'A Faux Cenotaph': Guerilla Interventions and the Contestation of Rhetorical Public Space

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Seemingly random acts of violence are occasionally acted upon monuments, memorials, and public icons of commemoration. On occasion, however, the rhetorical topography of cities arouses dialogue and interaction, especially at times of national or global crisis. Drawing on the theoretical work of Boyer and Matsuda, we explore the contested dialogues of commemoration as acts that go beyond evaluation, judgment, and of utterance, to become dialogic, interventionist, and (in extremis) auto-destructive. This article uses as a case study the creation of an artwork masquerading as a temporary memorial, which was constructed by an artist as a work about commemoration rather than as a commemoration in itself. However, due to the particular circumstances of its timing, coinciding as it did with the bombing of Afghanistan by America and its allies following the Twin Towers terrorist act in New York on 11 September 2001, it took on an unanticipated function. During the course of the show the Faux Cenotaph was written on, added to, subtracted from, and eventually dismantled by unknown hands. It became a locus for numerous expressions of protest with a sequence of interventions by a largely seen set of players, becoming a temporary version of what the Germans call a 'Denkmal': a monument that stands as a warning, causing us to meditate on the mistakes of the past, and hopefully to mend our ways. This paper sets out a number of arguments to suggest that following this sequence of unscheduled, and very radical, interventions the piece became a 'guerilla-memorial': a rejoinder to both the object and the genre of the monumental memorial itself.

Introduction

In 2001, a British artist (one of the authors of this article) staged two exhibitions of large drawings (representations of monuments and other icons of commemoration) in parallel venues separated by a tract of dockland water. The intention was to set these works against each other, and in doing so consciously reference any number of situations where memorial objects are placed in abrupt juxtaposition. In this instance a very particular geographical adjacency was being referenced: namely, the commemorative landscape of Gallipoli, Western Turkey, where Sir Frank Burnett's imperial neo-classical monuments stand adjacent to, and are contested by, Turkish figurative memorials; each commemorative work oblivious to the claims of the other, and each speaking a history that, in the artist's words, 'vies for the higher ground and for the moral ascendancy' (Borg, 1991; King, 1998). The artist referred to this charged 'memory-scape' in a [1] number of explanatory texts, a short catalogue statement and through the titles of some of the pieces in the two shows. What was made clear in these brief texts was that the two monuments were performing parallel monologues (Ayliffe et al., 1991). It was this evocative notion of two 'voices' talking over, around and above each other—with a complete absence of dialogue—that was the driving inspiration behind the artist's work at that time.

The first of the two exhibition spaces was located in the first floor concourse of the Watershed Media Centre in Bristol, UK. Here, at one of the busiest junctions in the building—leading to two cinemas and to the public bar—the artist designed, fabricated, and installed a 'False Cenotaph', a two-dimensional 'monument', which he intended to modify and adorn during the course of the 6-week show. Across the harbour a larger exhibition of drawings by the artist was mounted in the Bristol Architecture Centre. Its subject matter was drawn from a long-standing concern with monumental forms, architectural totems, and landscapes of conflict and recuperation (Figure 1).

As the shows progressed and the intervention to the Watershed piece began a number of academics in New Zealand, UK, and the USA maintained a correspondence with the artist and online participants, observing the changes, and sharing thoughts about the nature of intervention, the life cycles of a memorial object, and the pivotal role of context when citing any public artwork. This reflective article is the result of these dialogues; it tells the tale of the piece—its rationale, installation, initial reception, and programme of interventions. Using selective quotes from the Comments Book and the online discussions, the authors of this article attempt to measure the impact of the piece and situate what happened to it within the polemics of commemoration and anti-commemoration. Drawing

FIGURE 1   Faux Cenotaph, Watershed Media Centre, Bristol, 2001.

on the theoretical work of Boyer (1996) and Matsuda (1996), we explore the contested dialogues of commemoration as acts that go beyond evaluation, judgment, and of utterance, to become dialogic, interventionist and (*in extremis*) auto-destructive.

