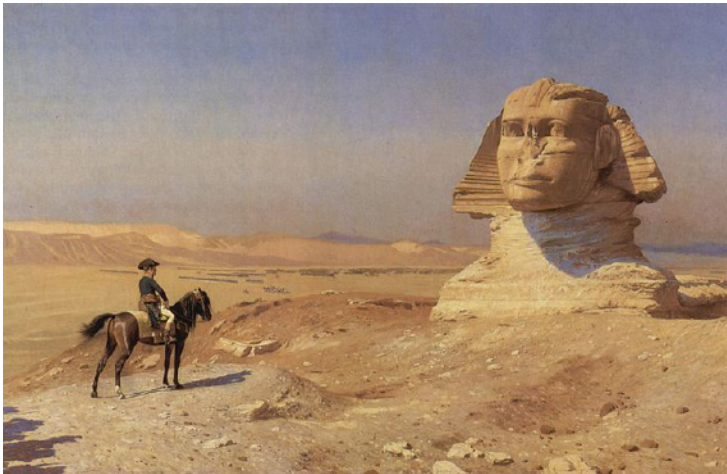


STATUES



& STORIES

A short workshop in which you'll generate quick visuals and loose narratives based on statues, memorials and monuments of your own design.



Companions
KAWS at YSP 2016



WW2 Peace Monument
Former Yugoslavia, 1960s



Untitled
Paul Thek
1966

Statue, Monument or Sculpture?

Statues are usually figurative, based on human or animal form, however abstracted or stylised.

Monuments may incorporate representational elements but may also be entirely abstract.

Sculptures may be either but the term usually has less of a commissioned, public or site-specific connotation.



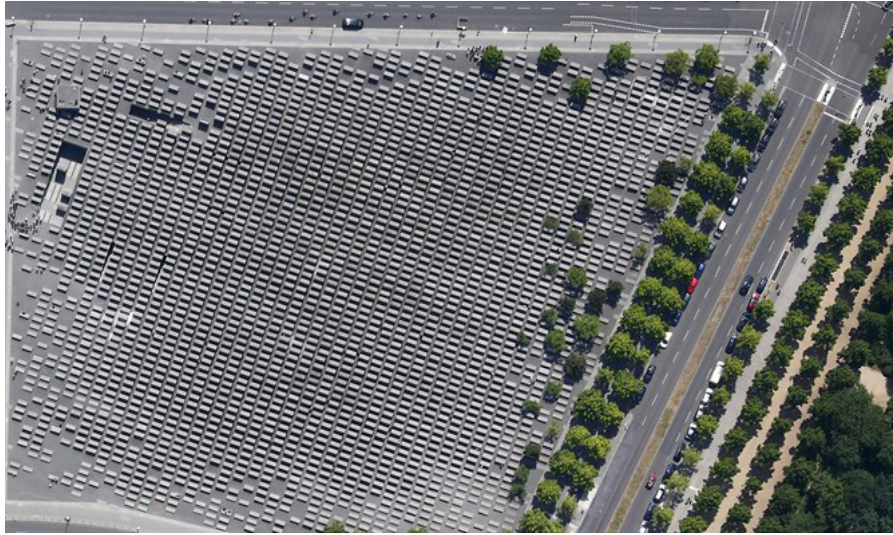
Joan of Arc
Emmanuel Frémiet 1890
Portland, USA



Isaac Newton
Eduardo Paolozzi
British Library London

Statues & monuments often;

- *Celebrate the achievements of a historical figure*
- Commemorate a collectively experienced event
- Symbolise dedication to a religious order or philosophy
- Represent an abstract notion or movement
- Embody a character from a fictional work



Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe
Peter Eisenman 2005, Berlin



