Augmenting the Narratives:
The Potential of Augmented Reality Counter-Sculptures

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ABSTRACT

While monuments have traditionally served as reminders of notable figures and events, their celebratory dimension introduces complexity as societies evolve and perspectives change. Contemporary debates on decolonization and cancel culture, in the pursuit of justice for the historically oppressed, frequently culminate in the removal or demolition of these landmarks. However, some have criticized it as a form of erasure of history, leading to oblivion. In this context, this article introduces a hypothesis: counter-sculptures, placed noninvasively via augmented reality (AR) technology in juxtaposition to the existing monuments, adding alternative or critical viewpoints on the events depicted by the original landmarks. The article draws inspiration from the discourse on history versus memory, placing these digital interventions as a bridge between amnesia and remembrance, erasure and representation. The article formulates a working definition of the term "counter-sculpture," emphasizing its role as a complementary, rather than opposing, viewpoint to existing monuments, and explores its relationship with the existing term "counter-monument." Furthermore, the article delves into their potential role in the debates surrounding decolonization and cancel culture. Lastly, it exemplifies this concept with a prospective intervention: the creation of an AR counter-sculpture of the literary character Velho do Restelo from "Os Lusiadas," placed in proximity to the Monument of Discoveries in Lisbon, Portugal. In conclusion, this paper highlights AR counter-sculptures' potential to contribute to the debates on decolonization and cancel culture, by providing a space for underrepresented voices, challenging dominant narratives embodied by existing monuments, thus aiding to reinterpret historical events in a more nuanced and equitable way. Through these digital additions, existing physical sculptures are preserved, while we advocate for a shift in the approach to public monuments from objects of celebration to objects of remembrance, inviting dialogue and exploration from diverse perspectives.

Keywords: counter-sculpture; cancel culture; cultural heritage.

1   Introduction

Monuments, representations of the past "cast in stone, marble, iron, or bronze" (Abraham, 2021), stand as static witnesses of constant development in the ever-evolving societies. Yet, recently these monuments found themselves caught in the crossfire of complex debates, particularly those related to decolonization and cancel culture, which demonstrate that our understanding of the past is not etched in immutable stone but rather interwoven from diverse threads of memory. These phenomena frequently culminate in the removal or demolition of monuments. In the pursuit of justice for historically oppressed communities, decolonization initiatives target landmarks that, as Larsen (2011) posits, inscribed colonial identities into the landscape by the dominant elite groups, often standing as manifestations of imperial rule, adds O'Riley (2021). Concurrently, cancel culture also contributes to this demolishment. Defined by Ahuja and Kerketta (2021) as focusing on holding individuals and groups accountable for their actions, cancel culture has extended its scrutiny to include not only contemporary figures, but also the ones carved on the stone plinths.

While Ahuja and Kerketta (2021) argue that it has allowed marginalized voices to share their perspectives and occupy spaces from which they were historically excluded, the definition brought by Silva (2021) emphasizes an alternate aspect of this phenomenon: cancel culture can be characterized as an attempt to focus exclusively on an individual's negative aspects to the extent of annihilating any of their positive contributions and recognition, such that they are ultimately cancelled – erased.

This article delves into the complex interplay between amnesia and celebration that emerges from these debates. They underscore the understanding of public monuments, as put by Johnson (2002), not as mere aesthetic embellishments but also as carriers of cultural and political significance. The question arises, as asked by Levinson (1998): "can a liberal, multicultural society memorialize anyone at all, or is it committed to a strict neutrality (...)?" In this article we ask: *Can monuments be transformed into an evolving canvas, reflecting changing values and perspectives with passing generations?* As a response to the inherent one-dimensionality of traditional monuments' representations, a concept of "counter-monument" emerged at the close of the 20th century, described by Stevens et al. as "commemorative practices that reject features of traditional monuments" (2012, p. 952). This article advances this concept by addressing digital dimensions and exploring consequent nuanced aspects.

