

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Marking Monuments explores the power of public space and the vision of artistic reimagining as a creative strategy for provoking new perspectives, dialogues and equitable modes of representation. Faced with the most challenging time of our lives, as we continue to struggle, cope and survive through a global pandemic, the climate crisis, political upheaval and disinformation, and uncertainty about the future, we acknowledge and reckon with the systemic racism and institutionalized violence against communities of color, and the significant political and social divisions and cultural conditions that have exposed deep racial, economic and health disparities, and the disproportionate access to resources for many. USFCAM continues to reflect and respond to our most pressing social issues by elevating artists' voices and role in imagining new paths forward and providing free access to our cultural and educational programs across both physical and digital platforms. I am exceptionally privileged and honored to present an exhibition highlighting the vision of these artists as an important contribution to the current global dialogue around public monuments and memorials. These projects promote creative and diverse approaches to memorialization and restorative justice as they re-envision state sanctioned symbols of the violent history of colonialism and white supremacy.

The projects presented in *Marking Monuments* examine power, reveal untold narratives and generate new collective knowledge and awareness by reframing public experiences in both the physical and online gallery space through film, photo documentation, proposals and prototypes. I am immensely grateful to the artists Ariel René Jackson, Joi Minaya, Karyn Olivier, John Sims and poet Trapeta B. Mayson for their contributions, energy and attention to the exhibition and associated programs as we navigate new ways of connecting and collaborating due to the pandemic. USFCAM is honored to include Monument Lab's *Field Trip* activity guide and appreciates the valuable contributions from Monument Lab's founders Paul Farber and Ken Lum, and curator Patricia Eunji Kim.

Special gratitude to John Sims for connecting USFCAM with Dr. Diane Wallman in the USF Department of Anthropology and fostering the partnership for the *Monuments, Markers and Memory 2021 Symposium Series* in collaboration with the Florida Public Archaeology Network, the University of South Florida Department of Anthropology, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, and the New College Public Archaeology Lab. The symposium series received generous support from Florida Humanities with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and from USF *ResearchOne*.

While maintaining Covid-19 safety protocols and facing the challenges of communicating in a socially distanced sphere, the entire team at USFCAM has worked with tireless dedication to

build strategies and solutions for new modes of engagement to safely provide engaging and thoughtful content for our expanding audiences and campus community in person and online. I extend deep gratitude to my USFCAM colleagues, as I truly appreciate the enthusiastic support and guidance of the USF Institute of Research in Art Director Margaret Miller, Deputy Directors Noel Smith and Randall West, and the professional talent and commitment of the team as we addressed the many tasks associated with mounting an exhibition including funding, contracts, artwork loans, exhibition design and installation, documentation, event planning, marketing and promotion, publication design, educational and community-based engagement and so much more. Special thanks to USFCAM team members Amy Allison, Shannon Annis, Marty De la Cruz, Leslie Elsasser, Mark Fredricks, Don Fuller, Ashley Jablonski, Eric Jonas, Vincent Kral, Will Lytch, Anthony Wong Palms, Christian Viveros-Fauné, and David Waterman. It is a pleasure and privilege to collaborate with each of you to mount ambitious and relevant exhibitions and educational programs.

USFCAM appreciates the expertise of Dr. Laura Harrison and her team at the USF 3D Access Lab for their technical assistance with the digital scanning and presentation of the virtual exhibition on our digital platform. Special gratitude to Don Corbin, Arts Technology Coordinator in the USF School of Art and Art History.

While we lament the inability to gather in person for a shared celebration and social exploration of the exhibition, USFCAM values our connections with our audiences and I am so appreciative of our community of supporters for embracing our digital platforms, and their continued advocacy and engagement with the arts as a vital expression of our human condition. As we look to the future and learn and build off these vital experiences and digital initiatives to engage with audiences, we are committed to examining and expanding the role of the university museum to promote racial, cultural and social equity, and move in bold and exciting new directions to provide inclusive access to the arts.

