

ALBERTO DUMAN

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## DEMOSTAPH (2001-5)



The location of the work is an artificial island created at the confluence of the Grand Union Canal and the river Soar, in Leicester City centre.

Within this island, two mounds overlook the management of this unusual crossing by the Ewan's Weir; these are an artificially created elevation in Soar Island.

These mounds are made of rubble from past demolitions and provide a pedestal from which the surroundings can be observed.

The abandoned tradition of civic monuments in honour of notable personalities informs the concept of the project DEMOSTAPH for Leicester public art program.

Public institutions are not anymore dispensers of civic goodness examples in forms of bronze or stone statues of do-gooders, famous citizens, historical personalities.

However, in our politically correct, pluralistic and fragmented society these powers of role-model description seems more likely to reside in the hands of advertising, TV and the Media at large.

Only the recent events of 9/11 have provided a reasonable exception in the figure of the fireman, a recovered hero of our days.

I have proposed for this site to recreate a typical Victorian monument plinth, but with access steps built-in to allow anyone to step on it and therefore acquire the status conferred by the plinth just by the fact of standing on it.

The plinth has been constructed from prefabricated elements made of a concrete mix with recycled aggregate recovered from re-processed rubble from demolitions.

This recycled material, recently officially upgraded in its definition from waste to resource, is a humble and more sustainable resource compared to aggregate from quarry, and in the aesthetic realm of this project enact a metaphor of diversity, useful for a city like Leicester which presents itself under a highly multicultural branding.

Furthermore, in the current stage of intense transformation of political entities, the notion of a civic monument made of rubble -and by inference a democracy equally made of rubble, a material still heavily scorned by the building industry- can only be a fitting representation of such state of things, fostering a re-evaluation of 'ways of doing things' and the value of those actions which appears as an inescapable predicament of the twenty-first-century.

Alberto Duman