

## **Introduction:**

This network aims to explore and develop methodologies and theoretical perspectives on the everyday life of urban monuments and the way in which such monuments have been integrated into the urban everyday life of citizens from a diachronic and cultural historical perspective. Questions regarding user reception and the clash between the uses and processes of forgetting characteristic of most urban monuments will be vital for the network along with the role of monuments in configuring and producing urban spaces and communities. This will be done in a collaborative and interdisciplinary configuration combining perspectives from art history with the methods and insights of ethnography, urban history, landscape studies, heritage studies and museology. The network's core group consists of leading specialists within the project's comparative inter-urban, cross disciplinary approach. (888/1000)

## **Objectives**

- strengthen international collaboration and research in the popular reception, everyday uses and reconfigurations of (urban) monuments
- nurture cross-disciplinary collaboration between heritage workers and scholars in the study of memory culture and urbanity
- highlight the potential of museum collections as a source for the diachronic analysis the interplay between monuments and urban spaces and communities
- build models for how museums and other heritage institutions can enhance and reignite urban monuments as part of their role in urban community-building
- develop comparative and interdisciplinary research into historical and contemporary monumental practices
- organize knowledge exchange activities, conferences, explorative workshops and seminars on the everyday life of urban monuments
- publish findings in both print and web observing open access principles, within the designated two-year period
- prepare for future research projects and education on the reception, uses and reconfiguration of urban monuments

## **Key research questions in studies of urban monuments**

The study of monuments has long been an integral part of the humanities, but saw a surge in the 1980s and 90s following Pierre Nora's work on *lieux de memories* and David Lowenthal's *The Past is a Foreign Country*, which gave rise to new perspectives on the interrelationship between

memory, monuments and politics.<sup>1</sup> Since then the field of memory and monument studies have diversified even further, focusing on postcolonialism, iconoclasm, gender imbalances as well as the transformability and material and artistic networks underpinning monumental cultures and works.<sup>2</sup> In recent years a renewed academic interest in the field have emerged around the remapping and reinterpretation of the material, ideological and civic roots of Western commemorative practices,<sup>3</sup> including elements of “action research” that aim not only to interpret and chart the cultural and material history of commemoration in the past and present, but also to suggest new paths for the future.<sup>4</sup>

With the specific focus on the everyday uses and reconfigurations of monuments the research network aims at securing a platform for the development of a new phase within the field of monument and memory studies. The everyday life of monuments is a subfield that has only recently been taken under consideration in the work of Thomas Houlton and Andrew M. Shanken among others, but also a subfield with a vast potential for the understanding of human landscapes and cities.<sup>5</sup> In the network the study of the everyday life of urban monuments will include perspectives on the passing and interaction of citizens with monumental spaces inspired by the theories of urban space- and placemaking.<sup>6</sup> This perspective allows us to create a sensitivity to the way in which bodies and monuments continuously cross-fertilize urban spaces with new meaning.<sup>7</sup>

### **Organization:**

The core group of the network consists of architects, art historians, urban historians and museum and heritage professionals from Copenhagen, Stockholm, Berlin, Bristol, Wrocław and Amsterdam. The group is selected to cover the wide range of research field merged within the project and will function as organizers and network builders in the activities mentioned below. As part of each activity, we will reach out to local communities, urban planners and younger and more experienced scholars of history, art history, ethnology/anthropology, in a joint exploration of monuments, commemorative practices and urban placemaking in the participating cities.

---

<sup>1</sup> David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge University Press, 1985) and Pierre Nora, *Lieux de Mémoire* (Paris, Gallimard, 1984), Sergiusz Michalski, *Public Monuments* (London, Reaktion Books, 1998),

<sup>2</sup> See f.i. Moody 2021; Forest/Johnson 2019.

