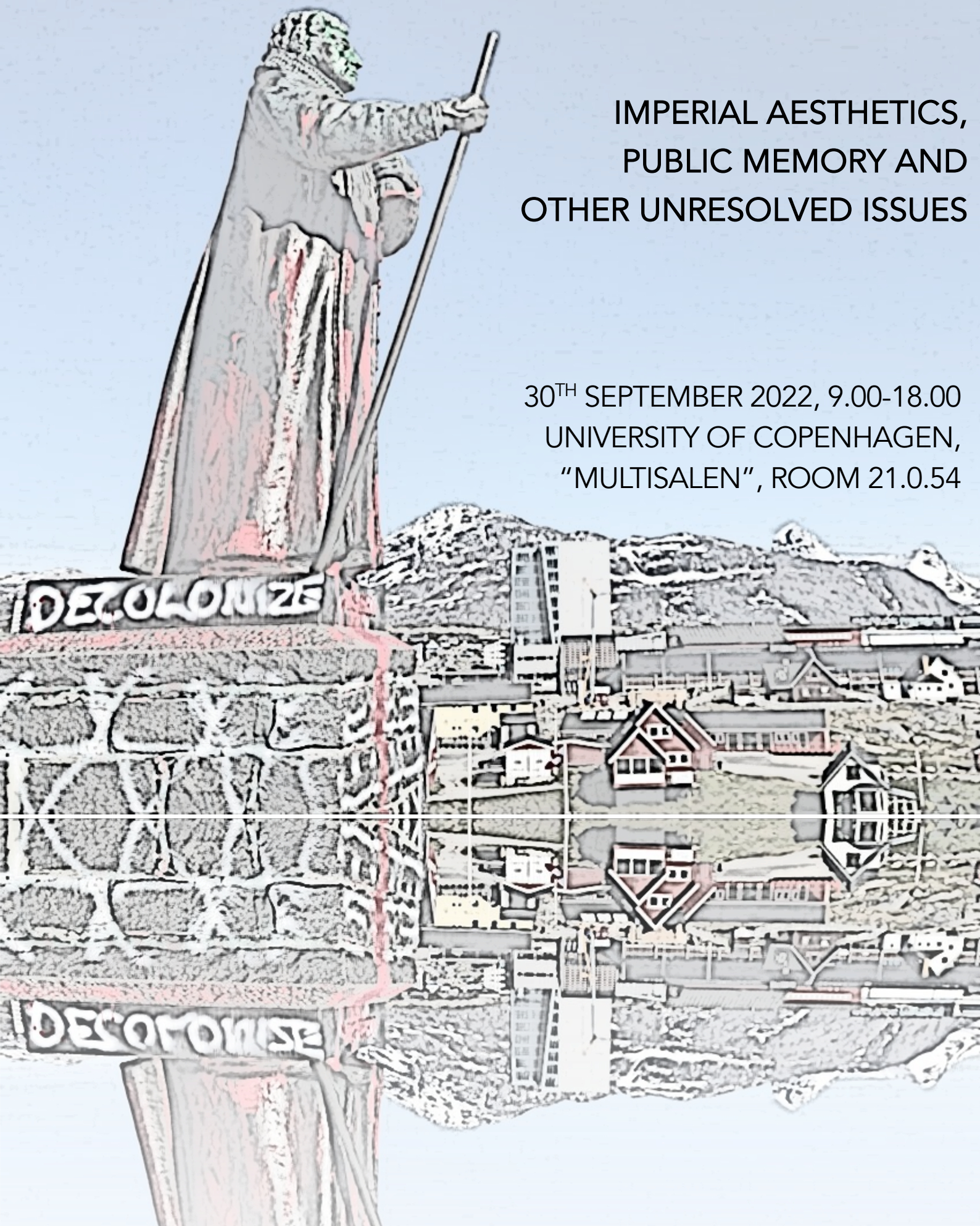


MOVING MONUMENTS

IMPERIAL AESTHETICS,
PUBLIC MEMORY AND
OTHER UNRESOLVED ISSUES

30TH SEPTEMBER 2022, 9.00-18.00
UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN,
"MULTISALEN", ROOM 21.0.54



Welcome to the kick-off seminar for the collective research project *Moving Monuments: The Material Lives of Sculpture from the Danish Colonial Era (2022-25)*.

The connection between colonialism, racism and public monuments have been heavily debated across the globe over the last years. Statues have been critically confronted, altered, removed, and in some cases destroyed – and new monuments have been erected or are in the process of being developed. With this seminar we seek to address the effects and consequences of the different critiques of monumental sculpture over the past years and discuss the new challenges and opportunities these debates have left us with. The seminar is free and open for all – no registration required.

Program

09:00: Arrival and coffee.

09:30: Welcome by Mathias Danbolt.

10:00: Amalie Skovmøller, "50 Queens: Invisibilities and Materialisms of Public Commemoration".

10:45: Break

11:00: Rebecca Schneider, "The Monument and the Quarry: Triumphalism and Decolonial Response-ability".

11:45: Marthe Kretzschmar, "Ce Marbre ne pouvait pas se travailler – Pigalle's Bust of Madame de Pompadour (1748-1751) and the French 'sol national'".

12:30: Lunch

13:30: Jeannette Ehlers, "Moko is Future" (2022) – film screening and presentation (online)

14:00: Discussion panel: Alex von Tunzelmann, Lise Skytte Jakobsen and Marina Prusac-Lindhagen. Moderated by Mathias Danbolt.

