The District of Columbia Office of Planning

Commemorate DC

Commemorative Works Visioning Guide

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

October 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction 3
Project Background 3
Commemorative Works Visioning Guide 4
Key Definitions 4
II. Forms and Context 5
Materializing Memory 5
Commemorative Works Elements 5
Design Typologies 5
Landing on a Site 7
III. Case Studies Overview 8
Figures + Sculptures 9
Murals 12
Landscape + Open Space 14
Buildings + Infrastructure 16
IV. Envisioning Future Commemorative Works 20
Emerging Approaches to Commemoration 20
V. Range of Commemorative Works 25
Featured Works 25
Additional Commemorative Works 27
Future Planned Works 33

I. INTRODUCTION

Project Background

Commemorative works recognize the collective memories of individuals, organizations, places, or events. As symbols of our shared past and values, they can reflect the distinct identities of neighborhoods, remind us of significant events that shaped the world we live in, and inspire us to make our own positive impacts in our communities.

The DC Office of Planning (OP) is responsible for managing design review of commemorative works and, to that end, developed this guide to promote innovative and creative works and projects that center visitor experience and responsive design. This guide provides an overview of considerations for designing a commemorative work:

- **Elements**
- **Typologies**
- **Location**

Each of these items shape the visitor experience and meaning of the commemorative work. The design should reflect and incorporate elements associated with its subject. This guide explains how the neighborhood surrounding a commemorative work could influence a site's design, why the size of the work matters, and how plants and layout create different types of spaces.

The Wailin' Mailman: A Portrait of Buck Hill

Source: Murals DC Program

Commemorative Works Visioning Guide

The District includes some of the nation's most iconic and significant commemorative works, such as the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Furthermore, multiple structures in the District also function as destinations and amenities at the neighborhood scale, such as the African American Civil War Memorial on U Street, the Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II, and the Jean Jules Jusserand Memorial in Rock Creek Park.

Memorialization across the nation and around the globe takes many forms and addresses a variety of subjects. The intent of this visioning guide is the following:

- **Identify different typologies.** Not only does identifying commemorative works typologies help structure the guide, it also provides project teams and stakeholders with a common vocabulary.
- **Showcase the range of design.** This guide illustrates how different artistic elements can be incorporated into a commemorative work, rather than relying solely on figurative sculpture.
- **Recognize the relevance over time.** Memorialization is an ever-evolving series of expressions. The guide points to considerations for establishing commemorative works that are relevant beyond the current times.
- **Inspire future commemorative works.** Commemorative works cited in this guide can be used during public engagement sessions to spark ideas and identify what could be successful in specific contexts.

Key Definitions

- **Commemorative Work:** This term broadly refers to a structure, artwork, or event designed to honor or celebrate an individual, group, event, or idea. Commemorative works can take various forms, such as sculptures, murals, plaques, gardens, or architectural designs. They may focus on celebrating achievements, marking historical significance, or highlighting cultural contributions. The tone is often celebratory or reflective.
- **Memorial:** A memorial specifically focuses on remembrance, often associated with loss, tragedy, or death. Memorials are typically created to honor those who have passed away or to acknowledge a tragic event. The tone is frequently solemn and often serves as a place for reflection, mourning, and healing.

Marion Barry Statue

Source: Michael Key

II. FORMS AND CONTEXT

Materializing Memory

Commemorative works serve as physical representations of collective memory, which is the shared pool of memories, knowledge, and information common to members of a social group. As a result, the design of a commemorative work reflects the most important qualities of the subject in both obvious a subtle ways. From monumental sculptures and architectural landmarks to serene memorial parks and interactive installations, commemorative works provide a wide range of spatial forms and mediums for reflection, contemplation, and dialogue, preserving cultural heritage for future generations.

