

THE PROBLEM WITH PURPOSE: THE CONTEMPORARY MONUMENT

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This article will argue that regardless of what physical form a community chooses to select, the contemporary monument must be a process of public discussion, perseverance, and tolerance. The paper explores the reappraisal of history associated with the commemorative monument now underway, and how this is challenged by a new generational change. With memorialisation we must ask the question of whom we are acknowledging, the victim, those remaining or perpetrator. The Sandy Hook massacre and Tuam Scandal are used as examples to explain a new type of media memorialisation. One now grounded within monetary return, community acknowledgement and global media interest.

Keywords: Monument, acknowledgement, memorial, memory, sculpture



Figure 1: Lord Scabar, *Cat Project*, 2022, located Kenyon Street, East Launceston. Photograph: Malcom Bywaters.

INTRODUCTION

Growing up on a small farm at the base of the Grampians (Gariwerd), in rural Australia most of my heroes were white, male and had an aeroplane orientated career. The opportunity of

escaping to the imagined world beyond the property fence line was provocative. Considering the Grampians is home to a number of Aboriginal rock art, paintings and First Nations shelters, indigenous land ownership was rarely discussed in my early life. As we age, the need to reflect and soul search upon the people, places and reasoning for existence becomes more apparent. The need for reappraisal most likely comes from an understanding regarding mortality, and the transference of knowledge and family legacy embedded in the psyche of children. With life experience comes an understanding that my childhood heroes, male, white and filled with derring-do, were as flawed as the rest of humanity, with many supportive of the racism, sexual mores, and abhorrent language reflective of their time. This paper will argue that the reappraisal of history and specifically the commemorative monument now underway, speaks to a new generational change, a deeper thinking beyond the sculpted marble slouch hat wearing dedicatory soldier, head bowed with World War One .303 rifle upturned, dominant in so many Australian regional towns and hamlets.



Figure 2: Lord Scabar, *Cat Project*, 2022, located Kenyon Street, East Launceston. Photograph: Malcom Bywaters.

WHAT IS A MONUMENT?

The genesis of the word monument is the Latin verb, *monere*, meaning to remind or warn, and the noun, *monumentum*, specifically something that recaps or prompts the viewer. The Latin terminology suggests remembrance of actions to reproach or notify. The use of the word historically originates in a Western context in the early seventeenth century, as representing a solid structure to acknowledge a famous body or achievement. For example, Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square, London, completed in 1843 to commemorate Admiral Horatio Nelson who died at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. A monuments site, physicality,

and associated captions assist the viewers memory of people, events and often belief structure. The traditional western monument venerates, and the large scale, prominent site exposure and material permanency delivers a civic purpose. Monuments that acknowledge political and community leaders or events for example, military battles, carry contemporary concerns of racial, sexual politics and war time distress.



Figure 3: Lord Scabar, *Cat Project*, 2022, located Richards Avenue, East Launceston. Photograph: Malcom Bywaters.

HEROES

The heroes of my boyhood, such as Guy Gibson, Chuck Yeager, Charles Lindberg and Charles Kingsford-Smith existed as protagonists of can do; action men who could overcome all obstacles and adversity. They represented for the younger self a noble pursuit of courage, whether it be Gibson leading 617 Squadron against the Ruhr Dams; Yeager shattering the speed of sound; Lindberg flying nonstop from New York to Paris; and Kingsford – Smith, first across the Pacific in a Fokker tri motor aeroplane. With the benefit of maturity, one accepts that we all carry as multi-faceted humans, inherent traits viewed as flawed or repugnant. Gibson has been tainted as a racist with his pet black Labrador named a pejorative slur. (Hill, 2020) Yeager has been signalled as racially prejudiced for his treatment of black American trainee astronaut Ed Dwight. (Ludolph, 2029) Lindbergh's antisemitism is historically acknowledged, and in 2003 he was outed by his several illegitimate children as a serial bigamist. (Duncan, 2017) Kingsford Smith the quintessential Australian larrikin has been accredited as a womanising publicity seeking alcoholic. Though here one could give him the benefit of doubt, as it could be argued he suffered from undiagnosed PTSD from his World War One service. (Fitzimons, 2010)

If we acknowledge the failings of our past heroes, specifically the racism sexual mores detailed, then we must question what type of memorial should give recognition. Arguably, the bronze white male figure such as Yeager or Lindberg is now no longer relevant, nor the marble gravestone for Gibson Labrador, or indeed possibly the naming of Sydney international airport Kingsford Smith. The question being are we acknowledging the accomplishment, or the individual? The purpose of this paper is to propose a more ethical way for the creation of future memorials, whether they be physical or an esoteric statement.



