



Arturo Lopez Ayala: Displaced mass

Displaced mass

A stone and its mass: which stone, and which mass? The question of the mass or size of a stone derives from the nature of its own material; a fragment of a rock as big as technology allows for - a monolith characterised by its material system continuity as a gesture intrinsic to its own material condition.

The unfinished obelisk in Aswan - a 42 metre fraction of a rock weighing 1090 tons - presents itself as the expression of a consequential form of engaging with the material, both in its extraction, transportation and placing. The incredible effort of displacing the mass is not a mere exaltation of power, but a structural need to deviate the horizontal forces to the ground by means of the weight of the material: mass and structure are equivalent.

My interest consists on the extraction and transport gestures done into the material of such a mass, but also structural use of mass and how this can create space. The proportions of the extracted block suggest force and gravity according to the relation between height to width; these relations determine the expression to an extraordinary extent: 8m x 6.5m x 5m. The as-found stone is rough; the continuous cut surface is smooth and polished, a result of abrasiveness of the diamond wire cut on the stone. In turn, structure becomes a continuous ornament, achieved by the gestures of extraction.

The extraction gesture in triangles is the easiest way to bring the block to 200 tons, while allowing precise increases of mass to allow for structural stability and contact with the floor. When placed in a new site, the gesture of cutting needed for transportation generates a negative space.

The character of this negative space is defined by its inverse positive space, this is: the structural mass that finds its formal logic in its gesture of making and displacing the stone. One must engage in a the bodily relationship with the positive spaces - the material gesture expression - to understand the dualistic spatial sequence.

The project focuses on how the gestures of displacing can allow for a spatial configuration that will relate the body with the displacement traces of the extraction (wire cutting) and displacement gestures (cranes and ramps) left on the monolith, determining the flows and relation between users.

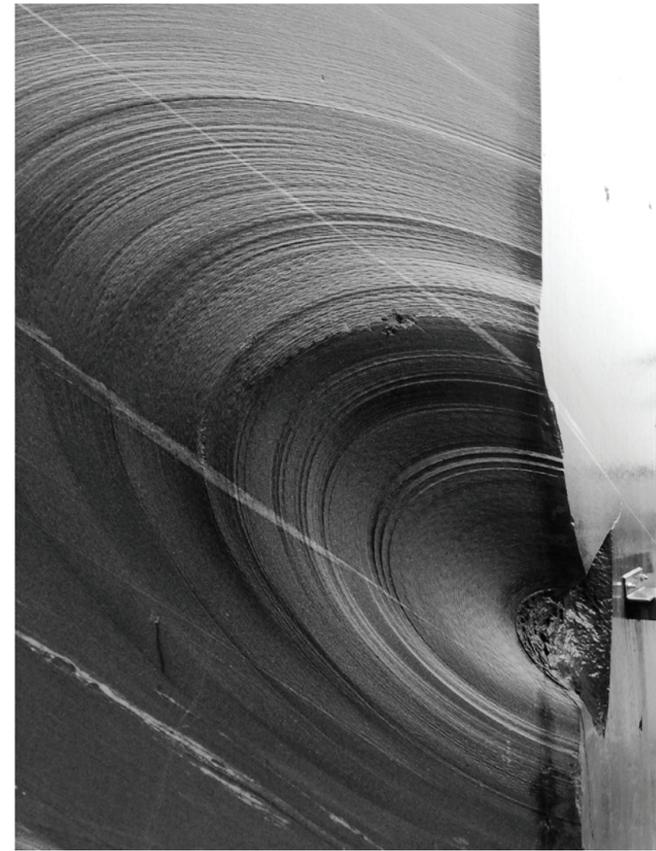


Unfinished obelisk, Aswan (Egypt), 1508 b.C.

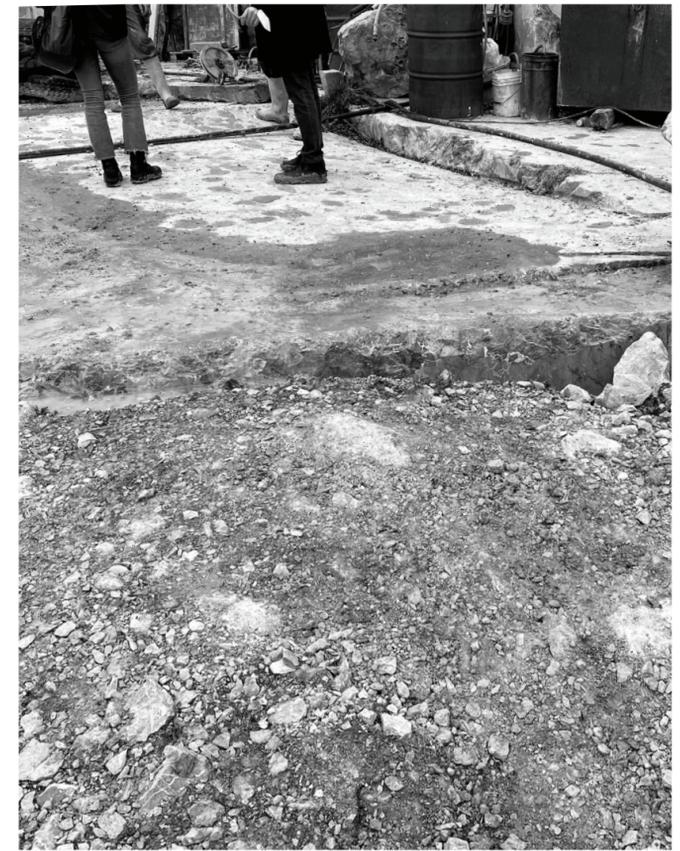
Extraction of mass: diamond wire cut



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Gestures of diamond wire cutting on stone



