

Curatorial Research at Monument Lab

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Background

Monument Lab is a non-profit public art and history studio based in Philadelphia. The organization works with artists, students, cultural organizations to pursue their mission of rethinking monuments. At Monument Lab, they believe that “monuments must change”. Their vision statement states that monuments should be dynamic in their meaning. By disrupting the status quo, Monument Lab hopes to “contribute to a future society defined by joy, regeneration, and repair”.

Monument Lab works with a myriad of community member and organizations to create project that propel their mission forwards. For example, their project *Re:Generation* was a nationwide public art and history project (Fig. 2). The project elevates people shaping the next generation of monuments reckoning with and reimagining public memory.

Curatorial Pipeline Support

One of the projects that I took part in as an intern at Monument Lab was the curatorial pipeline support. This required me to conduct research about a list of artists that Monument Lab provided me. I was able to learn about artists I had never heard of before. I input general information like pronouns, ethnicity, and mediums.

Although I sometimes struggled to sustain motivation working on this task, it was nice knowing that even smaller tasks like this can contribute to larger projects. Knowing that I was helping even in small ways helped me understand why I was doing this kind of work.

Latinx Contemporary Artist Research

The second project I worked on was researching Latinx contemporary artists. This part of my internship was really engaging because I was able to explore and learn about artists that aligned with many of the interests that I have. I compiled a list of Latinx artists that engaged with themes like history, public space, permanence and impermanence. By doing this, I could draw attention to artists that I think would make a good fit working with Monument Lab in the future.

This work was particularly important to me because as a Latinx student, I think it is crucial for our stories to be acknowledged as part of the history of America. I also enjoyed learning about artists that included their community in their artwork, such as Margarita Cabrera’s work *Arbol de la Vida* (2019).



Figure 1. Terry Adkins, *Prototype Monument for Center Square* (2015). Temporary art installation by Terry Adkins. The artwork reflected upon the history of educational innovation and loss in the city of Philadelphia.