Figure 4: Lord Scabar, *Cat Project*, 2022, located Richards Avenue, East Launceston. Photograph: Malcom Bywaters.

THE PROBLEM WITH HISTORY

We visit monuments for many reasons. To remember, reflect, give recognition or acknowledgement, mourn and grieve, to find solace and give thanks. For many monuments give sustenance to an understanding of history, whether that be personal or communal. As Caporaso remarked:

People visit historic sites, museum exhibits, and commemorative objects and places because they are tangible representations of historic events (Caporaso, 2020).

A physical memorial can offer a place of solitude and contemplation. A place for the viewer to step away from the pace of modernity and reflect. I believe in our ever-faster world of internet and google such spaces will become more and more important. Potentially the Covid

– 19 pandemic has contributed an awareness of solitude. As Warren commented on the monument and silence:

There is an increasing need to preserve and protect publicly accessible silent spaces (Warren, 2021).

However, the significant question that impacts from recent global events is what form will any future focussed monument physically take as a site of reflection? I doubt and am sceptical that any new monument suggested in our present era will be the traditional white male bronze on marble pedestal. For example, if we look to the English City of Bristol where in June 2020 “the statue of 17th century slave trader and civic philanthropist Edward Colston was toppled”. In many ways Colston is viewed as the man that built The City of Bristol. His name adorns the city concert hall, a stained-glass cathedral window, local girls’ school, a housing estate, and sign plates a street, avenue and parade. There is even a popular locally produced sweet baked dried currant offering, called the Colston Bun. (Landler, 2020). Lake, the first black Mayor of Bristol and who removed Colston’s portrait from her office remarked: “Some people still cling on to the saintly philanthropist idea”. Landler goes on to remark that Mayor Lake questioned if the prosecution of those who removed Colston statue, dumping it into Bristol Harbour, would have been more severe if they were not predominantly white. The same accusation has been levelled at those who encouraged by President Trump rhetoric stormed the American congress on January 6th, 2019. Would the United States National Guard have been called out if the protesters had been African American? The truth to such inquiring rests within a crystal ball. However, the question given white American history and the police preponderance to fire guns at African or First Nations peoples is understandable.

As evidenced by the toppling of the Colston Statue the land of Rhodes and Churchill is undergoing challenging racial questioning that originates from the outcry concerning the deaths of George Floyd, Eric Garner and Breonna Taylor. Rhodes is claimed as the father of apartheid and Churchill war time cabinet history includes the 1943 contribution to the death of three million Bengal Indians. In the same month the Colston statue was removed

Churchill's bronze sculpture positioned in London's Parliament Square was boarded up in plywood to stop vandals from graffiti tagging the artwork. As Booth wrote:

Like the United States, Britain finds itself facing anti-racism demonstrations, in the middle of a culture war, amid a pandemic and an economic meltdown. Encased now in a large wooden box, painted a dull grey, the monument resembles a shipping crate, or an upright coffin (Booth, 2020).

The contemporary questioning of what to do with our once feted heroes is of course not exclusive to Churchill. The historian and author Malcolm Gladwell when referencing the sculpture of "Bomber Harris" on the Strand in London proposed positioning a statue of the nurse and pacifist Vera Brittain opposite. Air Vice Marshal Harris was the architect of the destructive carpet-bombing of German cities during the Second World War. Gladwell proposed;

You could have Brittain looking at Bomber Harris with as much venom and contempt as possible, because she thought he was a monster (Glancy, 2021).

The juxtaposition of the perpetrator of mass destruction delivered by air and the author of *Testament to Youth* raises several leading questions specific to memorialization. For example, what message should a memorial convey; how do we determine truth; can a memorial shape our consciousnesses; war versus peace; the use of diplomacy; memory as vehicle and lastly community civil discussion.

The murder of George Floyd in 2020 by an American police officer ignited demonstrations against law enforcement brutality and racism across the United States and led to protests world-wide. In the United States the toppling of Confederate statuary seemed to become a daily occurrence. According to Treisman:

168 Confederate symbols were removed across the United States in 2020, virtually all of them following the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers (Treisman, 2021).

