

AO Edited

Liberty Sculpture Park

Yermo, California

A collection of anti-communist sculptures stands watch in the Mojave Desert.



FURYFACE31 [ATLAS OBSCURA USER]



THE REMOTE STRETCH OF I-15 between Barstow and Las Vegas that passes through the Mojave Desert is maybe not where you'd expect to find an international sculpture garden. But as you pass through Yermo, California, you cannot miss the huge "64." Pull over onto the dusty road and you will find a series of large-scale sculptures by Chen Weiming and several others, all dedicated to resisting communism in China and around the world.

Weiming founded the park in 2017, saying that his mission was to share information about the human rights abuses of the Chinese Communist Party. All artists were invited to contribute, but until recently, only the work of Weiming could be seen.

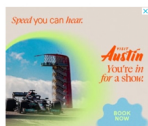
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The 36-acre park features numerous, poignant sculptures, all of which have interpretive signs. Many pieces delve into important events and figures, including the Tiananmen Square Massacre, Lakota Chief Crazy Horse, the Hong Kong protests, and even the COVID-19 virus.

One of the most eye-catching sculptures, whether from the park or driving past on I-15, is the large 64 piece. "64" references the Chinese date-writing convention of writing the number of the month, followed by the number of the day: 6/4/1989 was the date of the Tiananmen Square Massacre. The monolithic letters are 6.4 meters tall, 6,400 miles from the site of the massacre, and set at an angle of 64 degrees.

To the east, a pile of burnt rubble stands in stark contrast to a depiction of Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, his head stuck with coronavirus spike proteins. Weiming named the sculpture *CCP Virus II*, insinuating that the Chinese Communist Party holds responsibility for the COVID-19 pandemic. (The term is one of several that has been linked with xenophobic and inaccurate theories that the Chinese people were responsible for the disease.) A sign next to this sculpture alleges that spies from the Chinese Communist Party destroyed an earlier version of the sculpture.

Other sculptures in the park include a life-size replica of the "Tank Man" photograph, a bas-relief and mural of protestors, a larger-than-life sculpture of Chinese activist Li Wangyang, a macabre graffiti-like portrait of figures hanged in barbed wire Olympic rings, and a pavilion dedicated to those who died from COVID-19. A large bust of Lakota Chief Crazy Horse stands watch, as well. (A massive 663-foot-tall bust of the war hero can also be found carved into a mountain face in Custer, South Dakota.)

The sculpture park has a strong and controversial point of view, and the works themselves are moving and beautiful. Their incongruous location in the desert makes these monumental pieces even more striking.



Know Before You Go

Take I-15 exit 196 toward Eddie World. There are no paved roads directly to the park, but it can be easily accessed by foot or by vehicle.

Liberty Sculpture Park is free. There is a small pavilion and many interpretive signs in English and Mandarin.



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Liberty Sculpture Park
Yermo Rd Entrance

Yermo Rd

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