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Modern and Contemporary Art: Topical Abstraction in Contemporary Sculpture

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Message from the Guest Editors

Since at least the 1960s, artists have leveraged abstraction to address topical issues without ceding to the classical framework of sculptural figuration. At once allusive and open, such practices draw together disparate frameworks ranging from the vernacular and ethnographic to the phenomenological and commemorative. The overt conceptualizations that ensue cultivate trenchant conversations that foreground the critical terrain that making and materials occupy.

This Special Issue on contemporary sculpture—broadly conceived—seeks scholarship that explores the terms, origins, and outcomes that have emerged globally to engage with political, ecological, and intersectional questions. How might we understand such topical abstractions and the expanded terrain they explore? How do they pressure the limitations of abstraction to take up social or political considerations? In what ways might they invite new audiences, engender new relational positions to the viewer, or establish new possibilities for aesthetics?



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Special Issue



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Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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