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Abandoned Monuments

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ABANDONED MONUMENTS

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for graduation with Honors in the Art, Studio

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Spring 2019

All requirements for graduation with Honors in the
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ABANDONED MONUMENTS

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Everywhere around the world, there are traces of past civilizations which have been taken over or met their demise. The Marcus Aurelius bronze Roman statue and the bronze Egyptian Gayer Anderson Cat are some prominent examples. In the future, our society could also come to an end. The big question is: What will we leave behind? How will our cultural artifacts be found and what will they say about us? For this honors project, I investigated many ways a statue from my hometown could deteriorate and translated that into a ceramics form.

Throughout my college art history courses, I observed various art forms and wondered what would happen to our architecture and our art in the future. The General John Corse Statue from my hometown is one of the only statues there, and it is what I based my ceramics project on. With many hours of sculpting the Corse equestrian statue to the right scale and looking up multiple references of ancient bronze, I made a statue that I have come to know and love look abandoned and decrepit. I created the form out of clay and sculpted some of the details. Then, I made the clay look like metal deteriorating and cracking. By looking to the past, I researched various ways bronze can age, and tested multiple glaze recipes that resembled that effect.

This project was definitely challenging. The horse statue was supposed to be standing up, but with the original horse statue only standing on two legs, stability was an issue. The horse ended up separating from the base. At first, it was frustrating, but through a lot of reflection, this is something that could happen to the bronze statue over time, too. I also wanted to include the man from the original statue, but I decided against it because sometimes materials from old artifacts are taken to create new monuments. Perhaps this could have happened to this monument. Overall, my project turned out differently than I originally envisioned due to unforeseen challenges with the sculpture. However, I was still able to achieve the deteriorated effect I was seeking and am happy with how it turned out.