

Grand Arts
1995-2015

Problems and Provocations



Patricia Cronin *Memorial to a Marriage*

Sept. 6–Oct. 19, 2002



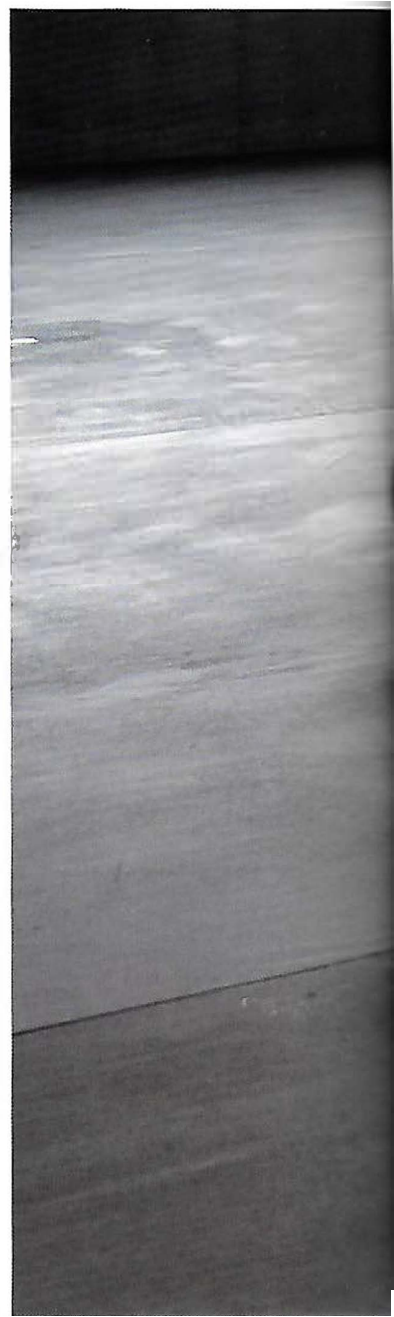
In 2000 Patricia Cronin set out to create a larger-than-life marble monument depicting her longtime partner, Deborah Kass, and herself in a rumpled-sheet scene of peaceful domestic intimacy. She was using a nineteenth-century medium to criticize a twenty-first-century lack of progress: Gay marriage was still illegal, and the state recognized Cronin and Kass as a couple only by way of wills, health-care proxies, and powers of attorney. In appropriating the form of neoclassical sculpture, Cronin could re-symbolize civic virtue, idealized beauty, and moral truths for a contemporary age. Further, as mortuary art, *Memorial to a Marriage* would permanently celebrate in death a union the couple could not legally celebrate in life.

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[PC] When Margaret and Sean came to my studio, I had three little clay maquettes and two watercolors, and I said, “I would like to make *this*, over-life size and in marble.” No gallery would let you do that. And no one would ever give a woman artist that kind of money. It’s an impossibility. “Oh, hello, I need six figures, I need \$100,000, \$125,000, I’m going to take three years, and I’m only going to make this one work of art. Oh, and I’m going to make it about a really controversial issue in the United States—illegal, actually. Um, so can I have the funding?”

^ Patricia Cronin, maquette, *Memorial to a Marriage*, 2002. Plasticine clay, 53 x 27 x 17 in.



COULEURS ET LUMIERE DE FRANCE
75 - PARIS
L'Arc de Triomphe
Triomphe Arch
Photo Frédéric Maury
36 75 0520

Dear Sean + Margaret,
This trip
was so incredible!!
I spent everyday in a
different cemetery
+ took 10 rolls of film.
Dorsay + Louvre had
great sculpture and film
so grateful that I got
to see it now
many love, Patrice

19 MAR 2002

Sean Kelley +
Margaret Silva
Grand Arts
1819 Grand Avenue
Kansas City, MO
64108

▼ Patricia Cronin, installation view,
Memorial to a Marriage, 2002.
Carrara marble, 83 x 40 x 27 in.

