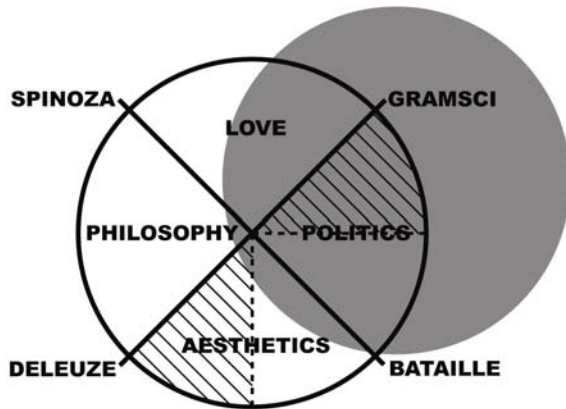


Why Gramsci?

The decision to do a monument dedicated to Antonio Gramsci comes from my commitment towards Art. As was the case with my other monuments to Spinoza, Deleuze and Bataille, my competence to do the “Gramsci Monument” in The Bronx, New York City comes from my understanding of Art In Public Space today, and not from my understanding of Gramsci. My decision to dedicate four Monuments to these four Philosophers comes from my schema:



There are four important points in this schema:

- 1) From the very beginning, I decided that my work would assert itself and move in the Form-field and Force-field divided into four parts: “Love, Philosophy, Politics and Aesthetics”.
- 2) My work doesn't necessarily have to cover all four parts equally, but each part should always be touched to some extent.
- 3) The “Love” and “Philosophy” parts can generally be considered as positive, and the “Politics” and “Aesthetics” parts as negative. I am aware and even interested by this fact, because I understand the world I live in as 'One', undivided and unique, as a world with the positive and negative, but also with the 'not-only-positive' and 'not-only-negative'. I therefore decided that my work would always include all four parts.
- 4) Dividing the circle in the four parts - “Love, Philosophy, Politics and Aesthetics” - creates four intersecting points: “Love / Philosophy”, “Philosophy / Aesthetics”, “Aesthetics / Politics” and “Politics / Love”. I decided that the intersecting point “Love / Philosophy” would be dedicated to Spinoza, the intersecting point “Philosophy / Aesthetics” to Deleuze, the intersecting point “Aesthetics / Politics” to Bataille and the intersecting point “Politics / Love” to Gramsci.

I am a “Gramsci-Fan”. This is my response to “Why Gramsci?”. My love includes everything coming from him, without exception. As a fan - as every fan - there is no criticism, no distance and there is no limit. Being a fan cannot be explained or justified, but I will try to clarify - for you - “Why Gramsci?”:

Because he was a hero.

Because he was a revolutionary.

Because he was ready to pay the price for his commitment.

Because he was a strategist.

Because of his passion for the Political.

Because of his proposition to self-define one's own position.

Because of his hate of indifference.

Because he wrote Notebooks and Letters in Prison, and each one is a beautiful and strong foundation from which one can build an education.

Because his faith in the human capacity and competence was unlimited.
Because he wrote “Every human being is an intellectual” - which was echoed by Joseph Beuys when he declared ‘Each human being is an artist’.
Because he understood Art and Philosophy as a friendship-movement.
Because of his question: “Is Philosophy independent from politics?” which encourages me - as an artist - to then ask: “Is Art independent from politics?”
Because his texts are a toolbox for everybody willing to confront today's' reality.
Because of his definition of what crisis is.
Because he wrote constitutively about art: “Art itself is interesting, it is interesting in itself, in that it satisfies one of the necessities of life.” and “The content of Art is Art itself”.
Because of his fight for Universality against particularism.
Because of his love of ideas, his insistence to make these ideas work, to act and be efficient with them.
Because he wrote: “The only justifiable enthusiasm is that which accompanies the intelligent will, the intelligent activity, the intelligent richness of concrete initiatives which change existing reality”.
Because he is was fearless and because he is an example of loyalty.
Because to read his writings - today - is such an encouragement.

“Why New York?”

It is easy to explain why I want to do a monument dedicated to Gramsci, but less so to give reasons “why in New York”, simply because there is no reason, and this is the point! But there is a logic – it is my logic - it is an artistic logic. It is my logic not to ‘choose’ specific cities, specific contexts or specific community places for my Monuments. Because what I am looking for, are universal places. Places where terms such as ‘Universality’ confront reality, complexity, chaos and contradictions of today. This is the ‘Universality’ I am interested in - the Universality which fights particularism and obscurantism. Not ‘Universality’ as a harbor of dreams, but ‘Universality’ as a beautiful and absolute idea, an idea one has to fight for at all times, an idea to be reconstructed everyday - anew, as the “Gramsci Monument” itself. It might be quite clear already that my decision to do the “Gramsci Monument” dedicated to the Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci is not a political decision but an artistic one. I am aware of today’s confusion and misunderstanding regarding what is ‘political’! And the “Gramsci Monument” gives me - once again - the occasion to clarify and insist on what differentiates ‘working politically’ as an artist - which I want to do - and ‘the political’ in art, which is only a “trademark” like many others. The meaning of ‘working politically’ or ‘acting politically’ is to decide for myself who is my hero. This is the artist’s own decision, according to his logic. What is crucial and what makes a big difference, is that no one asked me to do a monument dedicated to the co-founder of the Italian communist party Antonio Gramsci. And no institutional power, no official, no historian, no scientist, no politician suggested I do a monument dedicated to Gramsci in New York City. Antonio Gramsci is my hero - I am not trying to convince anyone of adopting my hero, just as no one has asked me to do something for his hero. The only decisive thing I want, is to do something, myself, for my own hero! I would be happy if the other establishes himself his own hero and hierarchy of heroes - in order to give form to the human capacity of self-decision, of self-authorization, of self determination and of emancipation. The “Gramsci Monument” must be an universal Monument, it must be mentally transplantable anywhere in the world, in other cities, other locations, other public housings or places where people are living. This is the ambition and the affirmation of the “Gramsci Monument”. The only valid answer to “Why New York?” is: because it's an universal work of Art. Universality - which is the condition for every Artwork - means Justice, Equality, The Other, The Truth and The One World. The “Gramsci Monument” exists at “Forest Houses”, in The Bronx, in New York City, in the USA, in America, in the World, in the one World, the unique World, in our World.