Driven by the motivation of bringing past to present, and of using new media to work for the good of humanities, our study introduces a hypothesis of a concept: augmented reality (AR) counter-sculptures – a convergence between art, technology, and historical reinterpretation. Over the subsequent sections, we aim to establish a working definition for this concept, drawing parallels and divergences with the term, "counter-monument." Furthermore, our study explores the potential of AR counter-sculptures to contribute to ongoing debates surrounding decolonization and cancel culture. Within the theoretical underpinnings, we position this concept amidst the nuanced interplay of representation and erasure, remembrance and celebration, and history and memory.

2   Memory Versus History

In the realm of historical discourse, the duality of history and memory emerges as a foundational construct, supporting our understanding of the past and its resonance in the present. Italian historian Alessandro Barbero's perceptive delineation between these two constructs serves in this article as a foundation for navigating the complex interplay between commemoration, remembrance, and amnesia. As we probe the implications of AR counter-sculptures, it becomes significant to delve into this theoretical framework that illuminates the complexities inherent in public monuments and their representation of history.

In his public appearances Barbero frequently draws attention to the fact that history and memory, although frequently regarded as self-evident concepts used interchangeably, are instead highly complex and demanding judicious navigation. Notwithstanding many examples of the use of the expression "collective memory" in monument studies (Brescó & Wagoner, 2019; Osborne, 2017; Krzyżanowska, 2016; Kulišić & Tuđman, 2009), Barbero (2017)[7] emphasises that memory is something that is never shared, when we refer to the true, personal, or generational memory of individuals. Other authorities in the field of history concur with his opinion, such as Beiner (2017), who has criticised the unreflective use of the adjective "collective" in the studies of memory due its presumption of homogeneity. Barbero (2023)[8] articulates that memory is individual and subjective, because every person and every community inevitably experiences things from

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[7] Public appearance at XIII Festival internazionale della Storia "èStoria 2017 - L' eredità di Roma," 2017, Gorizia. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_VAVBSaf1Hc&ab_channel=%C3%A8Storia.

[8] Public appearance at Festival Culturale "AltriMondi – AltriModi," Torino, 2023. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsfm6FXrBoQ.

their own unique perspective. Due to this inherent subjectivity, in the face of pivotal events in our history, Barbero contends that there are significant divisions between memories, engendering disparities and nuances in their interpretation (2017)[9]. This recognition of the multiplicity of memory emphasizes the distinct importance of history itself. Barbero (2023)[10] elucidates that a study of history can precisely aid individuals in discerning the demarcation between their personal or familial experience of events and the dissenting interpretation of the same events from the perspective of others. This crucial practice of "seeing things also through the eyes of others" (2023)[11] allows for a deeper understanding of how humanity fundamentally functions. Conclusively, as per his perspective, while memory is deeply personal, history should transcend individual experiences and strive for a comprehensive understanding of events from all points of view, incorporating an analysis of the perspectives of those with whom we disagree (Barbero, 2017).[12]

3   Limitations of Traditional Public Monuments

Barbero's elucidation highlights the inherent limitations of traditional public monuments. While representing historical figures or events, these structures often struggle to accommodate the multifaceted narratives that underscore human experiences. They risk lapsing into an ossified representation, a singular viewpoint that oversimplifies the myriad layers of memories that comprise history. Ben-Ur (2022) argues that these monuments often aim to depict an idealized reality, thus being unable to capture or interpret the nuanced past. Bellentani & Panico (2016) further suggest that monuments are often used as political tools to represent and promote selective historical narratives, "obliterating what is discomforting" (Abstract). In contrast to Barbero's view of history as embracing all perspectives, traditional monuments tend to represent a single memory. Therefore, in accordance with his phrasing, "there are conflicts because memories clash" (Barbero, 2023).[13] He illustrates it by drawing attention to the divergence of the memories of a colonized country versus that of the colonizers, which, consequently, engenders a diametrically opposed meaning of statues of figures like Christopher Columbus (Barbero, 2023).[14]

