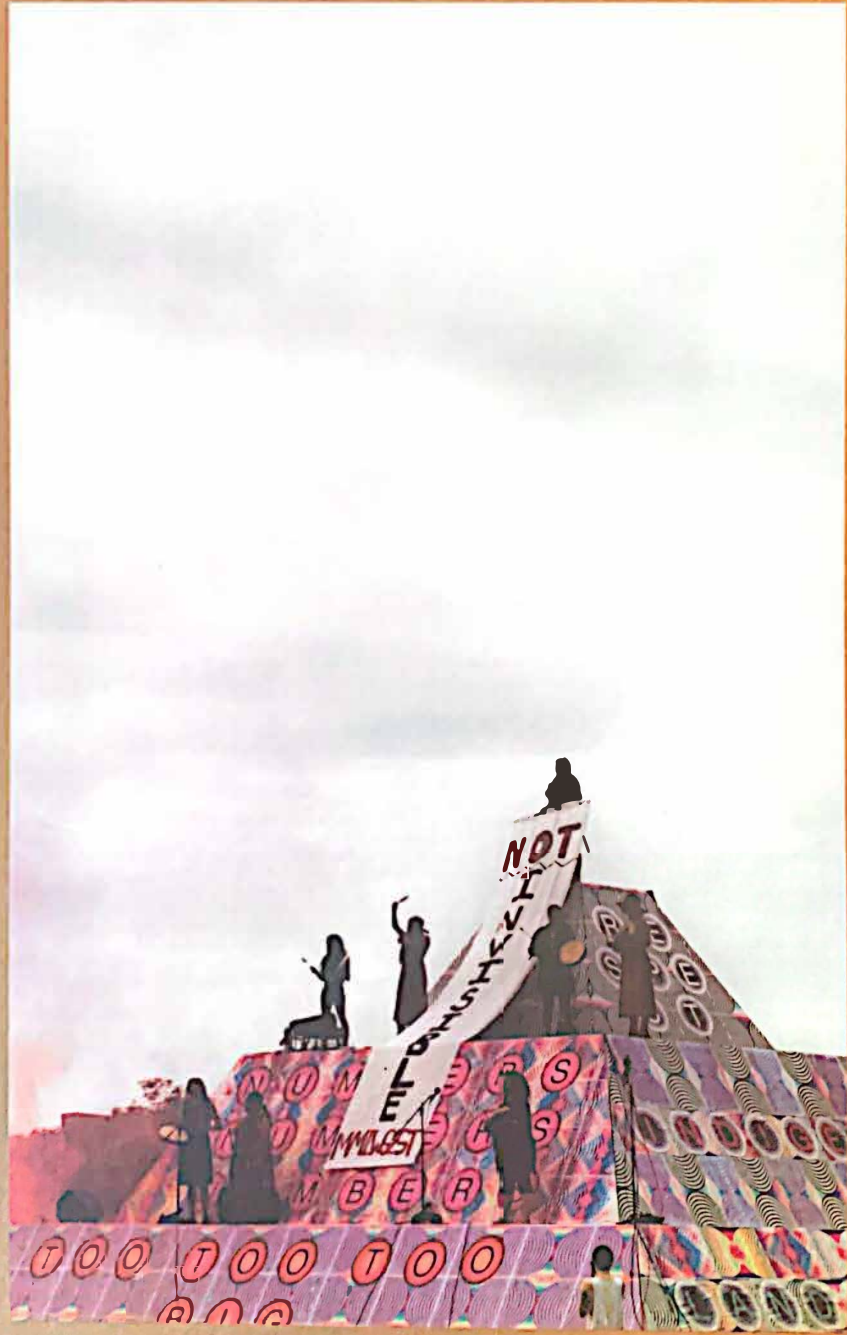


# MONUMENT



# EVENTS

# NOW

This book was published on the occasion of **MONUMENTS NOW**, curated by Jess Wilcox, Curator & Director of Exhibitions at Socrates Sculpture Park, New York. Part I of the exhibition, including commissions by Jeffrey Gibson, Paul Ramirez Jonas, and Xaviera Simmons, as well as the Broadway Billboard commission by Nona Faustine, was on view from Summer 2020–March 2021. Part II: Call and Response and Part III: The Next Generation were on view October 10, 2020–April 2021.

Funding for the publication was provided by the Henry Luce Foundation.



