CRGS
CARIBBEAN REVIEW OF GENDER STUDIES
A Journal of Caribbean Perspectives on Gender and Feminism

The In/Visible Woman: Gender, Memory and Monuments in the Caribbean

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How to cite
Ramsay, Allison. 2025. "The In/Visible Woman: Gender, Memory and Monuments in the Caribbean" *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* (16): 243–262.

Monuments are central to public art, commemorating significant persons or events while shaping collective memory. Cast in stone, bronze or metal, monuments become permanent markers fixed in place, space and time. As sites of memory, they articulate various messages to the public. Public statuary reflects the region's complex colonial and postcolonial histories. Colonial era monuments venerate colonial figures such as Christopher Columbus, Queen Victoria, Empress Joséphine and Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson. On the other hand, post-independence memorials mainly celebrate the Black hero subject, and portray visual symbols of freedom through various emancipation monuments such as the Emancipation Statue (Bussa Statue), Redemption Song, Neg Mawon Emancipation Monument and the 1763 Monument (Cuffy Monument). This dichotomy is part of the contested heritage of the West Indies linked to its colonial past. Yet, monumental landscape in the Caribbean promotes a highly masculine discourse as women are marginalized, therefore becoming part of "the unseen, the unseeable and the overlooked" in public memorials. This article examines the underrepresentation of women in Anglophone Caribbean public monuments, exploring how gendered, racial, and colonial hierarchies shape in/visibility in public memory. The article highlights the importance of addressing gender bias in the region's cultural landscape and the need for more inclusivity in shaping narratives and the expansion of the visibility of women across racial and ethnic identities.

Engendering Monuments

Public art exists in multiple forms such as sculptures, performances, installations, sound art and street art (Weidenmuller 2015, 437). Monuments, memorials and statues are physical embodiments of history cemented in landscapes that bring to the public a lesson about the past (435). "There was widespread conviction that individuals – explorers, politicians, entrepreneurs – made history. Therefore, it seemed appropriate to pay tribute to great men – seldom were great women, except queens, candidates for such heroic treatment – in statues and other memorials" (Aldrich 2004, 157). Therefore, "memorials, statues and monuments are spaces of ritual and public display that have political, gendered, and cultural meanings attached to them and are part of how a country's history is celebrated" (Ramsay and Teelucksingh 2024, 1). Art and visual cultures through public monuments have played an important role in politics across the world. "The influence of politics on memory is seen, for example, in the way history is written and passed on and the tangible sites of memory we construct to remember the past, or the heroes or heroines we advocate for as national icons" (Shepherd 2019, 268). Moreover, "statues and monuments depicting people constitute a common form of public art and… one through which gender is overtly inscribed onto the landscape" (Weidenmuller 2015, 437).

Gender refers to "complex systems of personal and social relations through which women and men are socially created and maintained and through which they gain access to, or are allocated status, power and material resources within society" (Barriteau 2001, 51). Patriarchy has been maintained through a "persistence of an ideology of male super-ordination which both men and women maintain consciously and unconsciously" (Mohammed 2021, 21). By the turn of the twentieth century, there was severely limited access and distribution of resources to women and the inferior subordinate status of women prevailed. "Ideologically, women's gender identities were explicitly expressed in terms of roles…confined to that of homemaker, nurturer and reproducer of the labour force" (Barriteau 2001, 51). This subordinate status continued in the 1930s to 1950s as the public sphere was slowly opening up to women. In the 1950s, the

granting of universal adult suffrage in the Eastern Caribbean allowed women to vote and contest general elections which changed their access to the public sphere (59-63).

Although political progress was made, women continued to occupy a subordinate status during the 1950s-1970s as the islands of the British West Indies moved towards independence. In the post-independence period, from the 1970s to 2000s, as Caribbean governments began to forge their nation states, the ideological relations of gender included "strong currents of misogyny, increased levels of reported violence against women, women challenging gender identities," and the idea of male marginality in society was accepted (Barriteau 2001, 55). Indian indentureship, which occurred after 1838 in some islands in the British West Indies, has added to the layers of inequality of gender systems in the region. "The rigidity of transplanted Asian cultural traditions exacerbated the inequalities in gender systems," for Indo-Caribbean women in several areas such as the segregation of men and women in public, arranged marriages and the denial of education to girls (52). "Participation in the public domain was even more complex for Caribbean women of Asian or East Indian origins. Gender ideologies mediated by an Asian cultural legacy prescribed rigid gender-role identities as wife and mother" (58).

