



MONUMENT TO DUST

Ruin, Resurfacing, and Ethics of Care
in Relation to Monument to Dawn

A thesis submitted to the
College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts, Studio Art
In the School for the Arts
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon

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ABSTRACT

Monument to Dust

The abstract expressionist sculpture, *Monument to Dawn*, by William (Bill) Epp first saw light in 1967 when the mild steel work was presented in an exhibition by the National Gallery of Canada, *Sculpture '67*, in Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto. 57 years later, Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, Epp's grandson, dismantles this monumental artwork in a processual project entitled, *Monument to Dust*. Part culmination, part provocation, a celebration of ruin, and enactment of ethics of care, this response to familial love and legacy acknowledges impermanence and questions the life cycles of artists and artworks, intentions, methodologies, and style.

Keywords

Sculpture; intermedia art; performance art; ethics of care; reflectivity; institutional critique; monumentality; archival reflectivity; abstraction; abstract expressionism; legacy; ruin; object-oriented ontology; cybernetics; Saskatchewan; Bill Epp; William Harold Epp; commensurate art; non-purposive art; refusal; provocation

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A project such as this could not come to light without a great deal of goodwill and generosity. I would like to acknowledge the following people in gratitude for their contributions to this exhibition.

To my thesis supervisor, Jake Moore, for her kindness, her friendship, and her ability to model a keen sense of history, openness, and integrity in the academic context. *Merci Jake.*

To university faculty and staff such as Jon Bath, Joseph Anderson, Blair Barbeau and Gabby Da Silva. To the professionalism and friendship of all the university technical staff, Patrick Bulas, Todd Lyons, and Barb Reimer. To Jacob Semko, Todd GronsdaHL and Jon Harrison-Kendrick for their help during the safe disassembly of *Monument to Dawn*. To my cohort, and especially my good friend Demilade Otayemi, who over the past two years have made inspiring artwork and shared personal progress while maintaining a supportive environment for me and others. To Soheila Fallah and Farhad Aghazadeh for their generosity and friendship. *Merci mes amis.*

I want to acknowledge my sister Stéphanie, brother-in-law Kerry, nephew Victor, my uncles and aunts, and all my extended family of relatives. Their presence, playfulness and insight over the years helped me learn to trust and care for the myriad ways of being in the world. *Merci, ma famille.*

To my parents Jean and Roger who have unwaveringly loved and supported my artistic and life journeys every single day of my life. *Merci Maman et Papa.*

To my children Lewyn and Sylvain for being utterly alive, kind, hilarious, and totally present in the moment. I love you both, just as you are, so very much. *Merci mes enfants.*

Finally, none of this project would exist without the love, care and friendship of my sweetheart and partner Allysha Larsen. I wish to share with her my deepest gratitude for our relationship. Allysha, your love, kindness, inner strength and fortitude are inspirations. *Merci mon amour.*

DEDICATION

29 years will have elapsed since the death of my grandfather Bill Epp on September 4, 1995. The exhibition is dedicated to him and my grandmother Betty Epp, to my parents Roger Gauthier and Jean Epp-Gauthier, to my extended family, uncles and aunts, and my sweetheart, Allysha Larsen and our two children, Lewyn and Sylvain. All of whom fill my life with inspirational acts of care and kindness.

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I know that I am not a category, a hybrid specialization,
I am not a thing - a noun.
I seem to be a verb –
an evolutionary process –
an integral function of the universe,
and so are you.

R. Buckminster Fuller¹

I see no more reason to glorify or condemn works of art than to glorify or condemn human beings.

Bill Epp²

INTRODUCTION

The abstract expressionist sculpture, *Monument to Dawn*, by William (Bill) Epp first saw light in 1967 when the mild steel work was presented in an exhibition by the National Gallery of Canada, *Sculpture '67*, in Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto. 57 years later, I (Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, Epp's grandson) have dismantled this monumental artwork in a processual project entitled, *Monument to Dust*. Part culmination, part provocation, a celebration of ruin, and enactment of ethics of care, this response to familial love and legacy acknowledges impermanence and questions the life cycles of artists and artworks, intentions, methodologies, and style.

Monument to Dust, takes as its departure point the deaccession, disassembly, and removal of *Monument to Dawn*. Within its myriad 'reflections', understood as 'the change in direction of a wavefront at an interface between two different media so that the wavefront returns into the medium from which it originated' defined in Physics, and the noun defined in the OED as having dual meanings, 1. "the throwing back by a body or surface of light, heat, or sound without absorbing it, 2. serious thought or consideration, *Monument to Dust*, lapses and thickens questions on the responsibilities linked to the care and preservation of monuments beyond their familiar material forms. It considers the many phenomena associated with them, materially, socially, and internally. The reflectivity of this process-based work hinges on critical acts of care; the removal of a public artwork from a university collection in order to restore its intentions, if not

¹ Edited by James Meller The Buckminster Fuller Reader, Penguin Books, Middlesex, England, 1972, page 5

² Cameron, Dorothy. *Sculpture '67: an Open-Air Exhibition of Canadian sculpture = une exposition en plein air de sculptures canadiennes*. Ottawa, Ont.: Musée des beaux-arts du Canada / National Gallery of Canada, 1968. Pages 26

its form, and the careful (yet futile) polishing of a large fragment of the work. It further includes new works in video, print media, site-specific installation and photography that activate other materialities and histories that intertwine their shared capacity for reflection. Collectively the works become actions that diffract the possibility for misrecognition of artistic integrity and seek to prevent the historical oversimplification of both artists and artworks through the abstractions of periodization and style.



Figure 1. *Monument to Dawn*, Nathan Phillips Square during Sculpture '67, Toronto, 1967, photographer unknown.

The exhibition further marks the 29th anniversary of the passing of the teacher and artist, William (Bill) Epp (b1930-d1995) and is the culmination of my MFA. The emotional chord that runs through this project seeks to productively interfere with the performed objectivity of academic writing and takes a physical place on these pages as a kind of chorus.