WW2 Peace Monument
Former Yugoslavia, 1960s

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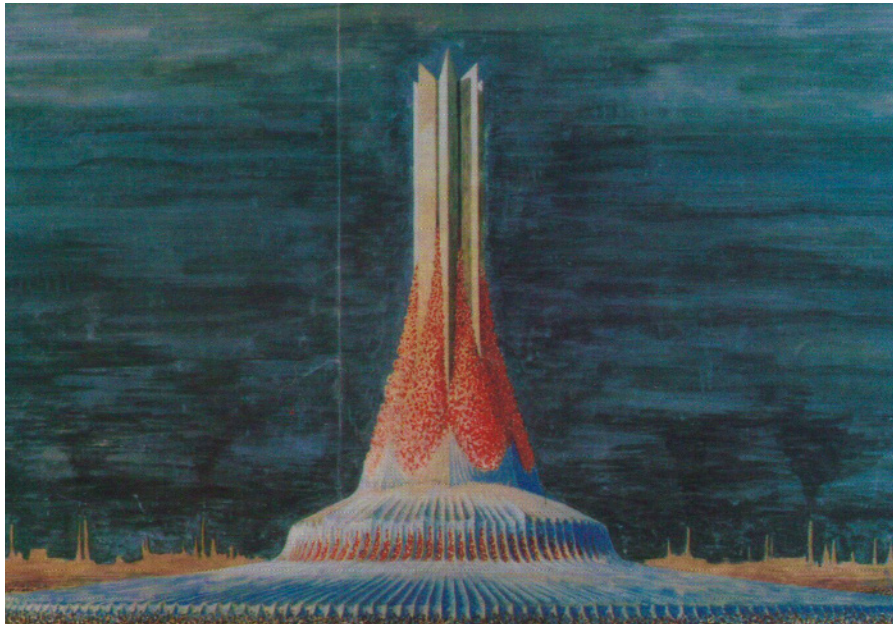
Hanuman Statue
Himachal Pradesh, 2010



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Site of Reversible Destiny
Madeline Gins and Arakawa, 1995



Monument to Work
1920 Wassili Luckhardt



Monument to the Third International
1919-20 Vladimir Tatlin (Unbuilt / contemporary visualisation)

Statues & monuments often;

- Celebrate the achievements of a historical figure
- Commemorate a collectively experienced event
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- *Represent an abstract notion, or movement*
- Embody a character from a fictional work



The Little Mermaid
Edvard Eriksen, 1913
Copenhagen

Seen here painted red in protest of
Danish involvement in whale hunting

Statues & monuments often;

- Celebrate the achievements of a historical figure
- Commemorate a collectively experienced event
- Symbolise dedication to a religious order or philosophy
- Represent an abstract notion or movement
- *Embody a character from a fictional work*

Generally speaking,
they serve as a physical
manifestation of the
dominant cultural
values of the time and
place in which they
were built.



They may be used
to either inspire
or intimidate their
intended audience.



Public action and official removal of statues commemorating Confederate generals and soldiers in the southern states of the USA in 2017



And the way they are understood by their public can change over time (statues are generally static, while norms & values often change).



Statue of Saddam Hussein toppled in Firdos Square, Baghdad April 2003



During times of sudden regime change or collective action, statues and monuments may become focal points for protest or cathartic release.



Digital visualisation outlining theory of the toppling of statue in Firdos Square as a contrived / staged media event

February 1991: Albanians push over a bronze statue of the late communist dictator Enver Hoxha on the central square of Tirana



Prague Metronome monument
built on the site of a 1965 work
dedicated to Josef Stalin.
The new sculpture symbolises
the changing of the times.

The meaning of
monuments replacing
or juxtaposing pre-
existing works may
be reinforced by the
history of the site.



Fearless Girl placed in the path
of Charging Bull on Wall St, the
site of Occupy protests in 2011





Relatives and neighbors put up and tear down flowers left in tribute to Henry Vincent who was killed while burgling a local resident.



(A close relative of the monument, the memorial, can often be short-lived or ephemeral, particularly in cases where opposing sides seek to erase commemorative messages placed by the other group)

