



## Shaping the Past

*Presented by Goethe-Institut, Monument Lab  
and the Federal Agency for Civic Education*

### Artist Statement

**Quentin VerCetty:**

**“Missing Black Technofossil Here”**

**Toronto/Montreal 2020**

In his project for Shaping the Past happening in Toronto and Montreal in October 2020 as a public space intervention, conversation and unconference – **“Missing Black Technofossil Here”** – VerCetty uses augmented reality, digital 3D-art and -printing to address Tania Inniss’ notion that “the absence of Black representation in art” is erasure, relating it to the City of Toronto as one of the few major cities without any monuments of Black people. Intervening their nonappearance, the artist's multi-layered process combining research, computer-generated- and haptic-modelling aims to create digital imagery as well as sculptural works that ultimately embody Black Canadian community leaders within the city-scape. As memorials of representation, these works are meant to be understood as Afrofuturistic technofossils functioning as an example of sankofanology, connecting the past, present, and future through its existence very much like the Sphinx of ancient Egypt and the bronze Edo Oba monuments of ancient Benin.

Quentin's work also connects with the recent debates of the renaming of the so-called “Mohrenrondell” in Sanssouci Park in Potsdam, Germany, to the removal of confederate and colonial figures across the Black diaspora globally.

Through speculation, the project explores how the absence and lack of representation give space for a lack of validation, valuing, and connection for Black people with themselves and their memory or data for the future. At the same time, this erasure causes a disconnect for non-Black folks to see them as being contributors to society.

The project seeks to address these notions by honouring and highlighting Toronto- and Montreal-based Black leaders of the past, present, and future, including Mathieu Da Costa, Lucie and Thornton Blackburn, Jean Augustine, Michaëlle Jean, Pharoah Freeman, and Saron Gebresellassi among others.

Using 3D scanning technology, the project will represent these leaders as a part of an interconnected narrative that "I am because we are the ancestors." The speculated new monument will be a bust of a futuristic hybrid African masquerader, as a metaphor that these leaders are the embodiment of our ancestors. The monument will also contain interactive components such as QR codes, relief imagery, and text that will tell and show narratives of the chosen leaders being highlighted.

The imagined (imagined and digitally engineered) monument will be represented in three states. First is a series of images that show the monuments of the leaders in futuristic community spaces. The second state will be 3D-printed models of the monument, and the third an augmented reality rendition so that the audience can experience the technofossils in their public or private spaces. The three manifestations are used for interventions to conducting workshops and engagement to bring awareness to the importance of inclusive anti-colonial technofossil representation in the public sphere and to address the erasure and alienation of Black people from the public psyche and memory.

**Related Links:**

[vercetty.com](http://vercetty.com)

[Goethe.de/toronto](http://Goethe.de/toronto)

[Goethe.de/shapingthepast](http://Goethe.de/shapingthepast)

[monumentlab.com](http://monumentlab.com)