

Vandalism and Public Art in Montreal: a Discussion of works by Mark Lewis and Robert Prenovault.

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ABSTRACT

Vandalism and Public Art in Montreal: a discussion of works by Mark Lewis and Robert Prenovault.

Tanina Drvar

This thesis is a study of two works of public art which have been vandalized in Montreal: Mark Lewis' What is to be Done?, which was a scaled down plaster replica of a statue of Lenin exhibited in Park Lafontaine in 1991, and Robert Prenovault's Les Territoires Simultanés, a project installed on a vacant lot on St. Laurent boulevard during the summer of 1993. I discuss these two works and the reactions they solicited in relation to discourses on public art and public space, and propose that the vandalism to these artworks may in fact be a way of reclaiming space, as a manifestation of what Henri Lefebvre has called the public's "right to the city".

By first briefly discussing the history of public art, I touch on some key theoretical issues which demonstrate the many ambiguities of public art practices. The analysis of public space, democracy and art leads to a discussion of how vandalism and public art can intersect. Examining different examples of works of public art which have been attacked or destroyed in both North America and Europe, I set the stage for my two case studies. I raise questions about the vandalism of these two works and the public's interaction with them, to suggest that these acts are not always destructive, but rather, can present creative alterations which contribute to the artistic process. While it is difficult to establish with certainty why these works were attacked, I nonetheless study the context in which they were not only created but also destroyed, to seek to understand what these works challenged and provoked that would warrant such reactions.

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Introduction.

Over the past century, hundreds of works of art, both in museums and in outdoor settings have been wilfully degraded, damaged or destroyed. Attacks on works of art have become a global phenomenon. Yet, the discussion of this phenomenon is too often left out of art historical discussions. More recently a few scholars within the discipline of art history have begun to address this question. This thesis aims to add to this discourse and to hopefully open up debates with respect to vandalism, iconoclasm and destruction.

The destruction of art is nothing new as works have been attacked for thousands of years. Political monuments are especially vulnerable to these types of responses since they are usually the first works of art that will be re-evaluated when a shift in consciousness and/or ideologies occurs. They are usually targeted when the regime that has erected them is challenged or toppled. These monuments remain markers of the old, the hated and the rejected and consequently become part of a certain cultural re-evaluation. After the fall of the U.S.S.R. for example, monuments and statues dedicated to political leaders and symbolizing the communist regime were being toppled, destroyed or removed. Iconoclastic movements such as these become examples of shifts of power and changes in national consciousness and this type of destruction seems justified at the hands of governments and authorities. However, many scholars and citizens have argued that these types of iconoclastic acts destroy collective memories and allow for these behaviours to be repeated.¹

The fall of communism and the destruction of political monuments that accompanied it may be understood as holding a sort of “liberating” quality as individuals

seemed to be attacking an oppressive political dictatorship, however, other acts of iconoclasm can be found at the other political extreme. Just a few years ago for instance, the Taliban government in Afghanistan, despite pleas and pressure from UNESCO and numerous nations, went ahead with the destruction of the ancient Buddha statues in the Bamian province. While archaeologists, historians, religious scholars and many other people were lobbying to preserve the statues and have them protected as a World Heritage site, the Taliban's strict fundamentalist Islamic views prohibited the conservation of religious and ideological material that would threaten the strength of their faith and power.

These highly symbolic acts, whether collective forms of revolt against a regime, socio-political or religious movements or done as oppressive forms of censorship from governing groups or individuals in power, express an important aspect of cultural and artistic production. Works of public art hold a tremendous amount of social and cultural power (perhaps more so than works in museums because of their presence in the public sphere, a very political domain) and as such are the ideal targets in a re-evaluation of political, social, religious, cultural and artistic concerns. Hence any objections, anger, frustrations or resentments can be taken out both physically and symbolically through the destruction of art. This point however can also be true of vandal attacks on works of art.

Vandalism, which is usually characterized by small actions carried out by individuals acting alone or in packs, is often misunderstood as wanton, random and meaningless behaviour, usually the work of psychopaths or deranged individuals.

The 1972 attack on Michelangelo's Pieta in St. Peters in Rome by Laszlo Toth may support the claim of "mental illness" when discussing vandalism and art. Toth, who insisted that he was Jesus Christ, went after the work with a hammer.²

Other works in museums have also been attacked. Rembrandt's the Night Watch in Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum has been attacked twice: once in 1915 by a shoe maker and once in 1975 by a knife-wielding assailant.³ Leonardo's Mona Lisa in the Louvre was damaged after a man threw a rock at it in 1957.⁴ Rubens' Fall of the Damned in Munich's Alte Pinakothek was severely damaged after it was spattered with a chemical in 1959.⁵ In 1982 Joseph Kleer, a veterinary-medicine student punched dozens of holes in Barnett Newman's Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue?⁶ These types of responses are commonly believed to be attacks brought on by ignorance, lack of education, lack of appreciation for artistic production and general deviant behaviour.

However many attacks on works of art are carefully thought out and appear to have a certain sense of "rationality" to them. What is particularly interesting is the growing number of incidents in which works of art were attacked by other artists. Jeffrey Kastner reports how in May of 1994, Mark Bridger lifted the lid of Damien Hirst's sheep-filled tank Away from the Flock (1994) at London's Serpentine Gallery and poured black dye into the solution in which the animal was suspended. Bridger then placed a label reading "Mark Bridger, Black Sheep, May 1, 1994" over the original title.⁷ Kastner also describes how in November of 1996, Jubal Brown, a Toronto art student, vomited a blue substance on Piet Mondrian's Composition in White, Black and Red (1936) at New York's Museum of Modern Art. Although Brown told museum authorities that he had become ill after eating a blueberry yogurt, he later admitted that this was the second act

in a three part performance piece. Kastner explains how Brown began targeting “‘oppressively trite and painfully banal art’ earlier that year when he splattered tomato sauce on Raoul Dufy’s The Harbor at the Havre (1905-06) at the Art Gallery of Ontario”, and was then looking for a third painting on which to vomit something yellow.⁸

And finally in January of 1997, Alexander Brener, a Russian performance artist, sprayed a green dollar sign on Kazimir Malevich’s White Cross on Gray (1920-27) at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. After the attack, Kastner recounts how Brener announced that it was “a political and cultural action against corruption and elitism in culture.”⁹ In his discussion Kastner explains that these artists did not feel as though they were really defacing the objects but rather they were using existing works to create new, conceptual works of art.¹⁰

While I do not want to promote these types of attacks, I do nevertheless want to argue that the cultural value of art is often challenged in meaningful ways through such gestures. Museums are not eager to discuss these attacks for fear of attributing a sense of legitimacy to them and therefore potentially increasing the number of future attacks. When artists attack works of art and claim that their acts are in fact art as well, a problem arises for the art world: without wanting to condone these actions, the art world does at the same time not want to fall into the trap of close-mindedness, conservatism and censorship. Kastner states: “To condemn them could be interpreted as advocating a certain kind of censorship, while an endorsement would seem like an invitation for destructive acts against works of art under their (the museum’s) care.”¹¹ If we consider the evolution of art over the last century then we can see that the success of new movements and artistic practices usually depends on its ability to critique and overcome

the past. The contemporary art world does promote a certain sense of anti-establishment and anti-institutionalism and hence as Kastner suggests, “late 20th century art has opened the door to the idea that acts of vandalism against artworks can be seen as artworks in themselves.”¹²

The reason for discussing these “interventions” done by other artists is to draw a parallel between these attacks on works in museums and the type of vandalism I wish to discuss in this thesis. Vandalism has always been understood as a form of destruction and as ultimately damaging the objects in question. There exists this dichotomy therefore between creation and vandalism in which there is little room for a grey area. Any physical modification to the work (usually excluding conservation and restoration efforts) can be understood as a form of destruction. Dario Gamboni explains how : “major theories of modern art [...], consider that a work is only integral in the context for which it was created, so that it may be ‘damaged’ and even ‘destroyed’ by being displaced or by its context being modified, without it having been itself physically transformed.”¹³ The perfect example of this is Richard Serra’s Tilted Arc installed in Federal Plaza in New York City which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 1. Serra argued, after the work generated a lot of controversy and faced removal, that to remove the sculpture would be to destroy it.

Hence we see that modifying the work in any way can be understood as destructive. However, if we compare acts of vandalism of works in public settings to those done to works of art in museums (such as the attacks by Bridger, Brown and Brener) perhaps we can open up the discussion to suggest that the vandalism of works of art does not always lead to their degradation and indeed, can contribute to the artistic

process. The life span of a work need not be measured in a linear way in which creation and vandalism are at opposite ends, but rather can be seen in a more cyclical fashion. While I do not dispute that much vandalism does indeed lead to the destruction of works of art, we do need to consider that some acts of vandalism, even those not directly engaged with the art world, alter works in creative and original ways and give them “a new life”. We need only look at the efforts of Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid in their fight to preserve communist monumental art, which is discussed in Chapter 2, to see that it is possible to alter works of art without immediately contributing to their destruction.

This thesis aims to bring forth this notion by discussing vandalism with respect to public art in Montreal. The subject is approached in the first chapter by briefly looking at the history of public art from the 1960s onward and opening up the debates surrounding the practice of public art. Focusing on theories of public space and democracy, the very nature of public art and the ambiguities surrounding the practice are brought forth. The second moment of this first chapter then deals with a general discussion of vandalism and looks at different works of art from both Europe and North America which have been negatively received by their audiences. This includes works by Richard Serra, Rachel Whiteread, John Ahearn, Wolf Vostell, Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev, and other artworks found in exhibition such as the Corridart : Dans la Rue Sherbrooke (1976) project in Montreal, the Swiss International Sculpture Exhibition in Bienne (1980), the Moose Project in Toronto (2000) and the I Am Montreal/ Je Suis Montréal photography exhibit (2003). The discussion of these works and the highly distinct public responses they generated sets the stage for the two works of art that are the focus of my study.

In Chapter 2, I begin my discussion of my first case study: Mark Lewis' What is to be Done?, which was a one third plaster replica of a statue of Lenin installed sequentially in Toronto, Quebec City and Montreal (1990-91). By first looking at the iconoclasm happening in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 90s, the social and political climate of the time is discussed to show the relevance of Lewis' subject matter. By bringing the monument and communist propaganda into Western capitalist cities, Lewis is questioning our own notions of public art and the kinds of responses these objects elicit from us. Approaching this case study from a social historical point of view, I draw attention to the ambiguities and controversies surrounding art in public places and the very nature of democracy. The vandalism of his work is addressed by looking into the relationship between power, state authority, public space and public art.

In Chapter 3, I discuss my second case study: Robert Prenovault's Les Territoires Simultanés, which was a sculptural installation consisting of a plywood palisade with an uprooted tree trunk cast in concrete and a seated figure, also in concrete, leaning against a wall. This work was installed on St. Laurent Boulevard throughout the summer of 1993. Les Territoires Simultanés, completely different from Lewis' work, was subjected to a series of "interventions" and acts of vandalism at the hands of the diverse public who encountered it. Here the work is discussed in relation to the evolution of contemporary sculptural practices, site-specificity, power relations in capitalist societies, the creation of value and the production of social space.

The reason I chose these two very different works of art is twofold: first, by looking at two works of art that are completely different in nature, the study of vandalism can be done in a much more heterogeneous manner. And second, even though both works

are different (a replica of a statue of a political leader recently removed from its original context and a post-minimalist sculptural installation) they both seem to address important issues with respect to the very nature of public art and appear to have anticipated or even invited strong public responses. By creating these works, both Lewis and Prenovault were critically addressing the very practices of public art in contemporary Montreal and Canada and expected the type of responses known as “vandalism”. This self-reflexive element allows a comprehensive look into the contemporary trend of public art practices and subsequently permits a thorough and in depth study of vandalism as a real and legitimate response to art in public spaces.

This thesis aims to discuss the vandalism of public art to show that it arises within a complex network of social, political and cultural relations, which deserves to be given proper attention in the study of art history. Without wanting to condone the attacks on works of art, I nonetheless hope to show that vandalism is not always synonymous with destruction and can sometimes open up new and interesting possibilities for artistic and cultural production. While many art historians, critics and artists themselves have denounced such actions as disrespectful crimes against culture and desperate attempts to gain social visibility and attention, these actions do nonetheless document the social temperament of the time and emphasize important aspects of our society.¹⁴ While I do not think the vandalism of the works discussed in the following chapters were intended as conceptual artworks, taking the lead from Bridger, Brown and Brener, I do however think the attacks present creative forms of self-expression and highlight aspects of public art, public space and socio-political and cultural relations we may otherwise have overlooked. For this reason alone, they deserve our attention.

1. Public Art and Vandalism

People are sexually aroused by pictures and sculptures; they break pictures and sculptures; they mutilate them, kiss them, cry before them, and go on journeys to them; they are calmed by them, stirred by them and incited to revolt [...] They have always responded in these ways; they still do. They do so in societies we call primitive and in modern societies; in East and West, in Africa, America, Asia and Europe.

David Freedberg, The Power Of Images.¹

Artworks are not always well received by their audiences. Works of art have the power to provoke, offend and insult and therefore often fall victim to acts of violence at the hands of individuals, the masses or even governments. While not all responses are violent in nature, many works become the subject of petitions, demonstrations, protests, defacements, degradations and destructions. Works of art in the public domain are particularly sensitive to these types of attacks simply because of their location outside of the security of the museum and gallery setting.

This chapter will attempt to explore the relationship between public art and vandalism to suggest that in the contemporary city, the attack on works of public art is a way for individuals to negotiate their territory and reclaim, in the words of Henri Lefebvre, their “right to the city.”² By first looking at a brief history of public art, we will see how the boundaries of this artistic genre were pushed by avant-garde artists, whose works challenged dominant ideologies and traditions, building artistic discourses through which social, political, cultural and environmental issues could be discussed and criticized. The debate surrounding public art will then be examined to show that, at the dawn of the twenty first century, the category of public art remains ambiguous and often times controversial. Through a discussion of vandalism from a sociological perspective, we will see how it is an outlet for various frustrations and resentments and a way to voice opinions. Drawing foremost from the scholarship of Dario Gamboni, the vandalism of

public art will be discussed to show that these attacks provide an important dimension to the study of public art, one that, until today, is often dismissed by academics, and which reveals a whole set of social, political, economic and cultural issues we may otherwise have overlooked.

The History of Public Art.

Art simply as art, and not as commemorations of individuals or civic themes, is, as Katy Siegel points out, rather new in the public realm.³ According to her, public art's history is relatively short, dating back to the 1960's, with a new wave of public sculptures being commissioned by city governments, local groups and programs like the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in the United States.⁴ This new interest in public sculpture gave rise to what has often been called "plop art", referring to the number of modernist works which were being commissioned to adorn government and corporate buildings, without much consideration of the site in which they were to be installed.⁵ From the 1960's to the mid 1970's, this type of work dominated the North American landscape, and as Miwon Kwon remarks, these works were mostly enlarged versions of abstract modernist sculptures usually found in museums and galleries.⁶ Kwon explains that these works had no specific qualities that defined them necessarily as "public", except perhaps their size and scale. What rendered them as "public" according to Kwon was:

[...] quite simply their sitings outdoors or in locations deemed to be public primarily because of their 'openness' and unrestricted physical access, for example, parks, university campuses, civic centres, entrance areas to federal buildings, plazas off city streets, parking lots and airports.⁷

Kwon identifies three distinct paradigms in the history of the "modern" public art movement in North America. First there is the "art-as-public-places" model which is

exemplified by this wave of modernist sculptures being commissioned by government and corporate programs like the NEA. These works take little notice of the site in which they are to be installed and are conceived as autonomous works of art. Any relationship to their site is, as Kwon argues, incidental.

The second paradigm which Kwon identifies is the “art-as-public-spaces” approach, in which the works function as street furniture, architectural constructions, or landscaped environments. Until then, public art left much to be desired. Its failure to integrate with its site, and its detachment from its supposed “public” entailed stark criticism of contemporary trends in public art as being solely for the self-promotion and glorification of the individual artists and as extensions of the museum or gallery. The main problem seemed to lie in public art’s inability to engage with its site, and consequently, site-specific principles became one of the key solutions in making public art more accessible, socially responsible, and as such, more “public”. As Kwon points out, in 1974 the NEA changed its guidelines to stress that public artworks needed to be “appropriate to the immediate site”. She argues:

The move towards a programmatic enforcement of an integrated relationship between artwork and its site, however, continued to be based on a kind of architectural determinism that is endemic to most urban beautification efforts. Such deterministic thinking reinforces the belief in an unmediated causal relationship between the aesthetic quality of the built environment and the quality of social conditions therein. Consequently, the type of site specificity stipulated by the NEA, GSA and other public art agencies was directed toward spatial integration and harmonious design.⁸

Public art practices as such are dictated by the architecture of specific sites and by the urban environment. Artworks are expected to fulfill guidelines set up by the NEA and other programs, and its priority becomes functional. Public art’s usefulness is now being judged above its aesthetic qualities. Mark Lewis points out in “Public Interest”, that for public art to exist it had to possess a function and “its total operation must be on behalf of

that functionalism, a mimetic relationship that will guarantee that this art of the public domain will never simply be itself.”⁹

This “art-as-public-space” model is heavily promoted by city governments, real estate developers and corporations precisely because of its usefulness and its ability to secure unity and control of public spaces. In response to this mandate, many artists in the 1970’s began searching for new sites in which to intervene in the public spaces of our cities and towns. Artists began appropriating unconventional sites for their artistic interventions and a new trend emerged in public art practices: Kwon’s third paradigm, the “art-in-the-public-interest” model.¹⁰ This trend of public art, more commonly known in Suzanne Lacy’s terms as “new genre public art”, preached for art as activism and social engagement.¹¹ Nina Felshin explains in But Is It Art: The Spirit of Art as Activism, how this movement sought to use public space in innovative ways to address issues of socio-political and cultural significance and to encourage public participation as a means of effecting social change. What she believes sets this art apart from other political art was its methodologies, formal strategies and activist goals.¹²

The practices of Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Robert Smithson, Richard Long, N.E. Thing Company, Walter De Maria and others used unconventional sites for their artworks and brought forth various issues with respect to waste management, ecology, territory and borders, and the natural landscape. By the mid 80’s media manipulation became very popular and much activist art used billboards, ads, newspaper inserts as the sites of their interventions. Jenny Holzer’s Messages to the Public series in 1983 on LED signs, Barbara Kruger’s bus shelter posters, Guerrilla Girls’ billboards, subway posters by General Idea, Gran Fury’s AIDS awareness posters and Dennis Adams’ bus shelters were

some of the popular works emerging in the 80s which actively brought to light important issues dealing with racism, cultural history, discrimination, feminism, violence and consumerism.

This new socially active art hoped to expand its boundaries and its audience to question and redefine the role of the individual artist. Site-specificity was thus no longer tied merely to the physical characteristics of a given site, but the site could now be understood more in terms of its context and the people who would encounter it. In One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity, Miwon Kwon argues how the sites of art can be redefined as discursive fields, and while site can be a geographic location it can also refer to a network of social relations.¹³

In any discussion of public art practices, it is important to mention the funding agencies. The National Endowment for the Arts, the General Service Administration's Art in Architecture program and the Percent for Art Scheme were the leaders in the commissioning of public art in the United States. In Canada, local groups and organizations commission and regulate public art projects in cities and their surroundings, some of which are often funded by the Canada Council for the Arts, the leading patron of the arts. In Montreal for example, Le Bureau d'Art Public was set up to manage the acquisition, implementation, conservation and value of public art in the city of Montreal and to plan and coordinate the installation of temporary works in the city in collaboration with cultural and municipal agencies.¹⁴ In both North America and Europe, the most common method of public art funding however has been the Percent for Art schemes. In many Canadian provinces such as Quebec, for instance, policies have been set up in

which one percent of the total cost of a new architectural construction is allocated to a work of public art. While not all new buildings projects are subjected to these policies, governments have adopted these practices as ways of integrating art with architecture and the environment.

Organizations such as these seek to use art as a way to beautify, harmonize and unify public spaces. Real estate developers, civic governments and corporations promote public art in the maintenance and control of the public spaces of our contemporary cities. Public art becomes a useful tool in creating civic images and identities. The design team format (the tight interaction between architects, designers and artists in the planning phase) therefore ensures a certain amount of control over the artistic process. By adopting lengthy policy documents, stating particular aims and objectives, the artist's freedom is fairly limited and his or her work has to abide by a set of guidelines and procedures. The artist now has to work alongside architects, urban planners, community representatives and city officials. Public art thus becomes a rather restrictive and bureaucratic practice. However, artists are often brought on board once the design and the architecture have already been planned and must therefore create a work that will fit with the general design and goal of the project.

Luckily, alternative funding is available through different organizations whose aims differ greatly from these official mainstream programs. Two of the most popular are the Public Art Fund in New York City and ArtAngel in London. The Public Art Fund has, according to Susan Freedman, "played a leading role in defining and redefining how artists can meaningfully interact with the city's residents and the architectural environment."¹⁵ Similarly, ArtAngel sought to provide "a professional platform for and

to realize projects with artists who do not necessarily produce works that fit with the regular exhibitions venues, and to commission and support new public art works in unusual locations.”¹⁶ It is through alternative organizations such as these that artists are given the opportunities to create works which challenge the very boundaries of public art practices, to throw them off balance and to enrich public art which has been, as Malcolm Miles suggests, secondary and marginal to other art practices, “having little appeal to curators, dealers and critics for whom it lacks the autonomy of modernist and contemporary art and offers few opportunities for the manufacture of reputations, accumulation of profit or demonstration of taste.”¹⁷

The Public Art Debate.