This limitation of public monuments restricted to representing a single viewpoint has become increasingly evident in the context of phenomena such as decolonization, iconoclasm, and cancel culture. These "memory-based" conflicts manifest in various ways, particularly, as Rossi (2020) observes, in the scrutiny of historical figures' representations, whose morality is questioned due to their association with the continued oppression of minority groups. Many sculptures considered offensive and outdated have been vandalized or removed, a phenomenon with occurrences "seen around the world" (Badilla & Aguilera, 2021, Abstract), "largely based on the desire to annihilate, challenge, eradicate and suppress the ideological and emotional attachments that are often connected to these historical monuments," says Sanni (2020, p. 1).

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[9] Public appearance at XIII Festival internazionale della Storia "èStoria 2017 - L' eredità di Roma," 2017, Gorizia. Source: youtube.com/watch?v=_VAVBSaf1Hc&ab_channel=%C3%A8Storia.

[10] Public appearance at Festival Culturale "AltriMondi – AltriModi," Torino, 2023. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsfm6FXrBoQ.

[11] ibid. Translated from Italian by the authors. Timestamp: 1:02:10.

[12] Public appearance at XIII Festival internazionale della Storia "èStoria 2017 - L' eredità di Roma," Gorizia, 2017. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_VAVBSaf1Hc&ab_channel=%C3%A8Storia.

[13] Translated from Italian by the authors. Public appearance at Festival Culturale "AltriMondi – AltriModi," Torino, 2023. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsfm6FXrBoQ. Timestamp: 1:10:00.

[14] ibid.

On the other hand, such demolishment can be seen as a form of erasure of history that promotes oblivion. Sanni (2020) argues that the destruction of historical monuments is ethically problematic, asserting that it poses the danger of sanitizing history, by reducing complex realities of the past to a vague understanding. Sukovata (2022) elaborates that the demolition of monuments is "a way of destroying culture itself, which can be dangerous to the survival of human society" (p. 66). Ben-Ur (2022) observes that despite the fact that these debates over the symbolic public landscape, involving activists, politicians, scholars, and artists, have been rich and exhaustive, no common ground has been found regarding solutions.

Murphy (2021) asks the question: should historical statues of figures of ethics that are questioned today be left as they are, be removed, destroyed? Or should they "be left but with additional monuments and memorials added to their surroundings to provide further context?" (Murphy, 2021, Abstract).

4   The Proposal of Counter-Sculptures

Within this realm of complexity and division, the present article introduces a hypothesis: the creation of AR counter-sculptures. It explores the concept of designing digital artworks that with the use of AR technology add an alternative narrative (or critical view) of the events celebrated by the original sculptures, this way adding another point of view – another memory, to fuller represent the history.

4.1   The Parallels with Counter-Monuments

Before delving deeper into their theoretical foundation, we first acknowledge the parallels with the preceding term: *counter-monument*. This term, first introduced by Young in 1992, represents a paradigm shift in the perception of monuments and memorials. Young defines counter-monuments as structures that reject and challenge conventional forms, and the reasons behind them, of traditional monumentality, including their durability, figurative representation, and the exaltation of past deeds (Young, 1992, as cited in Stevens, Franck, & Fazakerley, 2012). Subsequently, Stevens, Franck, and Fazakerley (2012), who noted that the term is often used interchangeably with forms such as "anti-monument" or "non-monument," highlight that anti-monumental artworks, unlike traditional monuments, use to acknowledge darker events like the effects of war, warn against ideologies, as well as honour persecuted victims while critiquing the offenders. They mention (2012) that Young's "paradigmatic example" of a counter-monument is Gerz and Shalev-Gerz's *Monument against Fascism* (1986). While Pinkston's *LandMarked* (2018)[15] may not be explicitly labelled as a counter-monument, its exploration of activating empty spaces left by removed monuments through performances on remaining pedestals represents a notable contemporary example.

