

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY, 2016

RESPECT - NEW YORK'S PREMIER SCIENTIFIC MUSEUM CONTINUE TO HONOR THE BOGUS RACIAL CLASSIFICATION THAT ASSIGN COLONIZED PEOPLES TO THE DOMAIN OF NATURE HERE AND EUROPEANS TO THE REALM OF CULTURE ACROSS THE PARK IN THE MET. WE DEMAND THAT THE MUSEUM'S DISPLAY ARRANGEMENTS AND CLASSIFICATIONS BE RECONCEIVED BY CURATORIAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE "EXHIBITED" POPULATIONS AND THAT HUMAN REMAINS, SACRED THINGS, AND OBJECTS OF POWER STOLEN FROM INDIGENOUS PEOPLES SHOULD BE RETURNED.

REMOVE - THE EQUESTRIAN STATUS OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT OUTSIDE THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY IS A STARK EMBODIMENT OF THE WHITE SUPREMACY THAT ROOSEVELT ESPOUSED AND PROMOTED. IT IS AN AFFRONT TO ALL WHO PASS IT ON ENTERING THE MUSEUM BUT ESPECIALLY TO AFRICAN AND NATIVE AMERICANS. A MONUMENT THAT APPEARS TO GLORIFY RACIAL HIERARCHIES SHOULD BE RETIRED FROM PUBLIC VIEW. WE DEMAND THAT CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTE TO REMOVE THIS MONUMENT OF RACIST CONQUEST.

RENAME - IT'S TIME FOR THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL TO RENAME COLUMBUS DAY AS INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY. NEW YORK CITY SITS ON THE TERRITORY OF THE LENAPE AND OVER ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE LIVE ON THIS TERRITORY TODAY. WE DEMAND THAT THIS HOLIDAY BE RELAUNCHED AS AN OCCASION TO DIGNIFY OUR INDIGENOUS BROTHERS AND SISTERS AND IT SHOULD NO LONGER COMMEMORATE A FIGURE WIDELY ASSOCIATED WITH EXPLOITATION AND ENSLAVEMENT.

What has (not) changed since 2016? Columbus is still on his perch above Columbus Circle. Sixteen months after Mayor de Blasio reluctantly agreed to its removal, the Roosevelt monument that disgraces the entrance to the American Museum of Natural History has not been hauled off. The city has no active Land Back initiatives that we know of. The big museums are dug in, actively resisting decolonization, while strengthening their ties to corporate wealth. Our universities are not any better, congratulating themselves on land acknowledgements, but unwilling to go any further.

DECOLONIZE! RECLAIM! REIMAGINE!

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY

— 2021 —



**REMOVE
RESPECT
THE
THE RENAME
STATUE
THE
ANCESTORS
DAY**

— LIFE AND COUNTER-POWER ON —

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY 2021

Following the lead of many other cities, Columbus Day has been erased from the NYC school calendar. Finally! But wait, officials are now calling it Italian Heritage Day / Indigenous People's Day. That is the offensive result of a compromise, cobbled together in response to white outrage at the change of name. Settlers shouldn't get to share their day in the sun with the people whose land they stole. That's really not difficult to understand, but electeds are spineless when confronted by Loud White Voices proclaiming that their heritage matters more. What's the lesson here? Having justice on our side is not enough. Our voices and our actions need to be louder and stronger.

What else has (not) changed? Columbus is still on his perch above Columbus Circle. Sixteen months after Mayor de Blasio reluctantly agreed to its removal, the Roosevelt monument that disgraces the entrance to the American Museum of Natural History has not been hauled off. The city has no active Land Back initiatives that we know of. The big museums are dug in, actively resisting decolonization, while strengthening their ties to corporate wealth. Our universities are not any better, congratulating themselves on land acknowledgements, but unwilling to go any further.

Why is NYC lagging so far behind the curve? This city has a progressive self-image, but its institutions and centers of power are



Remove The Statue
after midnight on the morning of October 6, 2021

October 6, 2021

News

Controversial Roosevelt Monument Doused in Red Paint at American Museum of Natural History

The equestrian statue of Theodore Roosevelt at New York's American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) was splashed with red paint minutes after midnight. More than a year after the Manhattan museum promised to remove the long-disputed statue, it still stands.

On by Hakim Bishara 5 days ago
October 6. The guerrilla action comes days before the annual Indigenous Peoples Day (or Columbus Day) on October 11, which has seen large protests against the controversial monument in previous years.



conservative AF when it comes to bold steps. All of them bend to the rule of real estate, like flowers toward the sun. The real estate aristocracy is the permanent government of New York, and its business is ongoing land settlement, whichever way you slice it. (Even air rights.) The predatory capture and disposal of land continues unchecked, almost four centuries after the "sale" of Mannahatta to the Dutch West India Company in 1626.

As October 11 approaches, we pay respect to Indigenous New York, also known as Lenapehoking. It is all around us, in the landscape and the built environment of high-rises constructed by Native workers. And its heartbeat is in every neighborhood and borough. There are 110,000 Indigenous people in the city, far more than any other American city. Excluded from public recognition, and blocked from exercising their land rights, they are building strength and influence, year by year.

On the eve of Indigenous People's Day, we salute the momentous struggles against the fossil fuel industry's pipelines. Snaking their way across Turtle Island, from British Columbia to North Brooklyn, they are poisoning biodiverse lands used for hunting, fishing, harvesting, and vital water resources. Their toxic progress has been met everywhere with resistance, and Indigenous people have been in the forefront. For the communities in their path, the pipelines are only the latest form of colonial plunder and trauma. In view of the recent setback at Line 3, we stand with Water Protectors who are committed to disarming it by any means necessary.

REMOVE
THE
SUPREMACY
WHITE
ABOLISH



The New York Times/Tyrone Duke

STATUE DEFACED: State's memorial to Theodore Roosevelt at the Americas Museum of Natural History after it was marked with red paint by vandals yesterday morning.

Six Indians Accused of Defacing Theodore Roosevelt Statue Here

By LESLEY OELSNER

Six young American Indians were arrested here yesterday and accused of defacing the state's memorial to President Theodore Roosevelt with several buckets of red paint.

According to the police, three men and three women were caught at 2:30 A.M. on the steps of the American Museum of Natural History, site of the memorial, with paint cans in hand.

According to Detective Carl Iannaci, the bronze equestrian statue in front of the museum was dripping with paint and the three young women were busily spray painting the slogan "Returns Alcatraz" and "Fascist Killer" on the museum wall.

The three men, the detective said, were holding the buckets.