The problem with public art seems to lie more in the discourses that surround it than in the actual works themselves. Critics, scholars and art historians have tackled the matter from within the art field and the discourses of art history, which is perhaps where the problem arises. In Art, Space and the City, Malcolm Miles suggests that the practice of public art has grown separately from debates on the future of cities, and for the most part has been untouched by the theoretical perspectives which enrich other disciplines. He claims that, consequently, the field has been impoverished by this isolation, lacking its own critical discourse through which artists and designers can question their practice. He argues therefore that one needs to look at public art from a viewpoint that is outside of art, examining various other disciplines to understand that public art, because it operates in the public realm, touches on a variety of overlapping issues, such as “the diversity of urban politics and cultures, the functions and gendering of public space, the operations of

power, and the roles of professionals of the built environment in relation to non-professional urban dwellers.”¹⁸

To categorize art as public solely because of its location outside of the mainstream art institutions is misleading to say the least. Art in public spaces functions differently than art conceived for museums or galleries. To understand it, we need to consider the very conditions of its commission, production and exhibition.

For the 5th annual Making Cities Livable conference in Venice in 1989, Jonas Lehrman proposed a general definition of public art as “art located in a public place, accessible to and for the benefit of users of such places.”¹⁹ What becomes problematic is the question of who decides what is beneficial to the users of these spaces and how are the users of these spaces defined.

As stated earlier, the modern city of the late twentieth century has had an increasing interest in public art as part of their development campaign. In the Practice of Everyday Life, Michel de Certeau argues that the new hypermodern city was a fiction, created by the desire to manage and control a growth in human agglomeration and accumulation.²⁰ This new “concept city” was based on the idea of the city producing its own “rational” space, repressing all the various physical, mental and political pollutions that would compromise its coherence. De Certeau argues that the city, which functioned much like a proper name, “provides a way of constructing and conceiving space on the basis of a finite number of stable, interconnected properties”.²¹ The very idea then of art in public spaces implies that there are spaces which are in fact public and that these spaces allow a certain public experience. We need to ask however, if this public experience can generate an aesthetic experience as well. For De Certeau it is through

simple acts like walking, acts that for him are spatialized rather than localized, that an aesthetic experience of the city can be lived. Public art, however, exists, for the most part, as a stable thing, erected in a specific location and falling under the rubric of the all encompassing city, with its desire for administration and control. This desire however, blinds the city to space itself, privileging progress and transforming the city into a landmark of socio-economic and political strategies.²²

What then becomes of public space? Adopting Jurgen Habermas' model of the public sphere, we can understand public space to fall under the realm of political interactions, in which individuals assume political identities. The public sphere, which Habermas argued developed with the rise of bourgeois society and the division of private and public realms, was an area in which private individuals assembled to form a public body. It was the sphere in which mediation between society and the state occurred and in which the public organized itself as the bearer of public opinion.²³

In Evictions: Art and Spatial Practices, Rosalyn Deutsche argues that while Habermas saw the rise of the welfare state, the emergence of non bourgeois groups and the growth of mass media as contributing to the decline of the public sphere, the introduction of this concept into the discussion on public art had a strong impact.²⁴ Because public art can now be understood as operating within the public sphere, it emerges and is discursively produced by its participation in political activity. Deutsche explains that: "the public sphere replaces definitions of public art as work that occupies or designs physical spaces and addresses pre-existing audiences with a conception of public art as a practice that constitutes a public, by engaging people in political discussions or by entering a political struggle."²⁵

This political aspect of public art is further echoed in the work of Chantal Mouffe who argues that every form of art has a political dimension. For her, “politics is always about establishment, the reproduction, or the deconstruction of a hegemony, one that is always in relation to a counter-hegemonic order.”²⁶ As such, the political dimension is always present, and it becomes impossible to always have a complete, absolute, inclusive hegemony. She states that artistic and cultural practices are key to the ways identity is constituted and therefore one cannot make a distinction between political art and non political art, because as she suggests, “every form of artistic practice either contributes to the reproduction of a given common sense- and in that sense is political- or contributes to the deconstruction or critique of it.”²⁷

Public art is particularly important with respect to this argument. Public art provides a means through which the state and the city can impose order, coherence and rationality on space. However by establishing public art’s location in the public sphere, a highly political atmosphere, we can see how it reproduces the hegemonic order. As Mouffe argues, Habermas’ approach to the public sphere and the question of citizenship is very limited. He suggests that there are a set of universal values and principles around which the world should be organized.²⁸ This becomes problematic as the public sphere is ideologically constructed and thus cannot be fully inclusive or accessible to everyone. Hence its basis relies on exclusion and distinction and as Deutsche argues, conflict, division and instability are the very conditions of its existence.²⁹

In Quebec for example, the Quiet Revolution which began in the 1960’s set out to create a public art that would reclaim the spatiality of the province for the benefit of the French speaking population. Expo ‘67 in Montreal was a perfect opportunity for

Quebecois artists to emerge on the international scene. With the large crowds that would visit Montreal for the world fair, the city built its underground transit system in 1966 and funded artists to decorate the various subway stations. As Annie Gérin remarks, whether the themes or configurations of the works produced for the subway stations were rooted in Quebecois culture or not, was irrelevant, as “symbolic value was not only bestowed onto the artworks themselves, but also onto their producers’ affiliation to a specific cultural and linguistic group.”³⁰ Hence, works such as these appropriated public spaces for their own purposes and ensured straightforward ownership of Québécois spatiality by the Québécois people. However, as Gérin argues, this phenomenon transformed the public sphere in Quebec and affected its spatiality, altering social relations among the users of these public spaces. On the one hand, it marginalized non-French-speaking communities, while on the other it gave a segment of the population access to the production of their own space.³¹

This last point brings forth another important theoretical approach which has been very effective in the discussion of public art. The idea of the social production of space was a term first coined by French theorist Henri Lefebvre, who argued that space was ideologically constructed by the dominant forces in society and by the ruling class.³² His theories on space provide an important starting point in an understanding of spatial design as a tool of social control. His concept of “abstract space”, or the space of capitalism, refers to the space of state domination, subordination and surveillance. He explains that this space serves multiple functions: “it is at once, a means of production, an object of consumption and a property relation.”³³ “Abstract” space is, for Lefebvre, where contradictions arise but where they are also contained. Space becomes fragmented and

hierarchical and its organization relegates groups of people away from the centers of power to the periphery, creating differences and exclusions.

The very premise of "abstract space" is produced by these contradictions: it is where they are born but also where they are worked out, allowing both the suppression and the substitution of an apparent coherence. Hence it is in this way that space takes on a function thought only to be held by ideology. Deutsche argues that practices of urban planning and design, and ultimately public art, now work to impose coherence, order and rationality on space. For her, these practices can be regarded as "disciplinary technologies in the Foucauldian sense insofar as they attempt to pattern space so that docile and useful bodies are created and deployed within it."³⁴ As such, public art plays a key role in spatial politics. It occupies spaces which the city has claimed as public even though they remain under the control of city officials and government authorities. These parks, city squares, plazas in which public art is often erected fall into this category of "abstract space". They merely mirror the images of coherence and control the city wishes to portray.

Malcolm Miles explains that the spatial practices of society are organized around what Lefebvre has called "the representations of space" and "representational spaces". Here the "representations of space" refer to the perceptions and conceptions of space which, according to Miles, "use signs and codes to enable a common language of space[...] and involves, for instance, making maps, verbal and intellectually formulated devices, hierarchies of space[...]."³⁵ Coming back to De Certeau, we can see that the city thus exists as a sign, a readable surface on which images of coherence and harmony are mapped out. Public art functions as one of the medium through which these images of the city can be maintained.

"Representational spaces" are, as Miles explains, "the lived and felt spaces of everyday life known through its associated images, and involve non-verbal communication, appropriation, rituals, riots, markets and other aspects of life in the street."³⁶ The expelled and marginal groups of society, while excluded from the public sphere and the forming of "public" opinion, claim the spaces of the everyday and of the street as their territory. They offer a counter-hegemonic voice and beg us to question which public and whose art we are referring to when we speak of "public art".

The mainstream discourses and practices of public art in the Western world, promote a consensual view of society, one in which, as Stuart Hall explains, there are "no major cultural or economic breaks, no major conflicts of interest between classes and groups."³⁷ As such, the public spaces of democracy become areas in which the ideas of consensus, harmony and inclusion are believed to exist. Public space is thought of as a stable homogenous entity. However critics such as Rosalyn Deutsche challenge this very understanding of public space and ultimately public art. The issues of publicness and public space become sites where the meaning of democracy itself can be reworked and re-evaluated. Pamela Lee too argues that: "[...] social space is understood as always structured by conflict and oppositionality, the basis of a democratic spatial politics."³⁸ As such, public art should follow the same logic: it should try less to resolve these conflicts then to expose them. It should challenge this utopian vision of the public sphere and acknowledge, as Lee suggests, "the anti-idealizing foundations of radical democracy: its resistance to being historically ontologized."³⁹

Many critical art practices from the 1970's to this day have sought to offer a way for the disenfranchised, the marginal and the oppressed to be heard. Artists like Gran

Fury, Group Material, Suzanne Lacy, Dennis Adams, and Armand Vaillancourt have created works that highlighted the marginal position of many groups in contemporary society. They focus on groups which have too often been left out of the "public" voice: homosexuals, the sick, the homeless, First Nations, African Americans and women. This attempt to make works of public art that are not always about mainstream society opens up the practice to include the voices of people who have been silenced for too long. But many of these practices fall short with respect to these minority groups.

Dennis Adams for example has included photographs of minority groups in many of his works: the Jews in Austria, the Algerians in France, the African Americans in the United States and the First Nations in Canada.⁴⁰ While these works are interesting and raise a series of important questions with regards to historical events, racial relations, the forming of collective memories and the systems of representation in our society, they seem nonetheless to ignore the voices of the very people he chooses to represent. They become the "token" minority for a controversial and political art practice.

Similarly Mary Jane Jacob's project "Culture in Action" in Chicago, which preached for community involvement and collaborations, has been criticized by some as exploitation, and even abuse of local communities.⁴¹ Miwon Kwon argues that these community collaborations are usually artist driven and curatorially directed, and the works, as a result, are often established before any real contact with the given community.⁴²

We need to ask therefore how inclusive and democratic public art really is. Is it always about the ruling elite and framed by institutions and governments or can it open up ways in which the marginal, the disenfranchised and the minority groups of society

can be represented? By moving on to a discussion of the vandalism of public art, I will suggest that while many public art practices still fall short of these “democratic” goals, the public’s intervention with the works of art offer ways in which opinions can be expressed, histories written and territories claimed.

The Reception of Public Art

The problem with any discussion of public art is that it often fails to take into account the public for whom these works were ultimately created. The history of public art has been, since the French Revolution, one of iconoclasm and vandalism. However, most studies pertaining to vandalism focus very little on art. Scholars over the last century have been interested primarily in studying vandalism from a sociological and psychological point of view, drawing from theories of delinquency and deviance. Claude Levy-Léboyer explains in the introduction to Vandalism: Behavior and Motivations how most of the research on vandalism up until the end of the twentieth century has consisted primarily of case studies which have lacked a real theoretical basis.⁴³ Recently however, more in depth studies on vandalism have been conducted and a body of historical and theoretical data has been collected. The main focus of most of this research has been grounded in the fields of law, psychology, sociology and architectural and urban planning. The aim of these studies has been to establish a working definition of vandalism, to uncover its many aspects and motivations, to create codes through which the perpetrators may be punished by law and to propose a set of guidelines for architectural and urban planning practices to avoid and deter future acts of vandalism.

The mainstream definition of vandalism reads as follows: “strictly speaking vandalism is the willful damage to property, often that owned by local or public authorities.”⁴⁴ Stanley Cohen has categorized some of the motives of vandalism in sociological terms, as follows: *acquisitive vandalism* for example, refers to looting, petty theft, and the stealing of badges or signs, *tactical vandalism* includes the desire to attract attention or to get arrested to get shelter for the night, *manipulative vandalism* is directed at particular institutions or individuals, *ideological vandalism* is politically motivated and involves the breaking of windows on embassies, political or racist graffiti and damage caused during riots, and *vindictive vandalism* is done as a means of revenge and aims to damage property belonging to an institution or individual.⁴⁵

This working definition of vandalism provides a good starting point to any study of vandalism, however it fails to take into account the fact that most vandals are never caught and hence many of the motivations behind vandal attacks remain unclear. In the discussion of the vandalism of public art, we need to consider the very nature of public art, public space and democracy. If we return to Henri Lefebvre, we can understand space to be a political instrument, one that ensures a strict hierarchy, control and homogeneity. His theories divide the urban system into three related concepts: space, everyday life and the reproduction of capitalist social relations.

Lefebvre argues that class conflicts are played out in space; in other words they are spatial conflicts, or struggles between economic interests. This homogenizing trend of space, which is both fragmented and hierarchical, relegates groups of people away from centers of power to the periphery, creating, what Lefebvre calls “an explosion of spaces”. These spaces of everyday life, or what he has also named “social space”, are

evidence of the multiple articulations of stratified social relations with space. Mark

Gottdiener explains:

This explosion of finely tuned spatial distinctions between people and groups in society results in a chaos of contradictory spaces that proliferate the boundaries at which sociospatial conflict appear. Such conflicts cannot be reduced to mere reflections of the class struggle or its displacement into realms outside the work site, as many Marxist contend, but represents instead concrete differences between people as a consequence of domination of abstract over social space in our society.⁴⁶

What becomes a key concern for Lefebvre is the way “abstract space’s”

domination creates differences and exclusions. The critical struggle within late capitalist society becomes the struggle to free the everyday uses of space from the Capitalist system and to allow the management and appropriation of spaces by individuals.⁴⁷ This is where his concept of the public’s “right to the city” (*droit à la ville*) emerges, which refers to the struggle of expelled groups of society to occupy and control space. For

Lefebvre:

Le droit à la ville légitime le refus de se laisser écarté de la réalité urbaine par une organisation discriminatoire, ségrégative. Ce droit du citoyen (si l’on veut ainsi parler: de l’homme) annonce l’inévitable crise des centres établis sur la ségrégation et l’établissant: centres de décision, de richesse, de puissance, d’information, de connaissance, qui rejettent vers l’espace périphériques tous ceux qui ne participant pas aux mêmes privilèges politiques.⁴⁸

This potential of freeing spaces from the dominant forces of capitalist society can only be achieved however, through the wiping out of the capitalist system of political and economic domination, allowing an appropriation of spaces for liberatory social uses.⁴⁹

Henri Lefebvre’s concern with the individual’s use of everyday space can relate to De Certeau’s practices of everyday life and his interest with walking as a key aspect in experiencing the contemporary city. Their shared concern with the ordinary ways in which city dwellers interact with their urban environment can be used as a basis in our study of the vandalism of art.

What is important to point out is how public art imposes itself on a public and how it appropriates a space that theoretically was defined as “public”. As such, public art brings with it all the cultural and ideological baggage associated with a work of art. While public space is represented as uniform and neutral, it is clear that the very installation of public works of art shows how the decision making process and the organization of public space is still dictated and controlled by the city and the state. The very premise of a work of art brings forth a certain sense of cultural domination of a majority by an elite minority. The work of art emphasizes the social distinction and inequalities that are at the very core of art’s proposition. It brings to light the division of labor and the class struggles that are such a fundamental part of western society’s make-up. Dario Gamboni, in The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution, explains how tastes express views of, and relationships to, the world that are usually formed through family, background and school education. He argues that “despite their ambitions of emancipation, culture and cultural practices thus also contribute to the modes of domination that – at the political opposite from totalitarian or authoritarian regimes- expect the symbolic integration of the dominated classes from the imposition of needs rather than from the inculcation of norms.”⁵⁰

Gamboni’s study, one of the most in depth with respect to vandalism and art, indicates that attacks and degradations have become a normal feature of permanent and temporary exhibitions in public spaces. His work attempts to explain the importance of these acts of destruction and to show how vandal attacks are not specific to certain groups of people or areas, but that they represent a widespread phenomenon in all parts of the globe. By studying both iconoclastic movements, which refer usually to a collective

effort at selective destruction such as the removal of communist monuments after the fall of the Soviet Union, and vandalism, which is a small action carried out by “normal” people acting alone or in packs, Gamboni explores the relationship between the attackers and the attacked, the effects of class domination and pays particular attention to questions of power and status. In a review of the book, Gary Schwartz argues that Gamboni’s work “establishes a new, high standard for the discussion of the issues it deals with” and how it “seeks to open up the debate rather than cap it with the pretense of definitiveness.”⁵¹

What is most useful about Gamboni’s work is his sensitivity to the issues at hand, and the ways in which he avoids reducing them to monocausal explanations or resorting to over-subtle nuances.⁵² His discussion of the vandalism of art in public places is particularly insightful as it does not dismiss the attacks as expressions of prejudice, narrow-mindedness or a reactionary tradition, but rather suggests how the public’s lack of involvement in the decision making process, the denial of legal means and the imposition of a work of art on an “unsuspecting” public puts forth a certain sense of cultural domination and control. It is this aspect against which the attackers seem to be rebelling. However Gamboni aptly explains that while these attacks and frustrations may represent effective means of expression, they tend “to entrench rather than really challenge the balance of power to which they react, since their authors can be denounced as enemies of culture and society.”⁵³ He continues by suggesting that the illegality of vandalism makes it a “dominated reply that reinforces domination, a counter-violence that hands weapons to symbolic violence.”⁵⁴

So while his work does not denounce vandalism as a wanton, senseless and meaningless action, it none the less points out the negative aspects vandalism entails and

the ways in which it “shoots itself in the foot” in a certain sense. What I imply by this, is that Gamboni tries to show how acts of vandalism against certain works of art might represent legitimate responses that are symptoms of a bigger problem, but at the same time, the ways in which frustrations or resentments are carried out take away from the symbolic effectiveness of the acts. Because vandalism is the illegal destruction of property, it is seen as a social problem and a crime more than as a serious and intelligent form of expression, rebellion and revolt. Gamboni explains that these vandal attacks are reduced to “crimes” against culture and society and their perpetrators are seen as enemies of art and cultural production. Hence their actions cannot be taken seriously. Therein lies the problem. His study, however, gives a certain amount of legitimacy to the vandal attacks and opens up the debate to allow us to at the very least try to understand the bigger picture and the power relations that exist between a work of art and an “unsuspecting” public.

We need to question then, why certain works of art are attacked while others are not. What behaviors do these works elicit from us? By briefly discussing some cases in which works of public art generated public outcry, and negative or passionate responses, we will see that these responses were highly varied and distinct. It is my aim to set the stage for the two case studies that will be discussed in the following chapters, to understand the phenomenon of vandalism in a more global context and as a common thread in the landscape of public art.

One of the most controversial public art projects in North America was probably Richard Serra’s Tilted Arc (Fig. 1), installed in Federal Plaza in New York City in 1979. Commissioned by the General Service Administration’s Art in Architecture program,

Serra created a steel wall like sculpture that cut across the plaza, acting almost as a physical barrier. Miwon Kwon characterized this particular sculpture as offering an “interruptive and interventionist model of site-specificity, quite explicitly opposed to an integrationist or assimilative one.”⁵⁵ Hence, while many of Serra’s supporters admired his work precisely for these reasons, his adversaries fought to have the sculpture removed. Kwon explains how many people argued that the sculpture was ugly, brutal and plain with no aesthetic appeal or artistic merit, and that its installation in this space was physically and psychologically oppressive.⁵⁶ Others argued that it interrupted a past coherence of the space and that it obstructed active use of it. One security expert testified at the hearing to determine the fate of the work, that Tilted Arc obstructed proper surveillance and hence encouraged loitering, graffiti, and possible terrorist bomb attacks.⁵⁷ Tilted Arc was finally removed from the site in 1989, much to the dismay of Serra who had pursued a lengthy legal process to avoid such action. The removal of the work was seen as key in the reclaiming of public space by the “community”, a term loosely defined as the people who lived and worked in the area. Ironically, here the term “community” referred mainly to the people who worked in the government offices, the various diplomats, FBI employees and bureaucrats.

This concept of community became a key concern in later public art projects, and as Kwon explains, by the late 1980s community involvement became an important feature of public art commissions. It involved the inclusion of non-art community representatives in the selection panels, but more importantly it stressed the creation of a dialogue between the artist and his audience, community participation and collaboration in the public art process.⁵⁸ The main problem that arises however is the vagueness of

terms like “community”, “public” and “public use”. These terms are taken for granted, their meanings are not questioned and universal and stereotypical definitions are readily accepted and employed by people in positions of power to suit their own needs.

If we look at the case of Rachel Whiteread’s work House (Fig. 2) in London’s Bow neighborhood, which was destroyed after it generated much controversy, we see that similar issues surface. Whiteread, funded by Artangel, obtained the lease on 193 Grove Road, one of the few remaining houses in what had once been a Victorian terrace, and created House, a concrete cast of the interior. Simon Watney explains how the opposition to House stemmed from what the work evoked. Watney suggests that Whiteread’s sculpture drew attention to the “complex cultural myths surrounding ‘childhood’, ‘family values’, the relations between men and women and adults and children.”⁵⁹ What made it “obscene” according to Watney was the fact that:

(...) it exposed an interior, because it shows us something we are not supposed to see, because it fails to operate as a proper, decent, ‘public sculpture’, in the interest of the moral and political claims of an administrative system which imagines its constituency in the homogenous likeness of the ‘public’ whose uniform views and opinions must at all costs be expressed in ‘public’ art and in ‘public’ places.⁶⁰

What is so interesting about this case is not so much the widespread attention the work received and the debates it triggered about its destruction, but rather the varied responses it engendered within particular groups and communities. James Lingwood explains that the controversies surrounding House could not be contained in binary opposing categories- local against national, art world versus real world- because of the multiplicity of opinions and sentiments the work provoked.⁶¹ He argues that there were a range of passionately different responses, but the “differences of opinion were always located *within* any identifiable community or constituency, and not *between* them.”⁶²

Similarly, John Ahearn's sculptures for the 44th Precinct Police Station in the South Bronx commissioned by the New York City Percent for Art Program (Fig. 3) were disliked by many members of the local community. John Ahearn was chosen because he lived in the area, had already established a reputation with the local community and had spent many years interacting with the community. His sculptures, three statues of local residents, were criticized as glorifying the delinquent, derelict and criminal and feeding into the outsider's view of the Bronx with these negative stereotypes.⁶³ The architect involved in the building project and the administrator, both of them African American, argued that Ahearn's sculptures were racist and that the artist, being white, could never understand the experience of the African American community.⁶⁴ Five days after their installation, Ahearn removed the statues at his own expense.

