

The American Dream Project – A Temporary Monument

What is the American dream in a time of great economic and racial disequilibrium? Is it a dream shared by all people or simply an old chestnut? Does it have political and social relevance today or is it time to propose a new vision and action?

The American Dream Project reflects on these questions in the form of a temporary public artwork in prominent locations in Cleveland and Philadelphia on the first days of the Republican and Democratic conventions.

The action centers around 4,000 pound sculptures carved and constructed entirely from ice, spelling out the words *The American Dream*. The life-sized sculptures melt away during the day, filmed and photographed in the act of disappearing and streamed live on websites sponsoring the project.

The sculptures continue LigoranoReese's practice of addressing key issues facing society through art – global warming, the disappearance of the middle class, the breakdown of the economy, and the loss of democratic values. At the conventions, the sculptures serve as anchors to discuss the meaning of the American Dream.

On the evening of the events, the artists are convening a public talk to investigate the relevance and direction of the American Dream focusing on income and race. Though the focus is specific to Cleveland and Philadelphia, the intent is to frame these issues as a national conversation.



Dawn of the Anthropocene, People's Climate March, New York City, 2014

These artworks are monuments to what's happening to our country and our society.

Katya Kazakina
BloombergBusiness

The power lies in giving sculpture a performative aspect which suggests change, movement and emotional power.

Jonathan Goodman
Sculpture Magazine



The State of Things, St. Paul, MN 2008

With the sculpture in the background, community leaders will discuss the ramifications of the American Dream, its disappearance and impact on society. In Cleveland, The City Club, the oldest free speech organization in the country, is co-hosting the event. In Philadelphia, poets and writers will read essays and poetry on American society and citizenship aloud as the sculpture disappears. At both locations, writers and poets will be artists residents on site, with support from the Musagetes Foundation, to record and post their impressions on social media.

These installations are the artists' most complex and elaborate productions, expanding and integrating public sculpture with social action and digital media, making use of video, photography and public interaction. With *inequality and change* a major theme this election year and taking place in the battleground states of Ohio and Pennsylvania, the impact of this artwork will be significant.

The American Dream Project creates multiple entry points for the public to reflect – to break through and open the hard lines around these questions. Witnessing these words, foundations of postwar America – disappearing in plain sight – suspends disbelief, compelling observers to reflect on ideas and concepts that may only be subconsciously felt.

To expand on poet Denise Levertov, insofar as art has a social function, it is to awaken sleepers by other means than shock.

*The sculpture weeps
throughout its transformation,
clear at first, it fatigues under the heat
as people's hands touch
and further erode it.*

*A combination of earth, language
and performance art
creating a striking hybrid.*

Nicholas Mirzoeff

<http://nicholasmerzoeff.com/O2012>



Dawn of the Anthropocene, People's Climate March, New York City, 2014



Artists' rendering, Public Square, Cleveland



Artists' rendering, City Hall, Philadelphia

*An artwork engaging
the community through creative process
to reflect and discuss the meaning of the American Dream.*

For more information: nora.ligorano@gmail.com • marshall.risarano@gmail.com • <http://meltedaway.com>
t. 718 855-0505 • c. 917 626-0598 • c. 917 363-5216