Commemorative Works Elements

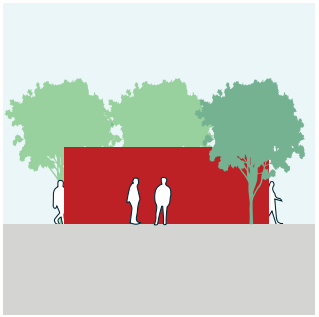
Visitor Experience

Design Considerations

Design Typologies

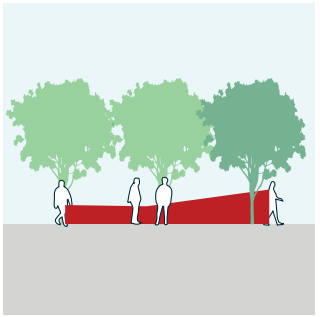
Context

Contrast



standing apart from context

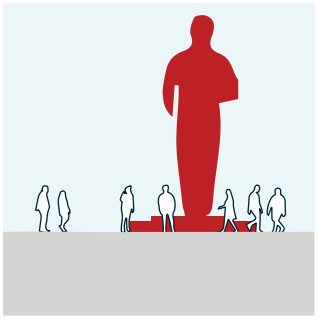
Integration



incorporated in context through natural and built gestures

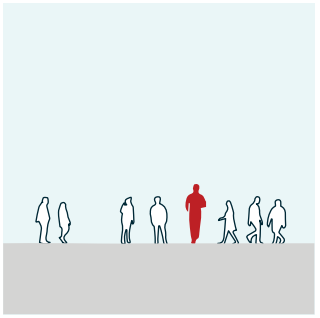
Scale

Monumental



'larger than life' condition, evoking greatness through scale

Human-Scaled

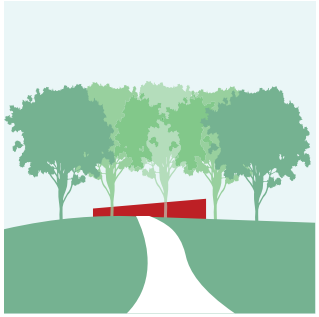


'approachable' dimension, suggesting more interactivity with visitors

Design Typologies

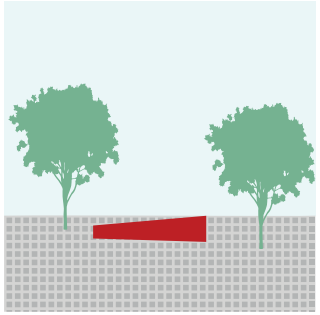
Landscape and Layout

Park Setting



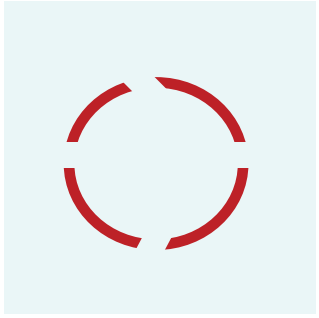
park-like planting with vegetation dispersed throughout the site

Plaza/Urban Setting



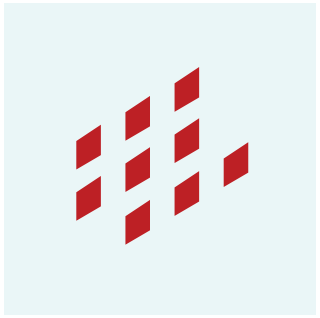
predominant hardscape with vegetation to frame the structure or secondary elements

Landmark



one or few visually captivating elements

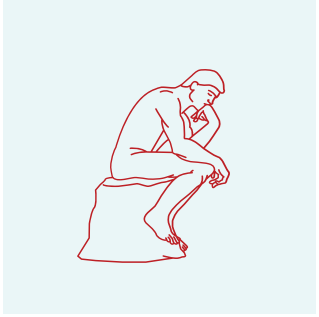
Composition



part of a broader composition of contextual elements, and can include repetitive elements

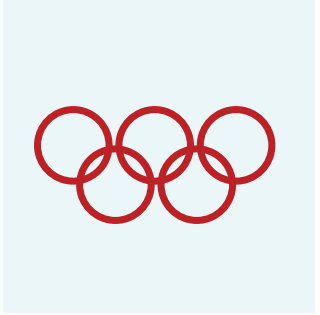
Mediums

Literal



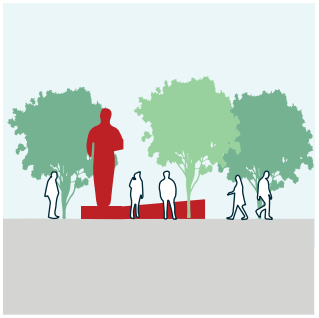
clear reference to commemorated person or historic moment/event

Symbolic



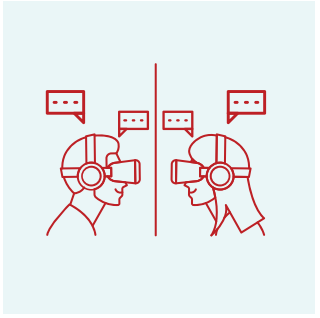
reinterpretation of key values or elements historically associated with the person or event

Physical



all elements are **displayed on its designated site**

Hybrid/Virtual



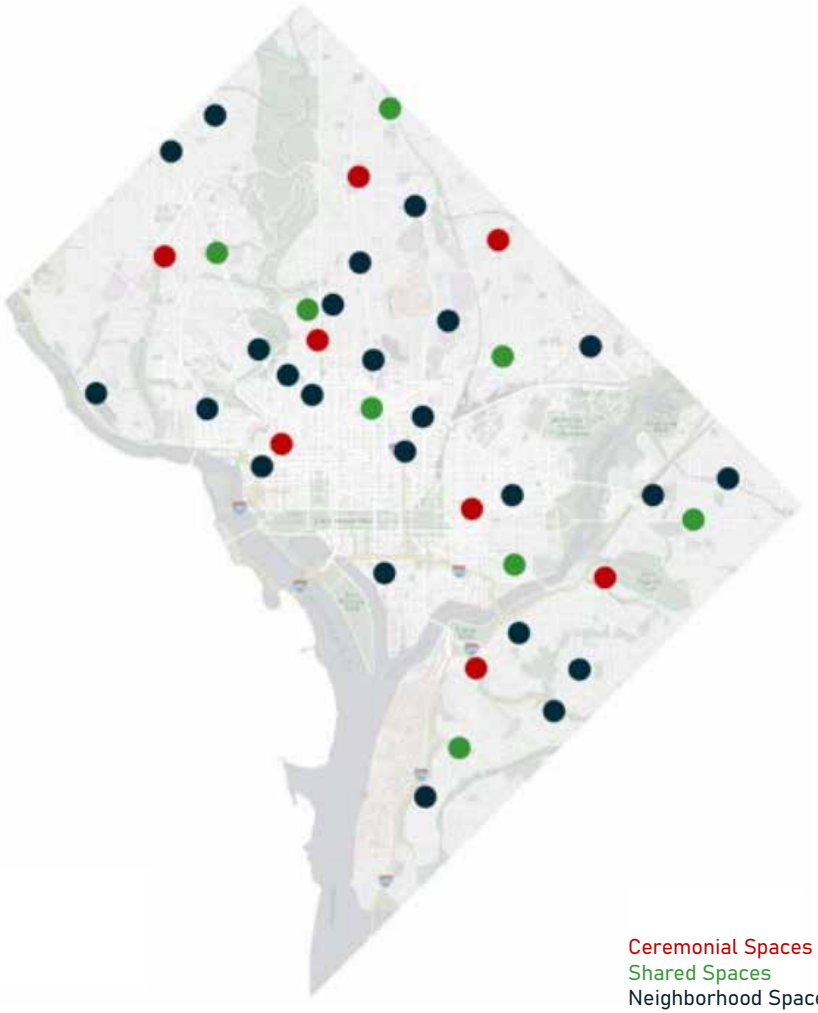
digital features inviting **interactions beyond site**-specific elements

