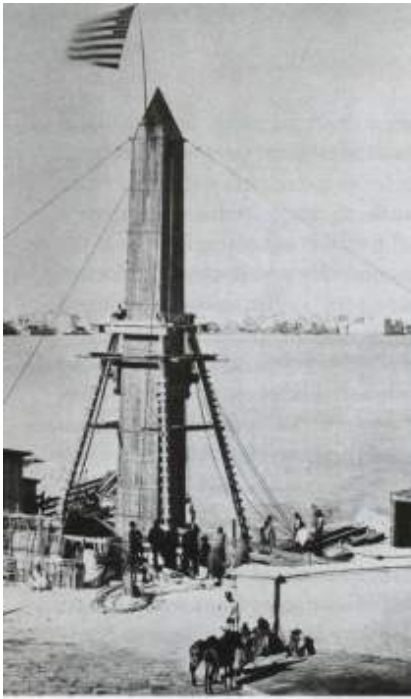


# Relocating the Past

Project curated by CYPRIEN GAILLARD



See page 264 for complete captions. Clockwise from top left: "Cleopatra's Needle" in Alexandria, Egypt, being prepared for transport to New York, ca. 1879. Fritz Koenig, *The Sphere*, 1971, Battery Park, New York. "Cleopatra's Needle," in Central Park, New York, 2006. Reconstruction of Ramses II temple statues after relocation, Abu Simbel, Egypt, January 26, 1966.

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**LAST SUMMER I TRAVELED TO GLASGOW** to witness the demolition of a couple of public housing complexes, including two eighteen-story towers in Pollokshaws, in the south of the city, and two twenty-story buildings in Sighthill, a neighborhood closer to the center. After the final demolition, a few local journalists and I were escorted to the debris pile, where we met Kenny Crookston, the man in charge of Glasgow's urban renewal plan. Looking at the sheer mass of material created by the dynamiting, I asked Kenny an innocent question: Where does the rubble go? He explained to me that contractors engaged in demolitions throughout Europe are required to recycle everything. This meant that all the concrete wreckage from the buildings before us would be crushed on site until it was reduced to small rocks. And then this very same material would be sold to still other contractors in charge of new construction elsewhere in the city, whether sidewalks, streets, parking lots, schools, foundations for office buildings, or . . .

This story would define the work I made during the subsequent year, for which I recycled concrete from modernist housing projects in Glasgow and Paris to create public sculptures. One of these pieces can now be found in the Loire Valley, France, where I used the material to pave the central allée leading to a sixteenth-century castle called Oiron; another stands at the Hayward Gallery in London, where the concrete is cast in the shape of an obelisk. Titled *Cenotaph to 12 Riverford Road, Pollokshaws, Glasgow, 2008*, the latter is a classical gravestone even as it gives new shape to the rubble—signaling a move from a death of architecture to an architecture of death. In terms of the urban context of Glasgow itself, however, what interested me then and holds my imagination now is that in ten years' time anyone walking the streets there will be surrounded by the ghosts of Sighthill's modernist architecture. It still amazes me that even structures like these concrete towers—things that we consider to be so monumental—might actually end up being displaced, or relocated.

