

The Corridor of Slavery

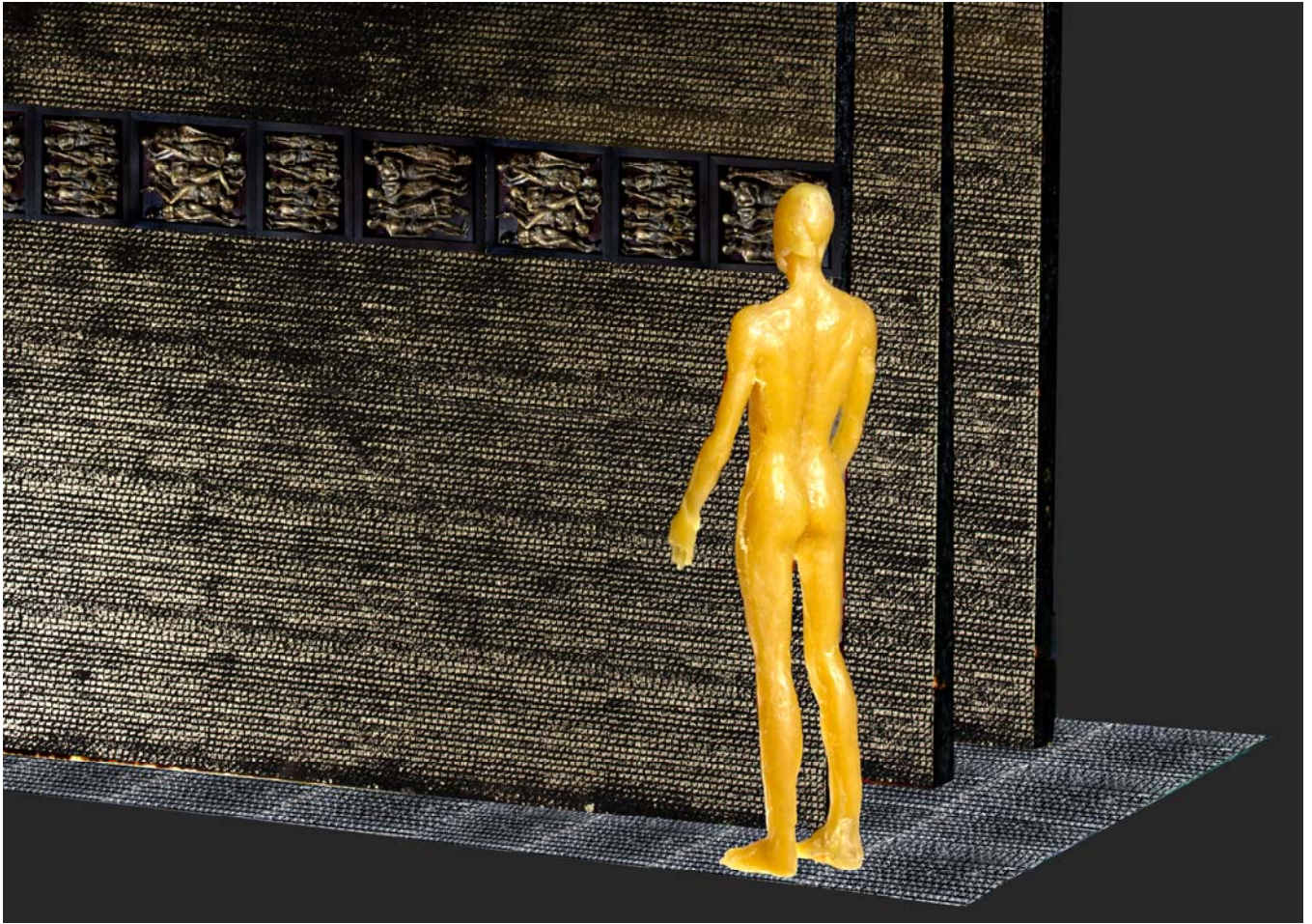


ARTIST'S STATEMENT

As I was preparing to submit a proposal for this slavery monument, I began to examine how many human beings were victims of the transatlantic slave trade. I was shocked. The numbers of enslaved and the volume of the trade were staggering. I have previously worked on a monument regarding the industrial mass extermination of human beings in the concentration camps. And I cannot but draw parallels with this and the magnitude of the abuse of Africans in the days of the slave trade. I am convinced that only few people realize just how many Africans were enslaved as the continent was depleted of its population. This is the background and my motivation for making this monument proposal.