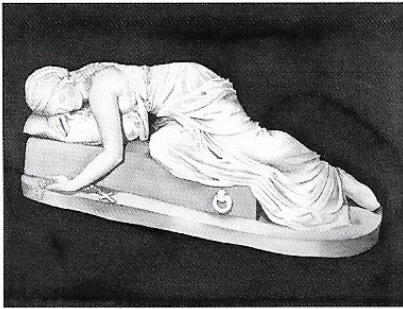


Taking American neo-classical sculptors like Harriet Hosmer as her guides—artists for whom trans-Atlanticism was considered essential—Cronin, too, sought an education in Europe. While men were often memorialized in nineteenth-century public statuary, women figured as subjects chiefly in graveyards and crypts, and Cronin first traveled to Paris to research the early garden cemeteries in Père Lachaise, Montparnasse, and Montmartre. In Italy she visited Pietrasanta, where Michelangelo lived, and Carrara, the next town north. There, she selected a twenty-one-ton block of polished white marble, which she had shipped to the United States.

Back in New York, Cronin submitted a clay model of the statue to the Johnson Atelier foundry in Mercerville, New Jersey. The foundry made a rubber mold from the model, and then a plaster maquette from the mold; after Cronin refined the maquette, the foundry scanned it three-dimensionally and fed the data to a computer-automated mill for carving. Once realized in marble, the sculpture was hand-finished by Cronin to achieve a smooth, polished appearance: a nod to the tradition of the “ideal” in memorial art.

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[PC] When I set out to make *Memorial to a Marriage*, I researched the entire history of sculpture, which is basically the history of death up until Brancusi. I love art history, bought every big tome I could find, pored through them—and then turned the page to see a fabulous sculpture. I went to the bottom and read the name “Harriet Hosmer.” I thought, huh, never heard of her. I looked at the sculpture again and said, “Wow! This sculpture is amazing. Why have I never heard of her?” That’s when I decided she would be my next project.



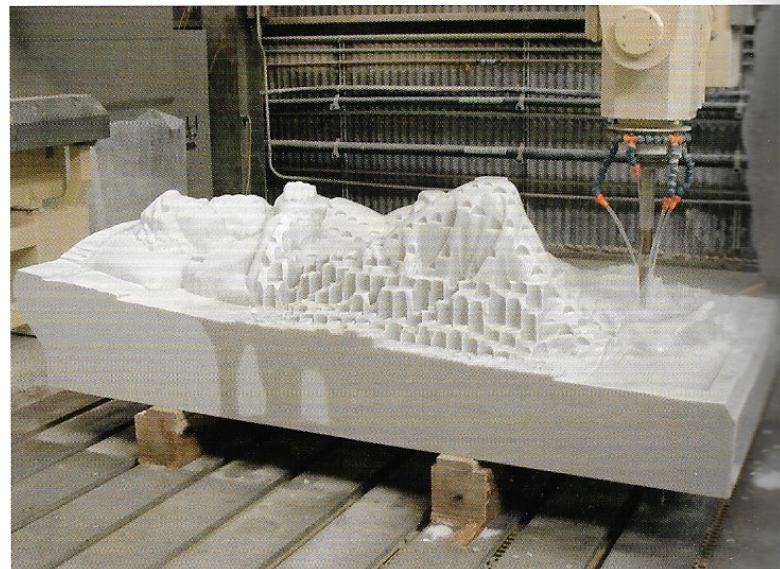
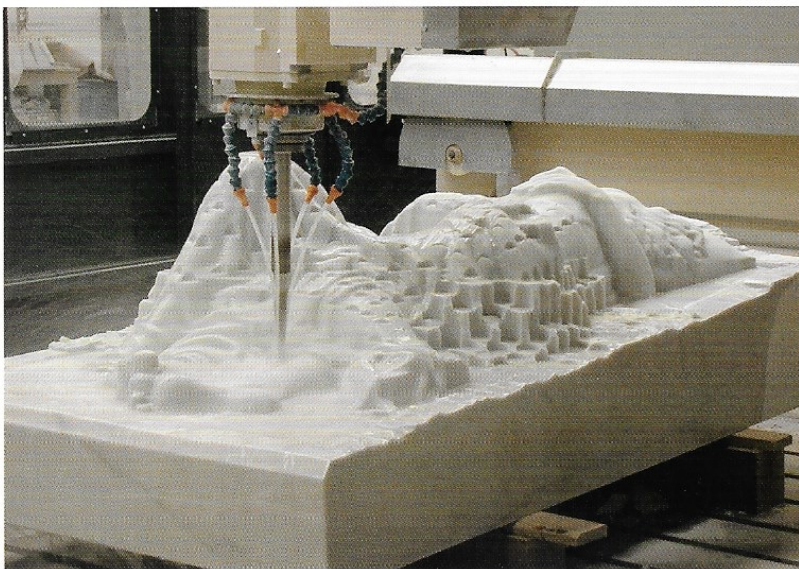
< Patricia Cronin, *Beatrice Cenci*, 2006. Watercolor on paper, 12 x 15 in. After Harriet Hosmer's 1857 sculpture by the same name.