Floyd's death led to a global questioning of police brutality and the legacy of political racial injustice. For example, the statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee representing the US State of Virginia was removed from the US Congress building in late December after more than 100 years. The Lee sculpture was replaced by a statue honouring civil rights activist Barbara Johns. A state commission decided that Lee was not a fitting exemplar to represent Virginia and recommended Johns. Each US state is allowed two sculptures as representation in the Congress National Statuary Hall Collection. It is up to the states to determine which of their historical figures will be represented. There are still several Confederate personages such as Jefferson Davis, who was President of the Confederacy represented.

One of the largest and iconic bronze monuments to the Confederacy, standing six meters in height, of a uniformed General Robert E. Lee riding a regal horse in Richmond, Virginia's State Capital was removed after much demonstration in September 2021. The sculpture stone base was over twice the height of the bronze statue and towered above Monument Avenue since 1890 in the former capital of the Confederacy. The Lee sculpture stood among four other massive Confederate statues on the avenue, all having been removed. The park around the Lee sculpture base with the murder of George Floyd, became a celebratory site, with the community protesting for civic change. The sculpture's massive marble base was covered by an unceasing fluctuation of spray and hand painted Black Lives messages reproving police brutality and challenging an end to the continuous racism embedded in American society.

Interestingly the construction manager awarded the contract to dismantle the Lee monument and twelve other Confederate statues has:

plans to commemorate his team's work by selling custom-made NFTs depicting 13 of the statues and other items that his team took down; he will donate the money from the sales to social causes. It is a new kind of art for the 21st century that will replace that which is past its time (Stevens, 2022)

With the worldwide toppling of mostly white male bronze or marble sculptures across the globe, and in this paper, I have only discussed a few significant examples, what will the counter monuments of our present time and futures look like? In a world of iPhone backup

how many photographs or physical public monuments do we really need stored or on display. The warehouse archive filled with shelves of historical documentation has now been surpassed by the building filled with humming computers collecting data. The one treasured framed photograph has been replaced by the digital screen, minus and perhaps showing cynicism, the thinking time to determine that significant photograph. Much like the headsets now so popular at art shows that inform on the reasoning for the artist making, where once we viewed for contemplative enjoyment, now is all about information that pre-informs. In the process I believe, losing our understanding to reflect, analysis and make personal decisions. The same can be said with the reasoning for maintain the contemporary public monument.



Figure 5: Lord Scabar, *Cat Project*, 2022, located Cimitiere Street, Launceston. Photograph: Malcom Bywaters.

A QUESTION OF RECOGNITION

In Australia, the Port Arthur massacre led to the significant review of firearm laws. Martin Byrant apparently inspired by the United Kingdom Dunblane massacre, murdered 35 innocent people and wounded 23. Within four months of Byrant's criminal rampage the Australian Federal Government facilitated a rigorous tightening of gun laws, which are now some of the most stringent in the western world. The Sea Scape Café at Port Arthur where the majority of Byrant's murderous horror occurred, has been stripped and remains as a bereft monument ruin. The site includes a reflective pool, with bronze plaque that states the victim names. In 2021 the film *Nitram* by Australian director Justin Kurzel debuted at the Cannes International Film Festival. *Nitram* is Byrant first name spelt backward. As Bradshaw wrote: *Nitram* is a hypnotically disquieting movie (Bradshaw, 2021) The film is a work of deep and complex emotion, conceptually sobering and tragic. The film proposes, I argue, a cinematic

template that could have far reaching application if applied properly in our media obsessed world for critical rethinking of memory and acknowledgement. Shaun Grant, who wrote the *Nitram* script remarked:

I'm a big believer in the idea that evil repeats itself if we don't shine a light on it and examine it (Quinn, 2021).

With memorialisation we must ask the question of whom we are acknowledging, the victim, those remaining or perpetrator. Additionally, the change and confluence of history gives rise to variable interpretations. The boarding up of Churchill's statue is a case study in the acquiesce repugnance of what was once perceived as noble, now being abhorrent. As Frew remarked:

Who owns the site, and who owns the right to tell the story (Frew, 2012)?



Figure 6: Lord Scabar, *Cat Project*, 2022, located Cimitiere Street, Launceston. Photograph: Malcom Bywaters.

ACTIVE ANSWERS

In recent times there have been numerous creative interventions that question the role and purpose of the contemporary monument, both in Australia and internationally. I will now detail five such examples.

