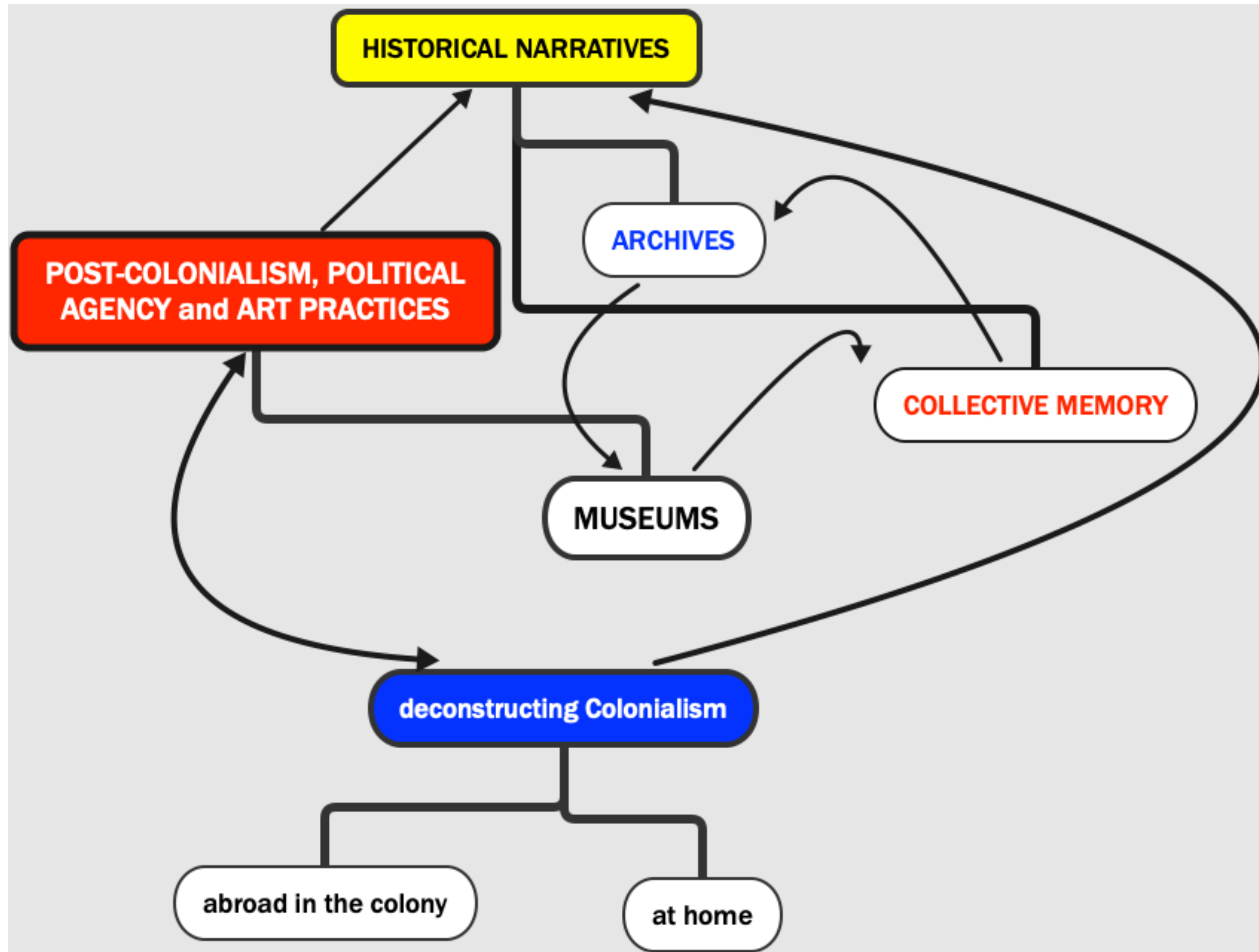


POST-COLONIALISM, POLITICAL AGENCY and ART PRACTICES

Allan Siegel



political agency

#METOO

#BLM - black lives matter

#GreenNewDeal

“Refuse to allow yourself to become a vegetable that simply absorbs information, pre-packaged, pre-ideologized , because no message.. is anything but an ideological package that has gone through a kind of processing...

...Every single empire in its official discourse has said that it is not like all the others, that its circumstances are special, that it has a mission to enlighten, civilize, bring order and democracy, and that it uses force only as a last resort. And, sadder still, there always is a chorus of willing intellectuals to say calming words about benign or altruistic empires.”