^ William Henry Rinehart (1825–74), *Sleeping Children*, modelled 1859. Marble, 15 3/8 x 36 3/4 x 18 1/4 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum. (photo: Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC/Art Resource, New York)



< Gustave Courbet (1819–77), *The Two Friends*, 1867. Oil on canvas, 135 x 200 cm. Musée du Petit Palais, Paris, France. (photo: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, New York)



Subject: re: stone etc.
 Date: Sun, 6 Aug 2000 16:13:47 EDT
 From: [REDACTED]
 To: [REDACTED]

Dear Sean,

I hope you got my last e-mail thanking you for a fab time in KC. I think Grand Arts is closed for the month, so I don't know when you'll get this e-mail. But just to keep you up to date with my research, I'm sending it anyway.

I've been calling lots of carvers and talking with different stone people and this is what I've learned. Everyone I talked with wanted to know WHY I wanted limestone, its not going to hold up in the weather, its just too soft and porous. Marble is harder, holds more detail and will last "forever." According to Angelo, (my man in stone), the figurative carvers in the US are VERY expensive (supply & demand) and very temperamental. They approach these projects as their own art work. Where the Italian carvers are much cheaper and just carve what you want exactly, how you want it from your marquette. I wouldn't have to make a life size clay, just a small one (then cast it in plaster) and they can blow it up in stone. I have a connection to a great quarry in Carrara and am sending them some drawings to get a bid. They just did a life size Mercedes Benz for some guy's grave here. These guys sound great and the most cost effective.

Once I find the right carver (hopefully these guys will work out and you won't balk at their bid or at the idea of having it carved in Italy), I'm going to need to hire 2 models to pose for the marquette and 1 model maker/mould maker (to help me with that part). How do I go about these expenses? How do you usually do it?

Sorry to interrupt your vacation, but I wanted to fill you in with what I had found. Let me know your thoughts when you get a chance.

All my best,
 Pattie

< Correspondence regarding project research, Patricia Cronin to Sean Kelley, Aug. 6, 2000.

[PC] I had to go and select the marble from Carrara, in Italy, where they don't allow women in the quarries. They said the reason was—women were too distracting. But they also didn't want to lose out on a big sale like this. So they had to get all this extra paperwork signed and stamped and sealed, and they finally let me in.

But it's a thing in sculpture, you know: The artist selects the block of marble because the marble speaks to them. You study them, circle them, and you think about them, and you pray to God there isn't a big dark black vein going down through the middle of the one you choose. Those were sleepless nights in Italy. Because you know where it's going to land—somebody's eye, nose, mouth, nipple, toe. It's not going to end up in a good spot.