Sarah Howard
Curator of Public Art and Social Practice
USF Institute for Research in Art

FOREWORD

Monuments confer meaning on our public space. Often erected to symbolize and embody an historical event or individual, their political and aesthetic efficacy is grounded in their commemorative value. Many historical monuments serve as markers of anti-Black and colonized spaces. *Marking Monuments* looks at artists who have rendered these original intents and meanings plastic, radically reinterpreting and reassessing monuments as cultural, political, and social contexts evolve. These artistic interventions contest the unwelcoming, uncomfortable, and confrontational messages of some monuments and communicate new narratives and histories that can transform the experience of visiting public spaces.

Sarah Howard, Curator of Public Art and Social Practice at the USF Contemporary Art Museum (USFCAM), has selected artists and projects for *Marking Monuments* informed by and contributing to the compelling global dialogues about our racist history, marked by monuments in contested public spaces. These artists are Ariel René Jackson, Joi Minaya, John Sims, and Karyn Olivier in collaboration with poet Trapeta B. Mayson. *Field Trip*, a community activity conceived by Philadelphia-based Monument Lab, is also part of the exhibition; viewers are invited to participate in assessing meaning in local monuments and markers as part of this ongoing project.

The USF Contemporary Art Museum offers temporary exhibitions and projects that engage viewers in current conversations about social justice and the power of artists to offer new perspectives on cultural issues. Because of the continuing Covid-19 environment, *Marking Monuments* is offered in a hybrid format. Installations documenting the artists' projects are presented in the Lee & Victor Leavengood Gallery of the Contemporary Art Museum and online. The Contemporary Art Museum's programs serve as a resource for students and faculty across all our campuses and the significance of this exhibition will be amplified by *Monuments, Markers, and Memory*, a symposium series in partnership with the Florida Public Archaeology Network, the USF Department of Anthropology, USF ResearchOne, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, and the New College Public Archaeology Lab.

The USF Contemporary Art Museum resides in the College of The Arts and thrives with the support of our new dean, Chris Garvin, who understands and advances the critical role of the arts in higher education. The museum relies on critical funding from grants, foundations and community philanthropy. We are fortunate to have generous support and funding for the exhibition, related educational programs and community-based engagement from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The Stanton Storer Embrace the Arts Foundation, USFCAM Art for Community Engagement (ACE) Fund, the Lee and Victor Leavengood Endowment, Florida Humanities with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Florida Department of State Division of Cultural Affairs.



Karyn Olivier, *The Battle is Joined*, 2017. Vernon Park, Philadelphia PA. Commissioned by Monument Lab and Mural Arts. Courtesy of the artist and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery.

I am privileged to serve as the director of the USF Contemporary Art Museum and extend my appreciation to the talented museum staff and to the participating artists. Congratulations to Sarah Howard for conceiving and organizing a timely and powerful exhibition that asks us to take notice of how monuments and markers function in the public realm and reflect the values and ideals of our cultural time.

Margaret Miller
Director and Professor
USF Institute for Research in Art



Left: Joi Minaya, *Proposal for artistic intervention on the Columbus statue in front of the Government House in Nassau, The Bahamas*, 2017. Archival pigment print. 5 x 7 in. postcards. Courtesy of the artist. Right: Joi Minaya, *The Cloaking of the statues of Ponce de Leon at the Torch of Friendship and Christopher Columbus behind the Bayfront Park Amphitheatre in Miami, Florida*, 2019. Archival pigment prints presented on custom wallpaper patterns. Courtesy of the artist. Photos by Zachary Balber, commissioned by Fringe Projects Miami. Installation Photo: Will Lytch.

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Cover image: Joi Minaya, *The Cloaking of the statue of Christopher Columbus behind the Bayfront Park Amphitheatre, Miami, Florida*, 2019. Dye-sublimation print on spandex fabric and wood structure. Photo by Zachary Balber, commissioned by Fringe Projects Miami.



