FOREWORD

Marking Monuments, an ambitious curatorial project, was created in response to the Covid-19 global pandemic, which has presented unprecedented challenges for exploring contemporary art and cultural institutions. This project is possible due to the initiative of Dr. Diane Wallman in the USF Department of Anthropology and the ongoing project of Monument Lab and Mural Arts. It is a distinct contribution to the field of anthropology and the arts, providing a platform to engage with the many issues of representation, power, and the vitality of public space in a socially distanced context.

The projects presented in this exhibition highlight the vision of these artists as an important educational program across both physical and digital platforms. It continues to reflect and respond to our most pressing social issues and the continued reckoning with the systemic racism and institutionalized violence against communities of color, and the significant exposure of deep racial, economic, and health disparities, and the significant contributions, energy, and attention to the exhibition and documentation, proposals and prototypes. I am immensely grateful to the entire team at USFCAM for their talent and commitment as we addressed the many challenges of communicating in a socially distanced sphere, the Department of Anthropology, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, and the University of South Florida.

I am privileged to serve as the director of the USF Contemporary Art Museum. I am deeply grateful for the CSLC colleagues, Dr. Margaret Miller, Noel Smith, Randall West, and Industry Advisor. I am particularly grateful to John Sims for connecting USFCAM with the artists and the projects of the USF Department of Anthropology.

Monuments online is a project of Monument Lab in collaboration with the Florida Public Art Fund, in partnership with the University of South Florida, M–F 10am–5pm; Closed Saturday, Sunday and USF Holidays.

Acknowledgments

I am scores the director of USF Contemporary Art Museum and my colleagues, Dr. Diane Wallman, Noel Smith, Randall West, and Industry Advisor. Our team comprises Lesa Maranson, Artistic Director, and Mark Fredricks, Chief Curator. I am also grateful to our community of supporters for embracing our celebration and social exploration of the exhibition, USFCAM staff, and the many volunteers who contributed.

With deep gratitude, I acknowledge the tireless dedication of the entire team at USFCAM has worked with Monument Lab's Field Trip ResearchOne in collaboration with the Florida Public Art Fund and Marking Monuments. This project promotes research, student engagement, and public conversation. These projects provide a means to engage with the social, political, and aesthetic concerns of our time.

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MARKING MONUMENTS

MARKING MONUMENTS engages with the global dialogues confronting and reclamation of public space and anti-Black symbols and iconography through a selection of three works by contemporary artists. Joiri Minaya’s 12 x 5 x 5 ft. fabric and wood structure, The Cloaking of the statue of Ponce de Leon at the Torch of Friendship monument in Bayfront Park, Miami, Florida, is designed and illustrated by Mike Dargas. Minaya, who briefly took refuge at the plantation before fleeing the country to escape Federal troops after the end of the U.S. Civil War, continues to serve as the headquarters for the Florida Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), an organization whose primary mission is to preserve Confederate monuments. As the now-removed Bentonville Confederate Monument, located in Bentonville, Arkansas, is the subject of Minaya’s work, she site-specifically constructs a 12 x 5 x 5 ft. fabric and wood structure around the area that the Bentonville Confederate Monument once occupied. Depicted in the animation and archival pigment print presented on fabric, Minaya subverts the decorative nature of the imagery with colorful patterns of tropical plants possessing dual powers for both healing and poison. Illustrations of early colonizers’ botanical illustrations are used as a creative strategy for intervention, covering the figures of Christopher Columbus and a Confederate soldier atop the now removed Bentonville Confederate Monument. Inspired by their research on the discriminatory practices and injustices and envisioning equitable representations and commemorations for a just and equitable future. As we continue to reckon with our past, present and future, Minaya’s work shines light on and honors the immigrant experience and black and brown womanhood, tropical identity, and the Gaze in contemporary culture. Joiri Minaya has received recognition and awards from XXV Concurso de Arte Eduardo Chillida (Nassau, The Bahamas), 1st Prize, 1998; Touchstone Award, 2018; the Anonymous Was A Woman Award, John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, 2020. Hands on activity guide. USFCAM installation view. Photo: Will Lytch.

Challenging the narrative and romanticization of a Confederate legacy, Joiri Minaya includes intergenerational voices of local artists to mobilize, build and create social transformation. Mayson has received recognition and awards from XXV Concurso de Arte Eduardo Chillida (Nassau, The Bahamas), 1st Prize, 1998; Touchstone Award, 2018; the Anonymous Was A Woman Award, John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, 2020. Hands on activity guide COVER.

Johanne Olivier continues to work and live at Gamble Plantation. Depicted in the animation and archival pigment print presented on fabric, Olivier has created large-scale commissioned public art projects in the United States and internationally, and has received international recognition and awards from The Cloister Art Prize (South Carolina), 2nd Place, 2018; the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (Madison, ME), 2019; Studio Museum in Harlem; and RISD Museum (Providence, RI). Reception and commissioning exhibitions include the Contemporary Art Center, New Orleans; DePaul Art Museum (Chicago, IL); Chicago Cultural Center; and The Phillips Collection (Washington, DC), among others.


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