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# AMERICAN VIRAGOS: DEPICTING HEROINES IN PUBLIC ART

by

CARA HENRY

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors in the Major program in Studio Art  
in the College of Arts and Humanities  
and in the Burnett Honors College  
at the University of Central Florida  
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Thesis Chair: Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz

## Abstract

To confront the inadequate representation of women as heroic figures in American public art, this project investigates the precedent of representing heroines in art. Through researching artwork featuring heroines, and heroic figures in general, this project aims to understand the historical context that new works featuring heroines will fit into. A template for constructing art featuring heroines was developed, showing what features or qualities are generally emphasized for the artwork to read as heroic. As art history has supplied principally man heroic figures, it was interesting trying to discern whether a template for art about heroines is different or essentially the same as a template for heroes. This project also includes three groups of artworks: new portraits for United States paper currency featuring American heroines, propaganda posters featuring Lady Liberty, and proposals for public installations that celebrate American heroines. These works investigate the process of placing women in spaces historically used to celebrate predominantly man heroic figures. In this investigation, I found that many heroic signifiers used for heroes were suitable for heroines. Emphasize physical strength, a performance of masculinity, or an emphasized performance of femininity were not necessary for the portrayal of heroines to read as heroic. By creating these artworks and a template for constructing heroines, this project will hopefully encourage and enable other artists to create works featuring heroines and generate support for better representation of women in public art.

## Acknowledgements

This thesis was only possible through the assistance and guidance from my lovely committee: Dr. Maria Cristina Santana, Professor Jason Burrell, and my art mom, Professor Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz.

## Table of Contents

<b>CHAPTER ONE: THE INVESTIGATION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO: HEROIFICATION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>HEROISM AND GENDER .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CHAPTER THREE: PRECEDENT .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>MIXED RESULTS.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: THE TRIALS .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>EXPERIMENT 1: Lady Liberty .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>EXPERIMENT 2: Currency Portraits .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>EXPERIMENT 3: Installation Proposals .....</b>	<b>68</b>
IDA B. WELLS .....	68
AMELIA EARHART .....	72
GRACE HOPPER.....	76
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: TEMPLATE.....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>TEMPLATE .....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>82</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1: de Weldon, Felix. United States Marine Corps Memorial. 1954. Cast bronze. Arlington National Cemetery. ARTSTOR. Web. 19 January 2017.....	5
Figure 2: Christy, Howard Chanler. Gee! I Wish I Were a Man. 1917. Lithograph. University of Minnesota Libraries. ARTSTOR. Web. 19 January 2017.....	6
Figure 3: Michelangelo. Sistine Chapel (The Libyan Sibyl detail). 1508-1512. Fresco. Sistine Chapel. ARTSTOR. Web. 19 January 2017.....	10
Figure 4: Ehrhart, Ehrhart. Columbia's Easter bonnet. 6 Apr. 1901. Cartoon. Prints and Photographs division. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University. Web. 01 Apr. 2017. ....	15
Figure 5: "Postcard: No Votes Thank You. The Appeal of Womanhood. [1912]." Ann Lewis Women's Suffrage Collection. Ann Lewis and Mike Sponder, 2015. Web. 02 Apr. 2017. ....	16
Figure 6: "A Woman's Mind Magnified." The Suffrage Postcard Project. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Apr. 2017.....	17
Figure 7: "The Apotheosis of Suffrage." The Library of Congress. The Library of Congress, n.d. Web. 02 Apr. 2017.....	18
Figure 8: David, Jaques-Louis. Oath of the Horatii. 1784. The Louvre, Paris, France. ARTSTOR. Web. 21 July 2016. ....	22
Figure 9: Gentileschi, Artemisia. Judith Slaying Holofernes. 1620. National Museum of Capodimonte, Naples, Italy. ARTSTOR. Web. 21 July 2016. ....	24
Figure 10: Michelangelo. David. 1501-1504. Galleria Dell'Accademia, Florence, Italy. ARTSTOR. Web. 21 July 2016.....	25

Figure 11: “The Nine Women of Statuary Hall.” Equal Visibility Everywhere. EVE: Equal Visibility Everywhere, n.d. Web. 19 Mar. 2017. ....	26
Figure 12: Levy, Rom. “Freddy Sam “I Am Because We Are” New Madiba Tribute Mural- Johannesburg, South Africa.” Streetartnews.net. Street Art News, 11 Jan. 2014. Web. 01 Apr. 2017. ....	27
Figure13: Anyangwe, Eliza. “Congo: Painting Colonial Brutality in the DRC.” CNN. Cable News Network, 03 June 2015. Web. 01 Apr 2017. ....	28
Figure14: Lopez, Belkys. “The Mirabal Sisters: Heroes, Not Victims.” thehuffingtonpost.com, The Huffington Post, 25 Nov. 2015. Web. 01 Apr. 2017 .....	29
Figure15: Cindy. “Professor Wangari Maathi.” Artandarchitecture-sf.com. N.p., 22 Aug. 2012. Web. 01 Apr. 2017.....	30
Figure 16: Ewing, Ed. “Che’s Last Stand.” The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, 31 Dec. 2008. Web. 01 Apr. 2017.....	31
Figure17: “Lincoln Statue.” National Parks Service. U.S. Department of the Interior, n.d. Web. 02 Apr. 2017. ....	32
Figure 18: Chicago, Judy. The Dinner Party. 1974-1979. Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY. ARTSTOR. Web. 21 July 2016. ....	33
Figure 19: Chicago, Judy. Emily Dickinson (Detail of The Dinner Party). 1974-1979. Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY. ARTSTOR. Web. 21 July 2016. ....	33
Figure 20: Larson, Kay. "A Subtlety, Or the Marvelous Sugar Baby." Rev. of A Subtlety, Or the Marvelous Sugar Baby. Curator 57.4 (2014): 505. Web. 21 July 2016 .....	34

Figure 21: “Diana Memorial Fountain.” The Royal Parks. The Royal Parks, n.d. Web. 19 Mar. 2017.....	36
Figure 22: CNN Wire Staff, and Sarah Aarthun. “Senegal Unveils Colossal Statue Amid Criticism.” CNN. Cable News Network, 03 Apr. 2010. Web. 19 Mar. 2017.....	37
Figure 23: Rothstein, Edward. “A Mirror of Greatness, Blurred.” The New York Times. The New York Times, 25 Aug. 2011. Web. 19 Mar. 2017.....	38
Figure 24: Richardson, Christopher. "North Korea's Kim Dynasty: The Making of a Personality Cult." The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, 16 Feb. 2015. Web. 20 July 2016.....	40
Figure 25: Kirby, Jen. “A ‘Refugees Welcome’ Banner Was Hanging on the Statue of Liberty Today.” Nymag.com. New York Media LLC, 21 Feb. 2017. Web. 01 Apr. 2017.....	42
Figure 26: Cara Henry. Running. 2017. Photograph. ....	44
Figure 27: Cara Henry. Open arms. 2017. Photograph.....	45
Figure 28: Cara Henry. Stand Firm. 2017. Photograph. ....	45
Figure 29: Cara Henry. Stay True. 2017. Acrylic paint, colored pencils and ink.....	46
Figure 30: Cara Henry. Be Love. 2017. Acrylic paint, colored pencils, and ink.....	47
Figure 31: Cara Henry. Courage. 2017. Acrylic paint, colored pencils, and ink.....	48
Figure 32: Boye, B. M. Votes for Women. 1913. Lithograph. University of California. ARTSTOR. Web.....	49
19 January 2017. ....	49
Figure 33: Saar, Alison. Swing Low. 2008. Harriet Tubman Memorial Plaza, Manhattan, NY. ARTSTOR.....	50
Web. 21 July 2016. ....	50

Figure 34: “Under the Wave off Kanagawa.” The Met. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, n.d. Web. 20 Mar. 2017. ....	51
Figure 35: BBC Radio 4. “Episode 95- Suffragette-defaced Penny.” BBC News. BBC, n.d. Web. 31 Mar. ....	53
Figure 36: Poppick, Susie. “Women on Money: 10 Countries That Did It Before the United States.” Time. Time, 17 June 2015. Web. 02 Apr. 2017. ....	54
Table 1: Currency portraits and their denominations .....	56
Figure 37: “Fannie Lou Hamer: Woman of Courage.” Library System – Howard University. Howard University, n.d. Web. 16 Mar. 2017.....	57
Figure 38: “Susan B. Anthony.” National Parks Service. U.S. Department of the Interior, n.d. Web. 16 Mar. 2017. ....	58
Figure 39: Norgren, Jill. “Belva Lockwood: Blazing the Trail for Women in Law.” National Archives and Records Administration. National Archives and Records Administration, 2005. Web. 16 Mar. 2017. ....	59
Figure 40: “Dr. Helen Rodriguez-Trias” U.S. National Library of Medicine. National Institutes of Health, 03 June 2015. Web. 16 Mar. 2017. ....	60
Figure 41: Errick, Jennifer. “Follow in the Footsteps of an American Hero at Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument in Maryland.” National Parks Conservation Association. National Parks Conservation Association, 8 Aug. 2013. Web. 16 Mar. 2017. 61	
Figure 42: “MINK, Patsy Takemoto.” US House of Representatives: History, Art & Archives. U.S. House of Representatives, n.d. Web. 16 Mar. 2017. ....	61

Figure 43: Goodacre, Glenna. “Sacagawea and Jean Baptiste.” Glennagoodacre.com. Glenna Goodacre, n.d. Web. 16 Mar. 2017.....	62
Figure 44: Cara Henry. Fannie Lou Hamer Currency Portrait. 2017. Ink pen. ....	63
Figure 45: Cara Henry. Susan B. Anthony Currency Portrait. 2017. Ink pen. ....	64
Figure 46: Cara Henry. Belva Lockwood Currency Portrait. 2017. Ink pen. ....	64
Figure 47: Cara Henry. Dr. Helen Rodriguez Trias Currency Portrait. 2017. Ink pen. ....	65
Figure 48: Cara Henry. Harriet Tubman Currency Portrait. 2017. Ink pen. ....	65
Figure 49: Cara Henry. Patsy Mink Currency Portrait. 2017. Ink pen. ....	66
Figure 50: Cara Henry. Sacagawea and Jean Baptiste Currency Portrait. 2017. Ink pen. ....	67
Figure 51: Park, Seungmo. “자동등록방지를 위해 보안절차를 거치고 있습니다.” Seungmopark.com. Seungmo Park, n.d. Web. 20 Mar. 2017. (HAN HYE YEON) .....	69
Figure 52: Cavna, Michael. “Here’s Why Google Doodle Salutes Fearless, Peerless Word-warrior Ida B. Wells.” The Washington Post. WP Company, 16 July 2015. Web. 20 Mar. 2017.....	70
Figure 53: Cara Henry. Ida and Truth. 2017. Markers and ink. ....	70
Figure 54: Kimsooja. “Lotus: Zone of Zero.” Kimsooja.com. Kimsooja, n.d. Web. 19 Mar. 2017. ....	72
Figure 55: “Amelia Earhart.” National Air and Space Museum. Smithsonian, n.d. Web. 20 Mar. 2017.....	73
Figure 56: Cara Henry. Amelia’s Flights Proposal. 2017. Markers and ink. ....	74
Figure 57: Cara Henry. Amelia’s Flight Miles Diagram. 2017. Ink and colored pencil. ....	75
Table 2 lists the flights referenced in each circle on the installation. ....	76

Table 2: Some record flights by Amelia Earhart .....	76
Figure 58: Associated Press. “Giant Portrait of Eva Perón Unveiled in Argentina Ministry.” The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, 27 July 2011. Web. 19 Mar. 2017.....	76
Figure 59: “Grace Murray Hopper (1906-1992): A Legacy of Innovation and Service.” Yale News. Yale, 10 Feb. 2017. Web. 20 Mar. 2017.....	77
Figure 60: Cara Henry. Grace and the Bug Proposal (Daytime). 2017. Markers and ink.....	78
Figure 61: Silber, Judy. “How a Buddhist Shrine Transformed a Neighborhood in Oakland.” PRI. Public Radio International, 19 Nov. 2014. Web. 20 Mar. 2017.....	82
Figure 62: Suzee in the City. “Women in Graffiti: A Tribute to the Women of Egypt.” Suzeeinthecity.com. N.p., 7 Jan. 2013. Web. 31 Mar. 2017.....	83
Figure 63: Hoey, Dennis. “High School Students Give Rosie the Riveter New Look and New Message.” Press Herald. Portland Press Herald. 28 Mar. 2017. Web. 31 Mar. 2017.....	84

## List of Tables

Table 1: Currency portraits and their denominations .....	56
Table 2: Some record flights by Amelia Earhart .....	76

## CHAPTER ONE: THE INVESTIGATION

This thesis is a confrontation. This thesis confronts the lack of representation of women in heroic art and, by extension, the prevailing ideas of what heroism looks like and what the concept of women as American citizens should be. The aim of this project is to create a template for the construction of American heroines in public art using information from literature on heroism and gender, information from artwork featuring heroic figures, through the development of my own artworks featuring heroines, and through the development of a template for constructing heroines.

