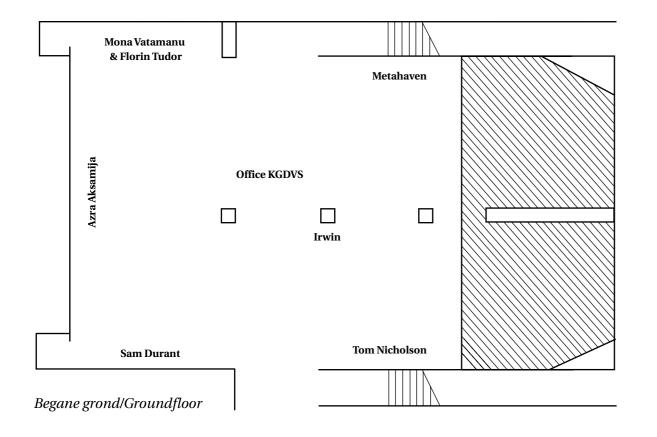
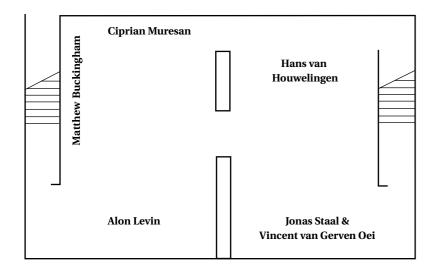
SinceWeLast SpokeAbout Aonuments

Plattegrond / Floorplan





Souterrain/Basement

Since we last spoke about monuments *Exhibition Notes*

This is not a collection of models for public sculptures. It is a look at recent history from a perspective – that of monuments –, generally reserved to absolute views of the past rather than to its interrogation. The exhibition assembles critical standpoints on the relation between monumentality and our usages of memory, our ideological unrest. It examines contradictions inbuilt in monuments, contradictory uses of monuments, as well as the possibility of a monument that integrates contradiction: dissent, diverging purposes, imagination. It aims to visualize a complicated monument for a complicated state of affairs – political, social or cultural.

'Since we last spoke about monuments' stems from a desire to disrupt the symbolic apparatus of monuments. Directly or obliquely, the works on show question the political and cultural mechanisms that monuments rely on, their necessity and legitimacy, their address and the communal epiphanies they stand for. Throughout the exhibition, the word 'monument' is used as instrument of questionable truth-value, as oscillation: between obsolescence and possible reinvention, between communities as ideologies imagine them and other, subtler forms of communality, between historical distortions and new ways of making history, between the ravages of populism and political protest, or counter-sovereignty as represented in contemporary art. The 'monument' has less to do with bronze or stone than with the victories, gaps or losses that deserve, today, monumental sites of public negotiation. Fervent debates the world over about what to remember - where, how, and to whose benefit -, public works commissioned, defaced or deplored, countless instances of symbolic abuse in public space evince the extent to which monuments are still with us today, as screens for projecting political or social emergencies, for enacting cultural memory. Archives, performances, an earthquake, the perfect paradox of a monument to control or a Panopticon looking unto itself, borders and repossessed territory, an untenable claim and conflicting images of eternity - the projects and positions in the exhibition reassert the artistic possibility of the monument, away from fabricated narratives, the deformities of political propaganda or collective Freudian slips.

Mihnea Mircan

Unless otherwise noted, the texts that follow have been written by the curator.

Sam Durant Defaced Monuments (2008)

