



Michael Rakowitz: *The Monument, The Monster and The Maquette*

September 8 – October 21, 2023

Jane Lombard Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition by gallery artist Michael Rakowitz, entitled *The Monument, The Monster and The Maquette*. Continuing his exploration of monuments, the artist will mount a new installation of this ongoing series for the first time in New York. The exhibition will be on view from September 8 – October 21, 2023.

Rakowitz's research-based studio practice is evidenced throughout this body of work, itself titled after a line of etymological inquiry. Scrawled across a mantelpiece at the base of the hybrid sculpture *American Golem*, the artist notes that "'Monument' is derived from the latin verb *monere*, meaning

to remind, advise, warn. Also derived from *monere*: demonstrate, remonstrate, monster." Rakowitz turns to the monument as a way to offer a renewed, transparent conceptual framework within which the dynamics underlying conventional history can be exposed as matters of power and rhetoric rather than of mindless observance. His amalgamation of the disparate elements that comprise *American Golem* can be considered a form of contemporary *spolia* – the ancient practice in which the architectural spoils of war and conquest were reappropriated into new, monumental structures, prominently displayed in the public forum. Rakowitz's extensive research transforms these individual fragments both literally and conceptually as he physically annotates the sourced sculptures with critical context surrounding their origins and historical trajectories. In doing so, the artist subverts the millenia-old connotation of *spolia* as political symbols of both triumph and warning. He adapts the technique to reveal the uncomfortable truths that connect these seemingly distinct fragments beneath their heroic patina.

With several explicit ties to New York City, *American Golem* engages local and regional audiences with a meticulously researched web of unsettling complexities. For example, the granite slab comprising part of the stone pedestal at the base of the central figure reads, "North Jay granite from Maine, extracted from the occupied land of the Abenaki people. Used in Grant's Tomb in NYC." The artist's inscription highlights the underrecognized historical mistreatment of the American Indigenous people in relation to Ulysses Grant, who served as president during the initial Abenaki occupation.

JANE LOMBARD GALLERY

Rakowitz juxtaposes the countless unnamed deaths and forced assimilation of the Indigenous people under ongoing American settler colonialism with the memorialization of Grant, one of the many executioners in American history.

Also featured in the exhibition is the inflatable sculpture *Behemoth*, which suggests a majestic equestrian figure shrouded beneath a black tarp, “breathing” through a cycle of inflation and deflation in a dramatic installation that embodies the constant discourse around monuments in America. A selection of drawings on layered architectural vellum will accompany the sculptural works in the gallery, depicting various instances of “the monument that was” as a shadow of its resultant form.

The Monument, the Monster and the Maquette was researched and built with the assistance of Annie Raccuglia, Nick Raffel, Derek Sutfin/Gravity Exhibitions, and Landmark Creations.

About Michael Rakowitz

Michael Rakowitz (b. 1973, New York) is an artist living and working in Chicago. In 1998 he initiated paraSITE, an ongoing project in which the artist custom builds inflatable shelters for homeless people that attach to the exterior outtake vents of a building’s heating, ventilation, or air conditioning system.

His work has appeared in venues worldwide including dOCUMENTA (13), P.S.1, New York, NY; the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; MassMOCA, North Adams, MA; Castello di Rivoli, Rivoli, IT; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK; the 16th Biennale of Sydney, the 10th Istanbul Biennial, Sharjah Biennial 8, Tirana Biennale, National Design Triennial at the Cooper-Hewitt, and Transmediale 05. He is the recipient of the 2020 Nasher Prize, 2018 Herb Alpert Award in the Arts (Visual Arts category), a 2012 Tiffany Foundation Award; a 2008 Creative Capital Grant; a Sharjah Biennial Jury Award; a 2006 New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship Grant in Architecture and Environmental Structures; the 2003 Dena Foundation Award, and the 2002 Design 21 Grand Prix from UNESCO.

He has had solo exhibitions at the Castello Rivoli, Turin, IT; Cleveland Triennial, Cleveland, OH; The Graham Foundation, Chicago, IL; Jameel Arts Center, Dubai, UAE; Malmo Konsthall, Malmo, SE; Mason Hall Atrium Gallery, Fairfax, VA; MOCA Chicago, Chicago, IL; Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, TX; REDCAT, Los Angeles, CA; Trafalgar Square, London, UK; Whitechapel, London, UK; Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, MA; among many more.

His works are featured in major private and public collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Neue Galerie, Kassel, DE; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; Smart Museum of Art, Chicago; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands; The British Museum; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Kabul National Museum, Afghanistan; and UNESCO, Paris. Rakowitz is a Professor of Art Theory and Practice at Northwestern University.

Sales Inquiries

Lisa Carlson: lisa@janelombardgallery.com | Ariel De Sal: ariel@janelombardgallery.com

Press Inquiries

Lainya Magaña: lainya@aopublic.com