

Project: ARTspace

156 Fifth Avenue Suite 308 New York, NY 10010

Monument to What? A Panel Discussion

Friday, October 7, 2016, 6:30-8:30

Project: ARTspace invites you to *Monument to What? A Panel Discussion*, organized by the Institute for Wishful Thinking as the final public event for the exhibition *Making Progress*.

Public monuments and memorials are meant to function as repositories for memory. Some monuments should be reevaluated. Exactly whose memories are perpetuated and whose are ignored through the public display of statues and other artifacts that celebrate problematic figures from the past, many of them from the Confederacy?

In an effort to respond to this question, *Monument to What?* will address the complicated history behind the monument to Dr. J. Marion Sims located in Central Park at 103rd and Fifth Avenue. In recent years calls for its removal have centered on the fact that it ignores how Sims exploited enslaved women for his medical research. Similar disputes are currently underway in cities across the nation in response to 18th, 19th and early 20th century monuments that celebrate slaveholders, racists, Confederate soldiers and corrupt politicians.

Participants in *Monuments to What?* will discuss the impact of Sims' memorial statue on the East Harlem community where it is installed and consider the social and cultural contexts as well as the human stories behind medical advances, particularly those that have impacted and continue to affect the poor, people of color and women.

Participants include Harriet A. Washington, a medical ethicist whose books include *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present*, which has won many awards including the National Book Critics Award for Nonfiction. Washington has been a Research Fellow in Medical Ethics at Harvard Medical School, a fellow at the Harvard School of Public Health, and a senior research scholar at the National Center for Bioethics at Tuskegee University; Heather Butts, MA, JD, is a former regulatory specialist at Columbia University Medical Center Institutional Review Board now teaches Bioethics, Human Resources Strategic Management, Integration of Science and Practice and Leadership Skills in the Health Policy Management Department, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health; Xenobia Bailey, artist and designer and cultural revivalist, whose who's epic project titled *Paradise Under Reconstruction in the aesthetic of Funk* is the subject of her blog, lectures, exhibits, and permanent public art works; Marina Ortiz, East Harlem Preservation (EHP) founder, writer, activist and radio host who has worked toward the statue's removal since 2007 and the Laundromat Project 2016 Create Change Fellowship artists Vanessa Cuervo, Autumn Robinson, Rahviance Beme and Terence Trouillot who together with EHP, organized the demonstration and ongoing project Not Our Statue, the East Harlem community's campaign to remove the Sims monument.

Making Progress (August 30 - October 7, 2016) curated by Liz Atzberger and Kevin Curran, is a group exhibition featuring works by Peter Fend, Neil Freeman, Kyle Hittmeier, Christopher K. Ho, Occupy Museums, William Powhida, Brittany Prater, School of Apocalypse, Adam Simon, and The Institute for Wishful Thinking, here represented by Maureen Connor, Tommy Mintz and Sheko Kirby.

Monument to What? will be followed by a closing celebration for the exhibition *Making Progress*.