

THOMAS HIRSCHHORN

GRAMSCI MONUMENT

AMARA-LOGO | JUAN ACOSTA | WALTER L. ADAMSON

JOHN AHEARN | DESIREE ALBERGOTTI | JUSTIN ALIAS (DJ GUCCI)

SHARA ALTER | MYRNA ALVAREZ | CHERINE ANDERSON

KEITH ANDERSON | ANABEL ANJEI | STANLEY ARONOWITZ

ELENA BAENNINGER | FRANÇOIS BARRAS | SIMONE BATTISTI

NICHOLAS BAUME | JULIETTE BEDER | PHIL BEDER | GREG BELFIELD

CHRIS BENDER | MOSES BERMUDEZ | SERGIO BESSA

ERNESTINE BETHEA | JANET BETHEA | KAREEN BETHEA

KATHERINE BETHEA | ZARIAH BETHEA | HOLLY BLOCK | GEORGE BLUME

REGINALD BOONE | GIOVANNA BOSMAN | ARIANNA BOVE

JAYDA BROADWAY | TWANIA BROADWAY | ISAIAH BROWN

KHOREY BROWN | LEX BROWN | MARCELLA BROWN | SELA BROWN

SHARLENE BROWN | TALIA BROWN | TANIA BRUGUERA | WALTER BRYAN

LAKESHA BRYANT | BENJAMIN H. D. BUCHLOH

CHRISTINE BUCI-GLUCKSMANN | JOE BUDDA | KATHLEEN BUHLER

JENNIFER BURLENSKI | TANYA BUTLER | JOSEPH A. BUTTIGIEG

FERNANDES BURKE | GREGORY BURKE | GLEN CARWELL | MARC CARY

CENTRAL PARK 5 | JOHN E. CHIARADIA | MAGGIE RUSSELL-CIARDI

MANUEL CIRAUQUI | FEDERICA CLARK | HARRY CLEAVER

<i>Manual</i> Thomas Hirschhorn	7	<i>On Embodying</i> Tracie D. Morris	321
IDEA	9	<i>Remind</i> Fred Moten	326
<i>Desegregating the Experience of Art: A User's Guide to Gramsci Monument</i> Yasmil Raymond	10	<i>The Gramsci Monument</i> Fred Moten	329
<i>Gramsci, a Testimony</i> Antonio Negri	28	<i>Know Yourself: Antonio Gramsci and Liberation Today</i> Nadia Urbinati	374
FIELDWORK	35	<i>Antonio Gramsci</i> Urayoán Noel	393
<i>Statement: Monuments; Tribute to Form; Unshared Authorship; "Gramsci Monument" at Forest Houses, Bronx, NYC; Why Gramsci? Why New York?</i> Thomas Hirschhorn	51	DISMANTLING	403
<i>Housing, Hegemony, History: A Fragment</i> Reinhold Martin	86	TOMBOLA	415
CONSTRUCTION	91	MEMORY	423
<i>Gramsci's Gramsci and Hirschhorn's Gramsci</i> Monxo López	131	<i>Precarious Publics and the Public Precariat: Thomas Hirschhorn's Gramsci Monument</i> Benjamin H. D. Buchloh	428
SPECIAL EVENTS	135	<i>The Coexistent Resonance of Gramsci Monument: Interview with Erik Farmer and Clyde Thompson</i> Kelly Kivland	440
STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS	145	<i>What I Learned from the "Gramsci Monument"</i> Thomas Hirschhorn	446
<i>Catalogue of the Cammett Collection at the Gramsci Monument Library</i>	160	<i>A Monument as a Garden</i> Philippe Vergne	452
DAILY EVENTS	197	Program of Events	456
<i>Monument Time</i> Lex Brown	230		
<i>Ambassador's Notes</i> Yasmil Raymond	254		
WEEKLY EVENTS	259		
<i>Gramsci Theater</i> Marcus Steinweg	271		
<i>Gramsci Monument through the Eyes of Marcella Paradise</i> Marcella Paradise	303		

MONUMENT TIME

Lex Brown

Lex Brown is an artist and educator. She led and developed the curriculum for the Children's Workshop, a daily program of *Gramsci Monument*, where she worked with two co-teachers, Forest Houses residents Jeniece Jenkins and Susie Shaw, to lead classes for neighborhood children of all ages.