What these three examples show is the ways in which terms like "community" and "public" become discursive devices that do not properly highlight the diversity of local communities and groups. We see in the three works by Serra, Whiteread and Ahearn, how they were each viewed by very different "publics": government employees, residents of London's working class Bow neighborhood and the Bronx's mainly non-white residents. The three works seemed to serve to constitute a "public" or "community". While officially removed or destroyed, these three examples bring forth the ambiguities and unresolved issues concerning public art and its actual public.

Other works of public art have generated passionate responses due mainly to their content. When works of art touch on controversial social, cultural or political issues, vandalism and defacements are quite common. In Montreal, the outdoor photography exhibition Je Suis Montréal/ I Am Montreal was attacked.⁶⁵ What is interesting about this

example is that from the numerous photographs on display, the only one that was defaced was one of a homosexual couple (Fig. 4). Someone had torn off the plaque which provided the information about the photograph, the title, the description and the artist's name and had spray painted over the faces of the two men depicted. Someone else, upon seeing the defacement, spray painted the words "love is love, you can't destroy it" as a rebuttal to the first vandal attack. Similarly, the very provocative and controversial AIDS posters by Gran Fury were received with mixed responses; while some individuals were very enthusiastic about the works and the important message with respect to AIDS awareness they promoted, others were quite outraged by them, linking AIDS to homosexuality and immoral behavior and lifestyles. In New York City, for example, some of their billboards were defaced within the first twenty four hours of their installation.⁶⁶

Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev's Monument Against Fascism, War and Violence- and for Peace and Human Rights (Fig. 5), installed in Hamburg in 1986, was also defaced. This work, a forty foot high, three foot square pillar made of hollow aluminum plated with a thin layer of soft dark lead, invited viewers to add their names to the work with a steel pointed stylus.⁶⁷ The more actively the audience participated the faster the column would be lowered into the ground until it would eventually disappear. Sure enough, swastikas began to appear (blatantly opposed to the very intention of the work, but anticipated as potential responses by the artists) and while the city argued that the work would be a trap for graffiti, the artist felt they should let the work document the social temperament of the time.⁶⁸

The destruction of the Corridart: Dans la Rue Sherbrooke exhibition in Montreal in 1976 was an act that still has not been completely digested by the Canadian art community. Envisioned as a sort of outdoor “art corridor” that would complement the 1976 Summer Olympic Games, Corridart was destroyed by city officials a week after the vernissage. With works like Melvin Charney’s Les Maisons de la Rue Sherbrooke (fig. 6), which was a replica of a domestic façade on Sherbrooke street, or Pierre Ayot and Denis Forcier’s La Croix du Mont Royal sur la Rue Sherbrooke (fig. 7), Corridart was officially approved by the Executive Committee of the city of Montreal. However, Mayor Jean Drapeau ordered its dismantling. Sandra Paikowsky explains how the Executive Committee later argued that the sculptures in Corridart “contravened municipal bylaws governing the occupancy of the public domain and moreover, in a number of instances, constituted a safety hazard”, and a spokesman from the mayor’s office remarked that the exhibition had been torn down because it was “ugly and obscene.”⁶⁹

However in an interview 25 years later, Melvin Charney, the official planner and coordinator of the exhibition, gives his opinion about the destruction:

Maybe he (Mayor Jean Drapeau) thought too many people understood the art in ‘Corridart’, maybe it was too accessible. None of that is relevant. The only thing I sensed was that he simply needed to get back in the front pages of the newspapers and saw one of the ways to do that, like all authoritarian and totalitarian politicians and leaders do: you knock heads, and show your power symbolically.⁷⁰

So while the city argued that the sculptures presented safety hazards, Charney suggests that the content of the art as well as the mayor’s desire for power were driving factors in the destruction of Corridart. We see how city officials and politicians exercised their power to impose censorship and control of artistic practices. Corridart was a dark

horse in the consciousness of the Montreal art community and remains one of the most notorious acts of destruction of art in Canada.

More recently, the city of Kelowna in British Columbia censored the public art project Temporal Transmissions, an innovative video compilation commissioned by the city and coordinated by the Alternator gallery for the centennial celebration of the city. According to the gallery, city officials waited until the last minute to voice their concerns with respect to one of the videos in the seven tape compilation, a work by Jayce Salloum which features members of the Westbank/ Okanagan First Nations “speaking frankly about the history of contact including the legacies of the residential school system and the relations with the settlement history.”⁷¹ The city claimed that this videowork did not fit into the celebratory spirit of the project and “overshadowed” the other works.

We see therefore through these very diverse examples that the very content of art is often the main reason for its vandalism, destruction or censorship. Art is a powerful method of self-expression but may also act as a tool to promote and voice opinions and ideas about cultural, social, political and moral issues. When art challenges fundamental beliefs or morals we may have, then it is not surprising that it would be attacked and vandalized.

Another important issue public art must address is the idea of taste and funding. Artistic taste is a very vague and abstract concept for obvious reasons: what one person may find aesthetically pleasing, another may not. As such, many people are outraged that their taxpaying money would finance works they find ugly and of little artistic merit. In Berlin for example, Richard Serra’s work Berlin Junction (Fig. 8), installed near the Brandenburg gate and the Wall in 1988, was spray painted with the inscription “560, 000 (DM) for this shit.”⁷²

Another interesting example was the Skulpturboulevard project in Berlin in 1987. Before the exhibition even opened, controversies flared up. The eight sculptures that were installed in the commercial and leisure district of the city received a lot of negative attention and at times generated violent responses. Wolf Vostell's work, 2 Concrete Cadillacs in the Form of a Naked Maya (Fig. 9), received the most attention. Dario Gamboni explains how the opposition to this work was quite profound and well organized: it included human chains, tracts, banners, petitions, advertisement campaigns and television debates.⁷³ However one of the most imaginative actions against the work was the anonymous addition of a sculpture, consisting of an East German car (the Trabant), placed within a triangular concrete pillar and installed near the original sculpture on a traffic island (Fig. 10).⁷⁴

A similar action was taken when an anonymous sculpture was added to the 8th Annual Swiss Sculpture Exhibition in Bienne in 1980. This sculpture, simply called The Thing (Fig. 11), was, according to Gamboni, added to criticize the other works and to mock the professional sculptors.⁷⁵ This exhibition actually caused quite a stir with the local population who felt that the works exhibited were lacking in artistic merit and aesthetic appeal. Of the 107 sculptures exhibited in outdoor settings, 44 of them were willfully defaced or destroyed.⁷⁶

In Toronto in the summer of 2000, Mayor Mel Lastman organized the Moose Project, in which numerous businesses, corporations and the city of Toronto funded a series of Moose sculptures that were exhibited throughout the city. While tourists seemed to enjoy the idea of taking "moose spotting" tours, many citizens felt that the project was a waste of taxpayers money and that the funds should be directed towards more pressing

issues. It was not long before the city had to set up a special “moose vandalism” patrol and spent hours investigating the rash of antler snatching that had become, according to Virginia Eichhorn, Toronto’s most popular summer sport.⁷⁷

While many of the moose were vandalized or destroyed, some people chose to alter them in ways that would reflect their resentment and frustration with respect to particular issues. As Eichhorn describes, Barbara Bailey for example created a mock homeless shelter out of the Mel Lastman Moose. Placing a mattress around the moose’s base and a cape over the body, she created a tent with a sleeping compartment.⁷⁸ Two weeks prior, a group of anti-poverty activists created a mock papier-mâché “homeless” moose in protest to the government spending money on the Moose project but not finding enough funding for the housing crisis.⁷⁹

By looking at all of these different examples, I hope to have set the stage for the discussion of two works of public art that have been vandalized in Montreal which will be the subject of the next two chapters. Because public art is installed outside any real institutional framework such as the gallery or the museum, it must adhere to a number of different criteria. Public art touches on discourses about the city, public space, democracy, and community. The contemporary discourses of public art understand that the public spaces of our towns, villages and cities are contested sites, where the very meaning of democracy can be worked out and challenged.

The idea of a consensual view of society leads to false realities as society is perpetually changing and its nature is dynamic and unstable. If we look into conflict theories, we can argue as Donald McQuarrie does, that consensus is “only a mask imposed by force and violence, and that in fact societies (are) torn by fundamental divisions of

interest and conflict between rich and poor, men and women, black and white, young and old.”⁸⁰ Hence public space and public art are the sites where these conflicts exist and where they are played out. Through a look at two very different works of public art in Montreal, it is my aim to show that vandalism is an outlet for these conflicts and a way for the “public” to reclaim “its right to the city”.

2. Lenin Under Attack in Canada: a look at the vandalism of Mark Lewis' What is to be Done?

In the immediate aftermath of the demise of communist regimes, statues and monuments all over Eastern Europe were toppled, destroyed or removed. It is within this politically charged atmosphere that Mark Lewis developed What Is To Be Done. While statues of Vladimir Illitch Lenin were disappearing from public squares and plazas all over Eastern Europe, a different version of the monument to Lenin popped up in the Western hemisphere, its fate in the hands of the Canadian public. By first discussing the political context of the time, we will see where the concept of What Is To Be Done originated. The wave of iconoclasm that swept Eastern Europe in the early 1990's provoked a re-evaluation of public art's role in the contemporary city and its use in the political arena. By exploring the significance of the events unfolding in the East, we will see how Lewis' work highlighted aspects of public art's reception that are not confined to a specific location but that are, rather, a widespread phenomenon. Discussing the work's journey throughout Canada, we will see how it provoked a series of important and at times entertaining public responses. Finally Lewis' work will be examined within the context of the late 20th century city with regards to issues of monumentality, public art and vandalism.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 was one of the most significant events in late 20th century history, and triggered a domino effect of destruction and removal all over Eastern Europe of both monuments and statues dedicated to political leaders or symbolizing the communist regime. Ironically, these statues and monuments, although (mis)used for political purposes, had until then, never received the amount of attention the

Western media and the Western world now paid them. The wave of iconoclasm that swept Eastern Europe was widely featured in the Western media, and as Dario Gamboni remarks, even the destruction of statues after the end of other dictatorships in Southern Europe or Latin America did not receive the same amount of publicity.¹ The attention the Western media paid to these acts of destruction and vandalism was due in large part to the paramount importance of the downfall of communism to the West as a key event in modern history, but it was also due to the huge number of monuments and works of art concerned. According to Gamboni, in 1994 there were an estimated 70,000 monuments (including busts and effigies) dedicated to Lenin in Russia alone.²

More importantly though, the symbolic nature of the acts was widely disseminated in the media because of their metaphorical function: the physical fall of the monuments symbolized the fall of the order which had erected them in the first place. The Western media were not simply covering world events in an objective manner, but were doing so from the vantage point of the capitalist West, showing the collapse of one regime and the "victory" of another.

Although many citizens from these Eastern block countries approved these iconoclastic actions, others questioned how this destruction was any different from that which had occurred during the Russian Revolution. It was the same pattern all over again: tampering with the past to make it more acceptable, erasing memories and rewriting history. Just as the Bolsheviks had destroyed Tsarist monuments, and Stalin had destroyed Bolshevik monuments, Russian history was once again being obliterated and rewritten.

Monuments were without a doubt the key targets in this process because of their public accessibility but even more so because of their clear propagandistic and ideological functions. It is important here, to divert for an instance and consider the very definition and function of the monument. Alois Riegl's discussion of the monument, defines it in its oldest and most original sense as a "human creation, erected for the specific purpose of keeping single human deeds or events (or a combination thereof) alive in the minds of future generations."³ Mark Lewis explains how monuments of the communist era, functioned as a way of simultaneously marking out and policing the public sphere.⁴ In a certain sense, these monuments dedicated to Lenin were symbols not only of the man that they depicted but also they represented, as Lewis suggests, in rather complex configurations, a political leader, an ideology, a liberation and a tyranny.⁵ The anger the masses felt towards this political leader, the ideologies of communism and the political regime could thus easily be directed towards these monuments and consequently their destruction could be seen as a way to vent that anger.

The removal of the statue of Felix Dzerzhinsky, founder of the KGB, presents, however, a certain ambiguity. When demonstrators attacked the statue on August 22, 1991 in front of the Lubyanka in Moscow, the mayor of Moscow, Yuri Lushkov, called in state authorities to supply a crane and remove it properly.⁶ While many approved of the actions, others saw it, according to Dario Gamboni, as an act of vandalism against a part of their history and wanted the statue to stay there if only to, as one woman put it, "be able to tell her son that this guy was a bastard."⁷ The use of the word "vandalism" here is problematic, since vandalism has for the most part been defined as an illegal action carried out by individuals acting alone or in packs, yet this removal started off as an

action carried out by an angry mob, but later aided by civic authorities. This example therefore can be seen as blurring the line between iconoclasm and vandalism.

What this particular example shows is how the fate of many statues and monuments was still being determined by government and state authorities, therefore undermining the symbolic effectiveness of these acts of vandalism and destruction. The destruction of monuments can be understood as a form of revenge, as a reversal of the hierarchical relationship between powerful and powerless, and as a way for the weak to seek some sort of retribution. In The Power of Images, David Freedberg explains that this destruction symbolizes the pulling down of the old, the hated and the rejected, and replacing it with the "promise of utopia".⁸ However, in this case, the so called revenge was controlled and tamed by the officially sanctioned removal.

Similarly the recent removal of the statue of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad was aided by American tanks and soldiers, when the sheer bulk of the statue posed quite a challenge to the crowds who had attacked it in the first place. While news reports on CNN represented the event as a passionate tearing down of a symbol of oppression by the Iraqi crowds,⁹ other reports have suggested that this tearing down was in fact orchestrated by the American army for the benefit of the Western world.¹⁰ Upon closer inspection, a wide angle shot of the scene which took place on April 9th 2003 in Baghdad's Firdos Square, revealed that the "large" crowds of cheering Iraqis were really made up in majority of American army and marine personnel and foreign journalists.¹¹ Although allegations that the event was staged were ignored and ridiculed by the US government and the most visible media outlets, a BBC website reported that there were actually only a dozen Iraqis involved in the toppling of the statue.¹² A little over a year later, the L.A.

Times acknowledged the allegations in a tiny 250 word article entitled “Army Stage-Managed Fallen Hussein Statue”, buried on page 28 of the July 3rd 2004 issue.¹³

These two examples (the removal of the Dzerzhinsky and Hussein statues) emphasize the importance of the control of the visual landscape of the public sphere in a revolutionary moment, such as the toppling of communism or the end of Hussein’s dictatorship. Lewis explains how during a social crisis, the symbolic realm of which public art is part becomes the subject of a certain re-evaluation. According to Lewis:

While we might indeed hesitate before concluding that the removal and destruction of “hated” monuments is the only possible critical re-evaluation of the semiotics of the public statuary, we need to acknowledge that the *visibility* which inaugurates such an attack is a pre-requisite for any attempt to re-interpret and intervene within this area of the symbolic realm. Clearly, the impulse to attack and destroy public works is part of a general attack on the continued presence of the signs of an *ancien régime*.¹⁴

Ironically, in Russia, the same authorities that were responsible for the removal of monuments were the ones who were censoring artistic practices and destroying works during the Communist regime. As Vitaly Komar, an exiled Soviet artist now living in the United States has remarked: “In most cases, these weren’t passionate crowds doing the tearing down- it was the cool hands of officials, by bureaucratic fiat. Same guys who used to order our shows bulldozed, now arranging the bulldozings.”¹⁵

Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, who had their Double Self Portrait as Lenin and Stalin destroyed by the KGB in the infamous outdoor bulldozer show in Moscow, were intrigued and saddened by Russia’s “worship or destroy” policy on art, and proposed a way of salvaging their country’s historical and cultural artifacts.¹⁶ Their project, What is to be Done with Monumental Propaganda, addressed the issue of altering existing statues and monuments, “to leave them at their sites and transform them, through art, into history lessons.”¹⁷ This project, an ironic gesture, was more a discussion about

the role of representation for the establishment, preservation, dissemination, consumption and subversion of ideology, than as an actual campaign for the preservation of monuments.¹⁸

Komar and Melamid, along with other Russian and American artists, proposed a variety of original and often humorous concepts to transform Soviet monuments. In their proposals for the project, Lenin's tomb would be salvaged by simply adding the suffix "ism" to his name and having it scroll by on an electronic sign board along with news updates, weather forecasts, Biblical quotations and Dadaist expression (Fig. 12).

Scherer and Ouporov proposed a mass ceremonial procession down the streets of Russia of the statues and monuments, culminating with their actual burial (Fig. 13).

Leonid Lamm proposed to alter the traditional hammer and sickle transforming it into the dollar sign (Fig. 14). The pair of Michigan artists who go by the name of Leighlaine claimed to have uncovered the significance of Lenin's billowing overcoats in their "Advertisement for Street corner Watch Sales" (Fig. 15) and Constantin Boym suggested that the only way to preserve monumental propaganda was to turn the statues and monuments into monumental advertisement campaigns where Western corporations could lease advertising space on the numerous Lenin statues for a hefty fee (Fig. 16).¹⁹

This desire to preserve monumental propaganda can be echoed in far less publicized acts. The graffiti inscription on the central pedestal of Ludwig Engelhart's statue of Marx and Engel in Berlin (Fig. 17), which read: "wir sind unschuldig" (we are not at fault), or the "no violence" banner on Tomsky's Lenin monument in Leninplatz in Germany (Fig. 18), which was destined for removal, are examples of some of the ways ordinary citizens were voicing their opinions with respect to the destruction and removal

of various monuments.²⁰

It is within this highly political, unstable and destructive atmosphere that Mark Lewis' work What Is To Be Done (Fig. 19) originated, addressing issues of iconoclasm, public art, democracy and politics in an original and humorous manner. What Is To Be Done was developed after a trip Canadian born artist, Mark Lewis, took to the former U.S.S.R. in the early 1990s. His arrival coincided with this recent wave of statue bashing and iconoclasm that swept these newly democratic countries. Overwhelmed by the sheer number of empty pedestals he now encountered in public spaces, Lewis set out to document the fate of many of these fallen monuments. He visited numerous warehouses which housed rows and rows of monuments, statues, busts and effigies removed from the public squares, plazas and parks. He also visited the Temporary Museum of Totalitarian Art in a Moscow park, which is now called the "Park of the Museon."²¹ Photographs such as The Studio (Fig. 20), After the Fall (Fig. 21) and On the Monuments of the Republic II illustrate the less than monumental state these Communist statues had been reduced to.²² Once standing menacingly tall in all their glory, these statues were now reduced to the disgraced objects of a regime that had failed. As Kanan Makiya so truthfully describes in his study on monuments in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, "the mighty fall hardest."²³

Mark Lewis' career over the last two decades has focused primarily on a profound investigation of systems of representation and specific historical moments, as for example the fall of communism. His interest with public art and public space has been articulated in various art magazines and his affiliation with Toronto's Public Access provided an opportunity for his theories to flourish. In the early 1980's, Lewis' work was primarily

photography based. It is through these first works that Lewis began using the photographic medium as a way of criticizing the modes of representation in our society. By the early 90's, he had moved on to a profound investigation of public art and monuments, particularly those of the former Soviet Union. As Robert Darcey Nichols suggests in From Monuments to Cinema: the question of the counter-monument in two works by Mark Lewis: "Here, the issues surrounding a post-communist 'new world order', -the re-evaluation of socialist ideals as well as the removal of images of those involved in said history- are examined in regards to the role of ideology within the cultural landscape of both East and West." ²⁴

Lewis' focus then shifted to cinema as the critical medium through which he examines representations of political power in both capitalist and socialist societies. From 1991 to 1993, in collaboration with Laura Mulvey, Lewis produced the film, Disgraced Monuments, which documented the iconoclastic movement in Eastern block countries after the downfall of communism. They combined old footage from the unveilings of countless memorials to both Lenin and Stalin, with contemporary footage of the destruction of similar memorials. They also interviewed critics, sculptors and curators who denounced this destruction and brought forth a deeper criticism: how was this destruction any different from what the Soviets used to do? As Louis Menashe argues in his criticism of the film, "a healthy national consciousness calls for an honest confrontation with its past, not its obliteration." ²⁵

What is most important to note for the purposes of this study is how these new post-communist nations were, as Dario Gamboni describes them, "land[s] of empty pedestals." ²⁶ They were lands of pedestals dedicated to absence. The empty pedestal

could thus perhaps be regarded as the new symbol of democracy. Playing along these themes, Lewis created What Is To Be Done, a one third plaster replica of a statue of Lenin removed from Bucharest's Piata Scinteli in 1989, after the fall of Ceausescu's government. What Is To Be Done was exhibited in Oxford, England in 1990, in Quebec City in 1990, in front of the Power Plant Gallery in Toronto in 1991 and in Montreal's Park Lafontaine in 1991. Accompanying the statue was a plaque attached to its wooden plinth which read:

This statue is a one third plaster replica of a twelve ton bronze statue recently removed from the city of Bucharest. An anonymous collector has purchased the statue from the mayor of Bucharest and would like to donate it for public display in this city. This is the proposed site for the statue.²⁷

Some of the statues, as in Toronto for example, were also accompanied by a mound of flowers which spelled out, "let everything be temporary", the very words Lenin used to describe the nature of the materials to be used for the monuments commemorating the first May Day celebrations in 1918.²⁸

In Montreal, the work was exhibited at the same time that Lewis' text, of the same title, was published in the art magazine Parachute, and while four of his photographs were being shown at the Dazibao Gallery. His work in Montreal can thus be regarded as a sort of non traditional triptych, as Lise Lamarche describes it, exhibited in three different "public spaces": an art magazine, a gallery and a park.²⁹ However it was his statue in park Lafontaine that received the most attention and its meaning as a work of public art is quite different on its own than when it is studied with respect to other parts of the so called triptych.