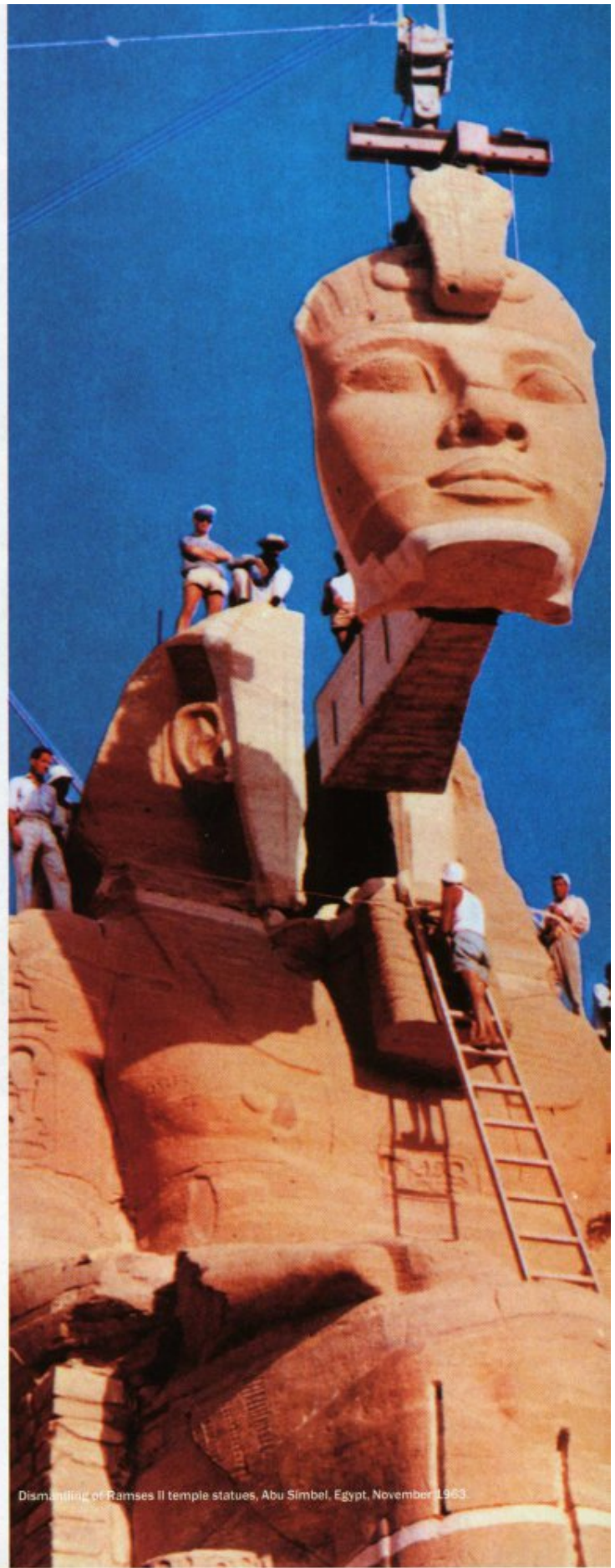
Of course, these circumstances are hardly unique. Consider the example of the Pruitt-Igoe housing project in Saint Louis, designed by Minoru Yamasaki in the mid-1950s and destroyed in 1972. When such structures are torn down, the cultures they represent are also on some level dislodged. Indeed, architectural historian Charles Jencks wrote that Pruitt-Igoe's destruction marked "the day Modern architecture died."

Such displacements strongly bring to mind recent history in Egypt, where Nubian temples such as Abu Simbel and Philae have had to be relocated, rock by rock, to avoid their being submerged after the Aswan High Dam was built in the Nile. They remind me as well that another Nubian structure, the Temple of Dendur, is found today in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and that a "Cleopatra's Needle" may now be seen not only in Central Park but also in Paris on the Place de la Concorde, and in London by the Thames, opposite Victoria Embankment Gardens.

But to keep things anachronistic, back to the infamous Pruitt-Igoe and its architect: Just one year after Pruitt-Igoe was demolished, Yamasaki finished building the World Trade Center, which was, of course, destroyed on 9/11. (Buildings fall for different reasons, but I have always thought that his buildings had a curse.) At their feet, on a smaller scale, was Fritz Koenig's *Sphere*, 1971, said to be the only work of art to have survived the calamity—found under the ruins of the twin towers and finally relocated to Battery Park in 2002. *Sphere* is no longer a public sculpture; rather, it now stands as a monument to the victims of 9/11—and, for me, it also stands as a monument to the dead buildings of Yamasaki.

Thinking of all these displacements, I had the idea of making a group show of preexisting public sculptures from around the world, creating a kind of on-site monument "reunion"—perhaps somewhere in the American desert, or alongside Robert Morris's *Grand Rapids Project* of 1974, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The pages that follow constitute a potential list of works to be included in such an exhibition.

—Cyprien Gaillard



Dismantling of Ramses II temple statues, Abu Simbel, Egypt, November 1963.



Robert Morris, *Grand Rapids Project*, 1974, Grand Rapids, MI.



Apollo Pavilion, 1970, Peterlee, UK.



Gate of the Kiss, 1938, Târgu Jiu, Romania.



Pablo Picasso, Tête de Femme (Woman's Head), 1957/1991, France.