Heroic figures are valuable and significant parts of culture and society. In a study on prototypical features of heroic figures, the authors stated that “the prevalence of the concept of heroes suggests that it is of psychological importance to human kind.” (Kinsella, Ritchie, Igou 114) The authors go on to say that “in particular, participants told us that heroes remind them about the human capacity for exceptionality and goodness.” (116) Heroes function as inspiration, individuals who show us the greatness we might achieve.

Yet, the demographics in heroic depiction are not proportional to the make-up of the United States population. In a 2011 article in the *Washington Post* titled “Why the Dearth of Statues Honoring Women in Statuary Hall and Elsewhere?”, Cari Shane notes that “of the 5,193 public outdoor sculptures of individuals in the United States, only 394, or less than 8 percent, are of women.” This is only one example of the meager representation of women in spaces of honor and power.

It is my firm belief that one necessary step towards a better world is better representation. If we do not celebrate the stories and accomplishments of a variety of people from different races, beliefs, orientations, gender expression, or socioeconomic status, how can we change the thought that there are only a few kinds of people in this world who can do great things?

There is a video from the Ad Council featuring John Cena called “We Are America” which discusses patriotism and the demographics of the United States population. John Cena asks the viewers to picture the average American and then says that, of United States citizens, “51% are female. So, first off, the average American is a woman.” The video goes on to break down other statistics and population groups. The video weaves a very positive ideal of patriotism: a love of country and therefore a love of its people. The point of having the audience imagine an average American is that the writers expected to upset the audience’s expectations. Though women make up more than half the population, they are not held as the default person. They are therefore secondary in the public perception of who an American citizen is.

In my thesis, I created multiple works of art to explore various ways of representing heroines. Each particular heroine was chosen because I found her interesting and heroic, not necessarily because the group or any individual is more heroic than any other American. The only restrictions I placed on my choices of women were that they had to be American (usually United States citizens, but sometimes, like Sacagawea, mostly incorporated into the narrative of United States history) and deceased at the time of this writing. I designed propaganda posters using Lady Liberty as the embodiment of America and her people. I designed seven new currency portraits, removing the men and replacing them with women. I designed proposals for three new public installations that celebrate women.

## CHAPTER TWO: HEROIFICATION

Researchers have attempted to break down heroic figures into a list of attributes. Through a series of studies, one group found that “the most prototypical features of heroes, identified in our research, are bravery, moral integrity, courageous, protecting, conviction, honest, altruistic, self-sacrificing, determined, saves, inspiring, and helpful.” (Kinsella, Ritchie, Igou, 124) In addition to this list, they found that heroic figures were “consistently described as having a positive impact on the lives of others and are famous for supreme acts of greatness.” (125)

In *Gender and Immortality*, it is stated that “being “the best” is not merely a characteristic of heroes, but their defining feature.” (Lyons, 10) Artist Margaret Kilgallen said, “I do have a lot of heroines- as well as heroes, too- but I like to paint images of women who I find inspiring . . . [who] hit me in my heart.” (“Margaret Kilgallen: Heroines”)

To be a heroic figure is to be raised beyond the ordinary. In “Designing Heroes”, Steven Heller states that “to be called a hero- or to be shown as such- is the highest of human distinctions, and heroism is the status to which everyone aspires, if only subconsciously.” Heller goes on to say that heroic figures must be represented as having virtues held in importance by the society celebrating them: “the synthetic [heroic figure] is a composite of ideal attributes.”

In ““Heroes” and “Villains” of World History Across Cultures”, a study surveyed 6,902 university students from 37 countries rating 40 historical figures. (Hanke et al, 5) The authors stated that “acquiring representations of major historical figures is a principal mechanism through which political socialization occurs. For example, some of the first robust political knowledge acquired by a child is beliefs about the character of the chief executor of their land.”

(2) The survey found that scientists got the most consistently high scores across all cultures

surveyed. (1) The authors interpreted their results to find “race and gender were no barriers to favorable evaluations”, citing “two of the top eleven” being women. (16) I view this finding misleading because only three women were included in list of forty individuals. Mother Theresa was ranked second highest in favorability, Princess Diana eleventh, and Margaret Thatcher twenty-fifth. (7) This is hardly proportional to the global population.

How the actions of an individual are framed is very important in the process of heroification. In “Theseus, Hero of Athens”, Andrew Greene lists Theseus’ accomplishments as “dispatched six legendary brigands” and “the slaying of the Minotaur”. Theseus’s murder of six criminals and one monster are not described as crimes, but actions of justice. That he left Ariadne behind and neglected promises (which led to his father’s suicide) is not enough to detract from his status as heroic. From the perspective of the family and friends of the brigands or Ariadne, Theseus would probably not be considered a hero. Instead, Greene sums up Theseus as a “complex and local hero for Athens.”

Steven Heller cites the United States Marine Corps Memorial in Arlington Cemetery as a prime example of dealing with the complexities of real events and real individuals when making heroic art. The monument by Felix de Weldon is based on a photograph of six marines raising an American flag after a battle. The focus is on the moment of triumph and patriotism. The death, gore, and suffering of war are not included in the piece. Heller suggests that this focus is necessary image management for the creation of heroic figures in art, “The most effective heroic depictions are sanitized.”



*Figure 1: de Weldon, Felix. United States Marine Corps Memorial. 1954. Cast bronze. Arlington National Cemetery. ARTSTOR. Web. 19 January 2017.*

The United States Marine Corps Memorial uses the bodies of the soldiers to create a pyramid pointing towards the United States flag, marking the soldiers as patriotic heroic figures. The diagonals in the piece create a sense of action and strain. The cast bronze is a solid, durable material which allows the piece to speak to the long-term consecration of these heroic figures. The memory of them will endure time. This bronze is also paired with a fabric flag which can move with the wind, giving the sculpture a reach into the present. The soldiers are frozen in action, held in memory, but America lives on even now.

Real individuals have blemishes and imperfections. Realistic depictions of individuals could include wrinkles or scars which Heller feels detracts from the clear message of “hero”. Heller states that individuals are “not always ‘heroic’ in appearance or stature, so designing heroes that conform to accepted models necessitates the creation of symbolic beings that are bigger and bolder than life.”

## HEROISM AND GENDER



Figure 2: Christy, Howard Chanler. *Gee! I Wish I Were a Man*. 1917. Lithograph. University of Minnesota Libraries. ARTSTOR. Web. 19 January 2017.

I wanted to talk about things like the WWI recruiting poster in Figure 2. The woman in the design stares off into the distance. Based on the text she is dreaming of a world in which she could join the Navy and go be a hero. That she could not be in the Navy because she is a woman is not questioned in this design. If she were a man, she would join the Navy. The target of this design is the young American man: if this *woman* would join the Navy, what does it say about you, who can go, that you won't? It is an appeal to a certain pride of manhood. It heroizes being in the Navy and creates a sense of possible heroization for the man viewing. The design does not heroize the woman in the design. Her statements are dreamlike, maybe even childish.

The labels for my subjects gave me considerable grief. How to qualify what the woman is not? Do I say that she is not a hero? Does that mean she is in no way a heroized person or that she is not a man heroic figure? Should I say that she is not a woman hero? Not a heroine?

Early in my research, “heroine”, to my mind, seemed to have an implied a secondary position to the hero. “Woman heroic figure” initially seemed too clunky to use in high frequency. Deborah Lyons presented a similar conflict in the introduction of *Gender and Immortality*:

The word *heroine* carries with it an unfortunate freight of associations, suggesting not a powerful being to be invoked and propitiated from beyond the grave, but a frail creature requiring rescue by none other than a hero. I decided not to circumvent this problem with the phrase “female hero” since such a phrase reinforces the notion of the female as the special case, the other, the marked category, while the male remains unmarked, normative, universal. In English, a language in which gender is relatively unmarked, gender specific forms like “poetess” can be rightly rejected as patronizing . . . I will use the word heroine to mean heroized female personage or recipient of heroic honors (Lyons, 4-5)

As Lyons suggests, “female hero” implies the male as the norm, and would thus necessarily be defined as heroes that are not male. Investigations into art labeled as such would have to be assessed in relation to the qualities of *heroes*. If there was an overlap in attributes, could the “woman hero” still be womanly if shown with “masculine” qualities? Would the assessments constantly be a list of all the ways they are like a hero, but not quite because they are presumed to be of another gender?

The words “heroine” and “hero” have similar meanings but with important distinctions. Merriam-Webster defines “hero” as “1 (a) a mythological or legendary figure often of divine descent endowed with great strength or ability. (b) an illustrious warrior (c) a person admired for

achievements and noble qualities (d) one who shows great courage.” Merriam-Webster defines “heroine” similarly, but only includes definitions 1a and 1c found in “hero”, replacing “figure” or “person” with “woman”. The definition is not explicitly inclusive of “illustrious warriors” or those “who show great courage.” The implication of these differences will be covered later.

For the purposes of my paper, I shall use the term “heroic figure” as the general, as Lyons put it, “heroized” figure. From there I subdivide by gender with man heroic figures called “heroes” and woman heroic figures called “heroines”. Such categorization allows heroines to be a specific subsection of the general hero, rather than in constant relation to the man.

It would be wrong to define heroines by their similarities and differences to heroes. Yet, it would also be inaccurate to make no references to art depicting heroes. Art depicting heroines is made in the context of the hundreds of years of mainly male heroes. In the United States “none of the 44 national memorials managed by the National Park Service (such as the Lincoln memorial) specifically focuses on women and their accomplishments.” (Shane) Shane notes that even when women are in public sculpture they are not always depictions of heroic individuals, but “anonymous figures”, representing an ideal or concept.

Art is not created in a vacuum. Even works that seek to question or reject an existing idea are speaking in reference to it. Performance artist Shaun Leonardo has many pieces that question or interact with the cultivation of hyper-masculinity. His performance piece “El Conquistador vs. The Invisible Man: The Homecoming” has him dressed in a fashion after luchador costumes. He performs in a wrestling ring surrounded by an audience chanting the name of the persona he is embodying: “El C”. His performance has him running, jumping, and fighting no one. His opponent, the Invisible Man, is not there. El C is struggling with no one, or perhaps with only

himself. The whole piece can be read as calling into question the promotion of violence and fighting. The intense masculinity of this fight is shown for what it is, a sort of performance. Even through questioning its value, the piece only exists in the context of traditional masculine practices.

Investigations into heroines in art necessitate some comparison. How does a particular heroine fit into the historical precedent of similar depictions of heroes? What qualities are emphasized frequently in heroines that are less frequent in heroes? I will aim to define heroines as their own category, by their own qualities, using heroes as context rather than the starting point.

The Musée d'Orsay has an article on their website titled "The Nude Man in Art from 1800 to the Present Day" which briefly goes over the historical context of male nudes in Western Art. The article contends that, since the Renaissance, "the man as a universal being became synonymous for Mankind, and his body was established as the ideal form, as was already the case in Greco-Roman art." They go on to say that, stemming from the Judeo-Christian tradition, man came first: "Adam existed before Eve, who was no more than his copy and the origin of sin." In this view, women are a derivative or offshoot of the man, like having a cherry flavored variation of an original soda. The article states that "the man was considered to have the archetypal human form."



