

RE-IMAGINING MONUMENTS

MEDA469 | Design Thinking for Creative Leadership

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THE MONUMENT IN QUESTION

Gassy Jack's sculpture located on Maple Square in Gastown has been relocated, vandalized, and has deteriorated since it was commissioned in the early 1970s.

A symbol of white supremacy and unjust occupation on a native land, Deighton's sculpture only serves as a reminder of trauma and loss of authority for Indigenous peoples who were displaced.



DEBRIEFING

- The Problem: Our group has decided to tackle the wicked problem raised by Indigenous activists about the placement and relevance of John “Gassy Jack” Deighton’s monument in Gastown.
- The Solution: We propose a temporary monument that highlights the problem associated with the current monument, and further builds on its story, symbolizing a collective struggle of the diverse ethnic groups that reside in Gastown. It is important to not completely disregard the history of Gastown but add to it, as our community increasingly diversifies in voices.

WE PROPOSE THAT THE MONUMENT STAYS, BUT
REFLECTS ON ITS PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE. IT
ACKNOWLEDGES THE UNCEDED LAND THAT ITS
ON AND DOCUMENTS THE STRUGGLE OF
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AS A RESULT OF EUROPEAN
SETTLER COLONIALISM.

THIS MONUMENT IS A SYMBOL OF HOPE,
IDENTITY, AND POWER IN HONOR OF
ABORIGINAL PEOPLE.

IT REPRESENTS THE CONSTANT “TUG-OF-
WAR” FOR REPRESENTATION BETWEEN
MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES AND THE
WHITE SUPREMACIST IDEOLOGY.

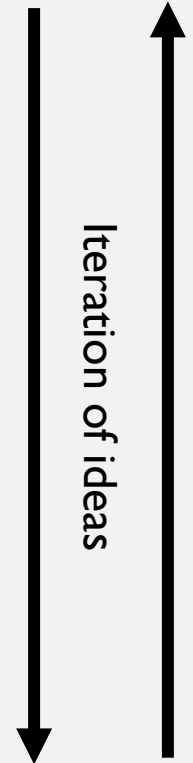
MOMENT OF REFLECTION

- How do we define a monument?
- How does the current monument make you feel?
- How might this monument represent power? Whose power?
- What materials will be used to make the monument?
- Where will it be located?
- How will it engage with its environment?

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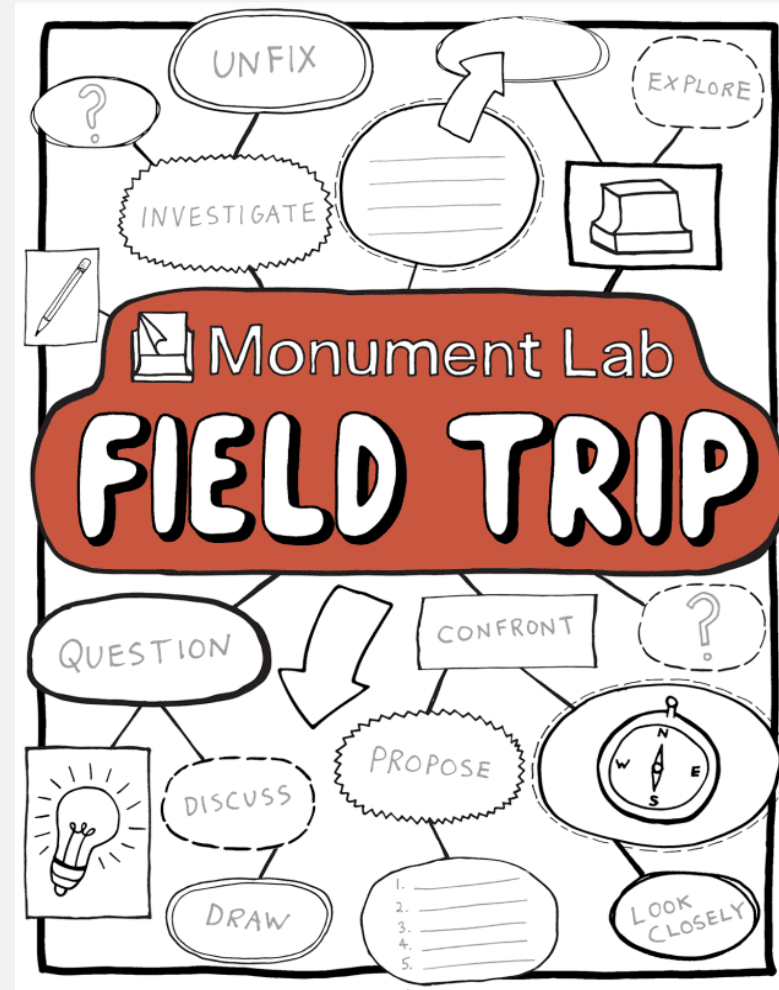
MODES OF RESEARCH

