



UOA D32

ART AND DESIGN:
HISTORY, THEORY AND PRACTICE



RESEARCHER

Kenny Hunter

OUTPUT TITLE

A Place is a Space Remembered

OUTPUT TYPE

Sculpture

DATE

2015

FIG. 1
Kenny Hunter, *A Place is a Space Remembered*, patinated and painted bronze, 2015. Photo Kenny Hunter.



01 / STATEMENT

A Place is a Space Remembered consists of four monumental patinated and painted bronze sculptures.

This public artwork addresses the identity, history, geology and economy of the Deux-Caps region in France through the use of sculptural symbols that are both meaningful and absurd. It is permanently installed within the courtyard of the Maison du Site des Deux-Caps, a venue situated near the village of Audinghen, France, a key site in World War II.

The work was commissioned in 2015 through the 'Nouveaux Commanditaires' programme, a prestigious French organisation that has commissioned over 300 artworks across Europe, working with internationally recognised artists including Vito Acconci, Ugo Rondinone and Erwin Wurm.

This output belongs to Hunter's longstanding investigation into the contemporary practice of public sculpture, particularly in relation to collective remembrance and war memorials.

FIG. 2
Kenny Hunter, *A Place is a Space Remembered*, clay models for *The Sandcastle*, *The Potatoes*, *The Nose* and *The Crab*, Audinghen, March 2015. Photo Kenny Hunter.





FIGS. 3-4
Kenny Hunter, *A Place is a Space Remembered (The Nose)*, painted bronze, 2015, dimensions 220 x 130 x 110cm. Photos Kenny Hunter.



FIG. 5
Kenny Hunter, *A Place is a Space Remembered (The Sand Castle)*, painted bronze, 2015, dimensions 180 x 120 x 120cm. Photo Kenny Hunter.





FIG. 6
Kenny Hunter, *A Place is a Space Remembered (The Potatoes)*, patinated bronze, 2015, dimensions of the group of three potatoes 250 x 250 x 77cm. Photo Kenny Hunter.



FIG. 7
Kenny Hunter, *A Place is a Space Remembered (The Crab)*, patinated bronze, 2015, dimensions 190 x 90 x 110cm. Photo Kenny Hunter.

FIG. 8

Beach at Audinghen looking across to the English coastline.
Photo Kenny Hunter.



02 / RESEARCH DIMENSIONS

A Place is a Space Remembered is a public artwork that addresses the identity, history, geology and economy of the Deux-Caps region in France through the use of sculptural symbols that are both meaningful and absurd.

The region is famous as a key site in World War II. Hunter chose the four symbols as a way to provoke a collective memory around war and its after-effects. The symbols reference both Vanitas painting and Surrealism. The genre of Vanitas, which reminds viewers of mortality and earthly transience, is commonly associated with the Low Countries, which have strong social and economic ties to this part of Northern France. Hunter also drew on Surrealist symbolism to explore how the irrational juxtaposition of motifs can trigger conscious and unconscious realms of experience.

The work was motivated by the following research questions, which are core to Hunter's longstanding sculptural practice:

- What are monuments for, what do they represent and who do they serve?
- How can art open a space for counter monuments to flourish, while at the same time enabling acts of remembrance?
- How can monuments engage a diverse public audience, by drawing on themes from shared histories and local knowledges?

FIG. 9
Research image. Bust of Napoleon
by Antoine-Denis Chaudet, 1809.
Image courtesy V&A Images,
London.



Background to the four elements

The Nose

Painted bronze,
dimensions 220 x 130 x 110cm.

The Nose, the largest sculpture in the group, refers to the local coastal promontory Cap Blanc Nez (White Nose) and is modelled on the nose of Napoleon Bonaparte, who had planned to invade England from le Deux-Caps, but instead sent his armies to Egypt.

It also refers to the discredited claim that Napoleon's soldiers shot off the nose of the Sphinx. At the back of this sculpted nose the viewer can see the outline of a wine bottle (FIG. 3). The co-existence of two images in one object is a common Surrealist trope.

The Crab

Patinated bronze,
dimensions 190 x 90 x 110cm.

The Crab represents the all but vanished fishing industry of this region. While today few people make a living from the sea, the local identity is still strongly attached to fishing through the growing heritage industry.