ongoing http://samdurant.com/defaced_monuments/

An expanding digital archive of statues, sculptures, memorials, markers and monuments that have been intentionally or unintentionally altered, damaged or destroyed as a political statement or during a political protest. Sam Durant's ongoing project gathers traces of a global history of violence, a recurring scenario of conflict between monuments, ideological majorities and minorities - groups evacuated from the version of history proffered by monuments, individuals whose existence and rights those monuments do not acknowledge. The artist's database records disparate but resonant political voices that decelerate the monument's forward stride, a systematic 'return of the excluded' that erodes grandeur and projections of totality, violently inscribing multiplicity into the logic of the monument. Monuments mark separation between winners and losers in the game of history, as well as the provisional nature and tentative configurations of that history. From the collision of selfrepresentations and political claims ensue a cohort of mutilated bodies and marred pedestals, of monuments beheaded, toppled, dynamited, powerless, gesticulating towards imprecise futures. As the monument is 'de-commissioned', it leaves behind an amputated comparison, a term against which to measure political or social imbalance, the intensity and effectiveness of counter-action. Sam Durant's database accumulates the historical proof of this mutual aggression, engendering a world-wide chart of attempts to change the prevalent order of things, or at least to rehearse the possibility of something different.

Acknowledgements: "This project is largely the result of the research work of Candice Lin - without her it would not exist. My gratitude to the following people for providing invaluable advice and information: Enrique Castro Ríos, Alvaro Uribe, Walo Araújo, Mir Rodriguez, Miriam Pons, Hetti Perkins, Melissa Ratliff, Katrina Pym, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Tom Nicholson, Sean Snyder, Mike Stevenson, Anthony Allen, Mihnea Mircan, Jon Bywayter, Fiona Jack, Hans Haacke, Edgar Heap of Birds, Mark Phillips, Catherine Hemelryk. Thanks to Cal Crawford and Bret Nicely for digital processing and webmastering and Johan van Gemert for technical assistance. (Sam Durant)

Additions to the database are welcome. Information on other defaced monuments can be communicated to the artist via the webpage http://samdurant.com/defaced_monuments/

Azra Aksamija Monument in Waiting (2008)

"Monument in Waiting is a collective testimony of the 'ethnic cleansing' in Bosnia-Herzegovina, carried out by nationalist extremists during the war of 1992-'95. This process of territorial and cultural 'decontamination' involved the eviction and mass murder of civilians, as well as the extermination of their cultural and historical traces, with places of worship - and the peaceful co-habitation they stood for -, being particularly targeted. The pattern of this hand-woven kilim tells the story of the systematic devastation of Islamic cultural heritage during the war and the impact of this human and cultural catastrophe on the Bosniaks' religious, ethnic, and national identities today. Acknowledging that the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia has recognized the destruction of religious architecture as evidence of a targeted annihilation of Bosnian multiculturalism, this kilim awaits its display in the ICTY, where it will actualize its function as a monument.

While all ethnicities suffered violent damage of their cultural heritage during the war, destroyed mosques far outnumber destroyed churches. The project started with the historical and archival research of 250 out of over 1000 damaged or obliterated mosques. Nine case studies were chosen for a more detailed investigation. Interviews with a range of individuals engaged in the current mosque building and rebuilding process gave insight into personal war experiences, histories and stylistic choices. The research material was then abstracted as kilim symbols. Each kilim symbol is thus encoded with both personal memories and historical facts, and their interweaving makes visible the collective memory of the Bosniaks' war experience. Such a collective design process enabled the translation of the traditional Bosnian kilim iconography into a contemporary context -locally found patterns and symbols were converted into signifiers of political, military aggression and threatened collectivity, while providing a multitude of outlooks into the future of the Bosniak nation.

The kilim was produced in collaboration with the Sarajevo-based workshop STILL-A, which employs refugee women as weavers. Three kilim borders, which usually symbolize levels of 'cleansing' and 'protection' of the central kilim surface, are inspired by the Afghan war rugs. They are filled with traditional local motifs, transformed into weapon-like symbols to describe the Bosnian war.

The three borders siege the central composition with the 'tree of life' motif, the metaphor of the paradise garden and eternal afterlife. This tree tells the main *kilim* story. Its top is designed as the characteristic Bosnian 'rhomb' motif, which crowns nine tree branches.

