

## Monument Brutal

This small table-top piece is part of an ongoing series of studies on brutalism, an architectural category that derives its name from Rayner Banham's 1955 essay *The New Brutalism* (Banham's title is based on the French term *beton brut* for rough, exposed concrete.) The term brutalism has acquired new interpretations since the heyday of the movement in the 1960s and 70s and this project is as much about those new associations as it is about the original intentions of the buildings' designers. The project maquettes are in fact proposals for monumental sculptures, leading to an invitation by MACBA, Barcelona to show one of these pieces in an exhibition titled *Nonument*, that investigated the meaning of the monument in contemporary culture.

Documentation: Installation view, text and image details

*Monument Brutal*

Terence Gower, 2014

Concrete

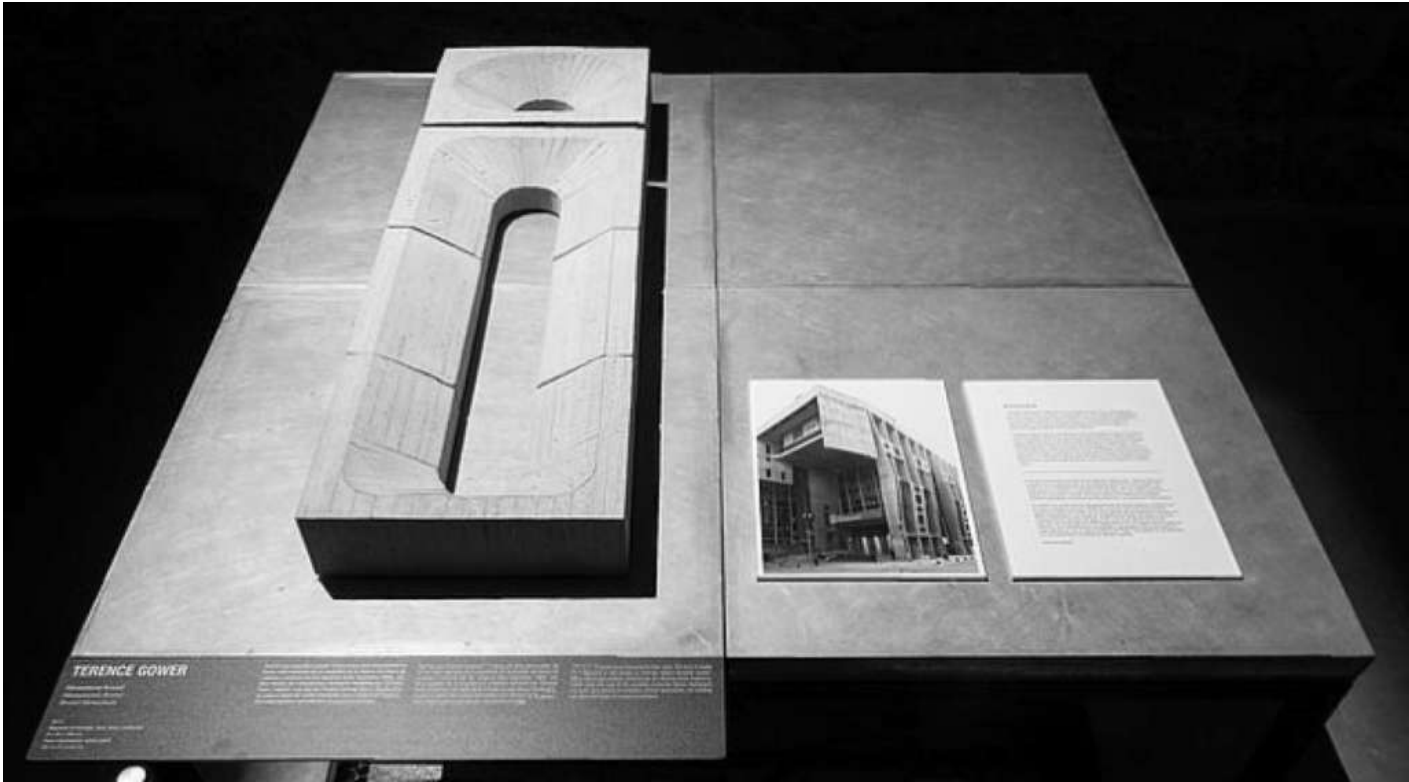
120 x 120 cm overall

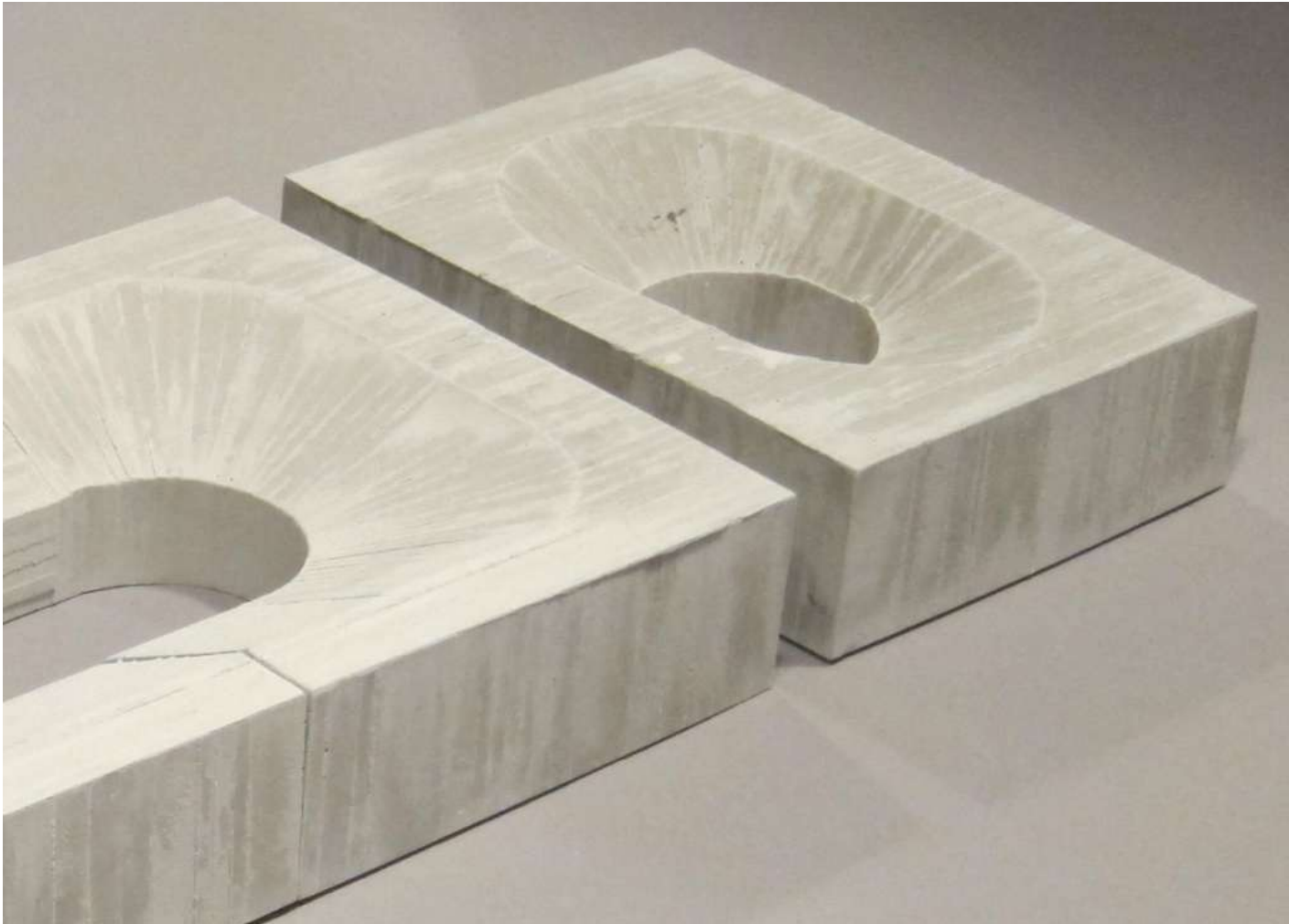
Exhibited at Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA)

[Project Essay: Monument Brutal](#)

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[Link: Nonument at MACBA](#)









## Monument Brutal

El término *brutalismo* se deriva del francés “beton brut”, que se refiere al cemento en su estado puro. El uso popular del término evoca algo anti-estético; una “fealdad” formal percibida (*brutto* = feo en italiano); o por asociación, un edificio o complejo comisionado por una administración o gobierno insensible o brutal. De esta manera los edificios *brutalistas* pueden representar acontecimientos políticos y económicos más amplios.