York area representative of the National Indian Youth Council, "you could guess why."

The statue, made in 1935 by James Earl Fraser and dedicated with the surrounding plaza and entranceway on January, 1936, as the official state memorial, shows the President astride a horse. On one side with what Miss Kehahbah described as a "bowed head," stands an Indian; on the other side, an African.

The six, who will return to court for a hearing on Thursday, are: Gus Grey Mountain, 25 years old, of 186 Atlens Avenue, Brooklyn; Gerald Crane, 25, of 308 West 21st Street; Raymond Sprang, 22, of 43 Sullivan Street; Blanche Was-
 Dec. 25, 1968
 Amsterdam

Land

We begin today by acknowledging that we are standing on the homeland of the Lenape, which is, and always has been, a place of Indigenous movement. Our action today, at its most fundamental level, stands in solidarity with the Lenape and all Indigenous peoples, here and beyond, whose land was stolen to create settler states, and who continue to live under siege, surveillance, and colonial structural violence on their own occupied land. We stand with all those advancing Indigenous resurgence and decolonization in the face of colonial oppression. We stand in support of the return of their lands. This acknowledgement is a call to commit, and to take on the responsibility, to dismantle the ongoing effects of settler colonialism. This is where, together, we must begin and persist.

**WE DEMAND:
 REMOVE
 THE STATUE**



*white supremacist monuments
 have no place in our city
 or our cultural institutions*

decolonize this place

WE
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 UE

FROM THE MUSEUM TO THE CITY

CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE

Dating to the reign of Thutmose III in 1185 BCE, this obelisk is one of three such objects bearing the same name. The other two are located in the imperial capitols of London and Paris respectively. In a process initiated by the US consul to Egypt, the object was presented as a "gift" to the United States from the Egyptian Khedive (the local tributary of the Ottoman empire) in 1879 in exchange for securing a trade agreement and diplomatic alliance favorable to the interests of the Egyptian comprador elite. It was removed from the seashore of Alexandria in 1881 by Arab laborers under command of a U.S. naval officer tasked with transporting it to New York.. The costs of removal, transportation, and re-installation in Central Park were born by the oligarch William Vanderbilt, who worked closely with the head of the New York City Parks conservancy to secure a location for it. Seeking to align itself with the mystique of "Eastern" antiquity as well as to mimic the trophy-taking of its geopolitical contenders Britain and France, the United States campaign to acquire this object is itself a monument to imperial plunder, geopolitical manipulation, and oligarchic philanthropy. In this respect, it closely mirrors the histories of wealth, power, and exploitation crystallized by the Metropolitan Museum just behind it.

NOTE ON TRAINING

There can be no radical action without radical thought, and vice versa. This is the basis for training in the practice of freedom: a constant dialectic of learning and unlearning, questioning and imagining, planning and organizing. Essential to this training is the embodied experience of shedding fear, cultivating courage, developing skills, taking risks, and testing conditions through direct action.



Remove the Statue

SENECA VILLAGE

Commissioned by city elites as a picturesque landscape for ruling class leisure and "passive recreation" for the white working classes, Central Park was founded on a dual history of displacement: first, the removal of the Lenape caretakers of Manahatta during the initial period of settler-colonization; and second, the eviction of the Black community that took up residency in what was known as Seneca Village between 82nd and 89th streets starting in 1825. In the first large-scale usage of eminent domain in the history of New York, the city evicted all of the residents of the settlement in 1857 to make way for park construction, allowing Frederick Law Olmsted to engineer an artificial "nature" of lawns, rambles, and vistas on the erased grounds of the community. Anticipating later projects of Urban Renewal, park advocates described Seneca Village as a "shantytown" and the residents there as "squatters" and "vagabonds and scoundrels". Egbert Viele, a former officer in the Mexican-American war and the park's first engineer, wrote a report about the "refuge of squatters" living on the future site of Central Park, and criticized them as having "very little knowledge of the English language, and with very little respect for the law." Seneca villagers fought back against the evictions, but the "green" vision of Olmsted was prioritized over the survival of the community.



THE GREAT LAWN

Following the eviction of Seneca village and the construction of Central Park, this area of the city soon became an aesthetic amenity attractive to real-estate developers, who filled the urban grid on either side of the park with luxury housing for the wealthy. From the so-called Great Lawn, one sees to the east and west the skyline of early 20th-century aristocratic townhouses; in the 1930s, as the rich looked out of their windows, they would have seen on this spot Hoovervilles, self-organized encampments of precarious and homeless workers demanding housing and public support. Looking to the south, we now see the construction sky-scraping residential towers of the 1% in upper midtown. This ultra-luxury city-scape is a harbinger of developers' plans for the northern frontier of the park in Harlem. Another kind of tower haunts this entire urban panorama: the De Blasio administration's plan to install its new jails on the top of commercial high-rises throughout the boroughs.

While initially designed as an aesthetic amenity primarily for the wealthy, the unavoidable presence of poor people in the park has always provoked hatred and paranoia by white elites. The image of the park as a place of racialized disorder has persisted since the 1970s, making it a space of intensive surveillance and criminalization, attested to by the massive NYPD floodlights stored just adjacent to the Great Lawn.