Landing on a Site

The process of selecting a site or location is paramount in the creation of commemorative works and memorials. The chosen space not only provides the backdrop against which these tributes are set, but also shapes their significance and impact.

Placing commemorative works at or near the sites of the events they honor offers vital contextual relevance, enabling visitors to grasp the historical importance of the events being memorialized. Moreover, the accessibility and visibility in selected locations can consolidate commemorative works as enduring symbols, fostering community engagement and collective reflection. Locate: A Strategy for Locating Commemorative Works in District of Columbia Neighborhoods is available at DCOP's website and identifies three types of sites:

- **Ceremonial Spaces**, located on primary transportation corridors and intended for subjects that are important within a national context. Centrally located in each Ward, with high-visibility sites along streets and avenues identified in the Comprehensive Plan as Gateway Corridors, Primary/Secondary Avenues, Primary/ Secondary Parkways, and Long-Established Roads.
- **Shared Spaces,** where a broad cross-section of residents come together and intended for subjects with significance to residents in all eight Wards of the District. Includes sites used by a broad cross-section of residents, like plazas at Metro stations, transfer points for bus lines with high ridership, or regional parks.
- **Neighborhood Spaces,** also considered centers of community life and intended for subjects with a strong connection to a specific place. Locations include spaces evenly distributed throughout each Ward, ranging from neighborhood commercial areas to libraries and recreation centers.



Locate, DC's commemorative work location strategy, profiles 40 potential sites and identifies hundreds of additional sites.

Source: DCOP Locate Report. 2023

III. CASE STUDIES OVERVIEW

Commemorative Works Across Scales and Locations

This section includes an overview of commemorative works in the U.S. and other cities across the globe. It also offers a closer look at local precedents in Washington D.C., identifying the different elements and design typologies covered in the previous section.

These examples illustrate multiple forms and mediums used to represent collective memory in space, integrating the values, perspectives, and interests of a wide range of groups. From widely known historical moments like wars to the elevation of underrepresented individuals and communities, commemorative works come in various scales and typologies, ranging from grandiose sculptures and architectural landmarks to more modest gestures and temporary installations.

Whether towering over cityscapes or nestled in quiet corners, these tributes offer poignant reflections on both the past and present, provoking aspirations for the future.