- Conversations
- Procrastination
- Readings
- Drawing and Painting
- Storyboarding and Animation
- Podcasts
- YouTube videos
- Online Archives
- Indigenous activist and community websites
- Class resources



MONUMENT LAB

Monument Lab is a public art and history studio based in Philadelphia. We cultivate and facilitate critical conversations around the past, present, and future of monuments.



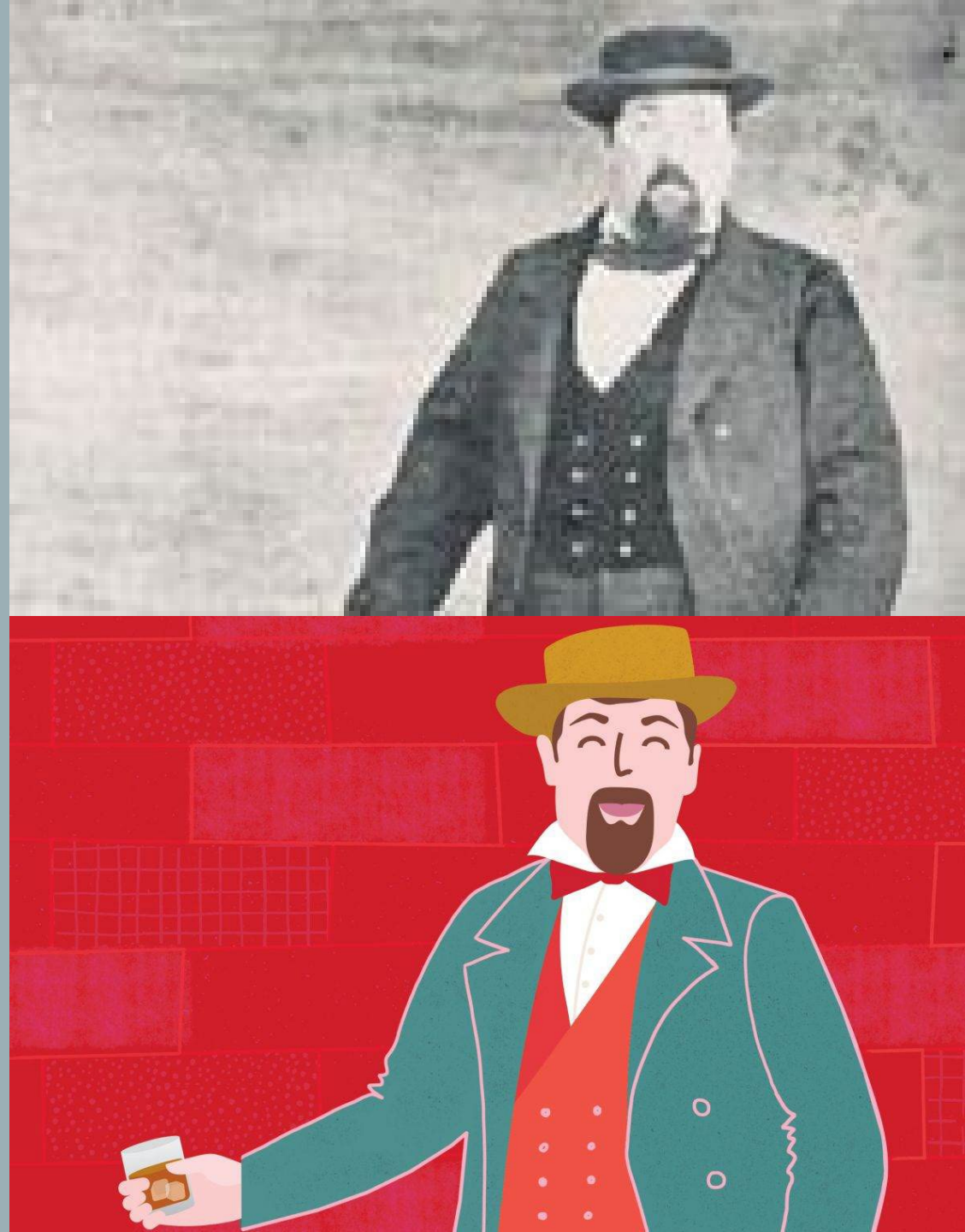
We filled out these activity sheets from Monument Lab to ask ourselves the right questions while designing the monument

PUBLIC IMAGE OF GASSY JACK

Gassy Jack is described to be “a determined, boisterous man” who had a boastful personality and a fondness for spirits.