Each branch carries symbols that represent abstracted data and stories about the investigated mosques. By providing a directionality in reading, the central composition shapes a double mihrab, an indicator of the Mecca direction. As such, the kilim can also be understood as the minimal form of a mosque and can be used as a prayer rug. The top of the kilim is left unfinished, indicating the impossibility to represent the genocide with a complete image, and also that working to restore the architectural and emotional devastation in Bosnia-Herzegovina is an endless process. The initiation of this process is visually communicated through the motif of the growing 'tree of life', to which new branches with new stories can be woven. Yet, these stories would need to encompass all the destroyed mosques, churches, and all other lost monuments in Bosnia-Herzegovina. While the completion of this project remains utopian, the ritual hanging of the prayer beads onto the kilim edge symbolically launches the process." (Azra Aksamija)

Conceptual contributions: Khadija Z. Carroll, Mihnea Mircan, Dietmar Offenhuber, Alex Schweder, Amila Smajović. Consulting in pattern design: Amila Smajović (artist and kilim expert from Sarajevo). Kilim manufacture: STILL-A Sarajevo (owner A. Smajović, www.stilla.ba). Thanks to: Project participants, conceptual contributors and producers, interview partners, Center for Islamic Architecture at the Rijaset Sarajevo, Gerhard Diermoser, Asia Mandić, András J. Riedlmayer, weavers of the STILL-A kilim manufacture, and the team of Stroom

Mona Vatamanu & **Florin Tudor** Vacaresti (2007-2008)

In this filmed performance, Florin Tudor traces, with string and small wooden sticks, the outline of the church from the Vacaresti Monastery in Bucharest, Romania, demolished by the communist regime in 1986. Retracing the shape of the lost building functions as symbolic recuperation and gains resonance in relation to current plans to build a commercial mall on the same site. It situates the work between an unclear 'then' and a problematic 'now', pointing at loss and at the entropy that architecture 'constructs' while it seeks to embody power, be it political or economic.

Office Kersten Geers David Van Severen Border Model (2008)

Another compelling fact – plans of the Romanian Orthodox Church to build a gigantic Cathedral of National Redemption -, completes the background against which this performance should be understood, endowing what may have seemed the working-out of mourning with a marked political poignancy. The size of the projected Cathedral is to a lesser extent the outcome of a local understanding of monumentality, but a perverse consequence of the gargantuan abuses of communist architecture in Romania. By contrast, the artists' performance presupposes a different understanding of the relevance of the church in contemporary Romania, suggesting that the effort to regain credibility should start elsewhere than in populist projects of mass redemption and derisory magnitude. In spite of minimal means and understated tone, Vacaresti generates a ghostly counterpart, a doppelganger designed to harass or haunt the National Cathedral, exposing it permanently to its own inadequacy.

The installation of the work at Stroom is an excessive execution of an instruction by artist Lawrence Weiner, from the series Statements (1968): A 36" x 36" Removal To The Lathing Or Support Wall Of Plaster Or Wallboard From A Wall. Weiner's instructions alternate between their own performativity and the possibility of being actualized, by the artist or someone else, in identical, repeatable versions. Mona Vatamanu and Florin Tudor's disproportionately large hole, and its residue, take Weiner's instruction into a radically political territory, connecting it to historical trauma and the urgency of solutions.

Border Model is an extension of a previous project by Office KGDVS: Border Garden (2005), the proposal of an enclosed palm garden to be built at one of the checkpoints on the border between Mexico and the United States. (It also lies in conceptual continuity with their current project for the Belgian Pavilion at the Venice Biennial of Architecture, a 6-meter wall surrounding the pavilion.) Border Garden aimed to completely transform the experience of border-crossing between Mexico and America, providing a space of transparency and leisure, luxuriant vegetation and tranquility, designed to defuse tension and reorganize relationships between individual and control. It thus actualizes the absolute opposite of what we know about that border and the rules of border-crossing - the dire facts and statistics, the Great Wall recently built to prevent trespassing, the permanent surveillance (American citizens can log on to a website fed by webcams overlooking the border and report any suspicious activity) and the escalating mistrust. Border Garden describes, as a functional and localized architectural utopia, the reverse of inequality. "Equality", wrote the philosopher Jacques Rancière, "is not an end to attain, but a point of departure, a supposition to maintain in every circumstance". In tandem with Rancière, the architects instate a form of public space that is against all odds and factual data, modeled to resist regulation and insist, arduously, on equality.