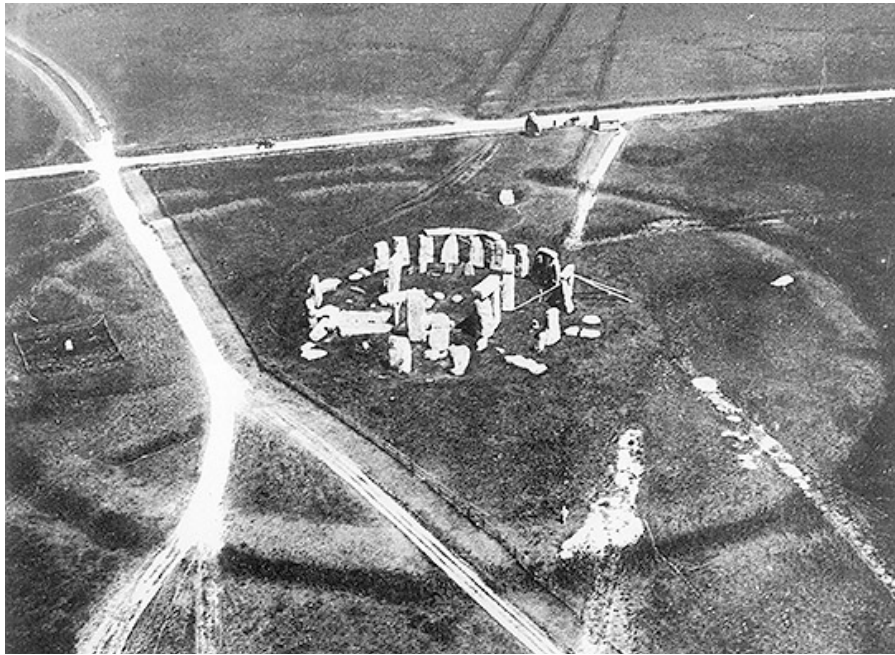


As with much architecture, many planned monuments remain unbuilt. These proposals can be seen as examples of hauntological artefacts - remnants from a near future that once might have been but never materialised.

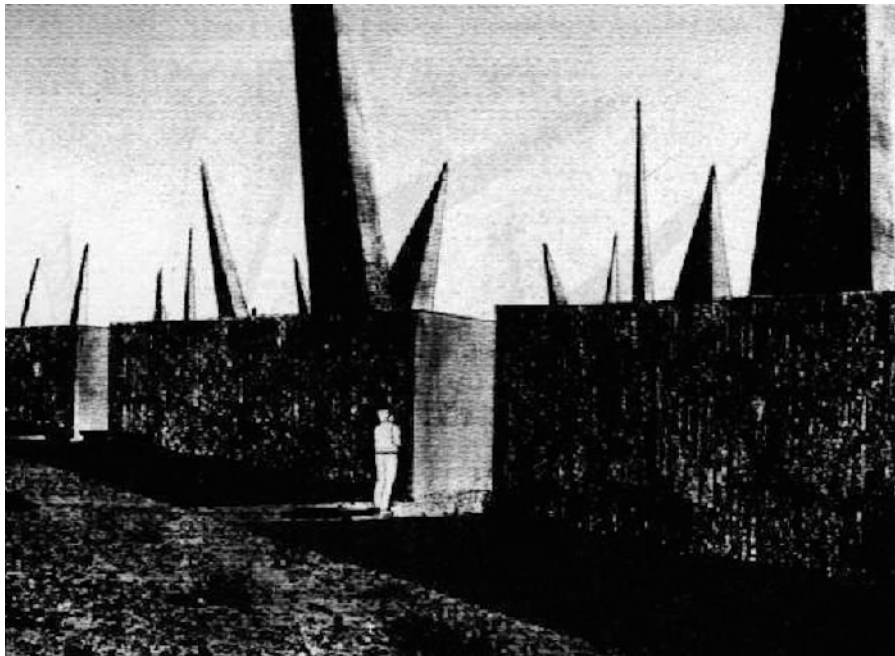


The form might also be explored or parodied by artists playing with the typology or genre of the monument itself as subject.





Stonehenge in the 1920s
English Heritage archives



The precise meanings of some older monumental forms have been lost, while doubts surround contemporary projects intended to communicate clearly to projected cultures 10,000 years in the future.

Proposal by Mike Brill for Landscape of Thorns intended to keep the people of the future away from radioactive waste burial sites. .



Momumental female forms in
Blade Runner 2049



Statues often feature in stories as a shorthand form of world-building and the embodiment of a specific element or belief in the world of the narrative, otherwise known as the *diegesis* (story space).



The Telltale Head
The Simpsons 1990

To compel dramatic turns in a plot they are occasionally vandalised or destroyed as a form of iconoclasm against the ideas they represent. For example the beheading of Jebediah as a prank against the community of Springfield in the Simpsons or the attack of the school mascot in Donnie Darko (heightened further with a paranormal edge by the impossibility of embedding an axe into bronze statue).