I intend to create a visualization of the more than 14 million Africans who were enslaved and transported across the Atlantic or died in the process. The goal is to honour these human beings and give them the place in human history that they rightfully deserve.





Description of the Sculpture

The sculpture is made of polished black African Nero granite, glass and bronze. It consists of 3 high parallel vertical walls spaced at 60 cm distance and culminating in a top plate covered with leaf gold 4.5 meters above ground. From some angles the sculpture will look like a large monolithic mausoleum. From other angles it will emerge as two three meter long bright and golden corridors.

The monolith stands on a massive glass plate. The sculpture is illuminated from below through the glass, creating the illusion that the dark sculpture floats weightlessly on the glass.

On the outside of the granite wall 170 cm above the ground, is a frieze of bronze sculptures showing chained slaves - men, women and children. They are placed in the same way as slaves were, when strapped to the 36,000 ships of the slave trade.

The vertical surfaces of the granite wall are covered with 12,500,000 golden lines - one for every African who was enslaved and shipped from Africa. Inside the glass plate that forms the monument base are engraved one and a half million lines for the estimated number of Africans who died before and during the transatlantic slave transports. The lines on the granite walls and the glass are written by hand by the descendants of the slaves - and then laser engraved into the plates.

The monument's tight design as a vertical dark rectangle will harmonize well and engage with the NY skyscrapers located in the horizon behind the monument, as well as the surrounding buildings.

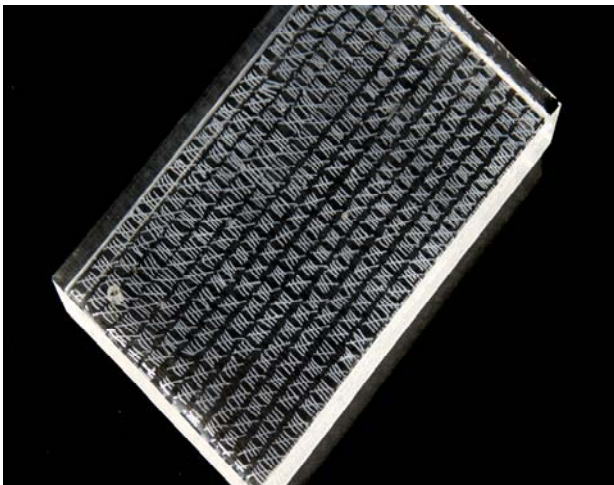
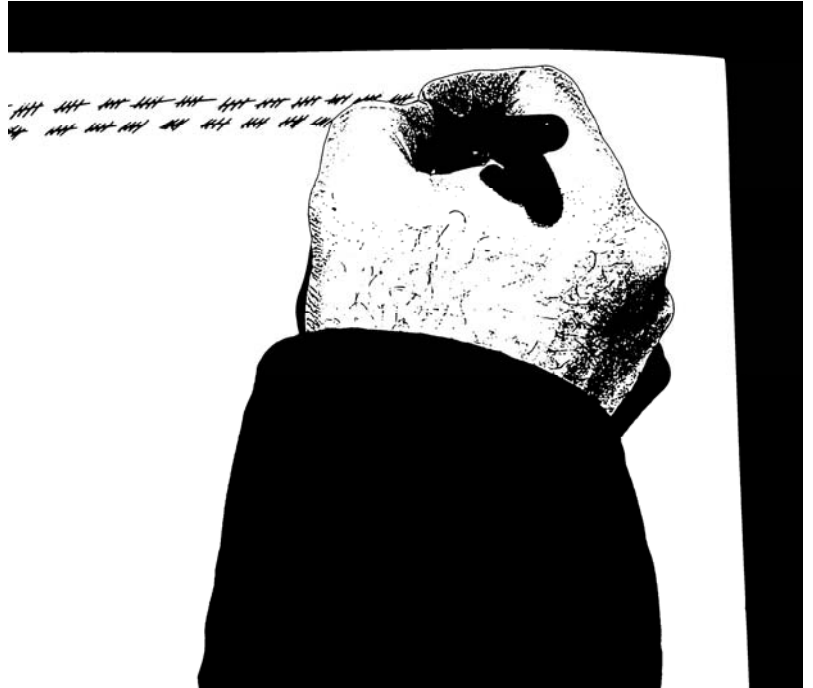
The Lines Constituting an Interactive Project