LOCATING MYSELF

I want to locate my practice as a form of genealogy, both in representing the timeline of my artistic practice as well as situating myself within the spectrum of artistic explorations, significantly

associated with sculpture practice in so-called Saskatchewan and the Western Canadian Prairies, Treaty Six Territory.

My practice as an artist has followed a very wide-ranging group of interests and technical processes. My initial exposure to the arts was in the form of family connection having been raised in and around the foundry and sculpture studios of Bill Epp, who was a highly productive monumental sculptor who also taught at the University of Saskatchewan for 32 years. From him I learned the work within the artist's studio or atelier, beginning with sweeping up, to mold making and then onward to other responsibilities within the foundry. All these actions indicated the steady collective care required to make works of art. When he passed away quite suddenly in 1995, it crystallized my wish to become an artist as a way of expressing my love for him and the experiences we shared.



Figure 2. My grandfather and me. He is smoking while patinating a monument with a tiger torch in hand, while I am sucking my fingers. (I have no memory of this event), circa 1984-85, photographer unknown.

From the moment of his passing life decisions were made with increased intention, to develop my technical and artistic skills further and to deepen my commitment to embodied community practices. I moved to Montreal to study sculpture at Concordia University. During my time there, I undertook focussed work in performance and video. I further studied sculpture under Trevor Gould, a South African born sculptor who works from the insight that sculpture is a form of social material and that exhibitions are an essential aspect of cultural research, and Liliana Berezowky. Her earlier work, monumental in scale, was based on the industrial landscape and the machine. These ways of working continue to inform my practice. I returned home and studied at the University of Saskatchewan as a visiting student for one year. At that time, I was highly influenced by the post-colonial and performance art courses presented by Lori Blondeau and Lynn Bell. I also received my first grant support to study performance art in Mexico under Guillermo Gómez Peña. His book *Ethno-Techno: Writings on Performance, Activism and Pedagogy* and performance methodologies also inform my work and intentions. These influences have consolidated in me as a commitment to enacting a lived ethic within my art practice. Inhabiting a lived ethic is to take position within a dialogical space of becoming and belonging to a moment and context. I am interested in inhabiting non-metaphorical spaces that are participatory, engaged and meaningful, personally and positionally. My art practice is embodied. I see this as active communication, it is a state of implication, non-conformism and non-apologetic receptivity. In my view, inhabiting such a process can offer what the German critical theorist Jurgen Habermas, who focused on the public sphere and relationality, coined as forms of symmetrical communication. A space of acceptance, acknowledging that in a process of “enlightenment there are only participants.”³

PARTICIPATING WITHIN ANXIOUS DOCUMENTS

Fast forward to my MFA, entered after a decade of professional artistic practice often as technical collaborator. During my first term, I participated in a collaborative project lead by Dr. Craig Campbell of the University of Texas entitled *Anxious Documents of Great Precision* that focused on the shared ‘taskscape’ of photography.

³ 1973b. *Theory and Practice*, J. Viertel (trans.). Boston: Beacon. [German, 1968a, 1971a], page 44

By claiming and defining a taskscape, however ephemeral, I propose an analytic tool that helps us to appreciate shared ideas and operations, their points of intersection, convergence, and defining differences. Looking at the shared taskscape of photography exposes how the camera coordinates behavior, how the lens disrupts and animates the imaginary, how we labor in the frame of photography's agency, and how the gallery becomes a space of encounter with the potential for remediation and reparative actions.⁴

Within this generative framework I chose to explore the artwork *Monument to Dawn*. This involved my attempt to realign my understanding of both the institutional structures which contain, maintain, and retain artworks as cultural objects, as well as an investment of time to better understand the full history of an artwork that my grandfather had created. This decision was taken in part due to a personal interest but also following my own methodology of a located practice which seeks to create meaning and understanding from where one stands. I believe that meaningful art can be made from any position one is attentive to and which evokes creative initiative.

I am interested in eroding the dynamics of ubiquity and homogeneity which, as someone with a disability, I am always having to adapt to. I see my practice as a way of not behaving as expected, to be myself. It is a form of resistance —art and art exhibitions are a structure for me to assert this potential to be me. This 'specific capacity of aesthetic practices' is further articulated by Métis artist and scholar, David Garneau, as the 'extra-rational':

Art is the site of intolerable research, the laboratory of odd ideas, of sensual and intuitive study, and of production that exceeds the boundaries of conventional disciplines, protocols and imaginaries...in the making and appreciation of art there is a space of difference, even resistance, where people can find refuge from the ideas that otherwise rule them.⁵

⁴Campbell, Craig. "Anxious Documents of Great Precision." *KAGCAG*. Last modified 2023.
https://kagcag.usask.ca/exhibitions/2023/craig-campbell_anxious-documents-of-great-precision.php.

⁵ Garneau, David. "Extra-Rational Aesthetic Action and Cultural Decolonization." *FUSE Magazine* 36, no. 4 (2013): 15–16.

DATA CAPTURE AND RELEASE: EVADING EVIDENCE



Figure 3. *Study for Document to Dawn*, digital print from photogrammetry scans, Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2023

This intensive work session in collaboration with many other artists, including members of my cohort, allowed me to explore the interstitial spaces between my own practice and those of sociological understanding. To acquaint myself with practices and practitioners of anthropology permitted me to look at the historical aspect of my understanding of the artwork *Monument to Dawn* through an auto-ethnographic and art historical lens. The immediate locative qualities of the context, namely the University of Saskatchewan and the Gordon Snelgrove Gallery, and the proximity of the artwork *Monument to Dawn*, allowed me to continue research into something which I intuited could prove meaningful to others. Via the simultaneous actions of researching and locating myself in relationship to the spaces I inhabit, I was meaningfully situated within my surroundings. It is a way of mapping my experience. Using photogrammetry and other scientific imaging techniques, I considered the historical record by creating more and more data points, more evidence, eventually becoming a saturation of evidence, all requiring new maintenance and care.

