

# Lets Talk About It

**Facilitating Stakeholder Discussion To Make  
Collective Design Decisions**

Samantha Nemazie  
MEP+D Thesis 2018

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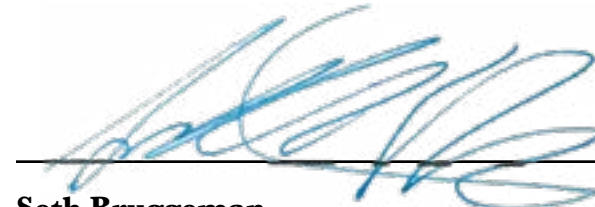
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University of the Arts Students  
Images by: Samantha Nemazie

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## Abstract

This thesis explores how facilitators can use monuments to foster design discussion within a defined community. This thesis focuses on the facilitators role in working with communities to better their public space whether that be through monument design or through a design decision that the defined community values. In this thesis process, I worked with the University of the Arts student community to better understand their needs when it comes to reimagining their university space. In the conclusion of this thesis project, future UArts facilitators are given guidelines and considerations on working with the student community in creating a co-creative space per the request of the individuals surveyed. This thesis also provides considerations to future facilitators when working on their own community projects.

## Prologue

This thesis is based in my point of view as a fellow student at the University of the Arts and on how monuments can be the catalyst for monument facilitation. This thesis project opened the doors for students to share their opinions on the University of the Arts. As the voice of this thesis, I wanted to give the students an outlet to communicate how they felt about themselves related to their wider university space. I initially set out to create a monument design with the students but after speaking with them, I realized that I needed to adapt my initial plan to better fit the community I was working with. Although it is important to stay objective as a facilitator when working with communities, I felt that when working with the University of the Arts students, as a fellow student, that it would be more valuable for me to become closer with the individuals I surveyed rather than appearing to be an authority. As a former graduate assistant for the Office of Student Life, I had noticed a form of hesitation when students talked with university administration about their concerns. For this project, I decided that connecting with students as a peer would illicit more thoughtful responses. Although, when I spoke to the students I did not begin any negative or positive conversations but, if the discussion went that way I allowed the moment to happen and validated it by letting the students know I was thankful for their contribution to the conversation.

## Preface

Understanding my peers and creating for them has been a huge part of my personality for as long as I can remember. From middle school to graduate school, I have held student leadership roles to provide better understanding and representation to those within my community. Being an advocate for students, I have continually been working to bridge the gap between individuals in my immediate community and those who have authority among my peers. Mediating between disagreeing individuals has been my strong suit because I truly believe that communication and conversation are the cornerstone for understanding. I am inherently an idealistic person and have worked repeatedly to understand others' needs via conversation and mediation. Adaption is necessary in the role of facilitator, as our current ideals are changing with better understanding of human nature. Through this thesis, I have utilized experience from my courses in the Museum Exhibition Planning and Design program at the University of the Arts, as well as past interactions with others in my professional/student leadership roles, to facilitate discussion among community stakeholders. I have begun to explore the ways in which design can provide solutions to the problem that is presented by permanent fixtures that claim space and project past ideals in our public landscapes, cultural memory, and individual minds. Full understanding and complete unity can never truly be possible. Human nature, as we know it, does not allow for utopia otherwise our society would not be discussing this topic so heavily. I'm not proposing to remove or manipulate monuments that are problematic to present day audiences, I am attempting to better understand community stakeholders and the steps necessary to improve the process of creating monuments for/with the people who are actively affected by the representations in their surroundings.





## **Explanation of Thesis and Background Information**

Involving community stakeholders in design discussions allows for individual agency within public space. Now, more than ever, the truth about our past and how it is represented in contemporary spaces is being critically examined and reevaluated to include current ideals and values. The challenge design professionals face when involved in the process of reimagining a public space is understanding how imperative it is that we reflect on past and contemporary community identity. We must also attempt to develop a connection and facilitate involvement with those who will be interacting with our design in order to truly understand how to serve a community and their needs. When working with individuals in a community, public professionals must also understand that coming to design conclusions takes a considerable amount of time and that it is impossible to make everyone happy.

The reevaluation of public spaces and the process of creating monuments, memorials and, public art impacts crucial elements in the development of social identity connected to the history of a place. As designers of public engagement, it is our responsibility to create better representations of our cultural identity within the memory landscapes of our nation. Therefore discrepancies among professionals involved in

the community design process and the individuals they represent have every possibility of creating a tumultuous environment. The process of connecting with a community to make design decisions will be different depending on the history of the individuals involved but also how facilitators handle various issues as they arise. No design problem is the same but public professionals can respond using various tools and techniques to better understand their audience and those they represent. Developing empathy for the individuals one is working with is necessary when considering how easily communities are impacted by the representations in their environment.

Facilitators face multiple challenges when understanding how to please local communities. Individual morals and beliefs differ in a group of people, therefore it can be extremely difficult to create work for the masses. Utilizing various techniques to engage communities can spur essential discussions in generating design decisions for local landscapes. The act of facilitating discussions is often the most important part of the process. Giving communities a voice when design decisions are made in their communities provides opportunity to better understand everyone in our communities rather than a select few.



<http://animaleadership.com/training/facilitation/>

## Why Monuments Exist and What They Mean to Communities

Due to commemoration having no bounds in its form of expression and appearing in art, music, currency, or the creation of national holidays, the social act of memorialization is inherent to human nature and understanding. The universal understanding of a monument that it is a physical statue representing an individual or time in history in a public space. Understanding monuments in the context of this thesis is to broaden one's idea of what a monument is and how it is placed within communities. When we discuss our own histories we often remember the experiences that we have encountered in our communities in relation to our landscapes. When considering monuments, their placement in our communities and how they relate to our memories/social identity has the potential to encourage communities to truly gain agency over their public space and identify what makes their monuments important both to themselves and to others.

Monuments hold different meanings to different people. When considering the history that is commemorated in monuments, it is important to acknowledge that not everyone's history is remembered. Depending on an individual's background, a monument may mean different things to that person. There is a difference between remembrance of history through public art and respecting that history through your actions. When monuments of hatred dominate, it has been debated in contemporary culture who gets to decide how public spaces are used to commemorate the past.

Often influenced politically, memorials are subject to selective remembrance and distorting memories to serve present needs. A crucial element in the development of social identity connected to the history of a place is created when monuments align with the beliefs of the people rather than those who hold positions of power. The act of facilitation has the potential to elicit new ideas and potential within communities.

the term takes on a fluid definition. The word monument in itself is a loaded term that many people define differently. When working with the University of the Arts students for the applied example of this thesis, the students did not feel comfortable with the word monument related to their student experience because they felt the word monument was a positive term. Therefore, the word monument can be defined in this thesis as a form of public art.

### Thesis Mission and Goals

This thesis will work towards creating a process of facilitating community discussion when designing monuments as art installations that represent the people and their current beliefs.

This thesis is significant because it will change the way that facilitators engage communities who are involved in the design of the monuments that surround them. It will address common concerns within the current political climate and how we can collectively decide what our commemorative landscape represents to us, to visitors, and to future generations. This thesis will be a diplomatic approach both to visitor interpretation and to the relevant needs of the people in the community that “live” with the monuments that surround them.



Funeral For A Home  
<http://www.canarypromo.com/funeralforahome>

### Developing a New Type of Monument

The physical embodiment of present day representation needs a design that meets the expectations of those involved. Due to these expectations, memorials must consider the present visitor and how contemporary knowledge symbolically connects to a topic and the past that it is commemorating. Monuments contain significant symbolism that following generations can use to understand their culture’s past ideals and history. Therefore the memory landscapes created by monuments must be able to be interpreted by the visitor through all times- past, present, and future. Design must truly be considered as a way to better implement the changing ideals of the people. This can be done in many ways and ultimately the path should be decided by the community that facilitators are working with. This can be done by creating a method to access a better understanding of individuals within communities who have not been able to participate in the development of their space.

Monument design produces conflict with those who have differing points of view therefore when discussing monuments in relation to this thesis



## **Nomenclature**

### **Community**

A feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals. It is commonly known that those in a community live in the same location but for this thesis the community members share a common educational institute.

### **“Live” Monument**

Monument in a public space with lots of activity and social interaction. Monument - Erected in order to commemorate a contemporary concept/issue that is visually represented through various sculptural media in the public.

### **Memorial**

An representational act of human expression through various sculptural media in the public in order to never forget historical events, tragedies, and figures of the past.

### **Memory or Monument Landscape**

Monuments and memorials create visual memories of times past. These monuments and memorials create markers that physically influence the landscape and understanding of the local culture/history.

### **Place Making**

The act of collectively reimagining a public space with individuals in a defined community. Place making pays attention to and facilitates physical, cultural, and social identity.

### **Public Art**

Work that exists in the public space. It is often seen in a positive light among University of the Arts students so using this synonymously with monument benefited the project.



### **Past and Contemporary Context**

We are at a moment of reimagining our future through transforming cultural ideals and civil rights among American communities. Our nation is in the process of embracing and rejecting various issues that lead to modern day oppression. No longer are communities standing by waiting for issues to be resolved by those in positions of power. Public protests, marches, and rallies have filled the streets of various cities to fight back against controversial issues that no longer fit in a contemporary context.

