

LUIS  
CAMNITZER

**MONUMENTS  
TO UNKNOWN  
HEROES**

# Monuments to Unknown Heroes

*Monuments to Unknown Heroes* is a participatory installation that investigates how we ascribe value in the context of public monuments. The project brings together nearly a hundred responses that imagine monuments to under recognized or unknown heroes. Each artist was asked to respond to the prompt, “Who or what is deserving of public commemoration yet has been overlooked?”

This installation is an expansion upon a call for submissions that originally took place in the days following the start of the pandemic. Initiated by conceptual artist and pedagogue **Luis Cannitzer**, this visual archive captures various perspectives on the ways in which we memorialize. The project also raises questions about the socio-political and economic underpinnings that typically accompany the production of public monuments. The shortfalls of America’s public monuments have received heightened scrutiny in the years following the social justice protests of 2020. Subsequent nation-wide campaigns called for the removal or renaming of monuments, streets, and sites that refer to legacies of the Confederacy, settler colonialism, and violence. Traditional monuments often depict male military heroes celebrating acts of war and abuses of power. However, the most heroic acts are often those performed anonymously and without expectations of recognition or reward.

For this presentation, an updated call for proposals was circulated to local and international artists inviting a reflection on the ways in which the people, places, or histories we value ought to be commemorated. Some participants approached this prompt with humor or irony, crafting monuments to honor “second chances” or the “unknown psychotherapist.” Others take a serious look at the ways in which more complex and inclusive national, cultural, and personal histories might occupy our public sites. These proposals include designs for monuments to unknown factory workers, migrants, mothers, and front-line workers, among others. This installation imagines a future in which those who rarely get recognized are seen as society’s true heroes, thereby transforming the fabric of our cities and our collective memory.

A portion of the submissions are displayed in the CAC Lobby, and additional works can be viewed on the CAC’s website. You can also scan the QR code found near the installation and on the back of this brochure.

*Organized by Amara Antilla, Senior Curator,  
Contemporary Arts Center.*

# Participating Artists

Carol Abbott	Tina Gutierrez	Ana Rank
Flavio Abuhab	Louis Hock	Rosangela Rennó
Daniel Alatorre	Roberto Jacoby	Angelo Ricciardi
Esther Aldaz	Yobana Jaimes	Ender Rodríguez
Erika NJ Allen	Juan Diego Pérez La Cruz	Gisela Romero
Jounte Armantrading	Freid and Leader	Kay Rosen
Raul Quintanilla Armijo	Cynthia Lin	Elizabeth Ross
Rosa Barba	Rachel Linnemann	Danny Ruiz
Jose Bedia	Isidro López-Aparicio	Alejandro López Saldaña
Gary Beeber	Georg Lutz	Francisco Tapia Salinas
Walter Brovia	Jesse Ly	Nathalia Cruz Sierra
Luis Camnitzer	Marco Maggi	Walid Siti
Oswaldo Cibils	Eric Javier Markowski	Luis Sosa
Aníbal Conde	Jason Mena	Kateri Sparrow
Michael Coppage	Sylvia Meyer	Tamara Stuby
Fabio Coruzzi	Priscilla Monge	Alina Tenser
Calcagno Cullen	Jonas Monib	Alex Thornton
Claudia DeMonte	Ronald Moran	Ana Tiscornia
Luisho Díaz	Michael Muller	Jose Toirac
Sam Durant	Carlos Navarrete	Sara Torgison
Magdalena Fernández	Cristina Ochoa	Sophie Tottie
Martina Fischer	Renato Orara	María Vargas
Beatrice Red Star Fletcher	Nadín Ospina	Silvia Velázquez
Harrell Fletcher	Jamie Payne	Humberto Vélez
Jose Franco	Jenny Perlin	Zhiqian Wang
Abby Friend, Dylan Bauer	Jenny Polak	Derrick Woodham
Alicia Mihai Gazcue	Liliana Porter	
Ed Mc Gowin	Angel Poyon	
David Enrique Martínez	Ben Quesnel	
Guerrero	Leo Ramos	

## Ask Yourself

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- 1 Think about your community. Who are the heroes in your community? How would you choose to honor them?
- 2 What role do monuments currently play in your life? How could they be made more effective in everyday life and in our society?
- 3 Consider the monuments presented by the artists in this installation. Are there common themes amongst their works?



**Monument to Banana Workers**

Erika NJ Allen



*Monuments to Unknown Heroes* at the CAC is an expanded presentation that originated at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Argentina in 2020. The current exhibition is co-produced by MAMM, the Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín, Colombia, where a year-long series of public workshops is being held responding to the central themes. *Monuments to Unknown Heroes* is generously supported by the participating artists and by Alexander Gray Gallery, New York. Submissions to the original 2020 call can be viewed alongside the 2023 works in an online catalog by scanning the QR code above:

For the exhibition-related programming, the CAC is happy to be partnering with ArtWorks' New Monuments initiative, which is a year-round Civic Studio aimed at developing and implementing a community engagement plan that will inform the creation of future monuments in Cincinnati.

CAC receives Annual Exhibition Support from Gale and Dave Beckett, Helen and Brian Heekin, Belflex and Jason McCaw, Barbara Myers, Barbara Weston Sasser and Carol Weston Roberts, Ronnie and John Shore, and generous contributors to the CAC Exhibition Fund. General operating support for the CAC is provided by The P&G Fund, The Johnson Foundation, ArtsWave, National Endowment for the Arts, and the Ohio Arts Council.

Inside image: Erika NJ Allen, *Monument to Banana Workers*, 2023.

