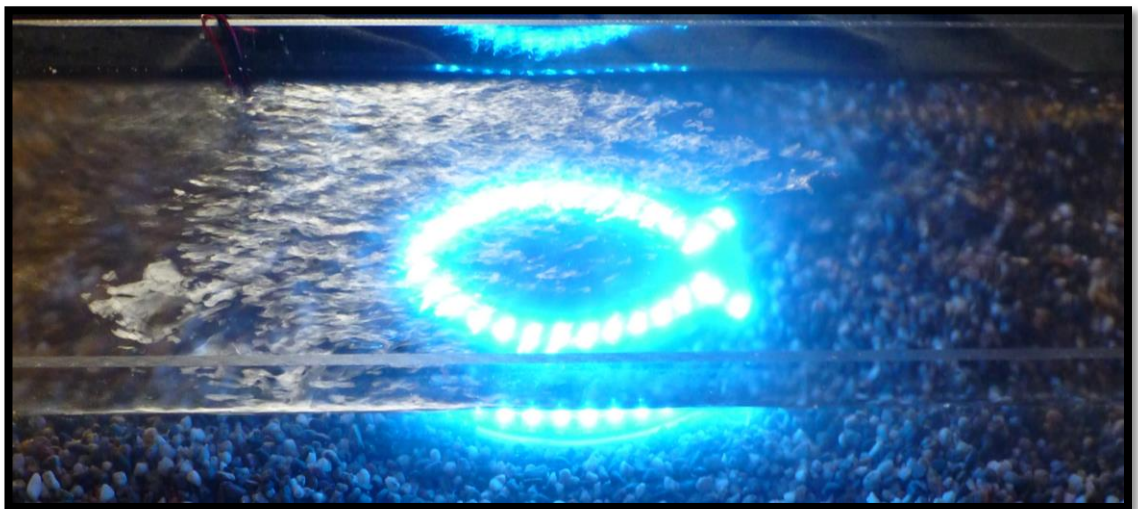
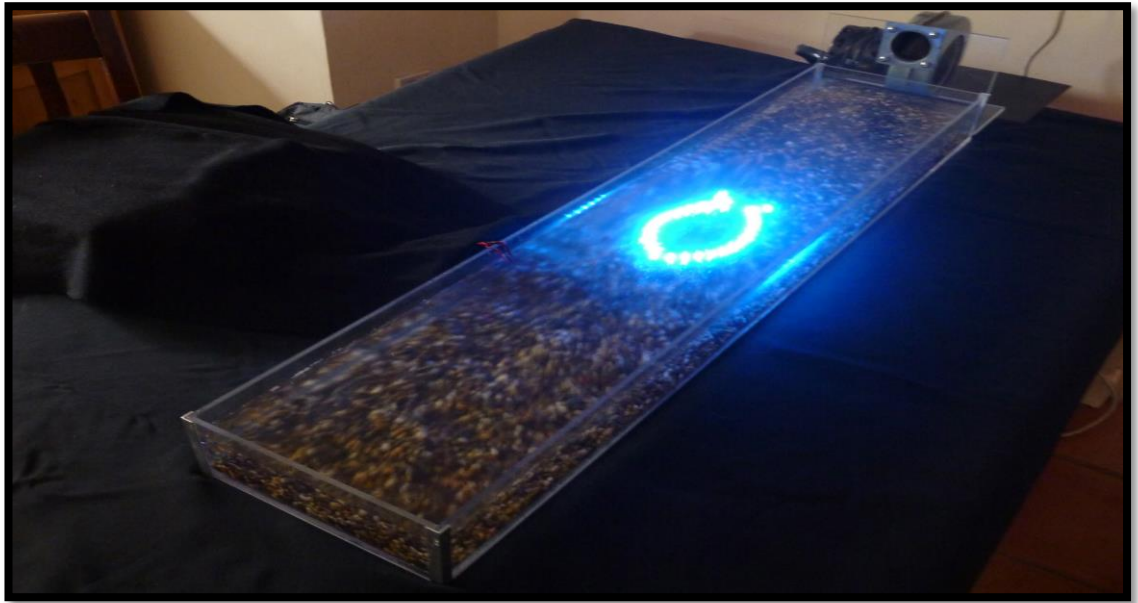


Video still from mirrored text test piece, filmed in River Frome.  
Mirrored Perspex. 100 x 25 cm.