Prior to delving into the nuanced distinctions between counter-sculpture and counter-monument, it is essential to underscore their commonalities. Proposed counter-sculptures align with the description of counter-monuments put forth by Kerby et al. (2021), as they also "seek to challenge dominant historical narratives by presenting equally valid, yet often marginalised perspectives" (p. 52). Additionally, the goal of counter-sculptures is to "provide a voice for those whose stories have been marginalised or excluded and enhance awareness and understanding of the historical event that is being commemorated," as Kerby et al. continue in their framework (2021, p. 52). Similar to counter-monuments, counter-sculptures also exhibit the capacity to "carry multiple meanings and have multiple functions which allow for diverse patterns of interaction with past/present" (Krzyżanowska, 2016, p. 465). However, while drawing inspiration from this discourse, the approach proposed in the present article places emphasis on diverse nuances and introduces a digital and dynamic dimension to the narrative.

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[15] Source: landmarkedproject.com

4.2 Working Definition of Counter-Sculptures

We now establish a working definition of the term "counter-sculpture." In order to comprehensively explore the concept, we will dissect the two constituent words comprising this term. The word "counter" is defined in a Merriam-Webster dictionary as "to or toward a different *or* opposite direction, result, or effect" (emphasis added). Unlike in the descriptions of counter-monuments provided by Stevens et al. (2012), which emphasize their "contrary," "anti-," and "critique" characteristics, aligning more closely with the notion of "opposite" within the counter definition, our conceptualization of counter-sculpture places a special emphasis on "different" (although still acknowledging the possible use in the sense of "opposite"). In this context, a counter-sculpture's primary objective is not to oppose an existing monument or propose a symbol that stands against something. Instead, it is about adding, about presenting *different* directions, a convergence with *otherness*. It can be understood as a counterpoint, defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as "a complementing or contrasting item", with our emphasis here on "complementing". Consequently, in our proposed definition, we employ the word "counter" in two ways: referring to the viewpoint represented by the counter-sculpture – a *different*, complementing narrative, and referring to the physical placement of the digital sculpture, juxtaposed with the physical one, one being in counter-position to the other.

Turning to the second component, "sculpture," it is important to note that while the terms "monument" and "sculpture" are occasionally used interchangeably, they differ in key aspects such as purpose and meaning. While a sculpture can indeed function as a monument, the term "sculpture" offers a broader and more flexible range of purpose and meaning. In our context, we believe the choice of "sculpture" is more appropriate, because while the monument's semiotic dimension is more collective, it is something more acknowledged, the term "sculpture" leans towards individuality, implying that everyone can produce their own version. The designation "sculpture" better embodies an individual voice – an individual memory that can be added for a fuller representation of history. Moreover, "sculpture" implies a higher level of artistic freedom regarding the choice of material or style, allowing for abstract or non-representational forms. In summary, AR counter-sculptures can be digital artworks, often three-dimensional, strategically placed through digital devices in juxtaposition to existing monuments, providing alternative viewpoints on the events or figures depicted by the original landmarks.

4.3 Theoretical Underpinnings – Between Oblivion and Remembrance

Within the domain of theoretical underpinnings, and in alignment with the discourse on history versus memory, our intention is to position AR counter-sculptures in the dialogue between oblivion and remembrance, between erasure and representation; this involves their relevance within contemporary debates on decolonization and cancel culture. To initiate this discourse, we reach for the dimension of the monument as an object of remembrance. "Monument" is defined by Merriam-Webster dictionary in two ways. Firstly, as an "object of remembrance, a lasting evidence, a reminder." As per this denotation, we can gather that removing a reminder leads to oblivion. Therefore, demolishing a monument, seen as an object of memory, regardless of whether it reminds us of actions and events we agree with or not, inherently carries the risk of amnesia. As Barbero (2023)[16] observes, a lack of historical knowledge about the past would render us oblivious to the challenges faced by preceding generations, as well as their solutions and errors. Furthermore, it would obscure both the atrocities and the remarkable achievements of humanity,

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[16] An interview with Alessandro Barbero by 9minuti, "Una, nessuna e centomila storie," 2023. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_FEr2yeRBL0.

knowledge of which furnishes an additional tool for comprehending individuals and societies (Barbero, 2023)[17].