The analytical and scientific drive of the *Anxious Documents* project influenced my actions toward the sculpture *Monument to Dawn* using photogrammetry and other evidential and measuring practices as means of bolstering an argument for the validity of the sculpture. To provide evidence and to preserve a research artifact. What I found lacking in this instance was an engagement with the object in non-evidential terms. It lacked a way of being in relationship without evaluation. I needed a way to let go of things to feel in relationship to them.

These actions resulted in dialogue around the implications of my grandfather's sculpture *Monument to Dawn* beyond an individual material output but rather as only a small sample of a

larger practice. I wished to highlight his presence and creative attention to others as part of his artistic intention and legacy. It was through this studio intensive that I created *Document to Dawn*, the first exhibited manifestation of my engagement with my grandfather's practice as a participatory methodology. From the germinal interconnection of technical skill, personal narrative, and ideological concerns that *Monument to Dawn* presented me, then sprouted into the gradual processual process of growth towards my thesis project *Monument to Dust*.



Figure 4. *Monument to Dawn* sited at USASK Education building (circa 1970), College Galleries Archive

I am interested in this inhabitation of non-metaphorical spaces, one that are participatory, engaged and meaningful, personally and positionally (positionality), in spaces that might offer 'symmetrical communication' to fully acknowledge that "In enlightenment there are only participants."⁶

The artwork *Monument to Dawn* was created for an exhibition held in Toronto entitled *Sculpture '67*. It was presented by the national Gallery of Canada as part of Canada's centennial celebrations and was curated by Dorothy Cameron. This important exhibition of 51 Canadian artists showcased diverse practices in contemporary sculpture. It remains one of the largest sculpture exhibitions in Canadian history.

⁶ J Habermas op. cit.



Figure 5. (clockwise from top left), *Monument to Dawn*, Nathan Phillips Square during Sculpture '67, Toronto (2 views), *Monument to Dawn* Maquette, 1967, photo by Paul Kolisher, Portrait of Bill Epp, circa 1967, photographer. (placeholder images)

SOME KEY PHYSICAL HISTORY OF *MONUMENT TO DAWN*

- This artwork was first exhibited in 1967 at Sculpture '67 in Toronto.
- Its initial price was set at \$4000.00 (in 2024 that would represent about \$35,000.00 dollars, given inflation).
- It's made of mild steel and its dimensions are 10' x 10' x 4 ½'.
- It was sold to the University of Saskatchewan in 1970 for the sum of \$600.00 (about \$5,250 in 2024).
- In Saskatoon it was exhibited near the College of Education following its acquisition.
- It remained in that location until its removal and ended up in the university's junk yard for an indeterminate duration until it was found by Don Foulds, (then Director of the Gordon Snelgrove Gallery in 1991-1992).
- It was then resituated to the Murray building just outside of the Snelgrove Art Gallery in the 1990s where it remained. Since then, its condition steadily declined, due to lack of maintenance and natural environmental factors. This is to be expected given the nature of mild steel's propensity to rust.
- It was never intended to be a permanent structure.



Figures 6-7. Work in progress on *Crate/Highlight: (citational intervention)*, plywood and hardware, Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2023

TAKING CARE: APPROPRIATION AS PARASITIC INTERVENTION

The first direct intervention upon the sculpture itself came in preparation for a seminar lecture. I devised a physical intervention upon the artwork which was to encase or crate the front monopod of *Monument to Dawn*. This structurally integral portion of the artwork was desperately corroded and as such the weakest and most likely failure point of the piece. My action performed on site allowed an act of care and preservation in the form of contact with the sculpture. In so doing I linked my awareness of the potential harms present in the failing integrity of the piece. It was a paradoxical feeling of wishing to end the piece while also supporting it. The drift between both creative and destructive wishes was already present in this intervention upon the artwork.

In conversation with my friend and colleague, artist Adam Manly, he noted the action was both an act of care and a potential parasitic intervention. My intervention hid the damage to the work, and it would also trap moisture in it, eventually increasing the rate corrosion. Seeking to maintain was also destroying its integrity.

This brought to my attention the vacillating nature of citation, meaning both a reference to something, and a notice of contravention. The work of locating and defining are examples of intervention upon artifacts. As research documents they are both subject to and vulnerable to the unintended parasitic nature of objectification.



Figure 8. *Crate/Highlight (citational intervention)*, plywood, hardware and paint, Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2024

This artwork is an argument. By making this intervention, the work of the artist is made to become citational and referential. It is highlighting as one might highlight course readings. This work also provides an interventional paradigm to practice which is critical of idealism in education and history. It is an evocative response to participation in tradition through non-idealized receptivity. It aligns with an Anti Form (Robert Morris) practice resisting the stasis of form.

Form is not perpetuated by means but by preservation of separable idealized ends. This is an anti-entropic and conservative enterprise. It accounts for Greek architecture changing from wood to marble and looking the same, or for the look of Cubist bronzes with their fragmented, faceted planes. The perpetuation of form is functioning Idealism.⁷

There is also within it a type of wish to crate or preserve the artwork. However, I do not wish for this care to become a suspension of inevitable, to become an idealism. This comes down to the

⁷ Morris, Robert. "Anti Form." *ARTFORUM*, April 1968, 35. <https://www.artforum.com/features/anti-form-211088/>.

inhabitation of an ethic of care related to local history and personal history since I feel that I am a keeper of some of the significant history of sculpture in the province and the city; I wish to honour those histories through careful examination and contextualization of local artefacts, not their stasis (or my own).

This act of care and of longing for a loved one is also an act of facing responsibilities. I care about him and his memory; I care about what he made and wish to see it valued. This act of removing is not an easy task for me, it is painful, difficult and rife with doubts. It feels at times like doing violence to remove it. It is also an acceptance that in care stands the responsibility inherent of action beyond my comfort to ensure the safety and continuity of his ideas in me.

