

Zaq Landsberg
Thomas Robinson
Lex250 Monument

Project Brief |

'Revolution Wheel' or 'Revolution House' [working titles] places an interactive rotating cylindrical bronze sculpture within an architectural garden house as a monument. Through artwork engraved in the bronze (inspired by US Revolutionary War era powder horn engravings, antique maps, Native American patterns, and Colonial era etchings), we will overlay the story of April 19, 1775, with stories of global decolonization movements, struggles for independence, and revolutions that Captain Parker and his men sparked, and that the American Revolution inspired and set into motion. The garden house will create a space of invitation, shelter, commemoration, and interaction, providing an audience of all ages with an opportunity to connect with the artwork through play, thought, and education. Sited within a landscaped garden of native flowering plants, we seek to integrate the piece in a manner thoughtful and sensitive to the history of the land and the identity of the culture of Lexington, past, present & future.

Wheel Artwork |

The bronze wheel borrows the shape, form, and action of Tibetan/Bhutanese prayer wheels. Typically, it is a metal cylinder filled with written mantras that, when spun clockwise, "activates" the mantras, like speaking them aloud, accumulating merit, or good karma. The wheel is housed underneath a roof and structure built in the local style with local materials: wood in Bhutan and stacked stone in the Himalayas in Nepal and Tibet.

The central image will be an antique map of the Battles of April 19, 1775 (the one displayed in Buckman's Tavern) engraved or cast on the wheel. It traces the path of the Redcoats from Boston to Concord, through Lexington, their retreat back, and paths of militia all over the state, converging on this path. From this central area, different strands of history, images, figures, patterns, and words will flow towards it, as the militiamen did on that day. Some of these will depict the events, threads, figures, and history that shaped the confrontation between the Redcoats and the Patriots. The Native Americans - their interactions with the colonists, both positive and negative, with ideas of independence and liberty observed by the colonists, who influenced European Enlightenment thinkers, some of whom helped the colonists and fought on the same side in conflicts. The training, cohesion, and organization that made the Minutemen victorious on that day were shaped by a history of protecting settlements from Native attacks. This could include images like Native American patterns and symbols, written forms of Native Languages, historical and contemporary, animals, plants, and (perhaps even an engraving of King Phillip I by Paul Revere).

The wheel is a physical metaphor; the piece is made to revolve, and the action talks about the Battle of Lexington as not a piece of history frozen in amber but as the spark, the push that set world-changing events in motion - not just the American Revolution but subsequent revolutions, such as the French, Haitian, and American Wars of Independence. We want to commemorate Capt. Parker and his men on that fateful day, at the dawn of the Anti-Colonial movement in the Americas, Haiti, and eventually the decolonization of Asia and Africa. These are the other currents that will flow from the central image of the map.

Graphically, the style will look like the carvings on powderhorns, a distinctive Massachusetts style during the Revolutionary War. This style started during the French Indian War and reached its height during the Siege of Boston. It's a visual language distinct from this time and region, and it mixes designs, maps, ships, architecture, landscapes, words, and patterns. The Native Americans also used powder horns.

We plan on mixing in old etchings, maps, and other graphic images that were physically carved, engraved, or scratched into the surface of objects. The imagery will be in high relief and designed to be touched.

Technical Details |

Materials:

Emphasizing the use of locally sourced historic materials. Working with 'living' materials intended to weather and age naturally in a timeless manner.

Reclaimed Local Granite:

Taking cues from the Lexington Battle Green and the region specifically, granite is a visually ubiquitous material for buildings, pavers, foundations, and monuments, both historical and contemporary.

Old Belfry Marker, Preacher's Stand, Parker's Boulder, Lexington Revolutionary War Monument, Prince Estabrook Memorial, Lexington Minutemen Memorial, USS Lexington Monument, WW II Monument, etc.

We will source rough-hewn granite posts for columns, cut clean on two sides, for the four primary structural members. Additional reclaimed granite pieces will be used for the column base details, pavers, etc. Emphasizing local materials and the reuse of original New England stone incorporated from previous structures and buildings in the area.

Potential Supplier: Olde New England Granite | Suppliers and Installers of Reclaimed Historic Hardscape Products

Olde New England Granite is a national supplier of reclaimed granite products. Building blocks from bridge and foundation demolitions, antique granite curbing, and vintage 19th-century cobblestones from New England roads... . . . reclaimed granite products include sawn and thermaled steps, landings, 2" pavers, rustic hand split posts and columns, fence ensembles, benches, unique pavers, planters...