Prior to trying real high-voltage neon, test-tank simulation using faux neon 'string' text underwater.  
[With fan 'breeze-maker' to generate ripples].  
Perspex, gravel, neon string, water and electric fan. 125 x 30 x 7 cm.





Three views of test piece showing resin encapsulation of ultra-bright LEDs for underwater monument.  
LED and resin 'Fish' 15 x 8 x 1.5 cm.

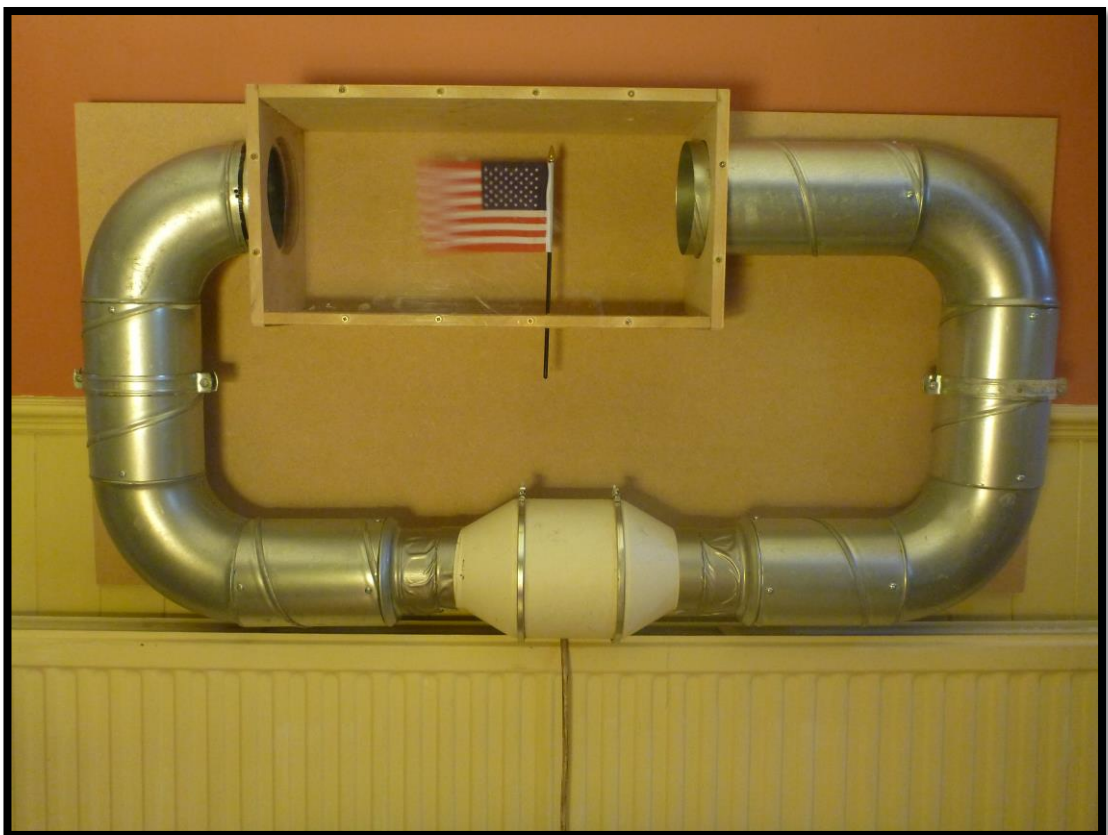


Test piece for tidal, submerging text monument to the migrant crisis in the Mediterranean  
 Proposed work to be fitted to a sea wall. Final work to be in LEDs. Unrealised as yet.  
 Kennet and Avon Canal, Bradford on Avon Locks  
 Clear and mirrored Perspex. 120 x 60 cm.





Test piece/maquette for full size '*Xenophobic Flag Machine No.2*'  
Electric fan, MDF and fabric. 100 x 35 x 10 cm.



Test piece for '*Xenophobic Flag Machine No.1 [Wind Tunnel]*'.  
Electric fan, steel ducting, MDF, Perspex and fabric. 100 x 70 x 15 cm.



Half size test piece with integral fans for '*Xenophobic Flag Machine No.2*'.  
Steel, aluminium, 2 electric fans and fabric. 4 x 2 x 0.3 metres



Maquette for '*Monument to Misplaced Xenophobia*'  
Steel, Plaster and fabric. 100 x 30 x 10 cm.