Edward Said

“Few today would dispute that **the museum is the product of both a colonial narrative and its apparatus. Hence, there have been growing calls for institutions to establish non-colonial practices, understood primarily at the level of exhibition and collection policies. These calls have also extended themselves to the archive, conceived as an institutional exercise in selective forgetting.”**

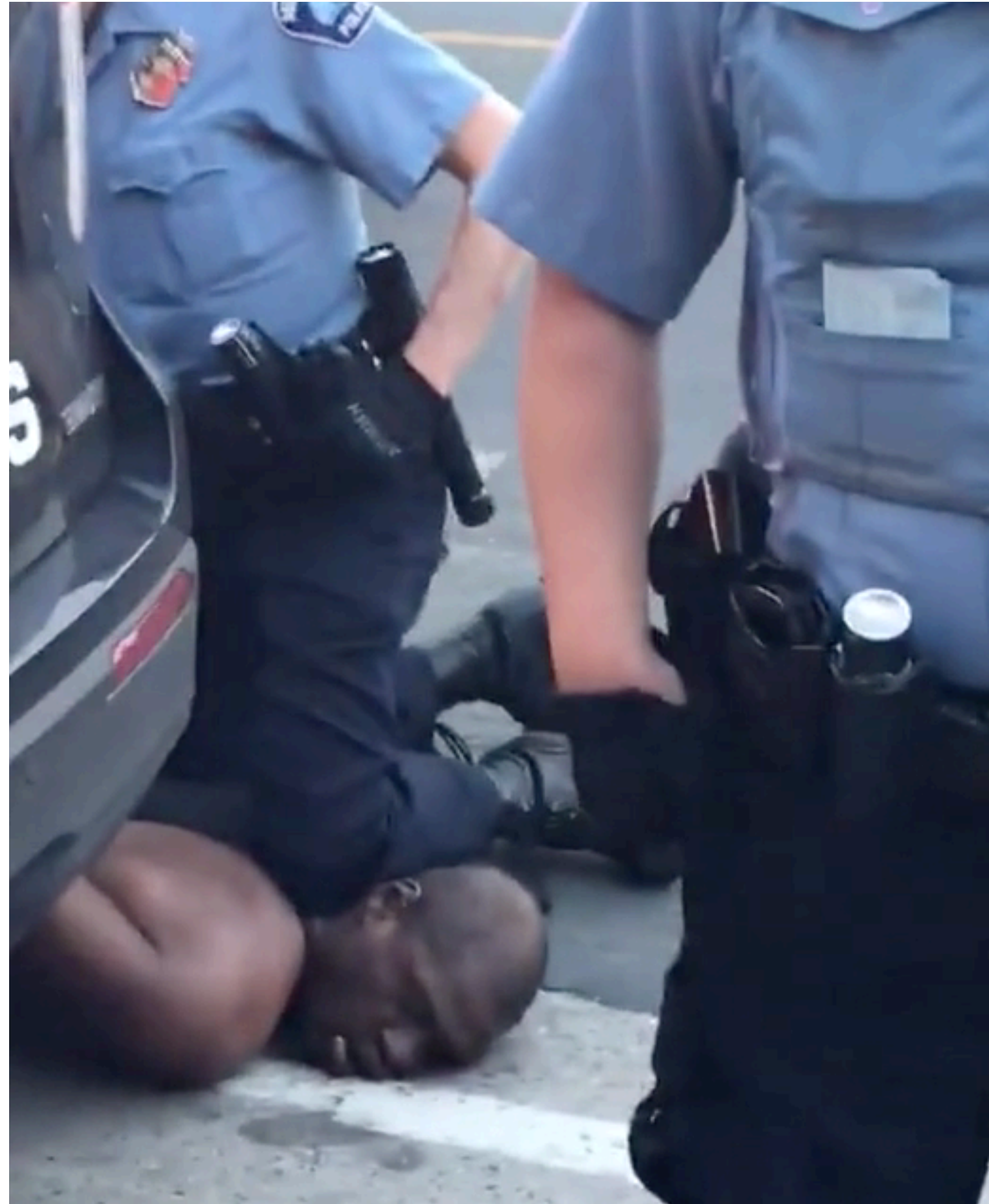
Brenda Caro Cocotle

"Deconstruction seems to offer a way out of the closure of knowledge. By inaugurating the open-ended indefiniteness of textuality... The fall into the abyss of deconstruction inspires us with as much pleasure as fear. We are intoxicated with the prospect of never hitting bottom"