However, certain definitions of monuments, such as the second definition in Merriam-Webster dictionary, differ in regard to the first one by the addition of adjectives: "a reminder of someone or something *notable or great*" (emphasis added). Such adjectives have the power to fundamentally alter our perception of these structures, leading to perceiving them as objects of celebration of particular figures or events. As Barbero points out, there can exist confusion in the pedagogy between studying something and celebrating it as a model to follow, adding that modern critical thinking should be able to differentiate between the two (2021).[18] Through the engagement with the monuments that portray famous individuals we can learn about pivotal historical events, and, as Barbero articulates, we can study these figures not because of our admiration and aspiration to emulate them, but "because we think that knowing our species' past on this planet is useful, perhaps even necessary" (2021).[19] We should accept that it is possible to be, for example, a notable poet, without necessarily serving as a political or moral exemplar (Barbero, 2023).[20]

We propose that adding counter-sculptures to an existing monument might help to look at the latter as an object of remembrance, replacing the celebratory dimension with an ongoing debate, by transforming the physical landmarks into triggers to experience other digitally placed interpretations of portrayed events. The celebratory dimension of monuments introduces complexity, as achieving a consensus on the morality worth celebrating across society's continuous development proves elusive. Barbero's words from the Festival Itinerante Della Conoscenza (2022)[21] emphasize that history is more than just a collection of facts; it is a dynamic process of interpretation, connection, and questioning. Every problem, even one thought long forgotten, can be reconsidered in the light of the present (Barbero, 2022).[22] Consequently, the actions of historical figures or events depicted on monuments are perpetually viewed through evolving perspectives. Our interpretation of the past evolves in relation to our contemporary epoch.

Within this context, AR counter-sculptures allow for ever-evolving interpretations. They enable the continuous introduction of new perspectives of established monuments, thereby infusing fluidity into what Krzyżanowska (2016) referred to as the "static and non-dialogic" nature of traditional monuments. Concisely, the proposed approach is not to be seen as a straightforward antidote to the traditional monuments' limitations, but rather as a constituent with the potential to aid in shifting the discourse surrounding them from celebration to remembrance. It aims to encourage dialogue, providing users the opportunity to explore history from multiple angles, fostering a deeper understanding of the diverse memories it encompasses. We therefore propose the creation of a place for discussion: to do better in the process of remembering.

Our approach resonates with the thoughts of Baxter (2021), when he proposes to regard monuments as an "archaeological record of a society." He believes that this perspective could encourage people to shift the

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[17] ibid.

[18] Public appearance at the conference Incontri Internazionali "Nel nome di Dante", Forlì, 2021. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmrD1ERnR7w.

[19] ibid., Translated from Italian by the authors. Timestamp: 1:16:03.

[20] Public appearance at the conference "Dante: Un Uomo del Medioevo," at Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Istanbul, Istanbul, 2023. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-XApiE6uvmU. Timestamp: 3:15.

[21] Public appearance at Festival Itinerante della Conoscenza VII Edizione 2022 "dialoghi," Palmanova, 2022. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKfsg3kSkA4.

[22] ibid.

focus from the individuals they portray, to "what they tell us of the societies that created the statues, erected them, and perhaps altered" (p. 1). According to him, "by seeing these statues as archaeology, we can then come to see them as a story about us, whom we celebrated, what histories we told, what values we upheld and who held power in our societies" (p. 2). Furthermore, our approach aligns with Oostindie's words (2015): "representation of this past is part and parcel of a process not just of commemoration, but also of healing" (p. 156).

