



The Cultural Functions and Social Potential of Queer Monuments: A Preliminary Inventory and Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Public monuments function as cultural agents, reifying dominant public narratives or fostering change. Either way, their representation of people and events intervene in public discourse and contribute to cultural, economic, political, and social environments. Queer monuments, defined here as heritage sites that honor gender and sexual minorities, represent communities that have often been excised in dominant public narratives. This article provides a preliminary global inventory of queer monuments and describes three of their major functions: (1) to provide visibility and reduce stigma; (2) to educate the public on the abuse and attempted extermination of gender and sexual minorities; and (3) to stimulate public debate and discourse about gender and sexual minority rights. This still rare type of monument is growing more common and prompting more active and equitable representations in public space. Queer monuments have the potential of lessening stigma and improving the lives of sexual and gender minorities.

KEYWORDS

Art activism; gender and sexual minority rights; heritage studies; history; memory; public space; queer monuments; visibility

The public monument is traditionally defined as a human creation erected for the specific purpose of keeping people, deeds, or events (or a combination thereof) alive in the minds of future generations (Riegl, 1982). According to historian Pierre Nora's influential theory *lieux de mémoire*, or *sites of memory*, public monuments may also be understood as permanent, famous heritage sites located within stable, physical contexts that function as signifiers and sources of collective memory. The majority of public monuments hold a static cultural meaning, which Nora has argued centralizes collective memory, undermines the complexities of history, and shortchanges their potential to shift surrounding environments (Nora, 1989). However, whereas in the past public monuments often cemented the power, privileges, and discourses of dominant groups, public monuments today increasingly challenge, interrupt, disrupt, or reform such heritage regimes by honoring minority groups (Dunn, 2016; Jordanova, 2000). As historians such as Iain Robertson have recently outlined, these novel public monuments and their material presence are powerful tools for minority communities, histories, peoples,

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and places, which were forgotten or—sometimes even worse—remembered in negative and oppressive ways (Robertson, 2016).

In this article, we analyze one type of these novel public monuments: *queer monuments*. We define a queer monument as a heritage site that is officially dedicated to gender and sexual minorities, including trans, lesbian, bisexual, gay, queer, intersex, asexual, and two-spirit communities, among others. Karin Daan's *Homomonument* is a prominent example of such a monument, one that promises inclusivity and change. It consists of three large-scale pink granite triangles that were erected in the center of Amsterdam in 1987, and for 30 years has been the location for annual celebrations and advocacy events that shift public memory, attention, and interest to the gender and sexual minorities routinely rendered invisible under heritage regimes across the globe. Queer monuments alike move beyond the normative function of grounded, static representation, which has been characterized as a vehicle for memory and veneration, to challenge cultural norms and make legible the political motives and negotiations underlying their creations. Rhetorically speaking, the functions of queer monuments no longer simply inhere within their material components but, instead, cohere with the development, activation, and reception of the monuments within their shifting cultural, economic, political, and social environments. While several scholars have more broadly reviewed such releases of heritage from its normative understandings (Tolia-Kelly, Waterton, & Watson, 2017), we here analyze how this innovation queerly manifests through monuments.

A survey of individual monuments, paying careful attention to their visual elements, and a review of all available sources of information about queer monuments lie behind our preliminary global inventory and overview of queer monuments (see Table 1). We reviewed individual monument Web pages, read digital and print newspaper articles, and visited many of the monuments firsthand. We interviewed community members and monument stakeholders at individual sites and events. We have identified a total of 46 queer monuments around the world, three of which are underway. They span continents from Australia, Europe, the Middle East, North America, and South America. They exist despite ongoing oppression, distortion of the historical record, and the erroneous, rigorous counter-narratives created out of prejudice and extremism. For example, these monuments may be prohibited by legislation in many nations, such as by the Russian Federal Law Article 6.21 – Promotion of Non-Traditional Sexual Relations Among Minors or the Algerian Penal Code Article 333 (Carroll & Itaborahy, 2015). Existing queer monuments frame their subjects differently in cultural contexts, and those they honor range from gender and sexual minorities at large to those persecuted in Nazi Germany specifically, from local queer communities to national queer communities, from trans communities to specific victims of hate crimes. Individual donors, gender and sexual minority organizations, cities, churches, museums, nations, and universities are among the diverse funders of these projects.

Table 1. Global inventory of queer monuments. Note: Δ denotes the monument consists of a pink triangle; the funding bodies may contain additional contributors.