The Border Model engages a more abstract topography-that defined by any two opposed camps. It can separate any two territories, regardless of the ideas or modes of organization that differentiate them, and extend to whatever dimensions are necessary at any given historical moment. It conflates architectural model and sculpture in a gesture of spatial incision, which we can view as simple or fundamental. The central space suggests the renegotiation of conflicting claims, which we can treat as ironic or absolutely serious. The rectangle functions as architectural translation of 'agonistic' space, a key instrument in some readings of democracy - more precisely, of a 'democracy to come' –, a place where antagonism is collectively reframed as discordant accord. Border *Model* oscillates between political abstraction and the use-value, here and now, of architectural utopia.

Metahaven Blackmail (2008)

"Blackmail is a series of postage stamps around the topic of Europe. It consists of drafts, proposals and speculations which question the political usage of memory and heritage in the name of European identity. Commemoration of great achievements is one way to define Europe's common good; yet this idea may always be applied to enforce new borders of exclusion. For example, a border between West and East, a border between legal resident and illegal immigrant, a border between centre and periphery or a border between good and evil. Blackmail portrays Europe as a deeply paradoxical place, stuck between

melancholia about its distant past and uncertainty about the near future. The postage stamp being an almost universally recognized unit of commemoration, Blackmail provides a glance at Europe as bureaucratic entity, 'superstate', monument, tolerance- and diversity-zone, suburb, non-place, camp and border." (Metahaven)

Metabayen is a design research collective based in Amsterdam and Brussels, its members are Vinca Kruk, Daniel van der Velden and Gon Zifroni The production of 'Blackmail' was generously supported by Veenman Drukkers.

Irwin Black Square in Red Square (1992)

"The Black Square, at first rolled up like a funeral shroud for rapid transportation from the bus, is opened by innumerable hands with a twisting, clockwise motion. Spread out in the heart of Red Square [in Moscow], it functions as [Kazimir] Malevich first designed it to: inscrutable, radiating, possessing an indefinable power. Hundreds of people, gathering at its perimeter, define the Suprematist archetype. As cameraman Ubald Trnkoczy observes, they look 'like a swarm of ants around a giant sugar cube'." Film director Michael Benson's account of the performance by Slovenian group Irwin conveys the collective frisson produced by this temporary monument installed in the siege of Russian political power. A 22-metre square of black cloth, ambivalent homage to Kazimir Malevich, is unfolded in the Red Square, triggering the confusion of police officers and the participation - enthusiastic or reticent –, of passers-by. The performance was connected to a larger set of actions taken by the group in Moscow, notably the setting up of the Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK) Embassy, which issued passports to citizens of the NSK 'State in Time'. NSK was formed in the early 1980s in Slovenia as an umbrella organization for related artistic groups, with interest in music, theater, design and art. NSK performed a relentless questioning of identity, more precisely of the way in which East and West define themselves - in relation to each other, one as lack, the other as surplus. Irwin proceed by 'emphasized eclecticism' or 'radical copying', believing that "the art of communism, fascism or nationalism is basically the same stuff" and amassing bits of distinct iconographies: motifs of Socialist Realism and the art of the Third Reich, of avant-garde movements like Italian Futurism or Russian Constructivism, and Slovenian

art of the 19th century. In employing every identifying aspect provided by the ideological apparatus, the NSK seemed to be "more total than totalitarianism", as philosopher Boris Groys noted. Collapsing two modes of totality, each more total than the other, Irwin comment on the two Squares - the Black one with its own history and disproportions, the Red one with the corruption it stands for in the political imaginary -, making visible another side to both elements. Malevich's square work is both exalted, 'misread' and deviously actualized, its revolutionary potential is emphasized together with its failure to create a viable link between art and politics. Between dual promises and failures, the performance organizes the debris of the cultural and political past into an explosive configuration.

Irwin, founded in 1983, is based in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Its members are Dusan Mandic, Miran Mohar, Andrei Savski, Roman Uraniek and Borut Vogelnik.