It is essential that it is the descendants of slaves themselves who make the lines. I imagine that approx. 1,400 descendants are selected. Each person makes 10,000 lines on a document and notes his/her country, city along with name and date. And on the back of the document, the ancestral story is briefly described. It is the lines of this document which are transferred and engraved onto the monument. The stories will be placed on the monument's homepage to be a part of its interactive and educational function.

These 1,400 descendants will come from **all** walks of life and from all countries where there are descendants of slaves. They will include very prominent descendants, such as U.S. First Lady Michelle Obama, Brazil's former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (known popularly as Lula), the Jamaican musician Ziggy Marley, as well as middle class citizens, prison inmates etc. The number of persons to be selected from each country will depend on how many descendants actually live in the respective countries.

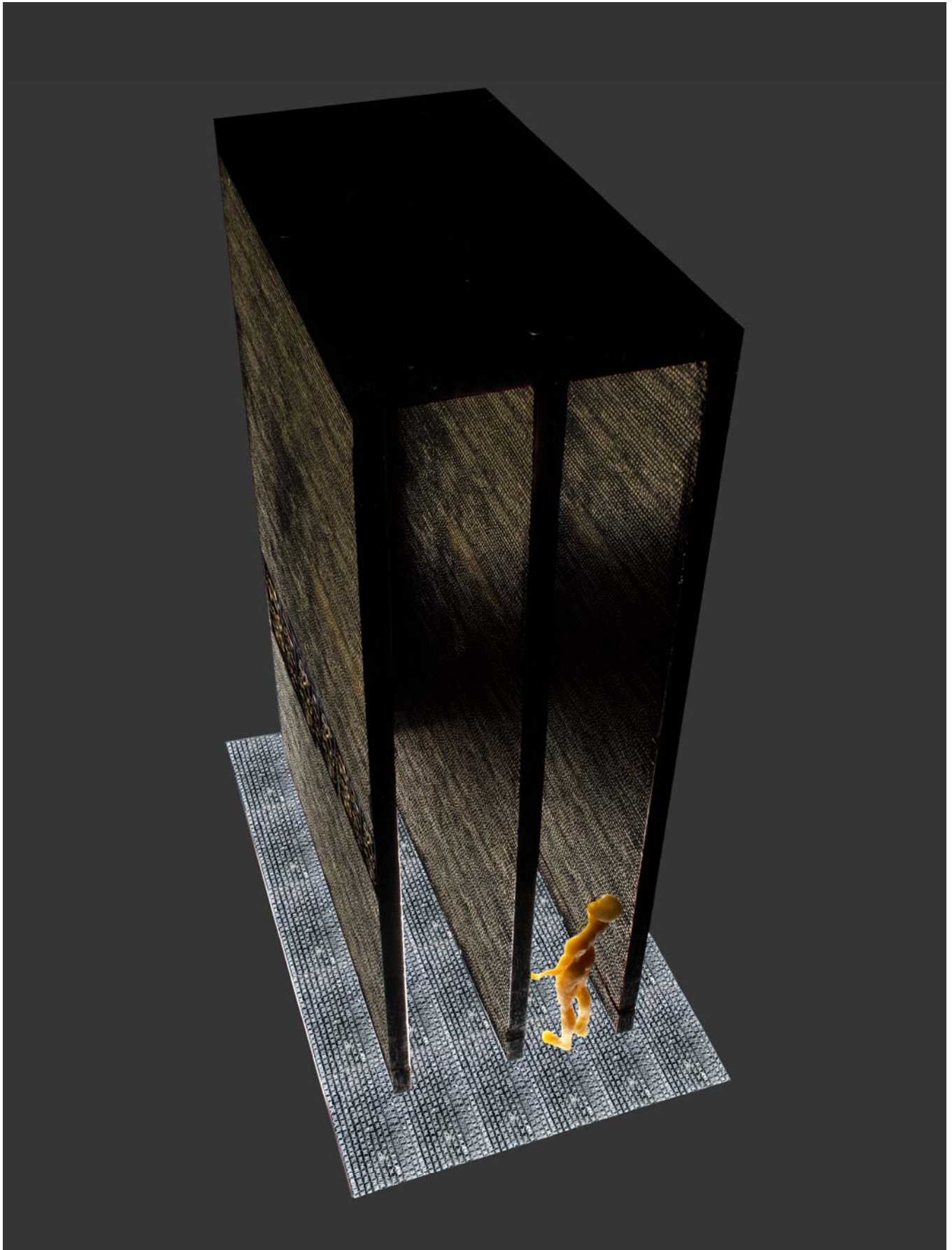
The participants will be identified with the help of an extensive global collaboration involving museums, historians, researchers and organizations dealing with the history and consequences of the slave trade and slavery. In this way, the establishment of the monument also constitutes a dialogue and mapping project.