Summer is long gone, and with it *Gramsci Monument*.

I left New York on the first day of its dismantling. Though the wood didn't come down until well into September, the fall gloom seemed to arrive from nowhere. I made my way over to the playground behind the benches to say goodbye to some of the kids I had taught over the summer. Leaving was difficult because it felt arbitrary. We were friends now. We had been making art together every day for two and a half months. And on top of the disappearance of this structure, I was disappearing, too.

Because the physical environment of *Gramsci Monument* was so novel, it exaggerated people's body language: it became very clear what different people were thinking, feeling, fearing, and loving about the project. I think any real experience of this work was also tethered to an experience of one's own physicality. Physically, psychologically, and emotionally, I experienced a profound surrendering of my self and my notion of time to this project. It's taken months to absorb and process what happened this summer. This honest, engaged, and difficult artwork had an entire internal component of people working to keep it going. That the work had a third perspective from which to experience it makes a compelling case to reexamine what it means to "experience" in experiential art. In light of the vital role other people play in Thomas Hirschhorn's work, it seems like another person's perspective on making and being a part of the work might be worth considering. And so, I offer my mine.

There were over fifty people working the monument full-time over the summer, a mix of Forest Houses residents and a handful of outsiders crewed together for the project. Wedged between the artist and the immediate audience of the project, we were doing "the work" of the work every day and watching it unfold before us. Working on *Gramsci Monument* was like living in another configuration of reality where all time was dictated by the architecture of the space. While the project created paid work opportunities with responsibilities and rewards much like any other job, from a social and an artistic point of view "working" takes on a whole new dimension within Thomas's public projects.

"Unshared authorship" is the term Thomas uses to describe a project in which multiple authors are making contributions under the terms of coexistence rather than collaboration. Group collaboration is a model for work celebrated in both art and corporate culture, but it can replicate the dynamics of a high school assignment. One person ends up taking over, three people are slacking off, and everyone else wants to pitch in but it's too hard to agree. Even if the project is deemed a success, people might be left feeling slighted, resentful, or used.

In a project with a goal, collaboration or "shared authorship" can set up a framework for covert hierarchy and all the prohibitive forces that

come with that. When the project has a shared outcome, it is the people who are afraid to trust others' abilities that rise up and become leaders. Those who don't trust themselves often yield their agency to the more confident (or the ones whose confidence comes from lacking confidence in others). In collaboration there is the possibility of harmony, but at the expense of each person making real compromises.

What unshared authorship offers is the richness and complexity that results from a group of individuals working in acceptance of each other. Responsibility isn't shared, so neither is blame. No one is a leader. Things get done because people want to do them, not because they are afraid others won't.

In our project, unshared authorship meant that Thomas and I had a relationship free from daily imposition. We didn't decide on anything together, and he didn't tell me what to do. Aside from a few basic rules—the doors of the workshop always had to be open, I had to lead the workshop every day—I had complete reign over the activities in the space. Whereas collaboration trades on approval, unshared authorship works by acceptance. I had to accept my choices and abilities, and as I accepted the choices and abilities of others, I also had to let go of control.

The vast majority of the people who came to *Gramsci Monument* were the kids of Forest Houses. Most responses to the project equate "residents" with adults, but anything written about this work must be done with the explicit inclusion of the kids. They were the most active and uninhibited users of all of the spaces: the stage, the bar, the computer room, the library, the radio station, the somewhat functional pool, and of course the workshop. Thomas called the workshop the motor of the monument, because the kids were always the first ones there and often the last to leave. We started at ten each morning and went until about three in the afternoon; it took all the energy I and my co-teachers, Jeniece Jenkins and Susie Shaw, had to get through those five hours for seventy-seven straight days. Kids are crazy. They are small adults who need everything and haven't yet learned how to pretend like they don't. It was beautiful to see them making full use of *Gramsci Monument*, not because children are "innocent," or naturally charming, but because they are people who fully invested themselves in the work with an intensity that most adults are either too tired or self-conscious to have. Through their presence and exuberance from day one, the children contributed hugely to *Gramsci Monument*.

One criticism made of the project was the lack of a response to the educational needs of the neighborhood. I must say that on my part I did what I could to teach as much as I know about grammar, math, art, and even some science. I did not allow misspellings and I drilled the kids with math flashcards. A large number of the children of Forest Houses were enrolled in summer school or summer camp, and just wanted to have fun. What *Gramsci Monument* provided was a safe, outdoor place where the kids could socialize, create, and play without being graded or creatively limited.