The social relations of gender intersect with other oppressive relations such as race, colour and class. As part of the articulation of political discourse, the iconography of statues can highlight how social divisions are negotiated in public spaces. Gender is etched into the landscape, and the physical form of monuments naturalises this social division. The broader social structures of gender inequality have influenced the gendering of landscapes of commemoration. Therefore, the in/visibility of women in public memorials ranges, but typically, "women rarely appear in sculpture as political or cultural leaders" (Johnson 1995, 57). In some cases, women are not depicted as real people but as allegorical figures, representing notions of values, the nation or the divine (Dunn 2017). These types of statues of women evoke an essence of femininity that conveys gentleness and softness, promoting to some extent

societal and masculine ideologies about women (Weidenmuller et. al 2015). Arguably, depicting women in allegorical forms "can strip the agency from women by denying any semblance of the real female experience" (Reeder 2018, 116).

Colonial Monuments as Sites of Protests

From the twentieth century, when decolonization in the British West Indies occurred through the process of independence, debates have emerged over who should be celebrated in public spaces. Early monuments in the Caribbean focus on historical figures that played roles in establishing and managing territories for the expansion of empire, local colonial officials such as governors and European monarchs. "The monumental landscape provides an indication of which figures captured public attention and gained official consecration, as well as which aspects of the colonial enterprise most successfully marked themselves in the national patrimony" (Aldrich 2004,6). These colonial spatial markers in post-colonial society "exclude those whose oppression and subalternity they symbolise, contributing to making the access to public space unequal" (D' Angelo 2023, 225).

Most contemporary and historical monuments across the world memorialize men. This circumstance is connected to the commemoration of acts in the public sphere, such as war, exploration of the world and politics, and as such, society deemed men as social heroes (Dunn 2017). The cultural landscape is typically biased towards White men because "it was white men, historically, from colonial societies built on racial and patriarchal hierarchies that excluded women from having social, political and legal voices…"(Abraham 2021,6). Early colonial monuments in the Caribbean focus on historical figures that played roles in establishing and managing territories for the expanding empire, local colonial officials such as governors and European colonial monarchs. In the Caribbean context, structures of inequality of gender systems were evident from the landing of Christopher Columbus in the Americas in the fifteenth century

and the subsequent decimation of the Indigenous peoples, to the period of African enslavement from the sixteenth century, to the implementation of Asian indentured labour from the nineteenth century.

Celebrated for "discovering" the Americas, the legacy of Christopher Columbus has been commemorated in the landscapes of the United States of America and Caribbean nations such as the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Puerto Rico and Trinidad and Tobago. Among the colonial monuments in the previous British West Indies are statues that memorialise war heroes, such as the Rodney Memorial in Jamaica in honour of Admiral George, which was erected in 1789 to revere Rodney's role in the Battle of the Saintes. This battle foiled a planned invasion of Jamaica by the French and Spanish in 1782. The Rodney marble statue has stood in what is known as Emancipation Square since 1997 in Spanish Town, Jamaica. Another war hero cast in bronze is the Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson. Lord Nelson's role in the 1805 Battle of Trafalgar against the French and Spanish was appreciated by White Barbadians. The Nelson Statue was erected in Trafalgar Square in Bridgetown in 1813, later renamed National Heroes Square in 1998 in honour of the country's national heroes (Ramsay 2024, 87).

Colonial officials have also been memorialized in the Caribbean. For example, the role of French politician Victor Schoelcher in the abolition of African enslavement in the French West Indies in 1848 was commemorated in Martinique and Guadeloupe through the erection of busts and statues in his memory. A bust of Charles Eugene Gabriel de La Croix de Castries, Marquis de Castries, stands in George V Park in Castries, Saint Lucia. The capital of Saint Lucia, Castries, is named after him, and he is recognized for his role as Minister of the French Navy and the colonies between 1780 and 1787. The capital city is named in his honour, recognizing his tenure as France's Minister of the Navy and the Colonies from 1780 to 1787.

