

Moscow monument proposed to immortalize peer review

Sociologist hopes to raise cash to carve concrete sculpture.

Quirin Schiermeier

12 September 2016 | Updated: 14 September 2016



Igor Chirikov

Sociologist Igor Chirikov hopes to carve an old concrete block into a monument to peer review.

Update: on 13 September, the proposed monument [reached](#) its \$1,300 crowd-funding goal on Kickstarter.

Fancy your name, or the title of your latest paper, engraved in a sculpture dedicated to peer review? If so, you may want to drop a line — and a little donation — to Igor Chirikov of the Higher School of Economics (HSE) in Moscow.

Three months ago the director of the HSE's Institute of Education, Isak Froumin, asked faculty for ideas about how to turn an ugly block of concrete outside the university into something handsome. Chirikov, a sociologist who splits his time between Moscow and the Center for Studies in Higher Education at the University of California, Berkeley, had the idea of turning the block into what he calls the world's [first Monument to an Anonymous Peer Reviewer](#).

The artistic concept: chisel the concrete into a die, and paint on its five visible sides 'Accept', 'Minor Changes', 'Major Changes', 'Revise and Resubmit' and 'Reject'. Chirikov and his friends hope to raise US\$1,300 on the crowdfunding site Kickstarter by 2 October to pay a sculptor for the work. Anyone who donates more than \$1 can have their name put on a sign near the monument. And art patrons who provide at least \$60 can have the title of a research paper of their own adorning one side of the die — if they are among the first 20 backers to ask for it.



Igor Chirikov

A future place of worship for peer reviewers?

“We believe this monument will not be just a funny square-shaped block in front of our university building,” the team says on its [Kickstarter page](#). “It will add a layer of genuine mysticism to the world of peer review and researching. Researchers from across the world will visit to touch the “Accept” side in the hope that the gods of peer review will smile down upon them. Of course, some unsuccessful researchers will want to curse it, and that’s their business. Peer reviewers themselves may view the monument as a place of worship.”

“It’s a bit sarcastic,” Chirikov says. “I certainly wanted to acknowledge the role of academic peer review — but I also wanted to have a good laugh about that process.”

Nature | doi:10.1038/nature.2016.20578

Updates

Updated: The project reached its crowd-funded goal on 13 September.