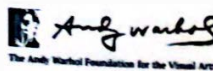
Special thanks to: Fernanda Arias, Itziar Barrio, Jenna Belabed, Christopher Bieram, Carlos Jiménez Cahua, Anika Cartterfield, David Castillo Gallery, Raven Chacon, Beanca Christopher, Regan De Loggans, Mark di Conzo, Jonathan Forgash, Gabe Gross, Kavi Gupta Gallery, Kyle Hagerman, Kendal Henry, Indigenous Kinship Collective, Emily Johnson, Kent Johnson, Devin Klos, Chelsea Knight, Leander Knust, Jonathan Kuhn, Megan Lee, Melissa Levin, Davis Lloyd, George Lugg, Ken Lum, Bazela Malik, Harlan Mann, Matteo Martignoni, Sheikh Muhtade, Laura Ortman, Taylor R. Payer, Ana Ramos, RAVA (Rafael Salazar and Ava Wiland), Dan Roberts, Roberts Projects, Galeria Nara Roesler, Sara Sciabbarrasi, Tristan Shepherd, Sikkema Jenkins & Co., Angelo Soriano, and Chris Yockey.

**MONUMENTS NOW** was made possible by major support from the Ford Foundation, VIA Art Fund, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the New York Community Trust Van Lier Fellowships, and the Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation. Additional exhibition support came from the Lily Auchincloss Foundation, the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, the Cowles Charitable Trust, the Charina Foundation, the Sidney E. Frank Foundation, the Maxine and Stuart Frankel Foundation, Agnes Gund, the Lambent Foundation, Mark di Suvero, and Spacetime C.C. **MONUMENTS NOW** was also supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council; the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; and the National Endowment for the Arts.

#### ABOUT SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK

For more than thirty years Socrates Sculpture Park has been a model of public art production, community activism, and socially inspired place-making. The Park has exhibited more than one thousand artists on its five waterfront acres, providing them financial and material resources and outdoor studio facilities to create large-scale artworks on site. Socrates is free and open to the public 365 days a year from nine o'clock in the morning to sunset. It is located at 32-01 Vernon Boulevard (at Broadway) in Long Island City, New York.

Socrates Sculpture Park is a not-for-profit organization licensed by NYC Parks to manage and program Socrates Sculpture Park, a New York City public park.



## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

### **OFFICERS**

**Stuart Match Suna, President**  
**Robert F. Goldrich, Vice President**  
**Ivana Mestrovic, Secretary & Treasurer**

### **MEMBERS**

**Michelle Coffey**  
**Maxine Frankel**  
**Richard Gluckman, FAIA**  
**Shaun Leonardo**  
**Deidrea Miller**  
**Brooke Kamin Rapaport**  
**Ursula von Rydingsvard**  
**Alison Saar**  
**Joel Shapiro**  
**Kimberly Strong**  
**Mitchell Silver, Ex Officio,**  
**NYC Parks Commissioner**  
**Mark di Suvero, Chair Emeritus**

### **STAFF**

**John Hatfield, Executive Director**

**Malaika Langa, Director of Finance & Administration**  
**danilo machado, Curatorial Assistant**  
**Eric Mathews, Director of Grounds & Horticulture**  
**Terrence McCutchen, Operations Assistant**  
**Julia Metro, Director of Development & Communications**  
**Audrey di Mola, Director of Public Programs**  
**Sara Morgan, Communications & Marketing Manager**  
**Douglas Paulson, Director of Education**  
**Jess Wilcox, Curator & Director of Exhibitions**  
**Chris Zirbes, Studio & Facilities Manager**

**Rick "True" Holmes, Grounds Support**  
**James Stewart, Grounds Support**  
**JJ Stewart, Grounds Support**

### **In Memoriam**

**Yousif Dawud, Resident Horticulturalist**

**Design by Geoff Halber & Kyle Blue, ETC**  
**Editing and Proofreading by Kaegan Sparks with Chloe Wyma**  
**Publication Management by danilo machado**

**Socrates Sculpture Park**  
**32-01 Vernon Boulevard**  
**Long Island City, NY 11106**  
**[www.socratessculpturepark.org](http://www.socratessculpturepark.org)**