- In Hobart the capital of Tasmania, Australia in April 2021 the colonial statue of 19th century naturalist, doctor and former Premier William Crowther in Franklin Square was reinterpreted by Tasmanian Aboriginal artist Allan Mansell. Crowther mutilated the body of First Nations Tasmanian Aboriginal William Lanne, partner of Truganini in 1869 aged 34, by cutting off the head and sending it to the Royal College of Surgeons. Truganini was long promoted by white Australia as the last living Tasmanian Aboriginal. Even at the time Crowther was criticised for his barbaric action. The Hobart City Council decided it wants to have a greater and more solid conversation specific to the statue and the greater questions surrounding Crowther's abhorrent legacy. Allan Mansell's temporary artwork is the first of four planned interactions. (McDonald, 2021).

- In November 2020 a shiny metal monolith was discovered by the American Utah Public Safety Workers Service. The three-sided object at approximately 3 meters in height was firmly and skilfully embedded with what appears engineered knowledgeable precision into the Utah red rock. Located in a difficult to access canyon environment, the monolith was discovered by a passing Public Safety helicopter crew carrying out a counting of Bighorn sheep, who landed and investigated. With no plaque or any attribution, the monolith gathered extensive media attention across the globe. Counter monument, artist intervention, or science fiction spoof, all were investigated to little avail. Subsequently the monolith has been removed, seemingly disappearing, as mysteriously as it was discovered. (Pietsch, 2020).

- In November 2021 New York City decided to add four statues of women to help fix the obvious gender gap imbalance in the city's public art. As Jacobs remarked;

Statues of the four women – Billie Holiday, Helen Rodriguez Trias, Elizabeth Jennings Graham and Katherine Walker – will be placed in the boroughs they once called home. Once the statues are installed, all five boroughs will have at least one public statue of a woman. (Jacobs, 2020).

- In a grassy park in southwest Washington DC there are 230,000 and growing daily white flags planted in memory of American coronavirus victims. This temporary art installation, with each flag carrying a message from loved ones, conveys a silent lesson of mourning and grief. The great majority of loved ones have not been able to attend the passing of their Covid infected partner, relative or friend. Covid has deemed that people now die alone, divorced from the care, acknowledgement, and love of those closest. In the final stages of the Trump Presidency these thousands of white fluttering flags gave recognition to human loss.

- In Launceston, Tasmania the anonymous artist Lord Scabar and his friends have been actively painting black cats in various poses throughout the city. The series of whimsical and fairy-tale-esque installations have been well received by the local community, as a humorous aside to the seriousness of the Covid 19 pandemic. (See Figure 1 to 10). Lord Scabar and his quirky stencilled cats contest the traditional acceptance of the monument as permanent durable large-scale structure (Peach, 2021).

The variable of these five creative interventions give evidence to the counter monument question, what constitutes a memorial. They each in their own ways challenge the traditional understanding of the monument. The Crowther statue questions the necessity to keep a monument that recognises such a horrific act. The Utah metal monolith is a mysterious solid durable and very well-made construct, which ultimately carried no meaning other than its presence. The 2021 decision by the burgers of New York City to give some sort of balance to the inequality of representation, acknowledges discrepancy of who gets remembered. And Lord Scabar adds humour and fun to the most tragic of Covid pandemic times.



Figure 7: Lord Scabar, *Cat Project*, 2022, located Lawrence Street, Launceston. Photograph: Malcom Bywaters.

SANDY HOOK

I believe reviewing the darker side of our society, the horror and tragedy potentially may give the answer to what determines a contemporary monument. When society is impacted by true evil, and on such a large scale it cannot be ignored, what will be the outcome for memorialisation? The question being what shape or form will a monument take?

The mass shooting at Sandy Hook elementary school where twenty school children and six educators were murdered by a twenty-year-old assailant Adam Lanza on 14 December 2012. Wielding a Remington AR-15 style automatic rifle murdered his mother at their home, and took the rifle to the school where he fired 154 rounds in five minutes before using a handgun to kill himself as police arrived.

The children murdered at Sandy Hook were six years of age with four being seven. Such a horrific tragedy gained global attention, with once again the question of American gun ownership coming to the fore. The tragedy occurring in a place of recognisable normality, a primary school, where children are supposed to be safe and secure, gave much horror to the massacre. Many of the Sandy Hook victim families have created websites in memory of loved ones who were killed, others have established foundations and memorial monetary funds to promote gun awareness, assist towards children having extracurricular activities, such as horseback riding, another an animal sanctuary, and the list travels the variable of human experience. Including a network of 26 playgrounds in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut that are dedicated to the victims of the shooting. In 2022 the Sandy Hook community after much discussion voted to commission a permanent memorial. The final

design chosen in 2018 from nearly 200 submissions was estimated to cost more than 10 million US dollars. The final design incorporates a roundel vision within a park type setting.