MARKING MONUMENTS

January 22 - March 6, 2021
USF Contemporary Art Museum

MARKING MONUMENTS

Marking Monuments engages with the global dialogues confronting and dismantling colonialist and racist monuments, markers and memorials in public space by presenting a selection of artists' installations and interventions that challenge, erase and transform dominant histories, offering reimagined representations for equity in public culture. The projects in this exhibition offer creative approaches to unfix history and reclaim space to reveal diverse narratives expanding collective knowledge and memory. Asserting the power and potential of art and the vital role of the artist to challenge and reframe critical social issues, these projects respond to the historical context of existing monuments, their site and community to shed light on questions of commemoration, visibility, permanence and inclusion in representation—Who is responsible for inscribing public space? Who is being honored and how? How do monuments and memorials generate knowledge and memory of our past, present and future?

In the recent past, a number of exceptionally heinous and violent acts have generated a groundswell of support for monument removal, breaking down barriers and beliefs to gain social, political and economic support from states and cities across the nation in efforts to remove colonialist and Jim Crow-era symbols erected as markers of anti-Black intimidation campaigns and Indigenous oppression.¹ In response, a number of progressive organizations like Take 'Em Down NOLA, the public art and history research studios of New Orleans's Paper Monuments and Philadelphia-based Monument Lab led local actions to identify problematic and offensive monuments. Engaging municipal agencies, civic and grass roots organizations, academics, artists and the general public, these leaders in the monument movement created community-driven participatory processes to provoke awareness through exhibitions, think tanks and workshops generating dialogues and imagination around new narratives honoring erased histories, and diverse public representations for future generations. As part of Monument Lab's groundbreaking work in the public art field, they teamed up with Mural Arts Philadelphia to present a city-wide exhibition in 2017, inviting 20 artists to respond to the central question: What is an appropriate monument for our current city? Commissioned as prototype monuments, the artists' temporary works were installed in Philadelphia's neighborhood parks, public plazas and squares responding to historical sites, unearthing untold narratives and generating new collective memory of past, present and future.² *Marking Monuments* features Monument Lab's *Field Trip*, a hands-on activity which invites the audience to participate in expanded engagement with monuments in their own community.

Commissioned for Monument Lab's exhibition of creative speculations, artist Karyn Olivier's *The Battle Is Joined* looks to the past to reflect the present. Intertwining histories from two monuments and memorials

to battle in Philadelphia's Vernon Park,³ one of which was encased and concealed from public view during both World War I and II, Olivier transformed a 20-foot-high memorial into a mirror clad monument honoring the local community. Effectively rendering the existing monument invisible, the reflective surface captures, depicts, and magnifies the presence of surrounding residents and their landscape and activities to honor and spotlight the Germantown neighborhood, historically a German immigrant area that has evolved into a predominantly African American neighborhood. In *Marking Monuments*, a video of still images of the installation is accompanied by an audio recording of Philadelphia Poet Laureate Trapeta B. Mayson reading *Monuments to Brown Boys*, her poetic response to the monumental looking glass.

Using narrative and meaning to inform and cultivate relationships between site and community, Ariel René Jackson's film *Bentonville Forecast: In the Square* includes intergenerational voices of local artists and activists reflecting on their experiences and perceptions of the Confederate soldier atop the now removed Bentonville Confederate Monument. Inspired by their research on the discriminatory practices of all-white "sundown towns," the film depicts the artist's poetic use of a weather balloon, typically used to capture meteorological data and environmental conditions, as a metaphor and tool to both measure the temperature of the public square, as well as obscure and conceal the presence of the monument as a symbol and marker of exclusion and intimidation on their city's landscape.

Artist Joiro Minaya's series *The Cloakings* also employs concealment as a creative strategy for intervention, covering the figures of Christopher Columbus and Ponce de Leon with tropical patterns stripping them of their identities, subverting and camouflaging their colonizing power. Using the aesthetics of early colonizers' botanical illustrations, Minaya subverts the decorative nature of the imagery with colorful patterns of tropical plants possessing dual powers for both healing and poison. Illustrations of manchineel trees, castor bean plants, yaupon holly, coontie palms and rompe saraguey weave the Indigenous and Afro-diasporic histories of resistance and rituals of protection into the fabric cloakings. The redressed statues were installed in Philadelphia's neighborhood parks, public plazas and squares responding to historical sites, unearthing untold narratives and generating new collective memory of past, present and future.² *Marking Monuments* features Monument Lab's *Field Trip*, a hands-on activity which invites the audience to participate in expanded engagement with monuments in their own community.