Inauguration	Country (city)	Queer monument (site)	Artist	Funding body
1984	U.S. (Stanford, Madison, NYC)	<i>Gay Liberation Monument</i>	George Segal	Mildred Andrews Fund, New Harvest Foundation
1984 Δ	Austria (Mauthausen)	Plaque (concentration camp)	Not recorded	HOSI Vienna
1985 Δ	Germany (Dachau)	Plaque (concentration camp)	Not recorded	Association for Sexual Equality, Ecumenical Group Homosexuals and Church
1985 Δ	Germany (Neuengamme, Hamburg)	Stone (concentration camp)	Not recorded	Independent Homosexuals Alternative Hamburg
1987 Δ	The Netherlands (Amsterdam)	<i>Homomonument</i> (Westermarkt)	Karin Daan	Foundation Committee, individual donors, Dutch Parliament, Amsterdam, North Holland
1989 Δ	Germany (Berlin)	Plaque (Nollendorfplatz)	Not recorded	General Gay Association, Ecumenical Group Homosexuals and Church
1990 Δ	Italy (Bologna)	Plaque (Villa Cassarini Garden)	Corrado Levi	Arcigay, Bologna City Council
1992	Germany (Sachsenhausen, Oranienburg)	Plaque (concentration camp)	Not recorded	Individual donors, Homosexual group of the Evangelical Advent church Prenzlauer Berg, Federal Association Homosexuality, Ecumenical Group Homosexuals and Church, Gay Federation Germany, Sonntags Club
1992	England (Brighton)	<i>Kiss Wall</i> (Grand Junction)	Bruce Williams	Brighton Festival Trust, British Gas & Arts Council
1993	The Netherlands (The Hague)	<i>Gay Monument</i> (Koekamp)	Theo ten Have	Foundation Committee, Hague Municipal Council
1994	Germany (Frankfurt)	<i>Frankfurt Angel</i> (Schäfergasse/Alte Gasse)	Rosemarie Trockel	Individual donors, City of Frankfurt, Hessian Cultural Foundation, Hannchen Foundation
1995 Δ	Germany (Cologne)	<i>Memorial to gay and lesbian victims of National Socialism</i> (Rheingarten/Frankenwerft)	Adam Zinkann	Cologne Public Services, Transport and Traffic Trade Union
1999 Δ	U.S. (Anchorage)	Plaque (Municipal cemetery)	Not recorded	Dan Cook (Cherresse), H.I.M. Peggy Murphy, Emperor VII
1995	Italy (Rome)	<i>All Potential Targets</i> (Pizazale Ostiense)	Anonymous artists	Individual donors
1999	The Netherlands (Utrecht)	Plaque (Dom Church Square)	Not recorded	Not disclosed
2001 Δ	Australia (Sydney)	<i>Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial</i>	Russell Rodrigo, Jennifer Gamble	Individual donors
2001	U.S. (Cathedral City)	<i>LGBT Veterans Memorial</i>	Committee	Individual donors, PFLAG
2001	England (Manchester)	<i>Alan Turing Memorial</i>	Glyn Hughes	Alan Turing Memorial Fund

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

Inauguration	Country (city)	Queer monument (site)	Artist	Funding body
2003 Δ	U.S. (San Francisco)	<i>Pink Triangle Park</i>	Robert Bruce, Susan Martin	Eureka Valley Promotion Association, Department of Public Works, San Francisco Arts Commission
2005 Δ	Uruguay (Montevideo)	<i>Sexual Diversity Monument</i> (Plaza de la Constitución/ Independencia)	Local activists	Individual donors
2005 Δ	England (Laxton)	<i>In Memoriam</i> (National Holocaust Centre & Museum)	Not recorded	National Holocaust Centre & Museum
2005 Δ	Italy (Trieste)	Plaque (Risiera di San Sabba)	Not recorded	Circolo Arcobaleno, Arcigay & Arcilesbica
2006 Δ	Argentina (Rosario)	<i>Walk of Sexual Diversity</i> (Paseo Emilio Schniffer)	Local activists	Vox Civil Association, City Municipal of Rosario
2006 Δ	Germany (Buchenwald)	Stone (concentration camp)	Not recorded	Evangelical Church of Central Germany
2006 Δ	Spain (Sitges)	<i>Sitges Against Homophobia</i> (fourth pier of the Catalan gay resort)	Not recorded	Individual donors, Youth Center of Sitges, Front a'Aliberament Gal de Catalunya, Casal Lambda, Collectiu Gai de Baecelona, City Council
2006	France (Dompierre sur Charente)	<i>Gay and Lesbian Memorial Park</i>	Not recorded	Individual donors, Regional Council, Defense Support Association Homosexuelle, National Union of Gays Facilities
2007	Belguim (Brussels)	<i>My Gay Mythology – A Monument in the World</i> (Plattestein)	Jean-François Octave	Not disclosed
2008	Germany (Berlin)	<i>Memorial to Homosexuals Persecuted under Nazism</i> (Tiergarten)	Michael Elmgreen, Ingar Dragset	Initiative Remembering the homosexual victims of National Socialism, Lesbian and Gay Federation in Germany, Federal State Minister for Culture
2008	U.S. (Laramie)	<i>Matthew Shepard Bench</i> (University of Wyoming)	Not recorded	University of Wyoming
2009	Spain (Durango)	<i>Monolith in memory of those repressed under Francoism for their sexual orientation</i>	Koldobika Jauregi	Individual donors, City of Batzan, Gerónimo Instituto de Uztariz, Memoriaren Bideak Association
2010 Δ	Austria (Vienna)	<i>Heinz Heger Park</i>	Frank Gassner	Individual donors
2010	France (Natzwiller)	Plaque (concentration camp)	Not recorded	Not disclosed
2011	Poland (Warsaw)	<i>Tęcza</i> (Savior Square)	Julita Wojcik	Adam Mickiewicz Institute, City of Warsaw
2011 Δ	Spain (Barcelona)	Plaque (Ciutadella Park)	Not recorded	City of Barcelona
2013 Δ	Italy (Turin)	Bench (museum grounds)	Corrado Levi	Individual donors; Museum of the Resistance, Deportation, War, Rights and Freedom