Mark Lewis' Lenin was not particularly well received by the diverse public who encountered it in the three Canadian cities. Only in Oxford did it survive undisturbed. In

Quebec City it was toppled. In Toronto, it suffered a broken nose, a shattered right leg and, as Lorenzo Buj describes it, "a spray paint attack that left a red hammer and sickle across its chest."³⁰ In Montreal, it was attacked so that the statue leaned dangerously to the front about to fall off its plinth, a position reminiscent of Lewis' photograph On the Monuments of the Republic II, and finally disappeared altogether only a few days after its installation.

Why was Lewis' work so badly received? While Lewis did in fact anticipate a certain amount of defacement to his statue, the extent of the reactions it actually provoked were quite surprising. In Toronto in July of 1991, Lewis' Lenin was installed on the south lawn of the Power Plant Gallery, gazing out onto Lake Ontario. After generating much controversy and having sustained numerous vandal attacks, the fate of the work was discussed during a forum held on the 7th of August, which was open to the general public and included art officials and representatives of the gallery. More pressing issues with respect to public art, such as the artist's freedom of expression in a democracy, and the function of public monuments with regards to both public will and state authority, were also addressed, but many people, however, argued that Lewis was wasting public funds and felt the work was an insensitive reminder to all of those who had suffered under the Soviet regime. One speaker, in particular, was outraged and insulted that the gallery and the curator would exhibit such an abomination.³¹

In Montreal, citizens complained to the mayor of the city on different grounds. Lewis' Lenin was installed directly across from Roger Langevin's Debout: Monument à Félix Leclerc (Fig. 22) erected in the fall of 1990. Leclerc's statue, a work by a Québécois sculptor to commemorate one of Quebec's most popular heroes, and later purchased by

the Movement National des Québécois, was a very political act in itself. Leclerc was not only a poet and songwriter but was also an adamant supporter of an independent Quebec. Langevin's work, while it was well received by the majority of the local population because of its subject matter, was not that well received by the Montreal artistic community. Because it was similar in artistic style to monuments from the former Soviet Union, critics, like Lysianne Gagnon for instance, commented that Langevin's work was an example of displaced social realism.³² Lise Lamarche remarks that Anglophone journalists refused to comment on the work for fear of attacking such a prominent Québécois figure.³³

Lewis' work was therefore seen as creating a dialogue between the two figures because of their placement vis-à-vis each other, and many felt that Lewis was not only drawing attention to the close artistic styles of the two statues, but was also insinuating that Leclerc, like Lenin, was a totalitarian. Interestingly, the Soviet consulate was also quite upset with the work and, as Lorenzo Buj explains, had unsuccessfully petitioned the mayor for its removal as "an insult to Lenin".³⁴

Installed on February 10th 1991, after a rather strange inauguration ceremony that, according to Claire Gravel, involved the playing of the Marxist Revolutionary hymn on a loudspeaker and two individuals wearing insignia from the Marxist-Leninist party saluting the statue,³⁵ Lewis' Lenin was stolen just a few days later, leaving only an empty pedestal. The empty pedestal, here, begs us to question if, in this context, it may also be a symbol of democracy? Johanne Lamoureux Buj suggests in "Mark Lewis and the Pollution of Monuments" how in view of this image of the empty pedestal, it may be relevant to note Claude Lefort's observation (along with Rosalyn Deutsche's) on power and "how it is

linked , in its ‘democratic moment’, to the ‘image of an empty place.’”³⁶

In Montreal, the statue, on its own, presented the viewer with a political figure who symbolized a despotic and totalitarian regime. It seemed out of place in the democratic West, especially in a liberal country like Canada, yet it highlighted the tolerant nature of our society. Without artistic censorship for such political statements, artists like Mark Lewis are free to commemorate and represent what they like, urging the public to find outlets to express their own political and artistic opinions. Since the mayor did not react to the complaints against the work, someone decided to take matters in his or her own hands, stealing the statue, leaving behind an empty pedestal. While the whereabouts of Lewis’ Lenin are still unknown today, we need to question if its theft was purely a “meaningless” action, a prank, whereby Lenin may be hiding out in a fraternity house or residing among the gnomes and other creatures of someone’s garden, or if its disappearance presents a much more meaningful act and form of socio-political criticism.

Returning to Habermas and his discussion of the public sphere, we see that Lewis’ work functioned within the particular confines of the public sphere. He created the possibility of an interaction between his work and its audience: an interaction that was highly political in nature. His choice of subject matter and the genre of art, the monument, were key aspects of his production and adhered specifically to the events of the time. While monuments of the communist regime were being destroyed all over Eastern Europe, Lewis brought both the monument and communist propaganda home with him to Canada. Although many art historians and critics saw his statues as a humorous yet meaningful critique of contemporary public art practices in general, other people were quite disturbed by them and felt compelled to vandalize them.

Mark Lewis has been very outspoken with respect to the nature and evolution of public art. Its very location outside of the museum setting means that these works of public art have the possibility of being confronted by people for whom, according to Lewis, the “experience of a work of art is an alien concern.”³⁷ As such, public art must commit itself to specific interests: whether they be religious, community, political or corporate. However for the artist to privilege any of these interests above the making of a work of art would immediately discredit the work as art in the first place. For him art should have neither “a priori obligation” nor any interests and this is what makes the current practice of public art so problematic for him. As he has said: "This, then, goes to the very heart of the problem I have with the current ‘belief’ in public art: while there may be a belief in some sense of publicness, it is certainly not a belief in art." ³⁸

Therefore, for Lewis, the only real form of public art that fits into this mainstream definition of public art is the monument.³⁹ The monument fulfills a clear and particular function: a function Lewis described as being essential to the mainstream definition of public art. Lewis’ choice of this art form was therefore done as a conscious effort to draw attention to our own forms of public art and the representations of power and culture in our society. As James Patten explains in his review of the work, Lewis did not create What Is To Be Done to discredit historical leaders but to question our own notions of public art.⁴⁰

Commemorating a historical leader who many people felt was a totalitarian and head of a despotic regime, Lewis' work was primarily viewed by the “general public” in terms of its subject matter. Any artistic merit the work may have had was overshadowed

by its subject matter. It thus functioned in the same way as Roger Langevin's monument to Félix Leclerc. As Lise Lamarche has argued, precisely the same aspects are at play in Langevin's work as in Lewis' only operating in opposite ways: Félix Leclerc does not allow us to see Langevin's work.⁴¹ The artistic quality of the work or lack thereof, as many art critics have described it, has gone, in large part, unnoticed because of the subject matter. However, Langevin's work avoids the usual criticism in newspaper articles and popular media not only because of his choice of subject matter but also because of its timing.

It is important to consider the socio-political context of Montreal and Quebec at the time. The early 1990's were a highly unstable time in Quebec politics. The rise of the sovereignty movement was reaching its peak and the decisive referendum on whether Quebec would at last separate from Canada, was only a few years away. The political momentum was thus in Langevin's favor and it allowed the aesthetic weakness of his work to, for the most part, go unchallenged.

What Lewis' work suggests, according to Lamarche, is in fact a re-evaluation of Langevin's work and of our own notions of public art.⁴² Lewis' Lenin points out the fragile nature heroic figures possess and the difficulty of agreeing, socially, on which figures to commemorate.⁴³ Félix Leclerc's statue could just as easily have suffered the same fate as Lewis' Lenin had it been installed in English Canada or perhaps even English Montreal. Similarly, Lewis' work, installed in a park in the eastern and predominantly French speaking part of the city and made by an Anglophone artist, may have had a longer stay had it been installed in a more western and English neighborhood. This shift from a political reading of the work on a global scale (communism versus

capitalism) to that on a local scale (provincial versus federal) shows us how the very location of monuments and their historical context can alter the meaning of a work in a colossal way. These monuments, taken out of their initial context, face the same challenges their counterparts face when the regime that produced them topples. Overtly political works, like for example a statue of Lenin, very often do not survive these shifts in consciousness and changes in politics and ideologies precisely because of what they represent. They remain a marker of the old and the rejected and as such become the focus of a certain socio-political re-evaluation.

What Is To Be Done clearly illustrates this process. Taken out of its original setting and transported to the streets of the capitalist West, we see that a statue of Lenin not only represents what has already been rejected here, but becomes a tool in a re-evaluation of our own socio-political concerns or of the material representations of these concerns. We can understand therefore, that the choice of site for Lewis' work was not pure chance or naiveté but rather was done to question and criticize the erection of monuments in public spaces.

This site-specific aspect of Lewis' work has particularly interested Johanne Lamoureux. By examining the indirect repercussions of site-specific artworks, she has come to study Lewis' art as a re-evaluation of the idea of site-specificity and as a critique of the works that fall under this banner.⁴⁴ In What Is To Be Done, Lewis questioned not only mainstream definitions of public art, but also allowed one to look at current definitions of the site, and its reification as an absolute artistic value. We need to ask, therefore, under what conditions are statues tolerated in public spaces and what kinds of behavior do these statues elicit from us?

Images of Lenin have appeared regularly in the West: in the media, in the classroom and even in the museum. Within these confines, these images have been fairly apolitical and their purposes, whether informational or educational, have justified their undisturbed survival. Lewis' attempt to extend the parameters of the museum out into the public realm of the public sphere is precisely what has left him open to attacks.

Monuments, as Andrew Payne argues, are profoundly anti-democratic:

The monument brings into view, in the form of the figure and for the benefit of a public whose privileged representative it claims to be, an idea of the Good Life which is both particular and permanent, that the very idea which the modern liberal state, with its rigorously formal ratification of competing interests, has expunged.⁴⁵

The monument acts as a reminder of a person, event or moment in history. It serves a commemorative function and as such contributes to the creation of history. In his study of the monument, Alois Riegl explains how every work of art is “at once and without exception a historical monument because it represents a specific stage in the development of the visual arts.”⁴⁶ He continues by explaining that every historical monument is also an art monument, and that the “differentiation of ‘artistic’ and ‘historical’ monuments is inappropriate because the latter at once contains and suspends the former.”⁴⁷ As such, monuments contribute to historical discourses and work in shaping the construction of particular histories.

However as Patricia Phillips explains in “Making Memories”, this sense of an “official history”, an approved preordained process of recollection, is in fact false.⁴⁸ She suggests that we need to analyze the different perspectives on to the past in order to formulate new questions that reassess fundamental ideas regarding the ownership and articulation of histories.

In Europe and the People Without History, Eric Wolf explains how the discipline of history is socially and culturally constructed and often leads to false conceptions of reality. The way history has been taught is, according to Wolf, very problematic as it focuses on the concept of different nations, societies and cultures as disconnected, static things. As such, the study of history becomes very misleading because it is seen as a moral success story, a “race in time in which each runner of the race passes on the torch of liberty to the next relay.”⁴⁹ Wolf continues by arguing that “history is thus converted into a tale about the furtherance of virtue, about how the virtuous win over the bad guys” and if “history is the working out of a moral purpose in time, then those who lay claim to that purpose are by that fact the predilect agents of history.”⁵⁰ The people in positions of power therefore hold the authority to tell stories and to write histories.

In this respect, we can apply Gramsci’s concept of hegemony in the sense that the history is written from inside the dominant ideology and holds its authority and power because it is controlled and approved by the dominant class. As Roger Simon explains in Gramsci’s Political Thought: an Introduction, “hegemony is a relation, not of domination by means of force, but of consent by means of political and ideological leadership.”⁵¹ As Simon states in his discussion, Lenin understood hegemony to be a useful strategy for revolution, one that the working class should adopt to win the support of the majority. As such, hegemony can be seen as a relation between classes and other social forces. However Gramsci complicated Lenin’s approach by urging it to consider the practices of the capitalist class, to gain state power and maintain that power once it has been achieved.⁵² Hegemony is thus exercised through both institutions and ideas; it is achieved not only through force but also through the control of knowledge.

By the control of knowledge and access to it, we see how history is constructed and how certain discourses are maintained. What becomes important is how history exists in the dominant spaces of the state and the ruling class. This becomes problematic however, because although the discipline of history realizes its shortcomings and biases, this fact is given little attention outside of academic fields, and many people within the general public still view history as the ultimate bearer of truth. David Lowenthal clearly argues in “History and Memory”:

Yet though historians realize that history always attenuates the truth, beyond academe this deficiency is little known or largely denied. The public trusts the past’s faithful retrieval of dispassionate, infallible historians [...]. But their disavowals fail to dispel popular faith in history as truth’s ultimate arbiter.⁵³

Hence it becomes clear that commemorative art in the strict sense contributes to this sense of “History”. It penetrates a society’s cultural memory and acts of a reminder of that which should not be forgotten. In totalitarian regimes, such as those in Eastern Europe before the downfall of communism, monuments represented the power of the state and imposed an “official” and preordained process of recollection. They stood above the masses and acted as a constant reminder of those who were in power. They represented the very leaders who ignored individual freedom and suppressed the plurality of voices which are so key to the very definition of a free and democratic society. By creating a work that expressed all of these aspects, Lewis challenged not only the concept of public space in the West but also the very foundation of democracy. His gesture, highly political in nature, provoked not only a reaction with respect to the articulation of history and the act of commemoration, but begged the Canadian public to re-evaluate the very nature of its so called democratic public spaces and of the use of representation in these spaces.

That Lewis represented a figure who symbolized a political regime which has long been rejected by the Capitalist West furthers the Canadian public's inability to relate to the work. In the West, Lenin's image in history books and in the media for example, represents a totalitarian organization of the public sphere, a monumental art project dedicated to the "Party". State commissioned public art in Eastern Europe was a way of organizing and controlling social spaces and by bringing these Soviet figures into the capitalist West, Lewis challenged our own beliefs of "free" and public spaces. Statues of Lenin were seen by Westerners as vehicles of propaganda and of the ideological domination of the masses. Hence, Lenin's immigration into the "democratic" public sphere via the work of Mark Lewis brings forth a comparison between capitalist and communist projects of public art in general, unveiling a similarity in the ways that politics are aestheticized in both East and West.

As discussed previously, the official commissioning of public art in Western nations served to bring coherence, rationality and order to public spaces. It operated to ensure the control and maintenance of public spaces by those in power. In a more general discussion of public art, Lewis has himself remarked that the possibility of an aesthetic experience in the late twentieth century city is somewhat limited and if it exists at all, it does so only in the most tangential and inconsequential forms.⁵⁴ Lewis argues that while De Certeau and the Situationists identified aesthetic experiences as the practices of everyday life, such as a pedestrian's movement as he or she navigates through the urban environment, we need to question if these kinds of ordinary movements really count as significant aesthetic experiences. In terms of public art then, Lewis suggests, with response to De Certeau's argument, that what is being proposed is "less an aesthetic *of*,

and more an aesthetic *for* the public realm- a sort of last minute add on, that unwittingly acknowledges the increasing failure of the so called public realm to entertain the possibility of an aesthetic experience.”⁵⁵ As such, public art functioned to meet specific interests, and the work of art needed to attend to, what Lewis calls, “accountability”. Because the work of public art is installed in a public space, where people have their history, it needs to respond to that history and to the place where it is installed; the people who inhabit those public spaces should have the right to determine the space’s aesthetic organization. As Lewis suggests however:

While it would be difficult to argue, *inter alia*, against that right [...] we might want to know how these rights are to be adjudicated and represented. And, further, what kind of occupation would determine if one person’s stake in that adjudication was more immediate, more pressing than anyone else’s? It is worth remembering that accountability, historically mandated by the state through and by its various national and local interests, gave to us the commemorative monument. Today, with accountability still the test of much public art, we risk being the grateful recipients of even more monuments, ‘democratic’ monuments perhaps, but monuments all the same.⁵⁶

Andrew Payne has drawn a similarity between Marcel Duchamp’s ready-mades and Lewis’ plaster replicas, insisting that it is their “ugliness” or “banality” that provides a “privileged occasion for exercising the subject-system’s power of aestheticization.”⁵⁷

While Duchamp’s works addressed issues of commodity, mass production and the work of art in capitalist societies, Lewis’ work deals with opposing, as Payne suggests, the rationality of the art system and a public sphere whose organization is based on capital and the money system. It is precisely this which prompted Lewis to install What Is To Be Done in the “democratic” public sphere, on the border of aesthetics and politics, the spaces of which are believed to be functionally differentiated in the West.⁵⁸ This aspect lies at the very heart of the work’s effectiveness.

The idea behind monumental public art is that it can exist in public spaces while remaining unreadable and inconsequential. As Andrew Payne argues, Alois Riegl’s study

of the monument suggests exactly this premise: the effect of the monument relies on its ability to remain by its ubiquity and authority, invisible and unreadable.⁵⁹ How many times have we passed monuments in our environments and aside from acknowledging their physical presence as occupiers of a given space, ignored their subject matter or meaning completely? Lewis' work sheds light on this very aspect of monumentality.

What is so interesting about the vandalism of Lewis' work is the fact that the work itself clearly addressed its viewers, almost to the point of provoking them to take action. The title of the work, posed as a question, is the first characteristic which draws on the acknowledgement of a viewer, no matter who that viewer may be. The title is taken from a pamphlet written by Lenin from autumn 1901 to February 1902 entitled: What is to Be Done: burning questions for our movement.⁶⁰ Here Lenin addresses the political ambitions of the Social Democrat movement and touches on a variety of questions with respect to the contemporary socio-political situation. Lenin's pamphlet is a call for action: if you don't like the conditions under which you live then he asks, what are you going to do about it. Similarly, the title of Lewis' work asks us the same question: if we as viewers do not like what we see, then what are we going to do about it?

This pragmatic function is further emphasized by other characteristics of the work.

First, the plaque accompanying the statue which explained that Lewis' work was only a proposal for the "real" statue that would occupy the site in the future was a way to discredit the importance of Lewis' Lenin. Second, the reduction in both size and the quality of the material (from bronze to plaster) conveys a certain loss of authority and a loss of "aura" as Walter Benjamin would describe it:

The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced [...] And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object. One might subsume the eliminated element in the term “aura” and go on to say: that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of a work of art.⁶¹

Third, the mound of flowers, which accompanied the statue in Toronto for example, spelling out “let everything be temporary”, refers to the impermanence and ultimately the removal of the statue.⁶² We need to question here the very issue of the temporality of the work. While Lewis’ work was only a proposal for the statue that would eventually occupy the site, we should consider if a statue of Lenin would really have been installed here on a permanent basis, what reactions would it have provoked. Would these be similar to those elicited by Lewis’ Lenin?

These factors seemed to provoke a deliberate reaction in the viewers; one that Lewis seems to have anticipated. In his text “What is to be Done?” Lewis argues that: “Insofar as they (the publics) are acting on that desire (to have a say in the semiotics of “their” public space), we could tentatively say that the attempts to remove and smash certain works of art are as much part of the project of public art as the discrete objects themselves.”⁶³ Although Lewis was discussing the fate of Soviet monuments after the fall of communism, these observations seem to present universal truths. While the vandalism and theft of Lewis’ Lenin did not hold the same symbolic significance as the Lenin statues being destroyed in Eastern Europe, it none the less shines a light on the very nature of monumentality and public space. Lewis explains, however, how these acts of destruction are “inscribed within the works as a potential from the moment that they are commissioned and publicly installed.”⁶⁴ As such, “the work’s installation and destruction share the same economy.”⁶⁵ From the very beginning then, Lewis knew that his work had

the potential to be vandalized and destroyed.

Johanne Lamoureux has used the term “extreme affect” in discussing Lewis’ work. She states that What Is To Be Done has the *effect* of producing a strong destructive *affect* in the viewer. Here it is useful to turn to psychoanalysis. Used initially by Freud, affect derives from the German word *affekt* and refers to an emotional state manifested by some sort of violent discharge whether it be psychic, physical, immediate, delayed etc.. Freud argued that affects were the manifestations of drives, which belonged to the domain of the unconscious and could thus never be consciously known. However, drives transform themselves into symptoms in the conscious realm by some sort of psychic process and these drives manifest themselves emotionally via an affect. Works of art have the ability to provoke affects in the viewer, whether they are devotional for example or destructive as in the case of What Is To Be Done.

This very relationship between work and viewer is of paramount importance in What Is To Be Done. In “Questioning the Public”, Lamoureux offers a dialogical model by which we can understand this relationship. The work of art, or in her analysis the speaker, sends a message or intertext to the viewer or listener. It goes without saying that the public or listener in this case has a share in the intertext and the intertext thus becomes “the locus of an ambiguous rendez vous between the speaker and listener, the real ground of the dialogical construction of meaning.”⁶⁶ Furthermore, it is almost inescapable that what is received does not coincide exactly with what has initially been formulated. As such, we see that Lewis’ intentions with regards to What Is To Be Done may have been solely to draw attention to our own notions of public art and the conditions in which it is exhibited, perhaps by creating a dialogue between the already existing statues with which

his Lenin was to share the public space. Indeed as both Andrew Payne and James Patten suggest, Lewis does not deny that his statues were made with these responses in mind and he did in fact anticipate some form of defacement to his Lenins.⁶⁷ As Patten explains, Lewis “calls vandalism a natural dialogue between the monuments and the people for whom they were ostensibly created.”⁶⁸ However the actual responses were quite harsh and have drawn new meanings from the work, responses that eventually caused its destruction and ultimately its disappearance.