154 West Street, Wilmington, MA 01887 | <https://oldenewenglandgranite.com/>

Timber-framed Roof Structure:

Aligned with traditional building methods and materials used throughout New England, the roof structure will be framed atop the structural granite columns and anchored with engineered steel connections. Working with a team of local carpenters, we will source the ideal timber for strength & longevity while staying as close as possible to historic means.

Drawing from timber-framed structures, as found on the trails of the White & Green mountains, we also find a visual and material language that blends with the rooflines of Lexington and the greater region. Particular references can be found in the Asticou Terraces and Thuya Gardens in Maine, designed by Joseph Henry Curtis with stone & woodwork by Augustus Phillips. All woodwork shall be sealed with Cutek, a professional architectural-grade exterior wood sealant with an extended lifetime and simple maintenance.

Wood Eaves and Fascia:

Ornamental elements are incorporated into the stone and wood structure and provide space for hanging additional decorations (lanterns, commemorations, etc.). Detailed and shaped to provide an aesthetic that ties the structure both to New England and the diverse visual history of the Prayer Wheel structures from which 'Revolution Wheel' draws. These ornaments will be used to explore the architectural language of New England and similar garden structures found worldwide (e.g., Japanese Gardens, Buddhist Temples...)

Zinc Roof Sheathing, Waterproofing:

In seeking a material for roof sheathing, we select a material akin to those used historically in New England while determining a low-maintenance, long-life solution. Soft natural metals, notably lead, have a lineage of use in New England craft and building, with its particular connection to its use in granite work for connections & fittings and, of course, its connection with the musket balls of the American Revolution. Zinc, a similarly soft and workable metal, is familiar in color and weathering but offers a safe and long-term solution. Other materials explored include copper, slate, and cedar roofing shingles, but they require additional maintenance and are likely cost-prohibitive. Zinc paneling fabricated by the design-build team will incorporate a modern AVB layer for a contemporary, long-term solution.

Copper/Bronze Alloy:

Rotating Cylinder, approx. 3' in diameter and 5' tall. Cast bronze with reliefs and engravings imprinted in the metal or fabricated from a rolled sheet of bronze or copper alloy, connected and welded at the seam, with designs engraved into the surface. The patina will be a statuary brown/dark brown, sealed with metal oil and wax, or left to weather naturally. The intention is that through interaction with the public, the viewers will burnish the finish with their hands, having the most touched parts become shinier over time.

Steel Framework & Bearings:

Attaching the cylinder to the timber-framed structure and ground anchor point and providing support and movement for the 'Revolution Wheel.' Heavy-duty bronze pivot bearings at the top and bottom will allow the cylinder to rotate on its central vertical axis. The bearings will be of a modern self-lubricating design but require periodic checks and regreasing. All steelwork shall be coated with a Zinc-Tnemec system, offering an incredibly long-term solution.

Footings:

Concrete, one per column, approx. 18"-24" in diameter, 36"-48" deep, installed below the frost line as designed per P.E. specifications, incorporating an engineered structural connection for the granite columns.

Native Garden Area:

A community engagement project will be undertaken to remove invasive species and to plant and care for native New England plants.

Viola Sororia

Known commonly as the common blue violet, it is a short-stemmed herbaceous perennial plant native to eastern North America. Native ground cover grows in the shade, food wildlife, can be walked over & will find natural growth patterns.

White Wood Aster

The white wood aster, is an herbaceous plant native to New England.

Blue Stemmed Goldenrod

Solidago caesia, commonly named blue-stemmed goldenrod, wreath goldenrod, or woodland goldenrod, is a flowering plant native to New England.

Milkweed

Native plant that attracts Monarch butterflies

Maintenance:

Bearing for the spinning mechanism must be regreased approximately once every six months. If the bronze cylinder is sealed with metal oil/wax, it should be cleaned yearly, and the sealant should be reapplied. Wood should be resealed every 3-5 years. Roof sheathing and waterproofing should be inspected annually and not require replacement for decades, if ever.

ADA Compliance & Accessibility

- All pathways to and from the monument will be of an ADA-compliant slope & accessible design.
- Clearance through the monument and around the bronze wheel shall be wheelchair & ADA-accessible.
- Artwork on the bronze wheel shall be high relief for a tactile experience and can include areas of brail description.
- The wheel's height shall be such that it can be engaged by children and from a wheelchair.
- The activation of wheel rotation shall be tuned so that appropriate effort is required to engage the piece while allowing children and people of diverse abilities to rotate it.