Categories

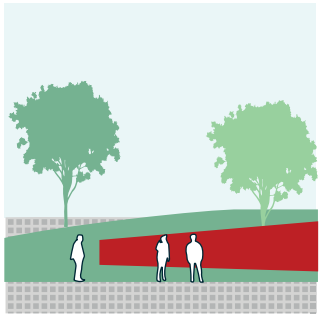
Figures + Sculptures

relief, carved, cast, assembled or modeled pieces and installations

Murals

modification of existing walls, ground, and other surfaces

Landscape + Open Space

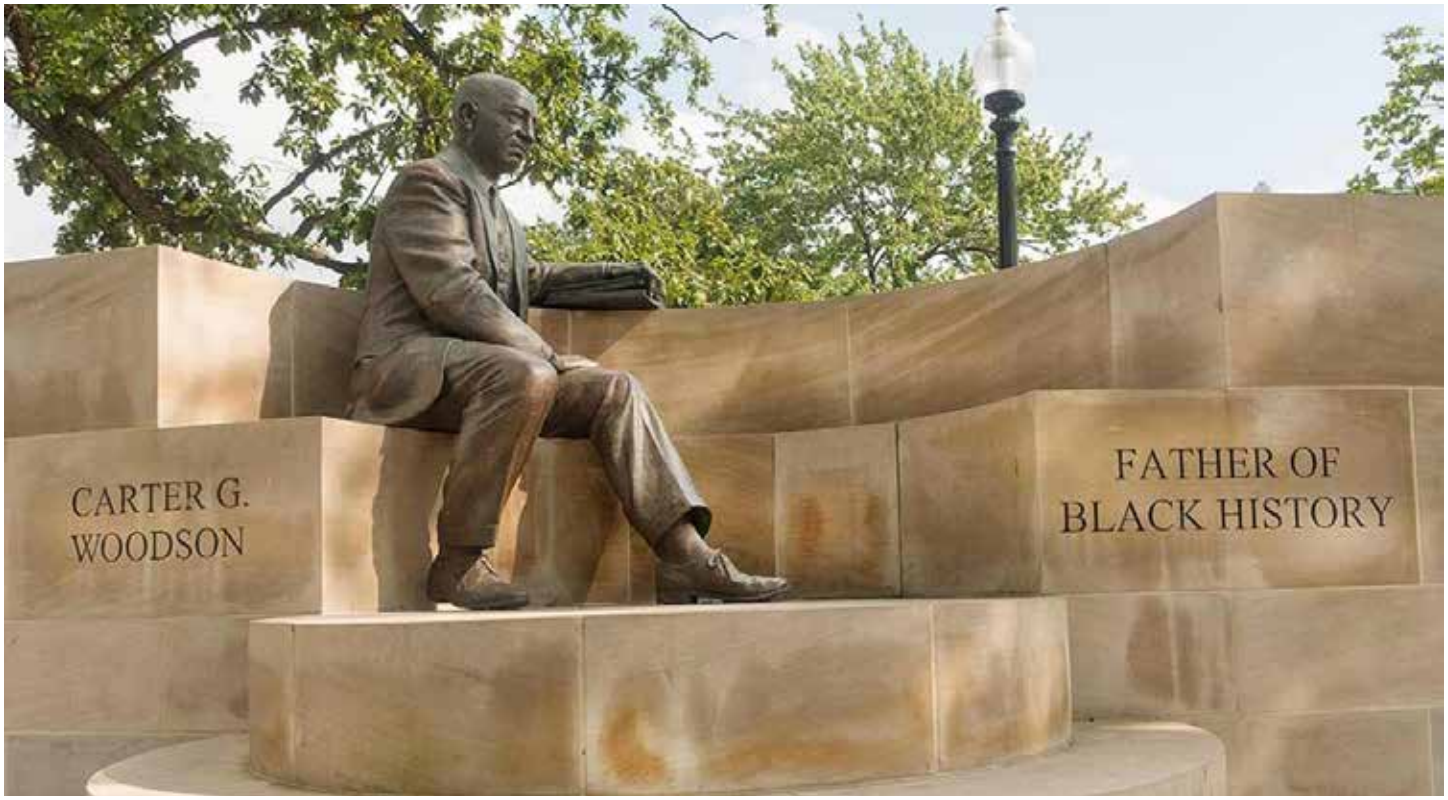


parks, plazas, squares, natural reserves, etc.

Buildings + Infrastructure

public amenities, facilities, and systems

Figures + Sculptures

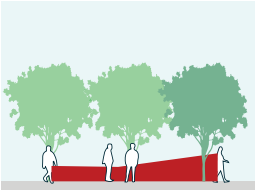


Source: National Park Service

Carter G. Woodson Memorial

Washington, D.C.

Located one block north of the home of Dr. Woodson, this memorial consists of a bronze sculpture of the father of Black history seated on a semi-circular stone bench with space for the viewer to join. With a slightly larger-than-human scale, this memorial is still approachable with its different levels for seating and contemplation, and a landmark-style piece framed with a paved plaza and light landscape interventions.



Integration

Human-Scaled

Landmark

Literal

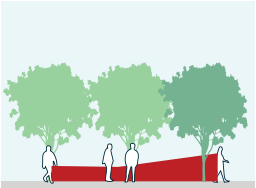
Figures + Sculptures

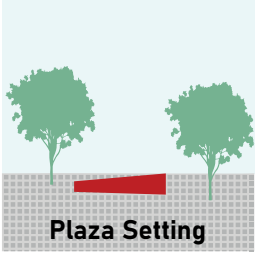
Source: Hartman-Cox Architects

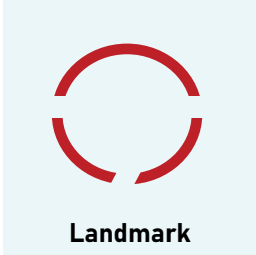
Holodomor Memorial to Victims of the Ukrainian Famine-Genocide of 1932–1933

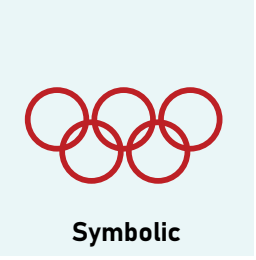
Washington, D.C.

Built to both honor the victims and educate the American public, this memorial uses the image of a disappearing wheat field as a symbol of the man-made famine in the context of Stalin's totalitarianism. One of the three monuments in Washington, D.C. designed by women, this composition of sculptural and public space elements leverages materiality and landscape to integrate itself into the plaza while also remaining visible and inviting for visitors.









Figures + Sculptures

Source: Mural Arts Philadelphia

All Power to All People

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

This temporary monument by Hank Willis Thomas across the street from City Hall was an intervention around identity and representation. The artist defined it as both a symbol and site *'highlighting ideas related to community, strength, perseverance, comradeship, and resistance to oppression.'*

Source: FPIF

Statue of Peace ('Comfort Women' Statue)

Seoul, South Korea

Adjacent to the Japanese embassy, this bronze sculpture was first erected in Seoul to both honor and demand reparations for the victims of sexual slavery by the Japanese military during World War II. Iterations of this piece across the globe are also symbols of advocacy for South Korean women's rights.

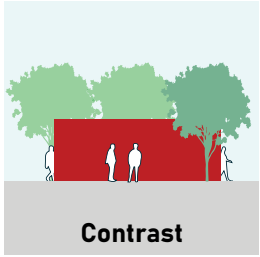
Murals

Source: Smithsonian Latino Center

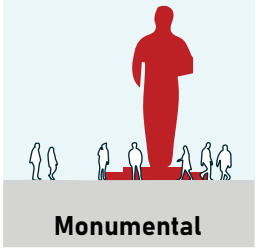
Un pueblo sin murales es un pueblo desmuralizado

Washington, D.C.

