Beyond the gift shop: the agency of design in the making of Glasgow Women’s Library

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Sisterhood is Powerful, Reading List T Shirt series, designed for Glasgow Women’s Library by Kaisa Lassinaro and Maeve Redmond, 2019
Exhibition detail, *Studio 58, Women artists in Glasgow since WW2* Glasgow School of Art, 2012 foreground, right, self-defence garments by Adele Patrick, circa 1985
Façade of Glasgow Women’s Library, Garnethill, 1991, photo, Adele Patrick
Glasgow Women’s Library is the only Accredited Museum in the UK dedicated to women’s lives, histories and achievements, with a lending library, archive collections and innovative programmes of public events & learning opportunities.

Vote 100: The Moving Story
To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Representation of the People Act, GWL has developed an animated web resource highlighting the forgotten heroines who have campaigned for women across the world to have the right to vote.

Other News from the Library
Moving Mountains: Visioning Intersectional Feminist Leadership
Adele writes about her ‘productive pause’ in 2018/19, after 27 years as a volunteer and staff team member at GWL, to undertake a Clore Fellowship. You can get a flavour of the wide range of activities, visits and
Façade, Glasgow Women’s Library, Bridgeton, 2020
Visitors to Glasgow Women’s Library, *Chandelier of Lost Earrings* by Lauren Sagar and Sharon Campbell, Tall Tales exhibition, 2016
Fiona Jack, *Our Red Aunt* exhibition, detail of stitched samples, Glasgow Women’s Library, 2018
Sample of web pages created to promote 21 Revolutions project original commissioned prints, podcasts of new writings and publication.
Artist Ruth Barker working with the GWL poster collection, 2012, ahead of her commissioned work for 21 Revolutions exhibition and publication.
21 Revolutions Podcast: Jackie Kay

By Laura | Published 21st March, 2014

In the nineteenth of our Glasgow Women's Library podcasts Jackie Kay reads her 21 Revolutions pieces, Undercoat, Model House and Ingrid McClements’ Papers, and talks about her inspiration behind the work.

About 21 Revolutions

To mark the Library’s 21st anniversary in 2012, and with the support of funding from Creative Scotland and Museums Galleries Scotland, GWL commissioned 21 women writers and 21 women artists to create new work inspired by items and artefacts in our collections.
Ruth Barker, prints commissioned for the 21 Revolutions project, Glasgow Women’s Library, 2012
We Thought We Were Going to Change the World

Margaret Ephrussi

in the archives of Glasgow Women’s Library there is a slider of badges from the late 1970s, the mid 1980s. They’re things like “Support Women’s Rights,” “Women’s Rights Now,” “Give Peace a Chance,” “Peace through Social Justice.” There are home-made badges for local events, and badges with internationally known symbols. There are badges proclaiming sexuality and personal power, support for local groups, and allegiances to international feminist, civil rights and peace movements.

I usually have a drawer full of such badges myself, which I store fancy or circumstance suggested. Why didn’t I keep any? Where have they gone?

These badges belong to a particular aesthetic that is no longer history. Feminists now seldom use these badges as a message towards proclaiming personal tastes, ideology or allegiance. Feminism is no longer a highly visible public space, in the form of notes, flyers, banners, badges, printed pieces, theatres, art and literature. Recently, the bookshop and feminist writing in Scotland and England, in its bathhouse, a collage of postcards of the 1970s and 1980s, featuring women’s banners which were used on rallies and protests. Seeing those postcards in the 2000s was like looking back through the wrong end of a telescope. When I watched those banners like those, I didn’t perceive them as a particular aesthetic response to a definite historical moment. The aesthetic of the women’s banners of second wave feminism were traditional women’s crafts, such as quilting and embroidery, in ethno designs inspired by the color and vividness of Mexican and South American textile arts, and have been published on nineteenth-century art. The banners seem exuberantly cheerful in their protest against oppression and militarization. They suggest a possible alternative, offering hope for the future through celebration of female and ethnic aesthetics, in apparent opposition to grey, face-painted women’s art works of folk art, although the feminist homegrown aesthetic was everywhere. It was fueled by high art, theatre and women’s art, with its tie-in to London to see the exhibition of the Dinner Party by Judy Chicago, in which thirty-nine women, women, some historical, some mythical, were represented by place settings and a massive dinner table. It was mounted and it was mounted to the dinner table, looking at the settings over and over again. It was one of those experiences which twisted my perspective in the world, altering it just a little, but forever.