The 'monument'

Presented as a silhouette of a simple Classical monumental form, the piece itself was constructed from hardboard (masonite), timber and emulsion paint; it measured some 2.5 m in height by 3 m wide. Its surface was pasted with contemporary newspaper pages, many of which reported upon the conflict in Iraq. A sequence of key words—drawn from what Hynes (1990: 14) has described as the 'high diction' of formal remembrance, such as 'Glorious', 'the Fallen', and 'Gallantry'—were drawn in larger letters on the face of the 'monument'. The edifice stood proud of the wall by some 0.5 m, and, on the wall immediately behind, was arranged a collage of red paper decorated with poppy floral designs painted in black and blue ink. The piece, which had been agreed for this site by the management of the media centre, was intended to remain in place for 6 weeks leading up to the weekend of Remembrance Sunday in November of that year (Figure 2).

In the accompanying captions about the artwork at the Watershed, after discussion with the current co-author, the artist described it as a 'false memorial', agreeing
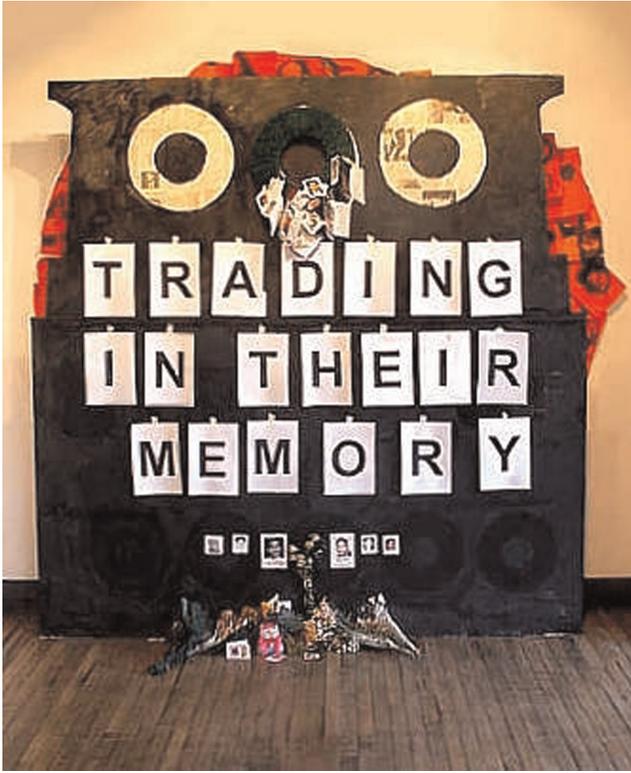
FIGURE 2   Paul Gough, 'Catafalque' (After Max Aitken), Drawing, 2001.

with her assertion that it had been constructed, perhaps, more as a work *about* commemoration than a commemoration in itself. These discussions led to the definitive title of the piece: *Faux Cenotaph*. However, due to the particular circumstances of its timing, coinciding as it did with the bombing of Afghanistan by America and its allies following the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001, it took on an unanticipated function. Upon reflection, the artists and the commentators saw that it had become a temporary version of what the Germans call a *Denkmal*: a monument that stands as a warning, causing us to meditate on the mistakes of the past, and hopefully to mend our ways. It also became a locus for the expression of spontaneous and pre-planned protest. Through informal intervention on the part of the audience it became what we describe as a 'guerilla-memorial': a rejoinder to both the object and the genre of the monumental memorial.[1]

During the course of the 6-week exhibition the *Faux Cenotaph* was written on, added to, subtracted from, and eventually dismantled by its 'viewers'. This monument, far from silencing the viewer with its rhetoric, seemed to incite intense, almost endless, 'speaking' from its audience.

The interventions happened at irregular intervals during the period of the installation, none of them was witnessed by the artist or by members of the Watershed

management. The modifications took several forms. Initially, the large words that were integral to the original artwork were modified: first, within days of its erection, a large question mark was scribbled at the end of the word 'Glorious'. The artist chose to leave it in place, recognizing that the artwork was attracting attention in a way that had not quite been predicted. After the first week on show, a new 'inscription' in large laser-copied lettering was added to the piece. It spelt out the words 'Enduring Freedom', a phrase that was drawn directly from the official rhetoric emanating from the US and UK governments of the time (Figure 3). The work was monitored by both the artist and the Media Centre staff but, as it was located in a public thoroughfare, it was not possible to police it at all times. Nor was this thought desirable by the artist.