*Figure 3: Michelangelo. Sistine Chapel (The Libyan Sibyl detail). 1508-1512. Fresco, Sistine Chapel. ARTSTOR. Web. 19 January 2017.*

In an analysis of various women depicted by Michelangelo entitled “The Heroine as Hero in Michelangelo’s Art”, Yael Even frequently labels them as “viraginous women” because of their masculine builds and strong muscles (Even, 29). Meriam-Webster defines a “Virago” as either “a loud, overbearing woman” or “a woman of great stature, strength, and courage”, which almost seem like incompatible meanings. The original meaning of “female warrior” seems to have morphed into a word to describe a woman who overstepped the bounds of what a woman ought to be. Such differing definitions suggest that perhaps great stature, strength, and courage are not compatible with a positive performance of womanhood.

Yael Even mentions that many of the woman figures depicted by Michelangelo seem to be based on male models rather than female. Even suggested various reasons for this stylistic choice. Michelangelo may have believed the male body superior to the female and wished to depict shapes and builds he liked better. He may have also just preferred men as people. Even references documents that “convey his struggle to suppress his homoerotic desires in light of contemporary religious and cultural taboos,” and a lack of females in his life. (29) Michelangelo may have simply preferred to depict “masculine” traits and bodies.

However, Even also suggests that the women in Michelangelo’s art may have frequently been represented as masculine to legitimize their presence alongside men. Discussing the Libyan Sibyl painted on the Sistine Chapel, Even describes her as “more masculine than feminine,” for her strong musculature (29). The Libyan Sibyl is shown lifting a heavy book and the only “feminine” signifiers are her clothing and braid. Of the Cumaean Sibyl, Even says “without her gigantic limbs, this elderly virgin would have looked like a hag and lost her sense of spiritual superiority. Portrayed as a more traditional female, she would have lacked her singular significance,” (29). The Cumaean Sibyl’s placement among prophets, and on the Sistine Chapel ceiling no less, gives her honor. However, Even seems to indicate that, were she to be represented with a more feminine body or attributes, she would have seemed weak in comparison and unworthy of the position. Her power comes from being strong like a man, shown through the strong muscles. Even finds that the Cumaean Sibyl, “transformed to look and act like an athlete, she comports herself like and becomes a triumphant hero,” (29).

Studies into the perception of heroism indicate that some aspects of heroism suggest that it should be fairly open to all people. “Risk taking is stereotypically and actually associated with

men, whereas empathetic concern for others' welfare is stereotypically and actually associated with women. Given this definition of heroism as combining masculine and feminine elements, heroism would seem to be culturally androgynous, and women as well as men might be well represented as heroes." (Rankin, Eagly 414) This idea, however, does not bear out. "Consistent with the cultural association of heroism with men and masculinity, men and mostly male groups predominated as public heroes. The predominance of men and mostly male groups among the public heroes is inherent in the types of roles that have yielded heroism." (418)

It seems that women have been traditionally left out of the heroic canon because they weren't often in places to be publicly recognized as heroic. "We found that people widely recognized as heroic (public heroes) generally performed their extraordinary actions within social roles to which women do not enjoy equal access. Occupations in which people perform emergency rescues are highly male dominated, as are leadership roles in politics and many social movements. Biosocial challenges pertaining to women's lesser size and strength, along with cultural stereotypes, may discourage women's participation in some of these occupations." (421) In some sense, the heroism of women, did not fit the flashier, bolder masculine representation of heroism.

This reaches into many aspects of society. Where do we expect to find women in America? Apparently, many do not expect to find them in positions of power. On CNN's *New Day* on February 14, 2017, Chris Cuomo questioned Representative Chris Collins on the lack of significant response or reaction from the GOP after Michael Flynn resigned from his position as National Security Advisor. Representative Chris Collins responded with: "Well, it's Valentine's Day, and I guess they're having breakfast with their wives." This statement shouldn't really have

caught my interest, it was just an evasion of the question. However, the fact that Collins said wives to sum up the excuse for his whole party gave me pause. Starting from the heteronormative assumption that all the people having wives are men, Collins generalized his whole party as exclusively men.

In her article “The 115<sup>th</sup> Congress by Party, Race, Gender and Religion”, Gabrielle Levy reports that it is “the most racially diverse in history and boasts more women in the Senate than ever before.” This would seem to be a moment for celebration, but “all told, 104 women are part of the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, accounting for 19 percent of lawmakers.” Women just aren’t yet proportionately represented in Congress. Levy goes on to report that “five women are among the Republican’s 52 Senators while less than 9 % of the GOP’s House Seats- 21- are held by women.” Given this data, it is not ridiculous that Representative Collins summed up his party with its majority gender of men. It was probably unintentional. However, in a likely unintentional sneaky way, this only perpetuates the association of a member of Congress being, unless very specifically otherwise specified, a man

In the realm of scientific study, it was necessary for the National Institute of Health to implement guidelines to ensure that women are included as subjects in scientific studies. The title of the guidelines itself underscores how deep the idea of a white man as the default human being can be: “Including Women and Minorities in Clinical Research.” Describing the necessity for such guidelines, the National Institute of Health had many obvious but important things to note: “for clinical research to be truly useful, it must reflect the populations that it intends to help” and “including women in clinical research makes results stronger and more robust.” The guidelines have helped enforcement in human trials but updates have been made to address

earlier stages of research because “many preclinical research studies continue to rely heavily on male animals or omit reporting the sex of animal subjects.”

As reported on CNN in a clip on New Day, Cheryl Rios, the CEO of Go Ape Marketing, posted on her Facebook page: “Yes I run my own business and I love it and I am great at it but that is not the same as being president, that should be left to a man, a good, strong, honorable man.” Though meant to stay on her private Facebook wall, her post became viral and she was invited on CNN to discuss her views. Speaking with Nadia Bilchik, Rios said “With the hormones we have as women, there is no way we should be able to start a war.” Bilchik then asked about the various woman heads of state around the world to which Rios replied that “God created us differently.” This difference, Rios believes, fosters different ways of reacting to situations. Rios was clear that this was a personal view for her, not one she meant to impose on others outside of her family. Anchor Joe Johns, laughing in response to this clip, said “I think it’s a medical fact that men have hormones too.”

In their study on the conception and representation of the warrior hero, Privadera and Howard maintain that “in the United States, the national representative is socially constructed as masculine rather than feminine.” (31) They studied how the media discussed and represented three female soldiers, Jessica Lynch, Shoshona Johnson, and Lori Piestewa, and found that the media seemed to describe them differently than they described the male soldiers. Female soldiers do not quite fit the conception of warrior hero. The study found that the media would “highlight their marital/dating status” and “reframe soldiering behaviors and reframe them in feminine terms.” (33) The word “spunky” was used to describe the women and the authors highlighted its usage to show how the enactment of aggression required of a soldier seemed to be outside the

media's conception of the performance of being a woman. The authors noted that “neither male soldiers nor the warrior hero are “spunky”. It is a term reserved for women and children.” (34) This is perhaps because boldness is not seen as expected from children or women.



Figure 4: Ehrhart, Ehrhart. *Columbia's Easter bonnet*. 6 Apr. 1901. Cartoon. Prints and Photographs division. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University. Web. 01 Apr. 2017.

Figure 4 “shows Columbia adjusting her bonnet, which is a battleship labeled “World Power” with two guns labeled “Army” and “Navy”, it is spewing thick black smoke labeled “Expansion.” She is inserting a tiny sword as a hat pin to hold it in place.” (Erhart) The United States is represented as a woman, given the powerful instruments and symbols of war. However, because these symbols are drawn as hats and accessories on a woman who is looking into a mirror, this could easily be read as excessive or vain. The power of Columbia is shown with the

power in weapons, but also depicted indoors getting dressed. There is an air of casual attitude towards war, a lack of solemnity.



Figure 5: "Postcard: No Votes Thank You. The Appeal of Womanhood. [1912]." Ann Lewis Women's Suffrage Collection. Ann Lewis and Mike Sponder, 2015. Web. 02 Apr. 2017.

In an article for the Atlantic on anti-suffrage art, Adrienne LaFrance describes the individuals depicted in the Figure 5 with the anti-suffragist as "a classically feminine compared with a scrawny suffragette." This postcard is an excellent example of someone sharing their views on "appropriate" gender expression. The woman promoting woman's suffrage is stretched out in an inelegant pose. Brandishing a pick while yelling, this woman is shown to be violent and aggressive. This is contrasted with the calm and dignified pose of the anti-suffragist. The anti-suffragist is classically dressed and, though she has large, strong arms holding out a banner, is standing in a restrained position with close feet. The position of the artist is clear: demanding

suffrage, yelling, and protesting is ugly and an improper performance of womanhood. The silent, beautiful, calm woman is on the correct side of the debate.

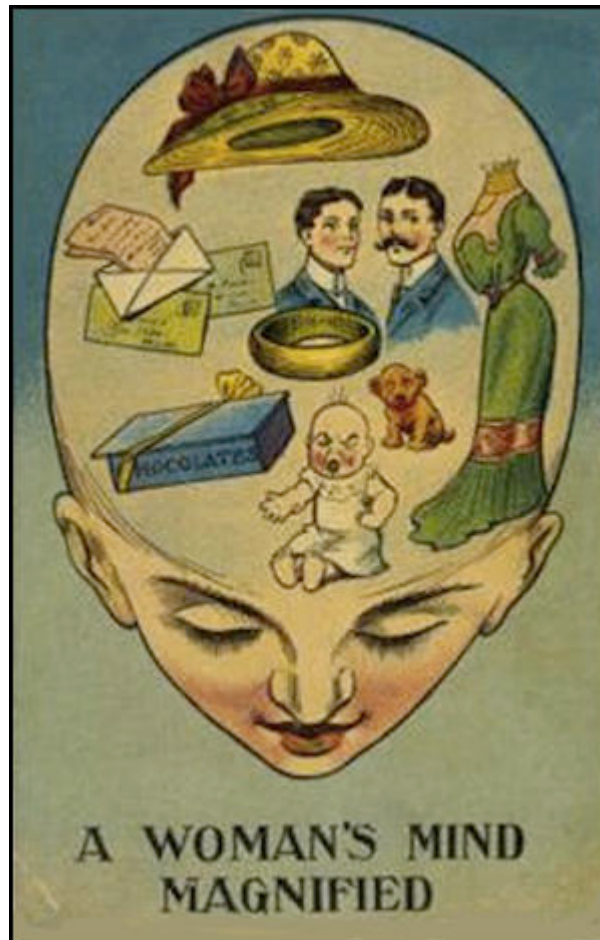


Figure 6: "A Woman's Mind Magnified." *The Suffrage Postcard Project*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Apr. 2017.

Adrienne LaFrance describes the postcard in Figure 6 as an attempt "to make the case that women were not sophisticated enough to handle civic decisions." The illustration depicts a few subjects to occupy this woman's mind: fashion (as shown by a hat and dress), correspondence (letters and envelopes), possibly relationships/marriage (two men by a ring), chocolate, babies, and dogs. These few items are large and take up most of the space within the woman's head. The remaining space is left empty, the implication being that this is all that a woman might be able to handle at any given time. The caption "A Woman's Mind Magnified" is

written like a caption of an enlarged scientific image, lending the position authority. Again, the argument is that women are not suited for political ambitions or anything beyond “womanly” matters.



Figure 7: “The Apotheosis of Suffrage.” The Library of Congress. The Library of Congress, n.d. Web. 02 Apr. 2017.

“The Apotheosis of Suffrage” features women’s suffrage activists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony on either side of George Washington. Adrienne LaFrance describes as the illustration as “meant to evoke “The Apotheosis of Washington” . . . Coffin’s sendup is intended to mock the idea of Stanton and Anthony deserving such stature.” “The Apotheosis of Washington” is a very grand painting, large and prestigious in location in the Capitol. To place Stanton and Anthony by Washington mockingly is to mark them as insufficiently important or worthy.

Describing anti-suffrage art in general, LaFrance states “one common theme was the subversion of male and female roles in society- with men often depicted holding crying babies or doing housework, and women portrayed as ultra-masculine and detached from home life.”

Arguments against women being involved in civic life tended along the same line of it being an inappropriate performance of womanhood.

