

Jeremy Deller, Fourth Plinth Proposals

Biografia Autore:

Jeremy Deller (nato il 30 marzo 1966) è un artista concettuale inglese, noto per i suoi lavori video e installativi. Gran parte delle opere di Deller è fondata su principi di collaborazione; presentano inoltre un forte contenuto politico, sia nei temi trattati sia nella messa in discussione dell'ego artistico attraverso il coinvolgimento di altre persone nel processo creativo. Ha vinto il Turner Prize nel 2004 e ha rappresentato la Gran Bretagna alla 55^a Biennale di Venezia nel 2013.

Titolo:

Fourth Plinth Proposals

Anno:

2008

Abstract:

Jeremy Deller in questi due progetti, entrambi risalenti al 2008 e destinati al Quarto Plinto di Trafalgar Square, ha proposto una visione antimonumentale e fortemente politica, non da artista ma da cittadino secondo le sue parole, strettamente collegata alla contemporanea situazione del paese coinvolto nella guerra in Iraq.

Una prima proposta consiste in una statua a dimensione reale di David Kelly, lo scienziato britannico morto apparentemente suicida a seguito delle dichiarazioni rilasciate ai media riguardo ai dubbi di una reale presenza di armi di distruzione di massa in possesso del governo iracheno, e della successiva inchiesta parlamentare.

La seconda proposta, intitolata *The Spoils of War*, prevede invece di esporre sul basamento la carcassa di una macchina distrutta da una bomba in Iraq, portando una traccia della guerra in quello che è stato per secoli il cuore dell'impero britannico e ancora oggi viene riconosciuto universalmente come un luogo dal carattere fortemente monumentale.

Descrizione del progetto:

“These are two ideas I had for the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square. I think the more you try to make art for the Fourth Plinth, the worse it gets. So I didn't approach it as an artist, more as a citizen. One idea, *The Spoils of War* (Memorial for an Unknown Civilian), was to exhibit a car that had been destroyed in Iraq in the heart of the former British empire, as it were. Trafalgar Square is surrounded by colonial embassies and the site itself explicitly commemorates a battle. My other idea was to display a life-sized statue of

David Kelly – the scientist who killed himself after being accused of sharing with journalists his doubts regarding the government’s notorious WMD dossier. Kelly paid the ultimate price for his involvement in the scandal – he was humiliated during a televised parliamentary inquiry and was made to feel the full weight of governmental scrutiny. It was a shameful event in British public life.”¹

L’artista descrive con queste parole le due proposte qui pubblicate, presentate all’interno del grande progetto di arte pubblica collegato al *Fourth Plinth* di Trafalgar Square, a Londra, e mai realizzate. Il “Quarto Plinto” era stato infatti originariamente costruito nella seconda metà del XIX secolo, come basamento per ospitare la statua equestre di Guglielmo IV, ma è sempre rimasto vuoto e per oltre 150 anni è proseguito il dibattito riguardo al suo possibile utilizzo, fino al 1999 quando i primi tre incarichi sono stati assegnati come progetti temporanei e *site specific* ad artisti contemporanei. A seguito del successo riscontrato da questa prima iniziativa è stata composta una commissione di esperti, che vede al suo interno lo stesso Jeremy Deller, per seguire i successivi bandi, inviti e selezione dei progetti: questi hanno stabilito ufficialmente e all’unanimità la definitiva destinazione d’uso del quarto plinto come supporto per installazioni appositamente commissionate di arte contemporanea.

In particolare Jeremy Deller nei due progetti presentati all’interno di MoRE, entrambi risalenti al 2008, ha proposto una visione antim monumentale e fortemente politica, non da artista ma da cittadino secondo le sue parole, strettamente collegata alla contemporanea situazione del paese coinvolto nella guerra in Iraq.

