

## The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and Snap Inc. Release New Collection of AR Monuments as Part of the LACMA × Snapchat: Monumental Perspectives Initiative

Five new augmented reality monuments launch on September 7, tracing personal lineages to uncover throughlines in present-day communities

LACMA to host an Open House on Sunday, September 10 to celebrate this multi-year initiative with Snapchat.



(Image captions on page 5)

(Los Angeles, CA—September 7, 2023) The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), in collaboration with Snap Inc., launches the third and final collection of *LACMA × Snapchat: Monumental Perspectives* projects today. This multi-year initiative brings together artists and technologists to create augmented reality monuments that explore histories of Los Angeles communities and amplify perspectives from across the region. These augmented reality monuments were built using Snapchat’s technology and supported by the Mellon Foundation’s Monuments Project.

The third collection of AR monuments includes Victoria Fu’s meditation on the Chinese Massacre of 1871 in Los Angeles; Yassi Mazandi’s consideration of climate displacement through imagery from the 12th-century Persian poem *Conference of the Birds*; Rashaad Newsome’s tribute to the spirit of perpetual regeneration and innovation in Black culture; Rubén Ortiz Torres’s response to the theft of bronze busts from Lincoln Park, which had honored Mexican historical figures; and Alison Saar’s shrine for women whose bodies have been colonized and commodified throughout time.

The five new augmented reality monuments are designed to be experienced at locations across Los Angeles through Snapchat’s camera. Beginning today, Victoria Fu’s piece can be activated at Los Angeles State Historic Park; Yassi Mazandi’s work at LACMA; Rashaad Newsome’s monument at Exposition Park; Rubén Ortiz Torres’s Lens at Lincoln Park; and Alison Saar’s project at Santa Monica Beach. All five monuments can also be viewed by anyone around the world on Snapchat by searching in Lens Explorer and by scanning the QR codes at [lacma.org/monumental](https://lacma.org/monumental).

“We are thrilled to once again partner with Snap and the Mellon Foundation in empowering artists and technologists to realize new community touchstones through the virtual space,” said Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director. “In bringing collective ancestral memories to life, this cohort of artists challenges us to examine the individual and communal legacies we are leaving today and how we are shaping the future of Los Angeles.”

“This project showcases how artists and AR creators can come together to use Augmented Reality in innovative and impactful ways,” said Bobby Murphy, co-founder and CTO at Snap Inc. “We’re proud to continue this work with LACMA and highlight some of the histories of Los Angeles communities through the power of AR.”

Collection III marks the final iteration of *LACMA × Snapchat: Monumental Perspectives*. In celebration of this three-year initiative, LACMA will host an Open House with free museum admission from 10 am–7 pm on Sunday, September 10. At the free event, visitors are invited to experience this year’s AR monuments as well as those from Collections I and II, engage with project creators, plus enjoy live DJ sets and art workshops for all ages.” Educator-guided workshops will include creating a one-of-a-kind mobile inspired by Yassi Mazandi’s *The Thirty Birds*, trinkets fit for an altar to the goddess Yemaya as portrayed in Alison Saar’s *Rise*, kites in the spirit of Kang Seung Lee’s 2022 monument *la revolución es la solución!*, and other activities, to be announced. Advance online reservations required at [lacma.org](https://lacma.org).

Monumental Perspectives launched in December 2020. The first collection of AR monuments was released in April 2021 and featured works by Mercedes Dorame, I.R. Bach, Glenn Kaino, Rubén Ochoa, and Ada Pinkston. Collection II debuted in April 2022, with projects by Judy Baca, Sandra de la Loza, and Kang Seung Lee. In consultation with community leaders and historians, each artist worked with Snap Lens Creators to create new monuments highlighting local Los Angeles stories from key moments and figures in the region’s past to changing landscapes and historical connections in the present.

The Mellon Foundation, the largest funder of the arts, culture, and humanities in the U.S., continues to support LACMA’s role in Monumental Perspectives as part of the foundation’s “The Monuments Project,” a five-year, \$250 million commitment to transform the way our country’s histories are told in public spaces.

### **About the Monuments**

#### **Victoria Fu**

#### ***1871, 2023***

*1871* may be experienced at Los Angeles State Historic Park (1245 N. Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012) or from anywhere at [lacma.org/fu](https://lacma.org/fu).

In light of the current anti-Asian sentiment and racially motivated acts of violence in the United States, Victoria Fu's *1871* recognizes the Chinese Massacre of 1871 in Los Angeles. The concept of Fu's piece is realized within its visual form: it is in the shape of an inverted, upside-down monument. Viewers peer down into the clouds through the abyss, or tomb-like portal to other worlds, that takes the shape of basic monument styles, shifting as they move. The void simultaneously acknowledges the current absence of a physical monument and the impossibility of any monument to stand in for the horrors of actual events. Recorded audio of a conversation in English and Mandarin between the artist and her mother about 1871 explains what the monument commemorates. The site, Los Angeles State Historic Park, is only a mile from the incident and adjacent to contemporary Chinatown whose residents, as well as the general public, might stumble upon the piece and learn about 1871.

### **Yassi Mazandi**

#### ***The Thirty Birds, 2023***

*The Thirty Birds* may be experienced at LACMA from the north side of the Resnick Pavilion or from anywhere at [lacma.org/mazandi](https://lacma.org/mazandi).