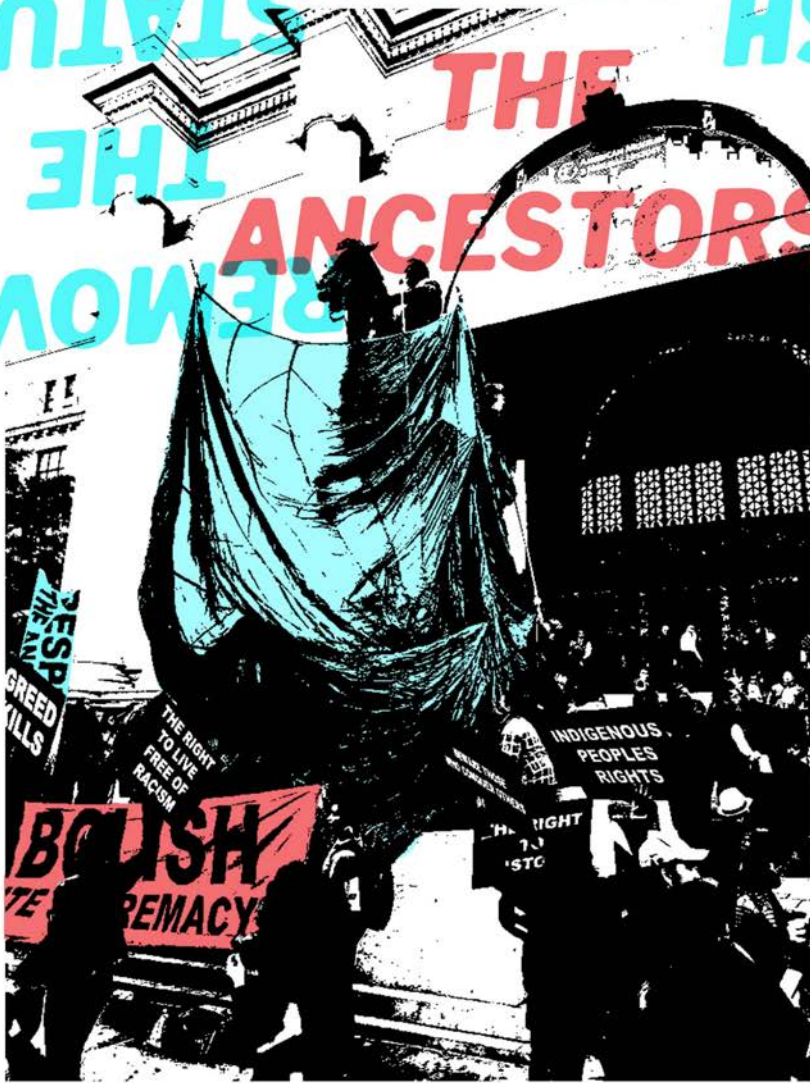


"Public Enemy" by David Hammons, Oct. 19, 1991-Jan. 7, 1992, The Museum of Modern Art.



RESPECT

RESPECT
 THE
 ANCESTORS



GREED
 KILLS

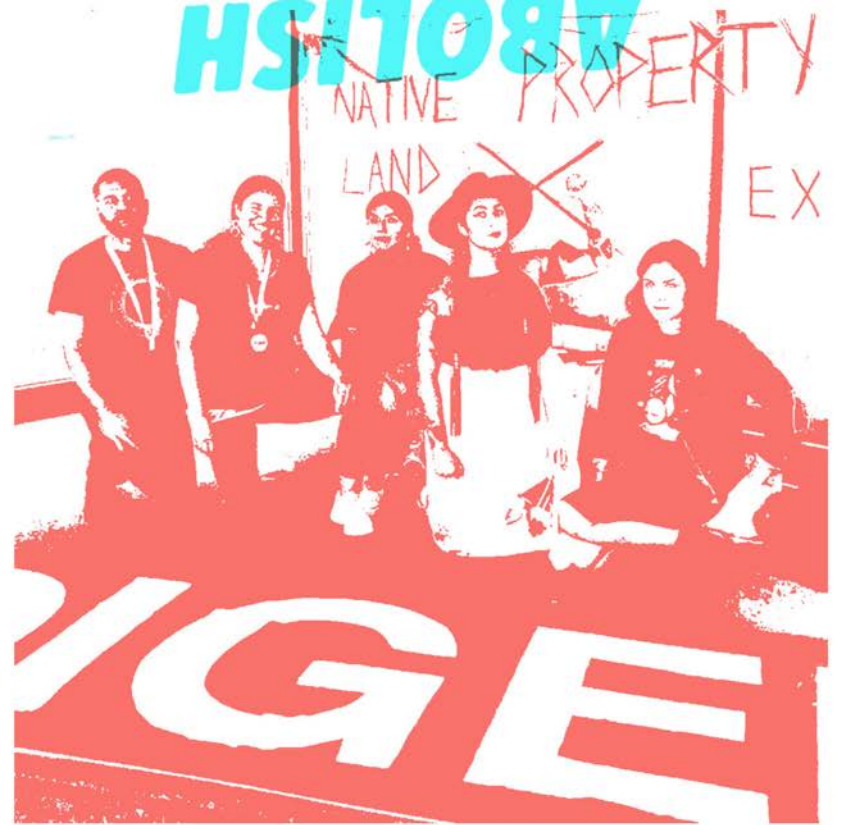
THE RIGHT
 TO LIVE
 FREE OF
 RACISM

ABOLISH
 WHITE
 SUPREMACY

INDIGENOUS
 PEOPLES
 RIGHTS

THE RIGHT
 TO LIVE

RESPECT
 SUPREMACY
 THE
 ANCESTORS
 ABOLISH



HALL OF EASTERN WOODLANDS INDIANS
 NISHNAABEKWEWAG NEGAMONID

Members of the Anishinaabe women's hand drumming group, Nishnaabekwegewag Negamonid, will be joined by native and non-native women-identified accomplices in the Hall of Eastern Woodland Indians. Together they will use movement, language, and sound to disrupt the colonial space of the museum and speak to prior, persisting Indigenous presences.