The oldest statues of women in the West Indies date back to the colonial era and were carved from marble. These depictions of individual women as statues represent women of the White elite, namely the British monarch Queen Victoria

in Guyana and Jamaica, and Dutch monarchs Queen Juliana and Queen Wilhelmina in Curaçao. One exception is the statue of a Mixed-Race woman, Empress Joséphine, in Martinique, who, unlike her counterparts, married into royalty. Joséphine was a Creole woman born in Martinique. She was the wife of Napoleon I, who was largely responsible for the reinstatement of African enslavement in 1802 in the French West Indies. Joséphine, "by the colour of her skin and by her marriage had obtained an incredible superiority over the other islands of mixed race descent" (Gyssels 2022, 118), and the statue of Empress Joséphine "became a powerful symbol for White claims to political, social and moral authority" (Brown 2006, 49). The statue of Queen Victoria in Guyana, erected in 1894, was commissioned to mark her Golden Jubilee. In Curaçao, Queen Juliana of the Kingdom of the Netherlands was crowned in 1948, and a statue in her honour was unveiled in 1955 (Groenewoud 2024, 125). The memorial to Queen Wilhelmina, who was a reigning monarch of the Netherlands, stands in the centre of Willemstad and was erected to commemorate her 50th birthday.

Regardless of sex, colonial statues in the Caribbean have been the subject of protest, with some statues being removed and others toppled and vandalised during the post-independence era. Statues of women have not been exempt from anti-colonial demonstrations by the public, who have viewed colonial statues of men and women as colonial relics and sites of oppression. In 1954, in an act of anti-colonial protest, the Queen Victoria statue located in front of the High Court in Georgetown was dynamited, and its head and left hand were blown off. The statue was removed to Georgetown's Botanical Gardens in 1970 to mark Guyana's becoming a republic. In 1990, the statue was restored and relocated to its original location. In 1990, the statue was restored and returned to its original location. It was vandalized again in 2018, when the Queen Victoria statue was defaced with red paint before being restored (INews 2018). Similarly, in 1960, the statue of Queen Juliana of the Netherlands was vandalized and later cleaned (Groenewould 2024, 136). The Empress Joséphine statue was beheaded in 1991 and has faced repeated attacks ever since (McGinnis 2022, 1070–1071).

Resistance to colonialism, reflected in the treatment of statues from this period, has persisted into the twenty-first century. Two notable movements were the Rhodes Must Fall in 2015, led by students in South Africa who called for the removal of Cecil Rhodes at the University of Cape Town. Rhodes was a colonial-era explorer viewed by South Africans as a symbol of the conquest and exploitation of Africa in the nineteenth century. In 2016, protests also occurred at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom, calling for the removal of the statue of Rhodes at Oxford. His legacy was viewed by protestors as an extension of British imperialism (Abraham 2021, 4). In 2020, the Black Lives Matter movement erupted in the United States of America in response to the murder of an unarmed Black man, George Floyd. This sparked protests against racism, colonialism and police brutality across the USA and other parts of the world, such as the United Kingdom and the Caribbean. Some monuments became sites of protests for the public, such as the statue of Edward Colston, a slave trader, that was toppled and dumped into a harbour in Bristol. In addition, a statue of Winston Churchill was defaced in London, and in Cape Town, South Africa, a statue of Cecil Rhodes was decapitated (Abraham 2021, 2). In Martinique, in 2020, local politicians temporarily removed the Empress Josephine statue to quell tensions since it had been the subject of attacks before; it was ultimately destroyed in that year (Gyssels 2022, 117). Two statues of Schoelcher were toppled in 2020 in Martinique, and in 2021, a statue in his honour that was erected in 1998 to mark the 150 years since slavery ended was decapitated (Gyssels 2022, 120). In 2020, in Guadeloupe, a bust of Schoelcher was removed. In that same year, the Christopher Columbus statue, which was donated to the city of Port of Spain in Trinidad and Tobago in 1881, was defaced with red paint (Rampersad, 2020). In 2020, the controversial Lord Nelson Statue was decommissioned and removed from its plinth in Bridgetown by the state after renewed protests called for his removal (Ramsay 2024, 91). In 2025, the Christopher Columbus statue was removed from the corner of Duncan Street and Independence Square in Port of Spain (Doughty, 2025).