Feminine and masculine are not very helpfully defined. Merriam-Webster defines “feminine” as “1. Female 2. Characteristic of or appropriate or unique to women.” “Masculine” is defined as “1. Male 2. Having qualities appropriate to or usually associated with men.” Following this trail of the male and female sex, it is still unclear because, though sex is viewed as a rather official status, something marked on a birth certificate, it is still assigned. This assignment is done at an infant’s birth, “usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy.” (GLAAD Media Reference Guide, 10) A more complete definition of sex might incorporate “a combination of bodily characteristics including: chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics.” (10) A person’s sex does not necessarily directly associate with their gender. Assigned males are not necessarily men, assigned females are not necessarily women. Gender identity is “a person’s internal, deeply held sense of their gender.” (10) This personal sense is not necessarily something an outside party can assess without asking. Gender expression is the “external manifestation of gender, expressed through a person’s name, pronouns, clothing, haircut. . . Society identifies these cues as masculine or feminine, although what is considered masculine or feminine changes over time and varies by culture.” (10)

In a thesis on the bodies and identities of women athletes, J. Alison Watts discussed the tension women athletes sometimes feel working to excel at their sport while performing womanhood. Watts found that “expressing any feminine characteristics on the court are perceived to compromise a player’s legitimacy. . . [The subjects] are assuming that

characteristics such as strength and aggression are masculine while crying and being “emotional” are feminine.” (141) Some of the subjects also expressed a desire to be sufficiently feminine at the same time. There were different gendered associations between sports: “gender appropriate sports for girls and women, such as gymnastics and figure skating, are those sports that reward athletes for characteristics perceived as feminine.” (67) Even while playing sports like soccer, basketball, or volleyball, the athletes Watts interviewed frequently mentioned their struggles with building muscle but not *too* much, and being aggressive but not *too* aggressive. Being too muscular in this case was not pushing beyond the bounds of healthy living but of straying too far out of a build “appropriate” to women. Being too aggressive did not mean that they were harming other players, but that they were being too masculine. To avoid the perception of being too “manly”, many athletes often used signifiers of femininity. “Body decoration, hairstyle, and body movement are perceived as signifiers of femininity that women athletes have more ability to manipulate in order to appear appropriately feminine.” (138)

Watts found additional tension for black woman athletes. One of the subjects in the study “suggests that the Black feminine body may incorporate more traditionally masculine traits such as strength and muscularity, compared to the generic white female.” (88) Watts had her subjects view photographs of different professional athletes and discuss their appearance and build. When viewing a photograph of Serena Williams, a top ranked professional tennis player who is also black, Watt’s subjects seemed a little divided by ethnicity: “while the Black players at Public U. assess Williams’ strength and the size of her buttocks as desirable, the white players read those signifiers as masculine, marking her as outside of appropriate femininity. Subjects sometimes remarked that highly developed muscles are not appropriate to femininity.” (92)

The study found that movement was an issue of ambivalence. Powerful, aggressive, or wide movement may be necessary in their sport. While some athletes found power in this, some were reluctant to appear too masculine. Watts described this as a “reticence to engage the space surround them,” which Watts explained “manifests itself in reluctance to reach and extend the body to meet matters of resistance and in constrained posture and general style of movement.” (139) As mentioned before, this is clearly seen in Figure 5, the postcard depicts the woman representing a ‘correct’ performance of womanhood with a “constrained posture” with feet together. The less womanly woman promoting woman’s suffrage, is running with spread apart legs. Her wide legs do not read as an athletic kind of powerful, but gangly and inappropriate.

Holding ideas on “appropriate” gender expression versus any other expression relies on the idea of normalcy. Merriam-Webster defines “normal” as “2 (a) according with, constituting or not deviating from a norm, rule, or principal (b) conforming to a type (c) occurring naturally.” This is a little different from the statistical normal of being the most commonly occurring or closest to the average. The trouble comes when people use “normal” gender performance to mean “natural”. Some gender performances might be average, but it does not follow that they are inherently natural or in any way more correct than any other.

In some ways, casting women as heroic figures has been seen as outside of the normal and natural way. It was not “normal” to have women be in political office or lead protests, and we are still pushing against the remaining boundaries left over from this history.

### CHAPTER THREE: PRECEDENT

This chapter studies various representations of heroic figures to distill them down into a list of characteristics, and determine what about the artwork makes the individuals read as heroic.



Figure 8: David, Jaques-Louis. *Oath of the Horatii*. 1784. The Louvre, Paris, France. ARTSTOR. Web. 21 July 2016.

“Oath of the Horatii” emphasizes the heroic quality of patriotism. Three brothers swear an oath of loyalty before their father, demonstrating their willingness to go to battle. The oath is the focal point of the painting. Slightly left of center, the focus of the piece is encircled by the outstretched arms of the brothers and the father. The diagonals of the men’s legs, arms, and swords lead to this point. The men in this painting are muscular, and positioned in strong, slanting diagonals. The clothes of the brother in the foreground flow slightly behind him, as if he has just taken a bold step forward. Though each brother is individualized by helmet style and

distinct faces, they function as a unit. Their matching poses create a repetition of lines and shapes with their bodies that is echoed by the three arches and three swords.

The heroism of these brothers is emphasized through the contrast with the attitudes of the women. Rosenblum and Jason describe the contrast as “an absolute rift between male and female worlds: a virile strength that leads from the home to the battlefield and a feminine passivity that remains sorrowfully within the domestic confines of mother and children.” (28) The heroism of the men is highlighted through their distinction from the feminine. The sharp lines of the masculine are set against the feminine, which are “united in slow, descending rhythms that flow in rounded patterns through flesh and drapery.” (28)

I found it difficult to settle on specific definitions of the feminine and masculine in terms of art. In a journal article titled “Gender Analogies in Architecture”, Raluca Niculae discussed the associations between styles and gender. In the western tradition “vertical elements are associated with celestial, divine, and masculine while horizontal elements are associated with the earth, the sea, and the feminine.” Additionally, “curved line has the symbolic correspondence in femininity and straight line symbolizes masculinity.” (Niculae, 481) This idea fits particularly well with the “Oath of the Horatii”: the men stand, their limbs a series of straight lines connected at sharp angles. The women sit curled over or lie down, their limbs hang without the sharpness seen in the men’s bodies.



Figure 9: Gentileschi, Artemisia. *Judith Slaying Holofernes*. 1620. National Museum of Capodimonte, Naples, Italy. ARTSTOR. Web. 21 July 2016.

This painting by Artemisia Gentileschi depicts a scene from the Bible in which Judith and her maid kill Holofernes. Emphasis is placed on the violence of the act. The flat plane of the bed meets the vertical sword and the diagonals of the arms to encircle the beheading. The arms cross each other, the body of Holofernes twists, Judith and her maid lean in diagonals. Blood spurts from the neck of Holofernes. Each of these elements create a sense of motion and struggle. Judith claims power by ending the life of another.

Judith's power is shown through strong arms and diagonals, as well as the aggressive act. Her face shows a determined expression, absent of panic or concern. Unlike the Oath of the Horatii, this image shows actual acts of violence. It is during, rather than before. Judith's power comes not from contrast to the masculinity of Holofernes, but through her actions. The

associated narrative, the biblical story of Judith beheading Holofernes, affirms her actions as noble and just.



*Figure 10: Michelangelo. David. 1501-1504. Galleria Dell'Accademia, Florence, Italy. ARTSTOR. Web. 21 July 2016.*

“David” is a larger than life-size sculpture of a male nude depicting Michelangelo’s interpretation of the Biblical figure David. His monumental size, defined muscles, and determined expression create a sense of power. Barry Vacker describes the sculpture as an “ideal representing man as a noble, conscious being, at home in the universe, and master of his own destiny.” (Vacker, 746) The physical strength and beauty of David, in combination with his size, represent him as beyond the regular human. Vacker suggests that David aligns with Aristotelian aesthetics, that this sculpture “imitates the movement to a more perfect completion and, as a consequence, strives for an ideal “better” than real.” (Vacker, 747)

Interestingly, Michelangelo shows David before facing Goliath. He holds his sling and stone and looks out. Does his heroism come from his willingness to go to battle? Or is his heroism created by what we know he will achieve?



Figure 11: “The Nine Women of Statuary Hall.” *Equal Visibility Everywhere*. EVE: *Equal Visibility Everywhere*, n.d. Web. 19 Mar. 2017.

The Statuary Hall in Washington DC displays sculptures of notable Americans. Each state provides two statues. Presently, one of Alabama’s statues is Hellen Keller. Hellen Keller is one of only nine women represented in Statuary Hall. Helen Keller is the only individual represented as a child. This is interesting because this may be more relatable to children viewing the sculptures. Normally, the vulnerability and small size of children is not used in heroic art for the heroic figures. The heroification comes mainly through the material and the honored place it is housed in. However, it also seems to ignore the later accomplishments or work of Helen Keller as an activist in support of women’s suffrage and the physically handicapped. (EVE, “The Nine Women”)



Figure 12: Levy, Rom. "Freddy Sam "I Am Because We Are" New Madiba Tribute Mural- Johannesburg, South Africa." *Streetartnews.net*. *Street Art News*, 11 Jan. 2014. Web. 01 Apr. 2017.

This 40-meter-tall mural of Nelson Mandela was designed and painted by Freddy Sam. Mandela was a civil rights activist and the first democratically elected President of South Africa. This celebration of Mandela is clearly heroized through the significant size, dominating the side of a multi-story building. The choice to represent Mandela boxing might suggest masculine power or aggression, but this is perhaps superseded by the associated narrative. The painting is based on a photograph of Mandela and "the artist chose to paint the iconic image of him boxing as he believed all were equal in the ring." (Levy) Equality and agency are important aspects to the narrative of Mandela and his work for equality in South Africa. The mural of Mandela is

enormous, looming over passerby, but it is not a position of dominance over others. His large size is a testament to his legacy. Huge art “in memory of this giant of a man.” (Levy)



Figure13: Anyangwe, Eliza. “Congo: Painting Colonial Brutality in the DRC.” CNN. Cable News Network, 03 June 2015. Web. 01 Apr 2017.

This artwork was painted by Tshibumba Kada-Matulu who was part of the Lubumbashi movement. Salimata Dio, head of programs at London’s Africa Centre stated, “these artists were not making ‘airport art’—art for foreigners or tourists to buy.” (Anyangwe) Their paintings were not paintings of light subjects with broad appeal and likely to sell. The Lubumbashi art movement tackled heavy subjects that resonated with the locals in their community: slave trade, colonialism, and the country’s efforts towards democratically elected leadership. This painting depicts Patrice Lumumba, the first elected Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo, delivering a speech in opposition of colonialism. (Anyangwe)

Georges Nzongda-Ntalaia called Lumumba’s death “the most important assassination of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.” Nzongda-Ntalaia went on to write that “the greatest legacy that Lumbumba left for Congo is the ideal of nationality.” This ideal is shown in the painting, Lumumba

dominates the composition, his head touching a sign noting the date of Independence. His posture creates strong, vertical lines. He holds a globe in one hand. The crowd looks on, smiling. Their inclusion in the composition lends Lumumba authority.



Figure14: Lopez, Belkys. "The Mirabal Sisters: Heroes, Not Victims." *thehuffingtonpost.com*, *The Huffington Post*, 25 Nov. 2015. Web. 01 Apr. 2017

In an article titled "The Mirabal Sisters: Heroes, Not Victims", Belkys Lopez said that since childhood, she regarded the sisters with the power and awe invoked by "dragon slayers" in fantasy stories. The Mirabal Sisters were a part of "the Movement of the Fourteenth of June" in opposition to Rafael Trujillo, dictator of the Dominican Republic. Patria, Minerva, and María Teresa distributed pamphlets and planned revolts. They were arrested but later released. They were murdered by a Trujillo "henchman" on a road in the mountains. He beat them to death and then pushed their car over the edge of a cliff in an attempt to make their deaths look like the result of a terrible car accident. (Reichard) The country did not believe this staged scene and pushed back against Trujillo. In fact, "many Dominicans credit the sisters with bringing down the brutal dictator who terrorized the nation for approximately 30 years." (Lopez)

Figure 16 shows one artwork honoring the sisters, three busts on a rock. The composition is interesting, having no sister look at another, but off into the distance. Their expressions are calm. The feminine signifiers are there in the hairstyles and flowers near the bottom of each bust.



Figure15: Cindy. "Professor Wangari Maathi." *Artandarchitecture-sf.com*. N.p., 22 Aug. 2012. Web. 01 Apr. 2017.