Patricia Cronin, process views, *Memorial to a Marriage*, 2002.



Johnson Atelier work contract, 2001. >

After nearly three years of work, *Memorial to a Marriage* had its public debut at Grand Arts in September 2002. Two months later, in conjunction with Deitch Projects, the monument was installed at the couple's plot in Brooklyn's Woodlawn Cemetery. In 2011, to protect the marble from deterioration, Cronin replaced the statue with a version cast in bronze. That same year, on July 24—the day the Marriage Equality Act took effect—Cronin and Kass were legally married, after eighteen years as a couple, in their home state of New York. [AF]

JOHNSON



ATELIER

CONTRACT DATE: This contract is to be entered into on May 2, 2001PROJECT NAME AND NUMBER: The name and number of the project covered by this contract are Project #3764Cronin's FiguresPARTIES: The parties to this contract are as follows: Artist/Gallery (hereafter "the Client") Grand Arts - Attn: Sean Kelley - 1819 Grand Avenue - Kansas City, MO 64108

Person/Entity responsible for payment (only if different than the Client)

Johnson Atelier Technical Institute of Sculpture (hereafter "Johnson Atelier").

WORK TO BE PERFORMED: The work specification to be performed by the Johnson Atelier under this contract are those designated by

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Modeling | <u>White Marble</u> Cast | <input type="checkbox"/> Patina |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enlargement | Rough Cast | <input type="checkbox"/> Paint |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waste Mold | <input type="checkbox"/> Unique Image Casting Direct Burnout Method (see item 4) | <input type="checkbox"/> Crating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rubber Mold | <input type="checkbox"/> Metal Finishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Delivery/Pick-Up |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plaster Cast | <input type="checkbox"/> Metal Polishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Installation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wax Cast | <input type="checkbox"/> Fabrication | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> JA will not store molds and/or patterns |

Specific Notations: We will travel w/ P. Cronin to Italy to select a block of white marble sufficient to make her sculpture 33"x76"x42". From her model we will digitally scan & mill on the above dimensions. The contract includes crating & shipping to Kansas City, but does NOT include any hand carving or finish work.

NOTE: All work of the Johnson Atelier is F.O.B. Mercerville, New Jersey.

DELIVERY DATE: (designate applicable item with an "X" and cross out non-applicable item):

☐ Estimated Delivery Date. The estimated delivery date of this project is _____
It is understood that this is an approximate delivery date; delivery may not occur on this date.

☐ Time of the Essence Delivery Date. The delivery date of this project is _____
It is agreed that time is of the essence with respect to delivery of this project.

COST AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE: The cost of the work to be performed pursuant to this contract is \$ 64,250.00 plus tax \$ _____

A sales tax will not be charged if a resale or tax exemption certificate is provided.

In addition to such cost, the other costs associated with this project are _____

~~XXXX~~ One-third of these costs are due upon the signing of this contract; one-third of these costs are due upon the completion of a metal casting; the final one-third of these costs are due upon receipt of the final invoice for this project.

☐ One-half of these costs are due upon the signing of this contract; the final one-half of these costs is due upon receipt of the final invoice for this project.

☐ The full payment for these costs are due upon the signing of this contract.
(Full payment is expected at the completion of the project.)

DATE _____ Signature of Artist/Gallery ("the Client")

DATE _____ Signature of Person/Entity Responsible for Payment (if different than Artist/Gallery)



CEMETERY

^ Installation view of *Memorial to a Marriage* at Woodlawn Cemetery, Brooklyn, New York, 2003-10.