Within a short while the 'R' had been ripped down, crumpled up and thrown to the foot of the artwork, so creating a new 'inscription'—'F_EEDOM'—that referred once again to commercial transaction. A few days later these were replaced with fresh sheets spelling out, 'Trading in their Memory' (a letter apiece laser-printed onto single A4 sheets of paper) pinned up on the face of the 'monument' (Figure 4). During this period of its showing even the Comments Book (which had been placed adjacent the edifice) became a part of its function as a collective, informal, *Denkmal*, or guerilla-memorial. It contained phrases that condemned the bombings in Afghanistan and the US war on terrorism, with exhortations such as, 'this can't go on' and 'stop the bombing'. By comparison, the exhibition of drawings at the other venue—The Architecture Centre—was attracting none of this attention, largely, one surmises, because it was a show of framed pieces of art

FIGURE 3   Faux Cenotaph, Watershed Media Centre, Bristol, 2001, first intervention.
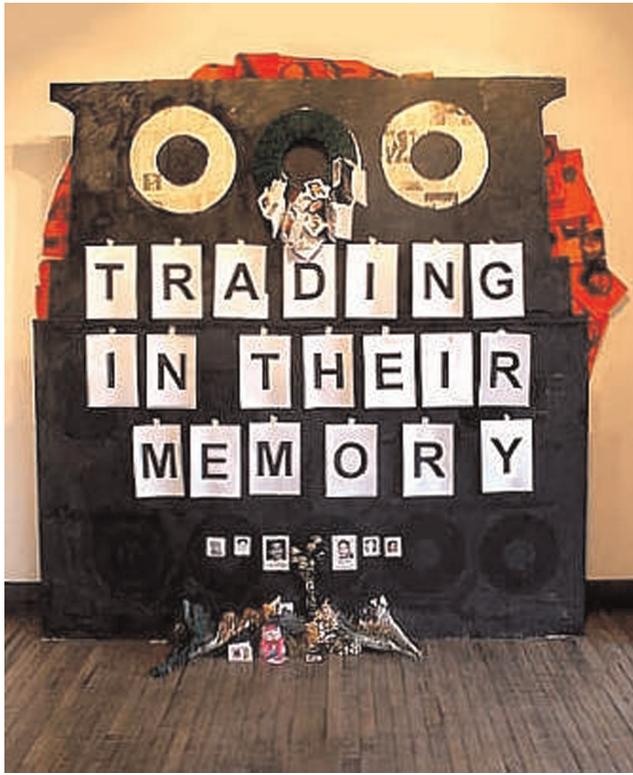
FIGURE 4   Faux Cenotaph, Watershed Media Centre, Bristol, 2001, second intervention.

hanging from the walls of a conventional exhibition venue. Comments in the Visi-
tor's Book at this venue were more conventional appreciations (or otherwise) of
the draughtsmanship of the work or their value as exhibited artefacts. In parallel,
the online 'conversations' between the academics and the artists addressed the
almost daily changes to the 'Faux Monument', seeking urgent updates and, at
times, challenging the artist to take some sort of stand against the interventionist
(s). One of the more pointed observations from a US colleague suggested that some-
thing 'had gone terribly wrong' with the show and that the artist had conceded any
say over his own artwork. Others felt very differently, arguing that the dialogic
nature of the piece was fresh, stimulating, and necessary.

   At the Watershed, the interventions by unknown hands took another turn with the
appearance 3 weeks into the show of a collection of cards, flowers, and other mem-
entoes which appeared to comment on the many hundreds of non-Christian and
non-white workers who had died as a result of the attack of the World Trade
Centre on 11 September. Placed carefully at the foot of the 'Faux Monument',
were arranged some thirty small digitally printed portraits of individuals who, it
was suggested, had died in the attack; these were accompanied by hand-written
notes offering commiseration and condolences (Figure 5). Wholly authentic in
appearance, they attracted considerable passing attention and were tended every

FIGURE 5   Faux Cenotaph, Watershed Media Centre, Bristol, 2001, third intervention.

FIGURE 6   Faux Cenotaph, Watershed Media Centre, Bristol, 2001, fourth intervention, detail.   3

morning, along with the flowers and bouquets, by the cleaners who cared for the building (Figures 6 and 7). All of these interventions were recorded and photographed by the artist and shared with the on-line correspondence group; the debate

FIGURE 7   Faux Cenotaph, Watershed Media Centre, Bristol, 2001, fourth intervention, detail.

still focused on whether any loss of creative autonomy had resulted from these unscripted interventions. By his account, the artist did not feel that he, or his work, had been violated by these intrusions, but had actually been enriched by its polyvocality, even if these voices were hidden and obscure.