The suite of works I have produced in relation to this mapping of personal experience onto the social actualities of the MFA project, museology, mythologies and ruin take up the early teachings of Trevor Gould, (sculpture is a form of social material and that exhibitions are an essential aspect of cultural research) Lilianna Berezowsky, (monumental scale, industry, labour), and the intensity of embodied processes and performativity of Gomez-Peña. My capacity to engage so fully in the practices of others is central to the teachings of my grandfather, who believed that the individual artist is not the priority, but the potential of relationality and production of spaces for exchange. The removal of his *Monument to Dawn* has become a *Monument to Dust*. With these actions upon the sculpture, I took the piece for myself, claimed it.

Grandpa,
The front leg of your sculpture is gopher a hideout
Sally hunted gophers
As a boy I would go out with her and watch her dig deep
with tooth and claw
One summer I followed along with a shovel
We dug under the sun together, collaborating
Deepest I had ever dug
Sweating under the sky with no shirt thinking proudly
One day I'll teach my kids to dig a big hole
Later that day you found our dirty work
Made me fill it back up
Someone'll get hurt if you leave it there Sebbie.
I didn't say peep, I had to take care of it.

MONUMENT TO DAWN BECOMING MONUMENT TO DUST

The idea of ‘Architecture Dust’ is introduced to suggest a possible redefinition of space in architecture, from the explosion of the architectural object and of the perspectival centrality of vision in its representation, to the contemporary notion of multiplicity and sprawl in the urban and the territorial. Architecture Dust is suggested as that which remains after the explosion of these pre-constituted orders — the architectural object and its representation, urban space and its definitions — but no longer belongs to them. Architecture Dust redefines dust as a concept that embraces at once the notion of the fragment, and that of a possible new assemblage. Dust is related to systems of order and disorder in an attempt to overcome their oppositions through a reconsideration of the material in architecture. In this context the fragment(ed) loses any reference to an *a priori* whole(ness) and form, and is redefined as a generative possibility for the production of space. Dust marks different economies of the body and systems of order, it is an index of otherness and it allows ambiguous redefinitions of interior and exterior. But dust also suggests a possibility and offers a chance to reinvent ways of making that defy the distinction between old and new, the discarded and the reclaimed.⁸

Monument to Dust enacts this defying of distinctions between old and new suggested by Stoppani and meshes with Campbell’s proposition from *Anxious Documents* that “...the gallery becomes a space of encounter with the potential for remediation and reparative actions.”

I see dust as foundational and fragmentary, ubiquitous and indicative. It relies upon and contains evidence of atomization and of gravity. I accept monuments as ‘social materializations of cultural significance’, but I am also arguing that the finite material composition of artworks is bound through their definitive temporal and material structures to naturally decay. Entropy is a significant aspect of sculpture, statuary and monumentality. Acknowledgment of the impermanence at play in monumentality is central to the intent of my project. I am also asserting that the intuitive intentions I am modelling are performative and homologous to my understanding of my grandfather’s example as an artist and relative.

⁸ Stoppani, Teresa. “Dust Projects: On Walter Benjamin’s Passagen-Werk and Some Contemporary Dusty Makings in Architecture.” *The Journal of Architecture* 12, no. 5 (2007): 543–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602360701722566>.



Figure 9. *Limestone Cowboy (final notice)*, Site specific installation, Photocopy paper and wheat paste on Murray Building façade, Dimensions: 10' by 10', Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2024, photo by Barbara Reimer

I am objectifying his work.
Becoming what I resist, definitively.
I define, refine and
research it,
search in it
It is a stripping off and staking out of meanings.
Is this unkind of me?
I'm too late.
It has taken time and become mine.
Ruined, it is my work now.



Figure 10. *Limestone Cowboy (final notice)*, Site specific installation, Photocopy paper and wheat paste on Murray Building façade, Dimensions: 10' by 10', Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2024, photo by Barbara Reimer

LIMESTONE COWBOY (FINAL NOTICE)

Limestone Cowboy (final notice) is a site-specific intervention upon the location where *Monument to Dawn* found itself for over 30 years. It is also a form of temporary instancing of the silhouette of the artwork on the institutional fabric of university itself. Leaving this mark, certifying its removal, punctuates the absence of the sculpture. The work serves as a final notice upon the site of the removal of something that left a mark on place. The image on the silhouette of the artwork is a reversal of the architectural tiles that comprise its façade, a ‘poor copy’ of the facade of the Murray building. The building’s outer wall panels of red granite, resembling the ferrous rusted tones of *Monument to Dawn* are posterized over with photocopies of dolomitic limestone (Tyndell Stone). This extends the large lighter coloured panels from above toward the platform below, drawing attention to the sedimentary and contrasting materials present in its architecture. This inversion of colouration and materiality mirrors the paradoxical nature of the project.

Here I wish to place greater focus on the silhouette of the piece while also referring to the eventual stratification or fossilization present within the institution. It also alludes to the sedimentary activities of educational institutions whose ability to shift actualized behaviors is bound in a slow-moving monolithic instrument.

Limestone Cowboy (final notice) is a counter monument, or a citational notice which wishes to point to the stasis of such large, bureaucratized bodies such as the University itself. The photocopy being pasted is a feeble reproduction inspired in part by German artist, filmmaker and theorist, Hito Steyerl’s conception of the ‘poor image’.

The poor image embodies the afterlife of many former masterpieces ... these works have become travelers in a digital no-man’s land, constantly shifting their resolution and format, speed and media, sometimes even losing names and credits along the way.

Now many of these works are back ◊ as poor images, I admit. One could of course argue that this is not the real thing, but then ◊ please, anybody ◊ show me this real thing. The poor image is no longer about the real thing ◊ the originary original. Instead, it is about its own real conditions of existence: about swarm circulation, digital dispersion, fractured and flexible temporalities. It is about defiance and appropriation just as it is about conformism and exploitation.