Timeframe:

Spring/Summer 2024

Finalize design/structural/engineering drawings

Finalize relief/engraving image for cylinder

Summer/Fall/Winter 2024/2025

Select granite structural members and detail pieces. Cut and prep surfaces.

Source, cut, and prepare timber frame roof elements (pre-fabricated).

Engrave/Cast bronze cylinder

September/October 2024:

Install footings and finish foundation work. Initial landscaping work.

February/March 2025:

Set granite, assemble roof, install bronze sculpture, set pavers, and finish landscaping.

Community Engagement:

- Engage the people of the community through the use, experience, and history of the land. Cultivation of native plants throughout the park landscape or in a designated designed area (e.g., garden & planter areas). Opportunities for community engagement through education programs about the history of the land and people, with occasions for interaction with community gardeners. Through this process, we will organize and sponsor volunteer events related to the removal of invasive species and their replacement with healthy native plants.
- Interactive sculptural elements. Touching and spinning the central cylinder.
- Engage local artisans, builders, and material sourcing (reclaimed granite, local artisans and carpenters, etc.)
- Tradition & Ceremony. Creating a community gathering place can provide an opportunity or anchor for other rituals, celebrations, etc. For example, the lantern eaves offer a space for hanging lanterns of different types to celebrate cultural and historical events in the community of Lexington. An opportunity to create tradition and interaction within Lower Belfry Park. This could be hanging Chinese-style lanterns from the eaves for Chinese New Year or traditional Colonial American-style lanterns the night before Patriots' Day. The Monument can serve as a place to decorate and celebrate Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, with lanterns, oil lamps, etc.

Creative Team Bios |

Zaq Landsberg is an artist based in Brooklyn, NYC, who specializes in large-scale, site-specific sculptures, monuments, and public art. His artistic focus is monuments, where the political and the aesthetic literally meet. He's interested in symbols of power, the historical context from where they emerged, and how that shapes neighborhoods/spaces/communities today. Much of his work is things that look like other things.

Landsberg has completed public art commissions at half-a-dozen NYC Parks (Harlem Art Park 2022, Fort Tryon Park 2021, Morningside Park 2021, Washington Park 2019, Flushing Meadows Corona Park 2018, Socrates Sculpture Park 2014), as well as Museum of Contemporary Art Arlington, VA, 2023, Rockaway Initiative for Sustainability and Equity, 2023, Green-Wood Cemetery, NYC, 2022, Liberty State Park, NJ 2022, Nicotra Group, Staten Island 2022, NYU 2019, Franconia Sculpture Park, MN 2017, Governors Island, NYC 2012 and 2011.

He has exhibited in solo shows, at CUAC (Salt Lake City, Utah 2016), La Ene, (Buenos Aires, Argentina 2012), with Chashama (NYC 2012), and Pehr Space (LA 2008).

His work has been shown in group exhibitions at Bronx Community College (2019), CCK, (Buenos Aires, Argentina 2018), MALBA, (Buenos Aires), and others.

He was awarded a NYC Parks Clare Weiss Emerging Artist Award in 2020, a UMEZ Arts Engagement Grant and LMCC Creative Engagement Grant (2020), NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellowship in Sculpture in 2017, the Art in the Parks: UNIQLO Park Expressions Grant and a More Art Engaging Artist Fellowship in 2018.

He was an artist-in-residence with the LMCC Workspace Program 2019-2020, and Sculpture Space (Utica, NY) in 2012.

He was born in Los Angeles and holds a BFA from NYU. He is of Chinese and Jewish descent.

His antics have been covered in more than 40 countries in more than 27 languages, including the New York Times, the Washington Post, NY Magazine Artnet news, Time Out NY, Vice, NY Daily News, The Believer, PEOPLE Magazine, Clarín (Argentina), ARTE (France), Blouin Art Info, Gothamist, KSL Salt Lake City, WGN Radio, NY Magazine, Fox News, The Daily Mail, among others.

zaqart.com

Thomas Robinson, principal of Studio North, is an architectural designer and builder who has worked in New York City and beyond for over 15 years. His portfolio includes numerous high-profile projects, including feature elements of the lobby of 4 World Trade Center, The Shed at Hudson Yards, and significant work at the recently completed Domino Refinery. His work ranges from custom feature staircases, entryways, and furniture to award-winning facades, including the copper & zinc façade of 325 Kent Avenue, developed with Shop Architects. His designs approach architectural elements as sculptural pieces of art. With a focus on elevated metal, glass, wood, and stone work, Thomas endeavors to find the more profound beauty & substance in the architecture around us. Studio North, with expertise in design, engineering, fabrication, and installation, is a fully integrated design-build firm specializing in making the most complex

design projects a reality. Through his work and process, Thomas seeks to foster meaningful connections between people and communities and the buildings, objects, and art around them.