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

“When we revolt it’s not for a particular culture. We revolt simply because, for many reasons, we can no longer breathe”

Frantz Fanon



**“I CAN’T
BREATHE”,
GEORGE
FLOYD**

Since the notion of the archive has been extended from the symbolic order (alphabetical texts) to the storage of signals (like physical sound and imagery), a memory has emerged which is capable of addressing human perception in a kind of repeatable hyper-presence. This does not only re-present, but actually enacts different aggregations of the past.

Wolfgang Ernst

“Cultural historian Catherine Hall asserts that a fundamental part of the project of decolonisation must begin with a settler desire to understand cultural difference. She writes that we must "decolonize the cultures through which those systems of representation were produced"

Crystal Fraser, Zoe Todd



“The Duke’s stony stare over the Moray Firth turns its back to the county from which thousands of Gaelic speaking, indigenous people were cleared to install sheep ranches... It had been claimed, at the time of the monument’s completion in 1838, to be the largest portrait statue in Europe.”

Rob Gibson



Santa Fe Plaza, New Mexico

The contested obelisk was erected in 1868 to honor Civil War Union soldiers. It was long-criticized by Indigenous groups and other locals for an inscription on its base celebrating “the heroes who have fallen in the various battles against savage Indians in the territory of New Mexico.” Indigenous Activists Topple Santa Fe Obelisk Celebrating Native Genocide [Hyperallergic](#) · by Hakim Bishara



How James Luna Exposed the Mechanisms of American Racism, John Yau

on April 2, 1991, to be exact — James Luna (1950–2018) stood on a platform inside the Whitney Museum of American Art, downtown at Federal Reserve Plaza, and invited members of the audience to join him by announcing:

Take a picture with a real Indian.

Take a picture, here tonight in New York City,

Take two. Leave one. Take one home.

America loves to say “our Indians,”

America likes to name cars and trucks after our tribes and people.

America doesn’t know me.

Take a picture with a real Indian.

Take a picture tonight, free.



EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

In this turbulent moment when we find ourselves reevaluating American identity and values, the *MONUMENTS NOW* exhibition at Socrates Sculpture Park seeks to address the role of monuments in society and commemorate underrepresented narratives such as diasporic, Indigenous, and queer histories.

SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK,
QUEENS - NYC

I. JEFFREY GIBSON, PAUL RAMÍREZ JONAS, XAVIERA SIMMONS

ON VIEW SUMMER 2020 – MARCH 2021

ABOUT PART I

Part I of the exhibition, *MONUMENTS NOW: Jeffrey Gibson, Paul Ramírez Jonas, Xaviera Simmons*, features three distinct visions for monuments.

PRESS RELEASES

[Updated Press Release](#), [Original Press Release](#)



JEFFREY GIBSON

Artist Jeffrey Gibson—a recipient of a 2019 MacArthur Foundation “Genius Grant”—will present a monument to inclusion and diversity: *Because Once You Enter My House, It Becomes Our House*. Drawing from Indigenous Mississippian culture, architecture, activist graphic traditions, and queer performative strategies, the large-scale public sculpture projects a future vision of the world that embraces complexities within collective identity.

[Learn More](#)

Jeffrey Gibson, *Because Once You Enter My House, It Becomes Our House*, 2020. Courtesy of the artist; Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York; Kavi Gupta, Chicago; Roberts Projects, Los Angeles; Image by Scott Lynch.



PAUL RAMÍREZ JONAS

Paul Ramírez Jonas imagines his *Eternal Flame* monument as a communal grill. The form honors the role of cuisine and cooking in cultural cohesion and expression among immigrant communities and identities. *Eternal Flame* is designed to invite dialogue and exchange.

[Learn More](#)

Socrates staff grills lunch on Paul Ramírez Jonas' *Eternal Flame*, 2020, Image by Sara Morgan.



XAVIERA SIMMONS

Xaviera Simmons' contribution, *The structure the labor the foundation the escape the pause*, is composed of sculptural forms—each bearing landscapes of text culled from historical documents foundational to racial disenfranchisement in the United States. The works are a monument to promises denied, offering insight into governmental policies that continue to shape the racial caste system we live within presently.