

Representations of Women in London's Public Spaces: A Photojournalism Series
Exploring the Reinforcement of Societal Inequalities in Gendered Landscapes

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Introduction

As of 2020, the United Kingdom (UK) ranks 13th overall on the United Nation's (UN) Human Development Reports out of 189 evaluated countries, which is determined using data related to life expectancy, expected and mean years of schooling, as well as gross national income per capita. However, when it comes to gender equality, the country falters. On the UN's 2019 Gender Inequality Index (GII), the UK received a ranking of 31 out of 162 countries based on its reproductive health, empowerment within education and the workplace, and economic status. Beyond this ranking, women experience pervasive discrimination and violence in the workplace, at home, in public, and online throughout the UK (Irvine et al. 2022; Havard 2022; "Prevalence and Reporting of Sexual Harassment in UK Public Spaces" 2021; Southern and Harmer 2021). The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this already deeply engrained cultural issue, leaving women disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic (Oreffice and Quintana-Domeque 2021; Zamberlan, Gioachin, and Gritti 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic's exacerbation of existing systemic inequalities that disenfranchise women in the UK is indicative of the continued presence of pervasive patriarchal ideologies as well as the implicit attitudes which perpetuate them. Implicit attitudes, as defined by Rydell and McConnell (2006), are deeply held attitudes people are often not aware of that form over extended periods of time and are not easily changed with information countering the attitude (1995, 2006). Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic's exacerbation of gender inequalities is, to some degree, unsurprising given how deeply unchanging implicit attitudes and, by extension, cultures are. Additionally, recent research theorizes that the intergenerational transmission of culture moves beyond the implicit messaging of language, practice, tradition, and collective memory to include biology. Within DNA, there is thought to be a cultural signature impacting the conservation of social

constructs (Nardone 2018, 751-752). This theorized biological factor is not an excuse for the existence of gender inequalities, or any other enduring social issue. However, it is indicative of the active, continual work necessary to instigate cultural change and create a more equitable society.

Within the process of instigating longstanding cultural change, consideration must be made for what is perhaps one of the most influential aspects of intergenerational cultural endurance: the construction of the physical landscape. Unlike the social and biological transmission of culture, the urban landscape embodies the values and biases of generations of people with daily, inescapable reminders of the normalized culture, most notably in the form of monuments. In the UK, monuments have long been used as largely implicit tools of education, identity building, and collective memory to influence the way future generations think about themselves and their country, to the detriment of underrepresented populations (Jenkins 2021). A 2021 study by ArtUK found that only 50 out of London's 1,500 monuments (under 4%) depict named women. This statistic becomes worse when race is factored in as just two monuments (0.2%) commemorate named women of color (Goodwin 2021, para. 8). In contrast, over 100 of London's monuments (8%) depict animals and over 300 (21%) depict named men. London's choice to represent animals at twice the rate as named women (8%) demonstrates a clear undervaluing of women's contributions to the city's nearly 2,000-year history. As a global city of approximately 9 million people, there is a gap between the reality of the UK's history and how it is being portrayed in monuments (Goodwin 2021, para. 8-9; Greater London Authority 2021, para. 5). Underrepresentation of women in the public sphere is reflective of a male-dominated society and, consequently, sends a message to the city's inhabitants that the continuation of gender inequality is normal and expected. The purpose of this project is to evaluate the link

between women's underrepresentation in London's monuments and the persistence of gender inequalities. Based on my findings, I created a social media campaign called "The Important Women Project" to raise awareness about these issues in order to promote a more equitable environment for women in London. Within this paper, I will first review the theoretical framework and methodology used to conduct this research before moving into the existing discussion linking monuments with social and cultural issues. This will be followed by my contribution to the discussion as well as the construction and execution of my social media campaign.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Theoretical Framework

In this work, I evaluate London's network of monuments through the lens of gendered landscapes used by Weidenmuller et al. (2015) in their analysis of Southeastern Virginia (435-436). This theoretical framework evaluates landscape through the lens of gender, recognizing that as landscapes are influenced by people those spaces inherently reflect the gendered biases present in the culture. It also, however, recognizes landscape as an influential entity impacting the continued construction of culture which, inevitably, reinforces gender inequalities (Weidenmuller et al. (2015), 436-437). My use of this framework is also predicated on the framework proposed by Mitchell (2008) in his fourth and fifth axioms: "History does matter ... Landscape is power" (41, 43). Through history, landscape is "a storehouse of values that can only be destroyed at great human and economic cost" (41-42). My work applies the fourth axiom (history does matter) to a gendered context by viewing monuments as strategic expressions of patriarchal values, namely that women are "less than" men. To create this enduring narrative with monuments, those in power exercised their power "to erase history, signs of opposition,

alternative readings, and so forth” (43) by erasing the accomplishments of women, particularly women of color. As a further expression of power, women who are represented in monuments are often commemorated with stereotypically feminine characteristics, despite the women’s lives often being in contradiction to that narrative. Therefore, the framework of gendered landscape I am using to approach this work is that landscape is a manifestation of the dominant culture that implicitly reinforces the social construction of gender and the gendered hierarchy that has been naturalized into society.

Methodology

Rooted in the gendered landscape framework, I first used secondary research to evaluate the primary areas of gender inequality present in the UK and the significance of monuments in contributing to cultural norms and collective memory. I then contacted individuals with professional research or relevancy to my work to develop a more well-rounded perspective, as I am an undergraduate student analyzing a new cultural environment. While I achieved limited success in this engagement, I did receive some support from those who responded, which enriched my work. Upon arrival in the UK for an approximately three-month stay, I employed primary research to evaluate the monuments in London and collect materials for the subsequent digital campaign launched in conjunction with this research, “The Important Women Project” (IWP). Given this primary and secondary research, I will assert that the underrepresentation of women in London’s monuments has the potential to reinforce implicit attitudes about gender which preserve gender inequalities in the UK. In response to my findings, my work advocates for increased representation of named women within London using statues and monuments via “The Important Women Project” (IWP). This digital campaign employs the gendered landscape

framework while incorporating the communication-based frameworks of solution-oriented photojournalism and fourth-wave feminism to optimize audience engagement.

The Existing Discussion and My Contribution

Existing literature linking the landscape of monuments to gendered social issues is limited, allowing ample opportunity to expand the discussion beyond the predominately U.S.-based work being conducted in this area. Weidenmuller et al.'s (2015) artistic analysis of tropes within Southeastern Virginia's statues asserts that women's underrepresentation in monuments within this region overwhelmingly favors white men and that the representation that is present pigeonholes women into archaic stereotypes that reinforce gendered hierarchy. This inaccurate portrayal of women contributes to a warped view of women as objects or less capable than men, ensuring patriarchal power structures endure (454-455). O'Grady (2021) furthers this discussion in her New York Times piece asserting that women's statues, while present, are largely "devoid of personhood" and "yet another random naked lady; yet another mangled lesson in feminism" (para. 3). This literature provides a foundation for my analysis by introducing the topic and providing an artistic analysis of the statues. However, my work will expand this discussion by evaluating monuments as key tools within the cyclical reproduction of patriarchal culture in London that has created the gender inequalities women face today.