Crabs or crustaceans also regularly appear in both Vanitas and Surrealist artworks as symbols of death.

The Potatoes

Patinated bronze,
dimensions of the group of three potatoes
250 x 250 x 77cm.

The Potatoes signify the current and historical role of farming in the local economy, in particular the cultivation of seed potatoes as a key crop in this region after World War II.

Supported by the Marshall Plan, potatoes subsequently played a vital role in feeding the population of Europe and represented the return of a viable economy from the trauma of war.

The Sand Castle

Painted bronze,
dimensions 180 x 120 x 120cm.

The Sand Castle stands in recognition of the regions' military past. This coast line, which forms the narrowest part of the English Channel, has borne witness to many invasions and has the ruins of historical defences from different periods along its length.

The motif of the sandcastle underscores how these bastions all eventually crumble, and how nature has the final word. It also signifies the new and growing economy of tourism which has created new opportunities for local people.

FIG. 10
Research image. Cap Blanc Nez,
2015. Photo Kenny Hunter.



FIG. 11
Research
image.
Photograph
by Dora Maar
Untitled
(*Hand-Shell*)
1934. © Estate
of Dora Maar/
DACs 2019, all
rights reserved.



FIG. 12
Research
image. Photo
Kenny Hunter.

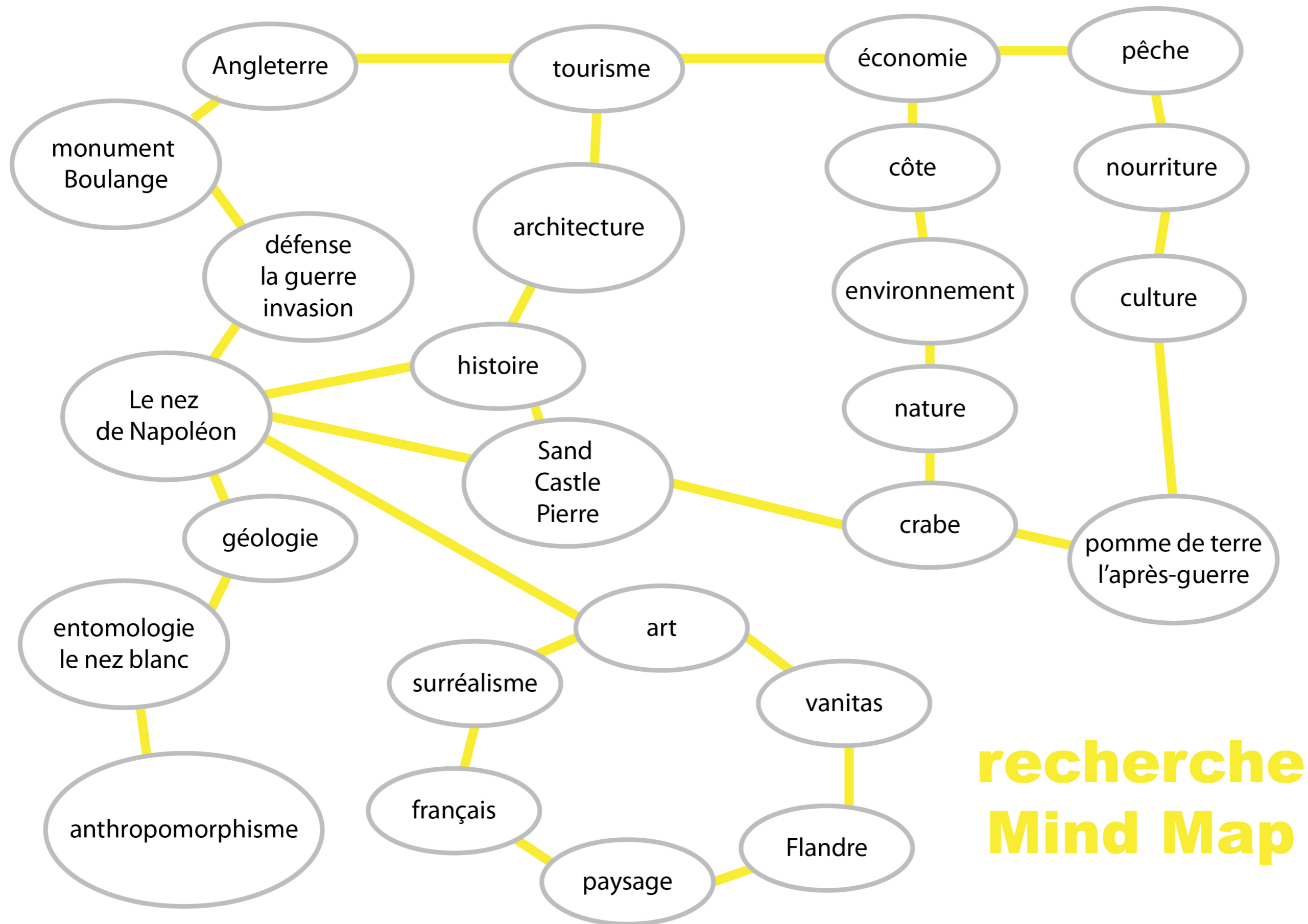


FIG. 13
Mind map research.
Image by Kenny Hunter.

03 / ORIGINALITY



FIG. 14
Kenny Hunter, *A Place is a Space Remembered*. Photos Kenny Hunter.fdsa

This work challenges a commonly held assumption within the field of Public Art that a single object can represent a diverse community.

Within the Deux-Caps region there is still a significant farming economy, alongside a growing tourism sector. Differing perspectives on 'place' can also be found – traversing different generations, or between immigrants and locals with longstanding ties to the area.

Taking into account such multi-faceted views, Hunter offers a new understanding of collective memory, and its experience through art, via a series of four interdependent sculptures. The sculptural group functions as a 3-dimensional still life that offers different perspectives on a single context.

Together, the collective group of sculptures encourages engagement that is both physical and conceptual, as the viewer moves between the different elements to contemplate their relationships and meaning.