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

Inauguration	Country (city)	Queer monument (site)	Artist	Funding body
2013	Germany (Nuremberg)	<i>Memorial for homosexual victims of the Nazi regime</i>	Christof Popp	City of Nuremberg
2013	U.S. (Brooklyn)	Stone (NYC Holocaust Memorial Park)	Not recorded	Not recorded
2014 Δ	U.S. (Galveston)	<i>Pink Dolphin Monument</i> (R.A. Appfel Park)	Joe Joe Orangias, Frank Pega, Sarah Sloane	Individual donors, Galveston Artist Residency, Galveston Park Board of Trustees
2014 Δ	Israel (Tel Aviv)	<i>Monument to homosexual victims of the Nazi dictatorship</i> (Meir Park)	Yael Moriah	City of Tel Aviv
2015	Belgium (Antwerp)	<i>Rainbow Monument</i> (Draakplaats)	Not recorded	Individual donors, Het Roze Huis
2015 Δ	U.S. (Elwood)	<i>LGBT Veterans Memorial</i> (Lincoln National Cemetery)	Tod Tatsui	Individual donors
2015	U.S. (St. Louis)	<i>Transgender Memorial Garden</i>	Monte Abbott	Not recorded
2016	U.S. (NYC)	<i>Stonewall National Monument</i>	N/A	National Park Foundation
2016	Germany (Lübeck)	<i>Monument to persecuted homosexuals in Nazi Germany</i>	Erich Lethgau	Individual donations, Lübecker CSD e.V.
2016	Puerto Rico/U.S. (San Juan)	LGBT Monument (Third Millennium Park)	Alberto del la Cruz	City of San Juan
In progress	U.S. (Washington, DC)	<i>National LGBT Veterans Memorial</i>	Marty Gunter	In progress
In progress	Canada (Toronto)	<i>Toronto Trans Memorial</i>	Local activists, Toronto Trans Alliance	In progress

Our preliminary analysis of these monuments has identified three major social functions of queer monuments. First, we find that queer monuments provide visibility and reduce stigma in public space. We define stigma as the labeling, stereotyping, isolating, and delegitimizing that some groups of people experience through an exercise of power (Link & Phelan, 2001). Second, queer monuments memorialize and educate the public about the abuse and attempted extermination endured by many gender and sexual minority communities. Queer monuments contribute to the growing body of information presented to local publics about these communities. Third, many queer monuments stimulate activists and policy makers to improve equality. Widespread media coverage, negative or positive, of queer monuments and related events (e.g., inaugurations, ceremonies, criticism, protests, rectifications, vandalism) enhances advocacy, improves representations, and prompts public debates on the rights and safety of gender and sexual minorities, often pressuring policy makers to take positions. To note, certain queer monuments may have additional functions or have entirely different

functions than the three highlighted in this article. In the next three sections, these predominant functions are illustrated and analyzed through the historical and cultural contexts related to specific queer monuments. Such preliminary analysis is necessarily descriptive and informative owing to the newness of the topic and the preliminary nature of our findings.

While scholars have developed important theories on the dynamic relationship between queers and space and queer heritage more broadly (Byrne, 2005; Castiglia & Reed, 2012; Chauncey, 1994; Halberstam, 2005; Higgs, 1999; Hubbard, 2012; Kennedy & Davis, 1993), this article specifically inquires into how queer monuments have become active platforms for public address and civic participation. Ultimately, this article argues that queer monuments combat systemic transphobia, biphobia, and homophobia in public space to enliven the margins—the gender and sexual minority communities existing at the edge of social formations, whose identities are silenced and neglected. These communities are invited back to the center through these monuments’ significant presence and participatory components. As this growing type of public monument has successfully resisted oppressive heritage regimes, policies, and social practices, we share this information with artists, activists, heritage managers, researchers, and general readers who seek to realize new queer monuments, program events at existing queer monuments, or experience queer monuments for the first time.

Heritage visibility

The lack of official recognition of gender and sexual minority communities in public space maintains and increases stigma (Dunn, 2011). Where heritage sites have existed for social bodies around the globe for time immemorial, primarily honoring cisgender and heterosexual people and practices, gender and sexual minorities have not had the position to leave prominent visible markers due to discrimination and legal, funding, and safety concerns. In a 2011 discrimination report, the Council of Europe showed evidence that the lack of representations of gender and sexual minorities in public space and the media had a significant negative influence on public opinions and attitudes toward gender and sexual minority populations, as well as on gender and sexual minorities themselves (Council of Europe, 2011). Contemporary scholarship also reveals the importance of representation and heritage visibility for minority groups (Byrne, 2005).

This section investigates how public markers made prior to 1984, the year the first queer monument *Gay Liberation* was inaugurated, and queer monuments since have worked to deconstruct historical foundations of invisibility. To analyze this claim and to see how stigma based on gender and sexual minority status has been countered overtime, here we examine visible traces left by influential 19th-century artist Anne Whitney. Focusing on Whitney

gives us a starting point to analyze what is a long historical strategy of navigating public recognition and expressing messages of affection within strictly governed and constrained environments. Queer monuments of the present day reduce stigma not only in their references or celebrations of gender and sexual minorities in public space, but also through their activation of visible, participatory platforms made by and for gender and sexual minority communities. Putting aside the problematic of queerness and its shifting definitions and reclamations, we can see in Whitney's expressions of love and friendship in her letters as well as her sculpture an assertion of romantic love made visible.