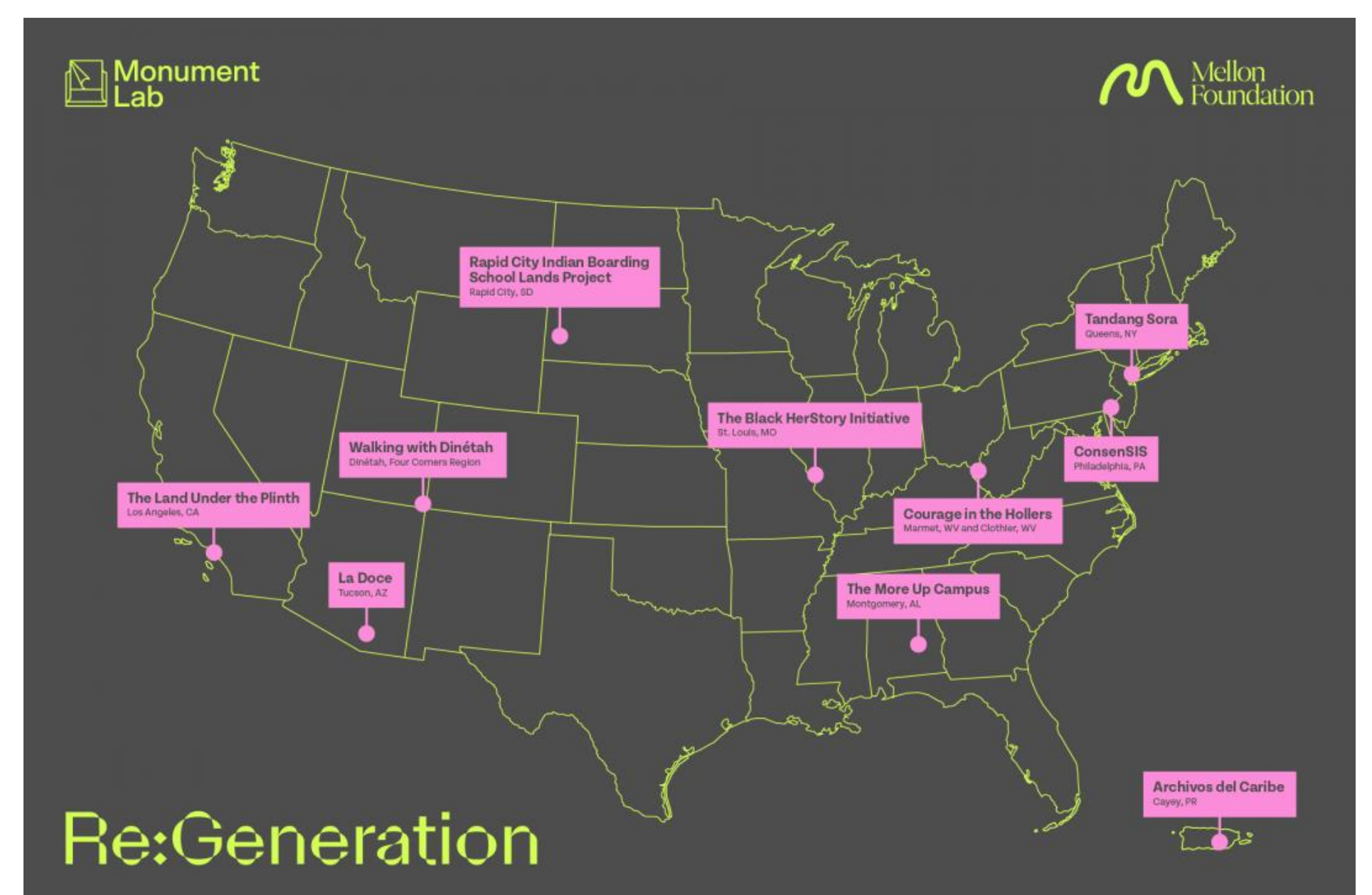


Figure 2. *Re:Generation* poster.

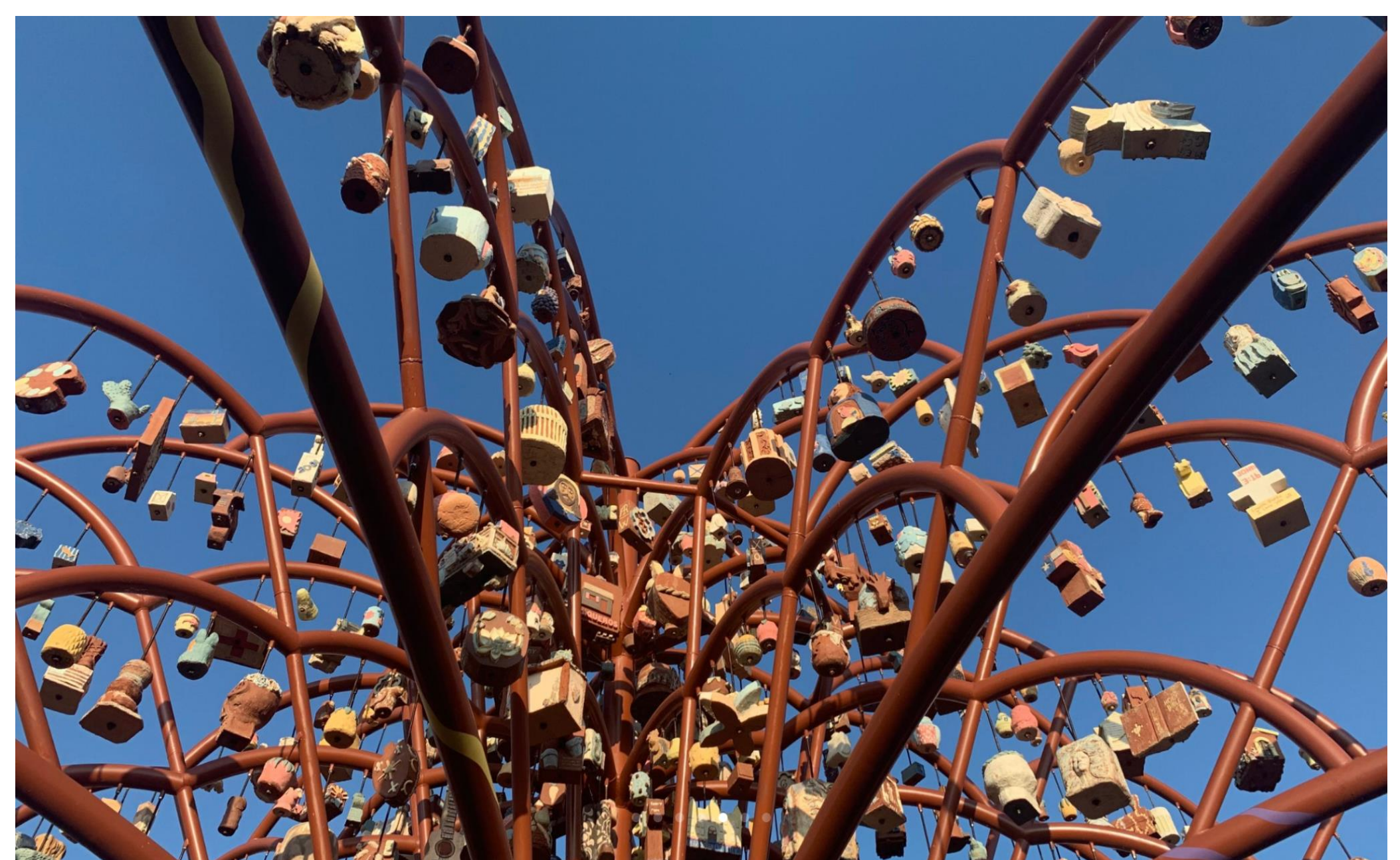


Figure 3. Margarita Cabrera, *Arbol de la Vida*, (2019). Public art project consisting of community members ceramic objects.