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Jeremy Deller ha affrontato il tema del coinvolgimento britannico nella guerra in Iraq successivamente anche nel 2009 con *It Is What It Is: Conversations About Iraq*. Questo prevedeva che in diversi luoghi - a partire dal New Museum di New York - fossero messe in scena conversazioni e incontri multidisciplinari sul tema, a fianco di un’installazione consistente nei resti di una macchina distrutta in un attentato avvenuto nel 2007 a Baghdad, lungo Al-Mutanabbi Street. Per tre settimane quindi questo progetto, commissionato da un consorzio tra New Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art di Chicago, e Hammer Museum di Los Angeles, ha viaggiato in tutta America: oggi la macchina è esposta tra le collezioni permanenti dell’ Imperial War Museum di Londra mentre sul sito <http://www.conversationsaboutiraq.org/> rimane documentata l’intera esperienza.

Tutti i progetti di Jeremy Deller presentati all’interno di MoRE sono stati inizialmente

1 *Joy in people. Jeremy Deller*, Hayward Publishing, London, 2012, p. 198

selezionati ed esposti dall'artista all'interno della mostra monografica retrospettiva *Joy in People*², e pubblicati nel relativo catalogo nella sezione intitolata "My Failures (2004-present)": nelle sue stesse parole "una sezione di lavori che speravo di essere in grado di fare, ma non sono stato in grado di fare".

Descrizione della documentazione del progetto:

1_ TheSpoilsofWar.jpg (file jpg, 1173 × 1646 pixel, 150 dpi)

The Spoils of War (Memorial for an Unknown Civilian), 2008. Modello di una macchina distrutta su un plinto. Foto James O Jenkins.

2_ DrDavidKelly.jpg (file jpg, 1181 × 886 pixel, 150 dpi)

Dr David Kelly Fourth Plinth Proposal, 2008. Rendering dell'artista della scultura del Dr. David Kelly su un plinto.

Committente e ulteriori informazioni sul progetto originale:

Il committente per il *Fourth Plinth* – dopo le prime 3 commissioni volute nel 1998 dalla Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) – era nel 2008 il Mayor of London attraverso il Fourth Plinth Programme.

La proposta di Jeremy Deller *The Spoils of War* ha fatto parte nel 2008 della selezione di sei progetti – che includeva anche lavori di Tracey Emin, Antony Gormley, Anish Kapoor, Yinka Shonibare and Bob & Roberta Smith – esposti alla Annenberg Court della National Gallery dall'8 gennaio fino al 30 marzo 2008. I progetti di Jeremy Deller sono stati inoltre selezionati all'interno della mostra *Fourth Plinth: Contemporary Monument* presso l'ICA di Londra, dal 5 dicembre 2012 al 20 gennaio 2013, insieme alle proposte di Chris Burden, Allora & Calzadilla, Sokari Douglas Camp, Elmgreen & Dragset, Tracey Emin, Katharina Fritsch, Brian Griffiths, Hew Locke, Stefan Gec, Antony Gormley, Anish Kapoor, Sarah Lucas, Mariele Neudecker, Marc Quinn, Thomas Schütte, Yinka Shonibare, Bob & Roberta Smith, Mark Wallinger, Rachel Whiteread e Bill Woodrow.

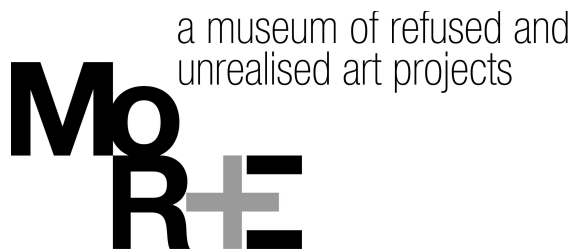
Jeremy Deller fa parte della Fourth Plinth Commissioning Group, il panel di *specialist advisors* scelto per guidare e monitorare la commissione per il plinto, insieme a Iwona Blazwick, Direttrice della Whitechapel Gallery, Mick Brundle di Arup Associates, Tamsin Dillon, direttore di Art on the Underground, Transport for London, Ekow Eshun, scrittore e presentatore televisivo, Jo Baxendale, Relationship Manager, Visual Art, Arts Council England, Grayson Perry, Artista, Matthew Slotover, Co-direttore di Frieze, Jon Snow, giornalista e presentatore televisivo, e Justine Simons, per la Greater London Authority, che è anche direttrice del progetto.