Anti-colonial monuments

Commemoration of anti-colonial resistance by post-independence governments is an example of agency to take back the cultural and political capital that it takes to erect monuments in public spaces. This became an effort to include anti-colonial monuments which celebrated the agency of enslaved people and their resistance, in order for future generations to know that African enslavement occurred, and also to gain knowledge of the notable figures who played prominent roles in resistance to slavery. In the West Indies, emancipation monuments are some of the sculptural celebrations of the achievement of freedom. These include Le Maroon Inconnue de Saint-Domingue, (The Unknown Maroon) installed in Haiti in 1967; the 1763 Monument built in Guyana in 1976 which is popularly identified as Cuffy, the leader of that slave revolt (Conduru 2021, 7); the Emancipation Statue in Barbados, which was erected in 1985 and has been personified as the Bussa Statue regarding Bussa being associated as the leader of the slave revolt of 1816; the Desenkadená (Unchained) monument installed in 1998 in Curaçao (4); and Jamaica's Redemption Song erected in 2003 which consists of two large naked bronze figures, male and female (Dacres 2004). Installed in the waters of Grenada in 2006 is Vicissitudes, an underwater sculptural group which has been related to the slave trade (Conduru 2021, 6). In Dominica stands the Nèg Mawon Emancipation Monument, installed in 2013. Fourteen busts and statues of Toussaint L'Ouverture, the famed leader of the Haitian Revolution, have been erected across the world in places such as Haiti, Benin, Canada, Cuba, France and the United States of America, projecting L'Ouverture and the Haitian Revolution on a global scale (Matthews 2022, 568).

In the Caribbean, two notable post-colonial monuments that are representations of enslaved women as resistors against African enslavement are the memorials to one of Jamaica's national heroes, Nanny, the Queen of the Maroons and Guadeloupe's Solitude. In the eighteenth century, Nanny was a leader of the Maroons who played an instrumental role during the First Maroon War against the British in the early eighteenth century. Known for her guerrilla warfare tactics and for being an obeah practitioner, Nanny promoted the

retention of African culture among the Maroons. Maroons defied the system of slavery as runaway slaves who created their own communities in the face of a system that was built upon owning and controlling Black bodies. For a woman to be the leader of the Maroons, who defied the plantation society and economy, was a remarkable feat against White men who were at the pinnacle of West Indian society. Patricia Dacres, however, argues that although Nanny is recognized for her role and contributions to Jamaica, the opportunity presented itself to offer a broadened role of women or ordinary people in affecting historical change through the Nanny monument. Instead, she has been "interpreted in a type of masculine discourse of the warrior and the idea that social and historical processes are guided by great men" (2004, 152).

Solitude, a pregnant slave woman who resisted the reinstatement of slavery in Guadeloupe in 1802, was captured and hanged after giving birth in that same year. Her resilience is captured in a life-sized sculpture of an expecting mulatto woman, which was unveiled in 1999. Laura McGinnis asserts that the sculpting of the Solitude statue has simultaneously materialized and sexualized the female body. "Her pregnancy is emphasised by the tie below her waist and her contrapposto pose, while her body is eroticised by her pout, her visible cleavage and her bodice falling off her left shoulder" (2019, 137). McGinnis notes that this "simultaneously eroticised and maternal portrayal appears incongruous with her active role in resistance and detracts from the monument's radical potential in its rare depiction of a female resistor" (137).

For the most part, emancipation statues in the Caribbean reinforce violent male resistance, contributing "to the glorification of masculine physicality through a single, recognizably male figure, often bearing the broken chains from which he has liberated himself" (McGinnis 2022, 1078). In the process of "rewriting the imperial associations of classical statuary, the anti-colonial monuments of Cuffy, Nèg Mawon, Bussa "perpetuate the masculinist iconography of the maroon, which arguably results in a one-dimensional portrayal of this symbolic figure and obscures the resistance of enslaved women (1078).

Post-Independence Monuments

Caribbean-born figures have recently come to be revalorized in the region, not only through the Maroon, but through the numerous statues erected in the post-independence Anglophone Caribbean which celebrate the contributions of citizens such as politicians, intellectuals, trade unionists, athletes, cultural practitioners and national heroes. The following is not an extensive survey of memorials in the Caribbean but a brief mention of some monuments to contextualize the discussion of the disparity in the number of memorials that celebrate the male hero as compared to regarding individual women as worthy of commemoration as well.

Among the men memorialized in the Caribbean are the region's two Nobel Laureates of Saint. Lucia, Sir William Arthur Lewis, who received the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1979 and Sir Derek Walcott, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1992. Cricket is one of the most popular sports in the Caribbean. West Indian cricketers, particularly those who emerged in the nationalist era of the 1960s to 1980s, dominated the cricketing world, winning test series against England, Australia and other teams, securing several World Cup cricket victories. For their forging of a regional identity and dominance in this sport, several cricketers have been immortalized in the form of statues, including Sir Garfield Sobers of Barbados, Sir Vivian Richards of Antigua and Barbuda, George Headley of Jamaica, and Brian Lara of Trinidad and Tobago in these islands.