Alongside gender-based discussions surrounding monuments is a collection of literature relating monuments to racial discrimination. The Black Lives Matter movements across the UK, United States, and other colonialist countries sparked widespread discussions debating whether monuments are mere tools of education or are enduring symbols of oppressive ideologies. O'Connell (2021) evaluates Confederate monuments in the US not just as relics of the past but as modern social influences perpetuating institutionalized racism (18-19). Abraham (2021)

describes the frequent representation of complex histories with one white man as reductive and disingenuous. Change, therefore, must happen to fully acknowledge the complexity of history as it happened and how it influences the present (12-13). Evaluating the parallel discussion within racial inequalities strengthens the link between monuments and social issues to supplement the limited literature surrounding gender inequalities in monuments.

Aspinall's (2021) case study of "A Real Birmingham Family" in Birmingham, England, a monument depicting a multiracial family structure made up of two adult sisters and their two young sons, offers insight into the continued impact of monuments on the construction of identity and culture in the UK. The author asserts that the representation of underrepresented populations in monuments challenges normalcy and expands a community's understanding of its identity, sparking further discussion (10). This literature offers my work context for the implications of new monuments and how they are received by the broader public within English society, allowing me to better inform my understanding of how London should address the issue my work raises.

The Contribution of This Work

My work expands on existing discussions by combining elements from the gender-based discussions centered on the misrepresentation of history, the race-based discussions surrounding the impact of preserving harmful narratives, and analyses of monuments from an artistic perspective. Instead, my approach argues that the landscape of monuments in London and the portrayal of named women is not just a historical misrepresentation but an active tool reinforcing implicit attitudes about gender. Underrepresentation of women in London's monuments sends the daily message that women are less capable, less accomplished, and less powerful than men.

This enduring message developed over the last 2,000 years is a factor in the endurance, and recent exacerbation, of gender inequalities in the UK.

Gender Inequality Today

Economic Barriers

In April 2022, the UK's gender pay gap, which measures the difference between how much men and women receive in hourly earnings for the same work, was 15.4 percent for both full and part-time employees (Irvine et al. 2022, 5). The same study facilitated by the House of Commons Library found that only 16 percent of entrepreneurs in the UK leading small and medium-size enterprises were women in 2020 and only 36.3 percent of the directors of major companies were women in 2021 (Irvine et al. 2022, 4-5). Yet, women make up 56.6 percent of participants in higher education, outnumbering men (Hewitt 2020, para. 2). An increased presence in higher education should, theoretically, lead women to have higher earning potential than men because they are more highly trained. In reality, male students are estimated to receive £110,000 more per person in net earnings than they would have earned had they never attended higher education. Meanwhile, female students are only estimated to receive around £30,000 more per person in net earnings after completing higher education (Hewitt 2020, para. 4). While shocking, this trend is largely unintentional although inexcusable. There is a clear disconnect between women's capabilities as highly educated individuals and the workplace. Imposing inherently lower earning potential and opportunity for upward mobility in a capitalist society ensures women will never collectively garner significant power or even parity in UK society.

Political Barriers

In the political sphere, women continue to face additional barriers and risks, likely contributing to women's underrepresentation in politics. A study by Southern and Harmer (2021)

found that women in politics experience gender discrimination by party selectors, marginalization by media outlets, and higher rates of violence than men in similar positions, including nonphysical acts such as harassment, intimidation, and discrimination (260-261). Expanding on this study, Southern and Harmer (2021) evaluate normal messaging activity on Twitter directed at female and male Members of Parliament (MPs), finding that female MPs were more likely to receive uncivil tweets. This incivility manifests as explicitly gendered or misogynistic, demonizing, or objectifying messaging behaviors. Abuse directed at men was often feminizing or questioning their masculinity as a form of criticism, indicating that the male MPs were not proficient at their jobs because they were too feminine or embodied features stereotypically associated with women (Southern and Harmer 2021, 269-270). This type of abuse, both to men and women, demonstrates the belief that being feminine is inherently negative and, by extension, that femininity indicates a person is less able to carry out the responsibilities of their position. As evidenced by Irvine et al.'s (2022) findings about the gender pay gap and the underrepresentation of women in entrepreneurial leadership positions, the belief, whether implicit or explicit, that women are less capable in professional environments is pervasive beyond a few abusive Twitter users.

Barriers to Personal Safety

Beyond the digital realm, physical and nonphysical violence against women has been a consistent barrier to women's equality for generations. At a UK university, 52 percent of female staff members participating in the study reported experiencing sexual harassment at work, with nearly all of the perpetrators being men and one in five of the perpetrators being a senior male colleague. Meanwhile, men frequently reported being unaware that gender inequality was present at the university (McCarry and Jones 2021, 1, 6). Oftentimes, gendered violence goes

unreported due to power imbalances or fear of retaliation, which can normalize the violent behavior to the perpetrator, the victim, and the other individuals in the environment. A study by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (AAPG) in conjunction with United Nations (UN) Women found that 71 percent of all women in the UK have experienced sexual harassment in public spaces. For young women, this rate sharply increased with 97 percent of women 18 to 24-years-old experiencing public sexual harassment (“Prevalence and Reporting of Sexual Harassment in UK Public Spaces” 2021, 6). Street harassment is often even more difficult to report than harassment within a closed environment, such as a workplace, as this type of harassment is usually anonymous and there are limited ways to report harassment in public spaces. Additionally, confronting violence in the moment may result in an escalation or unwanted attention. Thus public violence allows the perpetrator to avoid consequences and continue believing that what he is doing is considered acceptable.

Normalizing this behavior has not been accidental or reserved for a select few. As Nardone (2018) points out, harassment is a long-standing tool of oppression against women that undermines women’s confidence and reinforces a specific idea of social hierarchy (755). Microcosms of the overarching culture of violence against women can be seen in powerful organizations throughout the UK, including the London police departments. The annual “Reclaim the Night” protests were originally organized in response to the “Yorkshire Ripper,” a serial killer who targeted women in the late 1970s, who the police were seemingly uninterested in catching due to the victims being associated with sex work. Instead, police placed all women under curfew, sparking outrage that all women were being punished for the crimes of a man (“Why Reclaim the Night?” n.d., para. 6-7). The protests were resurrected in 2004 to combat the continued culture of violence against women in the UK (Christofilou 2021, para. 9). In 2021 and

2022, a wave of protests alongside “Reclaim the Night” arose in response to the 2021 kidnapping, rape, and murder of Sarah Everard at the hands of a London police officer who used his position of power to coerce her into his vehicle. Before the perpetrator was uncovered and charged, the London police department once again asked women to “stay hidden,” inciting anger amongst local women once again. The subsequent investigation into the crime uncovered an institutionalized culture of violence against women in the London police force, including messages between officers about “hitting and raping women, as well as the deaths of black babies and the Holocaust” (Gayle 2022, para. 5, 7). When those charged with protecting women are also the perpetrators and enablers of violence towards women, it is not difficult to understand why women often choose to avoid speaking out about their experiences.

To combat the perpetuation of this dangerous culture, London debuted a new marketing campaign in October 2021 aimed at decreasing sexual harassment on public transportation (“New Campaign Launches to Stamp Out Sexual Harassment on Public Transport” 2021). Interestingly, London has placed local police services at the center of the campaign, encouraging people to speak directly to officers for support and to report harassing behavior. However, the campaign is largely reliant on bystander intervention and self-reporting, both of which are not yet part of London’s culture (“New Campaign Launches to Stamp Out Sexual Harassment on Public Transport” 2021). The success of this campaign relies on combatting a well-established normalization of violent culture by leaning on a relatively nonexistent culture of action against this behavior. It fails to get to the root of the issue and places nearly all responsibility on the victim. While the intent of this campaign is a step in the right direction, improving gender equality relies on more than simply placing posters on public transportation and directing people to police, particularly in the wake of Sarah Everard’s murder. If London and the UK want to take

gender equality seriously, both entities must take thoughtful action to change the messages it actively and subliminally sends its population that women are “less than” men through things like commemorating animals in twice as many monuments as named women. However, the UK has not succeeded in this endeavor, going so far as to widen the gender gap in recent years.

