



Glasgow Women's Library

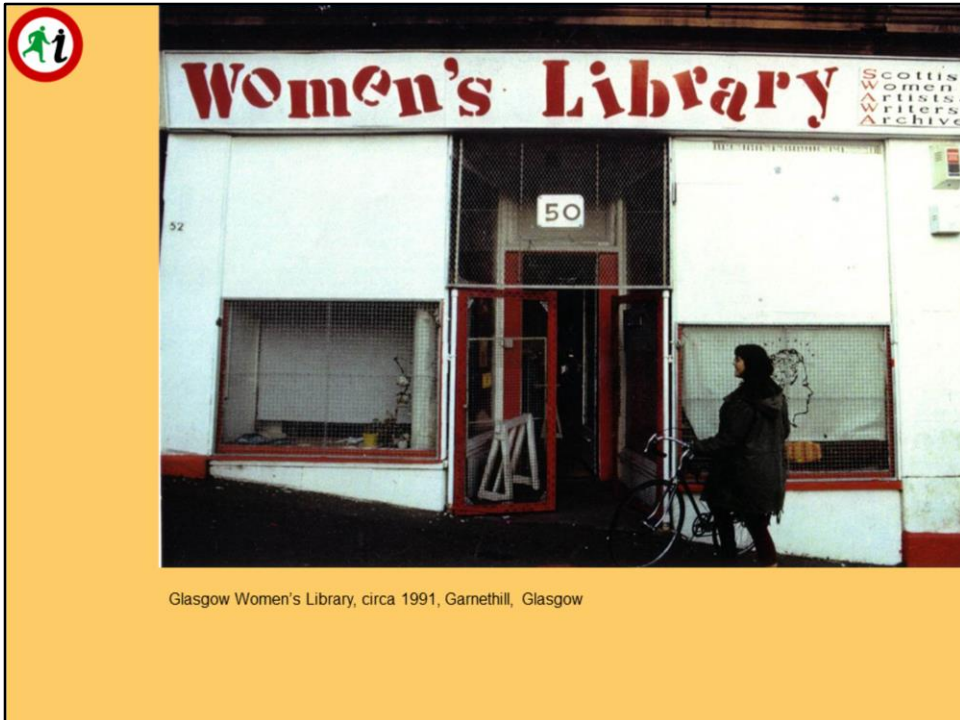
Adele Patrick
Creative Development
Manager

Welcome to GWL. We would like to share 6 minute summaries of aspects of our work to give you a flavour of who we are, what we do and importantly how we do it. I will start by highlighting the ways we are exceptional and innovative with a focus on the milestone year 2017



Traditionally museums focus on objects and collections care, (and secondarily on how people can use and access them). GWL was developed by, and has always included the hard to reach, or as we prefer to say the easy to ignore. Here, equality and diversity are at the core, inclusion has been the default approach from the outset. We have grown from the grass roots into a Recognised Collection of National Significance, keeping the focus pulled on our values.

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Glasgow Women's Library, circa 1991, Garnethill, Glasgow

For the first decade, from 1991, GWL was a volunteer led organisation with no funding source. Women from very different backgrounds created a crucible for change (a space, resource and collection) a new institution built in response to the absence or erasure of women's diverse histories from the cultural and heritage sectors.



In the lead up to Glasgow becoming European City of Culture in 1990 GWL's founders were convinced that unless we acted, the city's culture, past and present, would be experienced by locals and international visitors as overwhelmingly represented by white men. GWL was forged in a challenging cultural and political climate, in a city with a mythologised masculinised history and now with the city fathers keen to champion a new vanguard as standard bearers of the regenerating city, significantly dubbed The New Glasgow Boys.



Women in The City, Jacki Parry limited edition print commissioned by Glasgow Women's Library, as part of *21 Revolutions* exhibition.

Parry changed the street names in Glasgow to the names of women cited on GWL's heritage walks. The renamed zones correlate to the areas where GWL was located 1991-2014.

The Library community resisted, insisting both on a more plural account of women's historic contributions to Scotland (reflected in a new collection) and committed to literally making space for contemporary cultural contributions by women.



Glasgow Women's Library, Trongate premises, circa 1993, photo: Ruth Clark

Our origin story is one of resistance and courage and of subsequent ongoing bravery, innovation and collaborative working. The involvement of thousands of participants has resulted, 27 years on, in a thriving, multi faceted cultural enterprise.



Glasgow Women's Library archive and museum community curators working with the National Museum of Roller Derby collection created by artist, Ellie Harrison.

Now working in a dramatically evolved more representative cultural context (which our work has helped to bring about) we employ 22 staff specialised in access and inclusion, working in life-changing ways with over 100 volunteers.



GWL have achieved exceptional levels of ownership, engendered a culture of productive risk taking, confidence and creative thinking across the organisation. Each step change in our history has been taken with an increased prioritising of inclusion.