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1. See <https://abcnews.go.com/US/recent-flashpoints-controversy-confederate-symbols/story?id=49225648> for a brief summary of events from 2015 through 2017. For more information about the historical underpinning and political significance of Confederate monuments, see <https://abcnews.go.com/US/historians-debate-americas-sordid-history-racism-confederate-monuments/story?id=71486827>
2. <https://monumentlab.com/projects/monument-lab-philadelphia-city-wide-exhibition-2017>

3. For more on the references within Olivier's work, see Paul Farber and Ken Lum, *Monument Lab, Creative Speculations for Philadelphia*, 2020, p. 147.



Left to right: John Sims, *Freedom Memorial at Gamble Plantation*, 2020. 7:47 min. video animation with sound; John Sims, *AfroConfederate Flag: 12 Foot*, 2020. Nylon; John Sims, *Freedom Memorial Marker*, 2020. Latex paint on synthetic material. All works courtesy of the artist. USFCAM installation view. Photo: Will Lytch.



Video still from Ariel René Jackson, *Bentonville Forecast: In the Square*, 2019. Video; weather balloon, confederate statue, testimonials provided by Sharon Killian, Rachel Lynett, Sheree Miller, and Tonya Jackson. 4:14 min. Filmed in Bentonville, AR at Momentary Residency. Courtesy of the artist.



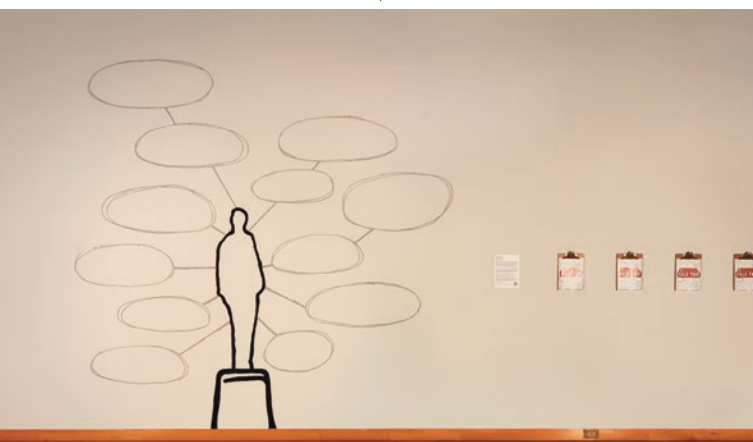
Sims presents new memorials, markers and symbols to shift the site's commemorative focus, transforming the former sugarcane plantation and Florida State Park in Ellenton, Florida, into a space for healing and reconciliation. The flyover animation features a renamed plantation site⁴ and an obelisk inscribed with the names of the last enslaved people to work and live at Gamble Plantation. Depicted in the animation and installed in the gallery, Sims's *AfroConfederate Flag*, which reclaims and transforms the Confederate symbol with the colors of the Pan-African movement, and a recontextualized historical marker, both honor the plantation's enslaved Africans and their descendants. Following two decades of work engaged in the ongoing cultural dialogue and movement to dismantle toxic symbols of white supremacy and institutionalized racism around the globe, Sims's proposal for Gamble Plantation is part of a larger call to action to repeal state laws protecting and celebrating Confederate heritage and anti-Black iconography.

Confronting and responding to monuments as markers symbolizing legacies of oppression, violence and hate, the projects of *Marking Monuments* harness the power of art to challenge conventional histories and elevate previously unrecognized narratives in public space. Artists continue to challenge our social and political systems to provoke space for dialogue, and access to transformative perspectives to shed light on new meaning for a just and equitable future. As we continue to reckon with our colonialist and racist past and address present symbols and systems of racism, we look to artists to shine light on continued cultural and social injustices and envision equitable representations and commemorations for future generations.

