

REMEMBRANCE PARK-MONUMENT TO THE VICTIMS OF STATE TERRORISM



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art institutionnal support
public space **memory** education
identity promotion human rights

1. Context

Remembrance Park – Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism, is the first site for remembrance in Argentina. It emerged as the result of appeals by human rights organizations throughout the 1990s within a political environment that was hostile toward remembrance, truth, and justice.

The park spans 14 hectares, and is located along the coastal strip of Rio de la Plata in the northern region of the city of Buenos Aires. The project intertwines unique characteristics of Argentina in the worlds of art, politics, and memory in a public space with immense testimonial, artistic, cultural, educational, and touristic value.



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Human rights organizations shaped this project as an act of resistance against the impossibility of criminal judgement of those responsible for the atrocities committed under the dictatorship. This was due to pardons sanctioned by various governments throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

The Remembrance Park project sparked an intense public debate in the country about the implications of creating a space with these aims. After initial approval, and an agitated public hearing in the Buenos Aires City Legislature, Law 46 of the City of Buenos Aires (1998) was passed with a favourable vote of 57 out of 60 legislators, thus approving the project.

This marked was an unprecedented first example of a joint effort between the State and human rights organizations.

The space has been strongly rooted by art, education, and research, contributing significantly to the collective reflection upon the massive human rights violations.

2. Culture in Buenos Aires

Having pushed forward the creation of a place for remembrance and tribute, human rights organizations had then presented a legal initiative to the legislators of the City of Buenos Aires, which, again, was approved and made into law in July of 1998.

Choosing the coastal strip of Rio de la Plata carries unique significance in recalling the events.

The architectural and landscape designs were determined by a contest held by the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Buenos Aires. The design shows respect for the environment and strikes a balance between the natural landscape and the presence of the city.



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The Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism was designed to be like a gash; an open wound on a grassy area devoid of any other objects.

The sculptural artwork at Remembrance Park was chosen from the International Sculpture Competition, which took place in 1999. A panel formed of specialists in art and human rights nominated eight potential winners and awarded four of them the prize.

In early 2000, the construction plan for the sculptures was launched. It was developed from feasibility studies that analyzed projects case by case, considering their relative construction, budgetary, and maintenance processes.

On August 30th, 2001 the opening ceremony took place for the front square, or "Plaza de Acceso".

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3. Cultural Policy Challenges in Buenos Aires

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These organizations were, and continue to be, the primary actors in the development of the project.

It was organized through a unique, groundbreaking mixed management model: The Pro-Monument Commission. This was comprised of representatives of ten human rights bodies, eleven legislators, four municipal government officials involved in the project (in the areas of human rights, culture, education, public spaces, and the environment), as well as a representative from the University of Buenos Aires. The latter gave up part of its land, where the Remembrance Park was built.

Then, in 2009, a new law gave Remembrance Park a permanent legal and administrative framework whereby the Pro-Monument Commission was replaced by the Board of Management. The Board was also comprised of members from human rights bodies, the University of Buenos Aires, and the City of Buenos Aires' municipal government.

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4. Buenos Aires and Culture: Impacts and Results

Over the course of its 15-year history, Remembrance Park has gone through many different stages before establishing itself as a site of memory with unique qualities that differentiate it from other public spaces. The space has been strongly rooted by art, education, and research, contributing significantly to the collective reflection upon the massive human rights violations.

On average, between 2,000 and 4,000 (primary and secondary school) students visit the park each month. From the general public, there are around 20,000 to 30,000 visitors per month. The organization of the space has impacted tremendously on the city's cultural and educational activities.

It was recommended that a permanent consensus be agreed upon for decisions pertaining to the project's development. Subsequently, there have been many different actors involved, and the project has always developed positively thanks to their transparency in finding common ground, and establishing consensus across differing points of view.



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5. Further information

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