4.4   Augmented Reality as a Medium for Counter-Sculptures

Concerning the technical aspects of counter-sculptures, we propose the use of AR technology, to digitally place the 3D object in juxtaposition to the original monument. We want to highlight that this integration is not merely technical, but symbolic as well; it requires a deep understanding of the historical context and the narratives embodied by the existing monument, respecting its historical and cultural significance. This digital augmentation can take various forms, encompassing immersive 3D models, but also textual narratives, images, audio commentary, and interactive components. It should be designed to provide an alternative perspective or narrative that enriches the viewer's understanding of the historical event or figure portrayed by the physical monument. Individuals can experience digital counter-sculptures through digital devices such as smartphones or tablets; in order to deliver the corresponding digital content, AR apps and platforms must be developed or leveraged. Designed objects can be placed in the desired position with the use of a marker, such as quick response (QR) code, geolocation services, or by using the physical surroundings of the original statue.

One of the paramount advantages of employing AR in counter-sculptures lies in the way it can address complexities surrounding monuments that represent values no longer universally acceptable. Thanks to the nature of this technology, which doesn't require a physical implementation in situ, demolishment or physical alterations to the original monuments could be avoided. This approach can become a pragmatic alternative way of expression, providing an alternative medium through which we can reinterpret history, allowing for the preservation of original monuments. A noteworthy advantage of AR is the aesthetic diversity inherent to the digital realm, when compared to the conventional materials of traditional monuments. While "it has always been the prerogative of ruling elites to determine the nature, placement and aesthetic of public monuments" (Harrington, 2023, para. 5), the proposed approach is characterised by an added freedom of aesthetic expression, individuality, and subjectivity. Additionally, the dynamic nature of AR technology enables the creation of immersive and interactive experiences, holding additional potential in captivating digitally native audiences. Such engagement may work as a trigger for interest in cultural heritage by younger generations, and in developing a critical approach to events of the past. Crucially, the post-digital generation can be positioned not only as a set of users, but also creators of the three-dimensional artworks, thereby augmenting the level of active participation in the cultivation of historical dialogue. In the light of rapid technological progress, it is crucial to recognize that the current employment of AR might represent just the initial, pragmatic medium for counter-sculptures. Future technological advancements could introduce more seamless mechanisms for overlaying digital narratives onto physical monuments, making their integration more organic.

4.5   Examples Of Augmented Reality Monuments Projects

Although we did not identify projects in exact accordance with proposed counter-sculpture concept, it is pertinent to bring attention to the growing number of projects that combine AR and alternative approaches to monuments. Particularly successful examples are: Movers and Shakers NYC "the Monuments Project:

Kinfolk" (2020),[23] Garcia et al.'s "Open Monument: An Open-Sourced, Augmented Reality Experience" (2019),[24] Castelblanco's "The People's Monument(s)" (2017),[25] and Mandela's Snapchat AR experience in Trafalgar Square (2022).[26]