The issues of racism, oppression, and slavery have plagued the landscape of American cities through representation of racist individuals and events since the Reconstruction era. Having moments of memory in public space reminds communities of past oppression and effects the cultural identity of a community. Representation of destructive themes within a community affect how a community feels about themselves in context to their local history.

Collective memory manifests through the commemoration of various events and themes by a group of people. Those in power choose what is publicly remembered and how those stories are told through text books, parades, holidays, sculptures, and public parks. We all have our



own family stories that we identify with but we're taught to remember and identify with collective memories based on events which those in power decide to share through memorial and monument mediums. Sometimes these stories that are continually shared are not the truth but the past as our society remembers it. Instead of considering all perspectives, it is mainly the perspective of the master class that carries on over time. This has become a problem in today's culture where diverse points of view are in the beginning stages of being recognized for their part in history. Deciphering remembered history, how its represented in the public and how that affects current populations is crucial in the progress for building present-day cultural concepts into our cultural identity.



<https://www.commercialappeal.com/story/news/government/city/2017/10/13/live-coverage-historical-commission-hears-arguments-removal-memphis-confederate-monument/758712001/>

## Lost Cause of the Confederacy Movement

The Lost Cause movement is known as a collection of historical myths meant to whitewash the hard truths of slavery and the Civil War which resulted in many confederate monuments during Jim Crow segregation of the 1890s-1950s. Many of the statues that are found in common spaces dedicated to KKK leaders were placed in those public spaces without the approval that contemporary public art requires today. (Brundage, W. Fitzhugh) Many of them were created by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, who claimed that they were representing local community sentiments in which they erected and dedicated these statues. Most of the controversial monuments are problematic because their existence omits the opportunity for contemporary African Americans to voice their opinion. These monuments are the result of private groups colonizing public space. The legacy of these symbols clearly affects society today. Over the past decade, Southern Legislators have passed laws that require approval on the removal and modification of these monuments. This has essentially frozen these private yet public art decisions made by the United Daughters of the Confederacy in the 1890s-1950s. We have inherited a memorial landscape that was created during two major cultural projects after the Civil War. These monuments were created during the reconciliation of the North and the South as well as during the time of Jim Crow and white supremacy in the South. Many of the figures represented in the Lost Cause of the Confederacy movement include Nathan Bedford Forrest, a generic confederate soldier, or a more well-known figure such as Robert E. Lee.

While studying in Memphis, TN, I was constantly confronted with the imagery of Memphis' past by various historical markers from over the years. Memphis' history is filled with past segregations that were eminent during various civil rights movements. One monument that caused an intense amount of controversy among Memphis residents and those from surrounding cities was that of Nathan Bedford Forrest, one of the founding members of the KKK. In 2013, the city threatened to remove the monument from its original location. During this time, many outsiders who visibly identified themselves as a part of the KKK, flooded the city to protect the Nathan Bedford Forrest Monument. Although Memphis does have its shortcomings in regards to racial inequality, the community does have a bright outlook on unity and encouraged city officials to remove the statue. Despite various protests and confrontations, state law does not allow the removal of the Nathan Bedford Forrest Monument. "Tennessee

is one of several Southern states that prevent the removal of Confederate monuments on public property without state approval, or require review from a historical commission. These preemption laws are part of a broader battle between conservative state governments, often dominated by white conservatives, and more liberal cities, often with large African American populations. Race is a frequent subtext in such discussions, but the debate over Confederate monuments makes that dimension explicit.” (Graham) the As a resident of Memphis myself, I was among those within my community who were disappointed in the verdict. The black community of Memphis is the majority with 64.1% of the population identifying as African American. (statisticalatlas.com) The monument to Nathan Bedford Forrest represented a past that was determined to stifle black empowerment which constantly reminds the community of past oppression and potentially glorifies KKK ideals.

Recently, the debate and controversy of the Nathan Bedford Forrest Monument has been revisited since I lived in Memphis. After The City of Memphis renewed requests to remove the statue in October 2017, the Tennessee Historical Commission rejected the request. The city decided to take matters into their own hands. On December 20, 2017, the Nathan Bedford Forrest monument was finally removed after the city found a legal loop hole to remove the detested statue. The city of Memphis sold “Forrest Park”, recently renamed “Health Sciences Park”, to a non profit organization that promptly removed the statue in the dead of night. This shows that when state government does not align with local communities there is a way for communities to stand for what they believe in and take action.

Although, this was definitely a step forward in the removal of confederate monuments the state of Tennessee became extremely angry at Memphis city officials for discovering a way to legally remove the monument with out approval. On April 18, 2018, the republican dominated house in Tennessee voted to punish the city of Memphis by taking away \$250,000 from the bicentennial celebration that is planned to happen next year. A “republican lawmaker said removing the monuments was erasing history, something he said ISIS does, and it was a bad action that deserved punishment.” (nbcnews.com) Not everyone will agree with removing statues from the lost cause movement. They are entitled to their opinion but, these statues have caused hatred to be visually perpetuated and communities are beginning to fight back.



<http://time.com/charlottesville-white-nationalist-rally-clashes/>

## Unite the Right Rally and Charlottesville Controversy

In Charlottesville, Virginia on August 11th, 2017, white nationalists rallied around a monument of Robert E. Lee, which had been in the city since 1924. Controversy struck when the city officials threatened to remove the statue. White nationalists and the counter demonstrators that opposed them met violently in a protest that resulted in three deaths and dozens injured. Those who favored removal saw the monument as a symbol of white supremacy, but their opponents accused them of trying to erase history.

The Unite the Right Rally was a long time coming at the University of Virginia. The statue had been debated for many years. In 2013, author and historian Edward Ayers, and Kristin Szakos, a Charlottesville city councilor, asked the city to reconsider its Confederate



monuments and whether they should be taken down. (Fortin, Jacey) The response by the local community was ugly and she received death threats. In 2015, southern states began to debate the symbolism of the confederate flag and monuments. As national events unfolded more and more people were beginning to question these symbols in their communities. That year someone spray painted “Black Lives Matter” on the base of the monument.

Public opinion has a huge impact on how monuments are seen. Until recently, Robert E. Lee was a convenient symbol of reconciliation between the North and the South which is why his statue is so prominent. Although Lee’s family owned slaves, Lee was ambiguous on his opinion of slavery and it is unknown whether he owned slaves. During the reconciliation of the north and the south, it was a common perception that he was a southern hero and was anti-slavery. Although there are excerpts from a letter that he wrote in 1856 to his wife that states, “In this enlightened age, there are few I believe, but what will acknowledge, that slavery as an institution, is a moral & political evil in any Country. It is useless to expatiate on its disadvantages.” But he goes on: “I think it however a greater evil to the white than to the black race, & while my feelings are strongly enlisted in behalf of the latter, my sympathies are more strong for the former. The blacks are immeasurably better off here than in Africa, morally, socially & physically. The painful discipline they are undergoing, is necessary for their instruction as a race, & I hope will prepare & lead them to better things. How long their subjugation may be necessary is known & ordered by a wise Merciful Providence.” (Blount, Roy) Although Lee has made racist statements he was praised for his surrender at the end of the Civil War, which in turn united the nation once again after five years of battle. Since Lee surrendered at the Appomattox Court House April 9, 1865, he has been publicly praised for his “honorable” actions. In 1907, on the 100th anniversary of Lee’s birth, President Theodore Roosevelt expressed mainstream American sentiment, praising Lee’s “extraordinary skill as a General, his dauntless courage and high leadership,” adding, “He stood that hardest of all strains, the strain of bearing himself well through the gray evening of failure; and therefore out of what seemed failure he helped to build the wonderful and mighty triumph of our national life, in which all his countrymen, north and south, share.” (Blount, Roy) Whether he owned slaves or not, his identity has become a symbol of oppression to contemporary African Americans/allies and as a symbol of white supremacy and violence to those who identify with racist values. Because of this, the monuments to Robert E. Lee



<http://www.post-gazette.com/news/nation/2017/08/17/Eight-now-face-charges-in-toppling-of-Confederate-statue-in-Durham/stories/201708170227>

represent a form of terrorism that is spread by contemporary members of the KKK.

President Trump responded to the Charlottesville events in vague terms and proclaimed that everyone and no one was to be blamed. This insufficient response resulted in Neo Nazi groups perceiving support from the President and for others to fight in maintaining these symbols of violence in the American landscape. Due to the contemporary symbolism, these monuments become actual forms of propaganda and terrorism in the communities they are located in. When governments protect these negative and hateful representations rather than take a diplomatic approach to understanding the communities that face these monuments on the day to day life, it pushes the idea that these values are shared by many when that is simply not the case as we have found in the plethora of

protests and debates held around this topic.