Test Pieces - Comparing side-firing ultra bright LED's [Left], faux neon string [Right]  
Plywood, LED's 12v battery and neon string. 35 x 13 cm.



Test piece. Silicone encapsulated  
Waterproof LEDs proved too dim.  
35 x 15 cm.

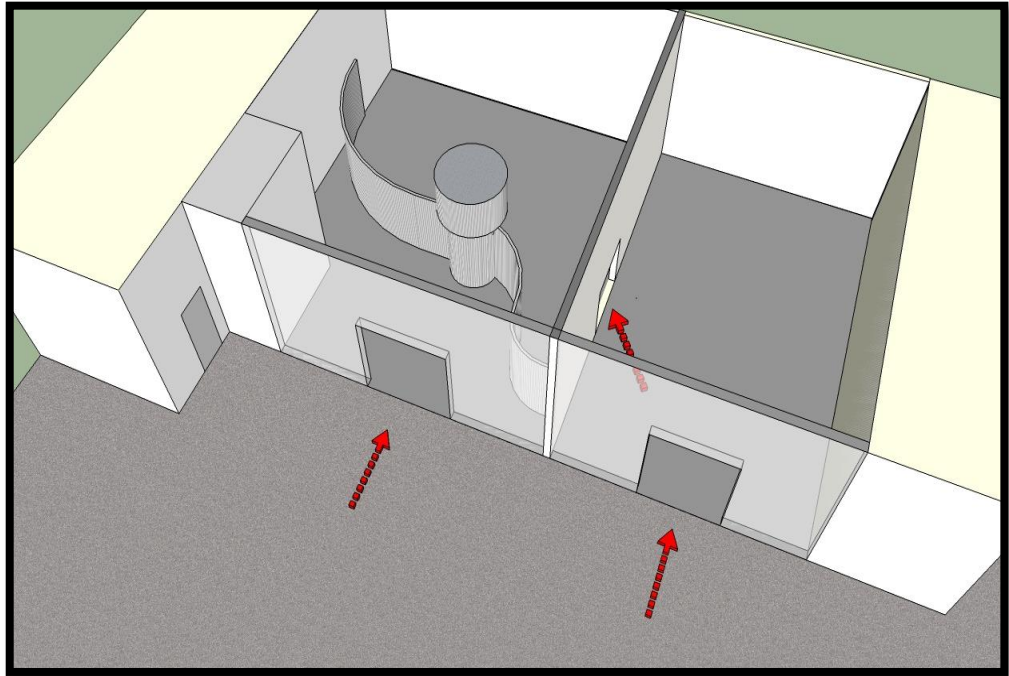


Prototype LED letter for '*The Humanity Monument*'.  
Plywood, LEDs, and plastic film. 35 x 20 cm.