Sarah Howard
Curator of Public Art and Social Practice
USF Institute for Research in Art

4. In 1925, the Gamble mansion and grounds were purchased by the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and donated to the State of Florida as a memorial to Confederate officer Judah P. Benjamin, who briefly took refuge at the plantation before fleeing the country to escape Federal troops after the end of the Civil War. The Judah P. Benjamin Confederate Memorial at Gamble Plantation Historic State Park continues to serve as the headquarters for the Florida Division of the UDC.

Below: Monument Lab, *Field Trip*, 2020. Hands on activity guide. USFCAM installation view. Photo: Will Lytch. Left: Monument Lab, *Field Trip*, 2020. Hands on activity guide COVER. QR Code: Scan to access Monument Lab, *Field Trip*, 2020.



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Ariel René Jackson (b. 1991) works across film, sculpture and performance, exploring land and landscape as sites of internal representation. Jackson's work is centered in investigations of ancestral memory and knowledge and informed by their research on economic and social systems of segregation, cultivating intergenerational dialogues around themes of loss, transformation and growth. An alum of the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (Madison, ME), Jackson's work has been exhibited at various galleries and institutions including the SculptureCenter (Queens, NY); CUE Art Foundation (NYC); Contemporary Art Center, New Orleans; DePaul Art Museum (Chicago, IL); Studio Museum in Harlem; and RISD Museum (Providence, RI). Jackson currently lives and works in Austin, Texas where they received an MFA from The University of Texas at Austin in 2019.

Trapeta B. Mayson (b. 1967) is a Liberian-born poet, teacher and licensed social worker. The City of Philadelphia 2020-2021 Poet Laureate, Mayson's work shines light on and honors the immigrant experience and amplifies the experience of community life as a catalyst to mobilize, build and create social transformation. Mayson has received a Pew Fellowship in Literature, a Leeway Transformation Award, a Leeway Art and Change Grant, and a Pennsylvania Council on the Arts grant. She is a Cave Canem and Callaloo Fellow and a 2019 Aspen Words Emerging Writer's Fellow with the Aspen Institute. Mayson is an author and her works have been published in *The American Poetry Review*, *Epiphany Literary Journal*, *Aesthetica Magazine*, and *Margie: The American Journal of Poetry*, among others.

Joiro Minaya (b. 1990) is a U.S. born and Dominican-raised multidisciplinary artist living and working in New York City. Her practice confronts historic and contemporary representations of black and brown womanhood, tropical identity, and the Gaze in order to decolonize and subvert imposed histories, and hierarchical representations of culture. Minaya has exhibited across the United States and internationally, including the Caribbean. She has received grants from Artadia, the Nancy Graves Foundation, the Rema Hort Mann Foundation, and the Joan Mitchell Foundation. Minaya has received recognition and awards from XXV Concurso de Arte Eduardo León Jimenes, Centro de la Imagen (D.R.), and the XXVII Biennial at the Museo de Arte Moderno (D.R.). She participated in residencies at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (Madison, ME); Smack Mellon (Brooklyn, NY); Bronx Museum's AIM Program; Lower East Side Printshop (NYC); Socrates Sculpture Park (Queens, NY); Art Omi (Ghent, NY); and Vermont Studio Center (Johnson, VT).

Karyn Olivier (b. 1968) is a Philadelphia-based artist and educator who creates public art, sculpture, and installations that expose social, political, and economic contradictions, and the residue of slavery in contemporary culture. Olivier has created large-scale commissioned work for Monument Lab, Creative Time, and New York City and Philadelphia's Percent for Art programs. She has exhibited at the Gwangju and Busan Biennials (South Korea); World Festival of Black

Arts and Culture (Dakar, Senegal); The Studio Museum in Harlem; The Whitney Museum of Art (NYC); MoMA PS1 (Queens, NY); and The Museum of Fine Arts Houston, among others. Olivier received the 2018-19 Rome Prize and has been the recipient of the Anonymous Was A Woman Award, John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award, and the New York Foundation for the Arts Award, among many others. Olivier is an associate professor of sculpture at Tyler School of Art and Architecture at Temple University (Philadelphia, PA).