However, perhaps the greater and more potent memorial given the continuous American debate on gun ownership led by such advocates as the politically powerful National Rifle Association is the payout out in February 2022 by Remington, to nine victim families of 73 million US dollars (102 million AUD). The agreement is a significant setback to the American firearms industry because the lawsuit worked around the Bush Administration supported federal law protecting gun companies from litigation by arguing that the manufacturer's marketing of the weapon had violated Connecticut State consumer law. (Rojas et al). As Veronique De La Rosa whose son was killed in the shooting remarked:

Today marks an inflection point when our duty of care to our children as a society finally supersedes the bottom line of an industry that made such an atrocity like Sandy Hook possible (ABC, 2022).

Francine Wheeler, mother of 6-year-old victim Benjamin Wheeler, remarked on the payout announcement:

Today is about what is right and what is wrong. Today is about the last five minutes of his life. Which were tragic, traumatic and the worst thing that can happen to a child (Katersky et al, 2022).

The Sandy Hook nine families argued Remington negligently entrusted to a civilian consumer an assault-style rifle that is suitable for use only by military and law enforcement and therefore breached the Connecticut Unfair Trade Practices Act through the sale or wrongful marketing of the rifle.

President Joe Biden called the Sandy Hook settlement historic in a statement remarked:

While this settlement does not erase the pain of that tragic day, it does begin the necessary work of holding gun manufacturers accountable (Katersky et al, 2022).



Figure 8: Lord Scabar, *Cat Project*, 2022, located Irvine Street, Invermay. Photograph: Malcom Bywaters.

TUAM

In 2017 children's remains were discovered in an underground septic tank in the grounds of the former Tuam mothers and baby home, Ireland. The Tuam home, though owned by the Galway County Council, was managed by the Sisters of Bon Secours, an Order of Catholic Nuns. Tuam housed unmarried mothers and their children from the mid-1920s until it finally closed in 1961. In the pre-1970s society of Ireland, there was little or no discrepancy between state and Catholic religion, and to be an unwed mother was sanctimonious with being tainted by the Devil, or in society's broader harsh community, evil.

In the 1970s the Tuam home was demolished, and a housing estate built on the site, the only remaining feature being a long fortress like stone wall. Two young boys playing near the new housing estate on nearly falling through the septic tank roof lid, discovered skeleton remains, specifically skull bones. The local community believed the burial find was most probably a famine-era grave from past Irish history. A Catholic priest was called to bless the site before the septic tank lid was re-sealed. Following the boy's unearthing, local residents treated the area as an historical burial ground, eventually erecting a memorial garden with a Catholic shrine, including a framed Virgin Mary.

The subsequent revelation by local and research by historian Catherine Corless, inspired by the boy's 1970s finding, revealed that up to 800 children, mostly below the age of 12 months to toddlers were missing, shocking the world.

As reported Flanagan:

Controversy over the fate of the hundreds of children who died while resident in the home, made international headlines in 2014, when it became known as the Tuam babies scandal. Catherine Corless, a local historian, had spent months trying to find out why there were no marked graves for hundreds of the home's young residents. She had discovered death certificates for 796 Tuam children for whom there were no corresponding burial records (Flanagan, 2022).

Catherine Corless collated the hundreds of birth and death certificates for the children but could not significantly locate any record of burial. Community anger originating from Corless findings caused the Irish government to create a Tuam commission of appraisal. The government review established 3,251 children were born or housed at Tuam, 802 died. This tally is almost statistically quarter of Tuam's total child population. Many of the deaths were marked as being caused by common ailments such as flu, gastroenteritis, meningitis and measles. Irish Government six year investigation was as Corless had proved, unable to uncover burial records or any type of sanctioned graves for the children.

A 2021 Tanya Stephen directed the documentary titled *The Missing Children* brought even greater attention to what has become globally known as the Tuam scandal. As the documentary revealed a sample archaeological testing confirmed that there were the remains of children ranging in age from premature babies to toddlers, most of whom died in the 1950s. The septic tank where the bones were discovered, consisted of twenty separate chambers, all designed close together, narrow and deep.