Integrated into a mural in San Francisco depicting mainly San Francisco residents, Wangari Maathi smiles brightly. Her importance is clear based on her enormous size relative to the other people and placement above them.

Maathi was part of the Greenbelt Movement, helping direct the planting of 20 million trees. The recipient of many honors, she also won the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize. (Frängsmyr)



*Figure 16: Ewing, Ed. "Che's Last Stand." The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, 31 Dec. 2008. Web. 01 Apr. 2017.*

Che Guevara was the guerilla leader in the battle at Santa Clara, Cuba that defeated General Batista during the Cuban Revolution in 1958. This sculpture of Guevara is atop a mausoleum and museum. His remains are buried beneath the complex. In an article titled "Che's Last Stand", Ed Ewing describes the approach up to the statue as a walk past "ranks of Soviet-style concrete housing." He goes on to say that "the term "cult of personality" seems to be have invented for this place. The statue of Che is visible from every approach, his chin thrust boldly forward, his military fatigues and rifle identifiable from afar. It looks slightly absurd—out of proportion with the small, dusty streets that surround it."



*Figure17: "Lincoln Statue." National Parks Service. U.S. Department of the Interior, n.d. Web. 02 Apr. 2017.*

The Lincoln Memorial is on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The National Parks Service describes the sculpture as "sitting in contemplation." They describe how the sculptor "decided that the special qualities found in the sixteenth president were his strength combined with his compassionate nature." Lincoln's hands, one relaxed and one in a fist, are described as symbolic of the duality found in him: determined and compassionate. The statue itself is much larger than life at 19 feet high.



Figure 18: Chicago, Judy. *The Dinner Party*. 1974-1979. Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY. ARTSTOR. Web. 21 July 2016.

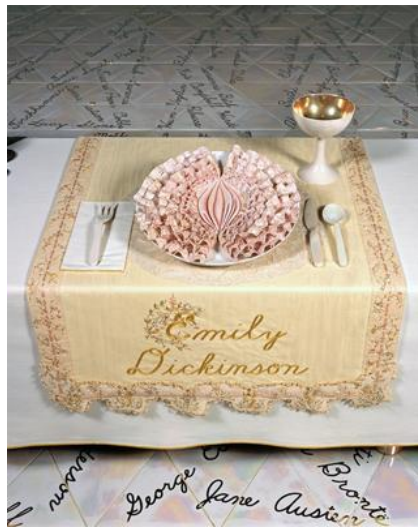


Figure 129: Chicago, Judy. *Emily Dickinson* (Detail of *The Dinner Party*). 1974-1979. Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY. ARTSTOR. Web. 21 July 2016.

Some heroic pieces, like “The Dinner Party”, break from precedent.

“The Dinner Party” creates a congregation of heroines. The large triangular structure forms a table with place settings on each side. Each of these settings is personalized in “a style

appropriate to the individual woman being honored.” (“Place Settings”) The gathering includes heroines from prehistory to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This long span of time suggests a continued tradition of power and a sense of unity. The place settings include painted plates and chalices. The piece has the air and prestige of a meeting of world leaders.

There is no reference to violence or domination over any other. There is no head of table and no secondary group to contrast with. The power comes from the repetition and unity. Their femininity is emphasized with the decoration of each plate “with a central motif based on butterfly and vulvar forms.” (“Place Settings”) Though made of china, this emphasized femininity does not necessarily mean frailty. Instead, the individualized plates seem to show both their personality and femininity as part of their personhood. The vulvar form is celebrated.



*Figure 130: Larson, Kay. "A Subtlety, Or the Marvelous Sugar Baby." Rev. of A Subtlety, Or the Marvelous Sugar Baby. Curator 57.4 (2014): 505. Web. 21 July 2016*

Like “David”, Figure 22 presents a monumental nude with a firm expression. In basically every other way, “A Subtlety” is entirely different. This piece was designed to be temporary and created for the context of the location. The work was exhibited within a Domino Sugar Factory before it was to be demolished. “A Subtlety” is complex, dealing with ruin, slavery and its legacies, racism, sexuality, myth, the passage of time, and the production of sugar. The figure is posed like the Sphinx, with large breasts and buttocks, and a visible vulva. Do the heavy topics and sexualized body disqualify her from heroism? Does the use of stereotypes make her a satire or tragic?

Her expression is too strong. She fills up the cavernous space. The allusion to the Sphinx brings associations of ruins, but also of prestige and power. Commenting on the pose, Walker says, “Although she’s bent over in this gesture of sort of supplication, I don’t feel like she’s there to be taken or satisfied or abused in any way.” (ART21, “A Subtlety”) The title refers to the historical practice of creating sugar sculptures in the likeness of royalty. Rather than being tragic, the figure seems to sit in judgment. Her symbols bring up painful subjects, but her power seems to bring her beyond these circumstances. She puts the *viewer* in the inferior position, forcing them to ask and answer the questions. Walker also affirms her strength: “She is powerful because she is kind of iconic and so monumental . . . She gains her power by upsetting expectations.” (ART21, “A Subtlety”)

## MIXED RESULTS

There are many artworks that aim for honor but encounter mixed reception. Much of the criticism seems to be a disconnect between the representation of the person or ideal, and the community’s identity and feelings towards the person or ideal.



*Figure 21: “Diana Memorial Fountain.” The Royal Parks. The Royal Parks, n.d. Web. 19 Mar. 2017.*

Figure 21 shows the “Diana Memorial Fountain”, a memorial for Princess Diana. The Royal Parks website suggests that the fountain “symbolises Diana’s quality and openness.” It is physically large, but horizontal. It lacks the vertical height that most other heroic works follow.

One of the problems seems to be that the intended interaction is unclear. The Royal Parks website states “Please feel free to sit on the edge of the Memorial and refresh your feet.” Yet, they also ask visitors not to walk on the Memorial.

In an article covering the announcement of a new memorial for Diana in progress, this fountain was described as having a “less than majestic design.” The new monument comes with heavy input from Diana’s sons who were not involved in this or other memorials. The article also quoted a royal source as saying that building a new monument is “not really a reflection on

anything that has gone before, it's just that they feel that now they are ready to do this." The fountain and another statue of her had little involvement with her sons. (Rayner, Sawyer)



Figure 22: CNN Wire Staff, and Sarah Aarthur. "Senegal Unveils Colossal Statue Amid Criticism." *CNN. Cable News Network*, 03 Apr. 2010. Web. 19 Mar. 2017.

This sculpture in Senegal is the "Monument of the African Renaissance." The pointing arms of the child and the woman, as well as the tilt of the pose and rock, all work together to create a diagonal streak. This diagonal, along with everyone gazing off into the distance, suggest that this sculpture looks into the future. Supporters of the statue said that it was a monument to the triumphant spirit of Africans.

However, many found President Abdoulaye Wade's decisions in the creation of this monument to be irresponsible. NPR's Ofeibea Quist-Arcton says "opponents argue that the colossal creation, built by North Koreans and taller than the Statue of Liberty, says more about poor governance than African Renaissance." Critics were upset not only by the \$27 million cost,

but also the style of the sculpture itself. Some described it as “aesthetically un-African”. (Quist-Arcton)



Figure 23: Rothstein, Edward. “A Mirror of Greatness, Blurred.” *The New York Times*. *The New York Times*, 25 Aug. 2011. Web. 19 Mar. 2017.

This monument on the National Mall was commissioned and designed to honor the civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr. The National Park Service’s website suggests that “the many entrances and approaches to it symbolize the openness of democracy.” The decision to not fully carve out King in the round is to reference a metaphor in one of his speeches: “With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.” A rather critical review from the New York Times described this design as “cartoonish.” (Rothstein).

Among the many carvings in the monument featuring quotes from King, one paraphrased quote was found by many to be very objectionable. The National Park Service quotes Maya Angelou as stating that it made King “look like an arrogant twit.” The carving was an abbreviated version of the original, out of context, and twisted the implied meaning to sound

more like a brag. The objections were so strong that the artist had to go back and remove the engraving.

Perhaps the strongest criticism in the New York Times article discusses how the monument seems incongruous with the ideals they felt King should embody. They felt King's direct engagement with people was not shown. Rothstein described King as absent: "he, clearly has his mind elsewhere."

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE TRIALS

### EXPERIMENT 1: Lady Liberty



Figure 24: Richardson, Christopher. "North Korea's Kim Dynasty: The Making of a Personality Cult." *The Guardian*. *Guardian News and Media*, 16 Feb. 2015. Web. 20 July 2016.

This painting is propaganda featuring Kim Il-Sung (Left) and his son, Kim Jong-Il (Right), surrounded by children. Both men used propaganda throughout their leadership to create a mythos of greatness surrounding their rule. Korean expert Sonia Ryang suggests that in this mythos Kim Il-Sung “is seen as the utmost form of existence that every North Korean is supposed to emulate (although everyone at the same time knows that it would be impossible to do so.)” (Richardson) The painting itself cultivates a sense of benevolence around Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-Il. The abundance of young children and the blooming flowers suggest a time of prosperity and peace. The adoring attitudes of the children suggest a love and trust towards their

leaders. In this painting, Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-Il both occupy the position of father or patriarch, implying a natural position of authority.

This piece is interesting because it gives off a familial air but not a domestic air. Perhaps this is due to the scene being set outdoors, presumably in public. This familial feeling seems suited to speak to the unique leadership of this dynasty. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, they occupy positions beyond political. This painting does not specifically cultivate respect for the office, but a personal relationship of love.

I am fascinated by the ideals and behavior encouraged in propaganda. They feature clear symbolism and create heroized leaders and heroized citizens to show the regular folks how they should live. I feel that propaganda can also be used to cluster people into communities. Propaganda posters can show the audience who belongs with the propaganda source and who doesn't.



*Figure 25: Kirby, Jen. "A 'Refugees Welcome' Banner Was Hanging on the Statue of Liberty Today." Nymag.com. New York Media LLC, 21 Feb. 2017. Web. 01 Apr. 2017.*

The Statue of Liberty has been the site of many protests. In the “Liberty Island Chronology”, the National Park Service noted three protests and one bomb detonation at the base of the statue. Like protestors draped a Puerto Rican flag over the face of Lady Liberty (which the National Parks Service specifically described as “an illegal demonstration”), on February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017, protestors “unfurled a banner across the pedestal of the monument just before 1p.m.” as seen in Figure 25. (Kirby) Communicating with a member of the protest group through email, Jen Kirby reports that this was done in protest of President Donald Trump’s first Executive Order on the Travel Ban regarding several middle eastern countries with a Muslim-majority.

The National Parks Service put out a report in response to multiple inquiries about a rumor that the Statue of Liberty was modelled on a black woman. The summary of the report states “the Statue’s design most certainly evolved from an earlier concept Bartholdi proposed for a colossal monument in Egypt, for which the artist used his drawings of Egyptian women as models. . . There is no evidence that Bartholdi’s “original” design was perceived by white American supporters or the United States government as representing a black woman.” The report goes on to say that our present associations of the Statue with immigration were not the original association (the report summary makes no mention of the Emma Lazarus poem “The New Colossus” on the statue) and that “official use of the statue’s image to appeal to immigrants only began in earnest with public efforts to Americanize immigrant children and the government’s advertising campaign for World War I bonds.” Many African-American community groups took part in fundraising efforts for the cost of the statue’s pedestal and “participated in public celebration during its dedication.” Yet, it can be difficult to include the history of African-Americans in the narrative of the Statue of Liberty. There was and is “fierce public debate about how African-Americans who were brought to America as slaves could or should be presented as “immigrants” and, if so, how the contributions to American society should be told.”

Playing with the imagery of Lady Liberty from the enormous sculpture “Liberty Enlightening the World”, I created my own propaganda posters promoting my own ideas of an ideal American Citizen. I use the Statue of Liberty to represent the United States of America as a whole. I created three posters, each with their own design and message: “Stay True”, “The Courage you need is already inside you”, and “Be Love”. After considering the claims discussed

in the National Parks Service report, I decided I would depict Liberty as a black woman. In one respect, the thought was, why not? More importantly, given the history of tension around black individuals and American identity, I thought it prudent to shake up the expectations (society's and mine) around who the symbols of America belong to. Based on this decision, I painted my Liberty in skin tones rather than the all-over green patina of the Statue of Liberty, in order to have this decision read more clearly.