Some 2 weeks later came a final *dénouement*. Now cleared of flowers, portrait photographs and candles, the floor in front of the 'monument' was strewn with large daisy-headed flowers, in their midst a small bundle, the size and form of a young child, was swaddled in blue cloth. Large single letters on the front of the edifice spelled out the epithet—BIG FUCKING BLUE—a colloquial reference to the 15,000 pounds BLU-82B, or 'daisy-cutter', bomb that was being used by US forces against civilian targets. Seventeen feet long and 5 feet in diameter, it is the largest conventional bomb in existence, and its deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan was controversial. Upset and overtly challenged by this latest, truly irreverent, intervention the management of the Media Centre summarily removed these 'additions' to the artwork (Figure 8). A short dialogue between artist and management ensued but the course of action was carried through, the argument being that the foyer was a public thoroughfare not a bespoke gallery space and could not be treated as such.

Clearly, there are a number of stages in the creation, reception, and usefulness of any public monument. Even in the case of an artwork purporting to be a monument there are several phases. Winter (1995) proposes a three-part cycle in the creation of any *lieu de mémoire*. There is an initial, creative phase—the construction of 'commemorative form'—which is marked by monument building and the creation of ceremonies that are centred periodically on the reverential object. During the second phase the ritual action is grounded in the annual calendar and becomes institutionalized as part of civic routine. There then follows a critical, transformative period when the public monument either disappears or is upheld as an active site of memory (Winter, 2000: 24–25). The success of this final phase depends largely on

FIGURE 8   Faux Cenotaph, Watershed Media Centre, Bristol, 2001, fifth intervention.

whether a second generation of mourners inherits the earlier meanings attached to the place or event, and brings new meanings or fresh layers of interpretation. Without frequent social re-inscription the key determinants of commemoration simply fade away: memory atrophies, the monument loses its potency and relevance. As Mumford (1938: 438) tellingly asserted, it becomes 'invisible' and stays so. The 'Faux Monument' had deliberately been situated in a public space passed by hundreds of people every day. Like most pieces of civic statuary it was expected to be ignored and to remain unseen for its 6-week temporary residency. Perhaps it would have done had it not been willfully, and radically, re-invigorated over the weeks by clandestine hands.

As planned the piece was dismantled by the artist on Remembrance Sunday of that year. Even at this late stage items had been left by or stuck on the 'monument', among them a photocopy of a letter from the front written by a First World War combatant. The artwork had assumed a degree of autonomy attracting its own momentum. Given the interest generated by the piece at the Watershed it was subsequently exhibited in two other locations where the artist and a number of

supporters invited members of the public to continue to chalk words or thoughts onto its surface (now painted with blackboard paint to help facilitate these more planned interventions). Again, members of the public took to this invitation with zeal; in one of the public settings the now blackened cover of the temporary memorial was scrawled over with words of admonishment: 'No more Wars', 'Oil is not worth it', and so forth.

Finally, after a further brief 'showing' in London (Figure 9) the piece was dismantled and accompanied a group of protesters on an anti-war march through London in Spring 2002. Its final fate is unknown, though given its deliberately light and flimsy construction it probably fell apart and was scrapped.

Critical reflection

Matsuda has suggested that commemoration is an act of evaluation, judgment, and of utterance. The *Faux Cenotaph* at the Watershed, originally intended to illustrate the notion of monument as monologue, found itself, through an extraordinary coincidence of timing, engaged in the 'polemics of commemoration and anti-commemoration' a situation common to many public artworks in times of *extremis* (Matsuda, 1996: 6). Situated, like many war memorials, in a public place, the artwork was unlike many public monuments in that it seemed to invite intervention or participation. Perhaps because of its obviously temporary and contingent nature and its subsequent inability to claim 'perpetuity' or 'authority', it became a conduit for public comment on a contemporary and momentous political situation (Gough & Morgan, 2004).

FIGURE 9   Faux Cenotaph, Watershed Media Centre, Bristol, 2001, sixth intervention.