### National Progress

After the events that occurred in Charlottesville, many cities began to fight back against the apparent support President Trump displayed for white supremacy groups. “These monuments purposefully celebrate a fictional, sanitized Confederacy,” New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu said, “After the Civil War, these statues were a part of that terrorism as much as a burning cross on someone’s lawn; they were erected purposefully to send a strong message to all who walked in their shadows about who was still in charge in this city.” (Smith, Jamil)

Just days after the Charlottesville Controversy, a group of activists in Durham, North Carolina took it into their own hands to remove a 93 year old bronze statue. A large crowd of people witnessed the 15 foot confederate soldier statue crumple by leaning a ladder that said “in memory of the boys who wore grey” with a yellow rope tied around the neck. (Kaleem, Jaweed) Citizens took control of the circumstances and illegally removed the statue plaguing the town. There were charges of vandalism but they were soon dropped. Local artists occasionally create their own statues and place them on the plinth now that the confederate statue is gone. Now the plinth is no longer a place that commemorates the confederate soldiers but instead memorializes the protest that tore the statue down. (Graham, David)

Even statues that aren’t related to The Lost Cause Movement are beginning to get a second look. A statue of Roger B. Taney was removed in Annapolis, Maryland. “On Aug. 18. Gov. Larry Hogan, a Republican, called for its removal earlier this week, reversing a previously stated position that removing symbols like the statue would be tantamount to political correctness. Though not a Confederate official, Justice Taney was the chief author of the 1857 Dred Scott decision, which ruled that African-Americans, both enslaved and free, could not be American citizens.” (Bidgood, Jess, et al)

Citizens are tired of these symbols representing and affecting today’s society. We are dedicated to imaging a new landscape to document our history and life events. The confederate statues in our communities represent a past that is not welcome anymore. Our identity as a nation is under scrutiny based on the monuments created by past generations and what they represent as shown in the case at Charlottesville. These monuments create “memory landscapes” throughout our country that visually represent our tumultuous past and do not reflect our current beliefs and needs as a nation. As designers of public engagement, it is

our responsibility to create better representations of our cultural identity within the memory landscapes of our nation.

## Representation, Public History, and Memory

The Power of Representation is instrumental in the development of selfhood within the constraints of culture. Monuments are a crucial element in the development of social identity connected to the history of a place. “With regard to the formation of urban space, the monument and the heritage are structures that constantly serve as references of identity, for the cultural representation of a group in a given area and at a given time.” (Vasconcelos Leite, pg. 26) Public symbolism aids in developing cultural heritage through adding to the collective consciousness of the community. Monuments have significant symbolism that following generations can use to understand their culture’s past ideals and history. Therefore monuments visually and symbolically represent a culture’s beliefs. Davis and Bowring in *Connecting with Tragedy Through Landscapes of Memory: Memorial Design, Tourism, and the Post- Genocide Memoryscapes of Cambodia, Rwanda, and Germany* states: “Historically, individual nations have held sets of meanings and interpretations in relation to their past which were developed into memorials and commemorative spaces to reinforce peoples’ identification with specific social values. In doing so, they create a collective national identity.”

Cultural memory is at stake when only a select few have a hand in the design of monuments. According to *The Museum Effect* by Valerie Casey, “Cultural memory promotes a shared sense of history, and this collective interpretation is fundamental in creating the values, ideals, and goals associated with social identity. However, this memory is selective.” Since collective interpretation and a shared sense of history is so valuable to our understanding of ourselves, it is necessary that many different perspectives are acknowledged and evaluated in consideration to the design of monuments within public spaces. In order to avoid selective memory, a process must be designed to create a collaborative monument which represents a shared belief that tells more than one side to the story.

Defining public history by collaborating with local communities allows for individuals to take part in creating their own cultural identity. When governing bodies decide the symbolism of their people they have the power to create misrepresentations of the minorities within society. Including the voice of the individuals in the community allows for an



authentic representation of what it means to belong in this time and space. This process is necessary in creating a vision of the people of now. Organizations can foster opportunities for co-creation in communities to explore various themes that are important to that community.

Mural Arts, a prominent community based arts organization in Philadelphia, focuses on key constituencies in the city. Mural Arts focuses on working with stakeholders in the neighborhoods they work in. Their website states: “Connections begin when people picture themselves in each other’s shoes. Once we have found our inspiration, we mobilize our partners and build a team of individuals – artists, participants, residents, nonprofit leaders, funders, policymakers – anyone who wants to help us make change happen. We connect people and institutions who normally do not talk to each other, and build bridges of dialogue over longstanding chasms of misunderstanding, distrust, or ignorance. The connections are not always comfortable or convenient. But they result in important conversations that spark change – in attitudes, in understanding, and in hearts and minds.” Mural Arts has a long standing in Philadelphia for creating public murals with community stakeholders. One of their community murals that prominently displays community members is the Peace Wall in the Gray’s Ferry neighborhood. The website states: “After racial violence in the Grays Ferry neighborhood made national headlines, Jane Golden and community organizers went door-to-door pitching a mural. Cynics sneered, but other residents chose this design, then lined up to have their hands photographed. The diverse, yet converging hands symbolize the community’s commitment to ending racial division.”(muralarts.org) The Peace Wall becomes a perfect representation of the people unifying to overcome their community struggles. The symbolism of this piece is paramount in creating a cultural identity for those who live in the neighborhood. Walking past the mural on a regular basis, neighbors are reminded of the pledge to peace. Mural Arts facilitated an understanding within the community by talking with community stakeholders that wanted to participate in making their memory landscape one of peace instead of racial divide. The mural becomes a monument to the community in that moment and what they want to remember about themselves and what they want to present to visitors. This mural and approach are a form of applied history that the community chooses to remember rather than what was presented in the media. Just as confederate monuments are a form of propaganda and terrorism within our landscape, designers can use symbolism to spread messages of hope and peace.



<https://www.muralarts.org/artworks/peace-wall/>

## “The People” and Redistributing Authority

When working with people and cultural concepts facilitators must acknowledge that attitudes, knowledge, laws, and memory are ever changing. The beauty of our world is paramount on our ability to progress. Our cultural identity and favored symbolism changes with our new discoveries and realizations. In this world of change, monuments fail because they aspire to last forever. Monuments can’t definitively represent the truth because the truth changes as we change. The attempt to commemorate the present through public art is a part of our need for self expression. Creating work that represents the people now that will stand the test of time is impossible.

The act of creation and collaboration is significant in itself. When people join together to reach a common goal it cements the act

of unity through symbolism. When the community feels connected to the piece that they designed together it cements that moment as a part of their history. Developing ownership of a personal environment in the public space allows for communities to develop agency for their space. When the confederate monuments loom over a community it creates an environment that stimulates fear/hatred. But when monuments made by the community, for the community take that place a bond can form.

To periodically reimagine symbolism within communities will create a memory within the landscape that is as ever changing as cultural identity. These community discussions and meetings will create moments of recognition for the current being therefore they should not outlast the individuals who created it. To resolve the issue of monuments' symbolism becoming outdated, it would serve the community greatly if the structure is evolving or temporary. One issue that always arises with collaboration work within communities is that not everyone can agree on the same ideas. When facilitating group art work some issues will not be resolved and that in itself is okay. There will always be someone who will not agree with the group or someone who feels left out. Other times, a member of the community feels that they must get along with the whole group and votes for something they don't necessarily believe in. When the monument is reexamined it allows for new opinions to emerge and allows for those who might have felt left out to get their opinion across.

Working with a community in a public sphere one must remember that there is no such thing as "the people" or that believing in complete unity is possible. To create a public art piece that completely represents a group of people with the majority vote would not work simply because the individuals with more power or money will always have the ending decision. The people will never truly be unified because we are all unique in our preferences. As a facilitator of group decisions, designers are directly responsible for the visual piece that results from the group work and will ultimately have a hand in the composition. When facilitating discussion, it is best to truly study the community you are working with to truly understand their needs and wants but to also remember that it is impossible to please everyone and that because of the false sense of unified public opinion.

When facilitators work with communities, they are acknowledging the individuals' connection to their space. The process of creating community-based work redistributes authority from those of the master class to those who have not always had an equal voice in determining the shape of the nation's commemorative landscape.

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### Case Studies

Philadelphia, the birth place of American History is populated with many forward thinking individuals is a city of on going action combating the topic of monument design and memorialization. All of the case studies follow various steps to ensure that the community is engaged in the process of design. In the case of The President's House: Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a New Nation, it was forced upon the Independence National Historical Park to listen to the communities voices after information about the site was leaked to the public. It soon became a topic in Philadelphia that was supported by government agencies such as Mayor John Street. A Quest for Parity: The Octavius V. Catto Memorial was supported by Mayor Kenney who followed a traditional process that was supported by individuals with higher levels of government involvement. Each of these case studies and those that put them in place seek to model a form of community engagement, but the people who make these monuments happen in public space are all mainstream, well-capitalized cultural organizers. The case studies are important to this thesis because they attempt to work with the community but, their existence perpetuate cultural hierarchies that gave rise to monument-building in the first place. When reading about these monument projects, it is imperative to examine how the organizers worked alongside local communities rather than how they are funded or who represents them.

## Monument Lab: A Public Art and History Project

The summer of 2017 was a time of transformation for public art in Philadelphia. A project started in classrooms led by Paul Farber and Ken Lum in 2012, took over the city at an opportune time of public discussion after the media coverage of the Charlottesville incidents. In September of 2017, the city embraced 20 monument-style public art projects in many of the different neighborhoods of Philadelphia. Monument Lab, which partnered with Mural Arts Philadelphia, another organization focused on creating public art, had a stated goal “to unearth the next generation of monuments and change to ways we write the history of cities together.” (monumentlab.com) Their focus was to “ask open research questions to cultivate contemporary artworks, generate publicly sourced civic data, and co-author interpretive experiences with artists, students, and public participants.”