5   Project proposal – Velho do Restelo Counter-Sculpture

In order to exemplify the potential of AR counter-sculptures, a prospect intervention is currently being considered. This project involves the creation of an AR counter-sculpture featuring the literary character Velho do Restelo, to be placed in juxtaposition to the Monument of Discoveries in Lisbon, Portugal. The Monument of Discoveries, erected in 1940 as a tribute to the navigators and key figures who played pivotal roles in the Age of Discoveries, holds a significant place in Portuguese heritage. However, its symbolism has been a subject of examination. Characterizing it as "one of the most emblematic symbols of propaganda for the mythical 'Portuguese Empire,'"[27] Monteiro (2023) underscores the complex duality within its meaning. She elucidates that while the achievements of the Portuguese Empire are symbolized, its tragedies are absent, thereby transforming the monument into a symbol of denial and oblivion regarding colonization, the maritime slave trade, and the obliteration of civilizations (Monteiro, 2023). In 2021, the monument was a target of an incident, when an activist graffitied a message in English: "Blindly sailing for monney [sic], humanity is drowning in a scarllet [sic] sea."[28] This occurrence underscored the ongoing discourse surrounding the monument's meaning and emphasized the necessity for alternative narratives. Velho do Restelo is a seemingly secondary character from "Os Lusíadas" by Luis de Camões, a renowned Portuguese epic poem celebrating the discovery of a sea route to India by Vasco da Gama, who gains significance by serving as a dissenting voice within the presented narrative. He articulates a critique of the expeditions and colonialism that the Monument of Discoveries celebrates, voicing concerns about greed, unnecessary violence, and the disruptive consequences of colonial endeavours. When addressing the departing caravels, he exclaims: "You wreck all peace of soul and body, You promote separation and adultery; Subtly, manifestly, you consume The wealth of kingdoms and empires!"[29]

By juxtaposing an AR counter-sculpture of Velho do Restelo with the Monument of Discoveries, the project aspires to challenge the dominant narrative embodied by the landmark, providing an alternative perspective on the historical events it depicts. This proposal serves as an illustration of how AR counter-sculptures could potentially foster dialogue, encourage critical thinking, and enable the re-evaluation of established heritage narratives.

6   Conclusions

This paper outlined the concept of AR counter-sculptures within contemporary discourse on public monuments. Their purpose is to challenge traditional monuments' limitations (which tend to fixate on a single viewpoint), by recognizing the dynamic and multifaceted nature of history and memory. They aim

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[23] urbanomnibus.net/2021/03/a-monumental-shift/, accessed on May 10, 2023.

[24] noah-garcia.com/opensourced-augmented-reality-monument, accessed on May 10, 2023.

[25] felipecastelblanco.com/peoples-monument/, accessed on May 10, 2023.

[26] theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/feb/11/app-black-britons-history-trafalgar-square-tukwini-mandela, accessed on May 10, 2023.

[27] Free translation from Portuguese by the authors.

[28] Source: www.publico.pt/2021/08/08/local/noticia/padrao-descobrimentos-vandalizado-mensagem-ingles-1973480, accessed on May 10, 2023.

[29] Canto IV, strophe 96, "Os Lusíadas" by Luís Vaz de Camões, translation by Landeg White, Oxford World's Classics 2001.

not to erase the significance of existing monuments but to complement them, enabling reinterpretation of the portrayed events. The article proposes AR counter-sculptures not as a definitive approach, but as a catalyst for a paradigm shift in the discourse surrounding public monuments. We believe that AR counter-sculptures present a potential avenue for addressing the debates surrounding decolonization and cancel culture, by providing a space for the expression of alternative perspectives or critical views of the events portrayed by the original sculptures, where marginalized and historically oppressed voices can be heard, challenging the dominant narratives, and promoting a more inclusive and accurate representation of history. By offering an alternative to physical interference with existing sculptures, they could play a role in preserving these sculptures. They advocate for a shift in how we approach public monuments, emphasizing remembrance over celebration. Their contribution to the dimension of remembrance also lies in the very act of revisiting and re-reading old monuments. Additionally, they could engage digitally native generations in a critical approach to history and spark their interest in heritage. In essence, counter-sculptures do not promote historical oblivion, but rather may serve as devices to add other layers of memory towards a more comprehensive and multidimensional representation of history. Echoing the sentiments of Barbero: "If only there was this miraculous thing of everyone being able to say: 'but I know that our point of view is partial. There is also the exact opposite.'"[30] AR counter-sculptures aspire to bring this multiplicity of perspectives to light, enriching our understanding of history and memory.

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[30] Translated from Italian by the authors. Public appearance at Festival Culturale "AltriMondi – AltriModi," Torino, 2023. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsfm6FXrBoQ. Timestamp: 1:05:48.

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