If we return to the case of the monument, we can clearly point out its political and often propagandistic function. It is the marker of an event, a place or a "heroic" figure, commissioned by a group or community to serve their own needs and to work to their advantage. Lewis argues in his article "What Is To Be Done", that monuments are installed as producers of identification and memory.⁶⁹ Monuments function as historical landmarks of a given order, even if they are commemorating a figure that is not "political" in the proper sense as for example a songwriter or artist, because is it not after all the state that installs or permits the installation of public works of art. This brings us back to Habermas and the public sphere, which for him was the place in which mediation between the state and society occurred. It was the milieu in which private individuals gathered to form public opinion. Is it not however, the opinion of but a privileged few? As Deutsche argues, the public sphere cannot be fully inclusive or accessible to everyone and conflict, division and instability are the very conditions of its existence.⁷⁰ Hence, we need to question how public this art of the public domain really is. Whose interests are being represented? Where are the voices of the excluded and marginal groups of society?

In the case of Montreal, the city gave permission to Mark Lewis and the Dazibao

Gallery to install the statue in Park Lafontaine. An article in Le Devoir, a Quebecois newspaper, comments on the city's involvement with Lewis' work:

Contrairement à ce qui est inscrit sur le socle, la Ville de Montréal n'a pas acheté cette copie de la statue déboulonnée à Bucarest l'an dernier. Mais la ville s'est prêtée de bonne grâce à cette mascarade, faisant ainsi un pied de nez à l'autre partie du Parc qui appartient toujours aux Forces Armées Canadiennes.⁷¹

In this article, Claire Gravel, the journalist, suggests that the city's motives in allowing Lewis to exhibit his work in this particular place were political and orchestrated to their benefit. The Canadian Armed Forces presence in Montreal was for a long time not very highly regarded and was seen as a symbol of federal power and the lingering English monarchy. During the Second World War, many Québécois people opposed Canada's involvement in the war and refused the draft.

This aspect is evidence of the language conflict and the ongoing political hostility between provincial and federal organizations. In the early 1990's, Mayor Jean Doré and his Citizen's movement had strong separatist inclinations, and it is therefore interesting to examine possible motives for their permission of the installation of Lewis' work on this particular site. Were they hoping to draw attention to the Canadian Armed Forces presence in the Park, insinuating that they are a totalitarian army led by the federal government? Or rather were they pledging allegiance with a political figure and regime with which the federal government was in opposition? Or still, were they simply unconcerned about the subject matter and granting Lewis artistic freedom of expression? Since the media, the artistic and local community saw the installation of Lenin as an attack on Leclerc, maybe we need to re-evaluate its meaning as shifting with respect to its entire surroundings and question its vandalism and theft as a military ambush and not a separatist one? While I am definitely not trying to play detective, I am attempting to

explore the different meanings Lewis' work may have taken depending on the point of view of the audience. By the very conditions of its exhibition, Lewis' statue was probably viewed by a whole variety of people with different backgrounds.

The "public" here was not a monolithic, homogenous group of people, but was rather made up of different social classes, ethnic origins and education levels. Park Lafontaine is not only a short cut between Rachel and Sherbrooke street, but is also a place for ice skating, hockey playing, cross country skiing and many other activities. However it also attracts, like many parks in the city do, a variety of characters that hang out, smoke drugs, drink and basically just loiter about.

In this light, it is useful to return to De Certeau and his view on the city and power. De Certeau argued that the city's constant will to administer, control and survey does exactly the opposite. It allows power to proliferate in a number of different places, outside of the city's grasp and all encompassing "panoramic" view:

Beneath the discourses that ideologize the city, the ruses and combinations of power that have no readable identity proliferate; without points where one can take hold of them, without rational transparency, they are impossible to administer.⁷²

By exhibiting his work in the "uncontrolled" environment of the public space, Lewis did not secure its safety. Since there was no security guard there to tell the public not to come too close to the work, Lewis' Lenin was vulnerable to a series of museum "faux pas" but also to a series of attacks. We see then that power emerges in many various "underground" forms, outside of the city's mechanism of control. The threat of punishment or legal prosecution are at times not efficient methods of prevention against destruction and vandalism, the city thus failing in its effort to regulate and oppress any forms of deviant behavior. Acts of vandalism on public art present a way to express

one's right to decide the aesthetic organization of their spaces. Public art is imposed on a space and on a public: it is an imposition and a trespass on the "public's" territory. As Dario Gamboni explains in The Destruction of Art, while many vandal attacks on art have been slightly neurotic, the majority have been justified by particular reasons and causes. It is thus important to move away from the stereotypical idea of vandalism being, as Gamboni describes it, "a motiveless action: senseless, wanton, random and meaningless."⁷³ Gamboni explains that the very term "vandalism" which has been used "to designate these actions, postulates that they cannot be explained, and has come to deny all specificity to the degradations of works of art, as compared with that of public telephones, for example."⁷⁴ As we have seen, the public work of art imposes itself on an audience and on a territory, and as such represents a form of ideological domination of a majority by an elite minority. Hence the vandalism of public art can be understood as a form of "social protest" and as a way for the public to have a say on what should occupy "their" space. As Gamboni suggests this vandalism may be seen as "illegitimate ways of appropriating the 'public realm' or of resisting and denouncing an authoritative occupation or management of it."⁷⁵

As discussed previously, the theft of Lewis' Lenin has left behind an empty pedestal; a possible symbol of democracy and power. As Johanne Lamoureux observes, however, it is highly unlikely that the empty pedestals in former Soviet countries will remain empty for long. Already, she remarks, Peter the Great, Stalin's counter-model, has been making a huge comeback. She argues that "it is as if, by erecting another absolutist effigy, one could ward off the conviction that empty pedestals are actually not empty, but indeed, haunted pedestals from which the former figure continues to hold sway and

threaten.”⁷⁶

As such, we need to ask whether if in the West, a pedestal could remain empty. Lewis’ work was only a temporary installation, exhibited for one month, and as such does not provide us with a proper answer. We need to look at this vacancy in its democratic moment as being linked to this image of power. The empty pedestal then, is not only a symbol of democracy, but also one of power; the power of the diverse public to have a say in what is allowed to occupy “their” space. The vandalism and ultimately the theft of Lewis’ Lenin can therefore be seen as a gesture of power and agency. The empty pedestal, this void in the middle of the city, could thus perhaps present a form of resistance to the cultural appropriation of “neutral” space by politics, art and ideology. It is important for the art world to question the critical relevance these attacks on Lewis’ Lenins have had. It is noteworthy to examine the degradation and destruction of works of art and to understand these responses as part and parcel of the artistic process. Lewis has himself seen the critical importance these acts of destruction and defacement possess and has developed his practice accordingly.

The disappearance of Lewis’ Lenin in Montreal still remains unsolved, its whereabouts a mystery. The controversy surrounding Lewis’ work and the particular outcome show us how ambiguous and problematic the idea of “public” art really is. Why are certain works tolerated in public spaces while others are not?

The history of public art has been, since the French Revolution, one of iconoclasm and vandalism. Because public art operates in the public sphere, a political environment, it must survive shifts in consciousness, and changes in politics and ideologies. Works of art

are representative of the time and order under which they were produced and are often incapable of responding to social, cultural or political changes, and thus remain markers of the old, the hated and the rejected. As Lewis explains, in times of social crisis, as a revolution or a social uprising, the symbolic realm, of which public art is part, becomes the subject of a certain re-evaluation. This re-evaluation may take on various forms, of which the degradation, destruction and removal of public art works are among the most popular. However their demise is as much a part of their history as their erection. As Andrew Payne so truthfully explains: “For the statue, no less than the king it so typically represents, is never more awesome in its representative capacities than in the moment of its demise.”⁷⁷

3. Contested Spaces: Robert Prenovault's Les Territoires Simultanés.

In the summer of 1993, Robert Prenovault installed Les Territoires Simultanés on a vacant lot on St. Laurent Boulevard in the heart of downtown Montreal. While Prenovault's work was not as overtly political as Lewis' statue of Lenin, it none the less suffered defacement and vandalism at the hands of the public who encountered it, and it highlighted the fragile border between private and public space. Exhibited from May until September of 1993, Les Territoires Simultanés provoked a series of public interventions which ultimately altered the work itself and in a way turned it into a performance piece. By constantly adding graffiti inscriptions, covering parts of it with posters and advertisements or adding foreign objects, the public became an active participant in the exhibition of the work, and had a stake in the management and appropriation of this public space. By first looking at a chronology of the events which unfolded with respect to the work, I will discuss how its very location compromised its safety and left it vulnerable to a series of attacks. Furthermore by going back to theories on space, public art and the city, this chapter will suggest that works like these bring to light the ways in which public art occupies "public spaces" and the implications of this occupation. Finally I will discuss its vandalism as a way in which the public negotiated their political and cultural management of space and reclaimed their territory.

On a vacant lot on St. Laurent Boulevard, just South of Prince Arthur, between the Toronto Dominion Bank and a discotheque, Robert Prenovault installed what at first glance appeared to be a construction palisade painted lime green with peep holes cut into

it (Fig. 23).¹ This palisade housed an uprooted tree trunk, cast in concrete from a live tree, and on top of which Prenovault installed steel reinforcing bars (Fig. 24). The artist also planted some wild plants from his own garden inside this bizarre structure.² A few feet away, leaning against a wall, he installed a seated figure, also cast in concrete and which he entitled Self Portrait (Fig. 25).³

This installation was in place from May 5th until September 5th 1993 on St. Laurent Boulevard, one of the principal streets of Montreal. St. Laurent, a sort of spinal cord of the city, dividing it into east/west and English/ French, is home to numerous businesses, shops, restaurants, night clubs, bars and residences. Known for its vibrant atmosphere, this street has been characterized by its cultural, economic and ethnic diversity. Summer is an especially lively time here, with the numerous festivals, parties and outdoor events (some planned, some more spontaneous). It is in this climate that Prenovault's work was subjected to a number of public interventions, carried out over its four month stay on the Main.

By mid-May, the public had already left its mark on the work; a pack of cigarettes and a pair of women's shoes littered the inside of the palisade. By June, the sitting figure's head had been coloured in completely with black crayon and someone had amusingly drawn genital organs on the figure, providing him with a sex (Fig. 26). On June 16th 1993, the Fringe Festival took over the lot and the installation was barely visible behind the throngs of people, musicians, street vendors and performers. The palisade was completely covered in graffiti and advertisements, leaving only a few visible patches of its original lime green colouring (Fig. 27). Wild plants sprouted inside the palisade and the human figure remained seated against the wall, silently observing the

lot that spread out in front of him. Small rocks and pebbles were placed in his hands like offerings.⁴

By August, people had trespassed inside the palisade, where according to Prenovault they had spontaneous and impromptu parties, trampling most of the wild plants, leaving only a few tall weeds.⁵ A number of chairs, which a bar was throwing out, were installed in a circle around the human figure, giving him, as Jacqueline Mathieu describes it, an unexpected audience.⁶ Pauline Morier recounts how an unknown man stood on one of the chairs one night and gave a speech in front of the statue.⁷ A few days later, most of the chairs were either burned or broken. On September 5th 1993, the installation was dismantled: as the first board was removed from the palisade, the contrast between the little corner of greenery inside the structure and the gravelled lot was striking (Fig. 28). By the end of the day, no trace of the installation remained as per the agreement with the Toronto Dominion Bank who owned the lot.⁸

The choice of site, in this case, played a paramount role in the way the work was received by the public. By discussing some of the key points mentioned in chapter one with respect to site-specificity, it will become clear that Prenovault's installation site offers a very interesting dimension in the discussion of the vandalism of Les Territoires Simultanés.

Les Territoires Simultanés was a project done in conjunction with Articule gallery in Montreal and with the permission of the Toronto Dominion Bank to use one of their properties as the installation site.⁹ Situated on one of the busiest streets of downtown Montreal, the lot did not only provide a short cut between St. Laurent and Clark Street but could also be seen as a “neglected” and unofficial “useless” space. In “Another

Pavement, Another Beach: Skateboarding and the Performative Critique of Architecture”, Iain Borden describes Henri Lefebvre’s concept of “zero degree” spaces. Here he refers to the forgotten and left over spaces of modernist town planning, of architecture and of late capitalism. These spaces, such as traffic islands or deserted spaces in the middle of the city, acquire a sort of “spatial degree zero”, as Lefebvre refers to them: they exist outside of the rational, ordered and homogenous “abstract space” of capitalism. They are the spaces of everyday life, the public space of the streets where, as Borden explains, “countercultural and counterspatial activities most readily take place as these are the spaces not yet dominated by high ideologies and the state.”¹⁰

The vacant lot of Les Territoires Simultanés would seem like prime real estate land, yet it remained empty for quite a while before it was finally transformed into a parking lot. While this is not an example of “spatial degree zero” in the strict sense, as the lot was not a left over or forgotten space of capitalist town planning, it nonetheless acquired a “degree zero” quality for three main reasons in my opinion.

First of all and most simply, it was a vacant gravelled lot, not that well maintained, with no benches, greenery or other aspects that would qualify it as an inviting public space where one could rest or take a brief pause from the traffic or mayhem of downtown living. Second, while its potential as prime real estate land was evident, the very fact that it remained vacant reflected the economic crisis the city and the province were facing. In the early nineties, the unstable political climate, the high unemployment rate, the lack of outside investments and the failing economy were shown in the lack of new constructions, the number of businesses for sale and the vacant spaces in the city.

Third, the lack of maintenance and beautification efforts gave the lot a neglected feel, suggesting a lack of value, and hence it was easily and conveniently appropriated by a variety of subordinate and marginal groups of society; it became the space of the homeless, the drunk, the drug user or any other character of modern urban life. While it was not a public space in the proper sense as it was owned by one of the most powerful forces of capitalism, a bank, it none the less presented an inviting and available space for those who did not wish to inhabit the “proper” spaces of capitalism and state domination. Similar to Gordon Matta-Clark’s project Fake Estates, in which he criticized the notions of property and ownership by purchasing at city auctions “left-over” parcels of land which had no value or potential for construction, Les Territoires Simultanés questions these very same notions of ownership, value and property.¹¹ Prenovault’s work shares the space of the homeless, the marginal, the expelled or the rebel; it challenges the very control of space and territory, and it imposes the art object, with all its preconceptions of “haute culture” and elitism onto one of the empty spaces of the contemporary city. It is therefore not surprising that this work suffered defacement and degradation at the hands of the very individuals who had appropriated this space as their own.

The plazas and city squares in which much of Montreal’s public art is situated present a highly symbolic and controlled atmosphere. They present the “abstract spaces” of capitalism or of De Certeau’s “concept city” in which meaning and symbolism are expressed and the dominant ideologies and powers of the state are maintained.¹²

The vacant lot on St. Laurent offered the possibility to insert new meaning onto a space where previously there was none, or to change and subvert its existing meaning. The vandalism of the artwork could therefore perhaps be understood not only as a way for

certain individuals to stake out their territory, but also it may present a fight by the unempowered and disenfranchised citizens of the city to map out a distinctive social space of their own. It also created circumstances, both spatial and temporal, in which such a mapping out could become visible.

Here, individuals were able to redefine space for themselves; even if it required the destruction of property and the vandalism of art. In a way then, Prenovault's work activated the site and became a locus for these tensions. The vandals and others who took part in the alteration of the work were laying claim to space both physically and intellectually. We need to question therefore who decides what is allowed to occupy "public" spaces and if, as Mark Lewis contends, public art must possess a function, then who determines what that function will be.¹³ In a review of the work, Donald Goodes suggests that:

by placing his work into an outdoor site- especially one which is an unofficial public space used for illicit pissing and drinking, or simply as a refuge from the flow of pedestrian traffic under the driving influence of Capitalism- Prenovault has inserted his statement into an already socially appropriated territory.¹⁴

Prenovault has himself remarked; "when posters cover the palisade, or a dozen women's shoes were thrown into it, or the portal screens are kicked in, it's a way for people to claim their territory with humour or aggression outside of the official venues."¹⁵

While the artist has said that the work was installed as an experiment, and he did encourage the "decoration" of his palisade with posters and other writings, the trampling of the plants inside and the destructive act of some of the interventions left him with conflicting emotions and feeling a little sorry.¹⁶ However, he remarks how art since the 1900s has taken a step away from being merely decorative and has rather more to do with an experimentation of the world both physically and emotionally. In this point in time, art

seems to be more about research than decoration. As Prenovault has himself explained by arranging this “experiment” in the urban setting of downtown Montreal, he has to be ready to accept all types of behaviours, not just the ones he wants but also the ones he does not.¹⁷ Research and experimentation, if it is to be done properly, needs to be open to all the possibilities and results, even the unanticipated ones.

If we return to the issue of site with respect to public art practices, we can recall how with the development of the practice of public art, site-specificity was no longer simply tied to the physical characteristics of a given site, but that the site could now be understood more in terms of its context and the people who would encounter it. As Miwon Kwon argues, the sites of public art can be redefined as discursive fields and while site can be a geographical location it can also refer to a network of social relations.¹⁸ In the case of Prenovault’s work, the site was framed architecturally by St. Laurent Boulevard, Clark Street, the TD bank and a discotheque. As such the vacant lot is the site for a network of relationships: between English and French, business and bohemia, rich and poor, immigrant and local, nature and city. Site can be seen as the locus for a dialogical relationship between the artist, the work of art and a larger public. However we need to see the power relations that emerge in this type of a dialogue.

The interventions and acts of vandalism articulate the social uses of the given space and a work of art installed here would have to be reconfigured and reworked to fit in. Through the public’s manipulation of the work, the meaning and impact of Les Territoires Simultanés has shifted. Annie Gérin argues in “*Maitres Chez Nous: Public Art and Linguistic Identity in Quebec*”, how public artworks often take on meanings not

intended by the artist, but indexical to the socio-political context in which they are exhibited. She states:

In this context, the index, the imprint of the everyday, includes art objects in a sort of dialogue, which constantly recreates them as the political and cultural situation evolves over time. While this condition might apply to all works of art, it is especially determinant with regards to public art. Because it is not cosseted by the institutional frame of the gallery, which tends to fix meaning within the narrative of a given history of art, public art simply cannot resist appropriation and regeneration.¹⁹

As such, we can argue that the way the public chose to intervene with respect to Les Territoires Simultanés offers the quality of a performance piece or a work in progress. By leaving the walls of his palisade bare, Prenovault allows the public to inscribe their own histories on it; here, individuals express their personal histories which are constantly being rewritten by the next intervention or act of vandalism. However, the word “simultanés” in the title, conveys simultaneity, a co-existence of different histories, and a plurality of voices.²⁰ It is through the vandalism of Prenovault’s installation that the unheard voices and personal histories of city dwellers are given a place on which to be remembered.

This last point ties in with the very function of public art. Public art is the medium through which national, civic or community identities can be constituted and a way in which history can be articulated. Even a non-commemorative work of art serves a historical function; it highlights not only the social, political and cultural context in which it was produced, but also uses a set of codes and narratives which works to stimulate meaning and memory. However, history and meaning are culturally produced and maintained through dominant ideologies. Hence, as Gérin notes, once vandalized, public art takes on the authority to direct meaning and memory in a different direction.²¹

By altering Prenovault’s work, the public inscribed it with new historical significance and meaning; here personal histories were expressed and identities were

established. Les Territoires Simultanés thus offered a medium through which both Prenovault and the public were able to affirm their identities, individual struggles and personal experiences. It was through these acts of vandalism that the public was able to undermine the power of cultural production as it is mapped out by the state and to challenge authority.

Without wanting to reduce these acts to the clichéd class struggles between bourgeoisie and proletariat, we none the less need to acknowledge that the vandalism may have been a way to wage frustration and conflicts. Exhibiting a work of art outside the museum setting, in the unprotected environment of the city streets, necessitates an understanding for the new spaces to which it must adapt. Not guarded by alarm systems, surveillance cameras and security guards, the public work of art is vulnerable to a series of different reactions and more importantly, attacks. Imposing itself in the “public” space of the city, the public work of art confronts viewers in an unplanned and often unwanted way. In this case, the work reconfigured the site physically by the installation of the palisade in the middle of the lot. As such, the users of this space had to re-establish their interaction with the site and adjust it to the size and physical presence of Prenovault’s work. These “involuntary viewers” were perhaps angered by this sculptural installation and felt that if they wanted to view works of art they would have gone to a museum. The problem with public art is that it imposes art on the people who frequent these spaces, people for whom the work of art may be an alien thing or for who the work of art is of no interest.

As Jean Philippe Uzel remarks, while the work of public art in the nineties no longer looked to “enlighten” the public to the experience of art but rather to provide a

solution adapted to the specific needs or problems of a particular community, it still imposed its aesthetic and “social” qualities on a varied and diverse public.²² Annie Gérin argues in “Art in Space: Public Art in an Expanding World”, that the structure of the modern city, with its urban grids and street names and its desire to contain cultural production, fails to create a homogenous and unchanging social space: “shared spaces constantly disseminate their meanings and forms, while themselves being endlessly transformed by their changing environment and users.”²³

We see therefore, that public art cannot exist in a clearly defined space or address a monolithic homogenous public, because social space is constantly changing and evolving outside of the city’s grasp and desire for administration and control. The functionalist view of society which emphasized unity and equilibrium fails to take into account the dynamic and unstable nature of society. Turning to conflict theories, we can understand that society is made up of a number of conflicting interests and that conflict and change are inevitable aspects of modern social systems. These changes and conflicts are seen as beneficial for conflict theorists since they argue that they can be liberating and progressive forces in society: it is through these competing and conflicting interests that old habits are broken down and customs and systems of power are challenged. As Michel De Certeau explains, beneath the discourses and ideologies that make up the city, points of power emerge and proliferate in various areas where they are impossible to administer.²⁴ We see then that power emerges in various “underground” forms, outside of the city’s mechanisms of control.