## A2. Sample 3D Computer Drawings

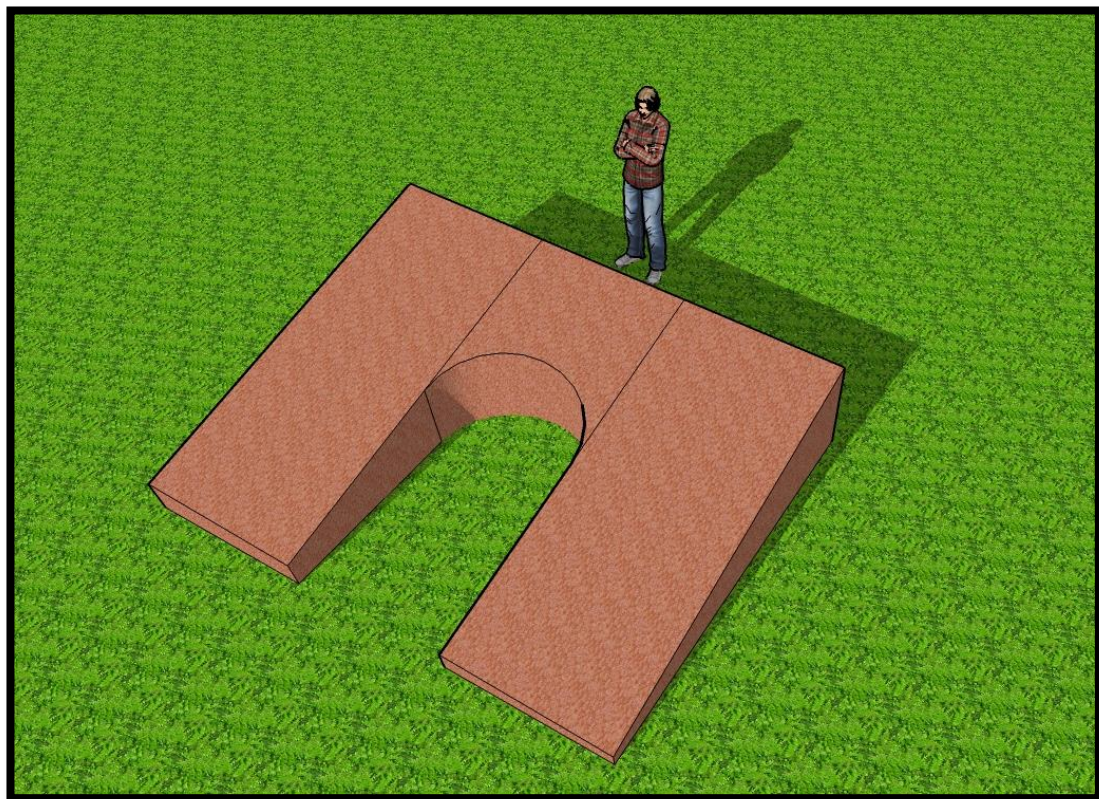
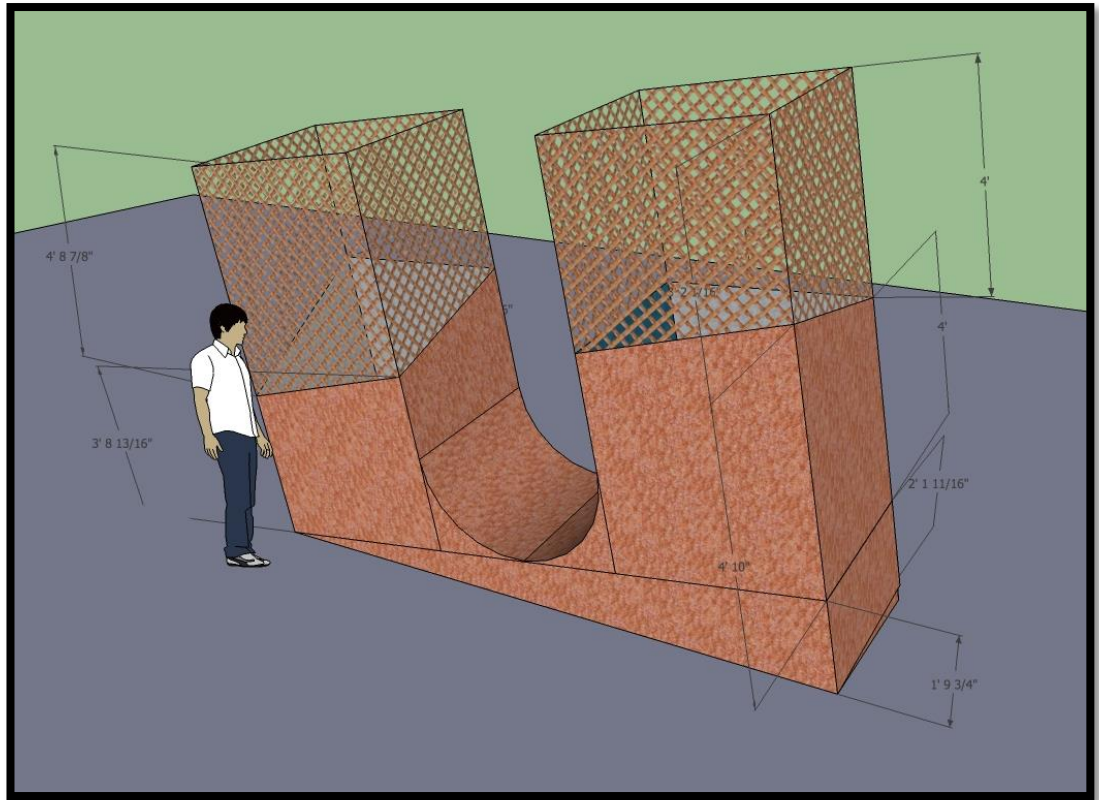
Program: Sketchup