The posters are designed for duplication to be spread out across the community. Reaching out to people while also being among the people in everyday settings strikes the sort of humble tone I would like my design of Lady Liberty to have. She is strong and inspirational, but still reaching out to the ordinary citizens.

These photos were used for reference:



*Figure 26: Cara Henry. Running. 2017. Photograph.*



*Figure 27: Cara Henry. Open arms. 2017. Photograph.*



*Figure 28: Cara Henry. Stand Firm. 2017. Photograph.*

Figures 29-31 are my own propaganda poster designs.



Figure 29: Cara Henry. *Stay True*. 2017. Acrylic paint, colored pencils and ink.



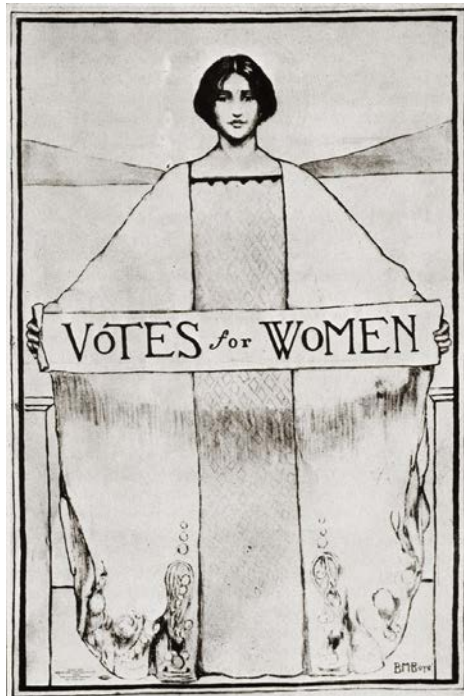
Figure 30: Cara Henry. *Be Love*. 2017. Acrylic paint, colored pencils, and ink.



Figure 31: Cara Henry. *Courage*. 2017. Acrylic paint, colored pencils, and ink.

The “Be Love, Act Now” poster design takes inspiration from the “Votes for Women” poster by B. M. Boye (Figure 32). Boye’s design features a woman holding open a banner which reads “Votes for Women”. The woman faces forward and, while direct, remains unaggressive. The “Be Love” poster is perhaps the softest of the three posters, with curves in both the orange circle behind Liberty and in the swoop of the banner she holds. The pose is open, possibly even vulnerable, but her expression is firm. This is mirrored in the words around her. “Love” could be considered a soft or vulnerable word. However, the entire message is in the imperative,

commanding viewers to “Be Love” and “Act Now” Like the Lincoln memorial, this poster shows a combination of strength and compassion



*Figure 32: Boye, B. M. Votes for Women. 1913. Lithograph. University of California. ARTSTOR. Web. 19 January 2017.*



*Figure 33: Saar, Alison. Swing Low. 2008. Harriet Tubman Memorial Plaza, Manhattan, NY. ARTSTOR Web. 21 July 2016.*

The “Courage” poster was inspired by the forward momentum in Alison Saar’s “Swing Low” sculpture of Harriet Tubman. This sculpture is a somewhat stylized representation of Tubman, which uses the trailing diagonal of the skirt to create both movement and solidity. The swinging arms show Tubman to be a heroic figure of action. The feminine signifiers of dress create curves in the work but do not paint her actions as soft.

Liberty’s pose in the “Courage” poster is very similar to Tubman’s in “Swing Low.” With the same sense of being in movement towards an act, Liberty is running through a field of grain. This field of grain is a reference to the “waves of grain” in “America the Beautiful”. This adds to Liberty’s association with American identity.



Figure 34: “Under the Wave off Kanagawa.” *The Met. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, n.d. Web. 20 Mar. 2017.*

I took inspiration from the waves in “Under the Wave off Kanagawa for the “Stay True” poster. The waves are meant to reference to the storms that toss the “tempest-tost” in Emma Lazarus’s poem “The New Colossus” which is on the base of the Statue of Liberty. The pose is meant to be strong and powerful, but not in a sense of power over the viewer. The action in the “Stay True” poster is in the waves. This is contrasted by the solid, stationary position of Liberty, pitting her against the storm. Her calm expression makes it clear that she has no intention of backing down.

## EXPERIMENT 2: Currency Portraits

Speaking of representing heroic figures in art in “Standing Soldiers Kneeling Slaves”, Kirk Savage says “in a rather literal way, preserving the memory of a hero meant preserving his image for posterity. In the comportment of his body and in the lines on his face, the traces of

moral example and achievement were thought to be readable.” (66) With this in mind, sometimes heroism can be represented simply by depicting a portrait on an honored space.

Physical money is precious. It carries literal value and the value it carries conveys power to make things happen. The images on physical currency become associated with this power. Binyamin Appelbaum states “our money is right up there with the Golden Arches as an instantly recognizable emblem of America. . . Countries historically have used their currency to make sure everyone knows who’s in charge.” (Schuessler et al) Additionally, the designs on currency come to represent the nation itself. The images on the money hold pieces of the identity of the country, the sort of things they wish to be associated with their economic power.

Design decisions for the United States currency are made by the Secretary of Treasury. The “Resource Center” page on the website for the Department of the Treasury notes that “unfortunately, however, our records do not suggest why certain Presidents and statesmen were chosen for specific denominations.” One of the clearest guidelines for currency design is the law which “prohibits portraits of living persons from appearing on Government securities.” The Treasury department states “Therefore, the portraits on our currency notes are of deceased persons whose places in history the American people know well.” It is not clear how well-known a figure ought to be for the American people to know them well.

The U.S. Treasury has listed plans to modify the designs on the \$5, \$10, and \$20 on their website. Presently, there are no women featured on any of the circulating paper currency. The plans for change involve putting Harriet Tubman’s portrait on the face of the \$20 bill and Andrew Jackson will be moved to the reverse. The reverse of the \$5 bill will depict events that occurred at the Lincoln Memorial with images of Eleanor Roosevelt, Marian Anderson, and

Martin Luther King Jr. The reverse of the \$10 bill will include images of Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth, and Alice Paul. These are positive changes in representation from a long-standing tradition of only white men on the paper currency. I welcome these changes, but I do not find them sufficient.



*Figure 35: BBC Radio 4. "Episode 95- Suffragette-defaced Penny." BBC News. BBC, n.d. Web. 31 Mar.*

BBC 4 Radio had a series on objects from history and the penny in Figure 31 was featured in their 95<sup>th</sup> episode. The program describes it as “a deft act of civil disobedience, and brilliantly inventive piece of low-budget popular propaganda.” A guest on the program, Felicity Powell, states “the idea is incredibly clever because it uses the potential that coinage has- a bit like the internet today- to be incredibly widely circulated.” The value of the penny was also too low to be worth a recall. The program quotes Prime Minister Gladstone’s opposition to a women’s suffrage bill: “I have no fear lest the woman should encroach upon the power of the man. The fear I have is, lest we should invite her unwittingly to trespass against the delicacy, the

purity, the refinement, the elevation of her own nature, which are the present sources of its power.”

The message being placed money is, as the program stated, a clever use of a circulated object passed among people. Images and messages on money become part of everyday life.



Figure 36: Poppick, Susie. “Women on Money: 10 Countries That Did It Before the United States.” *Time*. Time, 17 June 2015. Web. 02 Apr. 2017.

It is not a novel concept to put women on paper currency, at least 10 countries already have one or more women on their currency. Pictured in Figure 36 is Queen Zenobia, “known for fighting back against Roman colonizers in the second century AD, appears on the 500-pound note” on Syrian currency. (Poppick)

In portraits, creating a likeness can be very important, but so is the delivery or tweaking of reality. On painting a portrait of President George W. Bush, Robert Anderson admitted difficulty in depicting the mouth: “There would be too much upper lip, or too much of a smirk- I was aware of the public consciousness of his smirking.” (Grant 62) In creating portraits, it is

important to consider that any small adjustment in expression changes the feeling. The goal is dignity and power, not pompousness.

Discussing the poses and attitudes of representing presidents, Simmie Knox said: “I would never have public figures looking down. They should be looking directly at the viewer, as though making eye contact, because people want to see their eyes. . . A shirt and tie is a way of showing respect for the viewer and for the office he holds.” (Grant, 62)

The similarity in some portraiture or preference in style can sometimes be due to a concern of what other art a portrait might be neighbors with. Beverly McNeil stated that “A lot of times, the subjects want a painting that looks like another painting done 25 years before. The new painting is going to hang in the same room or hall as another one.” (Grant, 64) It is with this idea of consistency in mind that I chose to draw my currency portraits in the style of *Wall Street Journal* hedcuts. Their similarity to the engraving style found on U.S. currency creates an approximation of what these heroines might look like on paper money. This makes it easier to imagine and visualize and, therefore, an easier idea to execute.

I developed seven new currency portraits featuring women. It is difficult to narrow down who would be worthy of such an honorable location on our money, as it necessarily excludes others. I found the decision-making process much less stressful when I remembered that Andrew Jackson is part of the present lineup and will remain on the currency even after the proposed updates. I do not find Andrew Jackson suited to our currency and, as Binyamin Appelbaum said, “he was also a bad president.” (Schuessler et al) After considering this, I felt considerably less pressure to strive for complete perfection.

Table 1 shows the present lineup of portraits on the U.S. currency alongside my proposed lineup.

*Table 1: Currency portraits and their denominations*

Denomination	Present Portrait	Proposed Portrait
\$1	George Washington	Fannie Lou Hamer
\$2	Thomas Jefferson	Susan B. Anthony
\$5	Abraham Lincoln	Belva Lockwood
\$10	Alexander Hamilton	Dr. Helen Rodriguez-Trias
\$20	Andrew Jackson	Harriet Tubman
\$50	Ulysses S. Grant	Patsy Mink
\$100	Benjamin Franklin	Sacagawea and Jean Baptiste



*Figure 37: "Fannie Lou Hamer: Woman of Courage." Library System – Howard University. Howard University, n.d. Web. 16 Mar. 2017.*

Fannie Lou Hamer was a civil rights activist. While working to help black individuals register to vote, she was targeted by the KKK, arrested by the police, and beaten by prisoners under direction of the police. This did not stop her from continuing to work for justice. In 1964, Hamer ran for Congress. Though unsuccessful, she continued work as a political activist. ("Fannie Lou Hamer: Woman of Courage.")



*Figure 38: "Susan B. Anthony." National Parks Service. U.S. Department of the Interior, n.d. Web. 16 Mar. 2017.*

Susan B. Anthony was an anti-slavery activist and an activist for women's suffrage. She and her three sisters voted in the 1872 Presidential Election as an act of protest. They were arrested, fined, and then later released. ("Susan B. Anthony")



Figure 39: Norgren, Jill. "Belva Lockwood: Blazing the Trail for Women in Law." *National Archives and Records Administration*. National Archives and Records Administration, 2005. Web. 16 Mar. 2017.

Belva Lockwood was the first woman admitted to the Supreme Court bar and the first woman to argue before the Supreme Court in *Kaiser v. Stickney*. Lockwood was also the first woman to run a campaign for president and the first to appear on ballots. (Norgren, 1) While accomplished in fields dominated by men, she had to be careful: "as a woman, Lockwood always had to think about her image and used gentle forms of humor to soften the public's view of her to win favor." (Norgren, 2)



*Figure 14: “Dr. Helen Rodriguez-Trias” U.S. National Library of Medicine. National Institutes of Health, 03 June 2015. Web. 16 Mar. 2017.*

Dr. Helen Rodriguez-Trias was a founding member of the Women’s Caucus of the American Public Health Association and a founding member of the Committee to End Sterilization Abuse. She was awarded the Presidential Citizen’s Medal for her work on behalf of women, children, people with HIV and AIDS, and the poor. (“Dr. Helen Rodriguez-Trias”)



*Figure 41: Errick, Jennifer. "Follow in the Footsteps of an American Hero at Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument in Maryland." National Parks Conservation Association. National Parks Conservation Association, 8 Aug. 2013. Web. 16 Mar. 2017.*

Harriet Tubman escaped from slave holders, later returning to rescue family members. During the Civil War, Tubman was a Union nurse, scout, and spy. She helped "conduct an assault on Confederate plantations in 1863," which was highly successful. (Errick)



*Figure 42: "MINK, Patsy Takemoto." US House of Representatives: History, Art & Archives. U.S. House of Representatives, n.d. Web. 16 Mar. 2017.*

Patsy Mink was the first woman of color elected to Congress. She advocated for the Women's Education Equity Act and was a principal author for Title IX legislation. Mink stated "because there were only eight women at the time who were Members of Congress, that I had a

special burden to bear to speak for [all women], because they didn't have people who could express their concerns for them adequately. So, I always felt that we were serving a dual role in Congress, representing our own districts and, at the same time, having to voice the concerns of the total population of women in the country.” (“MINK, Patsy Takemoto”)



*Figure 43: Goodacre, Glenna. “Sacagawea and Jean Baptiste.” Glennagoodacre.com. Glenna Goodacre, n.d. Web. 16 Mar. 2017.*

Sacagawea was part of the Lewis and Clark expedition working as an interpreter. The photograph above is of the sculpture “Sacagawea and Jean Baptiste” by Glenna Goodacre. Goodacre used the same model for this sculpture as she did for her Sacagawea design on the gold dollar coin. Goodacre describes this pose as “reflective.”