Barriers Exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic

Women have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Two 2021 studies found that in the first few months of the pandemic, women were more likely to lose their job, be furloughed, have their hours reduced, experience socioeconomic loss, and engage in unpaid labor, such as housecleaning and childcare, even when they were the primary source of income for their household (Oreffice and Quintana-Domeque 2021; Zamberlan, Gioachin, and Gritti 2021). Orreffice and Quintana-Domeque (2021) also found that during the pandemic, women’s anxiety, as measured by the Gender Anxiety Disorder 7-item scale (GAD-7), was 25 percent higher than men’s anxiety (282-283). Women’s increased anxiety levels during this time may stem from a combination of women’s greater presence in careers severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, decreased access to childcare, along with the disproportionately high socioeconomic burden women have endured as a result of the pandemic (Brader 2022). Increasing rates of domestic violence may also be a factor contributing to this increase in anxiety. London’s police services reported an increase of over 8 percent in current partner abuse and over 17 percent from family members (Havard 2021, para. 6). Based on data collected by the team at Counting Dead Women, there were an estimated sixteen women and children killed because of domestic violence in the UK during the first three weeks of the COVID-19 lockdown, which is above the estimated average for the country and is the highest weekly number recorded during that same timespan for at least eleven years (Smith 2020, para. 1-2). The National

Domestic Abuse Helpline received 65 percent more calls between April and June 2020 than it did in the three months prior (Havard 2021, para. 8). If women have less job security, less earning potential, and less opportunity for socioeconomic growth, are more likely to experience violence in their workplace, their home, and in public, and this is all likely to get worse in a crisis, there is clearly still work to be done. Gender inequality is being actively, albeit unthinkingly, taught to every person in the UK when this unequitable and violent treatment of women is considered normal and, therefore, acceptable. This culture of inequality has been a choice, from the gender pay gap to the constructed landscape surrounding each person to the monuments exalting the ‘greatest’ in its society.

The “Monumental” Gender Gap

Monuments are fixtures within urban landscapes. Their prominence in the public sphere offers an ownership over the pieces that differs from other artistic pieces found in museums, adding to their significance in shaping collective ideas of self and community. Cudny and Appelblad (2019) describe monuments as an extension of public art which work to build political and national identity while also influencing a community’s collective understanding of history. The authors assert that monuments are a physical introduction of art into the landscape that changes how that space functions, drawing people to it as a place to spend time (274, 276-277). Petterson (2019) expands this understanding by acknowledging the significance of the subject, pose, and placement of the monuments for communicating messages about identity, history, and group membership. As in any art piece, the choices being made when creating and placing a monument are just as important as the monument’s subject.

London’s monuments reflect artistic decisions grounded in the social construct of gender beyond merely choosing to underrepresent women. I observed that monuments depicting men

are often in areas with heavy foot traffic, sitting atop large plinths, and holding poses with an air of power and importance surrounding them. These positions of power include posing men on a horse, with a weapon, in an emboldened pose, or by simply creating a physically larger monument on an imposing plinth. Women's monuments, generally, are smaller with delicate poses on short plinths in quieter areas. Exceptions to this rule exist, of course, but the women represented in London at the time of writing this paper reinforce many traditional stereotypes about what being a "lady" requires. As O'Grady (2021) writes in her New York Times piece, it is just as important to portray women correctly as it is to portray them at all within monuments, irrespective of whether they have fulfilled an outdated social contract such as having children or marrying a man (para. 6). The monuments of named women in London today portray a specific idea of what women who are powerful look and act like (i.e., not taking up too much space and not on the same level as their male counterparts). In 2018, Dame Millicent Garrett Fawcett became the first and only woman to be commemorated with a monument in London's Parliament Square, chosen for her lifelong dedication to women's rights and long list of successful initiatives (Topping 2018). While thoughtful, her monument is tucked under the shade of a tree and is physically much smaller than many of the other monuments in this historic space. The trend to portray these named women according to stereotypes about femininity does a disservice to the women represented, instills damaging implicit attitudes in current and future generations, and misrepresents history. These women deserve to be remembered as the complex individuals they were with interests and personalities, who were unafraid to take up space and defy social norms among a male-dominated world because they believed so strongly in creating change. Small, compact monuments overshadowed by those of men does not do this.

While the erection of monuments to commemorate important people in society has been popular in the UK for generations, Dame Millicent Garrett Fawcett's addition to London's landscape in 2018 is one of the few monuments installed in recent years. Today, monuments may be viewed as nothing more than daily fixtures of the landscape due to their age and lack of modern relevance, but they are still critical sources of education and culture-building. As Edensor (2019) points out, the ordinary permanence of monuments is what gives these (often male) figures nearly inalienable importance, whether their identity or role in history is known or not (54). The power and greatness expressed by a monument is seen as inherent to not only the subject but also the physical and cultural landscape in which it exists. When this inescapable importance is almost exclusively reserved for one group of people, commonly those in power, other populations are likely to be marginalized, underrepresented, and forgotten from collective memory (Mitchell 2003, as cited by Cudny and Appelblad, 2019, 281). Regardless of intent, those in power when many of these monuments were commissioned have built an enduring narrative that white men are the only ones who have made meaningful contributions to London and that important women, especially important women of color, are the exception rather than the rule. As Dunn (2017) points out, monuments are a public acknowledgement that a group is "worthy of our shared remembrance" and exclusion of a group from monuments is an attempt at erasure (203-204). This erasure, whether consciously decided or not, is the execution of Mitchell's (2008) fifth axiom, landscape is power (43). Excluding women from the historical narrative by underrepresenting them in monuments has normalized a culture of gender inequality for thousands of years, resulting in many people turning a blind eye to the gender inequalities that still exist and disregarding gender inequality as a modern issue. Monuments reinforce the gendered-hierarchy present by creating a physical environment in which white men's power is a

daily fixture that goes unnoticed and unquestioned by most people. While generations of men in power did not explicitly intend to create this environment, gender inequality is still perpetuated because women's contributions have been consistently erased or minimized in the public sphere using monuments.

To make the assertion, through erasure or counterargument, that women have not significantly contributed to history is blatantly untrue. Even though women historically experienced discrimination and were deprived of basic rights, they have made meaningful contributions at every stage of the UK's history. One such case is the first woman of color to be commemorated with a monument in London, Mary Seacole. Her story and name were forgotten for approximately one hundred years by modern history, despite her being a widely celebrated nurse, entrepreneur, and author during her lifetime. Seacole was so well-known when she was alive that 80,000 people attended a four-night fundraising gala to help her overcome the financial hardship she incurred when she personally funded and created the British Hotel on the frontlines of the Crimean War, which provided soldiers with immediate care when none was available ("Read Mary's Story" n.d.). Overcoming discrimination based on her race and gender, along with barriers placed in front of her by the UK government, Seacole saved countless lives and contributed greatly to nursing practices. Yet, despite her widely known achievements and best-selling autobiography, she was still largely forgotten until the early 2000s when nurses from the Caribbean came to London to visit her grave and advocate for her to be remembered more formally by the UK ("Read Mary's Story" n.d., para. 18) Mary Seacole is one of many women lost to history because men have controlled the UK's collective memory and identity for so long. The monument erected in Seacole's honor in the gardens of St. Thomas's Hospital in 2016 is a significant reason many people today know her name and story.