HALL OF EASTERN WOODLANDS INDIANS

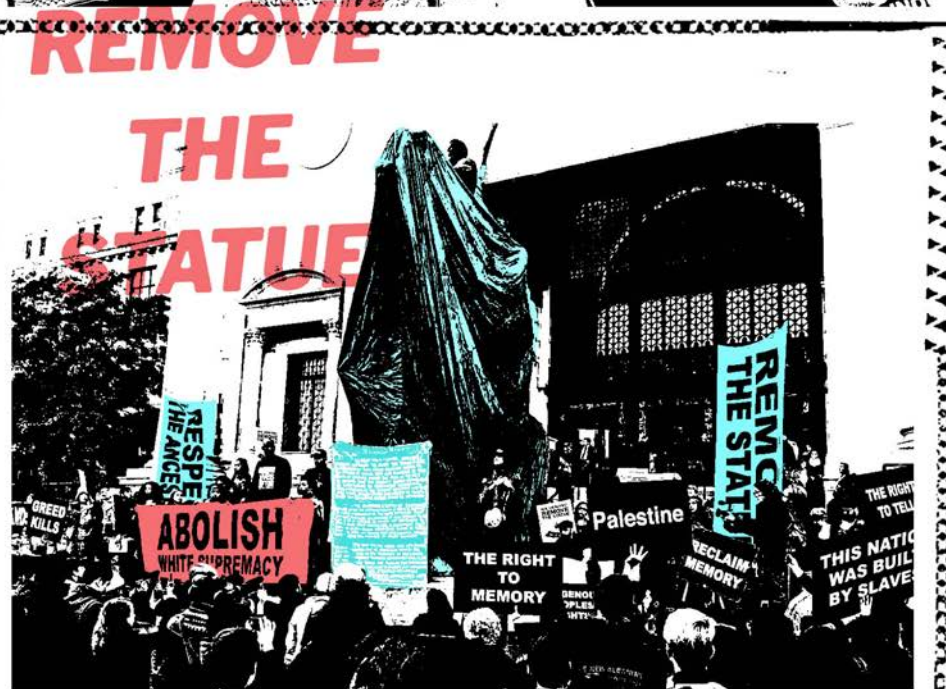
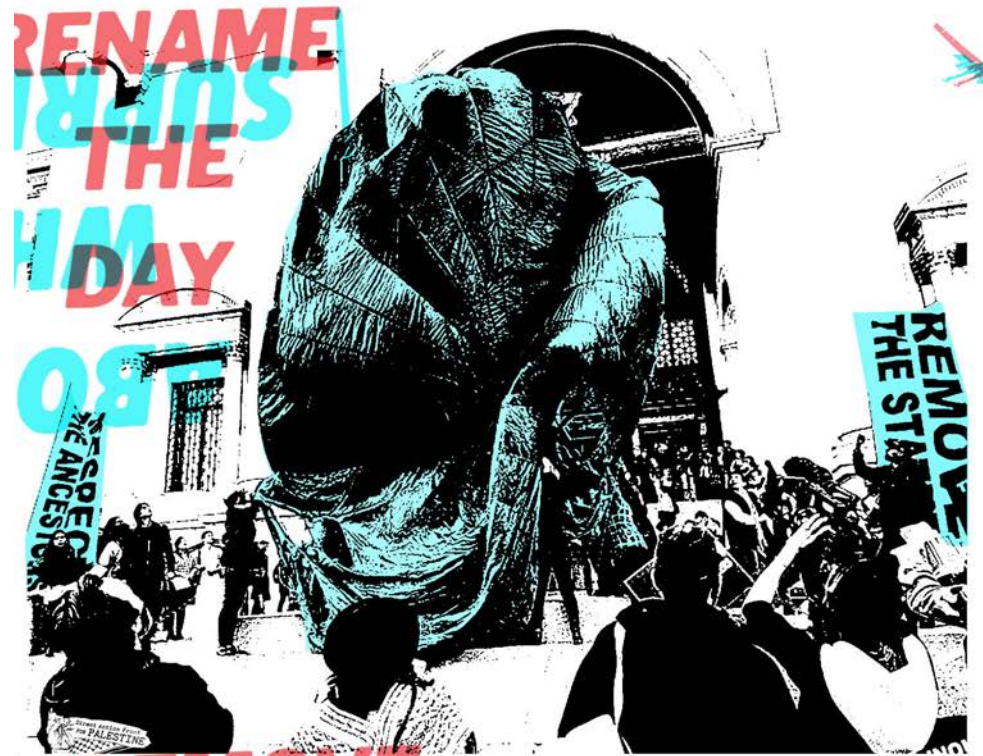
Ask yourself where you stand. You are in the Hall of Eastern Woodlands Indians: half a continent contained in an afterthought, dust settling and lights burning out on leftover real estate. You are standing over, above, looking down on things older and wiser than you: a hide robe with histories of Nations, a birchbark map of the world, a medicine bundle whose contents were not meant for your eyes. You are standing eye to eye with someone else's ancestors, and they are looking back. And above all, you are standing on what is still the territory of the Lenape people.

HALL OF PLAINS INDIANS

There is no greater insult than to display stuffed animals, petrified trees, fake humans, and sacred objects behind these glass displays. As with the Native American that flanks Theodore Roosevelt's horse outside, the "Indians" are presented here in an effort to recreate their "life" as death and to set the stage for their inevitable, destined replacement. The wall texts are not only historically inaccurate, they are hurtful. The Ghost Dance Prophecy did not fade away; it was violently suppressed through the massacre of three hundred men, women, and children at Wounded Knee. Indigenous people do not struggle to adapt to modernity; they are faced with genocidal techniques, coerced into treaties and then denied the rights pursuant to those treaties. Hundreds of treaties broken. Contrary to everything displayed here, the "Plains" was and is home to living beings and relations. The resistance at Standing Rock is a reminder of centuries of struggle for sovereignty over land, water and air, which continues to this day.

HALL OF PACIFIC PEOPLES

This island peoples of the vast Pacific Ocean were "offered" to ethnographer Margaret Mead, to classify and exhibit as she saw fit. The organization of the displays tells us more about her privileged viewpoint than they do about the complex lives of these peoples. How can one anthropologist's version of the cultural traditions of Polynesians, Melanesians, and Micronesians be so detached from the long history of colonization in Oceania? American visitors should reflect on the silence about the U.S. occupation of Hawai'i, American Samoa, Guåhan (Guam), Palau, and the Northern Mariana Islands, and how their residents fought to avoid being placed on the frontlines of Cold War militarism. Commenting on the fates of Marshall Islanders irradiated from nuclear testing, Henry Kissinger infamously said, "There are only 90,000 people out there. Who gives a damn?"



Our Ancestors



VIVA PUERTO RICO LIBRE!

Roosevelt ascended politically as a General in the Spanish-American war. He was crucial in establishing the United States as a colonial overlord of Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines, Hawaii and Guam. Let us acknowledge the people of Puerto Rico, a colonial territory of the United States annexed by Roosevelt. And, let us honor their work of mutual relief and collective resistance in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria as the colonial government leaves them to fend for themselves. Viva Puerto Rico Libre!

THEODORE ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL HALL

Theodore Roosevelt was not a noble man of science. He viewed land, territories, animals and people as his to be tamed, to be controlled and sometimes to be destroyed. As a "frontiersman" he proclaimed "I don't go so far as to think that the only good Indian is the dead Indian, but I believe nine out of every ten are, and I shouldn't like to inquire too closely into the case of the tenth." His devotion to conservation is celebrated in this hall, but it was driven by a desire to dominate Nature. His ethnically cleansed wilderness parks were conceived as places of refuge and recreation for elite White Anglo Saxon Protestants. As governor and as a president he expanded U.S. empire into the Caribbean and the Pacific with Big Stick diplomacy. He justified direct U.S. intervention in the affairs of other American nations if it was in this country's interest. He advanced white supremacy in the domain of law, science and state power. Today, this museum still stands as a testament to his vision, and the statue outside is its embodiment. It cannot be separated from the museum. It causes daily damage by perpetuating stereotypes of the Indigenous and African figures obedient at his feet. The public celebration of white male imperial rule has no place in this day and age.