The Discovery Phase of Monument Lab in 2015 is when the organization began working with the Philadelphia community. In this stage of the project, the Monument Lab team collected 455 monument proposals at a station located in Philadelphia’s City Hall. The team asked of the participants “What is an appropriate monument for the city of Philadelphia?” The question was on a slip of paper with room for the proposed monument’s name, where it should be located, a description/sketch of the proposed monument, the participants zip code and age, and a research ID number.

Once the Discovery Phase of Monument Lab was completed in July 2015, Monument Lab research interns met with members of the City of Philadelphia’s Office of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy at City Hall. The research interns were high schoolers from Philadelphia. Through their analysis, they found the top 3 topics submitted were Neighborhoods, Art and Culture, and City Infrastructure. They also found that participants wanted statue/sculpture, conceptual, or interactive types of monuments.

This part of the project was used to inform the debut of 20 temporary prototype monuments and community research in September 2017. The artists featured in the project were selected by a curatorial team. The artists’ hometowns ranged from Philadelphia to New York City and as far afield as Berlin. Each artist was chosen in a traditional curatorial process of curatorial review and invitation to participate. 20 artists participated including Hank Willis Thomas from New York City, Mel Chin from Egypt and local artists such as Kaitlin Pomerantz, Alexander



<https://philly.curbed.com/maps/philadelphia-monument-lab-public-art-locations-map>



Rosenberg, and Karyn Olivier. All of the artists were shown the Discovery Phase data but, it was not mandatory for them to follow the proposals received during 2015.

Hank Willis Thomas received the most media coverage over his All Power to All People explained as a “public art intervention around identity and representation in Philadelphia.” The piece was an 8 foot tall afro pick on Thomas Paine Plaza near Philadelphia’s city hall. Those from the community and the mayor of Philadelphia attended the opening event for this piece. Hank Willis Thomas stated the afro pick “exists today as many things to different people: it is worn as adornment, a political emblem, and signature of collective identity. The Afro pick continues to develop itself as a testament to innovation.” (monumentlab.com)

Karyn Olivier, a Philadelphia based artist, also received a lot of mention from the community through her piece titled The Battle is Joined in Philadelphia’s Vernon Park. The piece she created is an effective example on reimagining a past monument. The piece was made with the Battle of Germantown Memorial, a 20-foot-high commemorative structure dedicated to a Revolutionary War skirmish between American and British troops in 1777. Olivier built out a temporary acrylic mirror to encase the monument. Olivier stated, “It will transport, transmit, express and literally reflect the landscape, people and activities that surround it. We will be reminded that this memorial can be an instrument and we, too, are instruments—the keepers and protectors of the monument, and in that role, sometimes we become the very monument itself.” (monumentlab.com)

During this time, Monument Lab collected proposals for the 2017 research in many squares/parks in Philadelphia. When collecting the proposals, Monument Lab promised participants that their proposals would be on display at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, a part of an online map and interactive search system, a spot on Open Data Philly, a part of the permanent collection at the local library, and a final report based on the creative analysis that would be submitted to the city. The results of creative analysis from 2017 are not yet public, although the Monument Lab website has updated briefly through blog posts during the research analysis process. They are planning on making the 2017 research and public art project an iterative process to collect and engage with the community more.

Monument Lab is an example of how community engagement can be facilitated over a long period of time through action. The temporary monument prototypes allow for the community to express their identity

in that moment through the artists chosen to represent them. Symbols and icons of a community change over time and the temporary ongoing prototype monuments allow for community discussion to be revisited continually. One major part of the project is giving individuals within the communities a voice and space to communicate over time rather than just one project that is forgotten about as soon the media stops covering it. Also, the straightforward questioning with a sense of anonymity within a big city and the spontaneity of filling out a one question survey worked in the researchers’ favor in receiving response from those who participated.



<http://magazine.art21.org/2018/01/26/on-monument-lab/#>.  
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<http://www.philly.com/philly/news/pennsylvania/philadelphia/octavius-catto-civil-rights-statue-baseball-20170926.html>

## A Quest for Parity: The Octavius V. Catto Memorial

The Octavius Valentine Catto Memorial was an ongoing project for the mayor of Philadelphia, Jim Kenney. Being the first monument dedicated to an individual African American, the Octavius Valentine Catto Memorial was highly celebrated within the Philadelphia community. Presented to the public in September, the Catto monument coincided both with the Monument Lab project and the national dialogue surrounding the Charlottesville Controversy, and opened up a deeper conversation about representation in Philadelphia.

Octavius Catto had a powerful connection to Philadelphia through his activism work done through the 1860-1870s. (Salisbury, Stephan) He was a key figure in Philadelphia during this time because of his involvement in fighting for the rights for African Americans to use streetcars in Philadelphia and advocated for voting rights through the ratification of the 15th amendment. This was granted in October 1870. Unfortunately, Catto never got the chance to vote in Philadelphia because he was shot to death on his doorstep. His murder was used to deter fellow African Americans from voting. Catto's legacy has lived on within the African American community of Philadelphia since. The only issue being that Catto was erased from history books and lacked the recognition that current society demands of their unforgotten history.

In 2004, Mayor Kenney set up the Octavius V. Catto Memorial Fund with the Philadelphia Foundation. By creating a source of funding, the project gained momentum and notoriety from locals. When choosing an artist for the Octavius V. Catto Memorial, the Philadelphia Arts Commission used traditional monument guidelines. Branly Cadet was one out of many proposals from various public artists. After going through multiple rounds of review by a committee of local public and community arts, Cadet's proposal was chosen for the City Hall location. Cadet is not a local artist to Philadelphia but has a large body of work commemorating various historical individuals. Cadet is passionate about creating excellent representations of historical figures and visual "excellence that will stand the test of time." ([www.ovcattomemorial.org](http://www.ovcattomemorial.org)) Cadet stated in 2014, "My goal was to create a design in dialogue with the magnificent and historically important site that is Philadelphia's City Hall. I wanted to immerse viewers in a visual drama that celebrates a great man of unquestioned courage and service, whose young life was lost in defense of one of our most precious rights — the right to vote."

The final memorial located on the southwest apron of Philadelphia's City Hall consists of a 12-foot bronze statue of Catto. Behind him are five granite pillars, fashioned like upturned streetcars. The figure faces a stainless-steel ballot box resting on a broad table. Commemorating Catto near City Hall was a direct move in changing the memory landscape of Philadelphia. Creating diversified monuments/memorials allows for wider communities to feel represented in their landscape. Catto became a symbol for African American strength in the fight against oppression. Catto is the perfect individual to represent and commemorate the struggle that local African American communities face every day.

The process of creating *A Quest for Parity: The Octavius V. Catto Memorial* is common in the creation of public memorials funded through government represented organizations. Although the project had little community involvement, it brought an unacknowledged historical figure front and center to citizens and visitors of Philadelphia, creating the opportunity for a diverse and reaching audience to be impacted by the story of Octavius V. Catto.



<http://www.philly.com/philly/news/pennsylvania/philadelphia/statues-george-washington-thomas-jefferson-presidents-house-philadelphia-20170818.html>

## The President's House: Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a New Nation

The President's House, the first presidential residence, had one of the most controversial community discussions in regard to public history and interpretation. During the excavation and creation of the President's house interpretation, there were two schools of thought that contradicted one another. Some opted for focusing on the story of the founding fathers and the birth of our nation, while others proposed to tell the undisclosed story about George Washington and John Adams owning and living with nine African American slaves in the mansion during their presidencies. Members of Avenging the Ancestors Coalition and concerned members of the public protested for the commemoration of the enslaved African Americans that once lived in the home. From the initial discussions of the site's interpretation to the 2010 opening, The President's house and the controversy that follows examines the contradictions, conflicts, and politics surrounding the house and those that lived there. (ushistory.org) This debate led to many discussions in the community over the history of public space and what that means to society in contemporary contexts. This case study examines the conflicts between different groups of Americans concerning how this crucial piece of their shared history was to be presented, and the resolution of those conflicts.

From 1790-1800 Presidents George Washington and John Adams lived and worked in a mansion known as the Presidents House at 6th and Market Streets. The forefathers fought hard to retain freedom for "We the People" while contradictorily enslaving African Americans in that same space. George Washington would often bring 9 of his 361 Mount Vernon slaves from Virginia to do his bidding across the street from the present day location of the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, both American symbols of freedom in the modern mind. During this time, the Pennsylvania Law of 1780 provided that any enslaved individual brought into the state would be free after 6 months. Due to this law, it was known that George Washington would move his slaves from The President's House back to Mount Vernon after 6 months to keep ownership of those he enslaved instead of letting them free under the law. Also Philadelphia was acknowledging many previously enslaved individuals' freedom after the American Revolution. Many African Americans were starting the first black organizations, schools, and churches in Philadelphia.