An important symbolism lies in the fact that it is the descendants of the slaves throughout the world who become personally involved in the creation of the monument that is to honor and remember the incredible assaults that were made on the African continent. At the same time, the descendants' presence in the monument shows their great importance and relevance for the countries and continents they are now a part of. In this way the descendants are printing the memory of their forefathers into the imperishable granite plates.



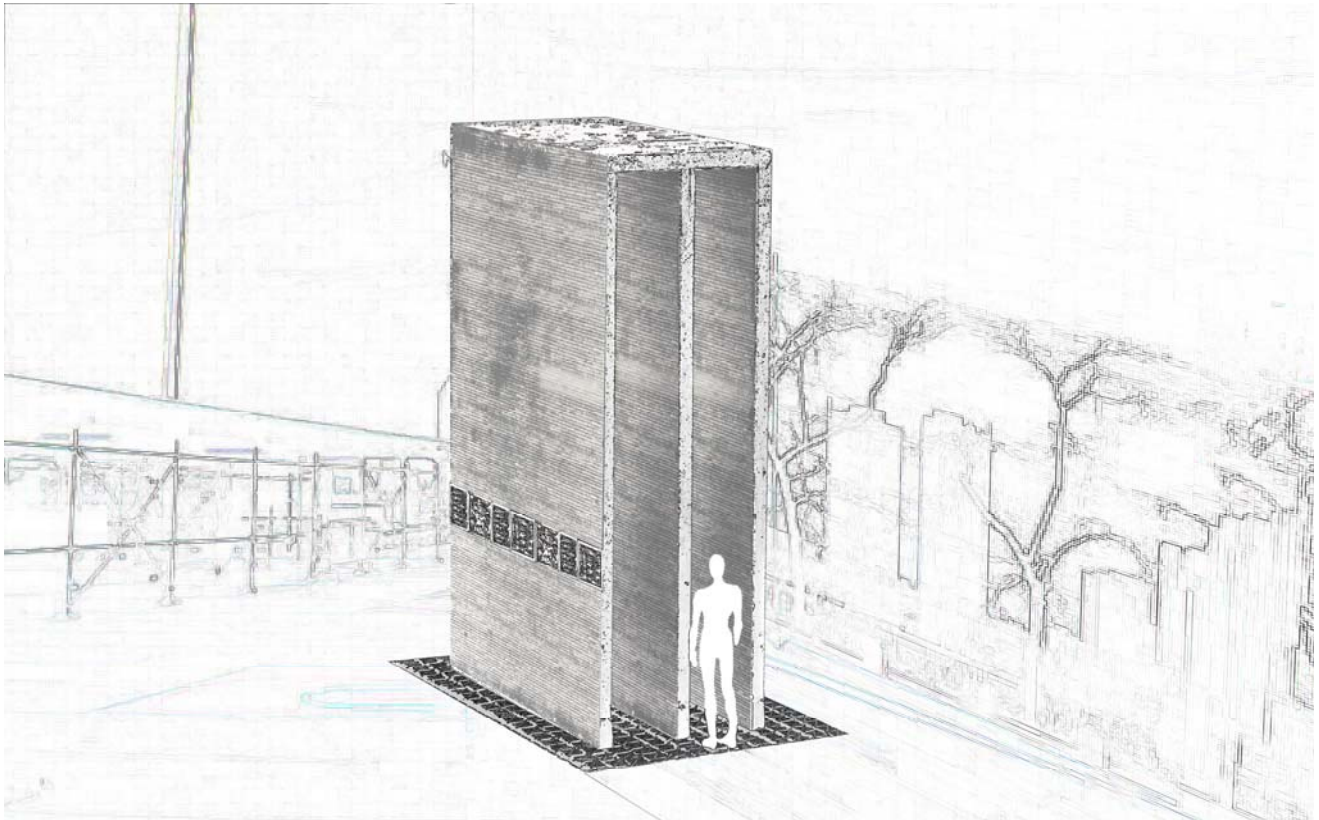
There is a significant side effect of the involvement of the descendants from around the world in the genesis of the slave monument. So it will create worldwide public attention and great awareness regarding the project and the history of slavery.