A people without murals is a demuralized people currently stands in Adams Morgan as the oldest mural in the city, painted in the mid 1970s by brothers Carlos and Renato Salazar. It illustrates the rich cultural movement and strong traditions of Latino immigrants, while also denouncing the early signs of gentrification in the center of DC's Central American community. Restored in 2005, this piece combined art and activism to depict, in both literal and abstract ways, dialogues of temporality and permanence still relevant today.



Contrast



Monumental

Composition

Literal

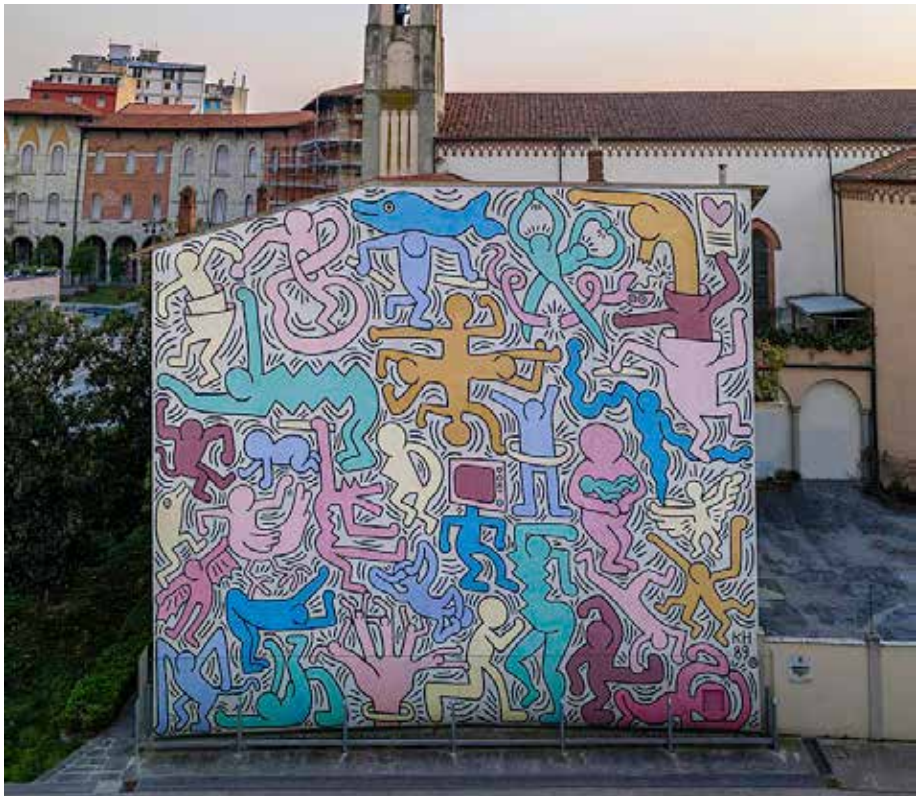
Murals

Source: National Park Service

The Great Wall of Los Angeles

Los Angeles, California

Stretching half a mile along the Tujunga Flood Control Channel, this mural chronicles the intercultural history of Los Angeles and California. Over a span of five years, 400 volunteers collaborated with historians, anthropologists, and local communities to bring this piece to fruition.



Source: Guglielmo Giambartolomei

Tuttomundo

Pisa, Italy

As one of the few murals Keith Haring envisioned to be permanent, this piece, which translates to 'All World,' is a memorial to world peace. Each figure symbolizes a different aspect of peace, from a woman holding a baby showing maternity, to human scissors cutting the head off a serpent representing triumph over evil, among others.

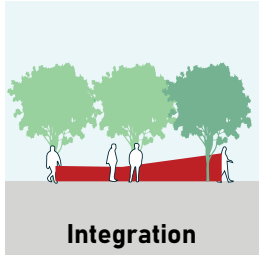
Landscape + Open Space

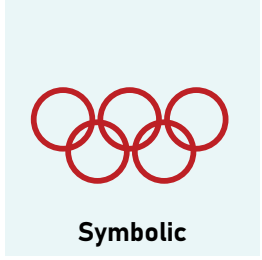
Source: National Museum of the American Indian

National Native American Veterans Memorial

Washington D.C.

Opened on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian in November 2020, this tribute recognizes, for the first time on a national scale, the service of Native Americans in all branches of the U.S. military. Joining the elevated stainless steel circle balanced on a stone drum, the memorial also incorporates water features, benches, and four lances, making the site suitable for both large ceremonies, gatherings, and more private rituals of remembrance, prayers, and healing.





Landscape + Open Space

Source: Maya Lin Studio

Story Circles

Pasco, Washington

This commemorative work integrates storytelling through landscape in Maya Lin's artwork at Sacajawea State Park. It tells the tales of people and their land in text etched into seven circles, located both above and into the ground of a historical gathering place for Native people, their culture and traditions for over 10,000 years.

Source: Gaeta Springall Architects

Memorial to the Victims of Violence in Mexico

Mexico City, Mexico

Located at the prominent park of Chapultepec, this project gives material form to one of the most pressing issues of contemporary Mexico. Including features for public appreciation and contemplation throughout the day and night, this memorial also operates as a public space for reflection, self-expression, and advocacy.