During the 2000-2002 construction of the Liberty Bell Center, the controversy over the President's House began. (independencehall-



americanmemory.com) Those working in the Independence National Historical Park (INHP) postponed the construction of the Liberty Bell Center when historian Edward Lawler and his team uncovered an icehouse built by Robert Morris in 1781 that was said to have been used by Presidents Washington and Adams. It was determined that the remnants of The Presidents house, where Washington and his slaves lived, was located right next to and underneath of the location proposed to house the Liberty Bell Center. Initially, The Independence Hall Association proposed that an outline of the Presidents House location would be installed in the pavement outside of the Liberty Bell Center. This proposal was rejected by the INHP and it was determined that there would be no interpretation on the President's House. Edward Lawler then published "The President's House in Philadelphia: The Rediscovery of a Lost Landmark" in 2002 which focused on the issues of the house and the enslaved men and women that toiled in the house during Washington's presidency. Later, WHYY-91FM radio conducted an interview with historian Gary Nash where he stated "And millions of visitors are going to go into the Liberty Bell not knowing they are walking over the site of Washington's executive mansion, indeed walking over the slave quarters he built at the rear of the house.... We have here a conjunction of liberty and slavery on the same site!" This interview sparked a grassroots national campaign that demanded the interpretation of the President's House and those that were enslaved there.



<http://www.independencehall-americanmemory.com/teaching-guides/teaching-guide-public-history/presidents-house-case-study/>

In January of 2003, the initial designs for the site were unveiled at an angry public meeting at Philadelphia's African American Museum. Many were unhappy about the lack of public participation in the decisions and no sign of marking where the slave quarters were located at the site. Although many urged for the marking of the slave quarters, the INHP defended its decision. After the opening of the Liberty Bell Center, Mayor John Street urged residents of Philadelphia to become a part of the conversation and pledged \$1.5 million to the commemoration of those enslaved who served at the site. The INHP then held a roundtable discussion with scholars to review the evidence collected over the years and the proposed design. The process of creating interpretation immediately became controversial.

Individuals in the community organized many protests and marches over the interpretation over the site. From March 2002-May 2003, an online petition was started to encourage public interest and feedback to help demonstrate public support for the project. In July of 2003, 500 marchers took a stand on the lack of slave quarter markings. After the involvement and urgency of the community, the INHP then decided to hold a public forum in October 2004 to address later critiques concerning the lack of public involvement. Hundreds attended the public forum and vehemently discussed their stance on the interpretation of the site. The INHP later decided to allow the markings of the slave quarters and passed the project on to the City of Philadelphia.

The project and interpretation was later completed in 2010, 3 years after the initial proposed opening. While looking at the controversy of the President's House, it can be determined that public participation is necessary in the development of a public space concerning history and memory of a space.



<http://www.facilitatingresults.ca/services/3/facilitation>

## Conclusion

These case studies provide various processes of looking at facilitation and what results from controversial community discussion. Each of the projects started with commemorating various elements of American history and culture but, also explore the issues in monuments and how they interact with those they serve. Communities must actively engage in monument building and interpretation to ensure that their voice is heard. In the case of the confederate monuments, the voice of the people was not heard at all because private organizations made decisions for the public landscape. While these case studies actively engaged the people and ensured that their voices were heard. The act of creating the monument isn't necessarily what pleases the community but, understanding the community's needs and providing a forum for that discussion is the most important part to the individuals emotionally involved. For every community member that is actively a part of the conversation, there are many that do not feel comfortable voicing their opinions. The mediator in these discussions must always understand that not every monument and community discussion is going to create progressive outcomes. The act of facilitation within communities takes a long time and on-going discussion and action.

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## **Process and Application Guidelines**

### **Guidelines for Facilitation**

When beginning to understand the act of facilitation, one must acknowledge the talent and skill that is needed to orchestrate a group of people to actively participate in the creation of cultural art works. There must be an inherent ability within a facilitator to be able to assess a group of people and their needs based on group discussion and data collection. “The facilitator is competent in designing and leading larger or smaller group processes and events: a conversation or discussion, a meeting, a workshop, a design conference, an environmental review, a strategic planning session or a macro program of consultation.” (Stanfield, pg.1)

After discovering the needs of a community and the scope of the project, the facilitator has to create a methodology that truly fits the people within the community and assess how to best access a group of people. This is an iterative process and may take time to truly understand how to tap into the community the best way. A facilitator must care deeply for the community that they are working with. If a facilitator is not dedicated to the community in which they are working then the project could easily fail. Without passion and dedication to the methods, a facilitator will struggle.

Another aspect of facilitation that is incredibly important to the process is for it to be as transparent as possible with community members in the intent of the project. When facilitators leave out information or are not completely up front, the group can lose trust in the individual conducting the research. A facilitator must also know how to create an environment that allows for participation. After assessing the needs of the community, the facilitator should be able to know where they can best interact with those they are working with. Without the proper environment to lead discussions, a facilitator can easily fall short when trying to engage community stakeholders. When evoking participation, exclusive brainstorming is necessary. Not all individuals process information the same way or feel comfortable expressing themselves in group situations so a facilitator must tease out these nuances in their group to better get ahold of the opinions of those they are working with.

One thing that a facilitator must always do is affirm to those that are contributing to the group work that their opinion matters, whether they are in accord or are feeling differently from the group. Acknowledging that not all people agree on one solution to a problem is truly giving the people the agency to share their ideas without group shame. Relaying that the community has wisdom empowers individuals to contribute who might have felt unheard in the past. Reading the underlying group dynamics of a group will help a facilitator in understanding how to respond to individuals in the group.

Remaining objective is one of the most difficult roles of a facilitator because the role has the ability to completely sway community opinion if care is not taken in understanding the data collected related to the project. If a facilitator feels a certain way about the community and project that can also sway the community to react in that way. When creating co created spaces with defined communities a facilitator needs to be present. Facilitators will not always be completely neutral when working with defined communities. When working on this thesis project as a facilitator, I continually asked about monument spaces and design. This was not always appreciated by the community I was facilitating discussion with because they didn't agree that the school needed a monument. In this process, the community I was facilitating discussion with needed an outlet for discussion but they weren't concerned with monuments which swayed the original projects goals. When doing this type of work, facilitators need to decide if they will be creating a monument with their community or if you will pursue the suggestions of your target community even if it isn't what your original intentions were.



I instructed the students to write a 6 word sentence describing why they love themselves. Image by: Samantha Nemazie

## Introduction to University of the Arts Monument Process

As a student at The University of the Arts and during my experience while working with the Office of Student Life as a Graduate Assistant last year, I have a close connection with the student community and various clubs/student organizations. I felt it was ideal for me to conduct my research on University of the Arts students based on the level of comfort I have among the students here. The specific needs of a chosen community (ie, students) informed the various ways in which the thesis process evolved. I felt that working with art students, future makers and community designers, would reveal nuances in the symbolic design process that would benefit this thesis. My research with the student artist community started in January 2018 and ended in April 2018. When working with the students and the administration, I began the preliminary process of connecting to a community and understanding their needs. Although, I encountered many roadblocks during this project, each moment of uncertainty led to a moment of understanding and reevaluation. A project with this scope could take several months, a larger staff, and a hefty budget to full reach its potential. In the following pages, I describe the trials and tribulations I faced when interacting with the community and how it led to my discoveries.



## Background of the University of the Arts and Student Community

Created in 1876, The University of the Arts has had a long standing as an arts institution in Philadelphia. Also known as UArts, the university was started by combining the Philadelphia College of Art and Philadelphia College of Performing Arts. ([uarts.edu/about](http://uarts.edu/about)) The school was granted university status in 1987 and since then has been offering programs in design, fine arts, media arts, crafts, music, dance, theater and writing. Not only are the students diverse in their talents but they are also a part of a larger artist community that has long been prevalent in Philadelphia. There are approximately 1,800 students total in attendance at the school this past semester. 63% of the students are women and 37% are men. There is also 40% minority enrollment at the University of the Arts. There are 10 buildings and 4 resident halls on campus that are spread out throughout the city that the students use on a regular basis. Due to UArts' location in Center City, one of the most expensive neighborhoods in Philadelphia, many of the students commute to class to be able to attend school. With the campus spread out over Philadelphia and the ever busy main street known as Broad Street, it can be hard for students to really feel connected to each other and the university. The location of the university and how public the campus is creates a unique environment for monument design because of the larger city population interacting with the buildings and students on a regular basis.

For students at The University of the Arts, the freshman retention rate is at 76% which is higher than the national average which statistically speaking shows that the students choose to stay at the University of the Arts for various reasons that cannot individually be defined. ([collegefactual.com](http://collegefactual.com)) When thinking of the “on time” graduation rate for college graduates, most believe that a typical student spends 4 years at college. That is true for 57% of the students but the rest spend about 6 to 8 years to get through their degree program according to [collegefactual.com](http://collegefactual.com). When the University of the Arts was polled in 2012, it was found that “35.5% (of the class) did not graduate within eight years. Of these 236 students, 2 were still working towards their degree, 149 had transferred to a different institution, and The University of the Arts lost contact with the remaining 84 whom we assume dropped out.” With most students completing their degree in 6 to 8 years that means that UArts students, even though their situation is considered temporary, spend a considerable amount of time in college and with their peers. Many of the students,



Group of UArts students  
Image by: Samantha Nemazie

while they are at UArts, are deeply involved with other students, faculty, and administration.