While society has largely moved away from creating new monuments, the monuments that persist have left the urban landscape stuck in a historic era that denies women remembrance and personhood. It is this landscape that has encouraged the implicit attitudes preserving gender inequality within the UK's culture. When explicit attitudes, that is the attitudes that are knowingly held and are easier to change with information contradicting those beliefs and biases, reinforce these implicit attitudes about gender, it becomes nearly impossible to change a person's view (Rydell and McConnell 2006, 995, 1006). Negative media coverage of third-wave feminism in the early 2000s and the work of some radical sectors of the movement led to widespread disillusion with feminism throughout the UK (Aune and Holyoak 2018, 198). This explicit dislike for some aspects of third-wave feminism was likely reinforced by the implicit attitudes about women which are already embedded in the culture, leading many people to believe that feminism and the fight for gender inequality is no longer needed nor wanted (Aune and Holyoak 2018, 197-198). Now, the idea of combatting gender inequality is so closely tied to negative connotations with feminism that it may be difficult to have discussions about advancing women's rights. However, by increasing representation of women within London's monuments and thus creating a more equitable environment, implicit attitudes upholding gender inequality in the UK can begin to break down. It is difficult to reshape culture and to rebel against the norms upholding it when social hierarchies are reaffirmed every day by the subliminal messaging present in one's physical environment. It is difficult to teach the next generation to think differently when what is being said to them does not match what they see and observe each day, contributing to the endurance of a culture that assigns men more importance than women. Underrepresentation of women in monuments reinforces and normalizes the outdated idea that men are at the helm of society. It denies all children female role models, and it denies young girls

the opportunity to see women that look like themselves in powerful, successful positions and to know that they are not the first person that looks like them to pursue their passions and achieve their goals.

In response to the 2018 unveiling of Dame Millicent Garrett Fawcett's monument, the Mayor of London assembled the Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm to increase representation of underrepresented communities within London ("About the Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm" 2022). Subsequently, when the 2021 ArtUK study which initially inspired this work was published, the Mayor of London launched the Untold Stories fund to offer grants to those who would like to share their stories in the public consciousness ("About the Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm" 2022). The commission's goal is to improve representation of the diversity of London using public art and monuments by 2023 without removing any existing pieces ("About the Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm" 2022). While this is a step in the right direction, there has been little public action from the committee to understand what the next steps will be and how much improvement of this issue is expected by 2023. Due to the limited discussion surrounding monuments' role in perpetuating gender inequality, this task is not being given the prioritization necessary to challenge the existing culture. Drawing attention to this issue within monuments and holding the commission accountable is an important step towards creating a more representative environment that will reshape implicit attitudes and encourage a more equitable culture across London and the UK.

Communication Purpose and Framework

Visual communication has long been used as a tool to advocate for change within social movements. As Denney (2018) outlines in her evaluation of visual advocacy within the UK's feminist movements, using visual pieces to mark the landscape and take up physical space was a

way women garnered power in the public sphere. This technique forcibly disrupted daily society, breaking up the complacency that many people ultimately fall into and forcing people to acknowledge the issue of gender inequality. Today, disruption through visual communication has given birth to fourth-wave feminism, the ongoing feminist movement that largely uses digital tools to disseminate information, create change, and build community which this project participates in. “The Important Women Project” (IWP) draws on the success of the suffragettes’ visual communication techniques alongside fourth-wave feminist campaigns such as “#MeToo” and “Time’s Up Now” to construct a solution-oriented photojournalism digital campaign.

Creating a photojournalism-based digital campaign for the purpose of communicating research related to gender inequalities, monuments, and landscape studies differs from existing literature. My choice to communicate my academic research in layman’s terms using a digital campaign is not widely practiced by researchers. However, the research conducted in this work directly impacts the residents of London and the UK, as gender inequality continues to influence their daily lives in meaningful ways. Without addressing the implicit attitudes perpetuating gender inequalities, which are, by definition, often not recognized by the person who holds them, the problems created by these inequalities cannot be solved. Engaging with the public with a digital campaign, rather than simply contributing to the ongoing academic discussion, draws increased awareness to the subject of my research, broadens the potential impact of the work, and encourages discussion amongst individuals who can create democratic change from the ground up. The IWP contributes to the existing literature by advocating for greater communication of research findings with public audiences to create opportunities for public awareness, education, and action.

Solution-Oriented Photojournalism

For the approximately 9 million people who live in London, the 50 monuments depicting named women scattered across the city make up an almost insignificantly small portion of the global city's landscape. To ensure that the few monuments of named women that are present are celebrated, the IWP's photojournalism series spotlights individual monuments of women in London, accompanied by a short biography of the woman's life and the location of the monument. Guiding this approach is a solution-oriented photojournalism methodology which seeks to educate the audience about multiple aspects of an ongoing issue, rather than evoke shock or extreme emotion, to encourage involvement in solving that issue (Dahmen, Their, and Walth 2021, 273). Dahmen, Their, and Walth (2021) found "exposure to solution-oriented images was a significant predictor of narrative engagements, and narrative engagement was a significant predictor of interest, self-efficacy, and behavioral intentions," (283). By avoiding the use of shocking, emotional images often used in activism, the IWP hopes to encourage solutions to issues of gender inequality and the role of the landscape in perpetuating them by improving awareness in a format that does not feel overwhelming or like the issue is unsolvable. The IWP enables the public to get to know historic women who made progress towards gender equality and learn about the gender inequality issues that still exist, along with providing them with the opportunity to engage further with the topic and project if they would like to do so.

In shooting the photos used for this series, the subjects and composition of the images follow some elements of Dahmen, Mielczarek, and Perlmutter's (2018) influence-network model. This model identifies elements of so-called iconic photojournalism pieces to help predict what characteristics of an image draw widespread public attention to that image and, by extension, the issue being highlighted in it (264). Iconic images are largely found in problem-oriented photojournalism series due to the shocking, immediate nature of the image. However,

drawing on some of the same characteristics identified in this model helps ensure each image has components which will appeal to digital audiences. Specifically, each image used in the IWP takes into consideration timeliness, composition, cultural resonance, and newsworthiness to optimize the series' digital marketability (Dahmen, Mielczarek, and Perlmutter 2018, 285, 287-288). By extending the principles of timeliness, cultural resonance, and newsworthiness beyond the imagery and into the IWP, the subsequent campaign also has a positive foundation for increased probability of engagement by digital audiences.