On-site cutting

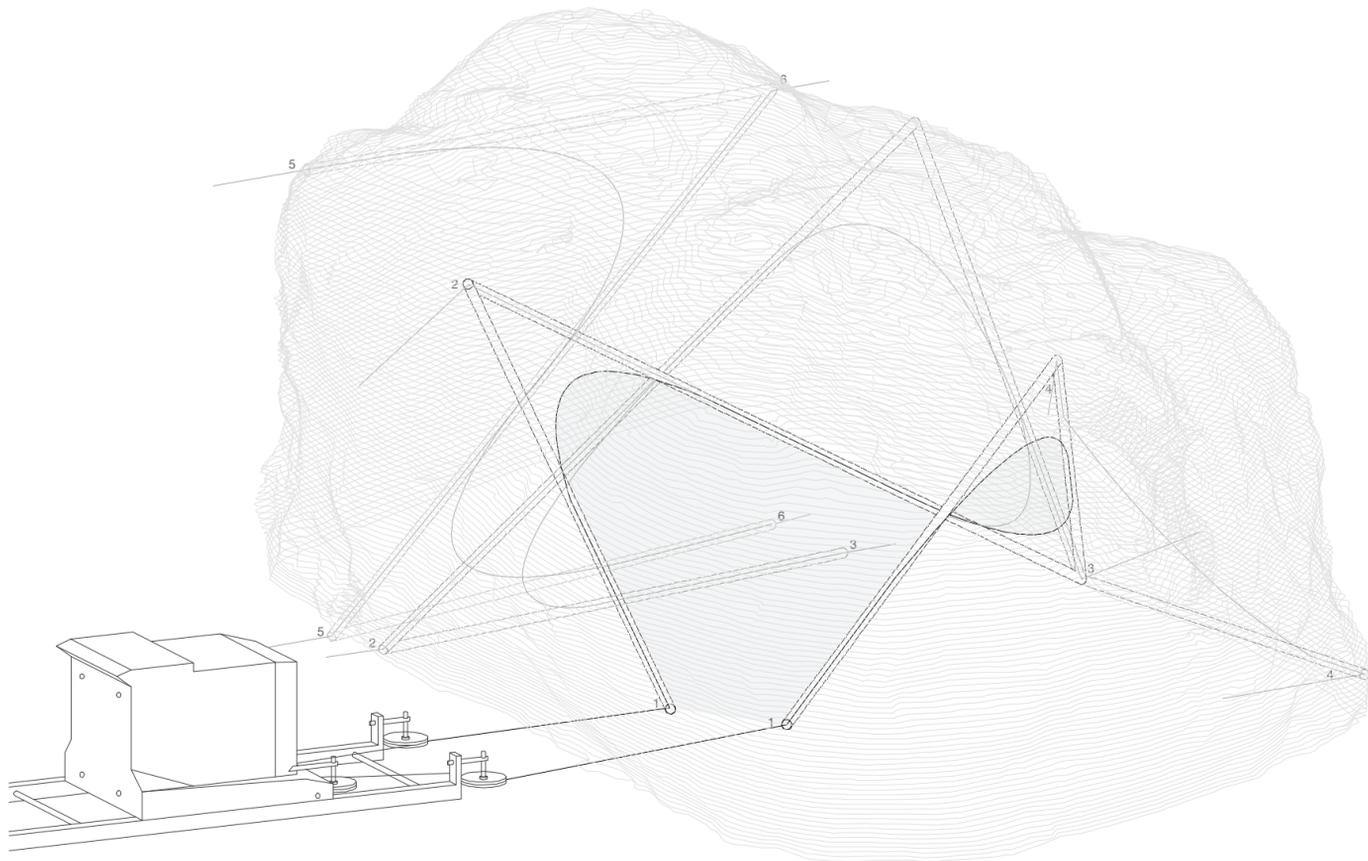
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On-studio cutting

Extraction traces

Having understood the gestures of extraction on stone, I decided myself for a spatial configuration where the body will always encounter one drilling line that crosses the space; thus exalting the gestures of extraction. The first three cuts (1,2,3) define the space through a drilling line in each spatial component, while the last three cuts (4,5,6) allow to detach the stone from its bigger mass of rock.



1,2,3 Defining traces in space
4,5,6 Detaching monolith from quarry





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