Several memorials to public figures who made an international impact across the world have been erected in the West Indies. These include monuments commemorating Simón Bolívar, a Venezuelan military and political leader who was instrumental in the secession of Latin America from the Spanish Empire. Monuments to Bolivar can be found in Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. Monuments honouring Indian nationalist leader Mahatma Gandhi are located in Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname and Jamaica. Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican-born political activist known for his ideas of Black empowerment and initiatives such as the Universal Negro Improvement Association and the Black Star Line in

the early twentieth century, became Jamaica's first national hero. His statue is located at the National Heroes Park in Jamaica and in other locations in the region, such as Trinidad and Tobago.

The commemoration of politicians is a hallmark of Caribbean public statuary. There are statues honouring Sir Grantley Adams, the only Prime Minister of the Federation of the West Indies and Errol Walton Barrow, the first Prime Minister of Barbados, who led the island into independence. In Saint Lucia, there is a statue of Sir John Compton, the only person to be Chief Minister and Premier of Saint Lucia, and the one who led Saint Lucia into independence, as well as a bust of Sir George Charles, a trade unionist and politician. In Jamaica, there are several monuments erected to pay homage to politicians, namely Norman Manley, the first and only Premier of Jamaica, Sir Alexander Bustamante, the first Prime Minister of Jamaica and Michael Manley, one of the island's Prime Ministers. In Antigua and Barbuda, a monument stands to Vere Cornwall Bird, the first Prime Minister of the twin-island nation, who transitioned the island from a colony to an independent country.

Conversely, in the Anglophone Caribbean, female politicians, Prime Ministers, Presidents or Governors-General have not become part of public art, despite their significant contributions to public life. To date, five women have risen to the highest office of Prime Minister. The first was Dame Eugenia Charles of Dominica, followed by Janet Jagan, who served as Prime Minister and President of Guyana, Portia Simpson-Miller of Jamaica and Kamla Persad-Bissessar of Trinidad and Tobago and Mia Mottley of Barbados, each of whom served two terms. Mottley also was the first woman in the region to transition a country to a republic in 2021. In Barbados, Dame Nita Barrow was the island's first Governor-General, followed by Dame Sandra Mason, who later became the island's first President. Paula-Mae Weekes, the first female President of Trinidad and Tobago, served as the twin-island republic's sixth president, succeeded by Christine Kangaloo. These women represent a small but significant group who has reached the highest echelons of political power.

Women have always been central to the development of Caribbean society. For example, "women protested Crown Colony rule and lobbied for the franchise across the region; and from Belize to the Bahamas, joined in the labour protests of the 1930s and demanded political rights—such as the right to join Unions as well as the right to vote and participate in representational politics" (Shepherd 2014, 281). Although women's contributions to political life have been evident, postcolonial monuments in the Caribbean continue to "exemplify the marginalized or absent role of women as political and historical actors" (Dacres 2004, 152). Highlighting female Prime Ministers, Governors-General and Presidents is not to suggest that these are the only women deserving commemoration; rather if these prominent women who have such high-profile public roles remain unrecognized, the visibility of the everyday woman in state-sponsored public statuary becomes a more challenging feat.

Despite the limited representation of women as political actors in postcolonial monuments, some progress has been made in the Anglophone Caribbean during the twenty-first century through the installation of statues honouring women by the state. Jamaica has taken a leading role in this regard in relation to statues of individual women erected by the state. This circumstance is contextualized by Jamaica's history of achievement in track and field. Many of its statues commemorate female athletes, reflecting the country's achievements in sport and the recognition of women who have excelled in visible arenas outside of politics. Merlene Ottey became the first female athlete to be honoured in Jamaica with a statue in 2005. Ottey was one of the best sprinters of all time, winning many medals at the World Games and the Olympics. Shelly-Ann Fraser Pryce and Veronica Campbell-Brown are two more outstanding athletes whose glory has been immortalized in bronze in 2018 and 2019, respectively. Fraser Pryce's statue captures her running form with one fist punching through the air, while Campbell Brown's statue has captured her athletic form with her hands outstretched and her head tilted to the sky. Jamaica is also known for its cultural icons, such as Bob Marley, who is also immortalized in a statue in Kingston, but other women artists in reggae and dancehall have yet to achieve this feat. In terms of female cultural icons, in

2018, Jamaican poet, folklorist, actress and advocate for the use of Jamaican Creole Louise Bennett-Coverley was memorialized in a statue with her hands outstretched and mouth open as if she is engaging with an audience.