Motivo di mancata realizzazione:

Fu selezionata dalla commissione e quindi realizzata la proposta di Antony Gormley, *One & Other*³, secondo la quale 2.400 spettatori hanno occupato il quarto plinto per un'ora

2 Jeremy Deller: *Joy in People*, Hayward Gallery, London, 22.02-13.05.2012; ICA, Philadelphia, 19.09-30.12.2012; Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis 01.02-28.04.2013.

3 A. Gormley, *One and Other*, Jonathan Cape, London, 2010.



ciascuno, per una durata totale del progetto di 100 giorni. La documentazione dell'esperienza è disponibile all'indirizzo <http://www.webarchive.org.uk/ukwa/target/32145446>.

Bibliografia specifica

Joy in people. Jeremy Deller, Hayward Publishing, London, 2012.

Jeremy Deller. *It Is What It Is: Conversations about Iraq*, Creative Time, New York, 2012.

Vesna Krstich *On the Road Again with Jeremy Deller: Conversations About Iraq*, "Art papers magazine". vol. 33, n. 4, 2009, pp. 18-21.

scheda a cura di:

Marco Scotti

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Artist:

Jeremy Deller (born 30 March 1966) is an English conceptual, video and installation artist. Much of Deller's work is collaborative; it has a strong political aspect, in the subjects dealt with and also the devaluation of artistic ego through the involvement of other people in the creative process. He won the Turner Prize in 2004 and represented Great Britain at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013.

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Abstract:

Jeremy Deller with these two projects, both developed in 2008 for the public art project connected to the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square, proposes an anti-monumental and deeply political vision, working – in his own words – more from the perspective of a citizen than from that of an artist, and remaining closely connected to the contemporary situation of a country, then involved in the Iraq War.

The first proposal is a life-size statue of David Kelly, the British scientist whose death, officially ruled a suicide, followed statements he had made to the media expressing doubts about the alleged presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and the subsequent parliamentary inquiry.

The second proposal, entitled *The Spoils of War*, consists of exhibiting the wreckage of a car destroyed by a bomb in Iraq, thus bringing a trace of the war to what has for centuries been the heart of the British Empire and is still universally recognized as a place of strong monumental character.

Project description:

“These are two ideas I had for the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square. I think the more you try to make art for the Fourth Plinth, the worse it gets. So I didn't approach it as an artist, more as a citizen. One idea, *The Spoils of War* (Memorial for an Unknown Civilian), was to exhibit a car that had been destroyed in Iraq in the heart of the former British empire, as it were. Trafalgar Square is surrounded by colonial embassies and the site itself explicitly commemorates a battle. My other idea was to display a life-sized statue of David Kelly – the scientist who killed himself after being accused of sharing with journalists his doubts regarding the government's notorious WMD dossier. Kelly paid the ultimate price for his involvement in the scandal – he was humiliated during a televised parliamentary inquiry and was made to feel the full weight of governmental scrutiny. It was a shameful event in British public life.”⁴

The artist describes with these words the two proposals published here, presented as part of the great public art project connected to the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square, London and never realized. The "Fourth Plinth" was in fact originally built in the second half of the nineteenth century, as a base to host the equestrian statue of William IV, but has remained empty for over 150 years and the debate about its possible use has continued till 1999, when the first three temporary commissions were assigned to contemporary artists for site-specific projects. Following the success of this first initiative it was decided to form a committee of experts, which comprises Jeremy Deller himself, to follow the subsequent calls, invitations and selection of projects: this committee has officially and unanimously established the final destination use of the fourth plinth as a support for specifically commissioned installations of contemporary art.

In particular, in the two projects donated to MoRE, both developed in 2008, Jeremy Deller proposes an anti-monumental and deeply political vision, working – in his own words – more from the perspective of a citizen than from that of an artist, and remaining closely connected to the contemporary situation of a country involved in the Iraq War.

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Jeremy Deller addressed the issue of British involvement in the Iraq War again in 2009 with the project *It Is What It Is: Conversations About Iraq*. Beginning at the New Museum in New York, the project brought staged conversations and multidisciplinary meetings on the subject to a number of venues, alongside an installation consisting of the remains of a car destroyed in a bombing in Baghdad in 2007, on al-Mutanabbi Street.