Video courtesy of the artists and Galerija Gregor Podnar Berlin / Ljubljana.

> Acknowledgements: Ruth Bain, Christian Capurro, Domenico de Clario, Johan van Gemert, Clare Land, Mihnea Mircan, Marv and Peter Nicholson, Dominic Redfern, Alex Rizkalla, Arno van Roosmalen, Anna Schwartz, Brie Trennery, Peter Wells

Tom Nicholson

Printed Pages/Bearing Images/ 1998-2008

"In 1998, I began to collect pictures of people bearing images from printed media. Collecting was a thinking mechanism - it came to feed the development of my banner marches, which I undertook in various cities, including Berlin, Melbourne and Sydney, between 2001 and 2005. As it grew in size and scope, the activity of collecting these pictures began to assume the shape of a work in its own right. Printed Pages/Bearing Images/1998-2008 is an attempt to elaborate the collection according to its own logic: images proliferating images, an insistent but shifting relation between the image and animation, and the confusion, merging and/or conflict between the faces that bear and the faces that are borne, between culprit and victim. The work is conceived as a meditation on contemporary relations towards death, but also on how these relations towards death – articulated through longing, violence, sometimes indifference - are also conflicting ideas of what is held to be sovereign. The work connects to the monumental through

this address to sovereignty - or more precisely to conflicting contemporary ideas of sovereignty. It also engages the monumental through what I would describe as its 'gathering up'.

"The focus in the works set together in Monument: A Liminal Sociography is the discrepancy between the monumental practice implemented by the state and the multiplicity of monumental practices initiated by groups that claim their 'own' interpretation of history. Official monuments represent and communicate a specific order of history: the monument is fundamentally a 'mark' that orders the most 'important' events or people in relation to the prevalent modes of government and power. This is contested by other, growing movements of people that claim their 'unofficial' histories, creating displays for well- or lesserknown individuals and organising actions - be they monumental or counter-monumental - to empower these claims. Recent public discussions on contemporary monuments (generally pigeonholed as being 'elitist', 'expensive' and not acknowledging their 'own' heroes, such as family members who died in car accidents or populist politicians like Pim Fortuyn) have shown growing antagonism within the meanings

This encompasses both a spatial characteristic (the way the monument situates itself at the point where sight-lines align, crowds accumulate, stairs rise, in short moments of visual climax in the city's spaces) but also a procedure (that of bringing together, massing together, unifying, reconciling, totalising, or conversely, reducing the diversity of human action to two categories). This is qualified, though. In *Printed Pages/Bearing* Images/1998-2008, no single image is ever itself, partly because of the transparency of the newspaper paper, and, in a more profound way, because of the endless dissolve mechanism. Even as the work tends towards a totalising procedure, it is also constituted by a self-fragmenting structure. This structure is also the work's system of proliferation (i.e., it makes of 198 found images 144,000 images, the number of frames in the work, each a distinct image), which gives the work the scale of the monument and the length of a feature film." (Tom Nicholson)

Jonas Staal and Vincent W.J. Van Gerven Oei Monument: A Liminal Sociography (2007-2008)

Collection of the Fonds régional d'art contemporain de Bourgogne, France.

and the audience that contemporary monumental practice addresses or used to address.

A 'new monumentality' should resist both the 'will to consistency', that is, the materiality of modernist-historical approach to monuments, and the 'realization to come' of endless conceptualizations without ever entering the public sphere, or appropriating methodologies in use in the public domain, that resist monumentality as such: advertisements, graffiti, NGO campaigns, etc. This resistance is what we define as '(a) sociography', both a context-specific approach, based on the responsibility of the sociographer to decide on interventions that occupy and are distributed over temporary sites, as well as on the set of the results that stem from these interventions." (Jonas Staal and Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei)

Against Irony (2008)

Concept & execution: Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei and Jonas Staal

Plastering of the Dutch Constitution (Article 1) (2007) Concept: Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei and Jonas Staal Execution: Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei Location: Hofplaats (square adjacent to the Parliament), The Hague (The Netherlands)