In the case of Les Territoires Simultanés, we see that the site may have played the most important role. While the work would have definitely had a different outcome had it

been installed in a gallery setting, the choice of site was crucial in an understanding of the acts of vandalism to which it was subjected. First and foremost, the vacant lot presented the public with what I have already suggested was a neglected and unofficial “useless” space. In a study of vandalism, Barry Webb argues that the built environment and the standard and speed of maintenance of this built environment are frequently cited as principal factors in influencing the levels of vandalism. Here he refers to the research of Leather and Matthews, who suggest that, “through inadequate maintenance, features of the built environment become seen as appropriate targets for vandalism” and that “if damage, which may result from normal wear and tear, is not repaired quickly, the object in question may become ‘thought of as an artefact upon which it is almost acceptable and permissible to inflict damage, or is considered to be dilapidated, and therefore useless, that it is completely destroyed or removed.’”²⁵

As such, we see that Prenovault’s work was installed in an environment that was already subjected to this neglect and damage, and hence it is only natural that his work would suffer a similar fate. Once the first acts of vandalism were carried out, the artist did not intervene and restore the work but rather he let the public take over. Prenovault even went so far as to encourage people to add posters to the palisade. He felt that this would record the cultural evolution of his work throughout its stay on the Main. However, the public interventions were not solely contained to posters or graffiti, but took on a more destructive quality as for example the trampling of the wild plants which Prenovault had carefully planted inside the palisade and the kicking in of the portal screens.

Furthermore, the work itself did not look like a work of art in the traditional sense. The palisade looked more like something one would see on a construction site, and

the concrete figure was left on its own, leaning against the wall, outside of any traditional sense of framing we would find in a gallery. If we look at the work itself, then we can see how it can fit into a long tradition of Post-Minimalist art. The plywood palisade is reminiscent of Donald Judd's and other Minimalist artists' simple geometrical shapes. Taken off their pedestals, these first Minimalist works blurred the line between high and low art. In "(Dis)Agreeable Objects" Hal Foster argues that in Minimalist art there is a certain fetishism of new materials and techniques, which are characteristic of an advanced industrial society.²⁶ Hence, according to Foster, the Minimal art work redefines the line between modernism and mass culture by collapsing the high/low ambivalence of the ready-made through the collapse of the divide between the craft basis of high art and the industrial order of social life.²⁷ We see that Prenovault's use of the plywood box as the main part of his installation project brings us back to this key moment in the history of sculpture. Although Prenovault does not consider himself a Post-Minimalist artist and explains his work more in a conceptual vein,²⁸ Les Territoires Simultanés does nonetheless highlight aspects of the Minimalist tradition which were paramount in the development of twentieth century sculptural practices.

The use of ordinary construction materials such as plywood and concrete further emphasizes the blurring of the line between art and industry. Keeping with the tradition of simple geometric shapes, Prenovault's installation employs materials one would usually find on a construction site. These "poor" materials seem to draw an emphasis on the very materiality of the work of art. They reflect our consumer society and as such, the work itself becomes involved in a certain relationship with the market economy. The materials used indicate something other than a "finished" product and become banal and

unspectacular. The plywood palisade in this context is reminiscent of a construction site, and seems to hide what is in the process of being built. Behind it should lie the promise of something new and improved. However in the case of Prenovault's installation, the palisade was the final product, and therefore presents a certain ambiguity.

The viewer here encounters an installation that at first glance just appears to be a curtain hiding the final product before it is ready to be unveiled. Much like the shop window that is being redone, the palisade acts like a shield that secures the success of the final product in its unveiling. Yet ironically, most construction palisades do have peep holes cut into them. In the case of Prenovault's work the peep holes allow the viewer a glance at what is inside. However instead of seeing a building in progress for example, the viewer gets a glimpse of a little corner of greenery and an uprooted tree trunk cast in concrete. Confused, he or she may not understand right away that this is in fact a work of art. As Jacqueline Mathieu describes, the most interesting part of the installation is the very fact that Prenovault created a work of art that does not appear like art.²⁹ By doing this, he challenged traditional notions of what art is. Here, viewers are presented with what appears to be an unfinished work. Much like Thomas Hirschhorn's public art projects, Prenovault's work represents something that does not look like it is finished. In Hirschhorn's early public art projects, such as the "displays", he present his work not like a product or as an object, but rather something that is in process.³⁰ Prenovault's work can be seen in a similar light. Les Territoires Simultanés took on a life of its own. It becomes possible to argue that its vandalism was in fact a prolongation of the artistic process.

If we return to a discussion of Post-Minimal art, then we can see how Prenovault's work possessed to an even greater degree that quality of theatricality that

Michael Fried argued was characteristic of Minimal art.³¹ For Fried, Minimal art is concerned above all with an audience and with the actual circumstances in which the work of art is encountered. Hence, Fried suggests that Minimal art has a theatrical quality or effect, one he felt was due to the relation between the viewer and the work itself. He argues that the theatricality of the work, expressed by its size, non-relational and uniform character, often distances the viewer. It is important in Minimal art for the object to remain the focus of the situation and therefore the object must confront the viewer and retain control of the viewing situation.

In the case of Les Territoires Simultanés, we see that through its vandalism, the work can no longer ensure a controlled viewing situation; it has become vulnerable to the reactions of the individuals who encountered it, however it fails to give up its theatrical quality. Here, this post-minimalist sculpture, if we can call it that, retains this pre-occupation with time and the duration of the viewing experience, an aspect that for Fried is paradigmatically theatrical. What is interesting however is that Fried insists that theatricality is at war with art in general. For him, as art approaches theatre, it degenerates.³²

In both the artist's opinion and my own, the vandalism of Les Territoires Simultanés does not take away from the work, rather it adds to it.³³ The theatricality which for Fried was leading to the degeneration of art became integral to most contemporary artistic practices, especially those that rely on the interaction of the viewers. The art of the Minimalist generation of the late 1960's and of future generations has offered the art object as an experience in time, one that is concerned not only with the art object at the moment of its creation but with the viewing process as well.

In “Sculpture and the Expanded Field”, Rosalind Krauss addresses the direction of sculptural practices after the 1960s.³⁴ For her modernist sculpture was a sort of black hole that is defined only in terms of what it is not: it is not architecture and it is not landscape.³⁵ Hence, sculpture becomes a pure negativity: a combination of a set of exclusions. It is precisely these exclusions which interest Krauss, as she draws up a set of dichotomies between architecture/ landscape, not architecture/not landscape, the built/ the not built, the cultural/ the natural.³⁶ She describes how beginning in the 1960s, sculptural practices began to focus on the outer limits of these terms of exclusion. It is within these outer limits that sculpture now exists, as a sort of expanded field which is generated by problematizing a set of oppositions between which the category of modernist sculpture is suspended. The term sculpture is on the periphery of a field in which there are a number of possibilities.

Prenovault’s work is particularly interesting with respect to Krauss’ discussion. Sculpture in the Post-Modernist context is no longer dictated by the medium but rather it can focus on the numerous possibilities within a set of cultural terms. Prenovault’s work is suspended between the dichotomies Krauss discusses; it fuses architectural and landscape elements and brings together the built environment with nature and culture. This is the perfect example of a work that throws the traditional notions and definitions of sculpture out the window. Here, sculpture is no longer defined by its medium (marble, bronze and so on) but is rather an intricate and at times complex set of relations within a particular cultural system. Prenovault’s premise in the creation of this installation was to challenge the existing dichotomies between nature and industrialization, to argue that these two terms are not dichotomous but rather part of a continuity.³⁷ It is this continuity

which is the focus of Prenovault's work. Les Territoires Simultanés brings forth the complexities of art in the public domain; it highlights the complex relationship between art, the city and nature and challenges us to redefine our positions with respect to all of these.

The use of industrial consumer materials such as plywood and concrete throw into question the very value of the work. By using materials not commonly associated with the fine arts, Prenovault is sidestepping conventional assumptions and practices. In Rubbish Theory: the Creation and Destruction of Value, Michael Thompson questions the very nature of the value of things. His argument suggests that value is socially and culturally determined but that every culture makes a distinction between valued and valueless. What is particularly interesting about his work, is his discussion of art, which as a category is something that is culturally and aesthetically valued: "the complete transfer of a class of items to museums or public collections is consonant with the general belief that, if only those items were in circulation, they would be increasing in value."³⁸ While Thompson's argument is directed at art found in museums or other institutions, it does still apply to the case of public art.

By simply labelling something as art, we are giving that item a sense of cultural value. From very common materials, Prenovault has created a work of art that at first glance may not even appear as art. The very question of what art is, is brought forward. Can anything qualify as art just because we label it that way? Consequently is the value of the item or object in question increased simply because we have decided to label it as art? His work therefore challenges these culturally determined notions of value.

In a study of the 8th Annual Swiss Sculpture exhibition in Bienne, Switzerland in 1980, Dario Gamboni observed that of the many outdoor sculptures that were vandalized, the ones that were usually left untouched were the ones made from materials associated with the Fine Arts, such as marble and bronze or handicrafts such as wood. The works that were attacked were the ones made from concrete, steel, plaster, aluminium, plastics, unusual combinations and ready-made elements.³⁹

Bienne, a small industrial town of mainly working class and lower-middle class residents, was grounded in the watchmaking, precision machinery, carmaking and metallurgy industries. Hence Gamboni suggests that:

To many viewers in Bienne, sculptures appeared to be useless objects, arbitrarily endowed with a high financial value, to the realization of which artists owed considerable social prestige, without having manifested in them professional abilities comparable to those daily demanded from the same viewers for a much lower material and symbolic gain.⁴⁰

The specific social and historical circumstances of the town of Bienne help to explain why the responses to this exhibition were so extensive. Gamboni argues that the exhibition of these works in the public realm must have seemed like provocation and that their value, determined by their inclusion in the exhibition, was resented.

In much the same way, the materials Prenovault used were materials not traditionally associated with the Fine Arts. Construction palisades in the city of Montreal are often plastered with posters advertising a variety of different things from shows, to parties to sales and so on. It presents free advertising spaces in an environment where vacant spaces are often limited or expensive. Hence when Prenovault's palisade was covered with posters and graffiti, Montrealers were just reacting the same way they always have. The choice of materials, the site and the nature of the installation presented viewers with a common feature of urban life, yet perhaps to their confusion it was

actually a work of art. As such, the work was given a sense of value it may otherwise not have possessed. Not to take anything away from the artists or the work, but we need to consider the reaction of viewers who are not accustomed to viewing art. While St. Laurent boulevard is home to numerous galleries, alternative arts festivals such as the annual Fringe Festival and Montreal's Bohemian community, it is also a busy street frequented by a number of individuals from all walks of life: the businessman/woman, the student, the yuppie, the hippie, the artist, the musician, the homeless, the drunk, the drug user/ dealer and so on. Hence when I speak of the vandalism of the artwork, I do not want to limit it to a purely class based conflict. Rather, I believe it is more useful to see it as a conflict of tastes, interests, beliefs and values.

Art has crept over the class divide, yet it still has a certain social and cultural standing attached to it. The art object remains tainted by a certain sense of elitism. Until today, art seemed to carry with it the stigma of snobbery, and it still intimidated people who felt that they just did not understand it. However, this is no longer simply a divide between economic means but rather between cultural interests and knowledge. In a way then, works of art in the public realm may be regarded as cultural domination of a majority by an elite minority. However, by creating a work which existed outside of any institutional framework such as a gallery or museum, Prenovault used the city as his framing device, and allowed his installation to document the social temperament of the place and time. Prenovault's signature becomes mixed in with those of others who have left their mark on the work, undermining the idea of the artist as genius and of the autonomy and authority of the work of art. Here, the work of art is brought down off its

pedestal to the level of the ordinary urban citizen. It begs us to redefine not only our relationship to the work of art but to the city and the people who inhabit it.

Touching on all of these notions of property and ownership of space, artistic conventions (high art versus low, post-minimalism and materiality) and value, Prenovault's work also highlighted the fragile nature between city and country, industrialization and nature, and private and public space. Fascinated with the idea of borders and territories, Prenovault's works often focus on these issues. Every year for example, he travels to New York, where he rents a small space of sidewalk and sells Christmas trees. In one of the busiest cities in the world, on one of the busiest streets, he installs thousands of trees amidst the other street vendors, the homeless, the crack addicts and pedestrians. He describes:

A New York, je loue le trottoir en face d'un magasin, genre gros Steinberg. Je monte une forêt d'environ mille arbres dans un des coins les plus achalandés d'une des plus grosses villes au monde. C'est là que la dichotomie entre la ville et la nature, entre l'asphalte et le brin d'herbe, le silence et le bruit, la paix et l'agression se trouve amplifiée.⁴¹

We see that this concern, this staking out of territory and this sense of defining borders, is evident in Les Territoires Simultanés as well. He has described his work as analogous to the Russian Matryoshka dolls, in which one object is contained within another: here the installation (palisade and seated figure) are contained within the vacant lot, which itself is contained in the urban landscape of Montreal.⁴² This hierarchy of territories is further emphasized by the focus on the constant struggle between nature and asphalt: the lot was once a green space that was later cemented, and now nature is once again growing here. Just as the city is imposing itself on nature's territory, Prenovault and his work similarly imposed themselves on the vacant spaces of our urban environment.

Interestingly, Prenovault chose to situate his work on St. Laurent Boulevard, which Pauline Morier refers to as “the corridor of immigrants.”⁴³ And what better place to install a work that deals with notions of territories and borders than in an area known for its immigrant population. This staking out of territory or of trying to create a territory of our own is nowhere more prevalent than with people who have had to leave their homes and attempt to make new ones.

It is this juxtaposition of these numerous territories (of the city, nature, the artist, the city dweller, the vandal, the nomad) that makes the work so engaging. As Prenovault has stated, a territory does not belong to one single person, in the city or out in the woods; there is always a hierarchy of owners that needs to be respected.⁴⁴ Perhaps the vandal attacks were ways in which this desire for respect has been affirmed. The work imposed itself on this space, without necessarily taking into account the people who had already laid claim to it.

Choosing this vacant lot on one of the streets known for its night life and diverse population, in terms of occupation, education, nationality and economic means, Prenovault did not expect his work to survive undisturbed or untouched. At three o'clock in the morning, St. Laurent Boulevard is often as busy as at rush hour, with throngs of people spilling out of night clubs, bars, restaurants, all in different states of mind and intoxication. The entire atmosphere on St. Laurent is one of unpredictability, in all the meanings of the word. As such, the site for Prenovault's “experiment” was, according to him, purposefully chosen because he knew it would provide a very “active petri-dish”.⁴⁵

The vacant lot, with its lone figure sitting by the wall and its lime green palisade in the centre, was most probably visited by a variety of people: the art enthusiast, the

student, the tourist, the drunk, the drug user or pusher, the homeless and so on. The diverse audience, the location and the lack of surveillance may have been factors that influenced the levels of vandalism that were ultimately carried out on the work.

Barry Webb explains that the lack of surveillance, the neglect of the built environment and the “pleasure factor” are the most common aspects that affect the extent of vandalism of an object or site.⁴⁶ In this case, the lot was wedged between two buildings, creating a visual barrier and allowing a certain amount of freedom outside of the eyes of law enforcement officials. It was situated on a street that is not only one of the busiest and most diverse, but also one where the night life and party scene are at their peaks.

We need to ask ourselves then, what else could we have expected? It seems to me that these responses by the public were almost inevitable and I would have been more surprised had the work survived unaltered. As such, we see that these reactions not only changed the work, but they enriched it as well. They allowed us to see aspects of the work we may otherwise have overlooked. For four months in 1993, the public on St. Laurent became part of an artistic process. They contributed to and redefined local cultural production outside of the official venues but in keeping with the atmosphere of the Montreal art scene and the vibrant and dynamic quality of this great city.

Les Territoires Simultanés by Robert Prenovault offers an interesting example through which we can study the relationship between the production of social space and public art. The vandalism and the numerous public interventions to which the work was subjected confirm the problematic nature of art exhibited in the public realm and raise important questions with regards to ownership, property, identity and class struggles. By

altering the work and inscribing its own histories and meanings onto it, the very diverse and heterogeneous “public” actively participated in the artistic process; it created its own narratives that did not always conform to hegemonic discourses or to the intent of the artist. The “involuntary viewers” of Les Territoires Simultanés were no longer passive consumers of images, but rather through their responses, they appropriated this space as their own and claimed their “right to the city”. The defacement and the degradation of the work provided a means through which the public took on its own authorship responsibility, ignoring the authority of the work of art, claiming both the work and the space for their own needs and purposes. The vandalism highlighted the fragile nature of public art but also brought forth the important relationship between the art work and its public in the twentieth century city, an aspect too often overlooked in art historical discourses.

Conclusion.

The vandalism of public art, as I have attempted to show throughout this study, documents diverse and important aspects of contemporary social relations. Foremost it calls into question the relationship between the work of public art and the viewer for whom the work is ostensibly created. While the case of public art differs profoundly from works of art found in museums or galleries, artists do nonetheless conceive their projects with the knowledge that their “public” will be much more heterogeneous and diverse than the “public” found in museums and galleries. As such the work of public art must take on the huge task of appealing to a vast range of people. Hence it can be argued that public art is a far more ambitious project than art intended for museums or galleries in which artists’ works are secured and installed in a controlled environment. By putting their work out in the unpredictable environment of the public place, makers of public art are taking a chance and ultimately allowing the “public” to determine the fate of the work.

The self-awareness with which both Mark Lewis and Robert Prenovault have conceived their projects calls into question the very nature of public art, public space and democracy. The extensive responses their works engendered emphasize the problematic nature of public art and allow us to question who decides what is allowed to occupy public spaces and what sorts of behaviour these works should elicit from us. Lewis created a work of art that not only challenged contemporary artistic practices by returning to the monument, a form of art he felt fit best into the mainstream definition of “public art”, but his work also threw into question the concept of artistic freedom, democracy and propaganda. The choice of site, next to a statue of a prominent Québécois figure,

contributed to the outrage and resentment a large part of the public felt towards the statue, and brought into evidence the important role context, site and surroundings play in the production of works of art.

His statue of Lenin proposed a re-evaluation of Langevin's work and of contemporary public art practices. The response to the Lenin statues in the three Canadian cities (as the work in Oxford was not attacked) is indicative of a general trend in society with respect to statues and monuments commemorating political leaders: at the moment when the image of Lenin was being erased from the public sphere in Russia and other Eastern European countries, his representation in Canada was not tolerated either. By taking the statue of Lenin out of its original context and inserting it into the new context of Montreal in the early 1990s, we see how works of public art can take on new meanings, not necessarily intended by the artist, but which tap into the social and political climate of the time.

The attack on Lewis' Lenin symbolized an attack on an oppressive administration and a politico-institutional appropriation of the public sphere. Considering the historical context, Lewis' work seemed to be challenging socio-political concerns and the management of public spaces. Lenin statues had been erected as forms of propaganda in Eastern Europe and came to signify a totalitarian control and management of cultural and artistic production. This blurring of the lines between politics and aesthetics is nowhere more evident than in monumental propaganda, and by bringing it into the Canadian setting Mark Lewis attacked our notions of "free" art and free "space".

Robert Prenovault's work, although very different from Lewis', highlighted similar aspects with respect to the practices of public art. Installed on one of the busiest

and most lively streets of downtown Montreal, Prenovault challenged the idea of public space. Like much public art, Prenovault's work imposed itself on a territory, one that in this case had already been appropriated by a variety of individuals. It was these individuals who interacted with his work by adding posters and graffiti to the palisade, drawing on the figure, trampling the wild plants inside the palisade and so on. By addressing a variety of issues in his installation, Prenovault threw into question notions of ownership, value, class conflicts and interests and artistic traditions. As such his work challenged the earlier, more banal and unoriginal public art practices, in which works of art were conceived as autonomous objects ignoring their public and the site for which they were intended.

The reason Lewis and Prenovault's works are so important with respect to public art is that they both engage the viewer, one through downright provocation (the title itself, What is to be Done? is in a sense a call for action) and the other through an invitation at interaction and participation (the theatrical aspect of Prenovault's work as discussed in Chapter 3). They thus functioned more as experiments in the public realm and documented and contributed to the growing critical discourses within not only art history, but within other related disciplines as well, on the practices of public art, the future of cities, the structures of society and the nature of democracy and artistic expression.

In his study of the gaze and the glance, Norman Bryson discusses differences in the viewing experience of works of art.¹ He suggests that art works which function through the glance address vision in the durational temporality of the viewing subject.

In other words, the viewing experience exists in a moment in time and space. For him, much of Western painting, and in a sense art in general, “operates by abstracting from the physical practice of painting and viewing a valorized moment when the eye contemplates the world alone.”² Bryson explains how the artist, upon the creation of his work, contemplates his field of vision from a vantage point outside of the passage of time, in a quasi-eternal moment, and that upon viewing of the finished work, the viewer will unite his gaze with the initial perception of the artist, what he refers to as the “founding perception.”³ As such, this viewing experience extends the gaze of the image as a pure idea. The gaze becomes this prolonged, contemplative look, yet it has a certain aloofness and disengagement attached to it. On the contrary, the glance is a “furtive or sideways look whose attention is always elsewhere, which shifts to conceal its own existence, and which is capable of carrying unofficial, sub rosa messages of hostility, collusion, rebellion and lust.”⁴

By creating works which clearly acknowledge the participation of the viewers and challenge them, both Lewis and Prenovault allow their works to be detached from this moment of artistic creation, in which the artists’ vision is seen as absolute and outside of the passage of time. The vandalism of the works can thus be understood as contributing to Bryson’s notion of the glance and allowing a viewing experience different from the “founding perception” of the artist and as a lived experience in time and space.