*In short: it is about reality.*⁹

⁹ Steyerl, Hito. “In Defense of the Poor Image.” *e-flux journal* no. 10 (November 2009).

My copy may equally conflict with and support my grandfather's opinion of a good work of sculpture. For him "a successful work, ..., is like a symbol. It isn't a picture of an object, or a copy of it. It is a sign, which with familiarity takes on a meaning of its own. Not a fetish, but similar."¹⁰ My reproduction becomes an operative of the sign of *Monument to Dawn*. The rawness of the facsimile, the copy, augments the aura of the artwork in its absence. The remaining index, its shadow projection, is a fully actualized sign which will dawn yet also fade.

I would like to think that in acknowledging the successful nature of his monument I am replying to it rather than replicating his art. I hope that I am giving shape to the "*fractured and flexible temporalities*" and begetting the '*originary original*' without destroying the essential intention of our common line of creativity. I hope I have made something from the dust of our pasts.

*So many people came to your memorial that
a second hall had to be rented
to accommodate so many bodies
you made impressions on
to warmly reflect on you.*

MOURNING

The video loop *Mourning* responds to my discovery of an optical effect which occurred on the surface of *Monument to Dawn*. When under the high sun of mid-morning and early afternoon the heat of the sun would heat the darkened surface of the top 'solar disc' (my title) of the art work. This heated area of the sculpture would then create a faint distortion of the air in front of it which would slightly bend the surrounding light behind the artwork if one peered through this heat lens effect. The refraction of the light came from the hot air being heated at a higher temperature than the rest of the media surrounding the artwork, and as such created a lensing effect. Though barely perceptible at times and quite remarkable at others, this subtle effect became an area of focus for me. Though unintended, this solar phenomenon creates a dialogue between the artwork and principles of thermodynamics. It effects its surroundings in a synchronistic alignment with the artwork's initial intention. It alludes to energies transmitted between bodies, as energy cannot be created or destroyed, only altered in form, direction, or location.

¹⁰ Dorothy Cameron, *Sculpture '67: An Open-Air Exhibition of Canadian Sculpture = Une Exposition en Plein Air de Sculptures Canadiennes* (Ottawa, Ont.: Musée des beaux-arts du Canada / National Gallery of Canada, 1968), 26.



Figure 11, *Mourning* (video still), 4K video loop, 5:00 mins, Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2024

*I received two tobacco plants.
Set them next to Monument to Dawn's maquette.
It smelled like tobacco when I took it apart last week.
Grandpa always smelled of tobacco too.
He and I planted some tobacco seed and birch trees near the old garden.
Tobacco didn't make it, but the birch trees did, until 2023.
I cut them down with Papa last fall.
Been hewing them since then, a little bit at a time.
I burn the offcuts. Spend time alone near the fire.
Ceremony for solitude.
Like the tobacco to come, maybe.*

SURFACING: A REFLECTIVE SELF-PORTRAIT

This work is a performative self-portrait, facing the camera under a mylar paper bag with reflective anonymity. It is taking a stance, reflecting away the gaze of institution and evaluative logic. In facing my grandfather's work as part of the ruin of modernity, I imagine this gesture as a form of grasping toward my own identity.

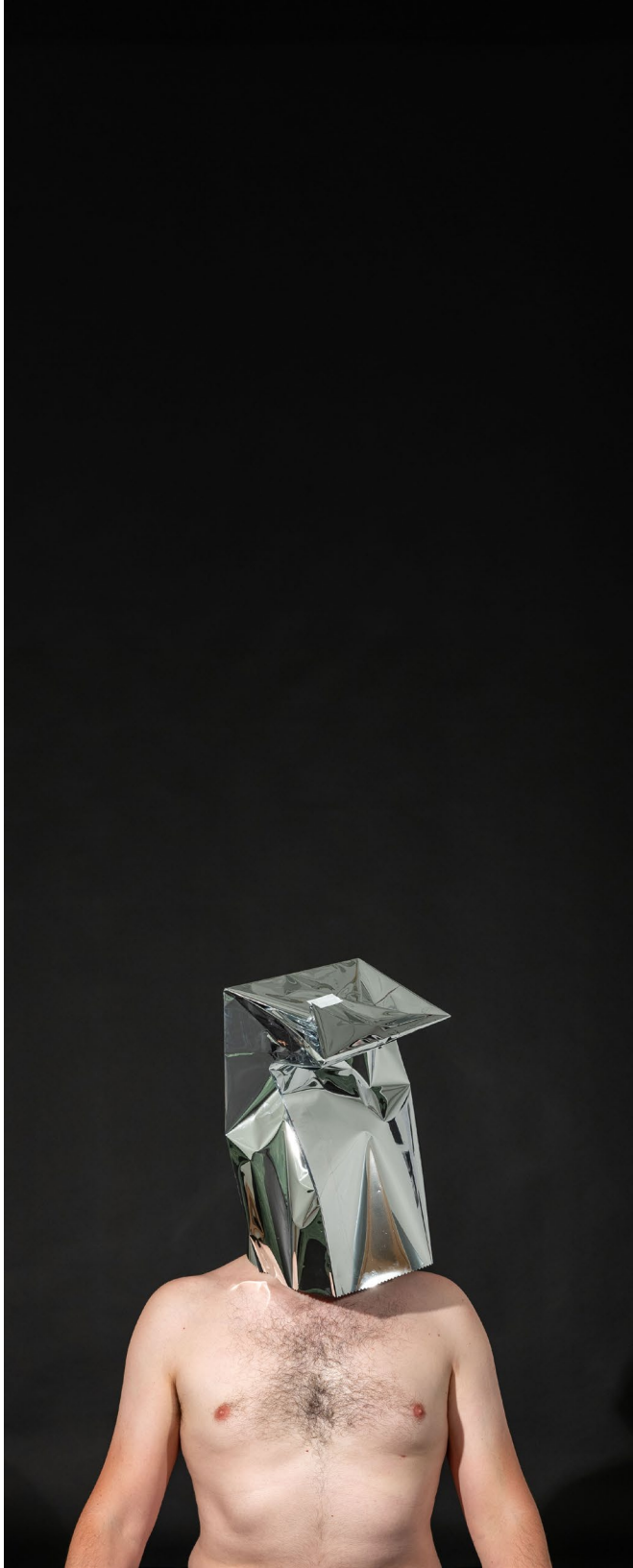


Figure 12. *Surfacing*, photograph, 36"x 70", Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2024, photo by Xiao Han

This self-portrait is a form of resisting authorship by offering a reflection back on my surroundings. This is a vulnerable position, but also one that wishes to defy the cult of personality. That this image operates within the logics of portraiture while refusing to offer the face is the paradox of relationality.