Within the United States, the late 19th century was a boon for women artists who contributed to the growing body of public sculpture that memorialized historic subjects. Whitney, like her contemporaries Emma Stebbins, Edmonia Lewis, Vinnie Ream, and Blanche Nevins, made statues that memorialized progressive leaders, feminists, and her life-long partner. Whitney memorialized Senator Charles Sumner, for example, a Massachusetts abolitionist who is presented with a book on a chair in Harvard Square. Whitney also memorialized Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, the leader of the controversial 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment of African American soldiers in the American Civil War, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, another abolitionist, feminist, and the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Toussaint Louverture, leader of the Haitian revolution that defeated slavery and brought independence to Haiti, was another figure Whitney sculpted. Her sculptures directed public awareness and prompted citizens to reflect and hold onto, in stable, resistant, and durable materials, the often wavering and parlous political and moral sentiments of the time. As ideas were publicly debated about the rights of African Americans and women, Whitney repeatedly conjured her subjects' bodies into sculptures that called attention to their uncanny physicality and personhood as well as the democratic duties of citizenship while considering the challenges and realities of social movements. Such summoning has been integrated into the design of numerous queer monuments.

While studying human anatomy, Whitney met artist Abby Adeline Manning, who became her life companion. The women lived together and traveled extensively to produce art. Many theorists have pointed out the temptations of "presentism," or considering the past in present-day terms, and Michel Foucault and others even challenge whether homosexuals existed before the term was coined in the late 19th century, but if viewers consider traces of Whitney's past, there is a chance of resurrecting cultural affect, experience, and norm (Foucault, 1978; Lobel, 1996). For example, her and Manning's letters span decades and document art making, illnesses, politics, family, and their love for one another, helping us

flesh out the meaning of same-sex partnership in those decades. In 1861, Whitney wrote:

You are honest, you are noble. I can't forgo my ideal – go on – but anywhere I hold you fast – you cannot go from me – so kiss me on the mouth and tell me is it so? I forgive all that I have misconceived and said amiss & love me still – do you dear Abby? (Whitney, 1861).

Exploring the meaning of such passages is tenuous from our contemporary perspective. How are we imposing our own cultural norms and identities on two women who in 1861 did not share the same vocabulary we now use to explain relationships? In the absence of terms such as *homosexual*, Whitney posits the possibility of a queer identity through her choice of life companion.

Those assertions were made material in Whitney's bust of Manning. The warmly and smoothly composed figure features Manning with a stretched neck and relaxed gaze, suggesting a deep bond between the artist and subject. Continuing the immortalization of her intimate loved ones, this was the first bust Whitney made outside of her immediate family. In 1873, it exhibited as *Bust of a Lady* at Doll & Richards, Boston, and it is currently listed as *Abby Adeline Manning* at the Davis Museum, Wellesley. Potentially, the original title was a method to slip a private sentiment into public recognition, one that was so impossible to imagine or utter publicly at the time. While their letters give us a lens to understand the sculpture, the bust itself leads us to rethink both their relationship and the worlds they inhabited. In *The Apparitional Lesbian*, literary scholar Terry Castle noted:

The very feeling of being obliterated by one's society may prompt a wish to assert oneself all the more aggressively—to enter more fully, as it were, into the larger scheme of things. Certainly, as is often the case with minority groups, lesbians have made contributions to culture out of all proportion to their actual numbers. (Castle, 1995)

Although not an official monument, an even bolder memorial of Whitney and Manning's relationship is their gravestone at the Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge (Figure 1). Whatever the motivations, the abiding sentiment is clear—the two women were close enough that they should be represented together with one stone in perpetuity.

A century after *Abby Adeline Manning*, *Gay Liberation* faced homophobic city responses in the ongoing struggle for heritage visibility. This queer monument marked the 10-year anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, a pivotal series of demonstrations that initiated the gender and sexual minority rights movement in New York City (NYC). The Mildred Andrews Fund approached prominent queer artists, including Louise Nevelson, who rejected the commission because of its possible negative effects on her and her partner's careers. Instead, artist George Segal built a life-sized sculpture of two same-sex couples holding each other. The bronze figures, coated in white lacquer, were formed to be sitting on a bench and



Figure 1. Gravestone of Abby Adeline Manning and Anne Whitney, 2014 (Photograph by Jeannie Simms).

standing across the street from Stonewall Inn in Christopher Park. However, NYC deemed the queer monument too controversial after its casting in 1980, so it was placed in Orton Park in Madison, WI, in 1986. In 1992, it was permanently relocated to Christopher Park. The city of Los Angeles also refused a second edition of *Gay Liberation*, so it was installed on Stanford University's campus in 1984, where it still resides.

Whitney and Manning's personal romantic history, like that of many historical gender and sexual minorities, is left uncertain, so it is difficult to understand how their queerness constituted itself and what terms they were seeing themselves in (Dunn, 2011). Such invisibility of minority gender and sexual identity and expression has been enforced (as all dominant cultural realities seek to marginalize those that are not them) and is strictly and systematically governed. For example, until very recently, the ongoing work of heritage regimes and legislature in the United States has disenfranchised, marginalized, silenced, and condemned gender and sexual minorities. The dismissal of a fully funded queer monument in the two largest cities in the nation, made by one of the most renowned cisgender male heterosexual White artists of that time, reveals how oppressive conditions were leading into the 21st century. Further, we might read

into the long history of hate crimes targeting gender and sexual minorities as evidence of the need for safety even as we seek more public visibility. The extensive process of designing, approving, and constructing queer monuments builds on historical means of mark making and actively works to reduce abiding stigma. With respect to queer heritage more broadly, scholar Denis Byrne has explained that “not to struggle is to remain invisible in the heritage landscape” (Byrne, 2005). It is important to point out that invisibility may protect gender and sexual minorities in many environments; therefore, heritage visibility should be carefully and strategically approached.