In 2002, one of the authors of this article proposed the notion of the 'Guerilla Memorial' as an unsanctioned artwork which contests dominant civic memory (Morgan, 2002). In discussing the work of Folake Shoga, Morgan proposed a category of intervention that stood as a combination of Guerilla Art and Counter Monument. The essential element in this kind of work she proposes is the act of dialogue between the civic, sanctioned, monument, or memorial, and the 'guerilla' or 'counter' work which contests it. In the case of Folake Shoga's work this manifested as a small Nigerian Yemoja shrine set up in direct and intimate spatial relationship to a statue depicting the Bristol Slaver, Edward Colston, as a civic philanthropist. The shrine was temporary in nature, was installed in the dead of night, and although it was clearly in a polite but critical 'conversation' with the statue, it did not deface or in any other way violate it. Unlike the interventions with the *Faux Cenotaph*, where the piece was extended or manipulated to change its meaning, Shoga's shrines were set up as a counterpoint that challenged the meaning of the statue as a celebration of civic virtue. Other scholars have suggested that guerilla art is difficult to define and Pieter (2009: 4) goes as far as arguing that it is not easily differentiated from graffiti art from which it originated. But the graphic forms used by the guerilla interventionists on the surface of the *Faux Cenotaph* were sophisticated and knowingly applied: the typography mimicked the graphic conventions of the billboard, and engaged in wordplay linking commemoration with commerce. Each intervention made an opportunity for the next. The word, 'FREEDOM', became 'F(-) EEDOM' as another member of the public adapted and expanded the text. The inscriptions played games with the high diction of official commemoration. As we have noted, Hynes (1990: 14) calls these the '"big words" of civic remembrance': *glorious, valiant, suffering, sacrifice, and heroism.* More usually carved reverently in foot-high capitals in stone, they were now represented in photocopies; serving as both parody and simulacra, their meaning subverted by medium and context. In a counter-play the comments book and the on-line discussions were conducted in a scrawled or hasty demotic, adding to the bewildering polyvocality that prevailed during the 6-week period of the exhibition, when each day seemed to bring new interventions of greater intensity and daring.

There is of course a vivid recent history of guerilla-style urban intervention and an equally full historiography on 'counter-memorials' (Michalski, 1998; Young, 2000). [4] There have been sporadic episodes in the UK and overseas when war memorials have been inscribed with words of protest. In the 1980s in England and Australia, for example, feminist groups were suspected of frequently daubing anti-rape slogans on cenotaphs. So widespread had this become that by the middle of that decade that on the eve of national remembrance days, guards had to be posted around war memorials to prevent any contestation of meaning being written onto them.

Some of the most radical legitimate developments in the evolution of commemorative form emerged from Germany in the 1980s, as a new generation of artists and

writers began to face up to the concealed and repressed recent past of their nation. Pursuing the ideological maxim of John Latham and the Artist Placement Group who asserted that 'the context is half the [art]work', artists, art groups and such interventionists created art that started from the premise that memory is fluid and contingent and that, consequently, it is neither possible nor desirable to insist on a single, objective and authoritative reading of any place or historic moment (Latham, 1997: 15). The key consequences of such thinking resulted in 'negative' or 'invisible' forms, instead of physical, erect forms. Anti-matter, non-object, and the ephemeral were preferred over verticality and solidity; dislocation and disturbance premised over comfort and reconciliation. Now regarded as the origins of the 'counter-monument', the conceptual base was brilliantly articulated by contextual fine artists, who asserted that statues—fixed, elevated, and plinth-bound— might actually induce national amnesia rather than meaningful acts of remembering. The principle aim of these 'counter-monumentalists' was to register protest or disagreement with the 'untenable prime object' (invariably, the 'hero on the horse'— the plinth-bound exalted statue) and to stage an alternative that might arouse reflection and debate, however uncomfortable or radical (Michalski, 1998: 207).