Fourth-Wave Feminism

Fourth-wave feminism is distinguished from prior waves by the distinct use of social media and other digital platforms to further gender equality and build community among supporters (Looft 2017, 894). Due to the modernity of this wave, there is some conflation between the third and fourth feminist waves in the UK, which has encouraged the use of terms such as "hashtag feminism" to further clarify the framework being discussed. However, for the purpose of this work, I will be referring to ongoing digital feminist activism as fourth-wave feminism. Feminism's venture into the digital world has created an increased opportunity for more casual participation in feminism due to the physical separation from more demanding in-person activities and the presence of more widely available information (Mendes, Ringrose, and Keller 2018, 244). The dynamic created by fourth-wave feminism offers easy avenues of communication between sectors of the feminist community, linking individuals across the world to improve gender equality around the globe (Charles and Wadia 2018, 177). The IWP capitalizes on this culture of digital cooperation to connect with existing communities drawing attention to women's underrepresentation in monuments and traditional tellings of history. Potentially due to the accessibility of the digital realm, there is a broader discussion occurring on

Instagram than is currently present in academic journals about underrepresentation of women in monuments, offering IWP an opportunity to link the two groups and encourage mutual education.

Inherently, the fourth wave's "ever-shifting landscape of social media" necessitates the timely campaigns (Linabary, Corple, and Cooky 2020, 1842). As campaigns such as "#freethenipple's" successful yet unorganized nature and the "#MeToo Movement's" delayed popularity evidence, the launch and direction of social media campaigns is unpredictable and largely subject to the whims of the internet to a large degree (Matich, Ashman, and Parsons 2019; Mendes, Ringrose, and Keller 2018). However, viewing fourth-wave feminism beyond the largest, most successful campaigns and employing the same purposeful educational techniques as are present in solution-oriented photojournalism enables the IWP to grow and garner support organically, as did the aforementioned campaigns. Using this method, the IWP optimizes its probability of connecting with people interested in gender inequality as well as monuments who are willing to act based on the research presented.

The #ImportantWomenProject

Foundationally, the name of the digital campaign created for the current project is inspired by O'Grady's (2021) New York Times piece about the shortage of women represented by monuments. At the end of her article, O'Grady recounts a conversation she had with her four-year-old daughter about a monument erected in Chicago in 2018 of Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Gwendolyn Brooks. When asked by her daughter who Brooks was, O'Grady described her as "'A great poet' ... 'An important woman'" (para. 9). This type of interaction is what the project aims to replicate by promoting conversations around monuments that celebrate female role models. There are still important women lost to history because they are not celebrated, and the

purpose of this campaign is to draw attention to this issue. Thus, “The Important Women Project” was created.

From a communication standpoint, the IWP draws inspiration from the visual methods of suffragettes in the UK as well as national and international feminist campaigns. As recommended by Seo and Vu’s (2020) analysis of constructing a digital presence for nonprofits, which similarly focus on enacting change through digital platforms, the foundation of the IWP is a [website](#) consisting of the campaign’s purpose, research, photojournalism series, call to action, an interactive monument map, and a brief biography (see fig. 1-7). It also uses [Instagram](#) (see fig. 8) to reach a broader audience using the image-based methodology selected for this project and recommended social media platforms identified by Seo and Vu (2020, 865). To ensure cohesion and immediate recognition across platforms, the IWP brand was developed alongside the website and Instagram account.

Throughout the development of the IWP brand, the “#MeToo Movement,” “#GirlGaze,” “Time’s Up Now” and “Times Up UK,” “He for She,” “Bring Back Our Girls,” “The Everyday Sexism Project,” “Whose Streets? Our Streets!,” “Herstorical Monuments,” and “UK Feminista” campaigns were evaluated to provide a framework for how to structure the website and Instagram pages. These campaigns were chosen because they target similar audiences or are attempting to draw attention to social issues using similar tools. From the perspective of the website, IWP’s inclusion of an interactive map was directly inspired by the interactive map of protests on “Whose Streets? Our Streets!” and the campaign to add women’s monuments to Google Maps by “Herstorical Monuments.” From a social media standpoint, the tagline of the campaign, the campaign’s hashtag, and the website are consistently the primary components of an Instagram profile’s biography which is then mirrored throughout the website and campaign

content. The IWP maintains this continuity by consistently using “The Important Women Project” as the foundation for its platforms. The website and Instagram page use the full campaign name to ensure the IWP is easily searchable and memorable. The IWP hashtag #ImportantWomen encourages audiences to engage with the campaign with a distinct hashtag while also connecting all IWP content under one searchable term on Instagram’s platform. The tagline developed for the IWP, “A study of how women are represented in public spaces,” is short, focused, and offers room for the campaign’s growth while still staying true to the campaign’s analysis of women’s underrepresentation within London’s monuments. This tagline is used on the header of the website and in the campaign’s Instagram biography to further develop a consistent brand that is immediately recognizable across platforms.

Development of the IWP color palette of dark and light purple, light green, and white (see fig. 9-11) stems from the recognizable color scheme used by prominent UK feminist group the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU), which was led by notable suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst in the early 1900s (Denney 2022, 4, 60). Similarly drawn from the suffragette movement, the IWP logo is based on Dame Millicent Garrett Fawcett’s monument in London’s Parliament Square with the campaign name under the figure (see fig. 12-13). Fawcett’s key role in advancing women’s rights, recent induction into the well-known landscape of Parliament Square, and recognizable silhouette with the banner her monument includes made her figure an ideal source of inspiration for the campaign’s logo. All posts, platforms, and images received this branding to ensure the content published by the IWP continues to be associated with the campaign when reposted.

The IWP launched on Instagram on March 1 to celebrate the start of Women’s History Month, a month well-suited to the topics discussed by my research. Launching on this day

enabled the IWP to capitalize on the discussions already happening on the social media platform and the increased attention by potential audience members on women's issues throughout history. Introducing the campaign consisted of an initial graphic celebrating the start of Women's History Month to garner traction on the platform followed by a more in-depth post within the following week outlining the purpose of IWP. Images of monuments in London posted to the IWP Instagram each offer a biography of the woman being commemorated with special consideration for any advancement she made on behalf of women, which is then posted to the IWP website alongside the biography to ensure viewers can see the same content on both the website and the IWP's Instagram account (see fig. 14-15). The website provides more information about the campaign and its context to supplement the photojournalism series. Meanwhile, the IWP Instagram account includes statistical graphics and graphics depicting quotes from the women spotlighted in the photojournalism series (see fig. 16-17), drawing inspiration from the solution-oriented photojournalism methodology by providing a wholistic view of the issue and the women being spotlighted in the photos of monuments. Along with breaking up the type of content being provided by the campaign, these graphics enable the IWP to share information about ongoing gender inequalities in a simplified, easy-to-understand format without linking the information to a specific monument or woman being commemorated. The quotes, similarly, provide a more intimate view of who the woman being spotlighted was in her own words to complement the biography provided with each image. Collectively, this approach communicates the research from this project in a more widely consumable communication method.

To improve engagement beyond the content of the website and Instagram page, the IWP actively engages with the platforms' optimizing features. Within the website, each

photojournalism post is internally tagged with the same relevant language along with the addition of the woman's name to improve the likelihood that those searching for the topics present on my website will be led to my posts. On the IWP Instagram account, a collection of hashtags related to the campaign is used in every post, along with additional hashtags that are relevant to the main subject of each post and/or timely events, such as Women's History Month. In order to build an audience, the IWP Instagram page engaged with similar accounts by following, liking, and tagging their content. This was the most effective tool for growth as those accounts would frequently engage with the IWP in return, including reposting and promoting the IWP content. Any engagement by fellow activist accounts would be acknowledged by liking their comments, reposting shared posts to the IWP Instagram story, and liking the accounts' posts. Comments from followers also received engagement to acknowledge their comments and encourage continued participation in the discussions sparked by the posts. As of May 11, 2022, the IWP Instagram page had amassed 78 followers and the IWP website had been consistently viewed by approximately two or three unique people each week. I did observe that there were consistently unique viewers of the IWP website on the same days the IWP Instagram received a new follower, indicating that audience members are frequently interested in learning more information about the IWP after being introduced to the project.

