

Examine Contemporary Controversies with a Year-Long Online Series, *Great Lectures: Great Monuments*

PHILADELPHIA — In an era of dismantling symbols of the past, the Penn Museum has focused its annual Great Lectures Series on a controversial topic, "Great Monuments."

Now online, the 2020-2021 Great Lectures Series features acclaimed University of Pennsylvania faculty and special guest hosts who explore the meaning of monuments, their connotations today, and how their significance has shifted over time.

Great Lectures: Great Monuments continues through June 2021 with a compelling line-up:



Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2020 at 6:00 pm

The Palace of Pharaoh Merenptah: Examining an Archaeological "Cold Case"

Kevin Cahail, Ph.D., Collections Manager, Egyptian Section

The Pharaoh Merenptah (reigned ca. 1213–1203 BCE) built a ceremonial palace complex at Egypt's political capital, Memphis. Excavated by Clarence Fisher between 1915-1920, elements of this magnificent building will be featured inside the upcoming **Ancient Egypt and Nubia Galleries**.

Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2020 at 6:00 pm

You Want a Confederate Monument? My Body is a Confederate Monument

Caroline Randall Williams, who commanded international attention for dismantling systemic racism with her powerful piece in *The New York Times*, leads this compelling lecture on how monuments are *more than* buildings, statues, or structures.

Wednesday Jan. 6, 2021 at 6:00 pm

The Lasting Legacies of Mesopotamia: Ideas, Monuments, Images

Holly Pittman, Ph.D., Curator in the Near East Section and Bok Family Professor in the Humanities, Penn History of Art

Cultural features of modern western societies originated in Mesopotamia (now Iraq), which flourished from 3000 to 323 BCE.

Wednesday Feb. 3, 2021 at 6:00 pm

Slave Dwellings, Monuments, and the United Daughters of the Confederacy

Joseph McGill, Jr., history consultant for Magnolia Plantation in Charleston, S.C., and the founder and director of The Slave Dwelling Project

America's history can be told through its buildings and monuments, including how iconography bolsters white supremacy.

Wednesday March 3, 2021 at 6:00 pm

Commemoration and Monuments in Medieval India

Mark Lycett, Ph.D., Director of Penn's South Asia Center

Monuments were only one part of a larger set of features and practices associated with commemoration in precolonial South Asia. In partnership with the South Asia Center, this discussion sets the stage for a broader consideration of the practice and politics of heritage in medieval India.

Wednesday, April 7, 2021 at 6:00 pm

The War Memorials of Imperial Rome

C. Brian Rose, Ph.D., James B. Pritchard Professor of Mediterranean Archaeology and Peter C. Ferry Curator-in-Charge of the Mediterranean Section

War memorials celebrating Roman victories throughout the Mediterranean, Europe, and the Middle East were designed with triumphal arches, monumental narrative columns, and large-scale battle paintings that influenced similar memorials in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Wednesday May 5, 2021 at 6:00 pm

Building Monuments, Monumentalizing Buildings

David Brownlee, Ph.D., Frances Shapiro-Weitzenhoffer Professor Emeritus, Penn History of Art, and a historian of modern architecture

History offers important lessons in creating monuments that reflect a society's current values and aspirations. For instance, some of the buildings that hold the most meaning, such as Independence Hall, were not built to be monuments, while ambitious programs to build monuments, like Philadelphia's City Hall, failed to capture contemporary attention.

Wednesday, June 2, 2021 at 6:00 pm

Then and Now: Monuments, Memorials, and Public Art

Penny Balkin Bach, Executive Director and Chief Curator of the Association for Public Art (aPA, formerly the Fairmount Park Art Association)

With a powerful public awakening regarding honorees, those who have inherited monuments and memorials view them differently than those who erected them.

Each online lecture is \$5. To register for this year's virtual Great Lecture Series, [click here](#).

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About the Penn Museum

Since 1887, the Museum has been transforming our understanding of the human experience. Dedicated to building connections between cultures, the Museum welcomes everyone to uncover the past, gain an understanding of our shared humanity, and find one's own place in the arc of human history. For more information, follow [@PennMuseum](#) on social media, visit www.penn.museum, or call 215.898.4000.