Through a series of extraordinary interventions staged across Western Europe, such artists as Christian Boltanski, Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz, and Krzysztof Wodiczko declared that they were not 'commemorating' particular wars as such, they were offering up a complex critique of how nations repressed, subverted, and diverted uncomfortable national memory (Burstow, 2001). As Young (2000) has examined in his study of remembering the Holocaust, these transient structures have intentionally challenged the notion of inviolability that was once the principal attribute of the monument. Clearly, the individual (possibly with the support of a wider group) who had made so many frequent, canny and irreverent interventions on the Faux Monument was familiar with the literature, the art and the rationale behind such European artworks. Here was a refusal to regard a public monument, or even one that was so transparently temporary, as palliative topoi in our overcrowded and overfurnished urban centres. They were determined to use the *Faux Cenotaph* as a means of attacking the idea of the monument as a bombastic, celebratory edifice that embellished the past and promoted pride in distant victories by asserting inflated values of nationhood. Ashword & Graham have contributed to this debate by noting how the traditional monument is often subject to random, unpredictable forces: 'Existing monuments may be removed and replaced; they may be re-designated and their meanings re-interpreted to express new meanings; or they may simply become ignored and rendered all but invisible, their meanings lost through being irrelevant or unreadable' (Ashworth & Graham, 2005: 11). ⑤

However, what happened in Bristol did not result in any constructive, social interaction. Unlike much guerilla art and in particular some forms of graffiti, many artists actually value their aesthetic gift to the public (Harris, 2011: 219) creating what Dew (2007: 13) has described a 'street dialogue' in which the urban scene

becomes the subject and background of 'an infinite flow of coded messages and interferences'.

The Bristol factor

It is, perhaps, no coincidence that this 6-week long act of continual, sophisticated intervention with a public artwork took place in Bristol. The city has a long tradition of critical engagement with public monuments and memorial events, and has gained a reputation for irreverent events that 'mark' the urban scene. Banksy's role in tagging the city's streets with provocative stencils has become the benchmark for such practices (Harris, 2011; Gough, 2012). In 1996, the city hosted the 'International Festival of the Sea', in which Bristol's maritime past was celebrated and acted out in and around the city's docks. The fact that the merchants of Bristol had African slaves as their ships' most significant cargo was not officially acknowledged other than in a very subtle guerilla intervention by artist Annie Lovejoy, called *Stirring @ the International Festival of the Sea*. Although others have described this work as 'intervention' Lovejoy describes it as a 'negotiation' (Morgan, 1998: 112), in which the key element of the piece was sugar. This commodity had been the main import in Bristol's Triangular Trade. It had been bought from the profit of the sale of African slaves, and had been produced by slaves on plantations owned by Bristol merchants. In Lovejoy's piece spoonsized packets of sugar were distributed to cafés around the festival site. The packets alluded to the Triangular Trade within the icon of the red triangle; a list of traded goods that included slaves; and an eighteenth-century typographic rendering of the word 'Bristol'. Also visibly present at the festival were the Bristol chapter of the *Guerilla Girls*. Their intervention was simple. Crudely photocopied posters depicting an eighteenth-century plan of slaves packed into the hold of a ship were fly posted around the harbourside. Such transgressions pose a number of questions about how we create histories and narratives which recognize that places are not so much singular points but 'constellations'. How can we reconcile these many radically different places?

   More recently, Bristol has become renowned for its graffiti and 'street' art; it has become the playground for a band of guerilla-artists operating under the banner 'Subvertise' who re-label and re-inscribe billboard signs on many of the approach roads into the city. The same group, or at least some of its members, may have been responsible in 2004 for depositing a cardboard facsimile of a child's coffin on the steps of the Bristol Cenotaph, around which were strewn bouquets of flowers some with a typed label: 'For Those Who Died for Oil'. Banksy's hugely popular exhibition in the city in 2009, which attracted global press interest as well as some 310,000 visitors in 6 weeks was clearly attuned to the historical fractures and vexatious histories of his home city. His work is aligned to, indeed perhaps derived from and nurtured by, the spirit of dissent that drives the counter-cultures of Bristol. Its very title, 'Bansky *versus* Bristol Museum' emphasized this point, causing

not a little irritation among those city grandees who wish to present a unified civic front (Gough, 2012).

Cultural historian Fussell (1975) has explored these questions. He posits the confrontation between 'us' and 'them' as an example of gross dichotomizing that can best be understood as 'the modern *versus* habit' (p. 79). One thing is opposed to another, he argues, not in the Hegelian hope of achieving some synthesis, or a negotiated peace, but with a determination that neither side should concede in a belief that total submission of one side or the other is the only resolution. The lack of a rapport between the artist, the object and the interventionist(s) who re-made the 'Faux Monument' is perhaps further evidence of Bristol of this pervasive 'versus habit' (Gough, 2012).