It is important to acknowledge that student-hood is temporary but that does not mean that the students should be denied the opportunity to express themselves and their beliefs within a space they will be deeply connected to for about 4-8 years of their life. Also when a student graduates from a university they will always be connected to their experience and time as a student. Their experience will always be a part of their memory and in their future pursuits in their careers. Although engagement with the University is difficult to maintain with alumni, it can be assumed that their education and connections will be a part of their life history. Also, when a student graduates from college they will always have their education and will use their college education as a way to determine their identity. Due to the permanence of monuments and the temporary (4-8 years) involvement of the students within their university space, I often discussed the idea of a temporary art piece to commemorate the artist community to better fit their needs.

When using the word community in this thesis project, I am only discussing the students that I interviewed and surveyed. The term community in this thesis project is misleading because I only surveyed a small amount of the students. Also when using the word community in relation to this project, I am leaving out a big group of people that are also in the wider university community. Defining communities is not





<https://hofferphotography.com/2015/06/16/kelley-jon-at-university-of-the-arts/>

democratic. Due to my relation to the campus and the small reach I have with in the campus community I inherently left people out of the discussion. When defining the student community I worked with all undergraduate students on campus. I also talked to some graduate students but did not pursue class discussion like I did with the undergraduate students. Some of the groups of people I have left out of interviewing who will need to be surveyed for future group facilitation will be the janitorial staff, security staff, UArts administration, and professors. When approaching the groups left out of this empirical research for further facilitation, there will need a different methodology due to their relation to the school as a work place rather than a learning institution.

### **Preliminary Discussions: University of the Arts Sculpture Students**

To start a connection to the students at UArts, I decided to begin discussions with a sculpture course (SCLP-364-01 Installation Immersive Environment) of about 8 students led by Professor Mara Scrupe. Working with Professor Scrupe and her students gave me beginning insider information to better understand the students' feelings about the university and their peers. I chose to work with this class because I believed the

students in this course would actively participate in discussion because they have an interest in working collaboratively and presenting their work in public spaces.

When starting my work with the class, I met with Professor Scrupe to speak with her about her own community-based art projects and what her students were interested in. It was understood that the students were to create a public art piece in the location of their choosing. Professor Scrupe invited me into her classroom to get to know the students. Although this wasn't mandatory, each of their topics was inspired by creating social change. With this in mind, I decided that they were the perfect individuals at the university to consult for the community based project.

I asked Professor Scrupe to allow me the time in her course to talk with her students. With her present, I asked the students "If you were to create a monument to your University of the Arts experience, what theme would you choose to commemorate?" Giving the students time to reflect, two of the students began to answer my question. One student who is a sculpture major said, "I would not want to create a monument to my University of the Arts experience." I then asked her to explain why she felt this way. In her explanation she felt that the word monument had a positive connotation and she did not feel that her experience has been

positive. She went on to tell me that she did not feel like a larger part of the UArts community and when the administration did try to build community she felt that the activities were not appealing to her. She also addressed the lack of community space due to many of the students living off campus. Another student spoke up during the conversation to discuss his own concerns about the university. One thing that he mentioned repeatedly was that he felt the university was lacking in diversity. He felt that the professors were primarily white males.

This discussion with the students in Professor Scrupe's course reminded me of the many problems that facilitators have encountered while researching case studies. I found it interesting that the students felt that way about the university and I wanted to know how to address their concerns as well as use this discussion to foster survey material to address the wider university audience. I was intrigued by the comments about UArts' lacking in diversity and community. For me, that was very informative to this thesis because it identified that there is not a majority feeling in the community just as there are difficulties in many communities that are trying to do this type of work. I was also interested in one student's understanding of what a monument was and what that meant to her. I began to think of new way to explain my monument idea that the students would get excited about and understand. I began to think of a monument as a form of public art in order to work with my chose community using vocabulary they would identify with. I also felt like I opened up a bigger conversation about the university that I could not address alone.



University of the Arts Campus : Center City  
Screenshot from GoogleMaps

### **Preliminary Discussions: University of the Arts Administration**

After the discussion I decided to contact the Title IX Coordinator and Diversity Administrator, Lexi Morrison, and have a meeting with her to discuss how to collaborate and address these feelings within the wider UArts community. She recently started an informal Diversity and Inclusion Committee among UArts' professional staff to address the issues the students brought up in the discussion. After explaining my project, one of the first questions that Lexi Morrison asked me was, "Do you have a budget?"

When working with communities, having a budget is one of the biggest ways that facilitators can back up conversations. Having a monetary amount dedicated to a project makes communities feel that their ideas will be heard and implemented. Although it is possible to have these conversations without a budget, communities might feel their conversations will lead to nowhere and be a waste of time. This has been a challenge in my facilitation. After my conversation with Lexi Morrison, I have decided to be transparent with the students I have talked with and remind them this is a preliminary research for a monument design proposal dedicated to the artist community of UArts.

Due to the Diversity and Inclusion Committee's schedule not aligning with the project schedule, Lexi Morrison advised me to contact Carley Johnson who is the secretary for the President's Office and oversees the Student Advisory Council. She explained to me that Carley Johnson is in charge of leading "test groups" with selected students willing to participate in discussion about different topics relating to the students. She also mentioned that I needed to get into contact with Kristen Burkett, Director of Campus Life, who happened to be my old boss while I was a graduate assistant for the Office of Student Life.

I reached out to both Carley Johnson and Kristen Burkett to discuss my project and how I can better interact with the students. I did not get a response from Carley Johnson but, I scheduled a meeting with Kristen Burkett. While meeting with Kristen, she explained to me that it is difficult to access the students' opinions because the students often have low participation in surveys and facilitated discussions. She also said that she would be unable to help in my pursuit of a larger student-wide discussion because there are so many students that ask for that kind of help and the University cannot favor one student's project over another. She did give me ideas on how to access the student body and offered to schedule a table in any of the various student halls. She also suggested that I create a digital survey and gave me access to all of the student life Facebook



accounts for the dorm buildings.

Through these discussions with the University of the Arts Administration, I realized that they all had similar problems interacting with the students and engaging them in conversation. I realized that working with the University of the Arts Administration might not be as helpful as I had imagined. I also realized that they may have problems accessing the students because they aren't students themselves. I thought about my own experience as a student and how uncomfortable I would be when discussing my concerns with those who hold authority over me. I feel that some students would be comfortable addressing their concerns with the administration but others might feel uncomfortable or like they are jeopardizing their education and reputation by speaking out about their opinions on the University as a whole. I imagine that individuals in communities also feel I decided that one of the biggest assets I had as a fellow student was that those I interviewed might be more comfortable discussing their concerns with me when I wasn't representing the University.

<https://www.muralarts.org/artworks/southwestroots/>



### **Preliminary Discussions: Experienced Facilitators within Communities working on Public Projects**

I reached out to Aislinn E. Pentecost, a curator from MuralArts who worked on a community project known as Bartram's Garden. While interviewing her, she stressed the idea of having a community liaison and how having someone connected to the individuals in the community gave her team access to people that might not have known about the project. When I asked her how she chose her community liaison, she told me that her team had to find someone that was from the community, well connected, and passionate. She conducted interviews with various community leaders and chose someone who taught at a local school for her outgoing personality and reach among her students.

I began to think of those I had interacted with in the undergraduate community that would be an asset to the project. I wanted to find someone who might be able to give me access to students who I don't have the opportunity of knowing. I asked one of the Resident Assistants, whom I worked closely with during my time working with the Office of Student Life, if they would help in getting my thesis concept out to the student body. After having multiple discussions with the student, he seemed on board to help me get the word out about the project. Unfortunately, he had to take medical leave shortly after our discussion. After this, I began to look at myself as a community liaison. Throughout the process of conducting my preliminary research with the students, I began to tap into students who I had gained a connection with through my studies. There were many students who assisted me in getting the survey material out to the student body.



## University of the Arts Monument Design Methodology

A huge part of interacting with a community as large as UArts is attempting to interact with a wide variety of individuals who would be interested in participating in a project like this. In the last half of the thesis project, I began to collect surveys from as many individuals as possible with a wide variety of backgrounds and ask them their opinion on what a monument should embody pertaining to the University of the Arts student artist community. I used a survey in order to gain mass participation in little time as I had noticed that students at UArts were hesitant to participate if the survey would take up time from their studies. I had two methods for collecting surveys, posting an online survey and conducting in-person interviews.

For the purpose of this survey, I chose to primarily focus on the student community rather than include the wider University because I wanted to be transparent with those I surveyed. By this, I mean that I didn't want to survey those that work as janitorial, maintenance, or dining hall staff because I knew that their survey might consist of other questions that do not pertain to or interest the students. Also knowing that the thesis was going to result in guidelines for the wider university to follow in facilitating group participation, I felt that various groups will need different guidelines and facilitation requirements. Being a student myself, I knew that for the purpose of this preliminary survey, I could effectively identify with the students as a facilitator. When working with the wider university, there must be a team of facilitators with wider backgrounds and experience in order to effectively work with a wider range of people.

For the online survey, I posted the link to six University of the Arts Facebook pages. Two of the pages were dedicated to a class of students, ie: Class of 2020. The other pages I needed to get approved by the UArts staff in order to participate. They were dedicated to the four dormitory buildings on campus. Another way that I was able to get out the survey digitally was to contact every undergraduate student that I had worked with previously and ask them to send out the survey for me. Utilizing myself as a community liaison was probably the most helpful part of the project because those who personally connected with me were more likely to help me out. Asking individuals to participate in an online survey and giving them the power to complete the survey on their own time can elicit different results. Utilizing social media proved to be a great method to get a wider amount of participation, but it did not collect as much reflection as other methods of surveying.