En 2009 fui a visitar una de las grandes obras del *brutalismo*, el *Banco de Londres y América del Sur* (1966) de Clorindo Testa en Buenos Aires. Argentina estaba en medio de la crisis global de las hipotecas tóxicas y el *Banco Hipotecario*, con sede en el edificio de Testa, fue blanco de una protesta de las víctimas de esta crisis. Los *cacerolazos* de la crisis bancaria de la década de 2000 degeneraron en un asalto directo sobre el edificio: Los manifestantes martillaban y golpeaban sobre las puertas y rejas del banco, por lo que el edificio de Testa, convertido en símbolo de la crisis financiera, se podía oír desde cuadras.

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*The term brutalism is derived from the French beton brut, meaning raw concrete. The term's popular usage evokes an anti-aesthetic; a perceived formal “ugliness” (brutto = ugly in Italian); or by association, a building or complex commissioned by an insensitive or brutal administration or government. In this way brutalist buildings are sometimes taken to represent larger political and economic events.*

*In 2009 I went to pay my respects to one of the great works of brutalism, Clorindo Testa's Banco de Londres y América del Sur (1966) in Buenos Aires. Argentina was in the grips of the fallout from the global mortgage-based financial crisis and the privately held Banco Hipotecario, now headquartered in Testa's building, was the target of a protest by home-owner advocates. The cacerolazos of the early 2000s banking crisis had evolved into a direct assault on the building: Protesters banged hammers and pipes on the bank's gates and doorframes, so that Testa's building, turned into a symbol of the financial crisis, could be heard from blocks away.*

Terence Gower