His wife Quahail-ya described him as “nice, good man” during a 1940 interview with Vancouver archivist, Maj. James Matthews.

How much of this information is distorted is a valid question to ask.



PUBLIC IMAGE OF GASSY JACK

- Indigenous activists have an opposing view on the figure.
- Lorelei Williams, Indigenous activist wrote a poem, in the Capilano Review about Gassy Jack's treatment of the Indigenous women he married. She suggests that "There is no monument to Quahail-ya, but her story's important."



DECISIONS

- The idea of a monument can be morphed in a digital space. We Identified animation as our medium to add movement to the statue.
- Easily accessible open-source animation software – Blender
- The identity and story of Gassy Jack is controversial, as there are widely opposing opinions of him. Some see him as a hero, and others are disgusted by him.
- The looping characteristic of the animation reiterates the idea of “being stuck in a constant loop”

ANALYSIS OF OUR IDEAS

Our three big ideas were:

- Augmented Reality Monument
- Physically Replacing the Monument
 - Animating the Monument

AR MONUMENT

Missing history needs to be represented;

Visitors pay less attention to text descriptions on monuments

Physical Space & budget limitation for removing or rebuilding.

Using AR to represent the missing history about his marriage instead of removing or destroying it physically

Digital space can make people share their judgement and opinions about this history widely, let more people know about the past.

But AR is highly reliant on smartphones (tool requirement), Internet access (necessary condition), and AR platforms (QR code).



Concept by Artist Andres Delgado

PHYSICALLY REPLACING THE MONUMENT

Physically moving the monument removed it from its context. Given the fact that this monument coincides with the environment it lives in, removing it would remove the meaning behind it.

Provided a better understanding of the space it occupies and how space adds to the significance and message behind the monument.



ANIMATING THE MONUMENT



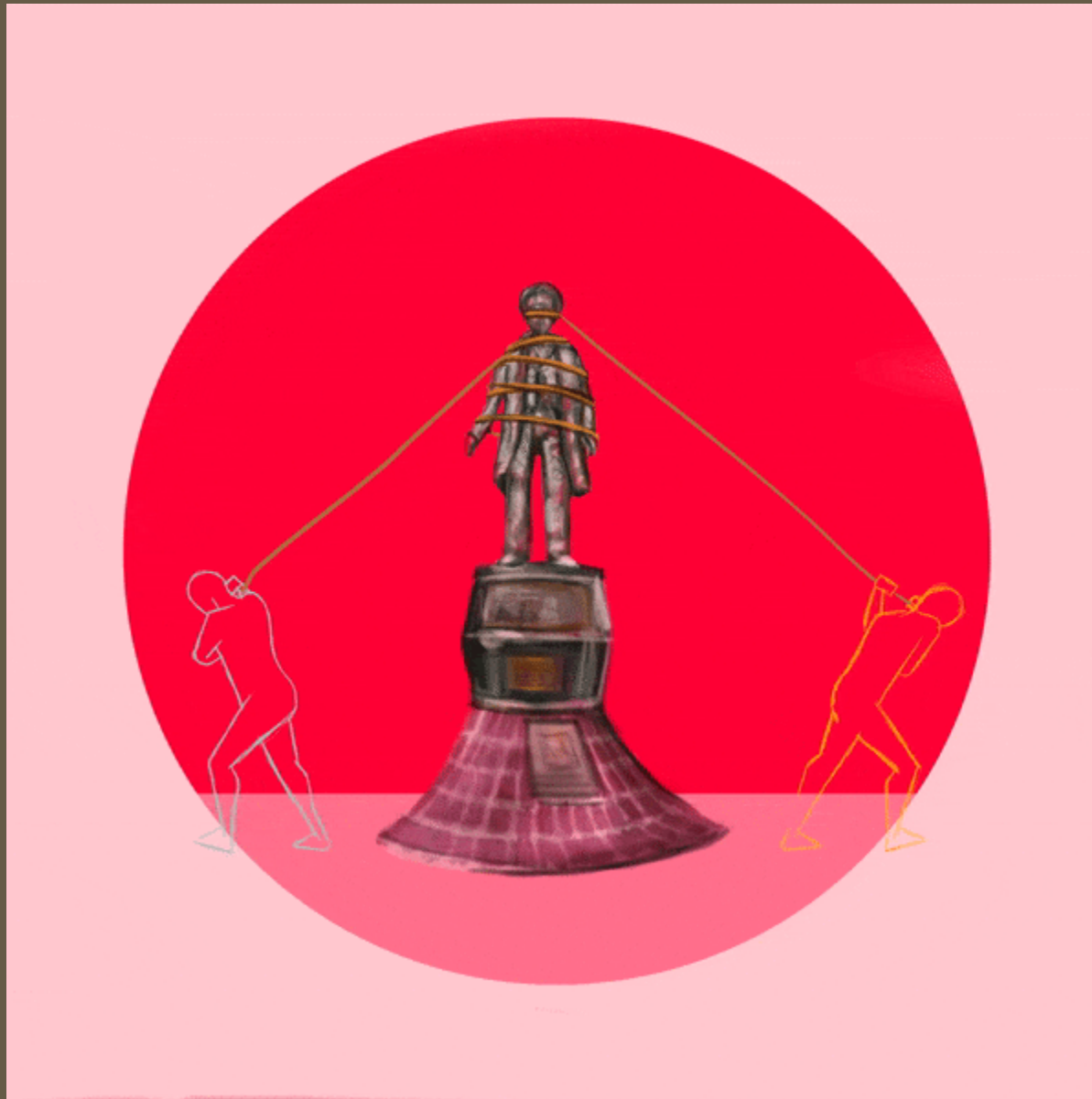
“I just had this moment where I realized, if you turn a monument inside-out, a sculptural monument, it becomes a theater,” – Paul Ramirez Jonas