Survivors of Tuam describe in the Stephen's documentary describe the site as a house of horrors, an evil place, one survivor believing his ears were forever damaged by the nuns pulling them so hard. When the home closed, a room was discovered filled with toys that locals had probably donated at Christmas, but the nuns never delivered to the children.

Tuam was managed by the now multi-billion euro financed health provider Bon Secours Order. The Order has offered 3,646 million AUD towards the approximately 19 Million AUD

cost of a full archaeological dig to investigate the final burial sites of the Tuam children. The Irish Government review into the scandal has cost 17,546,555 AUD. This seems an incredible amount of money, given not one single person has as yet been charged with a crime.

The survivors of Tuam association have erected a site memorial that includes a plaque listing the 802 missing children names. Surrounded by flowers and toys and other family mementoes and trinkets the morbid power of the display is a potent symbol of global community.



Figure 9: Lord Scabar, *Cat Project*, 2022, located Boland Street, Launceston. Photograph: Malcom Bywaters.

MEDIA AS MONUMENT

The outcome I believe of Sandy Hook and Tuam is that much like all our modern society the media is all powerful. Without the media Remington would not have paid out such a substantive amount. Without the media the Tuam Scandal would have been another story surrounding the abuses of the catholic Church. These media campaigns are more than simply part of our global necessary debate, they deliver by such a much more significant recognition based in a common. It is this common that I believe signifies the new monument, a type of memorialisation that the media delivers by substantive historical archive. The media is now the main driving force of memorialisation, with the archived memory producing an objective non-physical statuary. The media has produced the historical communal memory, and in the process, I argue created an impenetrable modern monument. A memorial based on publicity, promotion, to an extent economics and the power to influence across national borders with a lasting significance. The names of Sandy Hook and Tuam will forever be etched in our global consciousness as symbols of pure evil.



Figure 10: Lord Scabar, *Cat Project*, 2022, located Invermay Road, Invermay. Photograph: Malcom Bywaters.

THE FUTURE

Monuments, whether they be sculptures, the traditional brass signs, or site and building names that recognise individuals, groups events, fiscal payouts, or tragic stories of such magnitude we are globally transfixed, underwrite a nation informing its history to the next generation. I believe vision, not politics should be the outcome when proposing the future of the monument. Today, the great majority of western public environments excessively acknowledge a limited few and overlook those who are female, multicultural, First Nation or LGBTIQ+. In the process this deletion of acknowledgement, limits our understanding of history. This malfunction to overlook within a Western context, has caused the preponderance of public statuary to be white, male, constructed of bronze, marble or some other permanent material and totally lacking any understanding of the social acceptance within contemporary society. This is not to say that racism and sexual harassment does not exist in modernity, but we can and must utilise the public monument to educate by acknowledgement and recognition. We live in a time of ever accelerating change. Communities must democratize the selection of memorials and monuments.

As Hua remarked:

Some want to see problematic statues come down, but others would prefer for them to stay, so long as they are surrounded by placards and descriptive texts that contextualize and shame them. Your perspective on an appropriate monument for our time might rest on whether you see democracy as a process, always in flux, or a goal that has already been achieved. Ultimately, the issue isn't whether there are "good"

and bad monuments. At stake is whether we retain a critical relationship to the past or simply surrender to an illusion that it is fixed, reducible to a single man or woman, and just out of reach.

In October 2020 the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in the United States pledged to spend \$250US million over five years to help reimagine the American approach to monuments and memorials. The aim is to give thought, with cash support to the effort to better reflect the American nations diversity and highlight marginalised stories. It is now not simply enough to question the academic ethos of the contemporary monument. The objective of the Mellon Foundation money is to give validated community recognition to the stories that reach beyond simply honouring the famous. Significantly the grant allows scope to physically recontextualize old monuments with new perspectives and information to reveal other histories, such as multiculturalism, First Nations, LGBTQI+ and the tragedy of Black Lives.

The moral acceptance of a contemporary monument originates in the viewer's private encounter with its physical presence, a visceral sighting that positions the audience as a protagonist within the artwork's message. Regardless of what physical form a community chooses to action, the contemporary monument must be a process of public discussion, perseverance, and tolerance. The importance of history is that with individual and communal experience comes realisation that there are many stories to be told and such a contemporary chalice of difference, empowers society for the greater good.

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