Donnie Darko
2000

A MONUMENT FOR

?

With this very brief overview in mind, if you were able to propose a public work today, what would you want to monumentalise?

Is there a particular event, person or invention (real or imagined) you would like to highlight?

It might be a subject or practice that you feel is under-celebrated, or it might be an element of culture or history that you don't personally like, but still consider to be a dominant theme or presence.

With the focus of your monument in mind:

List a few key elements that capture your subject and draw 2 or 3 basic icons / objects / forms for each

If it's a character from a novel, these might be some of the visual details they are particularly known for, or if it's a historical figure it might be something to represent key elements of their deeds or discoveries. If it's a more abstract principle such as the discovery of dark matter, try to find some forms or visual shortcuts to key parts of the theory. You could represent more immaterial qualities of people, too

Now list a few materials that could best capture the spirit of your subject.

Don't feel limited to only the more traditional ones like stone and bronze. Evolving lighting effects, movement, interactivity, new materials such as nano carbon super light absorbent paint could all be utilised in this speculative proposal.

Thinking about the surrounding area, how does the location or placement of the monument frame the way it is understood? Is it a dominant feature of the landscape or something more diminutive and subtle? Does it tower above the viewer or sit at eye-level or below? Is it in a busy thoroughfare or a forgotten, overgrown field? Does it sit at a key point in a feature of the landscape eg at the head to a valley or deep in the bowl of a crater? Do the materials and form echo the local area or does it feel out of place / somehow alien?

With the above themes, visual elements, materials and setting in mind, draw 3 quick sketches of your new monument to_____.

Visualise it from 3 different perspectives, using closely cropped framing emphasising key details, an architectural plan approach and a longer distance view, showing the setting the monument sits within. Spend up to 5 minutes on each rough drawing.

TOWARDS NEW NARRATIVES

Responses to the following section can take the form of either brief bullet points, very quick sketches or both. Either answer each of the individual prompts, choose one that sparks something off or answer your own question related to the 3 main section headings

Audience & Reaction

1

Who sees this new monument? Is it viewed by many and constantly, or only rarely seen by a few individuals? How do they react to it? In fear, delight, confusion, dedication, ambivalence, disgust, awe, distrust or celebration? Is the audience united in this reaction or are there a variety of feelings towards it? Are these feelings expressed openly or inwardly?

Incident Tension Iconoclasm!

2

What dramatic events might befall your new monument? It may be an act of iconoclasm as mentioned earlier but could equally be something positive or somehow enhancing. Could it mysteriously disappear or somehow travel? Morph to a different scale, material or form? Become animated or be regenerated from a state of disrepair etc. Most importantly, who or what might be behind these actions - do we know why?

Outside of a singular transformation, does the monument remain physically unchanged but is instead the catalyst for other dramatic events relating to its themes?

Or is it simply the backdrop to a series of smaller, incidental stories eg the lions of Trafalgar Square overlooking thousands of daily tourist snapshots or the comings and goings of the sweet peanut sellers.

Wider World Backstory Further Narratives & Protagonists?

3

From these broad starting points, think briefly about the wider context of the world that has formed your monument. Is it identical to our own or wildly different? Is it a world of abundance or scarcity? Did the construction of the monument occur at the outset or later era of the civilisation which created it? How is the surrounding society organised? Do aspects of the surrounding culture start to suggest any further links with the dramatic events above?

Do these questions provoke ideas about distinct groups or even individual protagonists?

Write a very brief overview of a scene taking place around your monument, using your new ideas about the environment, any key events and the main characters involved.

NEXT

A Single Image

Following on from the workshop in your own time, reflect on your proposed monument and the narrative possibilities it presents. Revisit and edit elements that can either be developed or cut from the sculpture itself following your thoughts on the wider context, narrative and possible characters / protagonists.

Hopefully by now the edges of a possible narrative are coming together enough to form a singular image that captures an important moment / scene. Develop this image using

details from all the above questions, using an approach to pictorial composition and viewpoint that reinforces the atmosphere of your concept and once complete, see if it's worth developing further.

If not and you're happy to leave it there you'll have generated an intriguing stand-alone illustration. Otherwise this single image could be the starting point of a larger work based in a whole new world, even if the following works disregard the monument itself entirely and it has only functioned as a jumping-off point for other narratives set in the shared context.