Limitations and Further Opportunities for Research

Within the research component of this project, the primary limitation is the limited scope of the landscape being evaluated as London is only one part of the United Kingdom (UK). While London does make up a significant part of the UK and is the most influential city in the region, future research should evaluate other major cities within the UK to identify broader trends which would more closely tie into the national data available on gender inequalities.

From the perspective of the digital campaign, this work's limitations lie predominantly in the limited timeframe available to develop followers and establish the Important Women Project (IWP) in the digital community. Maintaining IWP beyond the scope of this project to continue to raise awareness for this issue will provide greater insight into the success of the campaign and the impact of communicating this research publicly. Additionally, encouraging greater audience participation in expanding IWP to other parts of the UK or cities around the world would allow the campaign to expand more broadly than I can currently do independently.

Conclusion

London's underrepresentation of women in monuments supports the endurance of implicit attitudes framing women as "less than" men by contributing to a physical environment that normalizes patriarchal values. Monuments' role in normalizing gendered hierarchies helps perpetuate a culture of gender inequality within the UK that extends into the workplace, home, public, and online. Named women's approximately 50 monuments (4%) compared to named men's over 300 monuments (21%) reflect a historic erasure of women and their achievements within UK society. The modern, likely unconscious, acceptance of the erasure of women within monuments actively shapes how women are viewed and treated within the culture. Coupled with monuments' apparent permanence and the lack of awareness surrounding gender inequality and its reinforcement by monuments, there is not considerable action being taken to correct this issue and, by extension, to mitigate the implicit attitudes working against women: "When the status quo is perceived as immovable, people tend to be passive, even if they are dissatisfied" (Nardone 2018, 757). Changing a culture which does not prioritize parity requires reframing identity, collective memory, and society's perspective with an environment that supports that growth, for both men and women. Currently, London does not provide that environment. However, women's

increased vulnerability in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic necessitates that this shift begins now to ensure that women can recover from the disproportionately high financial, social, and emotional strain they have experienced in the UK.

“The Important Women Project” (IWP) works to disrupt complacency and influence cultural change by combatting the implicit attitudes engrained in the UK population. The campaign does this by increasing awareness about the importance of monuments in shaping the way women are perceived and, subsequently, treated by society using solution-oriented photojournalism and informational graphics on Instagram. More directly, the IWP empowers audience members to challenge their own implicit attitudes and advocate for greater representation of women in monuments by providing them with strong female role models who have been commemorated with monuments, knowledge about gendered issues directly impacting their lives, and a forum to discuss these issues with like-minded individuals. Creating a supportive digital environment in which my own academic research is accessible and action to challenge implicit attitudes related to gender inequality feels approachable is central to the success of this project. As the IWP gains traction, people’s awareness of the link between monuments and the endurance of gender inequality will not only increase individual awareness of personal implicit attitudes that are damaging to women but will also help hold London’s Mayor and the Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm accountable for increasing representation of women in the city’s monuments.

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Figure 1. “Home.” 2022. *The Important Women Project*. <https://importantwomenproject.com>.

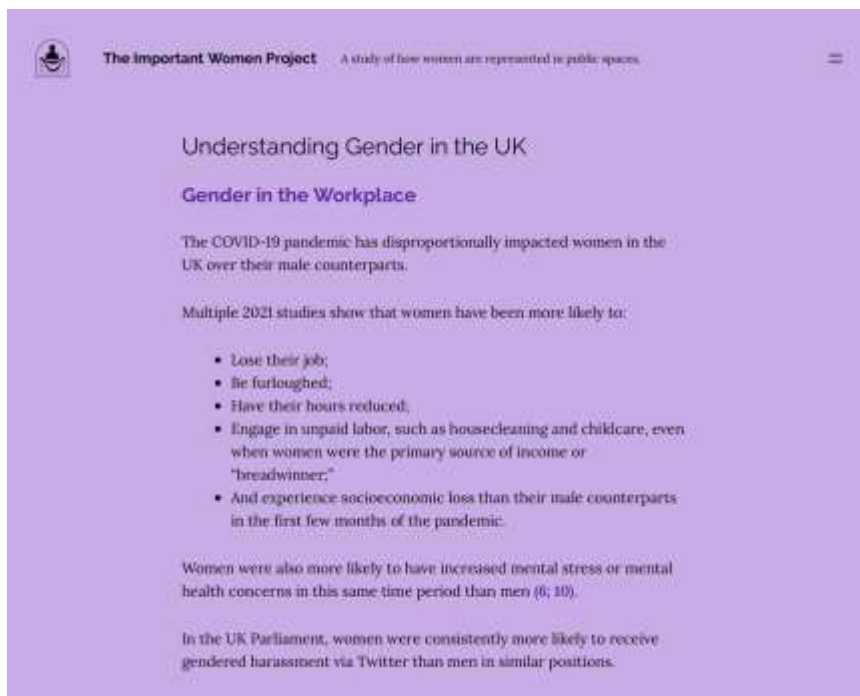


Figure 2. “Understanding Gender in the UK.” 2022. *The Important Women Project*. <https://importantwomenproject.com/understanding-gender-in-the-uk/>.

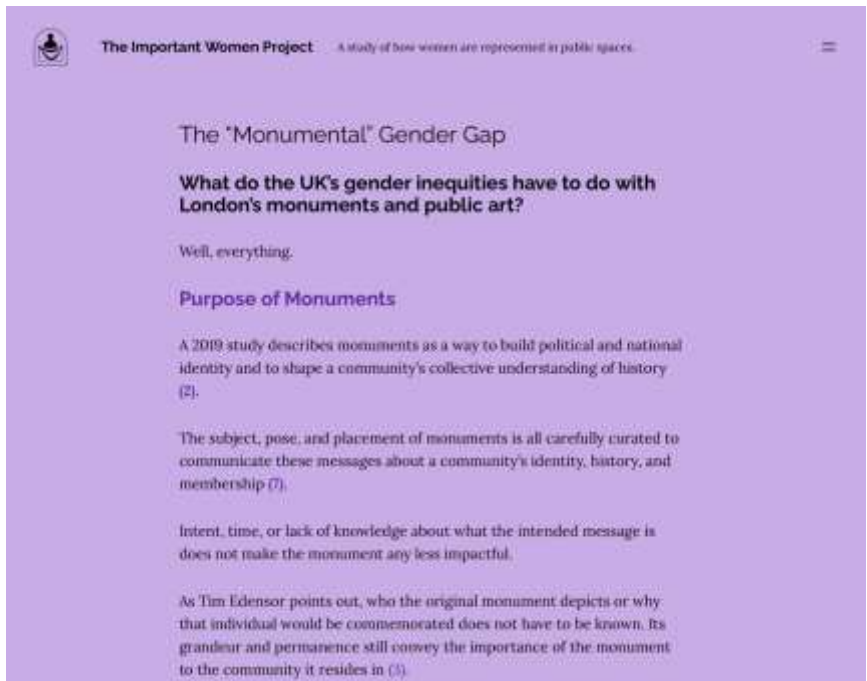


Figure 3. "The 'Monumental' Gender Gap." 2022. *The Important Women Project*. <https://importantwomenproject.com/the-monumental-gender-gap/>.