**© 2021 Socrates Sculpture Park**

**All texts © 2021 the individual authors and their rights holders. Images © 2021 the artists unless otherwise noted.**

**Printed by die Keure Printing and Publishing, Bruges, Belgium**

### **PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS BY PAGE**

Daniel Shea: cover, 44–45, 46, 47, 48, 49 (all), 50, 51, 52, 56 (both), 57, 58, 59, 64–65. Ike Edeani: Table of Contents (Simmons), 9, 68–69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74–75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82–83, 88–89. Mary Kang: Table of Contents (Jonas), 15 (right), 92–93, 94, 95, 96 (both), 97 (top), 98, 99, 100 (both), 101, 102, 103 (bottom), 105. Sofie Kjorum Austlid: Table of Contents (Williams & Socrateens), 13, 36–37, 114, 116, 117, 118 (top), 120–121, 122–123, 124–125, 126–127, 128–129, 133 (bottom), 137, 138–139, 140 (both), 141, 146, 147, 148, 150–151, 152, 153 (both), 154, 156–157, 158, 159, 160, 162–163, 164, 165, 171, 177, 178, 179 (top). Cattias.photos (licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0): 3 (top). Andreas Komodromos (licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0): 3 (bottom). AP/Steve Helber: 4, 30 (top). Glenn Castellano/New-York Historical Society: 6, 7 (left). Douglas Paulson: 7 (right). Paul Ramirez Jonas: 8 (left). Nicholas Knight: 8 (right), 11 (right), 132, 180–181. Aya Rodriguez-Izumi: 11 (left). Guadalupe Marvalla: 12. KMDeco Creative Solutions: Mark DiConzo: 14 (left), 54 (top), 60, 142, 144–145, 193. Scott Lynch: 14 (right), 55 (both), 97 (bottom), 103 (top), 107 (both). Sara Morgan: 15 (left), 16, 131, 179 (bottom), 190. Bel Falleiros: 17. Dennis Cowley: 23 (both). Dan Bradica: 24 (both), 26 (both). Lexi Moreland: 25 (both). Walter Wlodarczyk: 27. Andy Romer: 32 (top). AP/Mark Lennihan: 32 (bottom). David Familian: 34 (top). Sylke Meyer: 34 (bottom two). Nona Faustine: 39 (both), 40. Raven Chacon: 54 (bottom). Xaviera Simmons: 84, 85. John Hatfield: 118 (bottom), 166. Patrick Costello: 133 (top), 134–135, 136. Mariana Parisca: 168–169, 170 (both), 173. Sandy Williams IV: 178.

# NOTES ON THE REPARATIONS MONUMENT

JOANNA FIDUCCIA

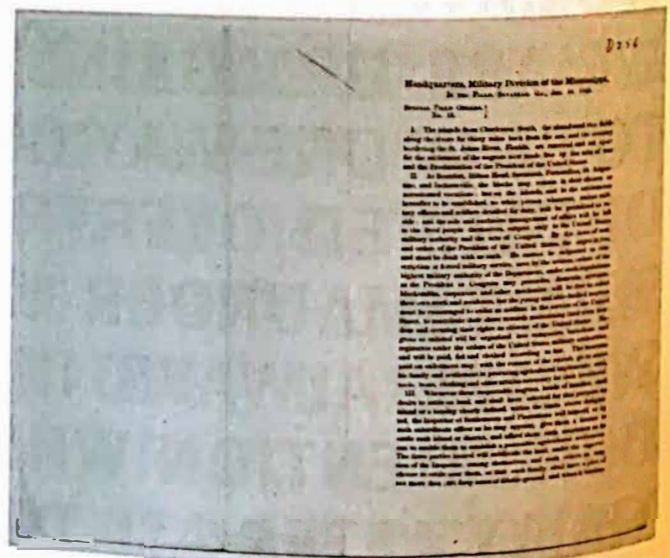
Forty acres and a mule. These words evoke the promise of reparations in America, but they are also shorthand for our nation's ignominious tradition of breaking its promises. Their source bears out this two-note melody of pledge and renege. On January 16, 1865, near the end of the Civil War, General William T. Sherman issued his Special Field Orders No. 15, which outlined instructions for the redistribution of a narrow flank of South Carolina coastland to freed peoples. By June of that same year, many thousands of people had come to claim their forty-acre plots. Yet by autumn, Abraham Lincoln's successor President Andrew Johnson had revoked its measures and hamstrung the broader reparations mandate of the Bureau for Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, forcing most freed people to either abandon their property or enter into coercive sharecropping contracts in order to remain. "Forty acres and a mule" is a wry abridgement of this history. But it is also American all the way down, implicitly affirming the principle that one becomes a true and equal citizen by acquiring private property. Reducing reparations to property rights makes "forty acres and a mule" an unfortunate slogan, to say the least. Not only does it elide the financial and structural measures that might bring about real equity, but it causes the demand for reparations to seem anachronistic and non-communitarian, and thus far easier to disregard.

