

Proposal for *Monument Culture: International Perspectives on the Future of Monuments in a Changing World*.

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“National Culture and Art-Statism”

It is known that the Confederate monuments under controversy today were built by state and local governments and other organizations in order to support Jim Crow. These monuments might be considered a form of “art-statism,” used to inculcate in the population the racist views of those funding and building these monuments. The exploratory question posed in this chapter is whether or not all state-funded art necessarily is art which attempts to create preferences in those experiencing this art for a larger discretionary role for the state in democratic society. We build a political economy model showing that when art is used explicitly to usurp the democratic process, we can categorize this art as “art-statism.” We then use research from the National Archives, Federal Art Project under the New Deal, to illustrate case-studies where the art-production is altered to maintain legitimacy of the messages conveyed in the public art. The New Deal is especially relevant for the study of art-statism as this is the period of the largest growth in the federal government in US history (Fishback 2017). However, we also find that not all public art-production is art-statism, some public art-production can be for “national culture”-building, creating a sense of love for country, a normatively positive societal value (Klamer 2016). Examples here might include monuments recognizing those who lost their lives in time of war or placing founding documents in the national history museum. In this chapter, we explore the tension between art-statism and culture-building in public art.

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