



Mark Tansey
American, born 1949
Landscape, 1994
oil on canvas, 71 3/4 x 144 1/2 in.
(182.2 x 367.0 cm)
© Mark Tansey.
Crystal Bridges Museum of
American Art, Bentonville,
Arkansas, 2014.29. Photography
by Edward C. Robison III.

About the Art

- We see a large mound of randomly discarded and damaged sculptures – bust portraits and statues of powerful men and mythological figures from across history and culture, such as Joseph Stalin, Abraham Lincoln, Adolf Hitler, Julius Caesar, George Washington, and Constantine I, among unspecified Egyptian pharaohs, Mayan kings, Greek kouroi, the Sphinx, and more.
- The monumental scene is meticulously rendered in a reddish-brown monochrome that evokes an old, faded photograph, a fragile document of history.
- On the back, in addition to the title and date, the artist has written “Colossii,” the Latin word for statues of gigantic proportions and, by extension, people of immense significance.
- The artist’s creative process is slow and meticulous, as he selects image material from his extensive archive, combines it into elaborate collages, photocopies and re-photocopies the composition in the search for the density and contrast he seeks, and then uses the result as the basis for the painting.
- The artist has written, “In my work, I’m searching for pictorial functions that are based on the idea that the painted picture knows itself to be metaphorical, rhetorical, transformational, fictional.”

About the Artist

1949: Born in San Jose, California, into a family of art historians

1969: Enrolled at Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles

1974: Moved to New York City, New York and enrolled in the graduate program at Hunter College

1982: First solo exhibition, at Grace Borgenicht Gallery, New York

1990: Had a major retrospective exhibition, *Mark Tansey: Art and Source*, shown in Seattle, Washington, Montreal, Canada, St. Louis, Missouri, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Fort Worth, Texas

1994: Painted *Landscape*