Site Drawing for *Architectural Apparatus No1 (Divisor)*  
Bath Spa University

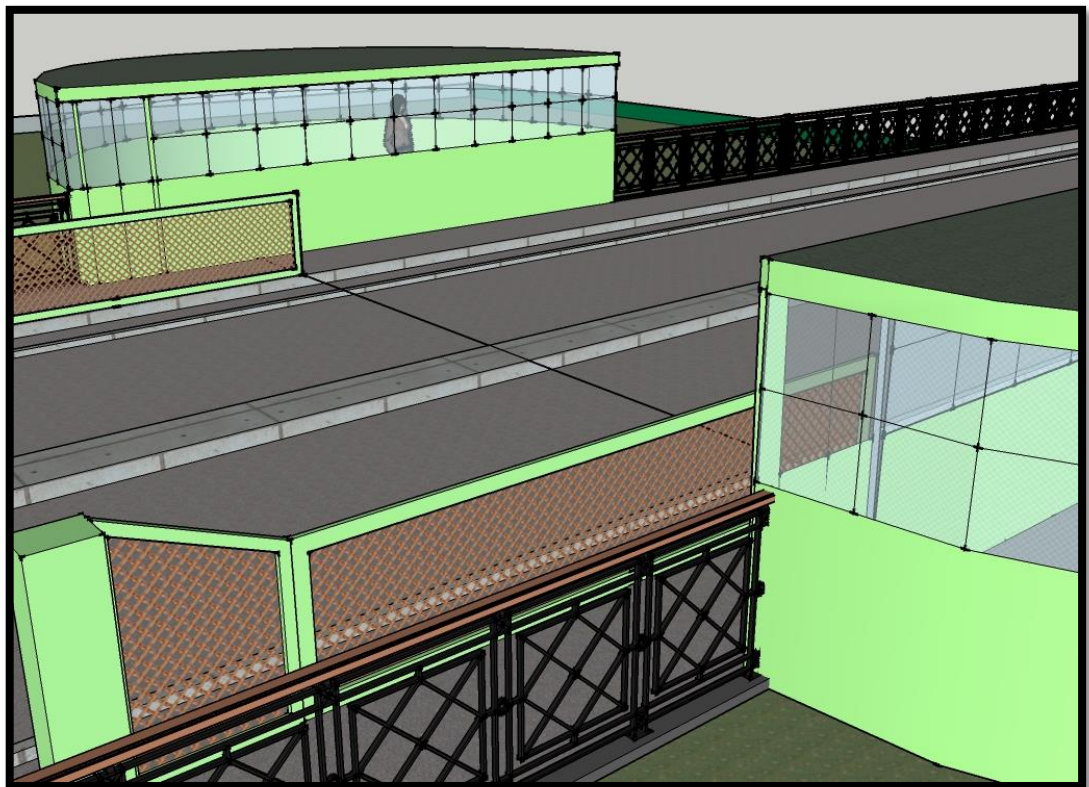
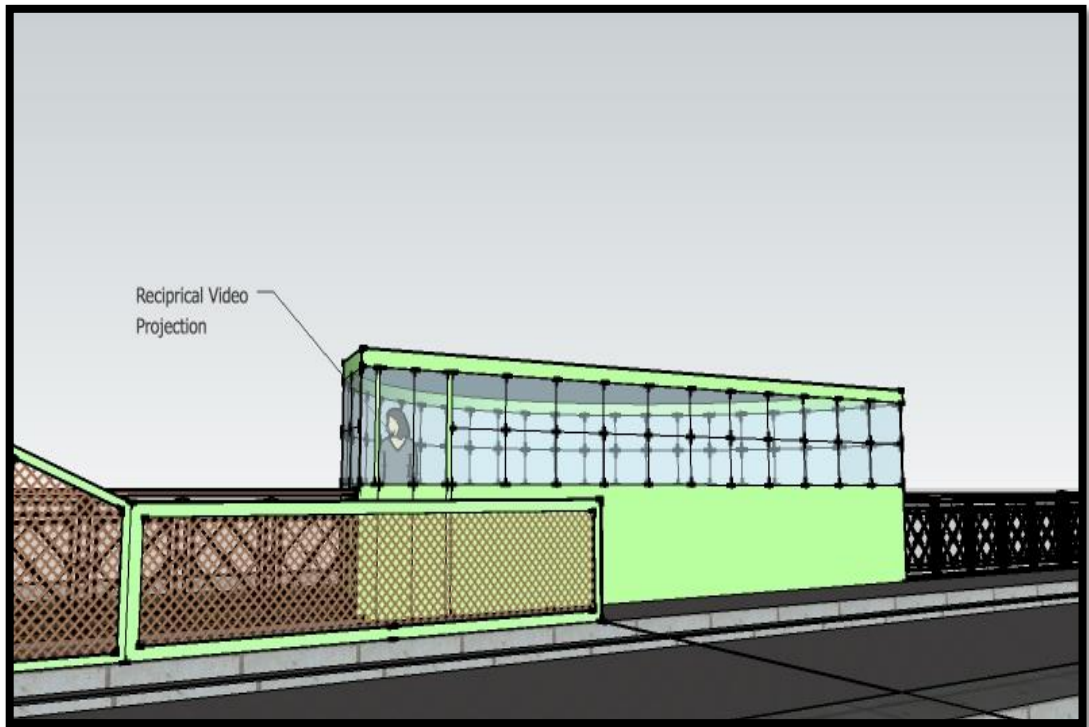