KEY

CEMETERY OFFICE
WEBSTER AVENUE & 233RD STREET
LOCATED 400 FEET FROM WOODLAWN
R.R. STATION.
30 MINUTES BY TRAIN FROM GRAND
CENTRAL STATION—METRO NORTH TRAIN

(A)

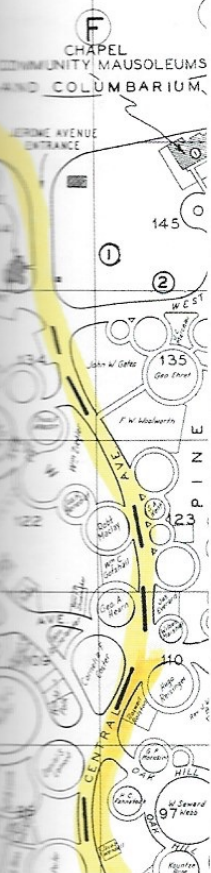
(B)

PERRY AVE. ENTRANCE
EAST 211TH STREET & PERRY AVE.

Background image: Map of Woodlawn Cemetery, Brooklyn, 2003.

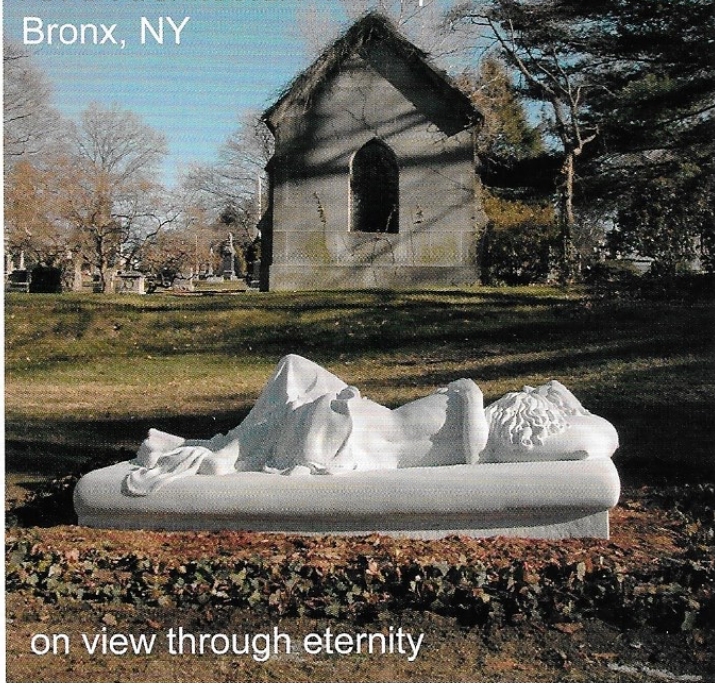
A descriptive booklet is issued by the Cemetery containing all required Information, Regulations, Etc., to be had free upon application at the Main Cemetery Office.