Within Hunter's sculptures both contemporary societal paradigms and historical monumental archetypes overlay and interact with one other.

A Place is a Space Remembered interrogates history as a fragmented, incoherent and subjective experience. This is expressed through inverting traditional monumental values and certainties with unexpected uses of scale, material and subject matter, opening up questions for the viewer, rather than providing answers.

Against the expectations of traditional monuments, *A Place is a Space Remembered* avoids a singular reading and instead embraces ambiguity as a positive position that encourages the viewer toward ethical and moral engagement, rather than passive consumption of official historical perspectives.

04 / RIGOUR



FIG. 15
Kenny Hunter, *A Place is a Space Remembered*. Photos Kenny Hunter.

A Place is a Space Remembered was developed within the innovative Nouveaux Commanditaires (New Commissioners) programme, initiated by the Fondation de France.

This scheme enables members of the public interested in societal issues or local development to take the initiative of working with an artist via the commissioning of an artwork. The vitality of this process lies in the collaboration of three players – the artist, the commissioner (public person or persons) and the art mediator.

The research process involved initial meetings and interviews with a diverse group of community members through the mediator and acquiring a sense of their relationship to where they live. The concept of the project evolved through these dialogues, as different potential iterations were presented and discussed.

Hunter then returned to the studio to reflect and develop a final proposal with further conceptualisation, visualisations and models. This was re-presented by Hunter to the Commissioners in France for their approval on all aspects of the design.

The implementation stage involved Hunter hand-making the original forms in clay, then having them molded and cast into Jesmonite patterns that were further adapted. These now refined forms were then molded once again prior to being cast in bronze.

Once this stage was completed the sculptures were either painted or patinated, then transported to and installed in Audinghen.

They were publicly inaugurated on the 24 September 2015 (FIGS. 17–18).

FIG. 16
Clay modelling complete on
steel armature, April 2015.
Photo Kenny Hunter.



FIG. 18
Master copy cast in Jesmonite
from plaster mold, May 2015.
Photo Kenny Hunter.