Original proposal drawing for *The Humanity Monument* for Trowbridge Arts.

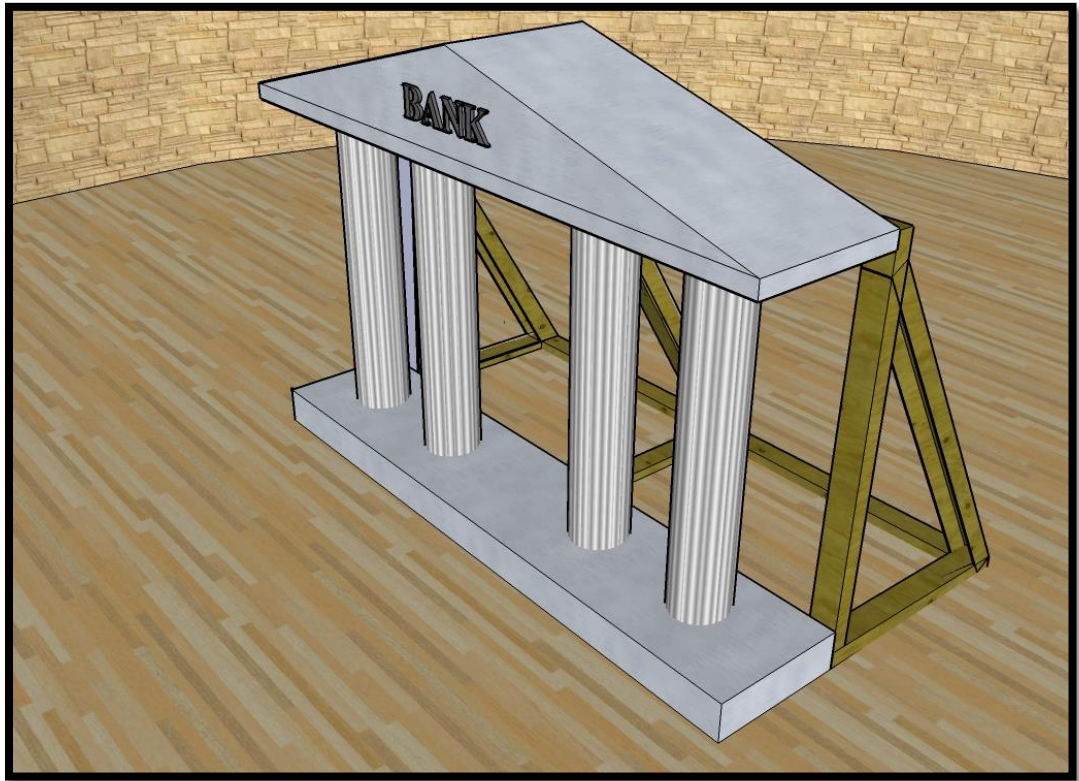


Proposal Drawings for *Architectural Apparatus No. 5 & 6*





The original proposal for *'Ecstasy of Truth'* with synchronised videos inside the bridge control cabins, facing each other across the carriageway.