Albert I, who succeeded King Leopold II as the arch-colonizer of the Congo. If you roll up this flyer and put it to your eye, you are looking down the scope of Carl Akeley's gun. This is a way of seeing. Each of the dioramas you have visited is a snapshot of domination: remember this when you look through the glass to see a human on display.

THE SLAVERY IN AFRICA AND THE AFRICAN TRADITION IN AMERICA

This short corridor, which occupies less than .003% of the entire space of the museum, leads to nowhere. This is where the museum accounts for slavery in Africa and the African Tradition in America. Here we are offered a scant overview of how slavers coerced pre-colonial African communities into participating in the trade of captives. Yet absent is any reference as to how slavery on the African continent inflicted harm on indigenous ways of living and weakened resistance to the coming European colonization. Here, slaves are recognized as human only insofar as they carry over some African cultural practices into



their new countries of captivity. There is no mention of the millions of Africans who died on enslaved ships en route to the Americas or how they were forced into work upon arrival. No mention that those who survived and their offspring built the economic backbone of the United States and other settler-colonies throughout the Western Hemisphere.

HALL OF AFRICAN PEOPLES

Look around, the vast multiplicity of African social and cultural life is positioned outside of modern time, in the past tense. With such a cacophony of sounds and colorful costumes, there is little space to ask: How did all these artifacts and costumes arrive here? And how do they perpetuate primitivist stereotypes which continue to feed discriminatory treatment of diasporic African populations today? Consider the German genocide of the OvaHerero/Mbanderu and Nama people from 1904-1908. 100,000 people died -- half of the Nama. Heads of victims were severed and sold to collectors of race science and medical students. Just last month, it was reported that one such collector later sold four skulls to this museum, where they were just discovered. In storage. Currently, representatives of the OvaHerero and Nama are calling both for a genocide memorial in the museum and repatriation of the remains. This is what a decolonial demand looks like.



HALL OF AFRICAN MAMMALS IN AMERICA

As they forcibly extracted resources from African peoples, so-called naturalists and explorers like Carl Akeley collected a variety of animals across the continent. Their activities led to species' endangerment, the flourishing of the fur and ivory trade, and widespread deforestation. Akeley was a hunting companion of Teddy Roosevelt and intimate of Belgian King

DIORAMA OF CHIEF ORATAM & PETER STUYVESANT

In 1500 there were 7000 Lenape Indians in what is now Manhattan, what they called "Manhatta." By 1700 there are 200. Where did they go? Rather than account for their death, relocations and current lives, this diorama represents a meeting between the Chief Oratam and Dutch Governor Peter Stuyvesant in 1660 and refers to what is now the Bowery as a "meeting place." Oratam signed the peace represented here after two years of the Dutch waging a vicious war against the Lenape and the British. The Lenape are denied their history, their present, and their role as caretakers and owners of this territory. Why is the diorama here in this Hall? Because Roosevelt's family can be traced to their Dutch ancestors who came to New York around the time this supposedly amicable meeting took place.

PLAQUE FOR HENRY FAIRFIELD OSBORN

Osborn, the most formative of the museum's presidents, was central to the community of eugenicists who met regularly within these walls to plot how to "save" the national gene pool from dilution by lesser breeds of men and women. A close associate of Roosevelt, Osborne's belief in the racial superiority of Nordic peoples helped to close the immigration "door" in 1924, and it has shaped the arrangement and display of the museum's collections down to this day.



* The texts included in this zine are drawn from brochures distributed during unauthorized Anti-Columbus Day tours of the AMNH and its surroundings, 2016 - 2019, undertaken by dozens of community groups from across the city.



GIANT SEQUOIA TREE

The rings on this cross section of an ancient Sequoia tree, felled by settler-loggers in 1893, are correlated here with the Eurocentric marking of 1400 years of human history. The museum finds it important to highlight that Napoleon seized power in France in 1800 A.D., Yale was founded in 1701, and Columbus "discovered" Orinoco River in South America in 1500. In a decolonial museum, these dates would tell a different story and different histories. It would acknowledge Indigenous life in the forests of California, the clear-cutting of Redwood trees by agricultural speculators, the ransacking of lumber for settler homes and towns, and the growing threat to these and other trees of drought stress from global warming. Where fire management in forests was once a sustainable pre-contact practice, forest fires in California are "fought" today by incarcerated people who are predominantly African American and who are compensated a dollar per hour. As we look at the rings of this Sequoia, let us also think of the genocides and ecocides, and movements and struggles, that we hold within our skins like the bark of a tree.

HALL OF SOUTH AMERICAN PEOPLES

BOLIVIAN

Welcome to the Orient of the Americas! Here, among the sacred gold artifacts, mummified heads and replicas of Indigenous elders, shamans, and warriors, you will find a spectacle of mysticism to match your fantasies about ancient civilizations and Indigenous cultures. Pizarro described Cuzco, the Inka capital, as Rome's equal, yet the metal trinkets and ritual funerary garbs on display do a poor job of expressing the sophistication and beauty of a culture that far surpassed the achievements of Europe at the time, and whose linguistic refinement is a living legacy among the Quechua peoples of the Andes today.

PERUVIAN

REMY



Land Back

AZTEC STONE OF THE SUN

While some artifacts in the hall of Mexico are "authentic," others are skewed replicas with inaccurate and outdated attribution, and some are not named at all. One example is the Stone of the Sun. We are told that it is "mistakenly known as a calendar stone." Yet this is what the Mexica know as a "sun stone," and an obsidian circle is used to view eclipses, the sun and meditate on our own reflection. The replica in the exhibit is of the sacred Aztec Calendar that tracks time through the balance of interdependent elements and energies that sustain life and order in the cosmos. It is still used today for this purpose, and, contrary to what the exhibit suggests, it has never been associated with the worship of a sun "venerated above all things" and "sustained through blood sacrifice." By rejecting the agency of a sacred culture, the museum as an institution negates the reality and genius of a humankind that uses time to balance the interdependence of all beings. It instead, reproduces a narrative based on a supremacy rooted in insecurity and fear.

SHUAR PEOPLES

This exhibit gives priority to the name (Jivaros, or "Savages") the Spanish gave to the Shuar people after they successfully resisted the conquest of their Amazon lands. The Spanish were driven out, but the predators keep coming back. Today they lust after the reserves of gold and other precious metals that are in contention between the national government and Chinese mining corporations. We are the Shuar peoples, Guardians of the Amazon, protectors of Mother Earth, her sacred medicines and ancestral truths. We rise, we reclaim, we rename, and we heal.



we rise, we reclaim,





HALL OF ASIAN MAMMALS

The people indigenous to the lands in this Hall have always co-existed with these animals. They shared the fields, the forests, and the waters. When wealthy conservationists like Theodore Roosevelt created national, or "wilderness," parks they actually displaced and dispossessed indigenous people. The parks were exported to Africa and Asia as "wildlife preserves" that elites visit and admire, to view and hunt charismatic mega-fauna undisturbed by people whom they consider to be social inferiors. And look around! Just like a wildlife preserve, this hall is also made for spectacular consumption. Yet, contemporary struggles of Adivasis (the indigenous of people of the land) against resource-extraction and land-confiscation have no place in this way of looking at nature.



we rename, we heal.

AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT

Indigenous people! We were here in "The Forest Primeval," cultivating and communicating with the land in ways that left no scar. We raised forests and planted corn. The land was not 'untouched'; we were here. We were here in 1790 when settlements spread; we were here in 1840 and 1870 despite broken treaties and forced removals. We were here in the 1950s when agriculture was 'perfected', as a calculation for converting land into the purest profit possible. Like the land, we have been cut apart, colonized, commodified. But we are here still.

ABOLISH WHITE SUPREMACY

LAND RECLAIMATION

RESPECT THE ANCESTORS

RENAME THE DAY



U.S. Drone Strike

HALL OF ISLAM

This hall presents an extreme 'othering' of Islam as seen through a whitewashed colonizer's lens. This perspective is characterized by a particular obsession with, and dehumanization of, the "women of Islam" who, in many Westerners' minds, can solely exist within the confines of heteropatriarchy. The Muslim community is not a monolith, especially along the lines of gender and sexuality. This hall fails to recognize the complexities of these experiences and cultures. There is also the notion that warriors are constructed in Islam and such a narrow classification of an entire religious culture is what has legitimized Islamophobia. This is the same belief system that justifies surveillance, drone strikes, and the 'War on Terror.'

PATHANS

The Pathans, also know as the Pashtuns, have historically been portrayed as a warlike people. Why is that? For almost 200 years they have had to contend with a series of invading forces--from the British, the Soviets, and, most recently, the Americans--all aimed at suppressing their efforts at autonomy. This community's traditional homeland is in the mountainous borderlands straddling Afghanistan and Pakistan. Their community remains fractured because of a line drawn by Sir Mortimer Durand in 1893 while negotiating the end of the second Anglo-Afghan War, another example of a colonial wound that remains open. Pathans' practice of resistance to foreign occupations is deeply ingrained, and was reactivated when US forces swept through their homelands during the initial stages of the "War on Terror". They are continuously subjected to lethal drone attacks by the U.S in both Pakistan and Aghanistan.

RESPECT
THE
ANCESTORS

SUPREMACY
WHITE
ABOLITION



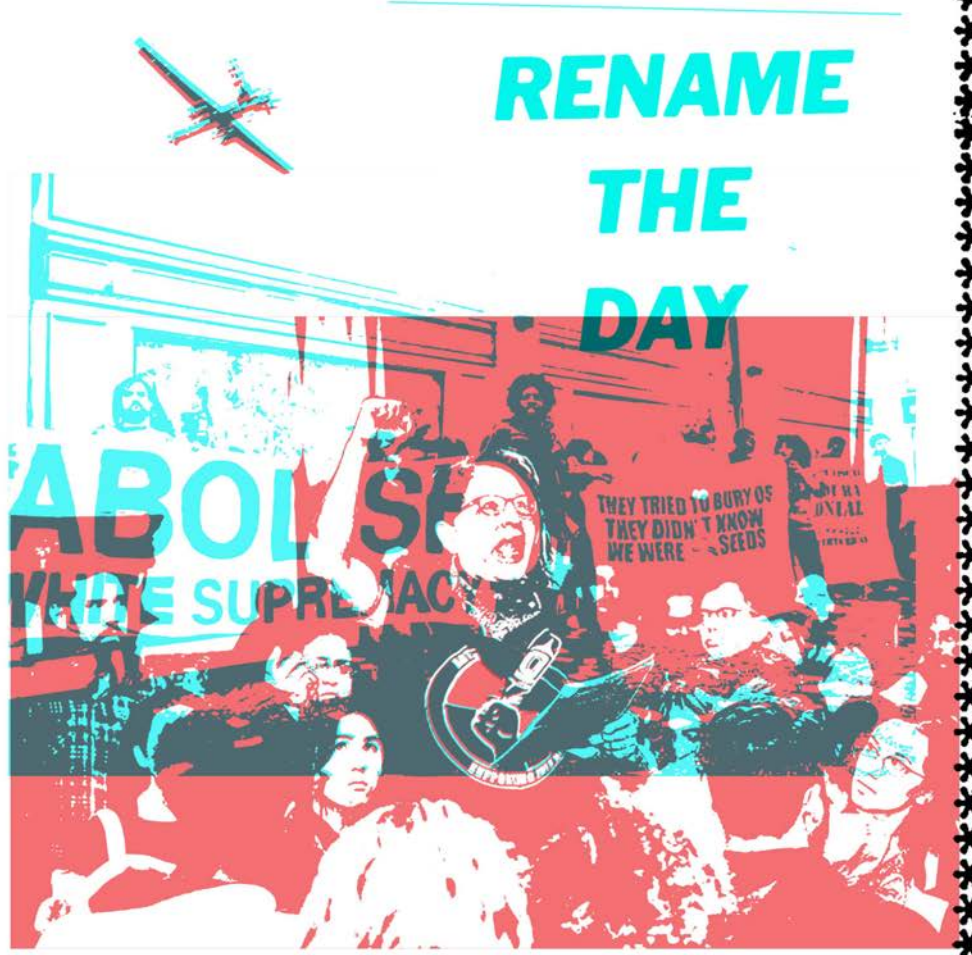
Rename The Day





JERICHO BEFORE JOSHUA AND JEWS IN ASIA

Here, we see a diorama about archeological digs in the world's oldest city, Jericho, in Palestine. It references the biblical figure of Joshua. His alleged military conquest of ancient Canaan and destruction of the city is used today to advance the settler colonization of the West Bank. Archeological digs are routinely used to "prove" that the Biblical narratives are historically accurate, and to support that claim that all of the Occupied Territories belong to the Land of Israel. The nearby display on "Jews of Asia" also upholds the historical continuity of the Land of Israel by recounting the story of Mizrahi Jews as a way of normalizing Israel's right to "ancestral lands." In most of the other exhibits on this tour, we see how the museum relegates indigenous peoples to the past tense. By contrast, in these exhibits relating to historic Palestine, the museum amplifies the non-indigenous Zionist claim to a land while simultaneously ignoring the indigenous Palestinian population - whether Jewish, Christian, or Muslim - who have always been there, long before the violent creation of the State of Israel.



