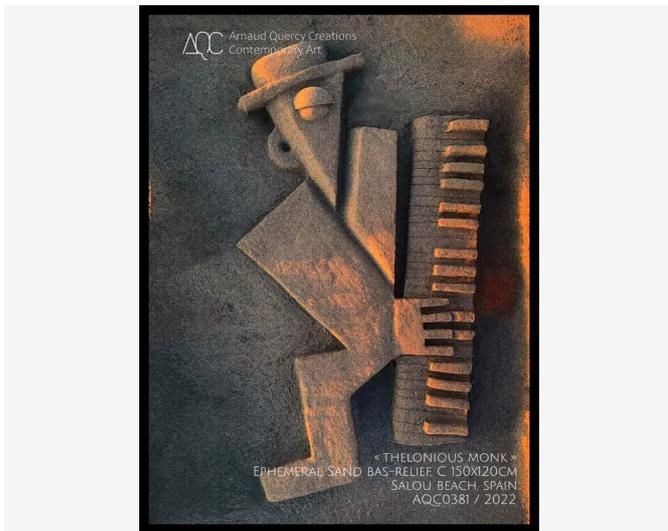


Nanopublication — Monk's Angularity Translated to Geometric Relief

by Arnaud Quercy [1] [2] · Thelonious Monk · 2022



INTERPRETIVE INTENTION FIRST PERSON EMBODIED

PRACTICE SYMBOLIC TRANSLATION HIGH

Monk's Angularity Translated to Geometric Relief

Thelonious Monk [3]'s music is angular — dissonant intervals, unexpected harmonic choices, percussive piano attack. I translated that angularity into geometric sculptural form: the sharp brim of his hat, faceted planes defining the face, piano keys rendered as rectangular blocks. Sand enforces simplification — no fine detail survives the medium's granularity. Bold shapes carved in relief, visible from distance, matching Monk's uncompromising aesthetic.

CONTEXT

Thelonious Monk's musical language resists easy comprehension. His compositions feature unexpected note choices, rhythmic displacements, abrupt silences, and harmonic structures that sound "wrong" until the ear adjusts and recognizes their internal logic. His piano playing was percussive — he struck keys with force, creating sharp attacks and rhythmic punctuation rather than flowing melodic lines. He favored dissonant intervals (minor seconds, tritones) and used space (silence, rests) as aggressively as sound. The music is all edges, angles, refusal of smoothness.

I translated that angularity directly into the sculpture's geometry. Monk's trademark porkpie hat appears as a sharp horizontal brim — the most recognizable element of his visual iconography, rendered here with clean edges and strong shadow. The face is constructed from faceted planes rather than smooth contours: angular cheekbones, defined brow line, geometric simplification that echoes Cubist portraiture but also reflects sand's resistance to organic curves. The piano keyboard — Monk's instrument, the source of his percussive attack — appears as a series of rectangular blocks at the composition's lower register, abstracted but unmistakable.

Sand as a medium matched the subject's aesthetic. Monk's music doesn't allow for decorative flourish or sentimental gesture — every note serves structural purpose. Similarly, sand sculpture at monumental scale cannot sustain fine detail or delicate ornamentation. The material demands bold, simplified forms. What might seem like limitation becomes alignment: the medium's constraints mirror the subject's uncompromising approach. I couldn't make Monk's portrait smooth or pretty even if I wanted to — sand won't allow it, just as Monk's harmonic sense wouldn't allow conventional beauty.

The piece belongs to the Untamed [8] Creations collection, which documents my work outside the systematic chromesthetic transliteration framework that governs the Synesthetic Explorations series. This is free artistic expression: a tribute to a musician whose work I deeply admire, created without the constraints of mapping pitch to color or translating harmonic structure into spatial composition. The angularity I rendered in sand comes from listening to Monk's recordings — his 1950s solo piano work, his quartet recordings with Charlie Rouse, his compositions like "Evidence," "Misterioso," "Brilliant Corners" — and attempting to find a visual equivalent for that singular, uncompromising voice.

The sculpture was created alongside a companion piece honoring Charlie Parker, also in ephemeral sand relief, during the same five-day Salou Beach [9] exhibition. Together, the two works represented jazz giants whose innovations redefined their instrument and their art form. Both pieces shared the same fate: documented at sunset with warm Mediterranean light catching raised edges, then erased by the tide.

REFERENCES

- [1] Quercy, A. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-2662-7790>
<https://arnaudquercy.art/en/the-artist.html>
<https://arnaudquercy.art/fr/artiste.html>
- [2] **ORCID:** <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-2662-7790>
<https://arnaudquercy.art/en/the-artist.html>
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- [3] Quercy, A. (2022). Thelonious Monk. AQC0381. Ephemeral sand bas-relief, 150 x 120 cm. Salou Beach, Spain. Untamed Creations collection. <https://arnaudquercy.art/media/2022/08/thelonious-monk-sand-by-arnaud-quercy-aqc0381-4c8.webp>
- [4] Monk, T. Various recordings consulted: Solo piano work (1950s), Quartet with Charlie Rouse, compositions including "Evidence," "Misterioso," "Brilliant Corners."
- [5] **Artwork Title:** Thelonious Monk
- [6] **Author:** Arnaud Quercy
- [7] Quercy, A. (2022). Bird (Charlie Parker). Ephemeral sand bas-relief. Salou Beach, Spain. Companion piece created during same exhibition.
- [8] **Collection:** Untamed Creations
- [9] **Location:** Salou Beach, Spain
- [10] ## Document Metadata
- [11] **Document ID:** thelonious-monk-sand-sculpture-claims
- [12] **Asset Code:** AQC0381
- [13] **Medium:** Ephemeral sand bas-relief

- [14] **Dimensions:** 150 × 120 cm
- [15] **Date:** August 2022
- [16] **Certificate:** #20221231-0051
- [17] **Status:** Not for sale (ephemeral work, documentation only)
- [18] **Claim Count:** 2
- [19] **Voice:** First person throughout
- [20] **Date Created:** February 11, 2026
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