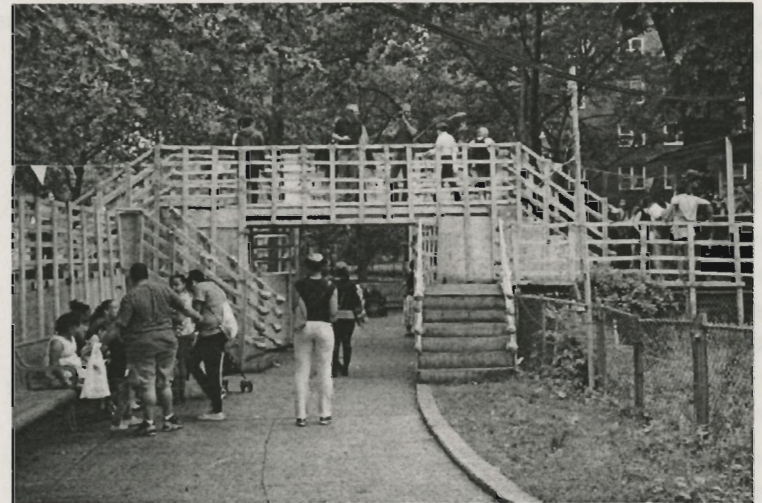


Discussions in Contemporary Culture
Monuments, Monumentality, Monumentalization

W. J. T. Mitchell and Michael Taussig

Saturday, December 6, 2014



Thomas Hirschhorn, *Gramsci Monument*, 2013. Forest Houses, Bronx, New York. Courtesy Dia Art Foundation, New York. Photo: Romain Lopez

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The issue of monumentality has been a recurring object of examination for Dia since its inception in 1974. From landmark outdoor works by Walter De Maria, Robert Smithson, and Joseph Beuys, to architectural interventions by Dan Flavin and Robert Irwin, to such recent exhibitions and commissions as Thomas Hirschhorn's *Gramsci Monument*, the retrospective *Carl Andre: Sculpture as Place, 1958–2010*, and Allora & Calzadilla's outdoor sculpture *Puerto Rican Light (Cueva Vientos)*, opening in 2015, Dia has demonstrated a sustained interest in promoting approaches to the monumental as a critical or truncated principle at work in public spaces.

Monuments have traditionally articulated historical and ideological concerns, directly addressing the citizen. In contemporary times, monumentality has emerged as a generalized category that applies to all sorts of grandiose and emblematic structures. The examination of this critical process becomes all the more urgent as the proliferation of monuments overwhelms the globalized, awe-driven public sphere.

From December 2013 to June 2015, this cycle of Discussions in Contemporary Culture brings together artists, architects, scholars, and writers to address today's monuments and counter-monuments as effigies of the multifarious forces at work in global society and to examine the current possibilities—even the need—for a redefinition of this important concept.

SCHEDULE

Saturday, December 6, 2014

- 4 pm **Introduction**
Yasmil Raymond, Curator, Dia Art Foundation
Manuel Cirauqui, Assistant Curator, Dia Art Foundation
- 4:15 pm **What Do Monuments Want?**
W. J. T. Mitchell
- 5:15 pm **Break**
- 5:30 pm **Monuments Need to Do Better**
Michael Taussig
- 6:15 pm **Panel Discussion**

W. J. T. Mitchell is professor of English and art history at the University of Chicago. A scholar and theorist of media, visual art, and literature, Mitchell is also editor of the interdisciplinary journal *Critical Inquiry*. He is the recipient of numerous awards including the Guggenheim Fellowship, the College Art Association's Charles Rufus Morey Book Award, and the University of Chicago's prestigious Faculty Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching. He is the author of *What Do Pictures Want?* (2005), *The Last Dinosaur Book: The Life and Times of a Cultural Icon* (1998), *Picture Theory* (1994), *Art and the Public Sphere* (1993), and *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (1986).

Michael Taussig is professor of anthropology at Columbia University and at the European Graduate School. An innovative voice in cultural anthropology, Taussig combines aspects of ethnography, storytelling, and social theory in his work. His most recent publication, *What Color Is the Sacred?* (2009), uses color to explore "the bodily unconscious" in an age of global warming. Other books include *My Cocaine Museum* (2004) and *Mimesis and Alterity: Particular History of the Senses* (1993). He has written essays about the work of artists Jimmie Durham and Juan Downey, and has recently given talks at Tate Modern, London, and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.