Yassi Mazandi is an experimental multimedia artist working in porcelain, clay, bronze, paper, and augmented reality. While her latest AR work *The Thirty Birds* tells a standalone story, it relates to and is located next to a physical installation by Mazandi on the north side of the Resnick Pavilion at LACMA. That kinetic sculptural work, *Language of the Birds*, consists of 100 suspended abstract bronzes and takes its name and theme from an epic 12th-century Persian poem by Farid al-Din 'Attar, a parable about a mystical quest for God, a spiritual home, or even our own highest good. The mission is undertaken by 100 birds seeking a worldly ruler—the mythical Simurgh. Many birds perish along the way until 30 remain. *The Thirty Birds* is Mazandi's interpretation of the ending of 'Attar's poem describing the epiphanic realization of the surviving birds at their journey's end: they are the Simurgh (literally "30 birds" in Persian). Through the medium of AR, Mazandi renders the birds as if they are in a dream state when they reach that moment of truth. The work also calls to mind today's key issue—climate change—and the ways in which it imperils many avian species and contributes to human migration, often accompanied by dangerous journeys and inhospitable reception.

### **Rashaad Newsome**

#### ***Self Inventions, 2023***

*Self Inventions* may be experienced at Exposition Park's Rose Garden (700 Exposition Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90037) or from anywhere at [lacma.org/newsome](https://lacma.org/newsome).

*Self Inventions* pays homage to the spirit of perpetual regeneration and innovation in Black culture. Rashaad Newsome's shape-shifting robotic figure set to an original score and poem reflects the resilience of Black people in the face of ongoing struggle. The optical effect of transformation from one form to another employs fractal geometry, an

aesthetic that, along with the designs of the robotic figures themselves, is inspired by African art and its early use of abstraction. Often used as a term in computer science, abstraction here not only serves as a visual tool but illustrates a tactic in Black culture's perpetual state of transformation. Newsome draws comparisons between the labor performed by robots and the unpaid, compulsory service Black people have had to perform historically. In the face of untenable circumstances, Black culture has not only survived and adapted, but has found a way to flourish. This is the exciting yet vexing task of creating Blackness, a process that many of the residents in the Exposition Park area have long been engaged in. The figures in *Self Inventions* are the "engineers of themselves," paying homage to the legacy of Black resistance, carrying forward a history of endless innovation.

### **Rubén Ortiz Torres**

#### ***Dead Heads, 2023***

*Dead Heads* may be experienced at Lincoln Park (3529 N. Mission Road, Los Angeles, CA 90031) or from anywhere at [lacma.org/ortiztorres](http://lacma.org/ortiztorres).

Rubén Ortiz Torres has responded to a site in Lincoln Heights where a number of sculptures have been stolen from their plinths. Among the bronze busts that have been taken from the site are important figures in Mexican modern history, including General Ignacio Zaragoza, poet Ramón López Velarde, and Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa. Ortiz Torres reimagines the role of monuments in the 21st century, especially in a moment where identity can be hybridized through mobile apps like Snapchat. In Ortiz Torres's project, the empty plinths become an opportunity to envision a new form of memorializing, one in which Mexican historical figures like General Ignacio Zaragoza, Doña Josefa Dominguez overlap with LA cultural icons and large scale statuary such as Olmec heads, Northwestern totems, and depictions of Buddha. While mourning the desecration of a significant site of cultural exchange, the work presses the viewer to consider new approaches to historical sites and iconography, through which we may more actively participate and envision the future.

### **Alison Saar**

#### ***Rise, 2023***

*Rise* may be experienced at Santa Monica Beach, Inkwel Bay (Ocean Park Beachwalk, Santa Monica, CA 90401) or from anywhere at [lacma.org/saar](http://lacma.org/saar).

Alison Saar's monument, *Rise*, creates space for the viewer to remember those lost, and those who survived the abuses of the colonization and commodification of women—specifically those of Black, Brown, and Indigenous heritage. *Rise* responds to the current attack on reproductive rights and threats made to the sovereignty of Black, Brown, Indigenous, and female bodies, and serves as a catalyst for dialogues which will bring these issues to light, inspiring compassion and activism. In Saar's work, the goddess Yemaya—a patron spirit of women in the Yoruba religion who commands creation, water, rivers, lakes, streams, and shipwreck survivors—is surrounded by swarming catfish, doves, cowrie and conch shells, wields a cane knife, and blows on a conch shell,

calling women to resist the forces that want to control their freedom and reproductive rights, especially women of color who have historically had their bodies colonized. *Rise* is accompanied by an excerpt read and written by author Desiree C. Bailey. Her poem *Chant for the Waters and Dirt and Blade* is followed by original music played on the conch shell by Avila Santos.

#### **Credit**

*LACMA x Snapchat: Monumental Perspectives* is made possible by Snapchat. Major support for the initiative is provided by the Mellon Foundation.

#### **About LACMA**

Located on the Pacific Rim, LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection of nearly 152,000 objects that illuminate 6,000 years of artistic expression across the globe. Committed to showcasing a multitude of art histories, LACMA exhibits and interprets works of art from new and unexpected points of view that are informed by the region's rich cultural heritage and diverse population. LACMA's spirit of experimentation is reflected in its work with artists, technologists, and thought leaders as well as in its regional, national, and global partnerships to share collections and programs, create pioneering initiatives, and engage new audiences.

**Location:** 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036. [Lacma.org](http://Lacma.org)

**Image captions:** (Left to right) Victoria Fu, photo courtesy of Jungsu Lim; Yassi Mazandi, photo by JF Chen; Rashaad Newsome, photo by Whitney Legge; Rubén Ortiz Torres, photo courtesy of the artist; Alison Saar, photo courtesy of the artist

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#### **Connect with LACMA**



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#### **About Snap Inc.**

Snap Inc. is a camera company. We believe that reinventing the camera represents our greatest opportunity to improve the way people live and communicate. We contribute to human progress by empowering people to express themselves, live in the moment, learn about the world, and have fun together.

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