<sup>3</sup> F.i. Danbolt/Skovmøller 2023 and 2020; Kelly 2022; Kester 2011; Shea 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Forest & Johnson 2019; Kelly 2022; Osborne 2017; Stevens et al. 2012; Krzyzanowska 2016; Bellentani 2021; Bellentani and Panico, 2016; Moody 2020; Dewulf 2012; Eröss 2016,

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Houlton: *Monuments as Cultural and Critical Objects – from Mesolithic to Eco-Queer*, (XX,2022), Andrew M. Shanken: *The Everyday Lives of Memorials* (New York: Zone Books, 2022)

<sup>6</sup> Lefebvre 1991; de Certeau 1984; Harvey 2009

<sup>7</sup> Schneider 2016.

## **Work plan**

The Research Network will follow a plan for knowledge exchange activities clustering around key conferences, explorative workshops and seminars. All seminars and workshops will include elements open to the public, particularly other researchers in the field, including PhD-students and young scholars. Papers and findings will be published in different formats observing open access principles, in academic peer reviewed journals, in websites, and in an anthology.

The network will explore questions like:

What constitutes an urban monument? Which are the typologies and categorizations available for the mapping and interpretation of monumental practices in cities? How can we study the public and everyday reception and reconfiguration of monuments and the spaces they occupy? How can museums and other heritage institutions play a role in engaging the public in the preservation and care of public monuments? What is it that ignites or turns on urban monument and momentarily or more permanently? And how can museums and scholars engage their users, students and other citizen groups when working with the monumental heritage of cities?

The explorations will be organized within three major themes: 1) Mapping Monuments: Typologies and biographies of urban monuments, 2) Ignition and care: Monuments in jeopardy 3) Commemoration and Citizenship: Outreach and Participation. In each workshop we will explore aspects of monument-citizen interaction and their continuous production and reconfiguration in selected cities drawing on museum collections, paintings, artefacts, written sources, interviews and ethnographic observations. To support cross-fertilization in critical thinking, the exploration of each subtheme will be organized around an interdisciplinary set-up in seminars, exploratory workshops and conferences. The network seeks to enhance the research field and set the ground for future research projects within the study of urban monuments. With the specific focus on the everyday uses and reconfigurations of monuments the research network aims at securing a platform for the development of a new phase within the field of monument and memory studies.

## **Milestones (April 2024 – March 2026):**

**Kick-off conference** at Museum of Copenhagen, April 2024

A conference with invited keynote speakers will address the three major research themes to be investigated in the research network and frame future research collaboration:

- Mapping Monuments: Typologies and biographies of urban monuments
- Ignition and care: Monuments in jeopardy
- Commemoration and Citizenship: Outreach and participation

Number of participants: The kick-off conference will host all members of the network along with invited keynotes reflecting on the themes above.

Three **seminars/explorative workshops** organized in different locations and each addressing one of the three key themes:

1. Monumental typologies and biographies, Stockholm, September 2024
2. Ignition and care: Monuments in jeopardy, Bristol, February 2025
3. Commemoration and Citizenship: Outreach and participation, Berlin/Amsterdam/Cracow, May 2015

Number of participants for each explorative workshop: approximately 15, including local scholars and speakers.

**Concluding conference with open call**, Copenhagen, November 2025.

A two-day international conference *Urban Monuments in Everyday Life* will present invited keynote speakers from the network as well as papers selected from an open call. This conference will be open for a wider public. Number of participants expected: 50.

**Publication plan:** Findings from the network will publish information on and academic results of the research during the two-year network period according to the following publication strategy:

- **a homepage** will be set up in order for the network to communicate and to update results of the research in process, including reports from seminars and conferences (2024)
- **Publications of papers from workshops in relevant academic journals:** 1. Monumental typologies and biographies aiming at *Journal of Urban History/Memory Studies Journal*; 2. Ignition and care aiming at *Sculpture Journal*; 3. Commemoration and citizenship will aim at *Frieze/Public Art Dialogue*
- **an anthology** will publish key findings in papers from the concluding conference (Publisher: Böhlau-Brill)

### **Project management**

- Jakob Ingemann Parby, Senior researcher and Curator, Museum of Copenhagen, Principal Leader of the network.
- Tanja Schult, Associate Professor/Senior Lecturer for Art History, Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University
- NN: assistant will be appointed to be in charge of basic management of the network