Remembering abuse and extermination

The content, design, material, and placement of queer monuments present important information to the public. While it would be challenging to measure a general public’s knowledge on gender and sexual minority identities and histories, reviewing information found in public space, the media, and compulsory education may give us an indication. We can infer from the inventory that national heritage regimes have strictly limited information on gender and sexual minorities prior to 1984, to which the majority of nations around the globe still do. According to the Council of Europe’s report, although there was a growing presence of gender and sexual minorities in the media, it was still lacking in most EU member states, and gender and sexual minorities and their crucial issues were often simplified, sensationalized, and stereotyped (Council of Europe, 2011). Further, a series of content analyses in the United States since 2002 showed that science education textbooks recently have started to include LGBT topics; however, in 2008 only between 0.08% and 0.7% of textbooks were dedicated to LGBT content, with this content predominately placed next to topics that generate “stigmatization through association.” The analyses showed that the first exposure many students had to factual information about gender and sexual identity was in tertiary education courses (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008; Young & Middleton, 2002). Therefore, this section outlines the vital function of educating local publics amid oppressive heritage regimes, policies, and social practices. We use the example of the pink triangle, since it carries significant information and is integrated into 22 queer monuments (see Δ in Table 1). Engaging the public in this symbol’s history and origin is another way to understand the complexities and open the possibilities for reforming *les lieux de mémoire*, affording a cultural narrative that runs parallel to the visible and participatory civic markers that Whitney’s work encouraged (Robertson, 2016).

From 1871 to 1994, the German criminal code Paragraph 175 made same-sex activity between males illegal (Epstein & Friedman, 2002). However, gender and sexual minority communities were vibrant in Berlin during the early 20th century. Sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld was a world-leading researcher and

publisher in the studies of gender and sexuality. From 1919 to 1933, he headed the Institute for Sexology in Berlin's Tiergarten, practicing some of the first gender-affirming surgeries (Meyerowitz, 2002). Revising and enforcing Paragraph 175, Nazis burned the Institute for Sexology's library and records in public streets in 1933 (Reed, 2011). They incarcerated and forced gay men to wear pink triangle badges in concentration camps. The Houston Transgender Foundation of America points out that Nazis often automatically criminalized many trans people as sexual minorities, forcing selected trans people to wear the pink triangle (Houston, 2015). Although pink triangle victims were a relatively small minority in the camps, they had a disproportionately high mortality rate (Plant, 1986). Many incarcerated lesbian and trans people wore the antisocial black triangles, but it is argued that, although lesbianism was also highly marginalized and seen as a threat to the future of the Aryan race, they were not sent to the camps due to their minority gender or sexuality (Heger, 1980). Regardless, the pink triangle has become a symbol to advocate for gender and sexual minority communities widely.

According to survivor stories, such as Josef Kohout's, pink triangle victims were the most abused groups in the camps, since some Nazis believed homosexuality was a curable sickness, including through nonconsensual castration and medical experimentation (Heger, 1980). During World War II, approximately 100,000 people were arrested and 50,000 were sentenced because of their minority gender and/or sexuality, and between 10,000 and 15,000 people were incarcerated, with an estimate of 60% perishing in concentration camps (USHMM, 2014). Victims who survived persecution faced intense criminal pursuit after the war, with some transferred directly from concentration camps into prisons, as same-sex sexual activity was legally criminalized in numerous postwar societies. The German government did not apologize to pink triangle victims, and reparations were refused until 2002 (Tsinonis, 2006).

It was not until the late 1970s that the pink triangle was reclaimed as an international symbol for gender and sexual minority rights. In 1972, Austrian writer Heinz Heger published *The Men With the Pink Triangle* about Kohout's experience in the camps. In 1984, a pink granite triangle was unveiled at the site of a former concentration camp in Mauthausen, Austria, where hundreds of gender and sexual minorities were once sentenced. Every year local communities host a wreath-laying ritual, including a minute of silence, at the queer monument. Additionally, the NYC art activism collective Gran Fury designed the famous SILENCE = DEATH poster with the pink triangle for the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, an advocacy group that has generated awareness around the AIDS pandemic and supported people living with HIV and AIDS since 1987. The reclamation of the pink triangle has continued since.

Relative to recent statistics on the rights and lives of gender and sexual minorities, publicly displaying the pink triangle is an act of protest. Only 20 of 116 countries in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, Europe, and

Oceania have existing legal measures for hate crimes targeting trans people, and only 47 countries have existing legal measures for antidiscrimination (Transrespect, 2014). Over 2,000 trans people were reportedly killed around the globe due to their gender identity or expression between 2008 and 2016 (Transgender Europe, 2016). At least one in four trans people have experienced violence in schools, at work, in interactions with police, at homeless shelters, accessing public accommodations, and in jails and prisons in the United States (National LGBTQ Task Force, 2015). Hate crimes targeting these minorities are often underreported or not reported at all, suggesting that these statistics are underestimates (Marzullo & Libman, 2009). Furthermore, studies show that trans populations face considerable health disadvantages, including discrimination and violence, and very high risks of suicide attempts (Pega et al., 2016).