We take inspiration from Paul Ramirez Jonas in transforming the idea and definition of monument, by adding a digital dimension for the Gassy Jack Sculpture.

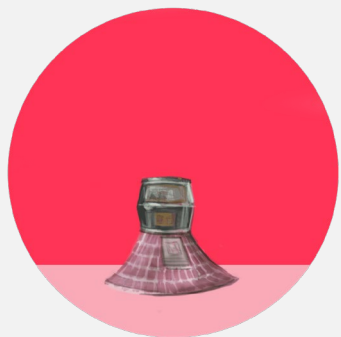
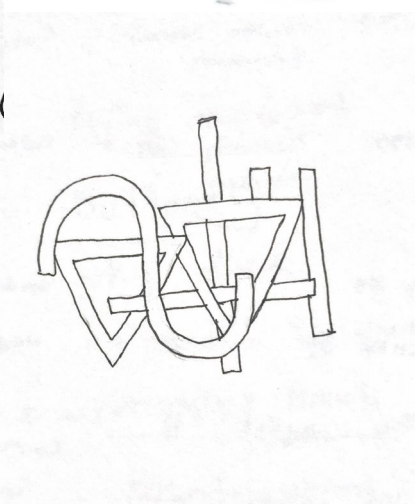
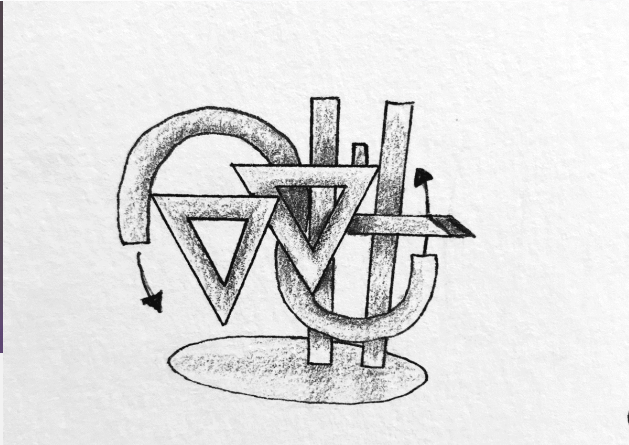
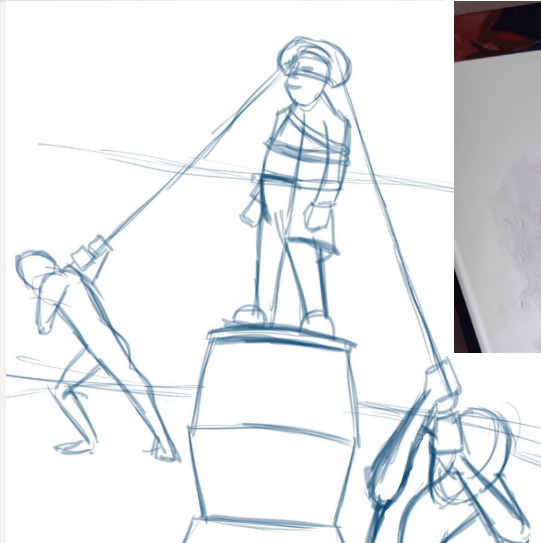
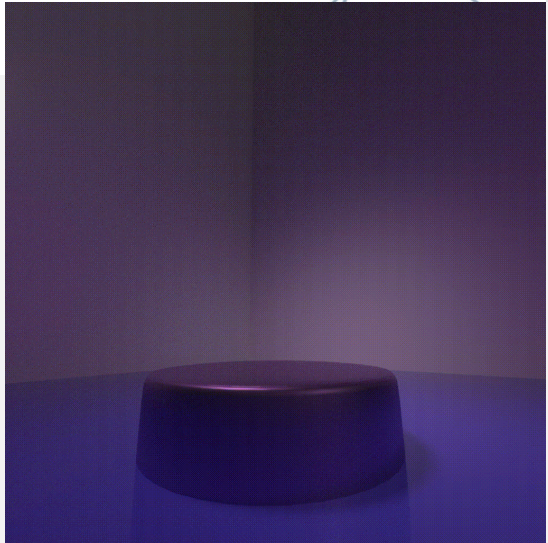
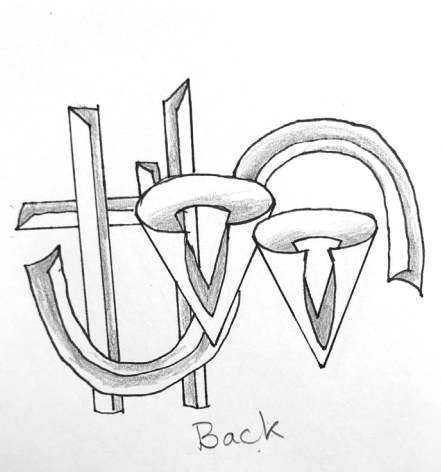
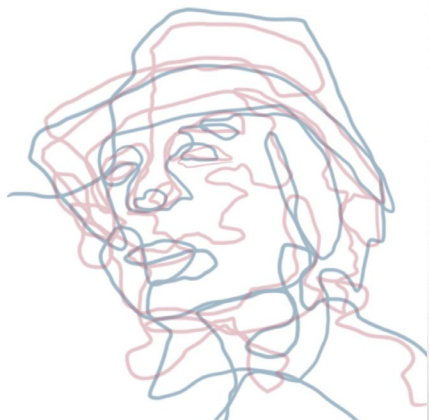


FUNNELING OUR IDEAS

- From Mino's AR idea we realized that we could project digital media onto the sculpture. It gives us the ability to appropriate our ideas on to the sculpture without physically vandalizing it.
- Thinking about how Paul Ramirez Garcia ultimately transforms the idea of monuments in his work, we realised that any artwork in any medium can take the shape of a monument.
- Faria's concept sketches were useful in identifying the use of the pedestal to represent the theme of power, the colors and composition. Her theoretical ideas of collective consciousness conceptually promoted a unifying community experience with the monument.
- Shehzar's animation process aimed to translate these ideas of appropriation, power, and the digital transformation of monuments to provide temporary solutions.



With Music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SdvtMc7H66s>



DEVELOPMENT

EVALUATION

THE MONUMENT RAISES
THE QUESTION OF

“WHOSE HISTORY
MATTERS?”

SO THAT IT MAY SPARK A
FEW CONVERSATIONS
ABOUT THE
GLORIFICATION OF JACK
DEIGHTON AND THE FATE
OF HIS MONUMENT.

- We need these monuments to survive in order to study them
- “A site of ongoing contest” - Kirk Savage
- Demonstration and Dialogue
- Opinions have shifted
- Thinking about the possibilities of AR, we are willing to further test the concept with this technology

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