In my grandfather's artist statement from the catalogue of *Sculpture '67*, there are key insights which are relevant to my actions in relationship to his work. I repeat again what he said "...I see no more reason to glorify or condemn works of art than to glorify or condemn human beings." This is very much aligned with his way of being in the world, which was of being receptive, open and engaged with everyone around him, of being humble to the world. Much like a folk-art tradition, this locates making within community while also reinforcing culture from within.

*I am working to bring you back into view
and me too
from the outside in.
The dust from your work is resting on the ground under our feet.
No action on our part is required for that
It is already happening*



Figure 13. *Finished* (back), fragment of *Monument to Dawn*, polished mild steel, wood, 72" x 60" x 24", Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2024, photo by Barbara Reimer

FINISHED

Finished is a fragmentary and processual work resulting from weeks of performed engagements and interventions with *Monument to Dawn*. These processes depart from and acknowledge the potential inherent in the finite nature of objects and their eventual ruination.



Figure 14. Finished (front), fragment of *Monument to Dawn*, polished mild steel, wood, 72" x 60" x 24", Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2024, photo by Barbara Reimer

The reduction to dust through polishing and sanding mimic the erosive nature of matter in contact. Surfacing requires constant contact, the creation of friction to reduce the bonds of a uniform surface. It dissipates and severs the bonds of matter, shearing fragments loose from larger masses. Sanding and polishing are reducing and smoothing surfaces until they become reflective, uniform. In this state such surfaces reflect what light they receive in a symmetrical way with little

absorption. This becomes a way of refusing absorption in its surroundings. It becomes a critical surface upon which no more is inscribed.

This resurfacing is also an act of informed futility. Performing the polishing reopens a chance for this work to reflect and shine but does not negate its inevitable oxidation. It is a refactoring of the surface into fragments, into fine dust. *Finished* itself is essentially contrary to its title because its finish is temporary, the surface remains mild steel and will inevitably rust again. The noun shifts into verb. It is wholly impermanent. As such I am acknowledging the paradox inherent in my own making actions.

In ending the decay and decline of the artwork I hope to resolve it, provide action worthy of it and pay respect to its intention. I have done this through a commitment to meet it with my body 1:1. Meeting content via my corporeal engagement relates to forms of radical pedagogy and performance practice taught by Guillermo Gomez-Peña and la Pocha Nostra. He imparted a willingness to trust my own creative research and intuition as an embodied theory. I consider this a lived ethic, performed to transcend objectivity in preference of deeper intergenerational intentions. I believe that this intergenerational aspect is also present in the genealogies of ideas that we participate in and retain in our practices and presence as sculptors.

The surface noise of the monument is reduced, and it is my hope that it can enable the institution to review what may have been perceived as invisible or redundant. That it may allow members of the community to risk seeing themselves in the artworks surrounding them.

My sanding, grinding and polishing risks
penetrating the surface
rupturing its finish
to prepare for reflection
uncertainty is worthy
of this end

CONCLUSION

Monuments are significant as spatial signs which can inscribe hegemonical invisibilities on daily lived experience. They become markers of significance through their stillness, yet can also become perceptual blind spots, spaces of forgetting. In refusing to rebuild the piece, refusing to restore it, I reclaim its materiality and intention through my embodied knowledge as a sculptor and

as someone living my grandfather's teachings. I am asserting the interminable continuity of working within a tradition of action as a sculptor.

I am positioning myself within the spectrum and historical continuity of sculptors whose expression is "by, for, and of the people". This is a behavioral modelling, a performance, which functions as artwork and as a pedagogical response to my education, my upbringing. This action orientation makes room for sharing work in acceptance of my surroundings as well as in offering mentorship to others.

Monuments are constrained to the finite duration of their components but not their intentions. *Monument to Dawn* is made of mild steel and cannot be expected to withstand the elements of corrosion and oxidation outdoors without continuous interventions on the fabric of its material presence. Just as any vehicle left on the open plains would deteriorate. As such, entropy, the eventual dispersal of matter to a more homogenous distribution, is an essential part of what makes up a work. *A Monument to Dawn* cannot outshine its subject, the sun, it can only stand for an infinitesimal period in the universal chronology. It is finite and cannot be fully maintained.

Yet maintenance is a form a labour, which takes grit, persistence and care. Conviction is required to reformulate the 'anti-entropic monumentality' of artworks in a collection's framework. This form of care is essential to the continuance of artwork of this nature and their preservation. Part of this project is calling for an attention to greater care being given to objects in cultural stasis in museums and historical contexts, and just what form that care might look like when informed by the intention of the makers and the role the works play for community. This relates to how objects can be imprisoned, neglected or abused as they age or are contained away from their relations, their true caregivers. This is especially true of objects of living cultures whose traditions and beliefs are incongruent with the acquisition and preservation proposed by institutions such as museums.