Two other countries which have made some progress regarding memorializing women are Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados. In Trinidad and Tobago, statues and busts of actual women were also added to the landscape in the twenty-first century, not by the state, but through individual and community-based efforts. In 2014, the statue of parang singer and composer Alexandra Daisy Voisin was added to the landscape of South Trinidad, Siparia. In 2015, calypsonian McCartha Lewis, popularly known as Calypso Rose, presented a wood sculpture of herself to government officials in Tobago, which was later presented to the Tobago Museum in Scarborough. In 2022, a statue of an Indian indentured labourer, Ajee Soogharee Jattan, was unveiled in honour of the sacrifices and contributions of female indentured labourers to Trinidad and Tobago (Jahgoo 2024, 144).

In Barbados, while there are no statues to individual women, two of Barbados' national heroes, Sarah Ann Gill a free coloured woman who is heralded for her fight to preserve Methodism during African enslavement and Robin 'Rihanna' Fenty, international superstar, business woman and billionaire are part of the Monument to the Barbadian Family installed in 2023 in National Heroes Square in Bridgetown. Their images are part of a stone monument, which celebrates the family and Barbados' eleven national heroes. Another memorial was placed in 2010 at the site of James Street Methodist Church in Bridgetown, paying homage to Gill, and an additional Rihanna monument was unveiled in 2017 near her childhood home in Westbury New Road, renamed Rihanna Drive (Ramsay 2024, 93-94).

In the Anglophone Caribbean, public art includes not only statues of individual women but also representations of womanhood as part of broader monuments. Notable examples include the 2005 Rock Hall Freedom Monument in Barbados, an artistic interpretation of a family of freed slaves (Ramsay 2024, 92), and the

2022 Yoruba statue in Trinidad and Tobago, which features both an African man and woman (Jahgoo 2024, 144). While post-colonial statues of women predominantly celebrate Black women, it is important to acknowledge that women of all racial and ethnic backgrounds have played a role in the development of West Indian society. The issue of re/presentation in public art, therefore, carries a racial dimension: colonial era monuments mainly portrayed White European women, while post-colonial memorials have tended to privilege Black women. This selective visibility must be broadened to include, for example, Asian women brought as indentured labourers in the nineteenth century, as well as Indigenous, Jewish, Syrian, and other women who form part of West Indian society.

Women's contributions in the Anglophone Caribbean have historically been undervalued in public memory. This invisibility arguably has been systemic. The gender imbalance in public statuary has implications for societal norms. While there is "an unlimited number of male role models in the public eye for young men to emulate" (Reeder 2018, 123), the same cannot be said of female role models for young women in the Caribbean to emulate. Gendered monuments reinforce and naturalize male privilege, although women, too, have contributed to freedom, activism, and nation-building in the Caribbean. Expanding the visibility of women can "create a narrative where women are more visible in public spaces, countering a male dominance of public statuary and national memory" (Ramsay 2024, 94). Rethinking monuments, memory and identity in the Caribbean is critical in the promotion of inclusive monuments. Further, it is not simply an act of including women but placing emphasis on the importance of how they are re/presented.

Conclusion

Public statuary in the Anglophone Caribbean has historically privileged men, reflecting colonial, patriarchal, and racial hierarchies. Colonial monuments celebrated European monarchs and officials, while post-independence memorials largely honour male political, cultural, and athletic figures. The post-independence period, however, demonstrates a growing recognition of women's roles, exemplified in statues of athletes, cultural icons, political leaders, and figures of resistance. These monuments challenge the gendered and racial hierarchies of public memory, though their numbers remain limited and uneven across the region. The selective visibility of women, alongside the predominance of male figures, underscores the importance of engaging with public art as a site where gender, race, and power intersect.

There is a need to re-examine how Black and Indigenous peoples are represented and incorporated in public monuments in the reshaping of collective memory. In order to dismantle systemic sexism and racism, the idea of history must be redressed, including hegemonic histories that produced "heroes" while marginalizing and rendering invisible other groups. It is important to continue to question how monuments continue to inhabit public spaces and normalize relations of unequal power. The celebration of more women and their legacies in public art can reshape a male-centric depiction of history. Creating public monuments celebrating women of all races and ethnicities in the Caribbean can help increase female visibility, reframe public consciousness on historical figures through the integration of women into official narratives, and bring to the fore the contributions of women to Caribbean history. More inclusive monuments can be a source of empowerment and encouragement to women and men in the present and in the future.

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