Same-sex sexual acts are criminalized in 75 countries, including with the death penalty in the following countries: Afghanistan, Brunei Darussalam, Iran, Iraq, Mauritania, Nigeria (12 northern states), Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia (southern parts), Sudan, and Yemen. Only 62 countries prohibit discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation. Same-sex marriage is legal in only 18 countries, and joint adoption by same-sex couples is legal in 19 (Carroll & Itaborahy, 2015). Since 1991, more than 100,000 hate crime offenses targeting sexual minorities have been reported to the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation. Gender-based attacks are not tracked on the federal level (Marzullo & Libman, 2009). Moreover, in the United States in 2012, 73.1% of all anti-gender and sexual minority homicide victims were people of color (Giovanniello, 2013).

In 1987, *Homomonument* was inaugurated in Amsterdam to remember the abuse and extermination that gender and sexual minority communities have endured and continue to endure (Figure 2). This monument is a 36-meter equilateral triangle outline with three 10-meter equilateral pink granite triangles at different heights comprising each corner. It integrates into the local terrain, intersecting a canal, public square, and street. The highest triangle, raised by stairs, is a pedestal for speeches and points to the COC Netherlands, an establishment that has advocated for LGBT rights since 1946 and is one of the first LGBT advocacy organizations with formal consultative status at the United Nations. The second triangle points to the Anne Frank House, a museum dedicated to the Jewish wartime diarist and highlighting anti-Semitism and other forms of persecution and discrimination. A poem by writer Jacob Israël de Haan that reads, “Naar Vriendschap Zulk een Mateloos Verlangen,” or “Such an endless desire for friendship,” is engraved in this triangle. The third triangle points to the National War Memorial on the Dam. An adjacent sign explains the memorial in three languages. Designed as a living monument, *Homomonument* hosts annual celebrations, including dancing, concerts, advocacy workshops, and festivals (Figure 3).



Figure 2. Homomonument, 2012 (Photograph by Henri Blommers, Courtesy of Homomonument Communications).



Figure 3. Homomonument Pride, 2014 (Photograph by Dennis Veldman, Courtesy of Homomonument Communications).

Every queer monument offers different information within its specific cultural, political, social, and economic environments. The pink triangle is rooted in a harsh history, but queer monuments in 22 cities around the globe reclaim this symbol to raise awareness and locally resist related forms of transphobia, biphobia, and homophobia. This symbol engages publics on inequalities, attempted extermination, and violence, which they may not otherwise be presented with. In *Imminent Domain: Queer Space in the Built Environment*, art historian Christopher Reed argues that “[queer] signifiers are imminent, and context is critical to their signification of difference implied in the process of taking place” (Reed, 1996). In other words, providing public access to such information is a vital function of queer monuments and their agency in reforming how *lieux de mémoire* operate. Many queer monuments move beyond simply continuing the centralization of collective memory, and toward engaging people in silenced histories and shifting monuments into active platforms for learning about and rallying against hegemonic conditions. Like Whitney and Manning’s gravestone, queer monuments point to a future of love to “inspire and support [gender and sexual minorities] in struggles of denial, oppression, and discrimination” (Homomonument, 2015).

Stimulating sites

While queer monuments undertake the work of deconstructing invisibility and educating the public, they are also highly contested projects that stimulate activists, communities, and policy makers to improve equality. Public debates and conversations on gender and sexual minority rights begin during the planning process and continue long after queer monuments are inaugurated. Our research found that queer monuments have brought positive and negative dialogue to city councils, courts, design firms, heritage organizations, legislation, literature, the media, newspapers, nonprofit centers, park boards, public spaces, and universities. Queer monuments have been used as platforms for rallies and vigils, as well as oppositional protests in the burning, refusal, relocation, vandalism, and even complete erasure of queer monuments. Although such fierce reactions attempt to diminish the functions of queer monuments, this section explains how those that targeted *Tęcza* by artist Julita Wojcik, the *Toronto Trans Memorial* by anonymous activists, and *Gay Liberation* instead focused greater attention on transphobia, biphobia, homophobia, and their intersections with racism, generating political leverage for activists. Widespread media coverage has spread awareness and pressured activists, communities, and policy makers to take bolder public positions on gender and sexual minority rights and to continue working toward equality. Queer monuments therefore expand and strengthen advocacy by moving gender and sexual minority rights further to the forefront.

In 2011, *Tęcza* was temporarily installed outside of the European Parliament, Brussels, during the Polish presidency of the European Union. The monument consisted of a 25-meter wide by 9-meter high metal rainbow-shaped armature

colored with 23,000 artificial flowers. Gender and sexual minority communities have long adopted the rainbow to stand for diversity and inclusivity. In 2012, the sculpture was relocated to Plac Zbawiciela, a busy intersection with trams, bars, cafes, and a famous church in Warsaw. As a temporary installation, the city of Warsaw pushed its de-installation back several years due to surrounding controversy. Politicians and opponents verbally attacked the monument, and arsonists set it afire four times. Parliamentarian Stanislaw Pieta, for example, called the sculpture's adjacency to a church "a disgusting gesture, offensive to Catholics" (Kozłowska, 2013). During a right-wing march on Poland's Independence Day in 2013, rioters burned the monument while waving Polish flags and chanting, "God, honor, and fatherland." Days following, 200 people placed flowers on and kissed under the charred armature (Figure 4). With endorsements from Mayor Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, activists, and celebrities, the city rebuilt the rainbow five times (L.N., 2013). By protestors displaying such violent intolerance toward