Each of the following currency portraits were created by using dots and dashes of ink following the contours of faces of each individual as seen in their photograph.



*Figure 44: Cara Henry. Fannie Lou Hamer Currency Portrait. 2017. Ink pen.*



*Figure 45: Cara Henry. Susan B. Anthony Currency Portrait. 2017. Ink pen.*



*Figure 46: Cara Henry. Belva Lockwood Currency Portrait. 2017. Ink pen.*



*Figure 47: Cara Henry. Dr. Helen Rodriguez Trias Currency Portrait. 2017. Ink pen.*



*Figure 48: Cara Henry. Harriet Tubman Currency Portrait. 2017. Ink pen.*



*Figure 49: Cara Henry. Patsy Mink Currency Portrait. 2017. Ink pen.*



*Figure 50: Cara Henry. Sacagawea and Jean Baptiste Currency Portrait. 2017. Ink pen.*

### EXPERIMENT 3: Installation Proposals

Large outdoor installations become part of the history of an area and a community. They become meeting places and markers of locations. Sculptures and monuments can be controversial, particularly while being funded or constructed, but over time they tend to normalize. Creating a public work dedicated to a person or group marks those people as worthy of remembering and worthy of the great effort and expense of maintaining a work. It is a process that honors. However, with time, these pieces become normal and every day. People drive by them on their way to work. Somehow, by being marked as special, they also become regular and integrated into the landscape of the community. Harriet Senie described the present incongruence of women and heroic art by stating: “We are not used to seeing physical female figures commemorated in public memorials. I think until it becomes as familiar to honor women as it is to honor men, the numbers will continue.” (Shane)

I would like to apply this process to women. I want them to be honored and celebrated through public monument and installation, and then normalized. Through this process, it is my hope that the idea of a woman being a noteworthy and important historical figure becomes almost boring. I want it to be expected.

#### IDA B. WELLS

Ida B. Wells was a teacher, journalist, anti-lynching activist, civil rights activist, and activist for women’s suffrage. While on board the Ladies’ car of a train (in a seat she had paid for), she was asked to leave and move to the smoking car with other black passengers. She physically resisted this attempt at removal, even biting the hand of one of the men who dragged

her away. She sued the railroad company for this incident. Wells marched in the 1913 march for universal suffrage. She was the first black woman to run for public office in the U.S. when she campaigned for Illinois State legislature. (Baker)



Figure 51: Park, Seungmo. “자동등록방지를 위해 보안절차를 거치고 있습니다.” Seungmopark.com. Seungmo Park, n.d. Web. 20 Mar. 2017. (HAN HYE YEON)

My piece on Ida B. Wells is inspired by Seungmo Park’s “Han Hye Yeon” wire sculpture and the Google Doodle with Ida typing at her typewriter. “Han Hye Yeon” is interesting because it bends such a strong, harsh material into complex and gentle folds.



Figure 52: Cavna, Michael. "Here's Why Google Doodle Salutes Fearless, Peerless Word-warrior Ida B. Wells." *The Washington Post*. WP Company, 16 July 2015. Web. 20 Mar. 2017.



Figure 53: Cara Henry. *Ida and Truth*. 2017. Markers and ink.

My proposal is to build a large installation of Ida at a typewriter, surrounded by her words. This pose is heavily inspired by the Google Doodle which celebrated Ida B. Wells. I have chosen one of her quotes: “The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them.” (Cavna) Each of the forms would be sculpted, cast, and then the cast wrapped in wire. The words that fold around her would illuminate one letter at a time. As each letter lights up, the corresponding key on her typewriter would also light up. This would create a sense of Ida writing.

## AMELIA EARHART



*Figure 54: Kimsooja. "Lotus: Zone of Zero." Kimsooja.com. Kimsooja, n.d. Web. 19 Mar. 2017.*

My piece on Amelia Earhart takes inspiration from Kimsooja's "Lotus: Zone of Zero" pieces. The lamps form both concentric rings and lines towards the center. This creates a sense of focused energy and attention.



Figure 55: “Amelia Earhart.” National Air and Space Museum. Smithsonian, n.d. Web. 20 Mar. 2017.

Amelia Earhart was an early record-breaking pilot. A few of her accomplishments are mentioned in Table 2.

A sculpture based on the photograph in Figure 54 of Amelia Earhart will be sculpted and then cast. This is similar to Seungmo Park’s “Han Hye Yeon” piece (Figure 50), but this cast will then be wrapped in wire cables. The sculpture of Amelia will be attached to a small round pedestal which will also be wrapped in wire cables. A wire form will be attached to this pedestal and will curve in a line once around her and then point off in the direction she is looking. At the end of this line, a small plane form will be attached. All of this will be wrapped in wire cables. Five concentric wire cable circles will go around Amelia.

Each of these circles represents one of Amelia’s record-breaking flights. Upon each circle, white paint markings will be made over time. This process provides interaction with the

piece and allows it to change over time. Each marking represents approximately 100 miles. The rope around her pedestal represents her attempt to fly around the world. The circle is incomplete to represent the uncertain end to her final attempt.



*Figure 56: Cara Henry. Amelia's Flights Proposal. 2017. Markers and ink.*

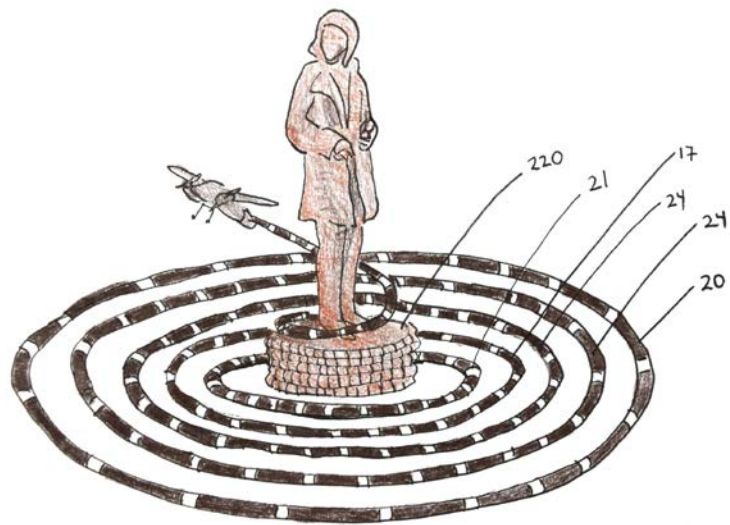


Figure 57: Cara Henry. *Amelia's Flight Miles Diagram*. 2017. Ink and colored pencil.

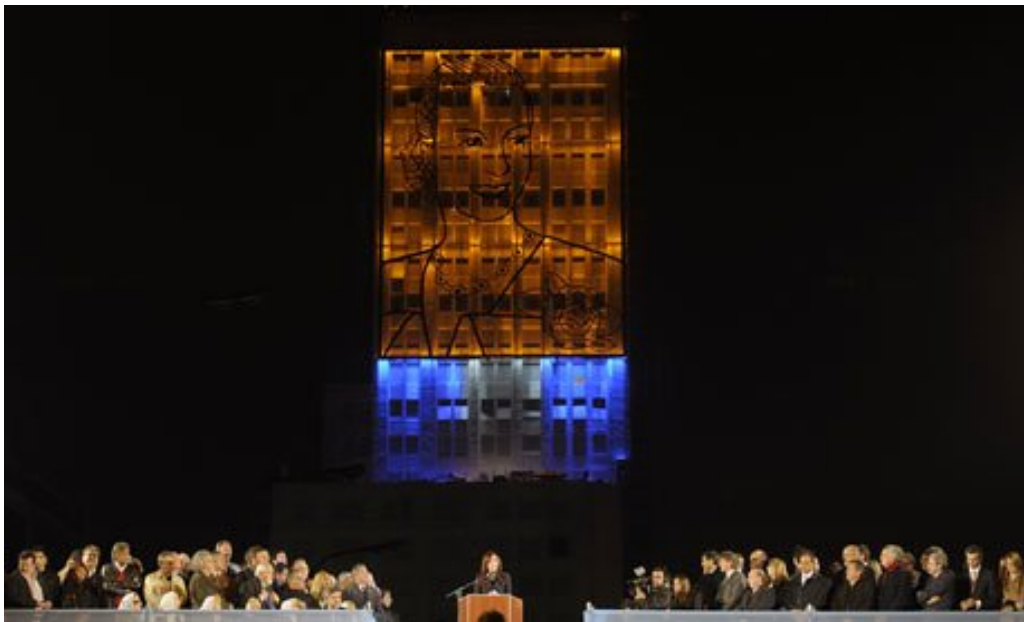
Figure 57 indicates the number of markings on each circle.

Table 2 lists the flights referenced in each circle on the installation.

*Table 2: Some record flights by Amelia Earhart*

Date	Flight	Distance
1932	1 <sup>st</sup> Solo Woman Flight across Atlantic	2,026 miles
1932	1 <sup>st</sup> Woman Solo Flight U.S. Coast to Coast	2,447.8 miles
1933	1 <sup>st</sup> Solo Flight Honolulu to Oakland	2,408 miles
1935	1 <sup>st</sup> Solo Flight L.A. to Mexico City	1,700 miles
1935	1 <sup>st</sup> Solo Flight Mexico City to Newark	2,100 miles
1937	Attempted Flight Around the World	22,000+ miles

## GRACE HOPPER



*Figure 58: Associated Press. "Giant Portrait of Eva Perón Unveiled in Argentina Ministry." The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, 27 July 2011. Web. 19 Mar. 2017.*

A large-scale portrait of Eva Perón (Figure 57) was hung on the outside of the Argentinian ministry where she “announced on 22 August 1951 that she was stepping down from

the candidacy for Vice-President.” (“Giant Portrait of Eva Perón”) This sculpture inspired the format and media of my proposal representing Grace Hopper.



*Figure 59: “Grace Murray Hopper (1906-1992): A Legacy of Innovation and Service.” Yale News. Yale, 10 Feb. 2017. Web. 20 Mar. 2017.*

Grace Hopper was a pioneer in early computers. She helped the Navy develop Mark II and Mark III computers. Hopper was awarded the National Medal of Technology in 1991. She was also posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian honor. (“Grace Murray Hopper”)

She sometimes explained the concept of nanoseconds using 11.8 inches of wire. These wires demonstrated the distance that an electrical signal can travel in one nanosecond.

(“Nanoseconds”)

My portrait of Grace Hopper consists of thick aluminum shapes for the lines with lights cut at “nanosecond” lengths attached, all affixed to thick metal mesh. This would be hung on the side of a building. This takes obvious inspiration from the portrait of Eva Perón in Argentina.

The supports and lights would be visible as a portrait in the daytime and in the nighttime the structure would light up segment by segment on a cycle to reveal her face. I have drawn her accompanied by a moth in honor of her famous instance of “debugging” a computer by removing a moth that was causing the computer problems. (“Grace Murray Hopper”



*Figure 60: Cara Henry. Grace and the Bug Proposal (Daytime). 2017. Markers and ink.*

## CHAPTER FIVE: TEMPLATE

The following template is meant to give initial guidelines for future artwork featuring heroines.