<https://twitter.com/uartsadmissions>



<https://www.theartblog.org/2018/03/two-for-you-artblog-launches-an-advice-column-in-april-ask-dave-debuts-with-advice-for-graduating-seniors-in-the-arts-plus-dont-miss-university-of-the-artss-two-big-public-art-projects-on/>

For my in-person survey, I chose to revisit Professor Scrupe's course, that I had worked with in my preliminary discussions, and an undergraduate Art Therapy course that I am currently enrolled in. I chose to pass out the surveys for the students to write on physically to give them a chance to write their feelings and understanding. It was important to me that the students reflect on their experiences and conducting the interviews via conversation could have been rushed in the context and classroom environment.

When working with Professor Scrupe's course, I visited at the beginning of class. When I arrived about half of the students were in their designated studios. I passed out the survey to three individuals in the

course. When giving the students the survey, I told them that I would wait for them to finish the survey in a central area related to their studios. This method of passing out the survey did the opposite of what I intended. The students, knowing I was waiting on them to finish the survey, began to finish the survey quickly and did not spend much time writing their thoughts and ideas. I made sure to thank them for their time because they did participate but I would advise future facilitators to create an environment that allows for those participating to truly feel they have the time to reflect.

When conducting surveys with the Art Therapy course I am



enrolled in, I took a different approach. Throughout the course, I have been getting close with the students through various personal conversations. I decided to use the connection I had with the students to personally ask them to fill out the survey for my thesis project. Having a personal connection to this group of students gave me a chance to get responses that truly reflect how the students felt about themselves in relation to the artist community at UArts. I also gave the students 30 minutes to fill out the surveys, which I felt allowed for more reflection if the students chose to do so. The results from the survey gave me more insight than any of the other methods I tried during this project. It definitely gave me an understanding of how a facilitator needs personal connections in the community they are working with to get thoughtful responses.

<b>Monument Thesis Proposal for the University of the Arts</b>		My name is Samantha Nemazie and I am a graduate student in the Museum Studies program. In my thesis project, I am proposing a monument to the artist community at the University of the Arts. I appreciate your time and feedback.								
1) What grade are you in at the University of the Arts? a. Freshman b. Sophomore c. Junior d. Senior e. Graduate Student	6) Where in the building you chose in Q5, do you spend the most leisure time and why? <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>									
2) What is your first and last name? <hr/>	7) If you were to choose a theme based on your student experience a. Diversity b. Friendship c. Dedication d. Support e. Other <hr/>									
3) What degree program are you pursuing at the University of the Arts? <hr/>	Anything you would like to voice: please comment below. <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>									
4) Do you live on campus? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No										
5) In which of the following buildings do you spend the most time in? This includes where you take classes, study, eat, sleep, and hang out with friends. <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>a. Hamilton Hall</td> <td>e. Pine Hall</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. Gershman Hall</td> <td>f. Furness Hall</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c. Anderson Hall</td> <td>g. Spruce Hall</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d. Terra Hall</td> <td>h. Juniper Hall</td> </tr> </table>			a. Hamilton Hall	e. Pine Hall	b. Gershman Hall	f. Furness Hall	c. Anderson Hall	g. Spruce Hall	d. Terra Hall	h. Juniper Hall
a. Hamilton Hall	e. Pine Hall									
b. Gershman Hall	f. Furness Hall									
c. Anderson Hall	g. Spruce Hall									
d. Terra Hall	h. Juniper Hall									

In-person survey instrument used for thesis project.



Images from a student run instagram account @everything\_broken\_at\_uarts

## Survey Instrument

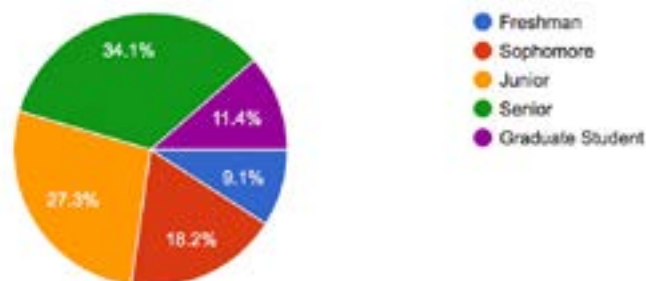
In this chapter, I will begin to explain how I developed the questions for the survey and what I would improve upon in future survey facilitation. When creating the survey, I sent versions of it to nine individuals who I consulted with during this thesis process. Getting feedback from the administration, the students, and public art professionals shaped the survey questions before I began the survey process. It is important for facilitators to consult with those in the community when creating a survey because there may be things that they have missed in their observation. Also, understanding the rhetoric that your community identifies with can make for better communication between a facilitator and the individuals within the community. Over the course of the survey process, I collected 44 responses from students.

Explanation and Results



### 1. What grade are you in at the University of the Arts?

44 responses



When creating this question for the survey, it was important to get a wide range of students to participate. Knowing the students' familiarity with the campus and the school could inform the facilitator in the answers that follow. Out of the 44 responses, I received the most participation from senior students. Students who have been at the University of the Arts the longest will have the best understanding of their community, therefore they might feel comfortable relaying this information.

### 2. What is your first and last name? (optional)

This question was important to the survey because it gives a name to the students' reflection and allows individuals to take ownership of their responses. If someone's name is connected to their response, they may feel a sense of responsibility to reflect their own beliefs and values. In the in-person survey, I did not specify whether students had the option of writing their own name but many of the students did. On the online survey, I kept this as an optional question to see how anonymity would reflect in the participants' answers.

### 3. What degree program are you pursuing at the University of the Arts? (optional)

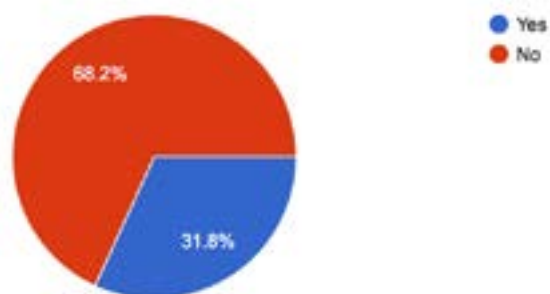
38 responses



When choosing to include this question to the survey I wanted to get information on the students' interests and what they were pursuing at the University of the Arts. In a school program, it is common for students to stick with their cohorts and I wanted to better understand what individuals and artistic mediums the students identified with. When facilitating this survey, I received more responses from those within the Illustration major because I personally connected with two illustration students in my Art Therapy course and asked them to send the surveys to their friends. I found it interesting that they sent the survey primarily to their Illustration classmates rather than to a wider range of students and their backgrounds. This might be helpful in further facilitation when selecting community liaison students from diverse studies and backgrounds.

#### 4. Do you live on campus?

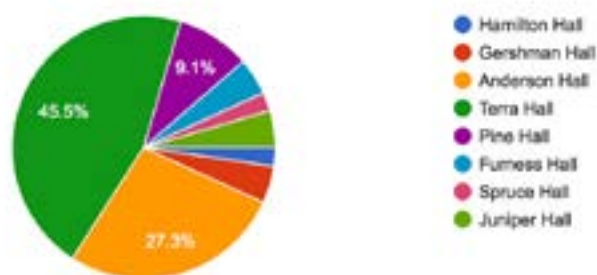
44 responses



When asking this question, I was attempting to understand how the student relates to the campus space. Although the dorm buildings house many students, not all live on campus. Through previous discussions with the students, those that lived off-campus were more likely to not feel connected to the school and other students in the community. Knowing whether a survey participant lives on campus could help me in better understanding how the student relates to their peers and surroundings.

#### 5. In which of the following buildings do you spend the most time? This includes where you take classes, study, eat, sleep and, hang out with friends.

44 responses



Based on the responses to this survey, it can be concluded that the students see themselves spending the most time at Terra Hall, the main campus building in which students attend classes, study, and work on homework. Asking this question gave me a better understanding on

campus in which a monument would better serve the students. When creating a public art piece in a place where most students spend their time, it can be understood that a piece that represents the students would elicit the most interaction.

In creating this question on the survey, I made the mistake of leaving out a building that dance students spend the most time in known as Merriam Hall. This mistake can negatively affect a facilitator's approach to interacting with communities and make those who interact with that space feel isolated from the group. In further facilitation it is important to include all buildings that the students interact with on a regular basis because leaving an answer choice like this out can have negative consequences on future plans and projects.

#### 6. Where in the building you chose in Q5, do you spend the most leisure time and why?

When creating this question, I wanted to get to know why the students spend most of the time in those buildings and why. This was important to the thesis process because, I wanted to get an idea of where in the building would a student monument get the most attention. I also wanted to hear more about why they spend time in those spaces because it might have led to a further discussion in why they would choose a theme for a monument in question 7. This question did not lead me to necessarily understanding an exact location but, it gave me insight into why the students were spending time in the buildings and how that affected their student experience.

#### Some of the responses to this question on the survey include:

(I did not change the spelling or wording of the survey responses)

- 1) "The 7th floor illustration because I am most comfortable with my classmates and friends"
- 2) "Industrial design (floor 5) because my friends all go to that floor when we have free time ( and it feels like home)"
- 3) "no leisure time at all actually when I spend time there. when I have down time I leave"

- 4) “Liberal Arts classrooms because they’re always empty and I can always get some work done.”
- 5) “The Dance Office - because that is where you can see the faculty outside of the classroom and it is always vibrant & full of energy.”