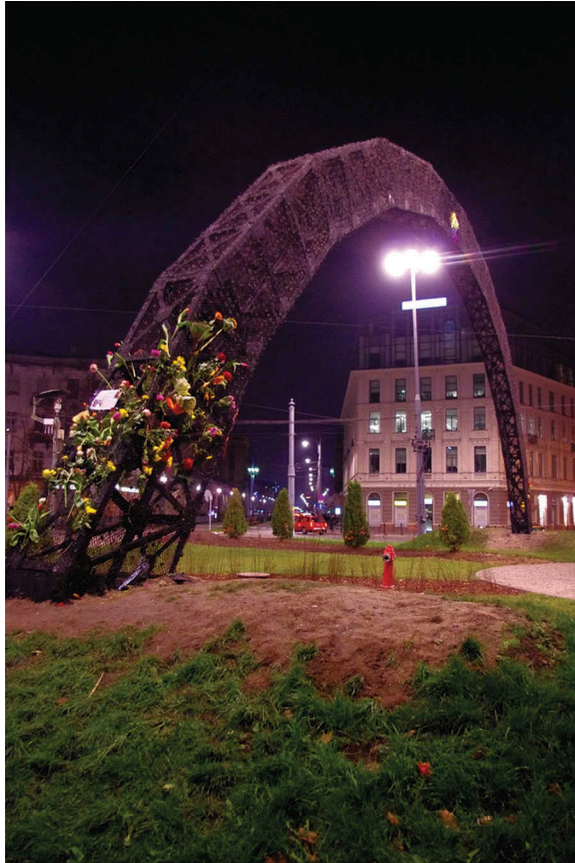


Figure 4. Tęcza, 2013 (Photograph by Mateusz Opasiński, available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 License. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tęcza_na_pl._Zbawiciela_w_Warszawie_\(po_Święcie_Niepodległości\)_06.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tęcza_na_pl._Zbawiciela_w_Warszawie_(po_Święcie_Niepodległości)_06.jpg); Note: This photograph was taken the day after Poland's Independence Day riots).

gender and sexual minorities, they developed a highly mediated debate among significant policy makers and the public that focused on gender and sexual minority safety in Poland and around the globe. *Tęcza* was de-installed in August 2015 due to expiration of the park permit, and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, which owns the installation, is currently deliberating on the location of its re-installation.

In contrast to *Tęcza*, the city of Toronto physically removed the *Toronto Trans Memorial* from public space. In 2014, anonymous activists drew the trans identity symbol with chalk on a brick wall in Barbara Hall Park (formerly Cawthra Park). The trans symbol is a combination of the astrological female and male symbols and a nonbinary arm, all extending from a common circle. Surrounding the symbol, the activists chalked the names of trans people who have fallen due to violence and oppression. The city washed away the bold memorial several times. In response, activists continually redrew the symbol with the additional statement, “You will not erase us” (Figure 5). Once confronted, Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam apologized for the city’s removal of the memorial and promised a permanent monument for the trans community (Forani, 2014). The Toronto Trans Alliance is currently working with the local trans community to develop a permanent queer monument to honor those who are no longer with us. There is discussion of placing it in a park close to the annual International Transgender Day of Remembrance meeting point in Toronto. While activists made the original *Toronto Trans Memorial* with an easily erasable material, alluding to its heavier and implicit meanings, its constant removal and re-installation have prompted an



Figure 5. Toronto Trans Memorial, 2014 (Photograph courtesy of the Toronto Trans Memorial community).

active conversation with policy makers around the rights and agency of the trans community. The affiliate activists are reforming dominant regimes that have attempted to reduce trans participation in civic space, commemoration, history, and policy making.

While people defaced *Tęcza* and the *Toronto Trans Memorial* most likely to curtail advocacy, others do so to progress advocacy. *Gay Liberation* has endured many different types of interactions since its inception. At Stanford University, it has been vandalized numerous times. For example, in 1984 the figures endured 40 hits from a hammer, resulting in a highly mediated rally of 200 people demanding the statue to be reinstated (New York Times, 1984). This controversial sculpture was repaired and is now part of the university's permanent collection. On the contrary, in Christopher Park in 2015, anonymous activists rectified *Gay Liberation*, painting the male couple's skin brown, dressing them in wigs and floral bras, and posting a sign stating, "Black Latina trans women led the riots, stop the whitewashing" (Browning, 2015; to view documentation of this rectification, see the video at the following link: <https://vid.me/zatb>). Since the leaders of the Stonewall Riots were Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, Miss Major Griffen-Gracy, and Storme DeLarverie, the activists questioned why the bronze statues were covered in white paint to begin with. Analogous to criticism of Roland Emmerich's 2015 film *Stonewall*, which also portrays majority cisgender gay and lesbian white actors in the historic roles of trans people and people of color, this action challenged the integrity of this queer monument. Unlike the other actions described, this correction presented a plausible issue within the commemoration, generating a public debate on misrepresentative history and highlighting an essential intersection between the gender and sexual minority rights and the Black Lives Matter and Latinx movements. The monument has since been repainted white by the city. While this debate continues, *Gay Liberation* is now included within the parameters of the 2016 inaugurated 3.1-hectare *Stonewall National Monument*, the first U.S. National Monument dedicated to the gender and sexual minority rights movement. Activists—many still presented with struggle—and city and national policy makers have spoken to massive crowds at the monument to oppose transphobia, biphobia, homophobia, Islamophobia, racism, surveillance, and xenophobia.