HALL OF NORTHWEST COAST INDIANS

Next to the Hall of Human Origins we stand outside the doors to the "Hall of Northwest Coast Indians." This is the museum's first cultural hall, built around the turn of the twentieth century. Museum curators recently announced that they will renovate it, in consultation with Indigenous groups whose possessions are displayed there. It took them more than a century to decide to address the harms done by these exhibits. How long will it be before they conclude that the whole museum needs to be overhauled? If and when they do, how can the harms generated over the course of the last century be recognized and recorded? Will they retain any of these mannequins, which have only served to denigrate and dehumanize? How will they acknowledge their role in ongoing colonization? What will it take for them to recognize the right of Indigenous advocates and curators, not simply to be consultants, but to make real decisions about how they will be represented.



CHINESE WEDDING CHAIR

These are the words museum educators have students learn before they take class trips to the Hall of Asian Peoples: "Dynasty", "divination", "dowry", "ancestor worship", "shamanism". This hall showcases the museum's imagination of life in Asia before European contact. It ignores the violent history of the United States in the region and its continued military occupation of many Asian nations. In these dioramas, you see a small selection of the Museum's 60,000 cultural artifacts plundered during colonial expeditions in Asia. One such object is the Chinese Wedding Chair. It depicts a Chinese bride with her face and body hidden within the confines of the ornate carriage. Curators explain Chinese matrimony as a sexist tradition rooted in the superstition of bad luck. This framing omits the role of Western patriarchy in creating the stereotype of East Asian women as exotic and submissive. Such portrayals incite the ongoing sexual violence against and exploitation of Asian women.



VE Prelude To The Removal of A Monument

Now the statue is bleeding. We did not make it bleed. It is bloody at its very foundation. This is not an act of vandalism. It is a work of public art and an act of applied art criticism. We have no intent to damage a mere statue. The true damage lies with patriarchy, white supremacy, and settler-colonialism embodied by the statue. It is these forms of oppression that must be damaged again and again...until they are damaged out of existence.

This work of public art is in solidarity with the Second Annual Anti-Columbus Tour that took place on October 9th. Without any disrespect for those organizers, our tactics must be different.

A thousand people assembled at the museum on that day, and amplified the following demands, originally issued at the first Anti-Columbus Day Tour the year before. 1) The museum should re-think its cultural halls regarding the colonial mentality behind them. 2) The City Council should follow the lead of cities around the country and replace Columbus Day with Indigenous People's Day (a related petition has garnered 18,000 signatures since October 9th, 2017) 3) Finally, it called upon the city to remove the monument to Theodore Roosevelt that frames the entrance to the Museum.

In that monument, Roosevelt is pictured on horseback, reaching for his pistol as he gazes onto the horizon. He is flanked subserviently by a shirtless Black man and an "Indian chief." They are both holding rifles, willing foot soldiers in the expansion of American Empire. A former NYC Police Commissioner and proud descendent of Dutch settler-colonists who first expropriated Manhattan from the Lenape, Roosevelt rose to fame for his role in the Spanish American war, which involved the colonization of Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Guam, the Philippines, and Cuba. Roosevelt was also a staunch endorser of Eugenics, the pseudo-scientific movement whose calls for sterilization, population control, and racial purification would directly inspire the Nazis. Roosevelt was an open white supremacist and imperialist who is still lionized by the museum and the city plaza standing in front of it.

In statements to the media, the Museum has claimed that the statue is the city's problem, since legally it sits on public land (which is also to say, stolen Lenape land, like the rest of the city). To separate the statue and the museum is a technicality. The museum itself is an expanded monument to Roosevelt's world-view, and the statue is what visitors first see upon approaching the institution. Millions of schoolchildren pass under this oppressive image every year as they visit the museum, where they are in turn exposed to grotesque, dehumanizing displays.

This damage is being done as we speak. In response, we choose to act immediately with the means at our disposal: artistic expression. Against an artwork that does real damage—the Roosevelt monument—we offer a counter-monumental gesture that does symbolic damage to the values it represents: genocide, dispossession, displacement, enslavement, and state terror.

The monument not only embodies the violent historical foundation of the United States, but also the underlying dynamics of oppression in our contemporary world. In highlighting the bloody foundations of the monument, we salute those movements struggling against the values epitomized by Roosevelt: past, present, and future. From the uprisings of Ferguson and Standing Rock, to popular self-defense at the frontiers of gentrification in the Bronx, in the ground zero of climate crisis in Puerto Rico, or in the crosshairs of ICE raids terrorizing immigrant communities. We also salute the history of artistic actions undertaken against the monument, especially the six Indigenous activists who temporarily marked it 1971 in solidarity with the occupation of Alcatraz Island by The American Indian Movement (AIM). On the base of the monument they inscribed: "Return Alcatraz" and "Fascist Killer." Decolonization and Anti-Fascism remain the horizons of our time.

After Charlottesville, Trump tweeted: "Sad to see the history and culture of our great country being ripped apart with the removal of our beautiful statues and monuments...Robert E Lee, Stonewall Jackson - who's next, Washington, Jefferson?"

A venerated U.S. president on the chopping block? Trump was on to something. The onus of decolonial and anti-fascist action falls to New York City, from whence the current president hails. Mayor Bill De Blasio has set up an advisory commission to investigate "hate symbols" across the city, but it will have no binding authority. The commission will at some point seek public input to identify eligible monuments and statues. We take matters into our own hands now to kickstart the removal process.

With this public artwork we are sparing the museum. We hope the museum will recognize the liability that the statue represents for its stated claims to be moving in the right direction, and use the leverage that it undoubtedly has with the City.

At this year's Anti-Columbus Day Tour, the NYPD made a massive show of force to defend the monument, with barricades, handcuffs, cops of every rank deployed—including two officers of color ordered to stand on the base of the statue itself just under the Black and Indian foot soldiers flanking Roosevelt himself.

We imagine a day when the monument—and the museum standing behind it—will not have to be barricaded and protected by force of arms. We imagine Roosevelt instead moldering away as a ruin in the trash-heap of history alongside his brothers-in-arms: towering figures like Lee and Columbus, lesser-known monsters like J. Marion Sims and Henry Osborn, and so many others. The empty pedestals left behind at places like the museum would in turn clear space for new visions of reparation, freedom, and justice. In the meantime, while the Mayor's Commission trudges forward, the Monument Removal Brigade hereby announces itself. Our membership is already legion, from Charlottesville to Durham to New York and beyond.