If there was a failure of the project, it was not education. Rather, it would have to be the lack of free food for the kids. There were free Gramsci Apples in the library, which were devoured daily, and for some time there was a free lunch available for the children enrolled in summer camps at the nearby Southeast Bronx Neighborhood Centers facility. A small number of children hanging out would take advantage of this lunch,

but for many of them, the Gramsci Bar was the cheapest option. The bar was set up and run like a microbusiness within *Gramsci Monument*. Even with a chef behind the counter, the constraints of operating a temporary, outdoor, plywood-ensconced kitchen limited the variety of food offered. Likewise, there was a limit to the profit that could be turned. The bar crew did everything in their means to discount the food for the children and give free snacks, because some of them were really hungry. Providing more free food would have been one improvement that wouldn't have compromised the artistic or social integrity of the Gramsci Bar or the overall project.

A month after the project ended, one of the girls I taught that summer, Semoni, sent me a letter. In it she said:

"Your love is in my bare hands."

More profound and rousing words have never been written to me. When I first saw them on the page, in a nine-year-old's handwriting, it brought forth a sob and a sound so raw and from so deep a place that I was startled to find it even existed. It was then that I realized the love I got to give and receive was more real, lasting, transformative, and important to talk about than anything else.

Love was an explicit and crucial part of *Gramsci Monument*. It's the word for the kind of energy that people could feel when they were standing in it and on it. The way the kids reacted to the monument, the work and participation that the residents put into it, the dedication of the people working there, and the reception of the people living in the neighborhood all contributed to make something that still feels too enormous to aptly sum up in words.

Love in a social context is often dismissed as sentimental, superficial, or naive, but in reality it is tough, powerful, and complex. Real love is not pity, charity, or an opportunity. During the monument, I learned that love is showing up, again and again, and doing your work because you believe in it. It is listening to other people with the knowledge that you don't know everything—even about yourself. In the time since *Gramsci Monument*, I have learned that to be loved is to have your love received.

Semoni's words ring a certain truth, because in her hands is where a monument used to be. On the day after the last day, there were nothing but walls without rooms and huge slabs of gray wood lying on the cement. There was a palpable emptiness: the space reassuming its form before this blip in time. Whether it was a momentary monument or a monumental moment, time will tell. I still think about it every day. *Gramsci Monument* doesn't all come down to love, but that's what makes the whole thing possible to remember, and even worth holding.

I have been writing this text for a long time, debating what, among so many moments, would have to stay in my memory and what was worth communicating. It will be bizarre to see how, or if, *Gramsci Monument* is written about in the future. If you didn't see it, walk on it, or feel it, there's nothing to go back to. There is no credible way to theorize or criticize it without having an actual experience of the work, because the work was entirely encapsulated in time. That is an amazing position for an artwork to occupy in resistance to history and critique—when art simply defies the words put against it by those who did not experience it. I am grateful to

have experienced art by living it as a physical and emotional truth, and to continue to feel what it is like to have my life changed by a work of art. I love *Gramsci Monument* for all the people that it is, and for what I now carry. And I love that no one can tell me what it was, besides *Gramsci Monument* itself.

To every person who I spent so much time with because of *Gramsci Monument*, you are important to me in ways that are mysterious, deep, and continually unfolding. I think about you often, call on your words and actions when I need a new perspective, and find myself trying to live life with your spirit. You changed me and taught me more than you can imagine. Zariah, Deseana, Xiomara, Tamara, Tyrone, Adam, Angelice, Wilcelys, Semoni, Daniel, Lisette, Shamah, Keylin, Zaria, Nasjè, Josiah, Joshua, Chanel, Antoine, Trinity, Champagne, Talia, Tonight, Greysaan, Taquan, Malika, Aaliyah, Kyle, Mabel, Sita, Marcella, Janet, Kareen, Myrna, Tyrone, Joe, Jermikah, Kemisha, Jeniece, Susie, Erik, Khorey, Stan, Abayomi, Lakesha, DJ Baby Dee, Freddie, Phil, Petawane, Justin, Saquan, Foster, Javon, Layet, Yasmil, Romain, Marcus, Thomas, Anna, Max, and so many more.