

Learning to Look

Exhibition tools

Entrance space



Danh Vo
b.1975, Saigon,
Vietnam
We the People 2011

We the People is part of a project to make a lifesize replica of the Statue of Liberty. At firstsite, you can see some fingers and part of her torch. The piece is displayed with tools, moulds, packing boxes and other objects, to create the feel of the artist's studio, and to link the work with the processes involved in producing the original Statue of Liberty. The artwork was installed at firstsite by the artist himself, and the boxes, tools and moulds are as much a part of the installation as the actual cast pieces of the fingers and torch.

The original Statue of Liberty was designed by Frédéric Bartholdi and gifted to the US by the Republic of France. Unveiled in New York in 1886, it has become an iconic symbol of the city. It took ten years to produce, and was shipped to New York piece by piece.

By recreating the Statue of Liberty, Danh Vo was able to experience the challenges in engineering and construction that faced the original designer of the statue, and finding solutions to these challenges is key to his exploration of the artwork. *We the People* celebrates the process used by Frédéric Bartholdi during a golden age of industry and manufacture, and connects the iconic statue with contemporary arts practice.

We the People is part of a two-year project to construct 1:1 scale replicas of fragments of the Statue of Liberty. Other fragments are on display at a gallery in Kassel, Germany, and more will be installed at other galleries around the world over the next two years.

Themes, discussion points and activities

Icons

The Statue of Liberty is an iconic symbol of New York.

- What do we mean by the terms 'icon' and 'iconic'?
- What makes the statue an icon?
- What do icons tell us about the place that they come from?

Scale

We the People is a 1:1 scale replica of the original Statue of Liberty.

- What do we mean by 'scale'?
- Can you estimate the size of the real Statue of Liberty based on the display in the gallery?
- Look out for other works where scale is important. Can you find the largest work in the gallery, and the smallest?
- Does the scale or size of the artwork have an impact on how you feel when you look at it?