As discussed above, queer monuments, artists, designers, and communities, often with little or no funding, have changed policy through the extensive process of convincing cities to dedicate public spaces to gender and sexual minorities. From initial proposals and negotiations to inaugurations and beyond, these projects produce stimulating sites that energize social movements and actively combat the discrimination, marginalization, and privatization of gender and sexual minority communities. Media coverage of rallies and vigils, as well as oppositional protests, further prompt public debates around the rights and safety of gender and sexual minority communities. The Council of Europe's report provided evidence that in many

countries greater public and media representations—even when negative—led to further advocacy and improved representations of these communities. Further, it noted that more frequent public events led to an increase in the level of reactions and expression of attitudes, both positive and negative, toward gender and sexual minority populations (Council of Europe, 2011). However, we argue that representation of queer monuments—even when negative—fundamentally provides leverage for the gender and sexual minority rights movement, because public events and media coverage shift attention to the visions of leading activists, politicians, and, most importantly, the magnitude and growing force of these communities. In addition, since the realization of queer monuments is dependent on local and/or national backing and, in some cases, funding, policy makers are arguably more obliged to support the communities and monuments that they have previously backed. Therefore, queer monuments ultimately pressure dominant cultures to change, not just through their recognition of and education on gender and sexual minorities, but also with the powerful agency and networks they secure. Yet as Black Lives Matter, Latinx activists, and scholars such as Thomas R. Dunn have shown, it is essential to remain critical of these projects since they make claims to history and inherently intersect additional, urgent inequalities and social movements (Dunn, 2016).

A global call

Over centuries, heritage regimes, legislation, and social practices have systematically worked to make gender and sexual minorities invisible and officially unrecognizable in public space. As summarized in the first two sections, these communities, often left unremembered or negatively remembered, commonly face discrimination, violence, and execution due to their minority gender and/or sexuality. Such conditions impact how gender and sexual minorities behave, feel, and socialize in public space, often resulting in the stigmatization and privatization of their social spaces and worse health conditions, as queer theorists and epidemiologists have pointed out (Castiglia & Reed, 2012; Hatzenbuehler, Phelan, & Link, 2013; Kennedy & Davis, 1993; Mays & Cochran, 2001). Recent studies prove that rights and supportive environments, which could include queer monuments, reduce the high suicide rate of gender and sexual minority youth (Hatzenbuehler, 2011; Raifman, Moscoe, Austin, & McConnell, 2017). Even though we have discussed cases and environments where gender and sexual minority communities have successfully countered heritage regimes and rapidly advanced their rights, there has also recently been a profound regression in many places around the globe (Beyrer, 2014). The ashes from 23,000 flowers in Warsaw and washed-away chalk in Toronto call into question these urgent concerns, generating dialogue and new tactics that must extend to locales where gender and sexual minority communities

do not have such shielding or resilience from their heritage or governmental and/or institutional backers.

Queer monuments do not simply decorate public space with static symbols. They reduce stigma and celebrate gender and sexual minorities in public space. They remember those who have fallen due to abuse and attempted extermination, and they educate the public on historical and contemporary conditions. And, most importantly, they stimulate strong public dialogues around the rights and safety of gender and sexual minorities. Queer monuments have each received different amounts and types of funding, attention from the media, and support from local and, in some cases, national policy makers. Regardless, their efficacy is dependent on directly encountering the public, opening spaces for gender and sexual minority recognition and civic participation, and radically changing the ways official heritage positions and accommodates these communities.

While this article focuses on the functions of officially recognized heritage and negotiations with governments, it is imperative to remember that queer monuments are the results of citizen-led efforts and directly relate to the expansive and powerful force of queer heritage at large (Morris, 2011). Like Whitney and Manning's gravestone, unofficial heritage has greatly contributed to community development, collective memory, and rights movements, as well as the realization of queer monuments. In 1999, for example, director Kimberly Peirce and writer Andy Bienen made the Academy Award-winning film *Boys Don't Cry* based on the story of Brandon Teena, a trans man beaten, raped, and killed by two cisgender male acquaintances. In 2009, the U.S. government passed a federal hate-crime law to include crimes motivated by a victim's gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability called the Matthew Shepard Act, which was named after a college student who was beaten, tortured, and killed due to his minority sexuality. Every year on the Transgender Day of Remembrance, community members and the UNESCO-Bangkok office hold a memorial service to honor trans people who have perished during the previous year. Placing the collective work of all types of queer heritage into perspective, Reed and Christopher Castiglia build on Nora, stating, "we can never live without memory" or else "we would cease to have consciousness" (Castiglia & Reed, 2012).

Queer heritage builds on itself and composes a diverse set of approaches for people to remember, criticize, discuss, advocate, celebrate, reflect, and heal. Specifically, queer monuments take different forms and inflect their locale in different ways. Sites are strategically chosen to afford the greatest social outcome and reorientation of the city. The global network of queer monuments is continually growing, with the recent inauguration of the *Transgender Memorial Garden* in St. Louis, the current development of the permanent *Toronto Trans Memorial*, and future projects yet to be determined. Queer monuments

benefit local communities but, more importantly, activate and pressure dialogue and action toward places where rights are regressing. Until gender and sexual minorities are equitably remembered and respected around the globe, queer monuments, longstanding and new, will continue to do the cultural work of re-envisioning possibility. Every time one of us is hurt or dishonored, the need for celebration of these minority cultures strongly remains.

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