**7. Online: If you were to choose a theme based on your student experience at the University of the Arts, what would it be?**

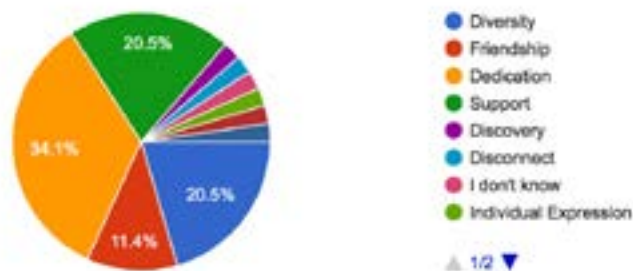
- a) Diversity  
b) Friendship  
c) Dedication  
d) Support  
e) Other \_\_\_\_\_

**In Person: If you were to choose a theme based on your student experience**

- a) Diversity  
b) Friendship  
c) Dedication  
d) Support  
e) Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Anything you would like to voice: please comment below. (text box included)**

44 responses



When choosing the answer choices to this question, I primarily paid attention to the rhetoric I heard from the students through my initial questioning. I also felt that it was important as a facilitator to give

those answering the survey a leading question to avoid “I don’t know” answers. When facilitators lead discussion they focus on what would benefit the group and based on my open ended question from Professor Scrupe’s course, I felt that while working with the students I needed to adapt my methodology. I felt that leading the questioning would allow for students to choose an answer that would best suit them and then provide more information on whether they agreed with my word choices in the reflection box of the survey. According to the survey material the majority of students would like to focus on the theme of “dedication” when exploring a monument that best represents their student experience. Although, this survey is not be conclusive with just a small population of the students participating, future facilitators can approach further surveying and discussion in mind. The most intriguing and informative part of this survey for me was to read the responses written by the students in the reflection part of this survey. Some of them opened up to me about things that I did not know about because I am not actively involved in their program. Some of the students used this space to explain how they felt about the school and the facilities. I’m assuming they did this to relay that they haven’t always been happy about their student experience at the University of the Arts. Future facilitators can use this information to get a feeling about how some of the students are feeling when interacting with them in this community based process. It is also important for facilitators to remember that can change depending on the mood that the students are in on that day. Based on previous discussions in this thesis, it is human nature for people to have changing opinions.

**Some of the responses to this question on the survey include:**

(I did not change the spelling or wording of the survey responses)

- 1) “I spend a lot of time with the school of dance and the ladies in the art therapy minor. This kind of seclusion (and I use this word with a positive connotation here) builds a heavy sense of community and family on the 2nd-4th floors and the 10th floor of Terra. This “family” is special for someone who left home and a close family in order to study, perfect, + perform her art.”- Kaylan Alday



- 2) “This school is good, but it has a serious problem putting majors who need no support or funding over the one’s that do Example: MBET was promised a new studio two years ago... instead they sold our building and gave film a new recording booth.”- Yale Baldali
- 3) “There is always an air of togetherness and community.”- Juliana Luber
- 4) “I really love the people and the staff. They are a great support and connection for us.” - Dana Brown
- 5) “In my experience, I haven’t met many people who are as dedicated as I would hope. Most people I meet do the minimum for their classes and complain about doing work. It’d super discouraging and I find it hard to be inspired and motivated by seeing my classmates’ work, which makes me sad. I find a few people that are motivated and hard-working but they are the minority. :(“ - Julianne Feaver
- 6) I think we should have a monument that focuses on overcoming hardships but also opening new opportunities Something that represents to students entering or leaving the school that each day that passes leads to something that furthers their successes and future.”- Briana Myall
- 7) “When things brake they are not always fixed in an adiquite time increasing anxiety for students such as elivator repairmen’s and ramps being removed at Hamilton.” - Dawn Jackson



<https://blog.vandalog.com/2018/01/we-the-people-six-murals-for-philadelphia/>

## Considerations and Guidelines for Future Facilitators at the University of the Arts

Based on research of the current monument landscape, survey material and discussion with the University of the Arts student community, I have created guidelines and considerations that future facilitators must follow while working with the University of the Arts community:

### 1) Create an environment for facilitation that encourages reflection.

Whether this be through the room in which the discussion occurs or with the mood set by the facilitator, it is imperative that facilitators consider the community stakeholders and their needs. The University of the Arts students need a set space and time for reflection to provide thoughtful responses. At times the students will not want to provide feedback. As a facilitator, that is something that one will have to accept and acknowledge when working with this community. One of the biggest assists a facilitator can have with the UArts community is a personal connection to the students and utilizing community liaisons to truly get students involved in the message. Community liaisons can be found in student leaders, professors, and those excited about spreading the message

of monument design. Giving students an environment where they feel they are being heard and following through on those discussions is invaluable to a student community like UArts.

## **2) Understand that the students will not agree on one solution.**

As previously discussed, individuals within the communities have ever changing opinions and moods. Making monument design decisions takes time and consideration. The solution that a facilitator might find when working with the University of the Arts community might not fit all of the students opinions and needs. Facilitators must consider engaging the community an iterative process and adjusting their methods as the students come to design decisions that best fit them. Facilitators can also consider creating monument prototypes that can be changed over time and added onto as the iterative process occurs. This will address the problems that present day monuments have in relation to their local communities.

A huge part of my discussion with the UArts students in my defined community was understanding and adapting to their needs and wants. When I mentioned the word “monument” the students would react negatively to that suggestions. They would often talk about how they didn’t feel like there was a space for them on campus if they didn’t live in the dorms. Design facilitators must be aligned with their communities needs and allow design decisions to be determined by the group discussions. With this type of project and the results and comments made by students any design work that is done with this community should be focused on creating a communal space. Although there are lounges on the University Campus, the student community does not use the lounge spaces to connect with one another. When creating an end product for the University of the Arts community, future facilitators should focus on place making for their defined community. Future facilitators should consider designing a space for the UArts student community that facilitates future community discussion.

Due to the students interests, design facilitators can consider creating a space that allows for creative freedom and expression. Art student communities are known for their bathroom “graffiti.” There are also Instagram pages dedicated to the drawings that UArts students leave behind on the walls in the school’s staircases and bathrooms. After future facilitation, facilitators can focus on fostering discussions on creating a space with the students that allows for all students to add their own art to

the walls of the space. To create a space that publicly allows students to express themselves and share their wall drawings/writing with one another could allow students to create art work together and foster connection with in the space. To bring further validation to the work created while in the space, the library could photograph the space for ongoing documentation. Future generations of students can look back on the documentation of past students work created in the space to share the communities self expression over time. When creating a space like this, facilitators will have to create community guide- lines with the defined student community to make sure that students upkeep ongoing community wellness. This idea will need further development with the student community but this can be achieved through further surveying and discussion.

## **3) Consider the act of discussion as important as the monument creation.**

The process of how a facilitator and community liaisons works with communities to decide on design decisions is just as important as the product of those discussions. Creating a monument that truly represents the students will be difficult as previously mentioned but, the road to getting there can mean the world to students who are wanting to get involved. Many of the surveys mentioned a form of isolation. Facilitators working with the University of the Arts students can effectively create connection through the design process in a way that the representative monument can not. Understanding and caring for the community will be a future facilitators biggest asset in working with the art students.

## **Final Assessment**

It is difficult to know when a facilitated design discussion is successful because there will always be room for improvement and change just as our ideals in society change. When working on a community project, the reaction of the defined community is the most important thing to look for when determining approval. There are some ways that you can know when your project has been successful but it will be different depending on what defined community the facilitator worked with. Everyone expresses their approval in different ways so when understanding if a community based process is successful, facilitators will need to adapt and create a methodology that speaks to their defined community to determine success. Future facilitators can decide if they have succeeded

based on their own experiences working with the group. Another method that a facilitator can use to decide if their facilitation and design decisions is successful is to lead another group discussion or survey the group based on their satisfaction. Although, as discussed in previous chapters there will always be groups of people that feel excluded, even in the facilitation group, so it will be difficult to know when a project is completely successful with a defined community. The future facilitators that pursue a project with the University of the Arts student community will know they have succeeded when they begin to get positive feedback from individuals in their defined community. At the end of my own research with the University of the Arts students, I received an affirmation from a student that had left me a note reading they thought it was very smart to crowdsource monument design ideas. I took this as a form of approval from the student community I worked with in this preliminary study.

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<https://blog.vandalog.com/2018/01/we-the-people-six-murals-for-philadelphia/>



University of the Arts student performing  
with friends at the Fall Festival.  
Image by: Samantha Nemazie

## Conclusion

Working with community stakeholders to create monument design decisions can be a rewarding process for the community and the facilitators involved. The process of coming to design decisions in community context also has the power to create new memories that communities can cherish forever and the feeling of being heard can outlive the physical monuments that dot our landscapes. No longer must our monument landscape represent the ideals of past generations but, can become fluid as our present ideals and memory changes. As designers we can become a part of the solution to creating better representation with in our monument landscapes by understanding the process it takes to better understand those around us.