14:45: Break

15:00: Charmaine Nelson, "Male or Man?: American Slavery, Public Monuments, and the Containment of Black Manhood" (online).

15:45: Elizabeth Marlowe, "Talking back to Problematic Statues and Their Problematic Labels".

16:30: Break (15 min).

16:45: Naima Murphy Salcido: "Monument Lab in Philadelphia, US".



Abstracts

Amalie Skovmøller

"50 Queens: Invisibilities and Materialisms of Public Commemoration"

Recent years' focus on public monuments has opened new critical entries to the traditional idea of portrait statues. Left with an overwhelming number of ideal representations of white male bodies, posing as singular historic figures of the past but continuously celebrated until today, many people have voiced the need for a more democratic cityscape. How do we tackle this absurd level of inequality and invisibility in public statues when viewed against the diverse cultural, social, and ethnic demographics of the 21st century? Should we put up new statues to "even the score", as some debaters have suggested? Taking the temporary installation "50 Queens" (2022) in Copenhagen that celebrated Danish women who despite their important contributions to the society, culture, and the arts have not been awarded a statue in public, this paper argues that matters are more complicated than just raising new statues. As public spaces have been dominated by white men for so many years, taking back such spaces entails more than putting up new monumental art works. In addition, the making of sculptures is traditionally a male-dominated field, raising not only the issue of diversity in the subject matter of public statues, but also the question of which artists are granted artistic autonomy to develop on the genre of public commemoration in the future.

Rebecca Schneider

"The Monument and the Quarry: Triumphalism and Decolonial Response-ability"

If monuments hail passersby into relation, on what kinds of frequencies can we respond? Is the often remarked "invisibility" of monuments, which become overlooked parts of everyday landscapes, accompanied by an inaudibility in what Michel de Certeau called the "oceanic rumble of everyday life"? This talk looks to these questions as well as aspects of theatricality that haunt Western orientations to (ongoing) stone-based rituals of (ongoing) imperial triumph. Are de-colonial orientations to triumph and what Tiffany Lethabo King has called "conquistador subjectivity" also resident in stone? Are there other-wise ways of listening for what stone might say? Or, what is the quarry to the monument, and what does the quarry recall?

Marthe Kretzschmar

"Ce Marbre ne pouvait pas se travailler – Pigalle's Bust of Madame de Pompadour (1748-1751) and the French 'sol national'"

The sculptor Jean-Baptiste Pigalle made a bust of Madame de Pompadour, the famous and powerful mistress of King Louis XV, that is exhibited today at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The Museum's online catalogue informs us about its material and its unusual historical background:

"She chose the stone for the bust, a hard and brittle marble, with the intention of promoting the use of local French materials. This piece was the first to be made of the white marble from the newly discovered quarry of Sost in the French Pyrenees."

This paper delves deeper into this story and provides contextualization for it. Why was this particular marble chosen for the bust? How did Pigalle receive the material? And what role did French white marble play in the context of eighteenth-century French marble? In a second step, the topic is related to the concept of a national earth or soil ("sol national") that emerged during the eighteenth century as a consequence of the increased and systematized research on local regions and resources. In this context, Pigalle's practical expertise as a sculptor was used to assess a newly discovered rock within official investigations of French quarries.

Charmaine Nelson

"Male or Man?: American Slavery, Public Monuments, and the Containment of Black Manhood" [online via Zoom].

Taken as visible symbols of the ongoing state and civilian assaults on black people, public monuments have recently become the focus of frequent, often violent attacks. However, across Canada, the UK, and the USA much of the public's ire has been directed at monuments that can be described as obviously colonial; ones that have venerated and heroized mainly white male politicians, military men, enslavers, and colonizers whose public and private lives were defined by an often genocidal interaction with black and indigenous peoples. But other, less obvious monuments, built for anti-slavery ends, have also fallen far short of our collective ideals – past and present – of racial equality and justice. Through a comparative analysis of Thomas Ball's nineteenth-century monument, Lincoln Memorial (c. 1866) with John Quincy Adams Ward's Freedman (1863), and Mary Edmonia Lewis's Morning of Liberty/Forever Free (1867), this lecture contends that Ball's monument in particular falls (and fell in its own time), drastically short of sculpting a black man.

Elizabeth Marlowe

"Talking back to Problematic Statues and Their Problematic Labels"

This talk will consider a handful of case studies in which neither the statues nor their original labels were removed from view when public opinion turned against their racist or colonialist ideology. Instead, in these relatively unusual examples, new labels were installed alongside the original ones. I will argue that when this happens, the new, additional labels have the potential to expose not only the abhorrent views of previous centuries but also the ways in which the more recent practices of museums and other commemorative institutions normalized those views.

Naima Murphy Salcido

"Monumental Coalition"

In this talk Murphy Salcido will share case studies from Monument Lab in its approaches to meaningful partnership in pursuit of a society where monuments are dynamic and defined by their meaning, not by their hardened immovable and untouchable status. This

presentation will ultimately reflect on our emerging field of public memory and entry points for varying sectors around the world. The conversation will draw on examples from the field and Monument Lab's own body of work, including the National Monument Audit's study set of approximately 50,000 conventional monuments representing data collected from every U.S. state and territory. These examples allow us to better understand the dynamics and trends that have shaped our monument landscape, to pose questions about common knowledge about monuments, and acknowledge our needs as a vast and diverse community focused on public memory.