But whether work is speaking to dust (as I am) or collecting dust (as the sculpture had) the institution has through the involvement, prescience and generosity of its staff made this action possible for me, so I want to acknowledge that this critique is not a simple "do better". Individuals at play in the space of the institution, such as Jake Moore, are making real engagement, embarking in dialogue with the fabric of the institution, and I commend their creative willingness to allow for novel outcomes to occur. I hope this exhibition can become an example of other remediated

practices to come in response to the build fabric of the campus as well as the collection of artifacts it can and must care for.

Monument to Dust relieves these stresses of maintenance and now aligns it to the larger intentions of my grandfather's legacy (his modelled behaviours, as a teacher, mentor and role model) and my own values, practice and lifestyle. My belief that being of service to community and to others is a central aspect of art creation and one which necessitates sharing to be complete. I have removed an artwork which had become dangerous to the community and was no longer operating as a monument. I have worked within institutional frameworks and expanded them to facilitate this action. Discussion around safety and legacy have been enacted; different people from the university have been involved. I have returned the site to a place of potential.

I have used the opportunities present in my surroundings and relationships to better understand myself and comment on my family history. My new monument is to the transfer of energies, relationships, process and potential. It is a monument to dust.

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ANNEX

Jean-Sébastien Gauthier
Sculptor
Document to Dawn (Various Documents of Great Precision, 2023)

In 1987 Bill Eggo's Monument to Dawn was shown as part of a significant Canadian Pacific season. This sculpture was created by my grandfather and my father (Sergio Galtieri). I recently discovered its location, and the proximity to the gallery prompted investigation into the artist's background and photography.

To formalize this imagined collaboration photographically, the completion of 3D scans from many photographs and images from our family archives by my mother (Léa Eggo-Gauthier) via text messages during the week.

En 1987, le Monument à l'aube de Bill Eggo a été exposé dans le cadre d'un important événement au Musée du Canada. Cette sculpture a été créée par mon grand-père (Sergio Galtieri) et mon père (Léa Eggo-Gauthier). J'ai récemment découvert sa localisation et la proximité de la galerie m'a poussé à effectuer une enquête sur le parcours artistique de la famille et à formaliser cette collaboration imaginaire par la prise de nombreuses photos et images de nos archives familiales. Pendant la semaine, j'ai réalisé ce Document à l'aube en envoyant des messages texte à ma mère (Léa Eggo-Gauthier) via texto au sujet de la sculpture.

Monument to Dawn (11 Bill Eggo, various docs, 1987-7, Collection de l'artiste Jean-Sébastien Gauthier)



Document to Dawn - 2023
Document à l'aube - 2023
Impression numérique, images et objets d'archive familiales



Figure 15. Document to Dawn, recreated Sculpture '67 catalogue page with 3d scans of Monument to Dawn, Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2023

MONUMENT TO DUST EXHIBITION DOCUMENTATION



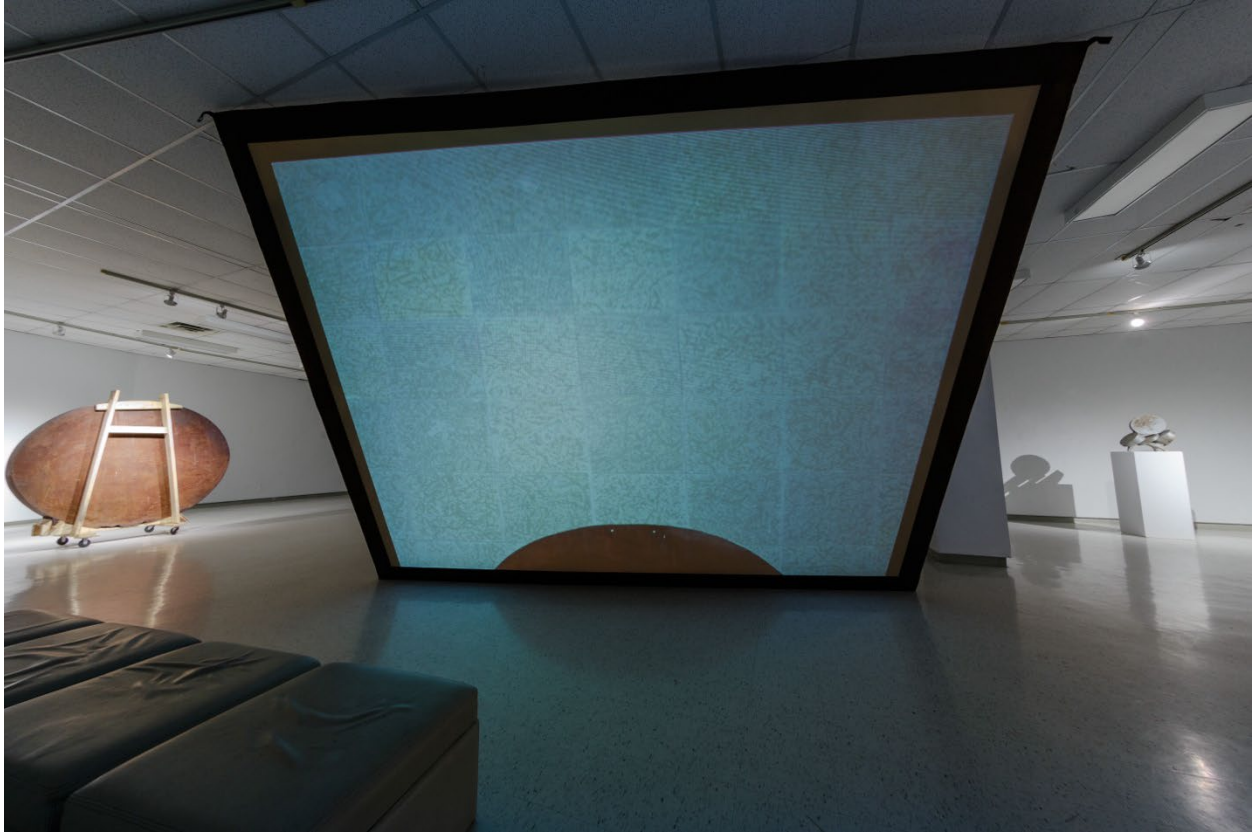
A1. *Limestone Cowboy (final notice)*, Site specific installation, Photocopy paper and wheat paste on Murray Building façade, Dimensions: 10' by 10', Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2024, photo by Barbara Reimer