John Sims (b. 1968) is a Detroit native and Sarasota-based artist, writer and social justice activist whose interdisciplinary creative practice expands to installation, text, film, music and performance projects. Informed by mathematics, design theory, sacred symbols and the power of poetic and political text, Sims has been actively challenging white supremacy and confronting Confederate iconography and commemoration for the past two decades through long-term multimedia projects, annual public performances, and political op-eds. Sims is currently the 2020-21 Artist in Residence at The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art (Sarasota, FL). His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally and has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, CNN, NBC News, *USA Today*, NPR, *The Guardian*, *ThinkProgress*, *Al Jazeera*, *Art in America*, *Hyperallergic*, *Sculpture*, *Science News*, *Nature*, and *Scientific American*. He has written for CNN, Al Jazeera, *The HuffPost*, *Guernica Magazine*, *The Rumpus* and *theGrio*.

Monument Lab is a public art and history studio based in Philadelphia. Monument Lab works with artists, students, educators, activists, municipal agencies, and cultural institutions on participatory approaches to public engagement and collective memory. Founded by Paul Farber and Ken Lum in 2012, Monument Lab cultivates and facilitates critical conversations around the past, present, and future of monuments. The Monument Lab team includes Kanyinsola Anifowoshe, Patricia Eunji Kim, Hilary C.V. Leatham, Sue Mobley, and Yannick Trapman-O'Brien and is supported by the Center for Public Art and Space at the University of Pennsylvania Weitzman School of Design. Monument Lab *Field Trip* was designed and illustrated by Mike Murawski and Bryna Campbell with Super Nature Adventures.

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Ariel René Jackson
Bentonville Forecast: In the Square, 2019
video; weather balloon, confederate statue, testimonials provided by Sharon Killian, Rachel Lynett, Sheree Miller, and Tonya Jackson
4:14 min.
Filmed in Bentonville, AR at Momentary Residency. Courtesy of the artist.

Joiro Minaya
The Cloaking of the statues of Ponce de Leon at the Torch of Friendship and Christopher Columbus behind the Bayfront Park Amphitheatre in Miami, Florida, 2019
archival pigment prints presented on custom wallpaper patterns
variable dimensions
Courtesy of the artist

Joiro Minaya
The Cloaking of the statue of Christopher Columbus behind the Bayfront Park Amphitheatre, Miami, Florida, 2019
dye-sublimation print on spandex fabric and wood structure
12 x 5 x 5 ft.
Photo by Zachary Balber, commissioned by Fringe Projects Miami

Joiro Minaya
The Cloaking of the statue of Ponce de Leon at the Torch of Friendship on Biscayne Blvd, Miami, Florida, 2019
dye-sublimation print on spandex fabric and wood structure
7 x 3 x 4 ft.
Photo by Zachary Balber, commissioned by Fringe Projects Miami

Joiro Minaya
Proposal for artistic intervention on the Columbus statue in front of the Government House in Nassau, The Bahamas, 2017
archival pigment print, 5 x 7 in.
postcards
variable dimensions
Courtesy of the artist

Karyn Olivier
The Battle is Joined, 2017
Vernon Park, Philadelphia PA
Commissioned by Monument Lab and Mural Arts
video documentation with audio recording of Trapeta B. Mayson's poem *Monuments to Brown Boys* commissioned for public art installation
1:46 min.
Courtesy of the artist and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery

John Sims
Freedom Memorial at Gamble Plantation, 2020
video animation with sound
7:47 min.
AfroConfederate Flag, 2020
12 x 12 ft.
Freedom Memorial Marker, 2020
latex paint on synthetic material
3 x 3 ft.
Courtesy of the artist

Monument Lab
Field Trip, 2020
hands on activity guide
Monument Lab Team: Kanyinsola Anifowoshe, Paul Farber, Patricia Eunji Kim, Hilary C.V. Leatham, Sue Mobley, and Yannick Trapman-O'Brien. Produced with support from the Center for Public Art and Space at the University of Pennsylvania Weitzman School of Design. Monument Lab *Field Trip* was designed and illustrated by Mike Murawski and Bryna Campbell with Super Nature Adventures.

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