Proposal Drawing for 'Architectural Apparatus No'2 [Fiscal Structure]'



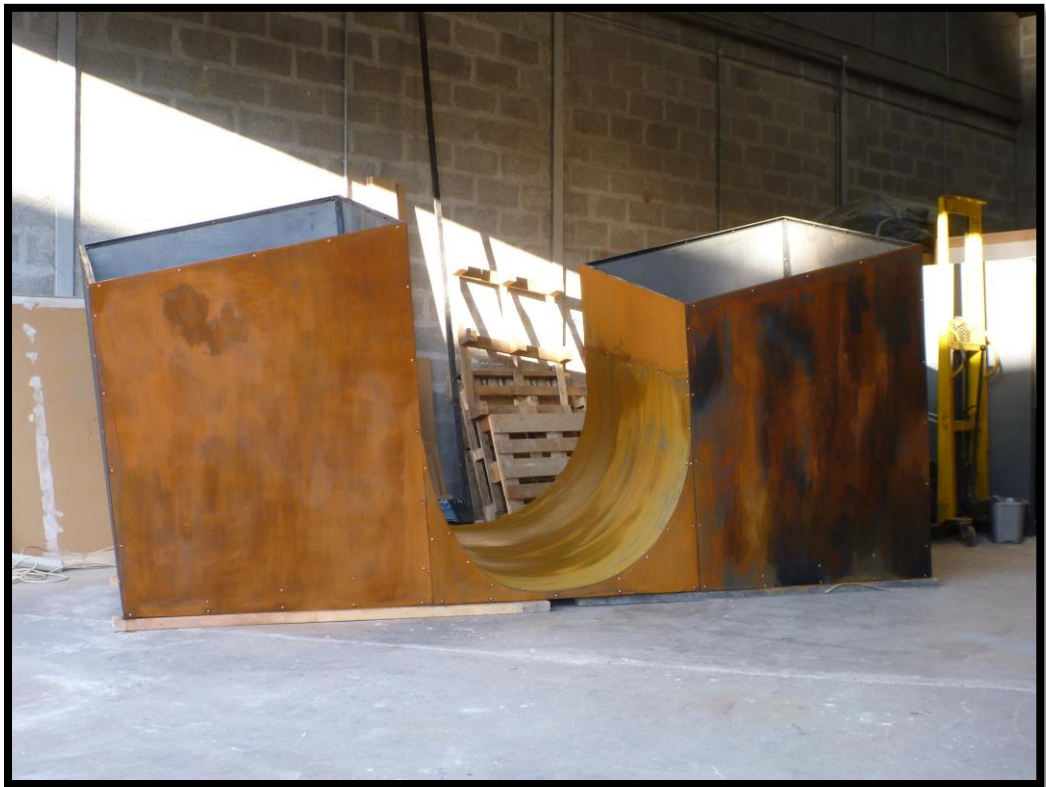
Proposal for Mottisfont Priory barn, on two floors.  
Front wall shown transparently on drawing, to show triumphal arch inside.





Proposal for tide-washed LED monument on dockside to those lost at sea.  
For Assen, Netherlands.

### **A3. Construction**



*Architectural Apparatus No.5 [Inverted Triumphal Arch] under construction and undergoing rusting process.*





Erecting Architectural Apparatus No.5 [Inverted Triumphal Arch] at Salisbury Art Centre.



*Architectural Apparatus No.6 [Inclined, Reclined, Declined] under construction.*



*Architectural Apparatus No.6 [Inclined, Reclined, Declined] ready to dismantle to transport to Bath*



*Architectural Apparatus No.5 Rev.A [Inverted Triumphal Arch] being erected at The Holburne Museum.*



## **Acknowledgements**

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Jemma Stokes at the Bo-Lee Gallery

Karen MacDonald at Salisbury Art Centre

Tracey Sullivan at Trowbridge Arts

Fiona Cassidy at Trowbridge Arts

Jo Dahn ex-Bath Spa University

Richard Wilson	Artist
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Jeremy Deller	Artist
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Michael Elmgreen	Artist
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Ingar Dragset	Artist
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Michael Petry	Artist
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Marina Sossi	Artist
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Thank you to all.