The Field Orders themselves, however, held a much broader vision of justice, one based not in private property but in sovereignty. Their central provision was this: "[I]n the settlements hereafter to be established, no white person whatever, unless military officers and soldiers detailed for duty, will be permitted to reside; and the sole and exclusive management of affairs will be left to the freed people themselves." Therein lies the

contemporary resonance of the document. In the Field Orders, the naming and ousting of white people is sutured by semicolon to the sovereignty of Black people. This phrasing contains, however off-handedly or unconsciously, the recognition that Black space requires the debarment of white supremacy. Land ownership was merely one means of enforcing it.

One can hardly be surprised that this provision didn't make it into the reparations byword "forty acres and a mule." How much easier it is, after all, to believe that equality requires only inclusion in the "land gift" of America (which is itself, needless to say, a theft of devastating proportions). How much harder it is to imagine that achieving meaningful equality requires that some of us relinquish what we have—above all, the ability to see our sovereignty reflected everywhere we go.

Monuments conventionally bolster that ability; they are part of the mirage of belonging that is so dear to whiteness in America. A reparations monument is thus inevitably a complicated object. It must reject the demand that every new monument be inclusive, capable of incorporating all comers and speaking in a common tongue. This tacit expectation of inclusion persists even in the monument's more radical instantiations—paradigmatically, Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial of 1982, whose glossy face incorporates the reflection of every visitor,



1 William T. Sherman, Special Field Orders No. 15, January 16, 1865. William A. Gladstone Afro-American Military Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

indeed refusing their option to disaffiliate. The reparations monument, on the contrary, rejects the rhetoric of inclusivity. It suggests that in order for space to become inclusive, there must first be an ousting of whiteness, which is, at its core, a principle of exclusivity. Moreover, although the reparations monument is compelled to speak the language of the monuments that came before it, so that it might effectively challenge their claims on space, it must also deny its status as a permanent declaration of an equally permanent sovereignty. The reparations monument rejects its genre's prototypical form as a bronze exrudescence of national or regional values. Instead, it insists that monuments are always partisan, always speaking for someone, and therefore always open to challenge, and accordingly always in need of defense.

For her Socrates commission, *The structure the labor the foundation the escape the pause*, Xaviera Simmons has erected a three-part monument that contends with these conditions. One recalls the form of the memorial wall, which turns the official language of the state—its list of martyrs, its proclamations and chronicles—into a solid, often formidable substance. In compact block letters, Simmons relays several definitions of reparations: “a system of redress for egregious injustices,” “the act of making amends,” “an acknowledgment and an apology for slavery’s role in the creation of the United States as well as its ongoing impact.” But the effect of her wall of writing is to run these explanations together. A commotion of white paint crowds out the black ground, each letter abutting the next, without punctuation to seal off one claim from another. Reading becomes an incomplete effort of parsing and absorbing. The text arrives, not as a declaration from beyond or on high, but instead, as something to be assimilated only at close proximity. The body must stretch and crane to read it, and perhaps even take the words into its own mouth, mumbling them in order to catch the inscription’s meaning.

The second component in Simmons’s series uses this same compressed lettering, but arranges it across a large rectangular panel, speared into the ground with an anxious abundance of steel supports. An excerpt from

Sherman’s Field Orders describes its plans for reparations in one continuous breath. The form suggests a billboard, echoing Nona Faustine’s contribution to *MONUMENTS NOW*, in which both the Lincoln Memorial and an equestrian statue of Theodore Roosevelt have been struck through by a single cancelling line. Yet where Faustine’s message is swift, graphic, and timely, Simmons’s is mediated and obsolete. The posts that hold it in place, like some strange promotional spider, seem at once to defend it against the winds of the next news cycle and to acknowledge its despair of ever capturing a billboard’s broad audience.

Simmons’s third structure is, by contrast, terse: a blank steel wall topped with a sphere. This wordless form may appear to offer a moment of repose or a pause, as Simmons’s title suggests. Yet its mute face and canted surface are worryingly ambivalent. Do they suggest the work’s readiness to accommodate a new script, or its inability to make permanent any message written upon it? Is the crowning sphere the head of a schematic body, one that is infinitely open to projection and identification? Or is it the iconic dot of the “i” on a kiosk that refuses to deliver any information? Does it accommodate or reject? Does it silhouette its viewers or menace them? Where do we stand when we stand before it? In the *escape* from our implication in the failed work of reparations, or in the *pause* of the breath one takes before calling out for its completion? It is perhaps the nature of the reparations monument to suspend the question, making some doubt whether they could even harken its response, and speaking to others its dark truth.