Scale of Feet



Patricia Cronin
Memorial to a Marriage
May 18, 2003

Woodlawn Cemetery
Art & Architecture tour 2pm
Bronx, NY

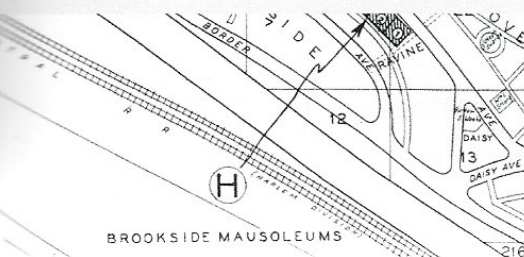
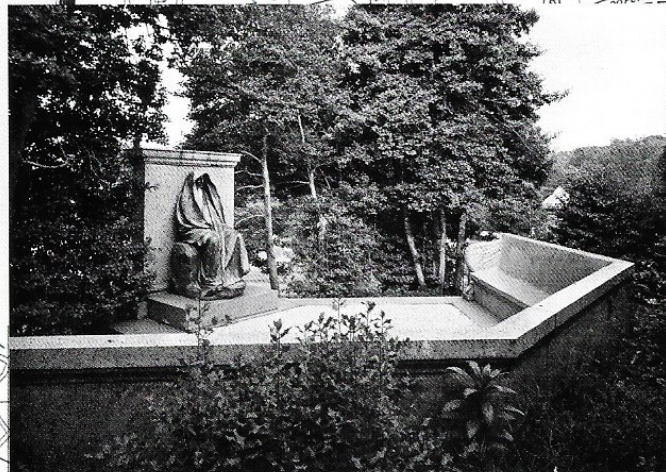
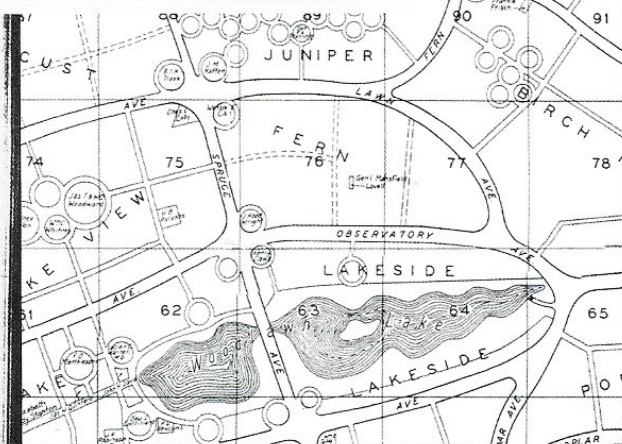


on view through eternity



Cassard monument

Research photocopy of Cassard family monument, installed at Green-Wood Cemetery, Brooklyn, c.1910.



THE PROBLEM OF NAMING

The title of Patricia Cronin's sculpture was taken from Lincoln Kirstein's book *Memorial to a Marriage*, about the Adams Memorial, a statue by sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. Henry Adams, grandson of John Quincy Adams, had commissioned the sculpture in dedication to his late wife, Clover, a witty socialite and accomplished photographer who committed suicide in 1885 by ingesting potassium cyanide, the solution she used to develop photographs. "It's a wonderful book," Cronin told *Sculpture* magazine in 2003. "Their sophisticated Transcendental Bostonian lives were intellectual, romantic, and tragic."

Located in Rock Creek Cemetery, in Washington, D.C., and situated on a hexagonal plot designed by architect Stanford White, Saint-Gaudens's bronze depicts an enigmatic cloaked figure, seated, with eyes closed. Informed by the Buddhist concept of nirvana, the statue quickly became a source of public fascination and was often referred to by the title *Grief*—a title of which Henry Adams did not approve.

In January 1908, following the death of Saint-Gaudens, his son wrote to Adams, requesting Saint-Gaudens's letters. Adams obliged, adding this: "I have only one favor to ask of you in return. Do not allow the world to tag my figure with a name! Every magazine writer wants to label it as some American patent medicine for popular consumption—*Grief*, *Despair*, *Pear's Soap*, or *Macy's Mens' Suits Made to Measure*. Your father meant it to ask a question, not to give an answer; and the man who answers will be damned to eternity like the men who answered the Sphinx."

< Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Adams Memorial, 1891. Bronze. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS DC-280-2. (photo: Jack E. Boucher)

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

The marble version of *Memorial to a Marriage* remained on view at Woodlawn Cemetery until 2010. When the material began to show signs of deterioration, Cronin replaced it with a version cast in bronze.

Other bronze versions of the sculpture have been exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum; the Perez Art Museum Miami; the FLAG Art Foundation, in New York; the Palmer Museum of Art, at Pennsylvania State University; the Contemporary Arts Center, in Cincinnati, Ohio; the Neuberger Museum of Art, in Purchase, New York; and the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, in Glasgow, Scotland, where the sculpture was permanently installed in 2012.



^ Installation view at Woodlawn Cemetery, Brooklyn, 2011–present.



< Installation view at Brooklyn Museum, 2004–05, pictured with bronze sculptures by Auguste Rodin.