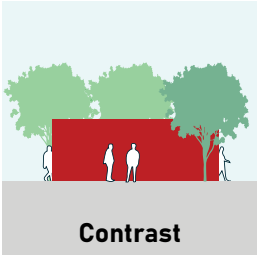
Buildings + Infrastructure

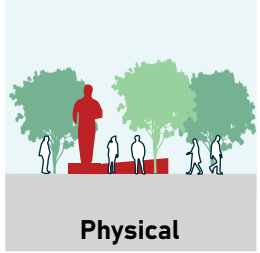
Source: BEAM Architects

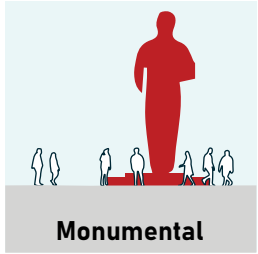
Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge

Washington, D.C.

The Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge spans the Anacostia River, serving as a vital transportation link in DC. Its design features iconic arches and is part of the South Capitol Street Corridor project. Named after the famed abolitionist, it commemorates his legacy of advocating for social justice and equality, while also offering a physical connection between emblematic areas and places in the life, work, and legacy of Frederick Douglass, located at both sides of the Anacostia River.







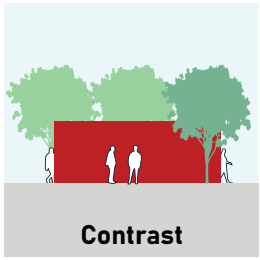
Buildings + Infrastructure

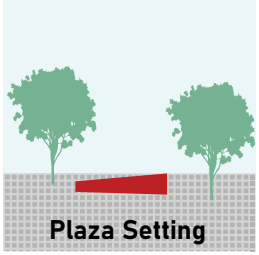
Source: Dan Arango

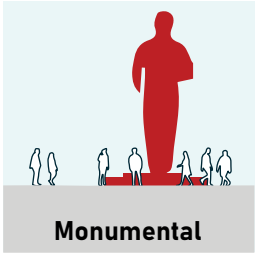
Women in Military Service for America Memorial

Arlington, Virginia

Located at the ceremonial entrance to Arlington National Cemetery, this memorial serves as the leading education center honoring the commitment, impact, and overall experiences of over 3 million women who have served the country since the American Revolution. Opened in 1997, this memorial repurposed both the indoor and outdoor spaces of the cemetery's Hemicycle structure for interactive exhibition galleries, an auditorium, and a registration space supporting the world-class collection of military women's stories.







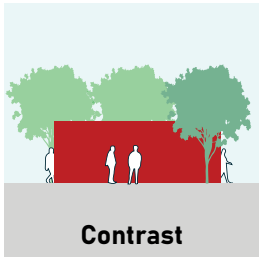
Buildings + Infrastructure – A 'Living' Memorial

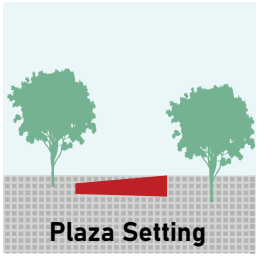
Source: The Kennedy Center

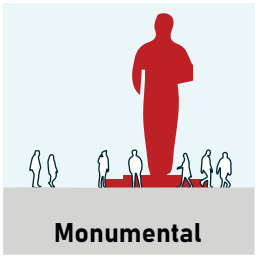
John F. Kennedy Memorial Center for the Performing Arts

Washington, D.C.

Resulting from bipartisan legislation for a National Cultural Center and later recognition of President Kennedy's commitment to the advancement of the performing arts, this memorial becomes 'alive' with over 2,000 events and gatherings every year. What was an individual landmark with auditoriums and indoor exhibition areas has now become a complex with more facilities and public open spaces for artistic expression across mediums and increased visibility to the cultural diversity of the United States.







Buildings + Infrastructure

Source: Equal Justice Initiative

National Memorial for Peace and Justice

Montgomery, Alabama

This six-acre project, alongside the Legacy Museum and the Freedom Monument Sculpture Park, is part of a larger complex re-imagined by the Equal Justice Initiative to memorialize the victims of lynchings in the U.S. after the Civil War. It focuses on both historical racial segregation but also explores issues of guilt and police violence.

Source: Gaeta Springall Architects

Memory, Peace and Reconciliation Center

Bogota, Colombia

Unlike most commemorative efforts, this project was built in the middle of an ongoing conflict. Memorializing Colombia's Internal Conflict, it remembers the more than 6 million victims lost at that time, while also hosting a wide range of social development and outreach initiatives for families of victims and other communities in the city.

IV. ENVISIONING FUTURE COMMEMORATIVE WORKS

Emerging Approaches to Commemoration

Commemorative practices are evolving, from the events and individuals recognized to the new and creative ways we honor and remember them. Trends include embracing technological advancements, adapting to urban spatial dynamics, and promoting meaningful engagement with our collective history in a way that yields more inclusive, equitable, and representative common grounds.

One clear illustration of how this latter trend has been occurring over a series of decades is the national commemoration of war-time service. Prior to 1982, military service was often represented as sculptures of leaders, such as General Pershing or General Pulaski, or of specific military groups or units. Over time, commemoration shifted away from individual accomplishments to the practices and sacrifices of the many, as illustrated by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial or the African American Civil War Memorial.

This section includes precedents across scales and locations illustrating some key considerations and trends based on the following variables shaping collective memory:

- **Evolution of information and communications technologies**, opening up new possibilities for creating memorials that resonate with diverse audiences and stand the test of time.
- **Changes in space availability and ownership**, influencing memorial integration into urban landscapes and the community's ability to engage with and maintain them effectively.
- **Consideration of memory as a resource for reflection and activism**, emphasizing the potential of commemorative works to provoke critical thought and foster collective action in addressing historical injustices through more representative public spaces.

