Monument Resources

Design a Monument Contest and Exhibition: Recognizing and Reigniting the March on Milwaukee

Monuments have been used throughout history to commemorate important people, events, or places. They have the power to bring people together to remember important historical moments. They also have the power to divide people, especially when the history being remembered is one that sheds light on our nation's history of slavery, racism, segregation and oppression of various peoples. During this past summer of 2017, historic monuments have become the focus of public debate. Anti-racism activists have challenged the appropriateness of monuments of historic figures who fought on the confederate side of the U.S. Civil War. For example, a group of activists in Durham, North Carolina, pulled down a monument titled, “The Confederate Soldier”. This, and other related events, have led to important conversations about the role monuments play in our culture, and in the telling of our country’s history.

In the past several years, contemporary artists and activists have begun to expand upon traditional ideas of monuments. They are challenging the assumptions made about the people, events and ideas represented in monuments, and are questioning who gets to participate in the creation and installation of monuments in public spaces.

The purpose of this resource is to inspire conversation with students as they begin to design a monument that will recognize and reignite the historic 1967 March on Milwaukee. Contemporary artists show us that public monuments can be created to commemorate social justice events and issues. Contemporary artists also show us that monuments can be made using a wide variety of strategies and materials (not just marble and bronze).

Do Ho Suh
South Korean, 1962

*Public Figures, 1998-99*
Fiberglass/resin, steel pipes, pipe fittings

In this monument, Do Ho Suh replaces the elevation of a single historic figure with a collective of small male and female figures, suggesting that the strength and struggles of common citizens are worthy of remembrance.

Metrotech Center Commons,
Brooklyn, New York1998-1999
Carlos Colombino
Paraguayan, 1937-2013

Estatua de la Libertad, 1991
Concrete, bronze

Colombino recreated this sculpture from the pieces of a toppled statue of the deposed Paraguayan dictator, Alfredo Stroessner. Some believe this symbolizes the power of the resistance, while others believe it is about abandonment and loss in the community.

Located in the Plaza de los Desaparecidos. (Original statue by Juan de Ávalos, Spanish, 1911-2006.)

The NAME Project Foundation (Cleve Jones)
Founded in 1987

NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, begun in 1987
1,920 fabric quilts (currently over 48,000 quilts)

Each quilt is a handmade memorial to a loved one who died from AIDS. The collection of quilts continues to tour, with the money raised going to fund AIDS research. The AIDS Memorial Quilt Archive photographically preserves the image and story of each quilt.

First exhibited in Washington D.C.
Néle Azevedo
Brazilian, 1950

The Minimum Monument (Melting Men), 2009
1,000 ice figures

Originally exhibited in Berlin, this monument has been recreated in cities all around the world to raise awareness of global warming and the melting of polar ice caps.

Maya Lin
American, 1959

Civil Rights Memorial, 1989
Granite

Located in Montgomery, Alabama, this is a memorial to 41 people who died in the struggle for racial justice in the U.S. from 1954-1968 (from the Supreme Court ruling against segregation in schools, to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr). Inspired by a quote for Dr. MLK Jr, “Until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream”, water flows across the monument, and rolls over its sides. A list of 74 names have become known as the “Forgotten List”, additional people who are thought to have also died in the struggle for civil rights during those years.