Returning to my argument at the beginning of this discussion, we can understand that the vandalism did not necessarily destroy the objects (as Lewis’ Lenin may still be around somewhere) but rather added to them and contributed to the artistic process. It is through the interaction between artist, artwork and viewer that Lewis and Prenovault created

works that challenged the static and banal art of the gaze and opened up the possibility of experiencing public life in Montreal. The vandalism of their works exists therefore in this grey area between creation and destruction and breaks down the solid boundaries of this dichotomy that has been intrinsic to the study of art history.

What I believe to be the most important and valuable observation from this entire study of vandalism and public art, is the very basic fact that art still matters. In this high-tech world of globalization, big corporations and capitalist domination, it reassures me, as an art history student, that art still holds the power to provoke, insult, offend and enrage. The vandalism of art, even though it usually expresses a dislike of the works in question, attests to the fact that people still care about art. David Freedberg argues that it is the continuing power of artworks to “spiritually and sensually animate” individuals that leads to the types of strong reactions associated with vandalism.⁵ I would suggest therefore that vandalism, such as I have discussed in this thesis, proves that the production of art is still very much alive and important. When art works are ignored, no longer attacked, and passionately talked about, that is when we need to start worrying.

Notes.

Introduction.

¹ Dario Gamboni, "Image to Destroy, Indestructible Image," Iconoclash 11 January 2004. <http://www.hosting.zkm.de/stories/storyReader>

² John Dornberg, "Art Vandals: Why Do They Do It?" Art News 81 (February 1982): 103.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Jeffrey Kastner, "Art Attack." Art News. 96 (October 1997): 154.

⁸ Ibid, 154-55.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid, 155.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Dario Gamboni, The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism Since the French Revolution. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.) 19-20.

¹⁴ These include Dario Gamboni, French art historian and author of The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism Since the French Revolution, Glenn D. Lowry, director of the museum of Modern Art in New York, and Painter and Newsweek art critic Peter Plagens. For their opinions on the attacks by Bridger, Brown and Brener, see Jeffrey kastner, "Art Attack" Art News 96 (October 1997): 154-56. Please note that the artworks discussed by these critics are very different from those that will be discussed in this thesis, yet their opinions with respect to these works found in museums are an interesting starting point for a discussion on vandalism of art in general, and of public art in particular.

1 Public Art and Vandalism.

¹ David Freedberg, The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989) 1.

² Henri Lefebvre, Le Droit à la ville (Paris: Anthropos, 1968).

³ Katy Siegel, "Puppy Love," Plop: Recent Projects of the Public Art Fund, ed. Susan Freedman (London: Merrell, 2004) 31.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The term "plop art" was coined by the architect James Wines and referred to the practice of public art that was common in the late 1950s and 60s. See Susan K. Freedman, "Foreword," Plop: Recent Projects of the Public Art Fund (London: Merrell, 2004) 8.

⁶ Miwon Kwon, One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002) 284.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid, 287.

⁹ Mark Lewis, "Public Interest" Art and Design 11 (Jan/Feb. 1996): 72.

¹⁰ For a discussion of Kwon' three paradigms see also Miwon Kwon, "Sittings of Public Art: Integration versus Intervention," Alternative Art New York, 1965-85, ed. Julie Ault. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002) 281-320.

¹¹ Suzanne Lacy ed. Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995)

¹² Nina Felshin, "Introduction." But Is It Art: The Spirit of Art as Activism, ed. Nina Felshin (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995) 9.

¹³ Miwon Kwon, One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002) 26.

¹⁴ www.2ville.montreal.qc.ca/cmsprod/fr/artpublic/bureau. 27 July 2005.

¹⁵ Susan K. Freedman, "Foreword." Plop: Recent Projects of the Public Art Fund, 2004. 7

¹⁶ Gerrie van Noord, ed., Off limits: 40 Artangel Projects (London: Merrell, 2002) 220.

- ¹⁷ Malcolm Miles, Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures (London and New York: Routledge, 1997) 1.
- ¹⁸ Ibid, 1-2.
- ¹⁹ Jonas Lehrman, "The Place of Art/ The Art of Place," Art in Public Places International Making Cities Livable Conference (California: IMCL council, 1990) 1.
- ²⁰ Michel de Certeau, "Spatial Practices: Walking in the City," The Practice of Everyday Life (Los Angeles: California University Press, 1984) 94.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid, 100.
- ²³ Jurgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964)," New German Critique 1.3 (1974): 50.
- ²⁴ Rosalyn Deutsche, Evictions: Art and Spatial Practices (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996) 287.
- ²⁵ Ibid, 289.
- ²⁶ Chantal Mouffe, "Every Form of Art Has a Political Dimension" interviewed by Rosalyn Deutsche, Branden W. Joseph and Thomas Keenan Grey Room 02 (Winter 2001): 99.
- ²⁷ Ibid, 101.
- ²⁸ Ibid, 112.
- ²⁹ Rosalyn Deutsche, 1996. 289.
- ³⁰ Annie Gérin, "*Maîtres Chez Nous*: Public Art and Linguistic Identity in Quebec" Canadian Poetics eds. Garry Sherbert, Sheila Petty and Annie Gérin. (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, in press, 2005) 6.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space trans. Donald Nicholson Smith (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1974) 125
- ³³ Quoted in Deutsche 1996. 75.
- ³⁴ Ibid, 78.
- ³⁵ Malcolm Miles, 1997. 46
- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ Stuart Hall as quoted in Roger Larose, La Crise D'Oka à la télévision: l'éloge du barbare PHD dissertation (Montreal: Concordia University, 2000) 8.
- ³⁸ Pamela Lee, "Public Art and the Spaces of Democracy," Assemblage 35 (April 1998): 83.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ For examples of Adams works see Recovered 10 on 10 (1993, Brussels) Tributaries (1995, New York City) , Bus Shelter VIII (1988, Toronto) and Reservoir (1992, Montreal).
- ⁴¹ For a description of the project see Lisa Corrin and Gary Sangster "Culture in Action: Action in Chicago," Sculpture 13 (March/ April 1994): 30-5.
- ⁴² Miwon Kwon, One Place After Another, 2002. 100-137.
- ⁴³ Claude Levy-Léboyer, "Introduction: Vandalism and the Social Sciences," Vandalism: Behavior and Motivations ed. Claude Levy-Léboyer (Amsterdam: Elsevier Science Publishers, 1984) 2.
- ⁴⁴ D.W. Cheetham, "Foreword" Dealing With Vandalism: A Guide to the Control of Vandalism (London: Construction and Industry Research and Information Association, 1994) iii.
- ⁴⁵ Stanley Cohen, "Sociological Approaches to Vandalism," Vandalism: Behavior and Motivations ed. Claude Levy-Leboyer (Amsterdam: Elsevier Science Publishers, 1984) 57.
- ⁴⁶ Mark Gottdiener, The Social Production of Urban Space 2nd edition (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1985) 126.
- ⁴⁷ Peter Saunders, Social Theory and the Urban Question 2nd edition (London: Anchor Brendon, 1986) 162.
- ⁴⁸ Henri Lefebvre, Le Droit à la ville (Paris: Anthropos, 1968) 22-23
- ⁴⁹ Mark Gottdiener, 1985. 128
- ⁵⁰ Dario Gamboni, The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997)183.
- ⁵¹ Gary Schwartz, "The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism Since the French Revolution," book review Art in America (July 1998): 29.
- ⁵² Ibid.
- ⁵³ Gamboni, 1997. 188.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid, 189.
- ⁵⁵ Miwon Kwon, One Place After Another 2002, 72-73.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid, 78.

- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid, 81.
- ⁵⁹ Simon Watney, "On House: Iconoclasm and Iconophobia," House/ Rachel Whiteread (London: Phaidon Press, 1995) 99-100.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid, 108.
- ⁶¹ James Lingwood, "Introduction." House/ Rachel Whiteread (London: Phaidon Press, 1995) 8.
- ⁶² Ibid.
- ⁶³ For a discussion of Ahearn's work and the reactions of the public see Miwon Kwon, "Sittings of Public Art: Integration versus Intervention," Alternative Art New York, 1965-1985. 2002 or One Place After Another 2002, 57-99.
- ⁶⁴ Miwon Kwon, One Place After Another, 2002. 91.
- ⁶⁵ The Je Suis Montréal/ I Am Montreal photography exhibition was installed on McGill College Avenue in downtown Montreal during the summer of 2003. The photographs, done by different local artists, depicted various aspects of life in Montreal. The exhibition was sponsored by the Quebec government and the Canada Council for the Arts. The photograph discussed here was taken by Manon Boyer and depicted Roger Thibault and Théo Wouters, who were the first gay couple to take the opportunity of a civil union marriage.
See Louise Larivière and Jean-Eudes Schurr, I Am Montreal. trans. Caroline Yang-Chung. (Montreal: les Editions de l'Homme, 2004) 88-89.
- ⁶⁶ For a discussion on Gran Fury's work see Nina Felshin, But Is It Art: the Spirit of Art as Activism, 1995.
- ⁶⁷ James Young, "Memory Against Itself in Germany Today," At Memory's Edge: After Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture ed. James E. Young (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2000) 130.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid, 138.
- ⁶⁹ Sandra Paikowsky, Corridart Revisited: 25 Ans Plus Tard (Montreal: Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery, 2001) 6.
- ⁷⁰ Melvin Charney interviewed by Christine Redfern, "Get the City Workers Out of Bed," Canadian Art 18.4 (Winter 2001): 5.
- ⁷¹ Alternator Gallery, "Censorship in the Okanagan," email communication sent May 7th 2005.
- ⁷² Gamboni, 1997. 134.
- ⁷³ Gamboni, 1997. 137.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid, 178.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid, 172.
- ⁷⁷ Virginia Eichhorn, "A Public Art Project," Espace 54 (Winter 2000-01): 23
- ⁷⁸ Ibid.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid.
- ⁸⁰ Donald McQuarie, "Conflict Theory," Readings in Contemporary Sociological Theory: From Modernity to Post-Modernity ed. Donald McQuarie (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995) 63.

2 Lenin Under Attack in Canada: a look at the vandalism of Mark Lewis' What is to be Done?

- ¹ Darrio Gamboni, The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism Since the French Revolution (New Haven: Yale UP, 1997) 51.
- ² Ibid, 57.
- ³ Alois Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and its Origin," Oppositions: Monument/Memory ed. Kurt W. Forster (Fall 1982): 21
- ⁴ Mark Lewis, "What Is To Be Done." Parachute 61 (Jan. 1991): 29.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ This statue of Dzerzhinsky was not destroyed but rather was dumped in a park across the street from Gorky Park and next to the Tsentralny Dom Khudozhnika, which now houses the 20th century collection of the Tretyakov Gallery. The sculptures that were dumped in this park can now be viewed in a less politicized way, as part of the Tretyakov's collection of 20th century art. Information obtained from Dr. Annie Gérin (August 18th 2005) via email correspondence.

⁷ Gamboni, 64.

⁸ David Freedberg, The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989) 390.

⁹ See CNN archives. "Saddam Statue Topped in Central Baghdad" 17 Feb. 2005

<http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/>

¹⁰ For criticism of events see Brian Dominik, "If Only Toppling the Media Were This Easy." Blog (04 July 2004). 17 Feb. 2005 <http://www.blog.zmag.org/uts/archives/00796.html/>> and Jon Elmer "Army Report Confirms Psy-ops Staged Saddam Statue Toppling" The NewStandard. (03 July 2004) 17 Feb. 2005 <http://newstandardnews.com/>>

¹¹ For wide angle shot please see <http://media.consurmecide.com/saddamstatue.html/>

¹² Ibid.

¹³ See Brian Dominik, 2004. <http://www.blog.zmag.org/uts/archives/00796.html/>> also for article go to <http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/latimes/>

¹⁴ Mark Lewis, "What Is To Be Done," Parachute 61 (Jan. 1991): 29.

¹⁵ As quoted in Lawrence Weschler, "Slight Modifications," New Yorker 12 July 1993: 59.

¹⁶ Andrea M. Couture, "Monumental Propaganda," Graphis 50 (1994): 102.

¹⁷ Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, "What Is To Be Done With Monumental Propaganda," New Formatics (Spring 1994): 1.

¹⁸ Dr. Annie Gérin, email correspondence (August 18th 2005)

¹⁹ For a full description of the different proposals for the project please see Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, "Monumental Propaganda: Portfolio," The New Yorker 12 July 1993.

²⁰ These are examples taken from Darrío Gamboni, The Destruction of Art, 1997, 64.

²¹ Gamboni, 77-78. Gamboni describes the statue park near the Tretyakov gallery in Moscow as a place where the state of the statues invites visitors to laugh at them rather than venerate them.

²² For a look at some of the photographs from Lewis' trip to Russia please see Mark Lewis, "Disgraced Monuments," Creative Camera 328 (June/July 1994): 18-21.

²³ Kanan Makiya, The Monument: Art and Vulgarity in Saddam Hussein's Iraq. (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004) xiii.

²⁴ Robert Darcey Nichols, From Monuments to Cinema: The Question of the Counter-Monument in two Works by Mark Lewis M.A. Thesis, Art History Dept. Concordia University (Montreal: Concordia University, 2003) 3.

²⁵ Louis Menasche, rev. of Disgraced Monuments, by Mark Lewis and Laura Mulvey, Cineaste 23 no. 2 (1997): 44.

²⁶ Gamboni, 51.

²⁷ Taken from Mark Lewis, "What Is To Be Done," Mark Lewis: Public Art, Photographs and Projects, eds. Mark Lewis, Johanne Lamoureux and Andre Payne. (Vancouver: UBC Fine Arts Gallery, 1994) 68. Lewis describes how interested Westerners could make an appointment with the mayor of Bucharest to discuss the purchase of the original statue of Lenin. While Lewis did not meet with the mayor, the mayor's hope of finding Lenin a home in the West, while at the same time raising much needed money for the newly democratic city, provided Lewis with the idea for his plaster replicas.

²⁸ As described by Richard Rhodes, What Is To Be Done (Toronto: Power Plant Gallery, 1991) 3.

See also Lorenzo Buj, "Here, There and Otherwise," Artforum International 30 (1992): 27.

Buj describes this as the advice Lenin gave to Anatoly Lunarcharsky, commissar of education, concerning the materials of the busts and statues of revolutionary figures that would be erected in celebration of the first May Day in 1918.

²⁹ Lise Lamarche, "Les Monuments de l'Est: notes à partir d'une exposition de Mark Lewis," Espace 7.4 (1991): 29.

³⁰ Lorenzo Buj, "Here, There and Otherwise," Artforum International 30 (1992): 27.

³¹ Lorenzo Buj, 25-26.

³² Lise Lamarche, 29.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Lorenzo Buj, 26.

³⁵ Claire Gravel, "Face à Face Félix-Lenine au parc Lafontaine." Le Devoir Tuesday 12 Feb. 1991: B3. The revolutionary hymn referred to here was the International, written by Eugène Poittier, a wood maker from Lille, after the fall of the Paris Commune in 1871, and was set to the music of Pierre Degeyter.

The International became the official anthem of Soviet Russia and later the Soviet Union, until it was replaced by the Bolshevik Hymn in 1943. It is still the official international song of both Marxist and non-Marxist socialist parties and was played throughout Eastern Europe at political rallies, party functions and other events.

The Marxist-Leninist insignia refers to the traditional symbol of the red star with gold hammer and sickle. For more information see <http://home.planet.nl/~elder180?internationale/> and http://wikisource.org/wiki/The_Internationale/

³⁶ Johanne Lamoureux, "Mark Lewis and the Pollution of Monument," Mark Lewis: Public Art, Photographs and Projects, eds. Mark Lewis, Johanne Lamoureux and Andrew Payne. (Vancouver: UBC Fine Arts Gallery, 1994) 8.

³⁷ Mark Lewis, "Public Interest," Art and Design 11 (1996): 72

³⁸ Mark Lewis' reflection on public art in Joyce Mason, "Accidental Encounters with Art," C Magazine 53 (1997): 35.

³⁹ As Lewis explains in Joyce Mason, "Accidental Encounters with Art": 35.

⁴⁰ James Patten, "Fallen Giants," The Montreal Mirror, March 7th to March 14th 1991: 14.

⁴¹ Lise Lamarche, 28.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid, 30.

⁴⁴ Johanne Lamoureux, "Mark Lewis and the Pollution of Monuments," 7.

⁴⁵ Andrew Payne, "The Statue Man," Mark Lewis: Public Art, Photographs and Projects, eds. Mark Lewis, Johanne Lamoureux and Andrew Payne. (Vancouver: UBC Fine Arts Gallery, 1994) 28.

⁴⁶ Alois Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and its Origin," Oppositions: Monument/Memory ed. Kurt W. Forster (Fall 1982): 22.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Patricia Phillips, "Making Memories," Sculpture 16 (March 1997): 22-23.

⁴⁹ Eric Wolf, "Introduction," Europe and the People Without History. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982) 5.

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Roger Simon, Gramsci's Political Thought: An Introduction (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1991) 21.

⁵² Ibid, 22.

⁵³ David Lowenthal, "History and Memory," The Public Historian 19:2 (Spring 1997): 36.

⁵⁴ Mark Lewis, "Public Interest": 71.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 72.

⁵⁷ Andrew Payne, "The Statue Man", 28.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 30

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Vladimir Illitch Lenin, "What Is To Be Done: Burning Questions of Our Movement," Lenin: Collected Works, vol. 5 trans. Joe Fineberg and George Hanna, ed. Victor Jerome. (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1961) 347-529.

⁶¹ Walter Benjamin "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in Illuminations trans. and ed. by Harry Zohn. (New York: Schocken Books, 1978) 221.

⁶² These three aspects are discussed by Andrew Payne in "The Statue Man", 30.

⁶³ Mark Lewis, "What Is To Be Done," Parachute 61 (Jan. 1991): 30.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Johanne Lamoureux, "Questioning the Public," Art and Design 11 (Jan/Feb. 1996): 77.

⁶⁷ See both Andrew Payne, "The Statue Man", 31 and James Patten, "Fallen Giants": 14.

⁶⁸ James Patten, "Fallen Giants": 14.

⁶⁹ Mark Lewis, "What Is To Be Done," Parachute 61 (Jan. 1991): 29.

⁷⁰ Rosalyn Deustche, Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996) 287.

⁷¹ Claire Gravel, "Face à face Félix-Lenine au parc Lafontaine." Le Devoir Tuesday Feb. 12th 1991: B3.

⁷² Michel De Certeau, "Spatial Practices: Walking in the City," The Practice of Everyday Life (California University Press, 1984) 94.

⁷³ Gamboni, 175.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Gamboni, 183.

⁷⁶ Johanne Lamoureux, "Mark Lewis and the Pollution of Monuments", 11.

⁷⁷ Andrew Payne, "The Statue Man", 30.

3 Contested Spaces: Robert Prenovault's Les Territoires Simultanés.

¹ The vacant lot was situated between 3556 and 3590 St. Laurent, on the west side of the street and just south of Prince Arthur. Today this piece of land holds a parking lot.

² As described by Jacqueline Mathieu, "Les Territoires Simultanés de l'art," *Espace* 27 (March/May 1994): 23-5 and Pauline Morier, "Territoires Simultanés: études sur un terrain vague." *Esse* 24 (Spring 1994): 16

³ According to Donald Goodes' review of the installation in "Urban Energy," *The Hour* June 3-9 1993: 20, Prenovault sat with his knees up, totally immobilized inside a plaster shell for 60 minutes to create the body mold which would later be filled with concrete.

⁴ The description of the vandalism and other acts of public intervention were taken from Goodes: 20, Mathieu: 23-5 and Morier: 16-20.

⁵ Robert Prenovault interviewed by Tanina Drvar, 26 June 2005.

⁶ Mathieu, 24.

⁷ Morier, 20.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ According to a review of the work, Ann Duncan "Montrealer Honored with Solo Show," *The Gazette* Sat. May 1st 1993: K5, Prenovault had been eyeing the lot for a long time but it took him a month before he worked up the courage to ask the bank for permission. Bank officials agreed very quickly to his ideas, and Prenovault has had nothing but praise for their cooperation.

¹⁰ Iain Borden, "Another Beach, Another Pavement: Skateboarding and the Performative Critique of Architecture," *The Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social Space* eds. Iain Borden, Jane Rendell et al. (Cambridge, Mass and London: MIT Press, 2002) 183.

¹¹ For a discussion of Gordon Matta-Clark's work see Pamela Lee, "Improper Objects of Modernity," *Object to be Destroyed: the Work of Gordon Matta-Clark* (Cambridge, Mass and London: MIT Press, 2000) 99.

¹² For a more detailed discussion of Lefebvre's theories on "abstract space" and De Certeau's "concept city" please see chapter 1. Or refer to Henri Lefebvre, *The Social Production of Space* trans. Donald Nicholson Smith. (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1974) and Michel De Certeau *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Los Angeles: California University Press, 1984).

¹³ See chapter one and two for a discussion on Lewis' theories on public art. Also Mark Lewis, "Public Interest," *Art and Design* 11 (Jan/Feb, 1996): 70-4.

¹⁴ Goodes, 20.

¹⁵ Interview with the artist from Goodes, 20.