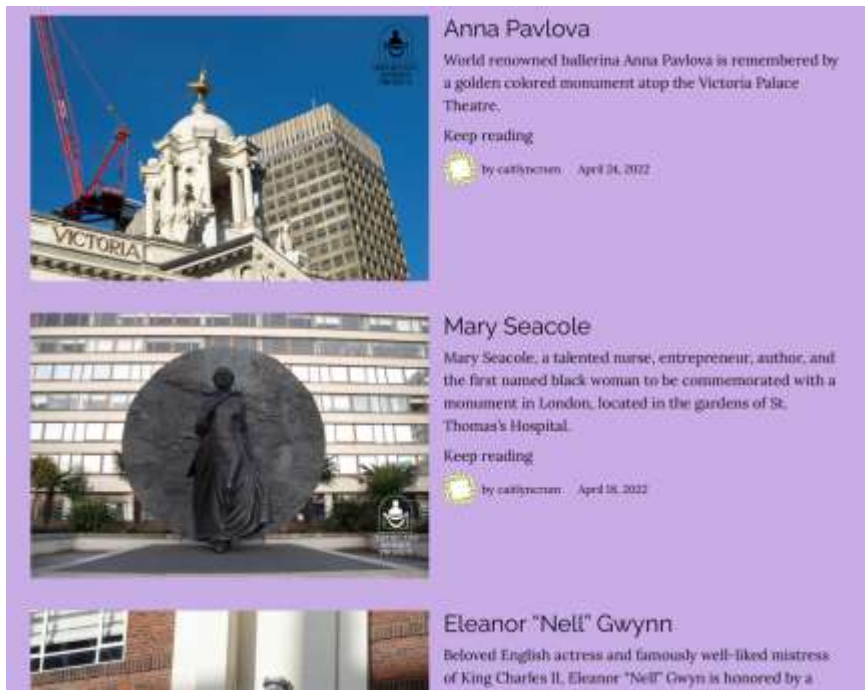


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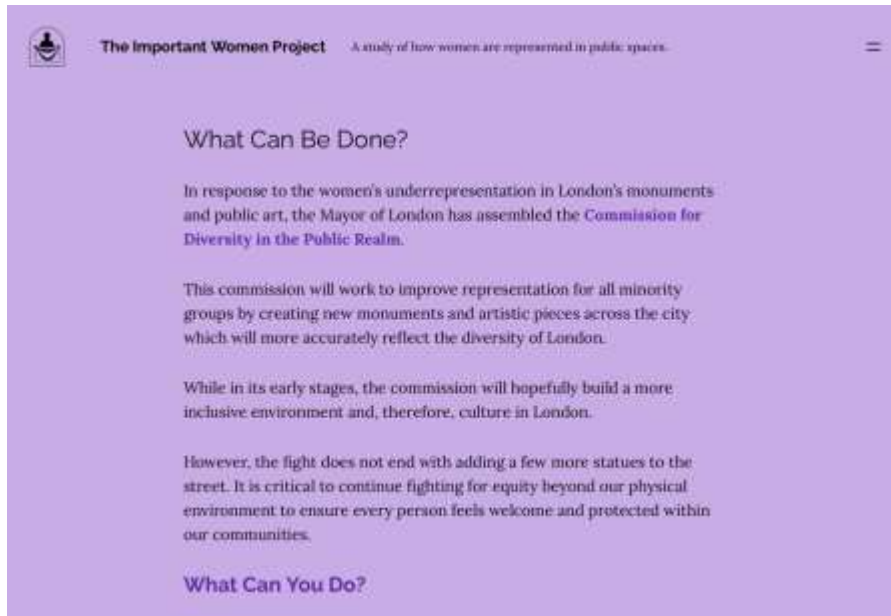


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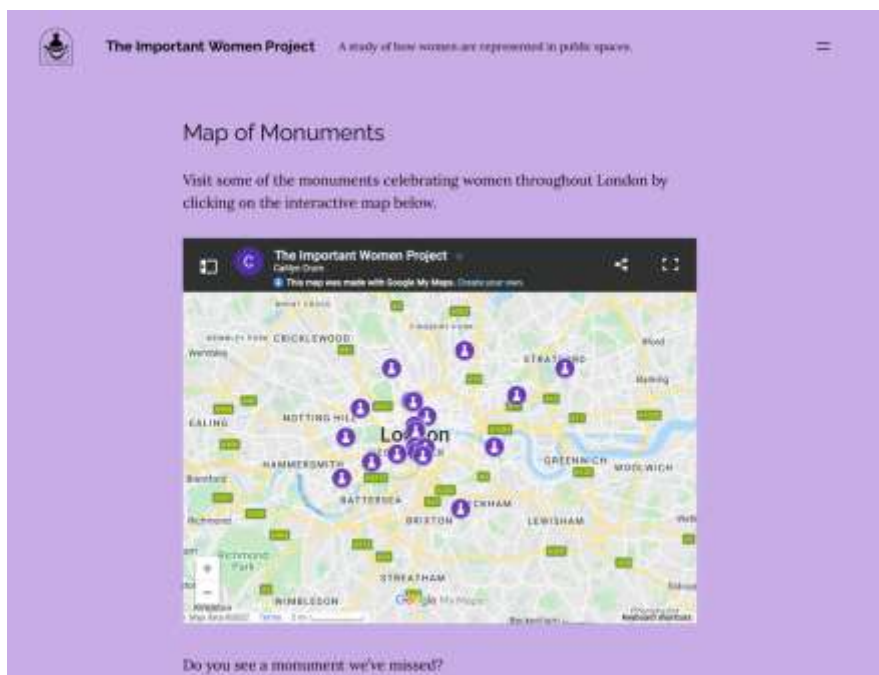


Figure 6. "Map of Monuments." 2022. *The Important Women Project*. <https://importantwomenproject.com/map-of-monuments/>.