For three weeks, the project—commissioned by a consortium consisting of the New Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles—travelled across the United States. The car is now held in the permanent collections of the Imperial War Museum in London, while the website formerly dedicated to the project, <http://www.conversationsaboutiraq.org/>, preserves documentation of the entire experience.

All the Jeremy Deller projects presented within the MoRE museum were initially selected by the artist himself, exhibited in the monographic retrospective *Joy in People*, and published in the catalogue section entitled "My Failures (2004–present)": in his own words, "a section of works that I wish I'd been able to make but wasn't able to."

Project materials description:

1 TheSpoilsofWar.jpg (file jpg, 1173 × 1646 pixel, 150 dpi)

The Spoils of War (Memorial for an Unknown Civilian), 2008. Model of the destroyed car on a plinth. Photo James O Jenkins.

2_ DrDavidKelly.jpg (file jpg, 1181 × 886 pixel, 150 dpi)

Dr David Kelly Fourth Plinth Proposal, 2008. Artist's rendering of Dr David Kelly sculpture on the plinth

Commissioner and other information about the original project:

The commissioner for the Fourth Plinth—following the first three projects assigned in 1998 by the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA)—was, in 2008, the Mayor of London through the Fourth Plinth Programme.

One of Jeremy Deller's proposals, *The Spoils of War*, was also included in 2008 among the six shortlisted projects – together with works by Tracey Emin, Antony Gormley, Anish Kapoor, Yinka Shonibare and Bob and Roberta Smith – exhibited in the Annenberg Court of the National Gallery, London, from 8 January to 30 March 2008.

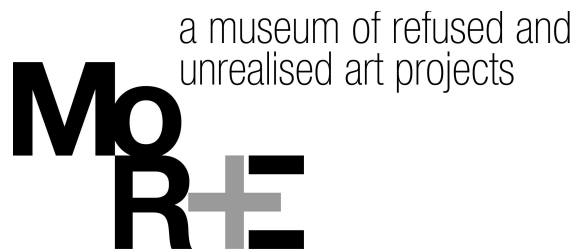
Jeremy Deller's projects were also selected for the exhibition *Fourth Plinth: Contemporary Monument* at the ICA in London, held from 5 December 2012 to 20 January 2013, together with proposals by Chris Burden, Allora & Calzadilla, Sokari Douglas Camp, Elmgreen & Dragset, Tracey Emin, Katharina Fritsch, Brian Griffiths, Hew Locke, Stefan Gec, Antony Gormley, Anish Kapoor, Sarah Lucas, Mariele Neudecker, Marc Quinn, Thomas Schütte, Yinka Shonibare, Bob and Roberta Smith, Mark Wallinger, Rachel Whiteread and Bill Woodrow.

Jeremy Deller is a member of the Fourth Plinth Commissioning Group, the panel of specialist advisers appointed to guide and oversee the projects for the plinth. The group also includes Iwona Blazwick, Director of the Whitechapel Gallery; Mick Brundle of Arup Associates; Tamsin Dillon, Head of Art on the Underground at Transport for London; Ekow Eshun, writer and television presenter; Jo Baxendale, Relationship Manager for Visual Arts at Arts Council England; Grayson Perry, artist; Matthew Slotover, co-director of Frieze; Jon Snow, journalist and television presenter; and Justine Simons of the Greater London Authority, who is also the director of the project.

Unrealized project: reason why

Antony Gormley project, *One & Other*⁵, was selected by the committee and then realised. This work consisted in 2400 spectators who occupied the fourth plinth for an hour each, for a total duration of 100 days. A documentation of the experience is available at <http://www.webarchive.org.uk/ukwa/target/32145446>.

5 A. Gormley, *One and Other*, Jonathan Cape, London, 2010.



Selective bibliography:

Joy in people. Jeremy Deller, Hayward Publishing, London, 2012.

Jeremy Deller. *It Is What It Is: Conversations about Iraq*, Creative Time, New York, 2012.

Vesna Krstich *On the Road Again with Jeremy Deller: Conversations About Iraq*, "Art papers magazine". vol. 33, n. 4, 2009, pp. 18-21

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