It represented something about being a woman who had not been in America before, because nothing of my background or education taught me to understand gender in quite that way. It contained so many things about feminism I thought were powerful. But, now that I see them in a different light, I have been through new experiences. Encountering second wave feminism in popular culture and high art, in early adulthood, it seemed to me these images, this new aesthetic, reflected something (perhaps the women’s banners made myself. They changed what I always knew, by apparently expressing for the first time what I was.

In order to understand fully the impact of feminism in the late 1960s, one has to remember what our world was like before it was typical of these early feminists in being white, middle-class, well-educated, and English. As an attempt to understand the many experiences that did not experience, I came to the Civil Rights Movement through the music of Joan Baez and Bob Dylan. But it was only when encountered early feminists that truly felt that the struggle was to my own generation. When I look back at the seven demands of the Women’s Liberation Charter of the early 1970s, I am sure that I grew up in a society where a demand for equal pay for equal work, equal education and equal opportunities, equal participation and not discrimination on demand, legal and political independence for women, and an end to discrimination against women, was regarded as radical and often ridiculous left-wing heresy. The first, six demands are now mostly accepted by mainstream society. The expectation is that they will be met, and most people are pretty blindfolded when they do not.

Economically and politically we have come a long way in the UK. The seventh demand makes us feel unfortunate, but “women for all women from discrimination from the threat or use of violence or sexual coercion, regardless of marital status, and end to all laws, assumptions and institutions that perpetuate male dominance and men’s aggression towards women.” It strikes me that the more unequal society we live in, the more women will continue to suffer discrimination and aggression. While many of the demands of the Women’s Liberation Movement (WLM) have been met, such victory is undermined by economic and within a society that grew increasingly unequal as the years pass.
**Serves 4 People**

**INGREDIENTS**
- 1 1/2 cup wholewheat chapati flour
- 1/2 cup gram flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 green chilli, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon carom seeds
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 big spoon ghee
- Handful of coriander, chopped

**METHOD**
Mix all the ingredients in a bowl then use cold water — slowly, slowly — to make the dough. Take a ball of dough with your hands, dip it in the dry flour, then roll it out into a circle (about 3mm thick). Put the roti in some dry flour so it doesn’t stick. Put the roti on a hot tava. 1 minute on each side, then put a little bit of oil on both sides and cook again, both sides, not for too long. With this have butter, yoghurt and tea.

**She’s got her whole life, now is her time to study.**

*I don’t want her to be stuck in the kitchen.*
Slogan Mugs, Sally Hackett, part of the From Glasgow Women’s Library product range, 2018 Phot: Caro Weiss
Objects from the GWL suffragette collection that inspired the charms created for GWL by Ruth Ewan and Joy BC, photo: Caro Weiss
Feminist charms, Ruth Ewan and Joy BC, part of a series of products From Glasgow Women’s Library 2018
Bridgeton, Women’s Library sketchbook, Finch and Fouracre, part of a series of products From Glasgow Women’s Library, 2018
Cushion, Donna Wilson, part of a series of products From Glasgow Women’s Library, 2018
Reading List T-Shirt:
Woman on the Edge of Time
READING LIST designed by KAISA
LASSINARO & MAEVE REDMOND
Made by BAR ONE CLOTHING
Fairtrade, organic cotton t-shirt
S/M/L/XL
£25.00