1 W. T. Sherman, “Special Field Orders, No. 15,” *General and Field Orders: Campaign of the armies of the Tennessee, Ohio and Cumberland*, Maj. Gen. W. T. Sherman, Commanding, 1864–5 (St. Louis: R. P. Studley and Co., 1865), 182.



Sculpture with David Byrne

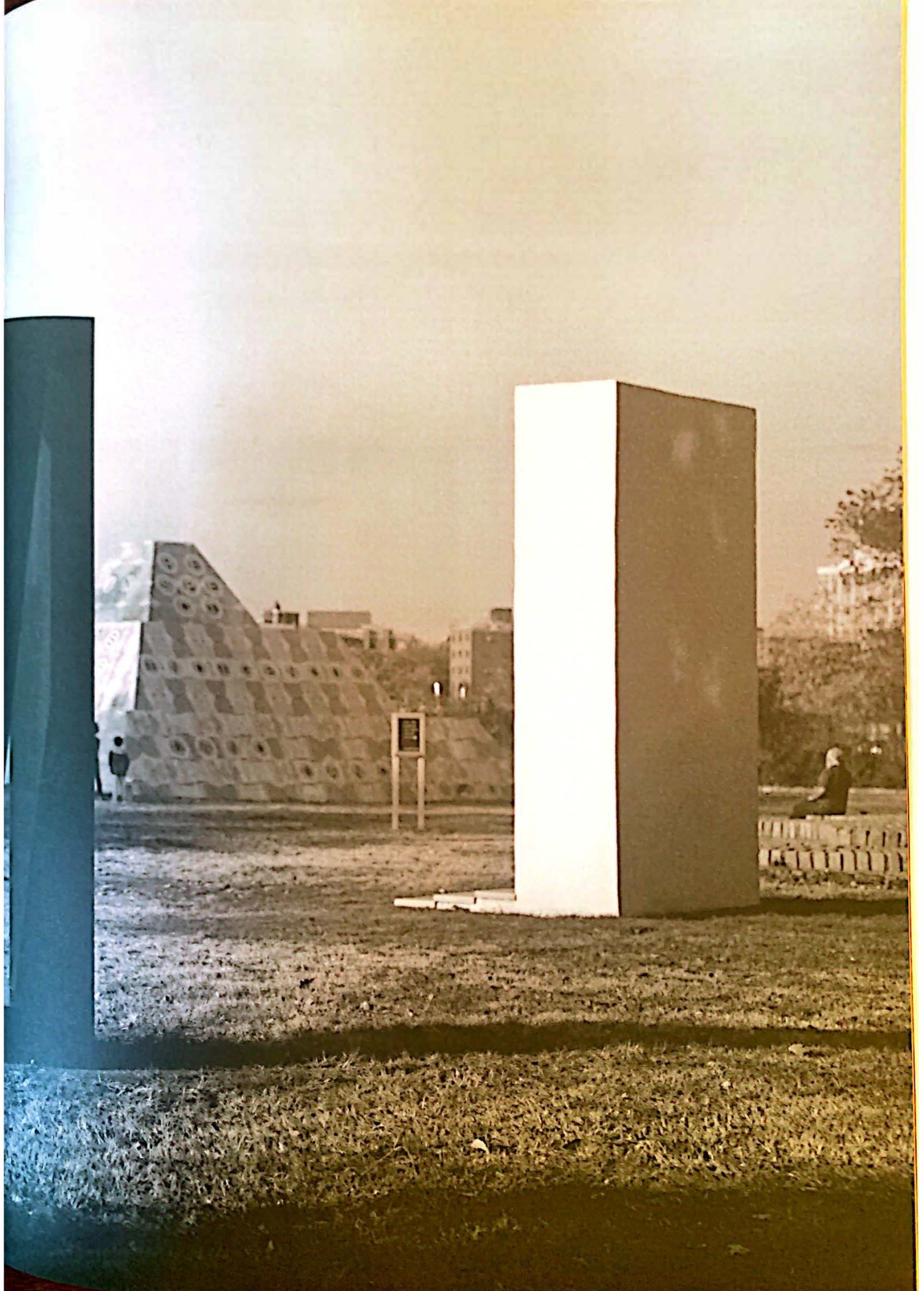


Figure 1. The site of the new building.