- Monument Removal Brigade (MRB) Oct. 26, 2017

October 26, 2017

A group calling itself the Monument Removal Brigade (MRB) has claimed

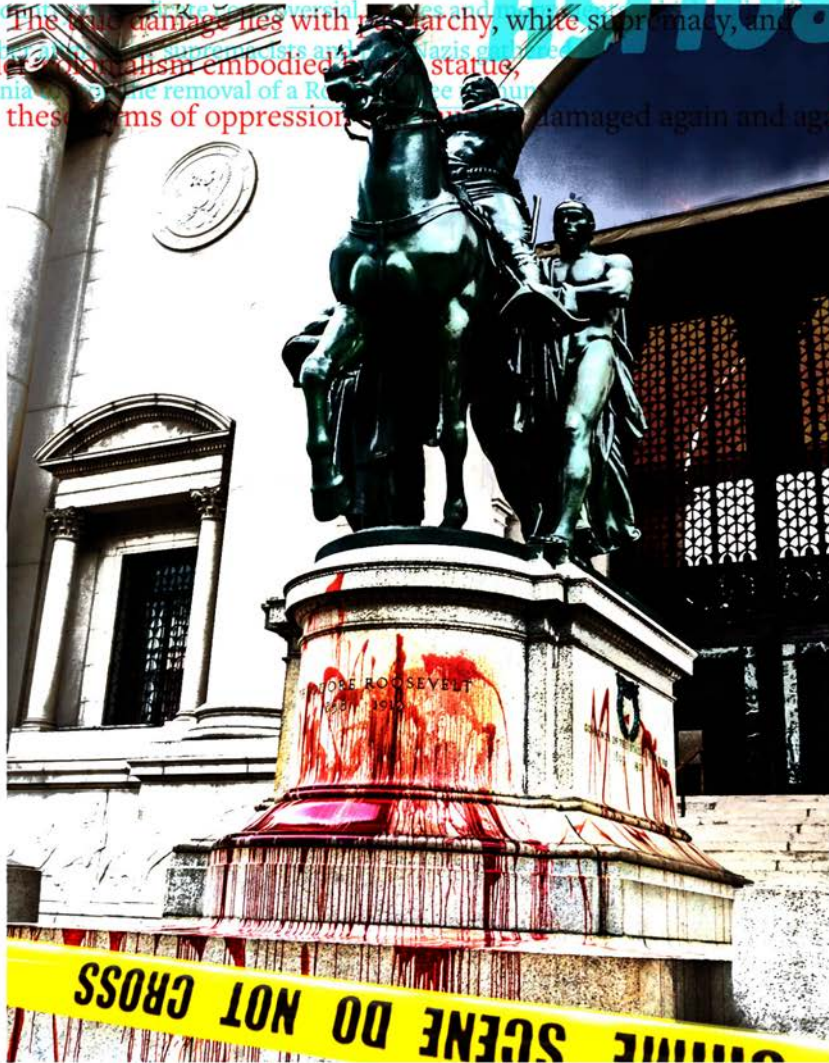
Activists Splatter Red Paint on Roosevelt Monument at American Museum of Natural History

The early-morning action, by a new activist group calling itself the Monument Removal Brigade, is the latest in a series of protests demanding the statue's removal.

It is a work of public art and an act of applied art criticism.

We have no intent to damage a mere statue.

The damage lies with the hierarchy, white supremacy, and settler colonialism embodied in the statue. It is these terms of oppression that have damaged again and again ...



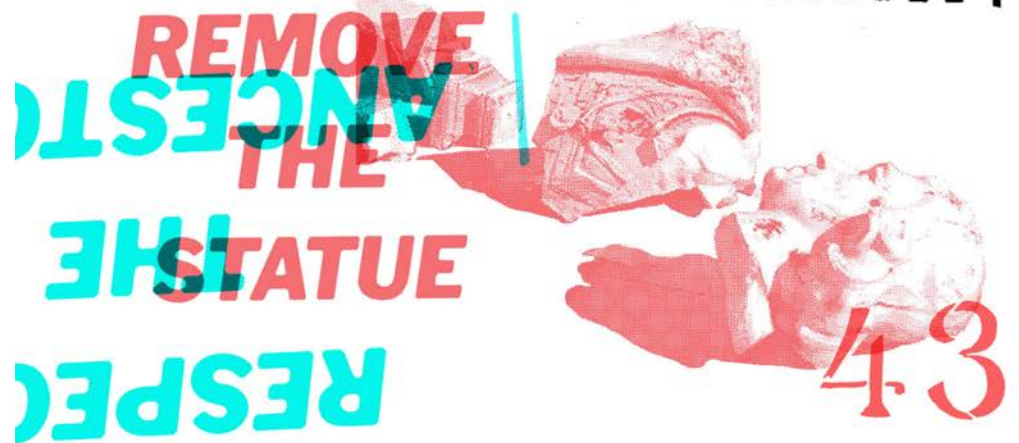
until they are damaged out of existence.

INDIA

This exhibit is devoted to what is now known as India. The British are sometimes praised for uniting India through colonial rule. As a colonizer, the British actively fostered the conformity of sexual and gendered roles to religious orthodoxy. So called unification was carried out to more efficiently extract massive amounts of wealth for the Empire. They also used the tactic of divide and rule to control the people, and exploited fault lines between castes, classes, religious, linguistic, and ethnic communities.

Mahatma Gandhi is heroized here as a leader of India's independence struggle against the British. But as with the "founding fathers" of other nation-states--including the United States--the heroization of Gandhi ignores his reinforcement of structures of oppression. He is often cited as an inspiration for civil rights advocates, but Gandhi's legacy of racist attitudes towards African peoples is well documented, and he was an upholder of the caste system in India.

The Hindu caste system is a hierarchical ranking of people where so-called "lower caste" communities are regarded subhuman, undeserving of basic rights. Dalit today is a term of empowerment claimed by oppressed communities formerly called "untouchable." "Lower caste" communities have used the term Bahujan as they represent the actual majority of the population. Although caste discrimination is outlawed in the Indian constitution, Dalits and Bahujans are often persecuted, forced to live separately from the rest of the population, sexually assaulted, and killed while the upper caste perpetrators of these acts remain unpunished. Refusing this systemic oppression, a massive movement of Dalits now exists in India. As Dalit anti-caste revolutionary Babasaheb Ambedkar said, "caste is not a division of labor, it is a division of laborers."



Respect The Ancestors