Preaching Sloganism (2008)

Concept: Harmen de Hoop and Jonas Staal Execution: Harmen de Hoop Locations: Amersfoort, Amsterdam, Leeuwarden, Zwolle (The Netherlands)

Monument for the Chased-Off Citizens of Rotterdam (2008) Concept: Ronald Sørensen Execution: Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei, Sjoerd Oudman and Jonas Staal Commissioned by Leefbaar Rotterdam (Right-wing Populist Party) in reaction to the initial proposal 'Monument for the Immigrant Worker' by Zeki Baran, member of the Rotterdam city council for the PvdA (Labour Party).

3D-modeling by Sjoerd Oudman; video editing, sound and subtitles by Michel Ligtenbarg

This project has been made possible through the financial support of Stroom Den Haag and Fonds BKVB, Amsterdam.

| Hans Van Houwelingen The Earth Knows (2007)

In June 2007, The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia announced a call for proposals for a 'Memorial to the Victims of Soviet Occupation' in Riga. The following text accompanied the announcement of the competition: "The ideology of totalitarian communism and its injuries are still not properly evaluated. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and totalitarian communist system at the end of the 20th century, the time has come for this debt to be paid. The Memorial will remind of the people's resistance, commemorate those who suffered, and admonish future generations against letting ideologies similar to totalitarian communism return and become weapons of the state policy". The idea that a 'debt' should be 'paid' via the monument sets the work, long before its realization, in perfect continuity with the symbolic ravage that monuments have performed throughout history.

Hans van Houwelingen's proposal for the Memorial in Riga situates itself in explicit disagreement with 'the monument against', which continuously proclaims the slogans of hostility. To a certain extent, it could be said to embody a disagreement with the monumental itself, which is 'shaken up' and laid on a new foundation. The proposal consists of a 25sqm platform connected to an underground mechanism that causes realistic earthquakes on a surface of about 150sqm. Computer-controlled hydraulics allows differentiation in the frequency and intensity of the earthquake. The platform is divided in half, with the words "THE EARTH KNOWS" written in Latvian and Russian on its two sides. Latvians and Russians face each other when reading the text, and when the earthquake occurs. The gestures and attitude of commemoration are replaced by a mentally and physically disturbing, immediate experience. The work shifts from the rhetoric of commemoration or vindication, where debts are paid, ambiguous heroes are worshipped and future generations are warned, to a poignant look at contemporary Latvia. It engages the acute tensions between Latvians and Russians (living in Latvia or not) today, in the immediacy of social experience and not in the tangle of resentment and recent history.

Ciprian Muresan

Communism Never Happened (2006)Auto-da-Fé (2008)

Ciprian Muresan's Communism Never Happened could headline a political agenda or announce the inauguration of a gigantic shopping center. It is pure, implacable revisionism, needing no further proof than the delays of memory in the East and the neoliberal exuberance of ownership. It is a complex anachronism, indicating the ways in which post-communism and globalization endlessly complicate each other. It is in English, something which endows it with a paradoxical double functionality: whose communism did not happen? The East's or the West's? Both forgot and moved on, safeguarding division lines and misapprehensions about each other. Communism Never Happened is as much the definitive answer to Winston Churchill's observation that Eastern Europe has produced more history than it could consume, as it is a way of saying that the East awaits its Derrida of reconstruction. Bound up with the certainty that communism happened, it signals the emergence of a generation of artists that no longer reflect on trauma and analyze geographical or historical marginality as if it were one of Zeno's paradoxes. Fundamentally, it is a slogan that bypasses political disputes about the Left and personal histories: if more people agree that 'Communism never happened', the possibility of a community discreetly arises.

A book by Ciprian Muresan is presented at the entrance of the exhibition space. A few pages from Elias Canetti's 'Die Blendung'/ 'Auto-da-Fé'(1932) have been segmented into sentences and graffitoed on walls throughout cities in Romania. The text acquires a monumental quality, while the processes of subjective dissolution it describes are embedded into the monumental. The resonance of each sentence, its persistent attempts to locate and rearrange the fragments of a disintegrating subjectivity, are set against the immobility of walls and enclosures, their indifferent inhabitability. The project echoes one of the themes running through this exhibition: the relation between public space and individuals pushed to the margins of social life.

