

Educator Notes

Danh Võ

November 4, 2016—June 4, 2017



Danh Võ, *We The People (Detail)*, 2011. Courtesy Lawrence and Joan Altman

About the artist

Danh Võ was born in Bà Rịa, Vietnam, in 1975, was raised in Denmark, and currently lives and works in Berlin and Mexico City. He is a graduate of the Kongelige Danske Kunstakademi in Copenhagen and the Städelschule in Frankfurt. His practice draws on autobiographical and collective history to explore issues of identity and belonging.

About the exhibition

Danh Võ's *We The People* is the artist's long-term project reconstructing Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi's Statue of Liberty on a 1:1 scale. Re-creating only the statue's fragile copper skin—the thickness of two copper pennies—and using the same fabrication technique as the original, Võ explores the relationship between monumentality and materiality in *We The People*. By displaying the sculpture in pieces and never as the whole, the artist offers us the opportunity to relate to an iconic monument on a human scale and to reflect on the collective construction of the concept of liberty itself.

Questions for discussion

- | What does this fragment of *We The People* represent to you?
- | How might the artist's choice to disperse the fragments or separate the parts help us to see the original monument in a new way?
- | Does a monument need to be large to make a statement?



Installation view: *The Ungovernables*, New Museum Triennial, New Museum, New York, 2012. Photo: Benoit Pailley

Suggested activities

Fragile Materials, Strong Images

Note: This activity requires two days to complete.

Gather square cardboard pieces, graphite pencils, liquid glue, glue sticks, tinfoil, cotton swabs, and permanent markers in a variety of colors.

Day 1

As a class, decide on a symbol that best conveys your class or school's values. Print out several large-format versions of an image of this symbol, ideally choosing one that is a basic outline. Have students work in groups of three to five people, and provide one image to each group. Ask students to divide the image into equal parts for each person and to glue this piece of paper onto their cardboard. Then ask students to go over the lines that make up the image with a thick application of glue. Make sure that the glue becomes three-dimensional, adding extra layers if needed. Set the boards in a good location to dry.

Day 2

Give each student a piece of tin foil large enough to generously cover the board. Have students rub the entire front of the board with the glue stick, being careful not to harm the glue lines. While the glue is fresh on the cardboard, direct students to cover with foil like a "skin," wrap the extra foil around the back, and using the cotton swabs, gently push the tinfoil around the raised glue lines. This should expose the symbol and create areas of high relief. Encourage your students to add color to their artwork using the permanent markers, if desired.

Ask students to reflect on the strength of their individual piece as a fragment before displaying the finished pieces together on a classroom wall or floor. As a class, discuss how the artwork as a whole connects to larger ideals.

For more information, please contact the Education Department at 970.925.8050 ext. 133 or email education@aspenartmuseum.org

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