A2. *Limestone Cowboy (final notice)*, Site specific installation, Photocopy paper and wheat paste on Murray Building façade, Dimensions: 10' by 10', Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2024, photo by Barbara Reimer



A3. *Limestone Cowboy (final notice)*, (detail), Site specific installation, Photocopy paper and wheat paste on Murray Building façade, Dimensions: 10' by 10', Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2024, photo by Barbara Reimer



A4. *Finished* (left), *Mourning* (center), *Monument to Dawn* maquette by Bill Epp, 1966 (right), other works by Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2024, photo by Barbara Reimer



A5. *Monument to Dawn* maquette by Bill Epp, 1966 (left), *Surfacing* by Jean-Sébastien Gauthier (center), *Monument to Dawn* documentation from *Sculpture '67*, (for details see Figure 1) (right), 2024, photo by Barbara Reimer



A6. *Surfacing*, photograph, 36"x 70", Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2024, photo by Barbara Reimer



A7. *Monument to Dawn Maquette*, Bill Epp, *Electroplated steel*, 10" x 20" x 18", 1966, photo by Barbara Reimer



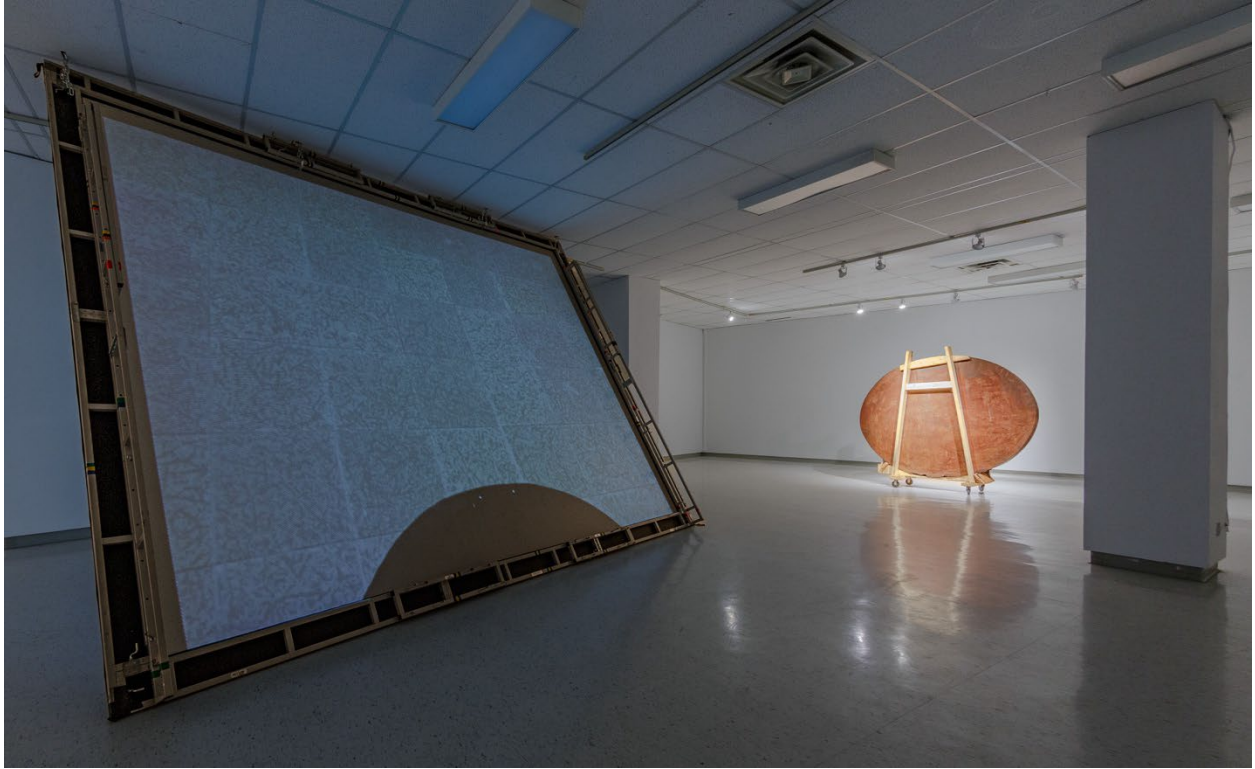
A8. *Mo Monument to Dawn Maquette*, Bill Epp, *Electroplated steel*, 10" x 20" x 18", 1966, photo by Barbara Reimer



A9. *Monument to Dust* exhibition view, Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, photo by Barbara Reimer



A10. *Monument to Dust* exhibition view, *Mourning*, tilted rear projection (center), *Finished* (right), Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, photo by Barbara Reimer



A11. *Monument to Dust* exhibition view, *Mourning*, tilted rear projected video loop, 14' x 11.5', 5:00 minutes (left), *Finished* (right), Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, photo by Barbara Reimer



A12. *Finished (back)*, fragment of *Monument to Dawn*, polished mild steel, wood, 72" x 60" x 24", Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2024, photo by Barbara Reimer



A13. *Finished (side)*, fragment of *Monument to Dawn*, polished mild steel, wood, 72" x 60" x 24", Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2024, photo by Barbara Reimer



A14. *Finished (front)*, fragment of *Monument to Dawn*, polished mild steel, wood, 72" x 60" x 24", Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2024, photo by Barbara Reimer



A15. *Monument to Dust* exhibition view, *Mourning*, tilted rear projected video loop, 14' x 11.5', 5:00 minutes (left), *Finished* (right), Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 2024, photo by Barbara Reimer



A16. Jean-Sébastien Gauthier reflected in *Finished*, 2024, photo by Barbara Reimer