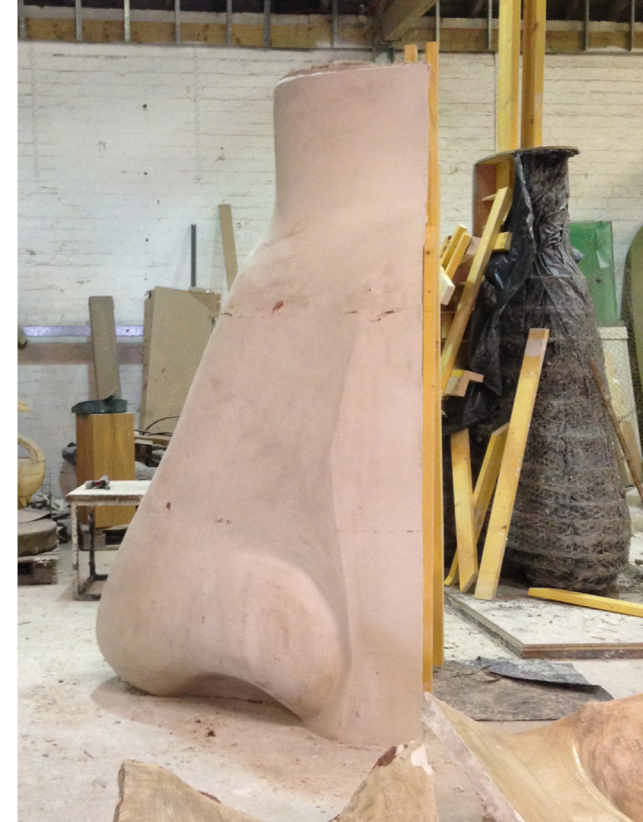


FIG. 19
Sculpture cast in sections and
welded together prior to
painting. June 2015. Photo Kenny
Hunter.



FIG. 17
Mold construction prior to
casting in Jesmonite, May 2015.
Photo Kenny Hunter.



05 / SIGNIFICANCE



FIG. 20
Installation in Audinghen,
September 2015. Photo
Kenny Hunter.

Hunter was invited to develop an artwork for this site by 'Artconnexion', a highly respected art agency and gallery based in Lille.

The significance of the work lies in its contribution to the field of public art, and particularly the genre of commemorative sculpture: firstly, through its 'pluralisation' of the memorial, such that meaning is not fixed to a single object, but disseminated across a group of objects; secondly, through a use of symbolism that at once taps into resonances with the local community and into more universal symbolic registers.

The Fondation de France, the leading philanthropic network in France, approved the proposal. Both institutions acted as peer reviewers, and both were involved in delivering and assessing the completed work.

The originality of the Nouveaux Commanditaires programme lies in a new conjunction of three players: the artist, the citizen-commissioner and the mediator approved by Fondation de France, further supported by public and private partners working together on the project.

The programme has developed a sector leading approach in the field of public art that uniquely enables French citizens to address social issues linked to their region through the commissioning of a major public artwork.

The Maison du Site des Deux-Caps, where the artwork is permanently installed, obtained the status of 'Grand Site' in 2011, on the basis of an application organised around a commitment to put into place measures that address the culture of the territory, and the highlighting of local heritage.

Further dissemination of the research took place through Hunter's artist talk at the Musée des Beaux Arts, Calais, 24 September 2015, and as part of and through participation in the *SLACK! Deux-Caps Art Festival*. See Appendix, page 30.

06 / APPENDIX

Video

Interview with Kenny Hunter.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKKbXKo3na8>

Artconnexion Website

<https://artconnexion.org/en/citizen-commissions/kenny-hunter-a-place-is-a-space-to-be-remembered>

Nouveaux Commanditaires Protocol

<http://www.nouveauxcommanditaires.eu/en/44/protocol>



FIG. 21
Flyer for SLACK!, Deux-Caps Art Festival, 2015.



FIG. 22
Mark Dion, *The Mobile Gull Appreciation Unit*, SLACK! Deux-Caps Art Festival, 2015. Photo Kenny Hunter.



FIG. 23
Janusz Stega, *Galerie à la Ferme*, SLACK! Deux-Caps Art Festival, 2015. Photo Kenny Hunter.

FIG. 24
Frères Chapuisat, *Anticamera*, SLACK! Deux-Caps Art Festival, 2015. Photo Kenny Hunter.



FIG. 25
Julien Boucq, *Untitled*, SLACK! Deux-Caps Art Festival, 2015. Photo Kenny Hunter.





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