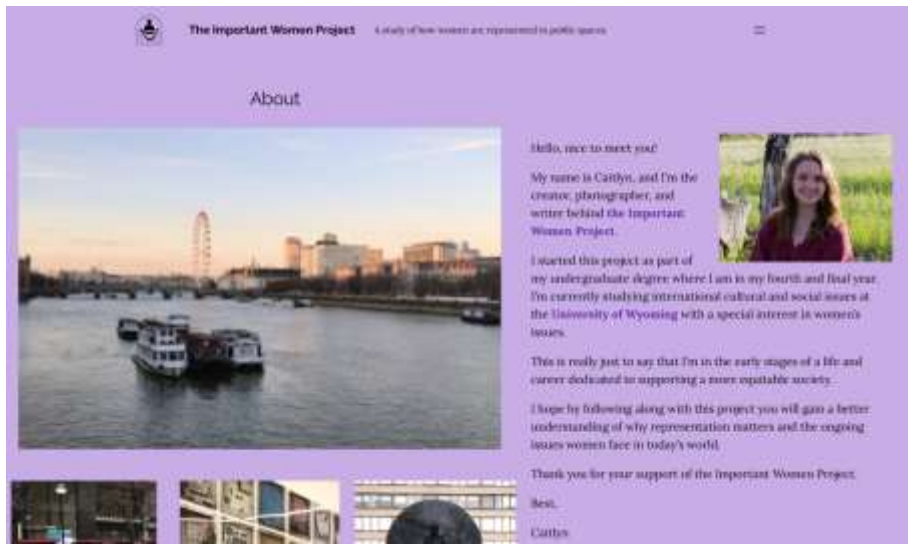


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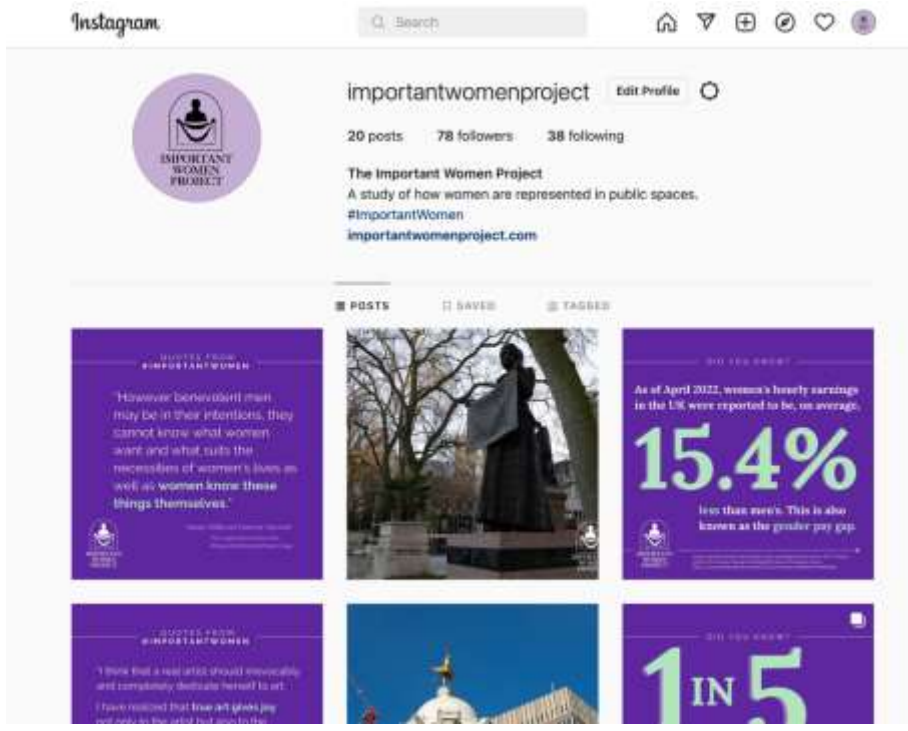


Figure 8. @importantwomenproject. 2022. *Instagram*.

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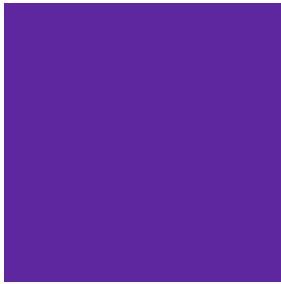


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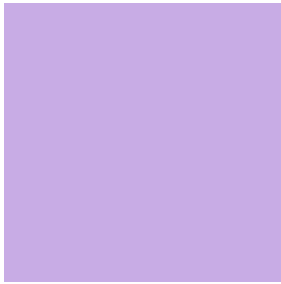


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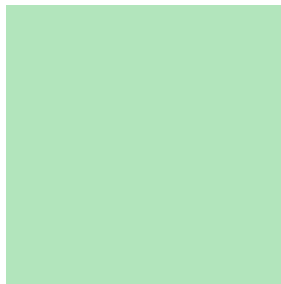


Figure 11. #B1E6BC



Figure 12. The logo for “The Important Women Project” modeled after Dame Millicent Garrett Fawcett.



Figure 13. “Monument of Dame Millicent Garrett Fawcett.” Photographed by Caitlyn Crum.

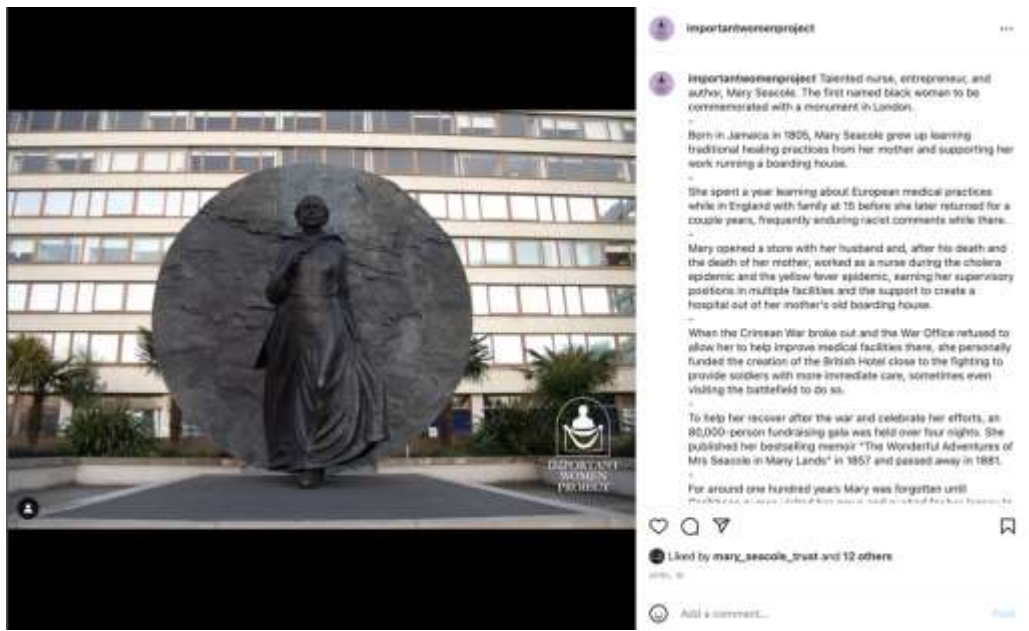


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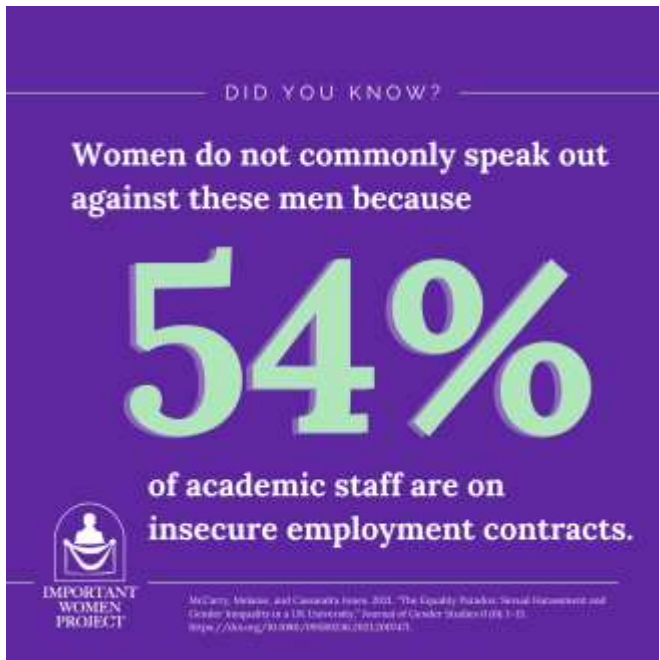


Figure 16. “Did You Know?” statistical graphics highlighting workplace harassment.



Figure 17. “Quotes from #ImportantWomen” graphic commemorating Mary Seacole.