

Marking Absences – Shifting Narratives

DIGITAL UN-CONFERENCE - OCTOBER 19 & 20

Goethe-Institut New York and 1014 investigate the future of monuments in public space with artists, activists, city officials and planners in a digital un-conference on 19 and 20 October. During four 1h-long conversations, artists will reflect on their respective practice and discuss the question, how narratives have shifted, how monuments should be made today, and how our memory landscapes could become more inclusive.

Urban landscapes are augmented layers of hegemonic power that materializes in buildings, street maps, and monuments in the public space. After the killing of George Floyd in 2020, the removal of white supremacist statues and symbols from cities across the world has become one of the central demands of protesters. While removing monuments to past figures and events can be a daunting process, to imagine and facilitate the installation of new monuments seems just as relevant. What challenges do artists, city planners, and local communities face in the creation of public art for the 21st century? Who decides what is commemorated or celebrated in the public space? How are these decisions made?

Join artists, architects, city officials, scholars, and activists to exchange ideas and contemporary practices for creating new contemporary monuments for our age.

Marking Absences – Shifting Narratives, organized by curator **Niama Safia Sandy**, will take place in multiple formats including a digital conversation series, an interactive installation, and more. It is presented by 1014 and the Goethe-Institut New York.



Conversations

Oct 19, 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Conversation #1: Un/making a Monument

Un/making a Monument brings together artists **Kenseth Armstead**, **Olu Oguibe**, and **Lava Thomas** with public art administrator **Dr. Kayla G. Coleman** to share their challenges and successes devising public art projects on the global stage. How are communities invited into the process of developing projects? How do artists and administrators envision art objects living on the landscape in the future? How has the public responded to the work? In what ways has the public inscribed these objects with their own ideas? Moderated by **Desirée Gordon**.

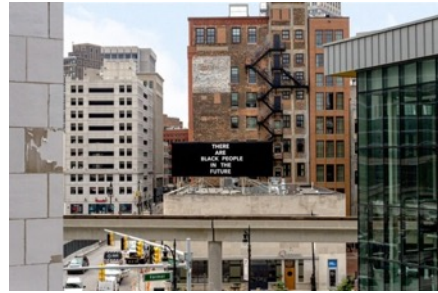


[Register here with Zoom.](#)

Oct 19, 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Conversation #2: Projecting The Future

Tomie Arai and **Alisha B. Wormsley** are among the 2020 *Shaping the Past* fellows with Monument Lab and the Goethe-Institut. Individually, their work endeavors to hold space for who/what is already present and project their specific communities into the future against forces of structural racism (neglect, urban renewal, gentrification). Together, the two fellows will consider their practices at large, and methods for revisioning the past in ways that do not seek to harm.



[Register here with Zoom.](#)

Oct 20, 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Conversation #3: Sound As Monument

Every street, every city has an aural character and ephemeral texture. It is a document of the place, and the people who inhabit it, and the lives they lead. Each of the panelists, **Arielle Julia Brown**, **La'Vender Freddy**, and **Natalie Hopkinson**, grapples with the sonic textures of the places they work. Together they will delve into how sound functions as a monument to memory, whether it can heal and restore. The panel will interrogate whether advancing/acknowledging the culture of their sounds can be a functional framework for developing new futures for a community. Moderated by **Arlette-Louise Ndakoze**.

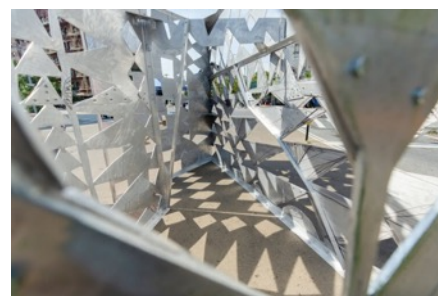


[Register here with Zoom.](#)

Oct 20, 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Conversation #4: A Matter of Public Inspiration

A Matter of Public Inspiration invites a cross-section of those leading the charge to bring social justice to their communities to reflect on the landscape of their cities. At their best, monuments and public art installations can become part of a community's psyche, acting as extensions of ourselves and our hopes and dreams. **Naila Opiangah**, **Walter Cruz**, **Hank Willis Thomas**, **Jerald Cooper**, and **Kaneza Schaal** share about the fixtures in their communities that have shaped and inspired them and functioned in their life. Moderated by **Niama Safia Sandy**.



[Register here with Zoom.](#)

A People's Manifesto

1014 and the Goethe-Institut New York ask New Yorkers how they believe monuments and public art should function. In October, their answers will be displayed on the Goethe-Institut's storefront at 30 Irving Place.



More Information

Curator

Niama Safia Sandy is a New York-based curator, essayist and musician. Sandy's curatorial practice delves into the human story - through the critical lenses of healing, history, migration, music, race and ritual. She is an agitator who calls into question and makes sense of the nature of modern life and to celebrate our shared humanity in the process. Her aim is to leverage history, the visual, written and performative arts, chiefly those of the Global Black Diaspora, to tell stories we know in ways we have not yet thought to tell them and to lift us all to a higher state of historical, ontological and spiritual wholeness in the process.



1014

In the heart of New York City, 1014 creates a space to explore global challenges and opportunities together - across the worlds of culture, ideas and society. With its digital components, 1014 extends its reach beyond New York.

Inclusive talks, performances and exhibitions offer perspectives from both sides of the Atlantic. Programs are free of charge. 1014 enables collaborations, forging individual and institutional partnerships.

Goethe-Institut

The Goethe-Institut, Germany's cultural institute, operates worldwide, promoting knowledge of the German language abroad and fostering international cultural collaborations. Its program of public events offers an opportunity to engage with themes and questions relevant to contemporary German culture and society. Faced with the challenges of globalization, the Goethe-Institut aims to strengthen intercultural dialogue and a global civil society. There are currently 159 Goethe-Institut branches operating in 98 countries around the world.

Partners

Marking Absences – Shifting Narratives is presented by the Goethe-Institut New York and 1014 as part of Shaping the Past, a project of the Goethe-Institut, Monument Lab, and the Federal Agency for Civic Education. Shaping the Past connects memory workers across Canada, Mexico, the US, and Germany who have piloted new approaches to shape the past in their own local contexts. Visit www.goethe.de/shapingthepast for more information on the project and all related events.

In partnership with:



Press contact

Benjamin Bergner
1014 Inc.
b.bergner@gmail.com
+1 917 349 1727

Katharine Maller
Goethe-Institut New York
katharine.maller@goethe.de

Images:

Olu Oguibe, *Das Fremdlinge und Flüchtlinge Monument*, 2017. Photo Michael Nast.
Alisha Wormsley, *There Are Black People In The Future*, Detroit, 2019. Courtesy of the artist.
Ricardo Iamuuri Robinson, Photo: Sonarcheology Studios.
Kenseth Armstead, *Boulevard of African Monarchs*, 2020. Presented by the Marcus Garvey Park Alliance & the New York City Department of Transportation's Art Program (DOT Art).