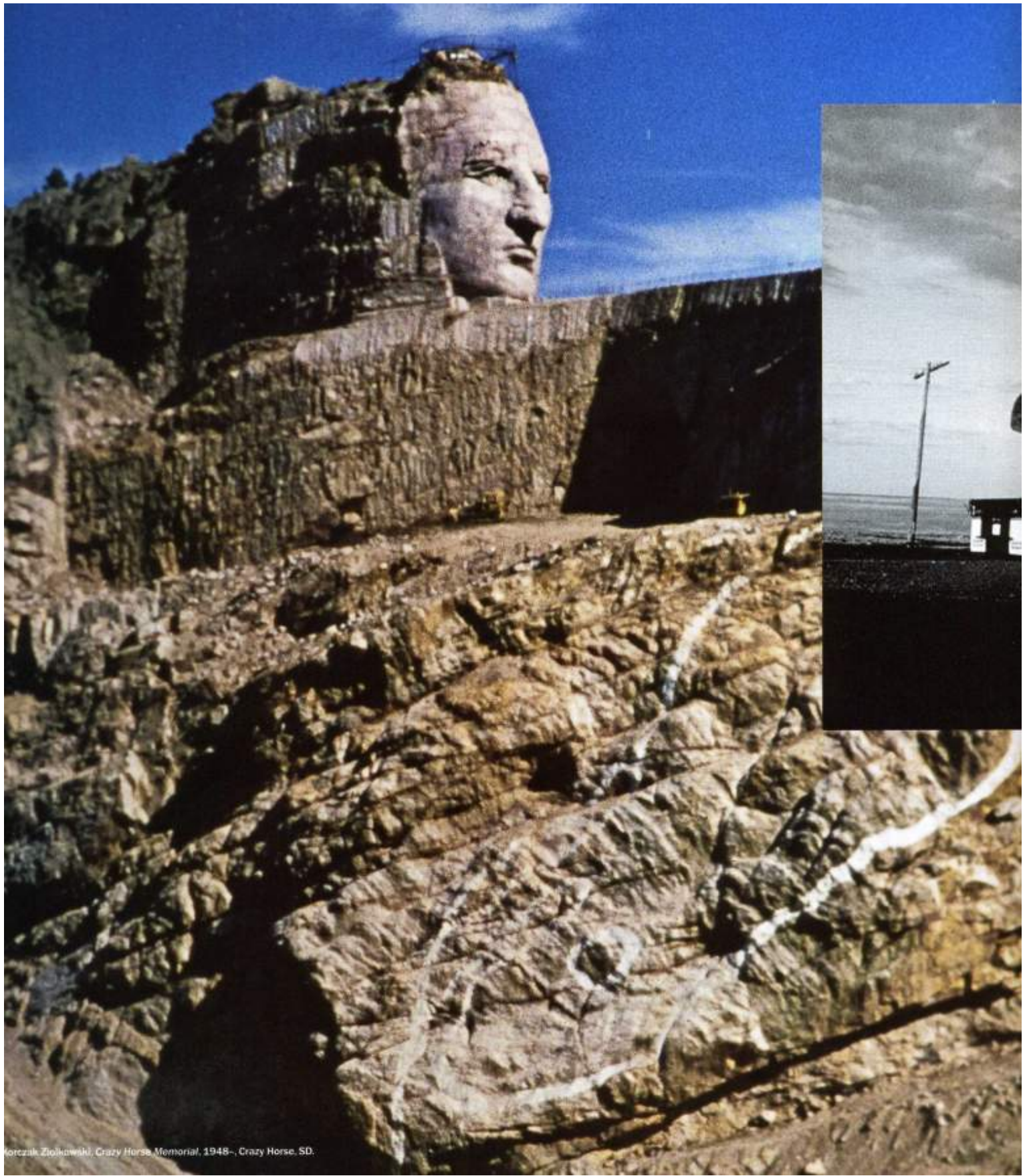
Robert Indiana, *Ahava (Love)*, 1977, Israel Museum, Jerusalem.



James Wines and Emilio Sousa, *Ghost Parking Lot*, 1978, Hamden, CT.



Richard Serra, *Manner (Stations: Stops on the Road To Stop and Look)*



Korczak Ziolkowski, Crazy Horse Memorial, 1948-, Crazy Horse, SD.





Robert Graham, *Monument to Joe Louis*, 1986. Views of monument in transit and installed in Detroit.

Otto Herbert Hajek, *City Sign*, 1973-77, Adelaide, Australia.





Anilore Banon, *Les Braves (The Brave)*, 2004, Omaha Beach, Normandy, France.





onja, Monument to the Revolution in Moslavina, 1967, Podgarić, Croatia.



World War II monument dedicated to the American Second Ranger Battalion, Pointe du Hoc, Normandy, France.