A website will be established to describe the genesis of the monument. It will present all of the 1,400 involved descendants of slaves and show their personal lines as well as their history. In addition the website is to contain a great deal of historical facts and descriptions of slave transports and what happened when they came ashore along with the slave trades' consequences for Africa and the world and more.



Walking Through the Corridor Of The Slaves

I imagine that monument could spawn a tradition where visitors and descendants of slaves walk through 'The Corridor Of The Slaves' when visiting NY and the UN. Thus honoring the slaves and increasing awareness and interest in the history and tragedy that befell on millions of ancestors to the present day population.



Meaning, Symbolism and Status as an Icon

There is a host of symbolic meanings in this monument proposal that will form the basis for a monument that the descendants of slaves will embrace as an icon of their history and background. This is a monument that is relevant to all people but especially with the global community of people of African descent and its diasporas. The monument will

- educate future generations by asking them to dwell on the consequences of the centuries-long enslavement and trafficking of Africans that were delivered to the Americas, Caribbean and Europe.
- anchor the legacy of the millions of enslaved Africans, whose countless stories, memories and contributions to humanity have changed the world community forever. It will provide a comprehensive and inspiring interpretation of this massive inhuman and forced migration of people who have shaped and continue to shape humanity.
- contribute to recognizing the tragedy of slavery, which also includes the legacy of hatred, intolerance, racism, racial prejudice and xenophobia, which permeate the international community and also are associated with the current economic and social inequality in the world.
- highlight the cross-cultural and global consequences of the transatlantic slave trade and honor the memory of the people who died and those who have shared their struggle.
- visualize and remember the magnitude, duration and extent of the tragedy and the legacy of slavery and the slave trade.
- involve all the areas affected by the transatlantic slave trade and slavery, through the participation of the 1,300 descendants and the lines they make.
- have the capacity to display and visualize the resulting diasporas and the processes African peoples were the victims of. These and the assaults involved are among the greatest civilian populations have been exposed to in the history of mankind.

NARRATIVE - TECHNICAL DETAILS

The Measurements of the Sculpture

The granite sculpture (overall measurements): height 4.5 m, length 2.78 m and width 1.5 m. The three granite plates and the top plate are approx. 10 cm thick (including steel) and set at 60 cm distance, so that you can walk through the sculpture corridor.

The sculptures in the frieze consist of lying slaves in size 1:5 (approx. 33 cm high). The sculptures are embedded in a recess in the granite wall, which is 3 cm deep, 40 cm high and 2.78 m long. The glass plate: length 4 m, width 2 m and thickness 5 cm.



Here you see a the proposal for the monument adapted to the site.

Materials, Construction, Cost, etc.

The three vertical surfaces and the top plate consist of African highly-polished granite Nero from South Africa, glued to a hidden inner construction of steel. The panel of glass is made of hardened glass.

The lines in the granite are engraved with laser and covered with leaf gold. The lines in the glass are engraved with a special laser that makes the lines inside the glass appear as though they are floating. The ceiling in the corridor is covered with gold leaf - the many sculptures in the frieze are made of solid bronze.

All materials are indestructible and their maintenance is virtually free except for normal cleaning. However, it might be necessary to establish a transparent protective layer on the base that can be replaced - depending on how popular the monument, and walking through it, will be. The technical specification and calculations of the construction will be calculated by an engineering firm to make sure that all necessary conditions are met.

The monument's tight design as a vertical dark rectangle will harmonize well and engage the NY skyscrapers located in the horizon behind the monument, as well as the surrounding buildings.

The monument and its related projects can be kept within the budget of US\$ 3 million.

