



# ART HISTORY INSIGHTS

## AUGUST 2020

The monthly newsletter that brings you selected articles of interest and opinion from the world of art history and visual culture. This issue looks at monuments and statues. It is guest edited by DECR committee member **Clare Fisher** at the University of St Andrews, and **Rebecca Senior**, Henry Moore Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Nottingham.

### STATUES ON THE FALL

The past few months have seen massive changes to memorial landscapes across the world. Monuments and statues once thought of as permanent have been removed, covered, or destroyed, as their links to white supremacy have become more widely recognised. Read the artist and art historian Eddie Chambers's powerful perspective as he draws parallels across the Atlantic, highlighting the international resonance of recent protests and the centrality of monuments to them.

<https://progressive.org/dispatches/statues-statues-they-all-fall-down-chambers-200612/>

### WHY MARC QUINN'S BLACK LIVES MATTER STATUE IS NOT SOLIDARITY

'There's a sensitivity to the news cycle, and the power of virality – whether the sculpture remained or was pulled down, Quinn had already won the war of clicks'. This important article by Kadish Morris critiques Marc Quinn's recent and short-lived sculpture *A Surge of Power* (Jen Reid), which was removed from the Edward Colston plinth the day after it was installed by Bristol City Council in July 2020.

<https://artreview.com/marc-quinn-black-lives-matter-statue-is-not-solidarity/>

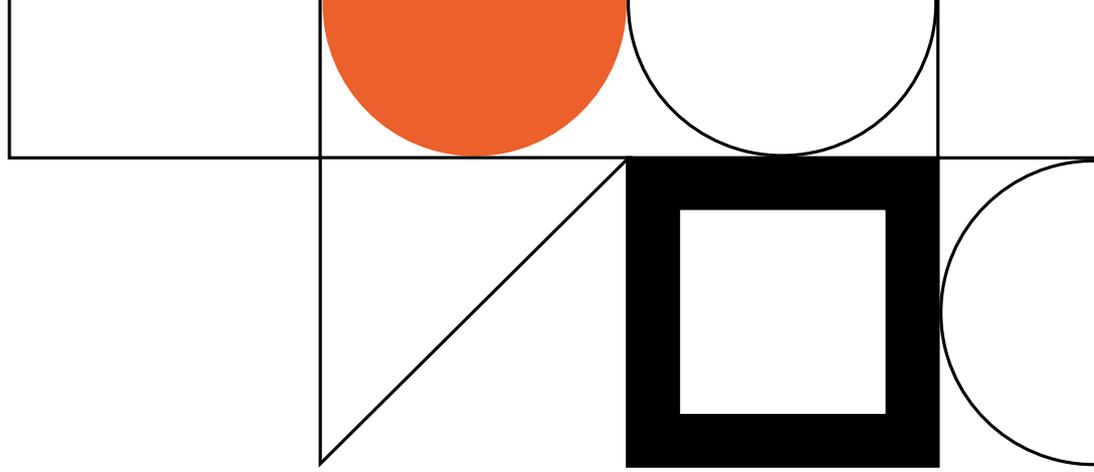
### THE POWER OF EMPTY PEDESTALS

Monument Avenue in Richmond, Virginia continues to be focal point for the Black Lives Matter movement in the USA. In these fascinating essays, Michael Dickinson and Gregory Smithers - two Richmond residents and professors of history - discuss the legacy of Confederate monuments, the creation false histories and how the significance of empty pedestals can further conversations around racial justice.

<https://bittersoutherner.com/2020/the-power-of-empty-pedestals>

### AN ALTERNATIVE HISTORY - CHALLENGING THE 'FICTION OF FIXITY'

In the immediate aftermath of the American Civil War, there was an optimism regarding the transformative potential of monuments. Kristen Treen reminds us of this critical moment in this fascinating article and the ways we might challenge the 'fiction of fixity' that they came to represent. Find out about the important Civil War



Monuments Database initiative created to help unsettle static perceptions of the past.

<https://www.apollo-magazine.com/american-civil-war-monuments/>

### **RHODES ON TRIAL**

Listen to organising members of the #RhodesMustFall movement discuss the lasting effects of the British colonial project in response to the criminal legacy of Cecil Rhodes. Using the statues of Rhodes at the universities of Oxford and Cape Town as a starting point, speakers discuss the historical significance and criminality of systematic land dispossession, colonial violence and the dangers of symbol worship.

<https://archive.org/details/RMFOepisde1>

### **TEACHING MONUMENTS**

Calls to decolonise the curriculum and Art History often start with monuments, but rarely are they placed at the heart of the modules we teach. Learn how we can adapt our classrooms to embrace the civic spaces that surround us and foreground overlooked histories in this inspiring example developed by Monument Lab's Patricia Eunji Kim.

<https://monumentlab.com/bulletin/teaching-classical-pasts-in-new-york-city>

### **YOUR INSIGHTS**

We promote a broad and inclusive art history, and look to engage with as wide an audience as possible. Please get in touch with articles you think may be of interest for our newsletter. We welcome all content suggestions.

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