Legacy Memorial Park

Source: Hunt Laudi Studio

Integrate participation as a feature of memorials

Source: George King Architects

COVID-19 Memorial

Sheffield, United Kingdom

Inspired by the beauty and strength of the willow tree, this memorial integrates the literal features of the tree such as the branches and trunk to create a welcoming and protected space for reflection and gathering. Leaves incorporated into the sculpture were created by local communities and incorporate personal stories - reflections of experiences during the pandemic, tributes to loved ones, appreciation to healthcare workers - embroidered onto long canvas ribbons.

Incorporate impermanence of location and format

Source: NAMES Memorial Quilt Initiative

National AIDS Memorial

Various locations across the U.S. and abroad

The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt was started in 1985 to both bring awareness to and memorialize lives impacted by AIDS. Over time, it has sparked a movement drawing contributions from across the world. What resulted in an iconic display of 50,000 quilts at the National Mall in 1996 has evolved into many other mediums, including the Interactive AIDS Quilt available for remembrance and consultation, available online *'so millions of people around the world can experience its powerful stories,'* according to NAMES.

Expand conversations on past, current, and future themes

Source: Armando Trull

'28 Blocks' Mural

Washington, D.C.

Commissioned by the city as part of its Art on the Trails program, this block-long piece on 3rd St NE by Garin Baker features the workers who build the Lincoln Memorial Statue. Named after the number of stones used to make the statue, it recognizes the hands, struggles, hopes, the dreams that went into building this country.

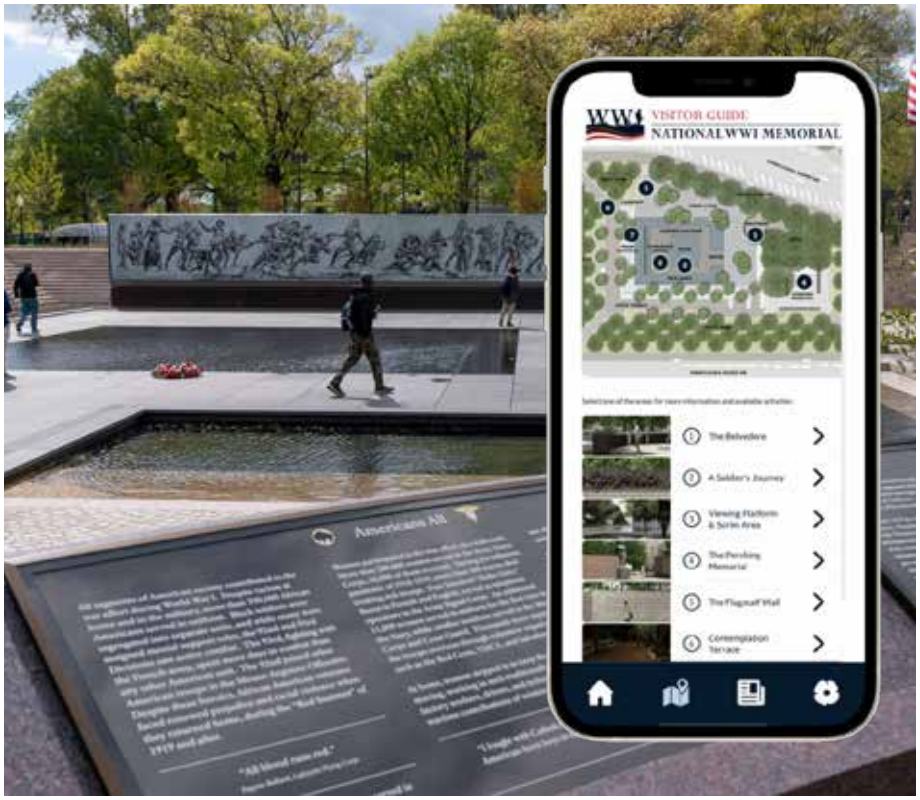
Source: The Conversationalist

Little Amal

Various locations across Europe and the U.S.

Embarking on a journey from the Turkey-Syria border across the globe, Little Amal (Arabic for 'hope') represents the thousands of refugee children displaced from their home countries. The Walk with Amal project also emerged as a way to change the narrative of the refugee crisis, increasing solidarity and collective actions of support.

Integrate technology for accessibility and increased impact



Source: Doughboy Foundation

National World War I Memorial

Washington, D.C.

As a resource complementing physical and wayfinding elements, this project features the WWI Memorial Virtual Explorer App. Apart from providing an augmented reality field trip to the site, it provides educational resources like games and audiovisual media for an enhanced user experience.

Source: Obscura Digital

UNESCO Mosaic of Change

Paris, France

In collaboration with Obscura Digital, this temporary memorial with large-scale projections emerged in the context of UNESCO's 70th anniversary. According to the organization, this storytelling platform *"reflects what we have achieved to date, and reminds us of focusing our time and resources where change is still needed most."*

V. RANGE OF COMMEMORATIVE WORKS

Featured Works

Lincoln Memorial

Marion Barry Statue

The Wailin' Mailman

Carter G. Woodson Memorial

Holodomor Memorial

All Power for All People

Statue of Peace

Un pueblo sin mural es un pueblo desmuralizado

The Great Wall of Los Angeles

Tuttomundo

National Native American Veterans Memorial

Story Circles

Memorial to the Victims of Violence in Mexico

Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge

The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

National Memorial for Peace and Justice

Memory, Peace and Reconciliation Center

Legacy Memorial Park

COVID-19 Memorial

National AIDS Memorial

28 Blocks

Little Amal

World War I Memorial

UNESCO Mosaic of Change

Additional Commemorative Works

The commemorative works featured here show how the categories of memorials can be applied across a variety of topics, locations, scales and levels of permanence. Some of the design typologies covered earlier in this guide are highlighted for further reference.

