



Opposing War Memorial

Kenny Hunter

The unveiling of a Memorial to Conscientious Objectors in Princes Street Gardens will be a significant event in terms of what sculptures and monuments predate it. The war memorials that currently exist form a unified monologue on war and its consequences, so this commission will present an opportunity to create a dialogue - by both relating to them and offering an alternative perspective on human freedom, duty and courage.

This proposal is for a bronze sculpture depicting three life size figures to be installed at ground level. This positioning is a key factor in understanding what the work intends to communicate. By choosing to place the representations of CO's at more or less the same level as the viewer instead of being raised up on a plinth I want to encourage a feeling of empathy rather than reverence, I want to underline their humanity through direct physical comparison – literally eye to eye.

The figures do not represent real people but rather they are representations based on real experiences. Together they form a linear narrative of objection and resistance, from World War I to World War II and on to the Cold War and beyond. The fundamental and differing positions of those who oppose war are also expressed – from the absolutist doing hard labour, to a member of the Non-Combatant Corp working in bomb disposal and finally the activist engaged in campaigning for peace. Each individual is still, centred and reflective, separated by history and the position they have adopted. This is further underlined by the different directions in which they face, yet they share the same ground unified in a common cause.

It is my intention to represent them, to bear witness to their lives. I want the viewer to experience an open encounter, one that allows room for their subjective response - possibly this sculpture could be read as implying that the CO's were ethical and stoic or isolated and utopian. The crucial factor for me is that the sculpture does not present a singular message akin to its neighbouring monuments but instead encourages engagement and questioning about the lives, choices and hardships of those who resist and object to war.

“The simultaneous existence of both war and the desire for peace does not inevitably lead to dissonance or disappointment, but an imagination that things can be otherwise.”

Pacifist Utopias Tobias Kelly Oct 2017













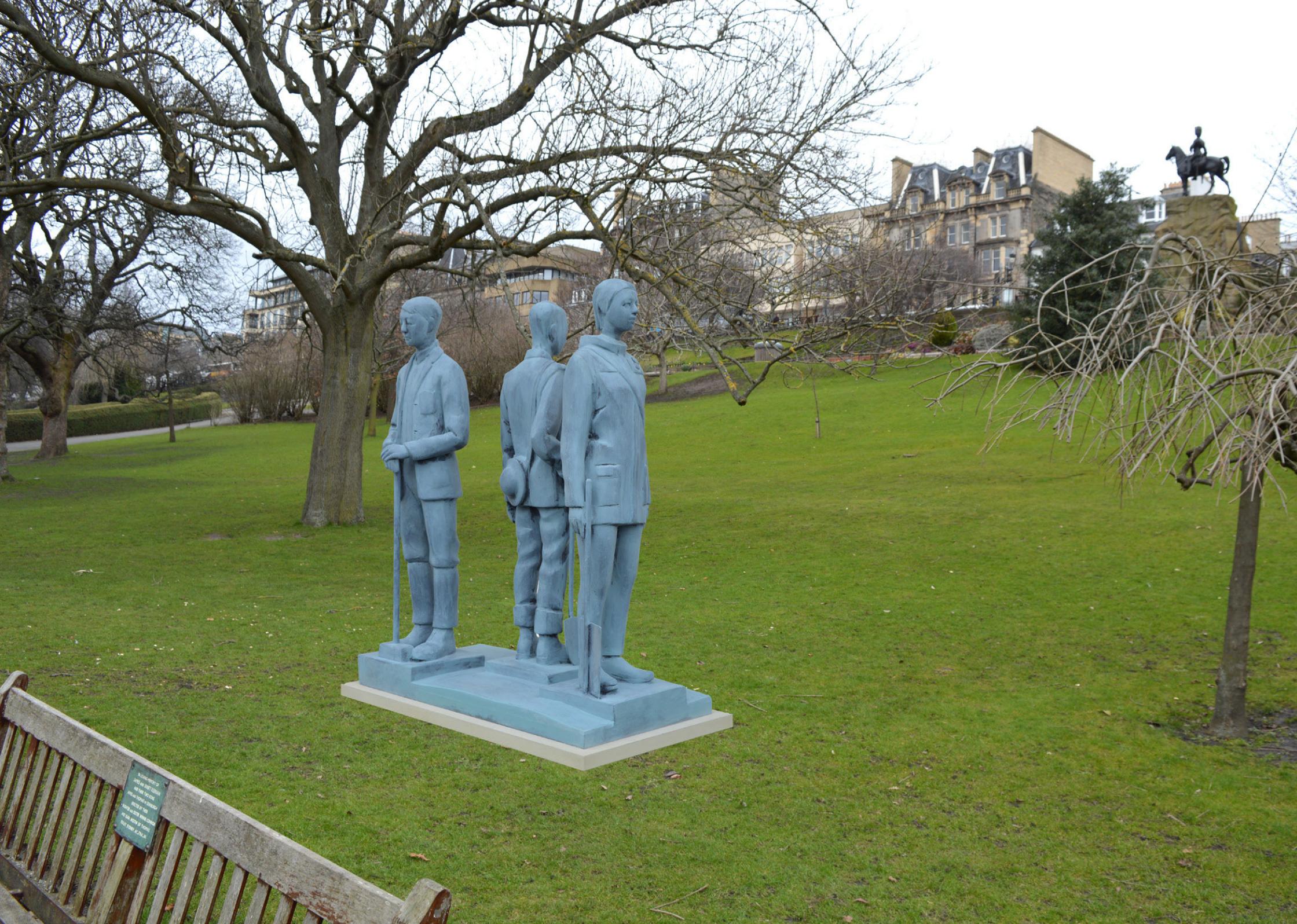












MEMORIAL TO
THE THREE
FIGURES
BY THE
SCULPTOR
JAMES
WATSON
1911