¹⁶ Robert Prenovault interviewed by Tanina Drvar, 26 June 2005.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2002) 294.

¹⁹ Annie Gérin, "Maitres Chez Nous: Public Art and Linguistic Identity in Quebec," *Canadian Poetics* ed. Garry Sherbet, Sheila Petty and Annie Gérin. (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, in press, 2005): 2.

²⁰ Mathieu: 24.

²¹ Gérin 2005, 13.

²² Jean Philippe Uzel, "Public Art in the Era of Cultural Democracy," *Espace* 49 (Autumn 1999): 16.

²³ Annie Gérin, "Art in Space: Public Art in an Expanding World," *Espace* 64 (Summer 2003): 36.

²⁴ Michel De Certeau, "Spatial Practices: Walking in the City," *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Los Angeles: California University Press, 1984) 94.

²⁵ Barry Webb, "Is There a Place for Vandalism," *Vandalism: Behavior and Motivations* ed. Claude Levy-Leboyer (New York: Elsevier Science Publishers, 1984) 176.

²⁶ Hal Foster, "(Dis)Agreeable Objects," *Damaged Goods: Desire and the Economy of the Object* (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1986) 17.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Robert Prenovault interviewed by Tanina Drvar, 26 June 2005.

- ²⁹ Mathieu: 25.
- ³⁰ For a discussion of Hirschhorn's work and to view illustration see Benjamin H.D. Buchloch, Alison M. Gingeras and Carlos Basualdo, Thomas Hirschhorn (New York: Phaidon Press, 2004)
- ³¹ Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," Artforum (June 1967): 116-147.
- ³² *Ibid*, 145.
- ³³ Robert Prenovault interviewed by Tanina Drvar, 26 June 2005.
- ³⁴ Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology. ed. D. Preziosi (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) 281-298.
- ³⁵ *Ibid*, 289.
- ³⁶ *Ibid*, 291.
- ³⁷ Robert Prenovault interviewed by Tanina Drvar, 26 June 2005.
- ³⁸ Michael Thompson, Rubbish Theory: The Creation and Destruction of Value (Oxford, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1979) 103-104.
- ³⁹ Dario Gamboni, The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997) 173.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 175-77.
- ⁴¹ Quote taken from Morier: 17.
- ⁴² Robert Prenovault interviewed by Tanina Drvar, 26 June 2005.
- ⁴³ Morier: 20.
- ⁴⁴ Morier: 18.
- ⁴⁵ Robert Prenovault interviewed by Tanina Drvar, 26 June 2005.
- ⁴⁶ Webb, 183-84.

Conclusion.

- ¹ Norman Bryson, "The Gaze and the Glance," Visions and Paintings. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983) 87-131.
- ² *Ibid*, 94.
- ³ *Ibid*.
- ⁴ *Ibid*.
- ⁵ Quote taken from Jeffrey Kastner, "Art Attack," Art News 96 (October 1997): 156.

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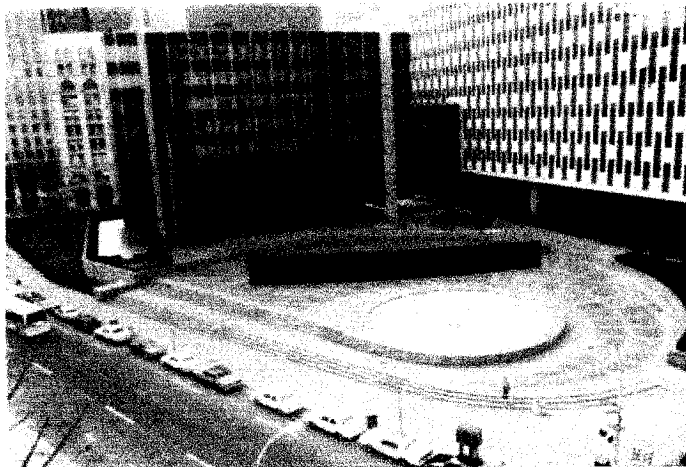


Fig. 1 Richard Serra, Tilted Arc (1981-89) (removed)
 Photograph of installation in Federal Plaza, New York City.
 3"x 12' x 120' curved sheet of Cor-ten steel.
 Photo taken from Dario Gamboni, The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution, 156.



Fig. 2 Rachel Whiteread, House (1993) (destroyed)
 Bow, London, England.
 Concrete.
 Photo taken from <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-images>.

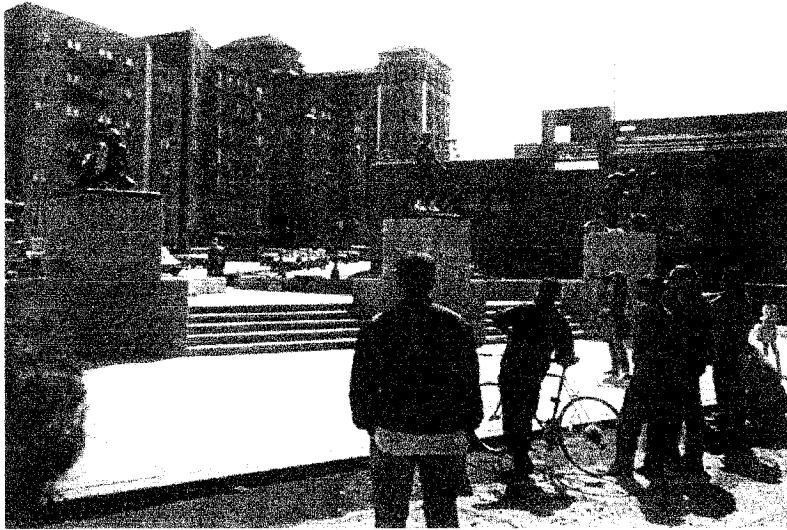


Fig. 3 John Ahearn, Sculpture Park (1991) (removed)
Sculptures of Raymond and Tobey, Daleesha and Correy.
44th Precinct Police Station, South Bronx, New York.
Photo by Ari Marcopoulos in Miwon Kwon, One Place After
Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity, 85.

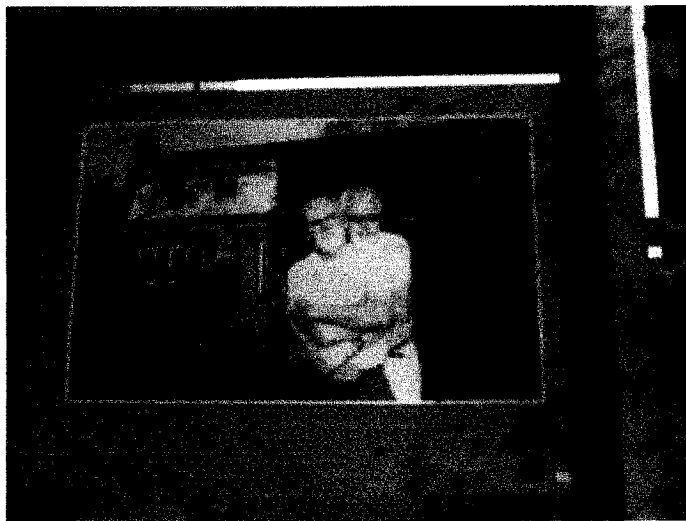


Fig. 4 Manon Boyer, Photograph of Roger Thibault and Theo
Wouters (2003) (vandalized)
From the Je Suis Montreal/ I Am Montreal photography exhibi-
tion, McGill College Avenue, Montreal, Canada.
Photo by Tanina Drvar.

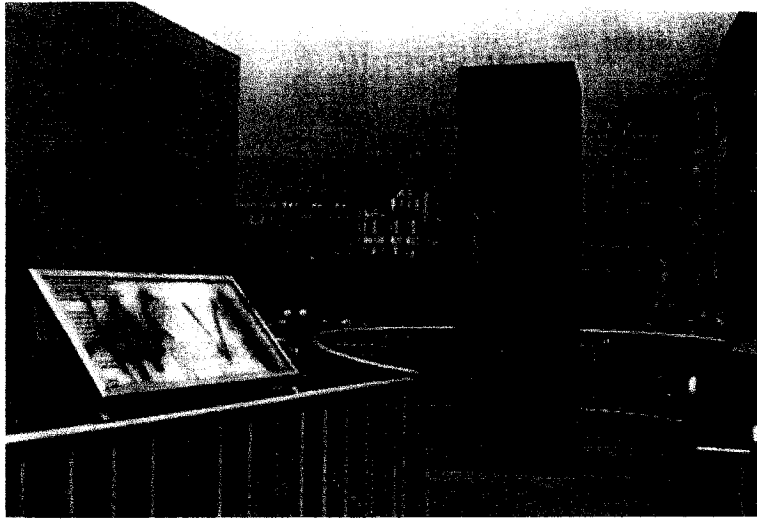


Fig. 5 Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev, Monument Against Fascism, War and Violence— and for Peace and Human Rights (1986). (vandalized) Hamburg, Germany.
40' x 3' x 3' hollow aluminum plated with a layer of thin soft, dark lead.
Photo taken from James Young, Memory Against Itself in Germany Today: Jochen Gerz's Counter monuments, 132.



Fig. 6 Melvin Charney, Les Maisons de la Rue Sherbrooke (1976) (destroyed).
From Corridart: Dans la Rue Sherbrooke exhibition, Montreal, Canada.
15 x 16.5 x 14.5 m, Steel, wood and concrete.
Photo taken from Christine Redfern, "Get the City Workers Out of Bed." Canadian Art 18 (Winter 2001): 48.



Fig. 7 Pierre Ayot and Denis Forcier, La Croix du Mont Royal (1976)
(destroyed)

From Corridart: Dans la Rue Sherbrooke, Montreal, Canada.

16.7 x 7.62 x 1.52 m, Steel pipe and light bulbs.

Photo taken from Christine Redfern, "Get the City Workers Out of Bed."
Canadian Art 18 (Winter 2001): 49.



Fig. 8 Richard Serra, Berlin Junction (1988) (spray painted)

Berlin, Germany.

Photo taken from Dario Gamboni, The Destruction of Art, 134.



Fig. 9 Wolf Vostell, 2 Concrete Cadillacs in the Form of a Naked Maya (1987) Berlin, Germany.

Part of *Skulpturboulevard* project.

Photo taken from Dario Gamboni, The Destruction of Art, 136.

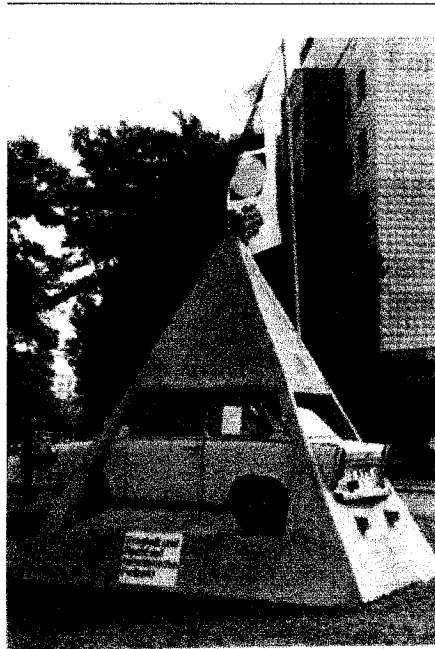


Fig. 10 Anonymous, “Trabant” Sculpture (1987) added to *Skulpturboulevard* Berlin, Germany as a comment on Vostell’s work.

The text reads “Unity and the right to artistic freedom.”

Photo taken from Dario Gamboni, The Destruction of Art, 136.

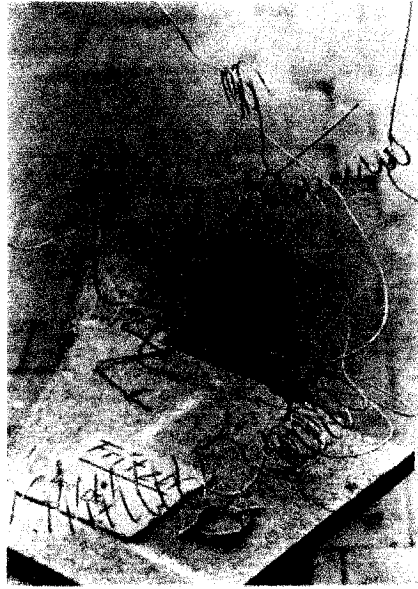


Fig. 11 Fritzli, The Thing (1980) added pseudonymously to the 8th Annual Swiss Sculpture Exhibition in Bienne, Switzerland.
Photo taken from Dario Gamboni, The Destruction of Art, 178.



Fig. 12 Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, Leninism (1993) conceptual art work for their project What is to be Done with Monumental Propaganda?
proposed to salvage Lenin's tomb by simply adding the suffix "ism" to its name, and having the word scroll by on an electronic sign board along with weather updates, biblical quotations and Dadaist expressions
Photo taken from the New Yorker 12 July 1993: 55.



Fig. 13 Scherer and Ouporov, Mass Ceremonial Procession (1993) conceptual work part of What is to be Done with Monumental Propaganda?
 Photo taken from The New Yorker 12 July 1993: 55.



Fig. 14 Leonid Lamm, Alteration of Traditional Hammer and Sickle (1993) conceptual work from What is to be Done with Monumental Propaganda?
 Photo taken from The New Yorker 12 July 1993: 54.



Fig. 15 Leighlaine, Advertisements for Street Corner Watch Sales (1993)
 conceptual work from What is to be Done with Monumental Propaganda?
 Photo taken from The New Yorker 12 July 1993: 54.



Constantin Boym, a Russian emigre, was teaching
 at the Parsons School of Design. "Why that the only way
 to protest a monumental propaganda may be to turn it into
 monumental advertising," said suggestively during the various
 Lenin lectures in Moscow in 1989, he "so boldly hand-
 curreted the people to the Russian government."

Fig. 16 Constantin Boym, Monumental Advertising Campaign (1993)
 conceptual work from What is to be Done with Monumental Propaganda?
 Photo taken from The New Yorker 12 July 1993: 57.



Fig. 17 Ludwig Engelhart, Statue of Marx and Engel (1977-86) in front of the Palast der Republik, Berlin, Germany. Photograph shows graffiti inscription “wir sind unschuldig” (“we are innocent”) (1991)
Photo taken from Dario Gamboni, The Destruction of Art, 64.



Fig. 18 Nikolai Tomskey, Lenin Monument (1968-69) (demolished 1991) Leninplatz, Berlin, Germany. Photograph shows the “no violence” banner protesting against its planned demolition.
Photo taken from Dario Gamboni, The Destruction of Art, 65.



Fig. 19 Mark Lewis, What is to be Done? (1990-91) (stolen)
View of installation in Park Lafontaine, Montreal, Canada.
Plaster statue of Vladimir Lenin, painted in bronze colored patina finish and
mounted on wooden plinth.
Photo by Reuter in La Presse Thursday 21 February 1991: A5.



Fig. 20 Mark Lewis, The Studio (1993)
color print, 218.4 x 188 cm.
Photo by Mark Lewis in Creative Camera 328 (June/ July 1994): 20.



Fig. 21 Mark Lewis, After the Fall (1993)
color print, 122 x 157.5 cm
Photo by Mark Lewis in Creative Camera 328 (June/ July 1994): 19.



Fig. 22 Roger Langevin, Debout: Monument a Felix Leclerc (1990)
Installed in Park Lafontaine, Montreal, Canada.
Photo from <www.2ville.montreal.qc.ca/cmsprod/fr/artpublic/bureau>

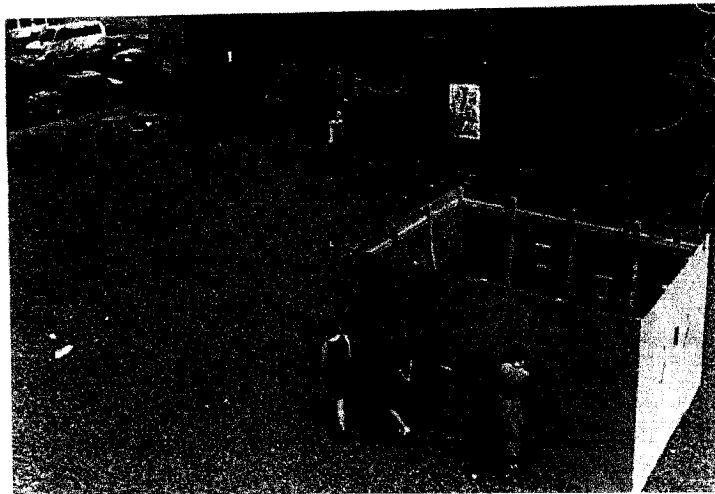


Fig. 23 Robert Prenovault, Les Territoires Simultanés (1993)
View of palisade and seated figure. Plywood, concrete and steel.
St. Laurent Boulevard, Montreal, Canada.
Photo by Jean Bernier from Espace 27 (March-May 1994): 23.



Fig. 24 Robert Prenovault, Les Territoires Simultanés (1993)
View of interior of palisade with tree trunk and steel reinforcing bars.
Plywood, concrete and steel.
St. Laurent Boulevard, Montreal, Canada.
Photo by Jean Bernier from Espace 27 (March– May 1994): 25

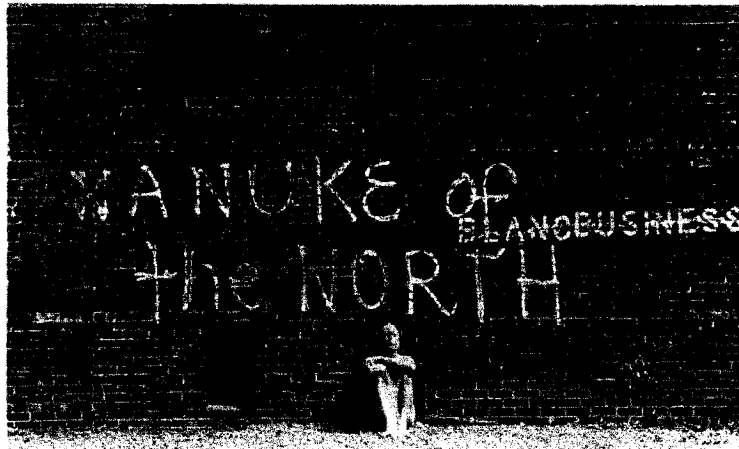


Fig. 25 Robert Prenovault, Les Territoires Simultanés (1993)
View of seated figure. Concrete.
St. Laurent Boulevard, Montreal, Canada.
Photo by Jean Bernier from Espace 27 (March– May 1994): 24



Fig. 26 Robert Prenovault, Les Territoires Simultanés (1993)
View of seated figure after he'd been drawn on.
Concrete
Photo by Jean Bernier from Espace 27 (March– May 1994): 23

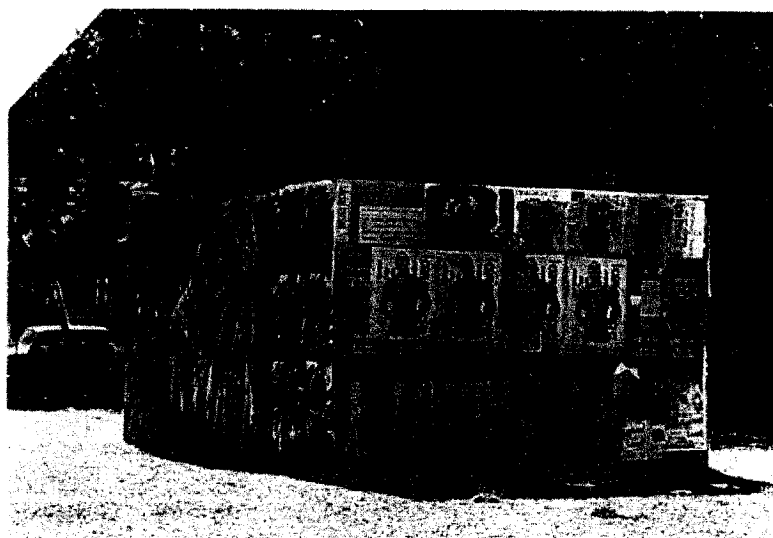


Fig. 27 Robert Prenovault, Les Territoires Simultanés (1993)
View of palisade covered in advertisements and graffiti.
Plywood.
St. Laurent Boulevard, Montreal, Canada.
Photo by Jean Bernier from Espace 27 (March-May 1994): 25.

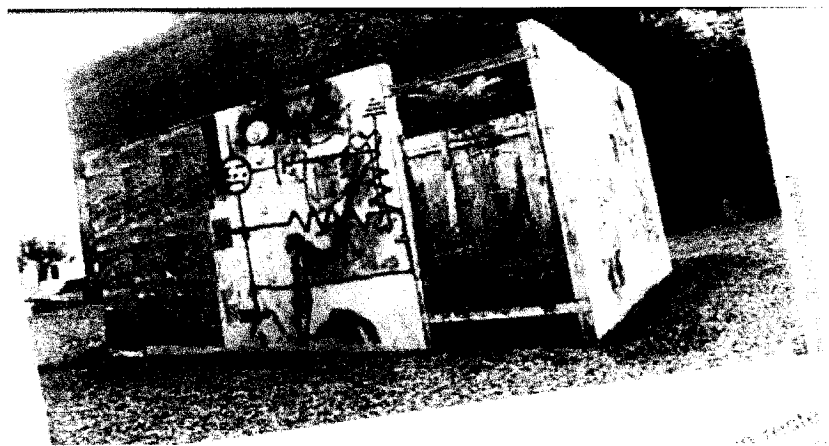


Fig. 28 Robert Prenovault, Les Territoires Simultanés (1993)
View of dismantling, with greenery growing inside.
St. Laurent Boulevard, Montreal, Canada.
Photo by Robert Prenovault in Esse 24 (Spring 1994): 20.