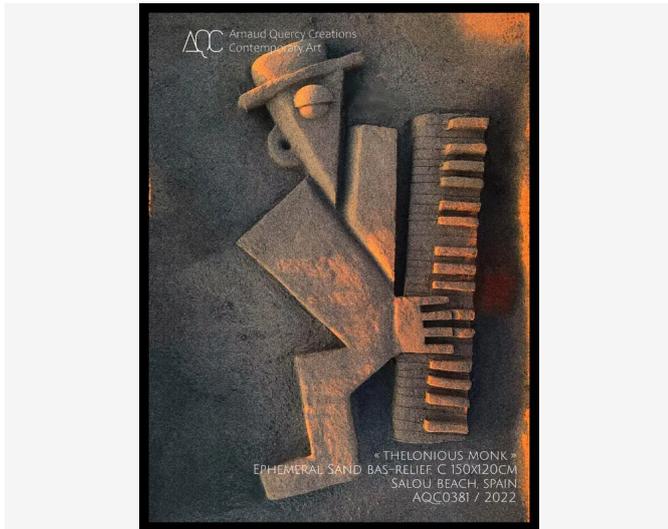


AQC0381

Nanopublication — Monumental Ephemerality — Paradox as Artistic Strategy

by Arnaud Quercy [1] · Thelonious Monk · 2022



ARTISTIC METHODOLOGY FIRST PERSON AUTHORIAL

REFLECTION EPHEMERAL PRACTICE HIGH

Monumental Ephemerality — Paradox as Artistic Strategy

I created this 150×120cm sand bas-relief on Salou Beach knowing the tide would erase it within hours. The monumental scale wasn't despite the ephemerality — it was the point. Larger scale, briefer existence, more profound the loss. Sand sculpture at this scale requires hours of work for a piece that survives minutes after completion. The impermanence isn't metaphor; it's the medium's intrinsic condition.

CONTEXT

This work was created during a five-day open-air exhibition on Salou Beach, Spain, in August [3] 2022. The exhibition format allowed passersby to witness the creation process and the inevitable destruction — some viewers returned across multiple days to see which pieces had survived the tide and which had vanished. The 150×120cm dimensions made this one of the largest pieces I've attempted in sand, requiring approximately four hours of continuous carving work directly on the beach surface.

The choice of monumental scale was deliberate. In traditional sculpture, monumentality implies permanence — bronze monuments, marble statues, stone reliefs designed to outlast their creators. Here, monumentality serves the opposite function: it amplifies the ephemerality. A small sand sketch erased by waves is charming; a

massive portrait disappearing into the Mediterranean is profound. The investment of labor (hours of carving), the visual impact (150cm tall, commanding beach space), and the brevity of existence (hours until high tide) create a productive tension. The work refuses the usual logic of sculptural ambition.

Sand as a medium enforces its own constraints. The material allows for bas-relief carving — raised surfaces catch light, carved depressions create shadow — but fine detail is impossible. The granular structure of sand means edges remain soft, transitions between light and dark happen through texture rather than precision. I work with broad, bold forms: the silhouette of Monk's iconic hat, the angular planes of his face, the rectangular blocks representing piano keys. These forms are visible from distance and reward closer inspection with surface detail, but they must be simple enough to survive the medium's resistance to refinement.

Documentation became the primary artifact. The digital photograph (AQC0381) preserves what the tide erased. This positions the work within traditions of ephemeral [2] art where the object's destruction is anticipated and the photographic record becomes the lasting presence. Tibetan sand mandalas operate similarly: days or weeks of precise work, ritual destruction, photographic memory. The difference here is environmental rather than ceremonial erasure — the Mediterranean doesn't care about intention, ritual, or artistic ambition. The wave takes what it takes.

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] Quercy, A. (2022). Thelonious Monk. AQC0381. Ephemeral sand bas-relief, 150 × 120 cm. Salou Beach, Spain. Untamed Creations collection. <https://arnaudquercy.art/media/2022/08/thelonious-monk-sand-by-arnaud-quercy-aqc0381-4c8.webp>
- [3] Certificate of authenticity #20221231-0051. Documentation of ephemeral work, August 2022.

CHECKSUM (SHA-256)

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