Designer Statement

Through the exploration of materials, acknowledging their history, origins, & properties, we can find the connection between our buildings and our world. With delicate and intentional detailing, we find the human touch upon our materials. In form, we find the architectural gesture, an original vision of what can and will be. The objects we create carry us through place & time. Architecture is not inactive — it is imbued with its passage from the earth, by our hands, to structure.

duenorthnyc.com

Zaq Landsberg Initial Artist Statement for Lex250 |

Why does this public art opportunity interest you/your artist team?

I've long been fascinated by monuments, they are literally where the political and the aesthetic meet. I'm interested in symbols of power, the historical context from where they emerged, and how that shapes neighborhoods, spaces, and communities today. Most of my work is site-specific. I tailor my work to site and location, with content and aesthetics. I match the vernacular of the place, in terms of the objects, forms, colors, and finishes that belong there. I specialize in research, taking deep dives into history, and weaving that into a more contemporary and meaningful context.

I'm fascinated with the opportunity to conceptually excavate, examine, and reevaluate the legacy of the Battle of Lexington and what it means to the United States of 2025. Personally, I'm of mixed Chinese and Jewish heritage. Having ancestral roots in two different continents has given me a certain amount of identity-dexterity. There is no one place that is my homeland, except for the US.

There is a deep meaning to this battle, to this event, to those whose ancestors fought on the actual site, and to those who may have just become naturalized citizens, talking about the possibility and necessity for radical, revolutionary change. My strength as an artist is to take disparate ideas/concepts/materials/and aesthetics and force them together in a visually harmonious way, and I'm excited at the challenge of taking accurate historical commemoration and making that relevant and inclusive for the present and the future.

What approach or values do you/your artist team bring to commemorative artwork?

My recent work has pushed new ideas of what monuments can be. My artistic focus has been monuments for the last 12 years. I've been pushing the idea of what monuments look like moving forward: multi-faceted, more representative, inclusive, and democratic than what monuments have historically been. Monuments with innovative use of forms, materials, voices, narratives. I've cast biodegradable statues out of fungus, mixed Medieval-European and Colonial-American styles for a commemorative tomb, and did a mash up of the Statue of Liberty and reclining Buddha statues.

My approach to the Lexington Monument would be a physical form that could be stretched to include many different voices and elements. I see this as the only way to try and capture Lexington's legacy as a historical and multigenerational touchstone, that cannot be represented in a single image, object or form. I envision an object that could weave together elements from many different perspectives communities, historical, current and future.

I have mission to represent more than historical individuals, to represent movements, ideals, collective belonging. I bake many layers of meaning in a work, so there are many entry points, and many different ways for views to approach the work, from various backgrounds.

Engaging the audience is essential for me, something that is visually compelling, that draws people in, that does not blend in while people walk by. That can be thorough interactivity, that can be integrating with the site, and that can be speaking in the language of the place.

How do you/your artist team approach community engagement in your artistic practice?

Access is central in my work. Having multiple entry points is also important, my work has intellectual rigor, but also has elements that appeal and attract people young and old. I make my work approachable, both physically and conceptually. I layer complexity and meaning on top of this. I make efforts to present in parks and public spaces, places where people gather on their own terms. My pieces work best both physically and conceptually close to the ground.

Public art is my focus, and there is an inherent community engagement aspect to working in this field. I've found that the best way to protect a public art piece from vandalism is to make it connect to the community from the very beginning, design it in a way so that community members themselves feel ownership over it, take pride in it, and they will discourage anyone trying to mess with it. Getting to know a place, listening to the neighborhood, doing research and laying groundwork, and delivering something inspiring are necessary components to successful public art pieces. My pieces often have an "interactive" component, some describe my work as "art you can hang out on." I'm drawn to making work that's attractive, approachable, and that serves some utility in a place, a spot to sit and picnic, an object to climb. I find the easier a piece is to engage with the easier it is to get a weightier idea across.