Reading List T-Shirt:
The Living Mountain
READING LIST designed by KAISA
LASSINARO & MAEVE REDMOND
Made by BAR ONE CLOTHING
Fairtrade, organic cotton t-shirt
S/M/L/XL/XXL
£25.00

Votes for Women Book Cushion
Votes for Women Book Cushion designed and made by DONNA WILSON
100% lambswool cushion
The cushions are now back in stock!
£80.00

Reading List T Shirt series, designed for Glasgow Women’s Library by Kaisa Lassinaro and Maeve Redmond, 2019
GWL products designed by Women of Wevolution, 2018
Muriel Spark book covers designed for GWL by Glasgow School of Art illustration students to mark Spark centenary 2019
Sisterhood is Powerful, poster exhibition curated by GWL Designer in Residence, Kirsty McBride, 2017
GWL Makes You Think stickers

Glasgow Women's Library Makes You Think – and our stickers add a splash of colour to your notebook, bag, wall, or anywhere you place them!

Designed for GWL by Maeve Redmond and Sophie Dyer as part of our 'GWL Makes You Think' campaign, these 7cm stickers are a bright, bold and striking way to show your support for Glasgow Women's Library.

Just £1 each (including postage & packing), these stickers are available in two colour combinations: pink and yellow, and blue and yellow.

£1.00
SOLD OUT

Limited Edition Runners-Up Tote Bag

Our new Limited Edition GWL Tote Bag celebrates the power of women who are Runners-Up.

Made with 100% fairtrade cotton. This bag is very strong and fully lined.
Women on the Shelf, section dividers/sponsorship blocks designed by Kirsty McBride
GWL’s Women on the Shelf campaign raised over £40,000 enabling the completion of a major capital refurbishment in 2017
Cristina Garriga, My Bookcase, Speaking Volumes, Glasgow International Festival of Visual Arts, Glasgow Women’s Library 2016
Detail of Redstockinged Women’s Quiz night, Glasgow Women’s Library, 2018
Audience and members of Collect:if, GWL’s Women of Colour creatives group who curated Herland accessible salon, 2016.
March of Women, 2014, a collaboration between GWL and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.
Sedna (Abuse is Ancient) Mandy Macintosh, Hoardings outside Glasgow Women’s Library, 2015
Bower of Bliss, Linder, a commissioned flag and film with accompanying film and exhibition for Glasgow Women’s Library, Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art, 2018
Post Fellowship Research

Moving Mountains: Questioning and visioning intersectional feminist leadership in cultural organisations

An excerpt from Adele's sixth notebook on the Clore Leadership Fellowship which asks a significant question in the research:

Tell me about one instance of innovation where you resisted, converted and implemented change using feminist approaches?

Adele was successful in securing funding for Post Fellowship Research from Clore and AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council). This research was supervised by Helena Reckitt, Goldsmith's University and was supported by contributions by GWI, staff Board and volunteers.
Is the programme/organisation centred on a ‘default’ human?

Am I represented?

How am I represented?

Does this speak to my experience?

Do I learn more about the agency of my community of identity?

Does it increase my ability to tap into my own agency?

The building

- Am I treated with respect and dignity?
- Am I treated as ‘other’?
- Is my ability to access the programme seen as an adaption?

Programming

Governance

Leadership

Recruitment

Communication

Thain-Gray, 2018
Analysing intersectionality identity

Embedded experiences of discrimination
SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES
- Systemic Violence
- Incarceration
- Income Disparity
- Immigration

SANKOFA.ORG
- Collaborates with grassroots organizations
- Supports artists
- Supports events
- Supports theatre
- Supports films

TO ADDRESS
- Music
- Art
- Events
- Theatre
- Films

TO CREATE, MARKET & PROMOTE
- Shine a light on the issues
- Drive donations & sales of content

TO SUPPORT
- Supporting & funding
- Grassroots partners
- Sankofa Justice & equity fund

THE RESULT
- Attention
- Action
- Cultural shift
- Policy change
Thank You.

www.womenslibrary.org.uk

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