'Communism Never Happened' courtesy of the artist and Gallery Plan B, Cluj/ Berlin. 'Auto-da-Fé' courtesy of the artist and Gallery Andreiana Mihail, Bucharest

Matthew Buckingham Image of Absalon to Be Projected Until It Vanishes (2001)

Matthew Buckingham's slide piece portrays the statue of Absalon, a 12th century Viking and mythical founder of Copenhagen, towards a wide open sky-shot from behind, almost out of frame. Over the duration of the exhibition the heat from the projector lamp slowly alters the emulsion on the slide, creating a protracted 'fade-out' which challenges the monument's attempt to fix meaning against the flow of time. The narrative of national construction and one of its enduring symbols are reduced to white light, to an ethereal transparency. "One way to look at how we define the present", Buckingham notes, "is to consider how we edit or construct the relationship with the past-what's important enough to be included or excluded". This study of inclusion/ exclusion is applied in Absalon to the monument - progressively erased by the heat of the projector lamp, perhaps a physical equivalent of prolonged scrutiny by the historian, or by the artist.

Alon Levin

Another Adaptation of the Object to the Ultimate Form of Perfection in the Attempt to Celebrate the Center and Not the Middle (2008)

Visual notations pages 8 and 9

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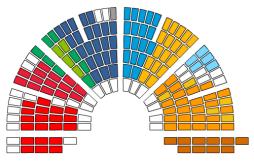






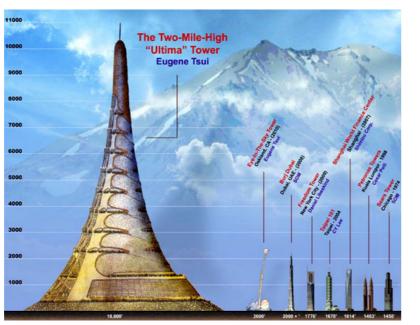








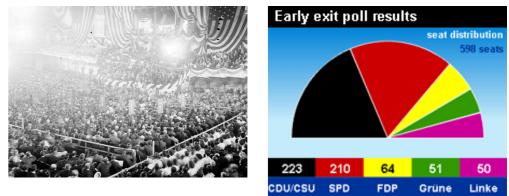
















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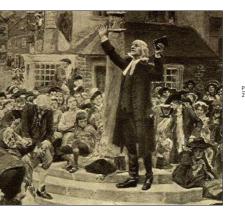
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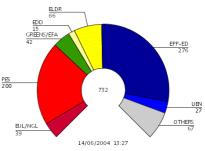


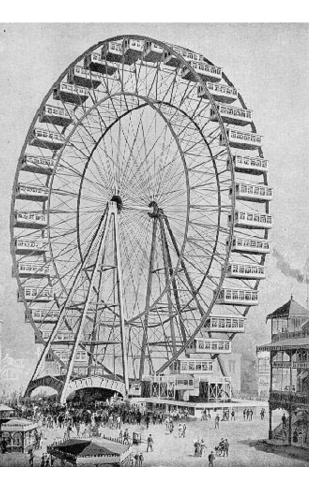
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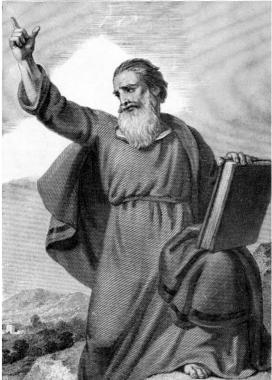
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The works by Azra Aksamija, Alon Levin, Metahaven and Office KGDVS have been commissioned by Stroom Den Haag for this exhibition.

'Since we last spoke about monuments' was realized with support from the Mondriaan Foundation, American Embassy in The Hague, and in partnership with Kosmopolis Den Haag.

Strom Jen-Jaag