Conclusion

When Henri Lefebvre argued that the monument acted as a 'consensus', offering 'a collective mirror more faithful than any personal one', and asserted that 'everyone partook, and partook fully—albeit, naturally, under the conditions of a generally accepted Power and a generally accepted Wisdom' (Lefebvre, 1997: 133) he may have rather overstated the case. As we have argued with the Bristol case study, although the monument appears to represent consensus, it may more properly be described as *appropriating* consensus. Furthermore, it can be convincingly argued that most members of society do not see themselves in this 'collective mirror': rather they see a spatial and material expression of power, divested and wielded by others. Furthermore if, as Christine Boyer has posited, memorials and monuments can be regarded as sites of rhetoric, then the official monument or memorial-form may be calculated to be the 'last word'—an emphatic statement of history established and erected in line with the dominant ideology of its time (Boyer, 1996: 343). The essence of this kind of monument might be said to be silence: each standing as a polemical monologue that speaks in order to impose silence in the beholder, and, importantly, to maintain that position, in perpetuity, through the maintenance of Lefebvre's 'generally accepted Power'. The sequence of interventions at the Watershed during late 2001 help us develop the notion of public commemorative sites as possible sites of exchange, even where these refer to a site of commemoration in 'proxy' form.

It is significant that the *Faux Cenotaph* was the locus for furious intervention and ideological assertion. Its companion piece on the same theme at the Architecture Centre, just yards away across the river, remained completely untouched during this same period. The fact that the 'monument' was situated in a busy thoroughfare in an environment that legitimized participatory behaviour made it a genuinely public artwork in a way that the gallery-situated piece was not. The fact that it impersonated that particularly democratic form of memorial, the Cenotaph, which, unlike earlier monuments mourned the common soldier rather than celebrated the leadership of generals, and which is classless, rank-less, and

inclusive, meant that this 'cenotaph', *faux* or not, offered the possibility of reciprocation and inclusion. It is not, perhaps, too far a move from laying a wreath at the foot of such a monument, to, given the right circumstances, writing your contribution on it.

The *Faux Cenotaph* gives us insight into the key differences between a public artwork and a public monument. This lies in a perception of the supposed inviolability of the monument as opposed to the contestability of an artwork. Perier summed up a common sentiment when he observed: 'Monuments are like history: they are inviolable like it; they must conserve all the nation's memories, and not fall to the blows of time' (Perier, C., cited in Matsuda, 1996: 33).

Because of its simulant nature, the *Faux Cenotaph* neither claimed nor maintained rhetorical power. It also neither sought nor commanded 'the power to silence'. Its temporary character, the fragility of its components, its quest to be 'about' commemoration rather than an act of commemoration, and its consequent lack of civic or national authority, might be seen to open, rather than close, debate. The 'Faux Cenotaph' is a useful simulacrum, it gives the appearance of being something, without containing that which is most potent in the original: in this case a sense of legitimate civic authority. It is not, and cannot be, the voice of 'power'. In its deliberate equivocation; in its open-ended discussion of the commemorative process, it left open a door for other voices. It became a comment on current political affairs and conflicts rather than a definitive act of memorialization that sets out to fix the memory of a past event into an act of national or local 'heritage'. Its actual affect comes from its function as art as a locus of discursive activity rather than as a civic or national monument. In many ways this places the work alongside those of Jochen and Esther Gertz, Rachael Whiteread and Christian Boltanski, all of whom ask us to interrogate our relationship with events of the past in a difficult and often uncomfortable way. These are works that are contentious as much because of the way they ask us to acknowledge guilt and deliberate forgetting, as the way they are wrought as artworks. What was, perhaps particular about this work, however, was that it was shown in the hybrid space of a gallery foyer. The fact that it was not in the gallery itself, nor in the fully public space of a town square, or similar, seems an important element of this work. The foyer of the Watershed was a public gathering space, but not a ceremonial space. The informality of the work and its setting set it apart from the actual Bristol Cenotaph only a hundred or so metres away outside which was not the subject of any intervention in this period. That, and the contingent, temporary and discursive nature of Gough's piece opened it up to an intensity of intervention unusual for commemorative works. It could be argued that the range of interventions apparent in this process makes clearer to us the difference between the artwork as a discussion of the commemorative process, and the monument as an act of officially sanctioned heritage.

Note

1   The non-standard spelling of 'guerilla' has been used in this article because it is the preferred spelling used by those who describe themselves as guerilla-artists.

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