### TEMPLATE

1. To build art that represents a heroine, you must first select a person. It will be easier to argue heroism if that individual fits any of the prototypical features found in research: “bravery, moral integrity, courageous, protecting, conviction, honest, altruistic, self-sacrificing, determined, saves, inspiring, and helpful.” (Kinsella, Ritchie, Igou 124)
2. Your heroine should fit their place. The heroine should have some relation to the physical space the art occupies or be tied to the place through some attribute of their narrative. The art should create a sense of belonging in this place.
3. The materials should be carefully considered. The media should generally be durable and lasting to show the longevity of their legacy. The media is often more expensive or prestigious to demonstrate the importance of the individual or to show how the artist or communities wishes to honor the individual. Cheaper or less durable materials may be used, but should be part of the conceptual design and message (such as the intentional temporary nature of “A Subtlety” by Kara Walker).
4. There is no need to exaggerate the physical strength of the individual unless that is part of the design language. The strength of the individual can be shown through their pose (a stately regal pose, a pose with the individual in action, a face showing mental strength). Sometimes the power is shown in strong movement. Sometimes the power is shown in

larger than life size. Sometimes the power is shown in symbols of power. This power needs to demonstrate agency.

5. The art piece should be triumphant in some sense. They should be represented as in control of their action, whichever action is depicted. A person leaping could be heroic, but a person falling would not necessarily be read as heroic. If their narrative includes setbacks, it would be more difficult to depict the setback and still have the piece read as heroic. If a setback or failure should be included, it should be included in the context of a larger narrative.
6. Relative size can be very important. Individuals can be celebrated with artistic representation in special places, but this most clearly reads as a mark of importance. To read clearly as heroic, consider enlarging the heroine relative to life-size or other figures. Rather than enlargement, sometimes heroic figures are placed higher than others or higher than eye-level. This is similar to size in that it creates a feeling of the heroic figure being taller. Vertical height seems to be more easily read as heroic than greater horizontal width.
7. The individual should be represented with dignity. Heroic art somehow transcends the messy, out of control life that normal people have. This dignity is sometimes shown through a calm, thoughtful expression. Sometimes dignity is shown in the individual facing danger.

There is no need to emphasize masculine or feminine traits of the heroines to have the artwork read as heroic. The Amelia Earhart proposal did not have signifiers that

indicated a particular performance of any gender. This did not aid or detract from her heroism. Feminine signifiers of long, loose hair did not negatively impact the heroism of Liberty in the propaganda posters.

References to the precedent of art depicting heroic figures is beneficial to learn from or have your piece be in a dialogue with. However, as the precedent was built on mainly masculine conceptions of heroism, the tradition may not always be suitable for your heroine. Feel free to do something wildly different and start building a new precedent, mindful of the context the artwork will sit in relation to.

## CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS



*Figure 61: Silber, Judy. "How a Buddhist Shrine Transformed a Neighborhood in Oakland." PRI. Public Radio International, 19 Nov. 2014. Web. 20 Mar. 2017.*

In the face of pain and complexity, it can be difficult to make any effort. However, I believe that real, lasting change is possible. In an Oakland neighborhood, Dan Stevenson was consistently frustrated with this garbage pile that built up on his street. There was this empty space that people would dump unwanted items in. No matter how many times Stevenson called for the pile to be picked up, the cycle would continue. He finally decided to try to change the feeling of the space. He placed a small statue of Buddha that his wife had purchased at a hardware store into that space. He took an honored, spiritual figure and changed the feeling of the space. It became special. People stopped dumping their trash. Then, some members of the Vietnamese community took to caring for the Buddha statue. A structure was built around it, the Buddha was painted, and the place became a spot for reverence and worship. This was, perhaps, an unintentional collective art installation, but it remains an installation nonetheless.



Figure 62: Suzee in the City. "Women in Graffiti: A Tribute to the Women of Egypt." *Suzeeinthecity.com*. N.p., 7 Jan. 2013. Web. 31 Mar. 2017.

In Egypt, the Arab Spring of 2011 and the aftermath saw artists and protestors voice their opinions in graffiti around Cairo. Hend Kheera's work pictured in Figure 65 is part of an anti-sexual harassment campaign. Translated to English it says "Warning! Don't touch of castration awaits you!" Suzee of *Suzee In the City* describes Kheera's work as having "a tough, extreme and honest quality to it, and there's nothing stereotypically feminine about her aesthetics. . . The stencil was shocking and provocative, compelling some bystanders to even berate Hend for making it, a surefire sign that her message was powerful and effective."

Other graffiti focused on the abuses from the military or celebrated protestors. Bahia Shehab created a project called "A Thousand Nos" featuring different depictions of no's in Arabic script from art throughout history. The project was for a gallery installation but she later created stencils of some of her "no"s for protest graffiti. In a TED Talk on her work, "Bahia

Shehab: A Thousand Nos”, Shehab described one piece as “No to blinding heroes.” It was in response to Ahmed Harara losing both eyes to shots from snipers on two separate occasions.



Figure 63: Hoey, Dennis. “High School Students Give Rosie the Riveter New Look and New Message.” *Press Herald*. Portland Press Herald. 28 Mar. 2017. Web. 31 Mar. 2017.

Fashion marketing high school students in Portland, Maine have “used an iconic World War II recruiting image as inspiration for a T-shirt they designed featuring a modern-day woman wearing a hijab instead of a bandana.” This reimagined Rosie the Riveter was designed “in an effort to make immigrant students and others feel safe.” This project has been led by Zahra Aburkar and Taylor Rickett. (Hoey)

Art has the power to change spaces and communities. It is possible to create meaningful change with art and challenge the present situation.

This change is very necessary. The World Economic Forum conducted a study across 144 countries to determine the gender gap across multiple areas. They ranked Iceland in first place for being the closest to gender parity. (Global Gender Gap Report, 194) The United States is ranked 45<sup>th</sup>. (356) In government positions like women in parliament, Iceland scored a 0.703 out of 1.00, with 1.00 being total gender parity. (195) On this same measure, the United States

scored a 0.24. (357) This deficiency in representative leadership in higher levels of government of the United States is unacceptable and, as perhaps the Ad Council and John Cena might say, unpatriotic.

Discussing the Mirabal sisters in an article, Belkys Lopez underscored the importance of how the narrative around women is framed. She noted that “women and girls make up 70% of human trafficking victims, 35% of women globally have experienced physical or sexual abuse.” It is vital that these crimes and statistics are addressed but “viewing women only through the lens of victimization means that we risk losing sight of the diversity of their experiences, identities and the many ways in which they act on their worlds. . . We must recognize their agency in order to overcome the inequities they face.” This agency can clearly be shown through the celebration of heroines. Agency is clearly emphasized in depictions of heroic figures. Lopez continues, “We don’t hear enough about women leading rebellions or as the vanguard of political transformation. Too often, we’re portrayed as victims of history. We don’t do things but instead things are done to us.”

Margaret Kilgallen said when describing her depictions of women “I often feel like so much emphasis is put on how beautiful you are and how thin you are, and not a lot of emphasis is put on what you can do and how smart you are. I would like to change the emphasis of what is important when looking at a woman. (ART21, “Margaret Kilgallen”)

The art history future heroic works will build upon does have baggage: “civic monuments in the nineteenth century could only use the language of female allegory to represent the ideals of the state, not the actual women whose work and sacrifices supported it.” (Shannon,1-2)

“By making room for the heroine within the category of heroic beings, we necessarily change our view of that category.” (Lyons 171) By creating and supporting more representation of women in honored spaces and in heroized ways, the conception of the American heroic figure will change.

In the second experiment of their study on the social construction of heroism, Rankin and Eagly had participants read a story of a protagonist rescuing a young boy from icy water. There were multiple variations of the story, with the protagonist being either male or female, the risk being high or low, and the benefit being smaller or greater. They found that “the inclusion of a female protagonist influenced participants to perceive women as relatively more likely to perform similar rescues. . . . This finding suggests that the observation of heroic women can change the perception of women in general.” (Rankin, Eagly, 421)

The “Global Gender Gap Report” from the World Economic Forum made it clear that moving towards gender parity should be a high priority for everyone: “there is a fundamental moral case for empowering women: women represent one half the global population and it is self-evident that they must have equal access to health, education, earning power, and political representation.” (v) By empowering women, we can more fully utilize the talents and skills half the planet has to offer.

The women I chose to represent in this project are all (presumably) cisgender women. Research into the heroic representation of transgender women must be conducted to have a fuller picture of women as heroic figures. Research into heroic representation of all transgender individuals is necessary for a better understanding of constructing heroic art, but it is also vitally important for the potential social change it might cause. “Injustice at Every Turn”, a report on

transgender discrimination, found that 61% of transgender and non-binary respondents “reported harassment, assault, or expulsion because they were transgender or gender non-conforming at school.” (35) Transgender individuals can face a lot of misunderstanding, discrimination, or violence, largely because of fear and confusion on the part of people who have strict rules for gender expression in relation to one’s assigned sex. Inclusion and representation of transgender individuals in heroic art could create meaningful and positive change across the United States. Transgender individuals could become more explicitly part of the nation’s understanding of who America is.

At the time of this writing, multiple legislative debates and national discussions are being held regarding nondiscrimination policies on transgender individuals in public spaces. In North Carolina, House Bill 2 “directs all public schools, government agencies and public college campuses to require that multiple-occupancy bathrooms and changing facilities, such as locker rooms, be designated for use only by people based on their "biological sex" stated on their birth certificate. Transgender people can use the bathrooms and changing facilities that correspond to their gender identity only if they get the biological sex on their birth certificate changed.” (Tan) This law was implemented in 2016 and was just repealed very recently at the time of this writing on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017, with a new ban on local governments passing non-discrimination ordinances for three years. (Tracy) Beyond the consequences for transgender individuals and the economic consequences of individuals and companies boycotting in protest of legislation of any kind related to discrimination based on gender expression, these arguments affect everyone. If anti-discrimination laws are put in place protecting transgender rights and gender expression in public places, the variations in gender performance will continue to strain at the old “rules” of

performance until we can no longer call them “normal”. Masculinity and femininity will have to be redefined. Discriminatory legislation on gender expression enforces particular kinds of performance of self. Future laws might be even more strict and specific in regulating gender expression and performance. It is possible that future legislation could make a few performances of gender expression compulsory and ban all others. In any case, the American ideas of femininity and masculinity and the performance of gender—already a diverse grouping—will be strained and tested as we move forward. The ideas that we have now, may not last.

In my choices of heroines, I tried to include a variety of ethnicities and experiences. I feel that this effort was limited and further research must branch out more. What are the differences in gender expression across different ethnicities, different cultures, and different regions? Future research might focus on non-heterosexual heroines and the complexities of navigating gender performance. Other research might focus on heroes and men with more feminine performance and the tension between wanting to perform themselves and society often viewing femininity as a weaker position.

I did not go into detail on the disabilities of Helen Keller or Harriet Tubman. Future research might focus on how to best represent heroic figures of individuals with physical disabilities well, given that much of the precedent of heroic art emphasizes physical strength as a visual cue for the power of that individual. Really disability of any kind would push against the old boundaries of heroism, questioning the assumption of weakness often cast upon those with disabilities.

Research must also be done on the dress and poses of woman heroic figures in regard to their relative sensuality. A sense of virility in heroes seemed to be acceptable. Virility in men

seemed to read as power. The sensuality of women seems to have more boundaries of “appropriateness”. More research must be done into changes in reception of heroines by modifying hair, clothing, or poses. All the heroines I chose to research happened to be relatively conservatively dressed because of the style of their time or particularly in the photographs I used.

In this thesis, I have only chosen a few historical figures and only attempted a few methods of representation. There is a whole world of media, styles, and conceptions to explore. It is very possible that less traditional methods of heroic representation are more suited to representing heroines. I look forward to seeing what other artists and communities will create.

In his artist statement for his outdoor installation piece “Looking Up”, Tom Friedman wrote “Art, for me, is a context to slow the viewer’s experience from their everyday life in order to think about things they haven’t thought about. Or to think in a new way.” (‘Look Up’, 9) I hope that with this thesis I have begun to do just that: make myself and everyone else think of the potential of heroines and the people in this world a little differently.

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