Curtain of Courage – San Bernardino, California
Human-scaled, park setting, part of a symbolic composition

Source: Hood Design Studio

Kids of the Block Memorial – Chicago, Illinois
Contrast composition, plaza setting, symbolic form

Source: Diane Latiker

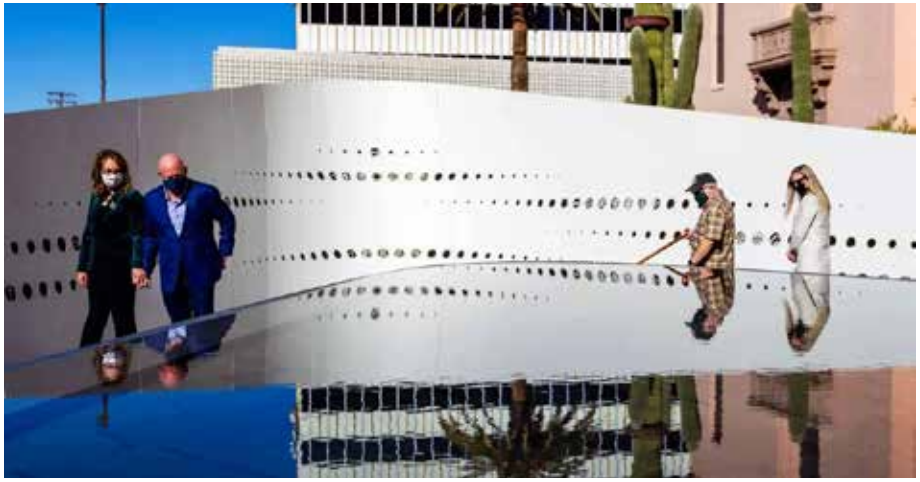
Parallel Lives Monument – Veracruz, Mexico
Monumental, plaza setting, designed as a symbolic landmark

Source: Rafael Gamo

9/11 Memorial Glade – New York City, New York
Integrated symbolic composition, park setting

Source: Jin S. Lee

Two Boxes of Oranges and Admonia Jackson – Alexandria, Virginia
Human-scaled, park setting, symbolic composition
Source: City of Alexandria



Embrace –January 8th– Memorial – Tucson, Arizona
Integrated monument, plaza setting, literal and symbolic elements
Source: SAHP

Naval Cemetery Landscape – Brooklyn, New York
Landscape composition, park setting
Source: Marvel Design

Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During WWII – Washington, D.C.
Integrated monument, plaza setting, symbolic features
Source: Shutterstock

Fearless Girl – New York City, New York
Human-scale, plaza setting, literal figure

Source: Washington Post

Iwate Tsunami Memorial Museum – Rikuzentakata, Japan
Monumental, plaza setting, literal and symbolic elements

Source: Nippon Magazine

UVA Memorial to Enslaved Laborers – Charlottesville, Virginia
Integrated monument, plaza setting, combining literal and symbolic elements

Source: MEL

Australian War Memorial – Canberra, Australia
Monumental, plaza setting, literal and symbolic elements

Source: AWM

In America, Remember – Washington, D.C.
Monumental, symbolic, temporary composition

Source: AECOM

Escadaria Selaron – Rio de Janiero, Brazil
Integrated, literal and symbolic elements

Source: Marshallhenrie, Creative Commons License

Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Mural – Atlanta, Georgia
Integrated piece, park setting, literal figures

Source: Wally Gobetz

Sousse and Bardo Memorial – Birmingham, United Kingdom
Human-scaled, park setting, symbolic sculpture

Source: George King Architects

Mandela Memorial Sculpture – Durban, South Africa
Contrast landmark, literal figure, plaza setting

Source: Marco Cianfanelli

9/11 Memorial – New York, New York
Integrated landscape, plaza setting, literal and symbolic elements

Source: Roy Rochlin

African American Civil War Memorial – Washington, D.C.
Human-scaled, plaza setting, literal elements

Source: NPS

9/11 Pentagon Memorial – Arlington, Virginia
Monumental landscape, park setting, symbolic composition

Source: U.S. Department of Defense

Of Thee We Sing

For the Living

The Soil You See...

America's Playground: DC

HOMEGOING

Let Freedom Ring

Beyond Granite – Washington, D.C.
Multi-scaled, contrasting design, symbolic composition, with multiple locations and forms across the National Mall

Source: Photo Series by AJ Mitchell Photography

Future Planned Works

Emanuel 9 Memorial – Charleston, South Carolina
Human-scaled, plaza setting, symbolic elements

Source: Emmanuel 9 Initiative

Peace Corps Commemorative Park – Washington, D.C.
Human-scaled, park setting, literal and symbolic elements

Source: PCCF

Chicago Torture Justice Memorial – Chicago, Illinois
Contrast piece, park setting, literal and symbolic elements

Source: CTJM

National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial – Washington, D.C.
Landscape landmark, plaza setting, literal and symbolic elements

Source: NDSDSF