15 years before we employed a museum professional, our first paid workers focussed on connecting the Lesbian Archive to young women experiencing homophobia. Our full time BaME worker joined the team 11 years ago a decade before the first collections employee and we have employed a full time literacy worker and had daily ESOL classes since 2004.



The catalysing agency of creatives has shaped GWL from the outset. We have worked with over 300 artists, writers performers and filmmakers in the past decade alone. Artists and writers were amongst GWL's founders and unusually for the museum sector our senior managers are trained artists.



March of Women, a collaboration between GWL and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

We have writers and architects on our Board and strong links with institutions such as Glasgow School of Art and the Royal Scottish Conservatoire and National Theatre of Scotland.



Our groundbreaking approach to developing a ‘museum for all’ is evident across our governance, programming, recruitment, operations and strategy. Equality is intrinsic in our business and strategic planning and our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan is used by the whole team in dynamic, motivating ways.

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The screenshot shows the website 'womenscotland.org.uk/memorials'. The main heading is 'Mapping Memorials to Women in Scotland'. Below the heading are navigation links: 'About the project', 'The Memorials Map', 'Get Involved', 'Add to the map', and 'Contact Us'. The central content area contains text explaining that the map shows all mapped memorials to women in Scotland, with instructions to click on markers for more information or to search for memorials in a specific area. It also notes that the records are not complete and encourages users to help by finding more. A map of Scotland is displayed with many blue location markers. Below the map, there are instructions on how to use the map's controls (pan, zoom, search) and links to view recently added records and a list of all women. A sidebar on the right contains a search bar and a list of links: 'About the project', 'Who is involved?', 'Press information', 'Latest news', 'Contact us', 'Acknowledgements', 'The Memorials Map', 'A-Z of women', 'Search the site', 'How to get involved', 'How to add a memorial', 'Find us on Facebook', 'Follow us on Twitter', 'Share your images with our FB&W group', 'The Women of Scotland project has been developed by Glasgow Women's Library and Women's History Scotland with support from Glasgow City Council', and 'The Women of Scotland website is powered by Drupal. Brandtastic theme by Helen MacDonald © GWL & WHS 2016'. The logo for 'Women's History Scotland' is also visible.

Our Mapping Memorials to Women in Scotland website project has been developed in collaboration with Women's History Scotland and Girlguiding Scotland

GWL has forged productive links and collaborates across the voluntary, cultural, arts, museums, archives and library sectors and with academic institutions. In 2017 we worked with over 200 partner organisations, from the Palace of Westminster to Her Majesty's prisons, from Scottish Women's Aid to the Travelling Gallery with whom we collaborated on a new exhibition and mobile museum resource connecting with an audiences of over 5000 from Orkney to the borders.



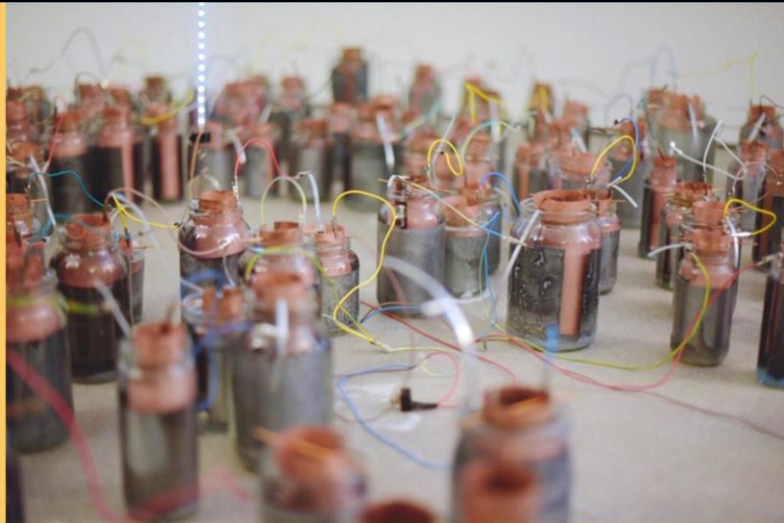
In the same year we delivered 160 events (from Voices of Experience bringing forgotten contributions of pioneering Scottish women architects aged 80 and over together with their younger counterparts in a series of illuminating recorded conversations) to an innovative archive exhibition with the choreographer Janice Parker.

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Sally Hackett, limited edition, hand rendered mugs inspired by GWL zine collection. Part of *From Glasgow Women's Library* merchandise, 2017.

Our view is that the combination of equality, enterprise and creativity has made us into a robustly sustainable museum and created an environment that is inspirational and radically welcoming. The sell out *From Glasgow Women's Library* merchandise developed in 2017 launched at Cubitt Gallery in London typifies our thinking about, for example, what a museum gift shop could be...



Hannah Leighton Boyce, *More Energy than Object, More Force than Form*, (detail) Castlefield Gallery, Manchester, a work developed from a residency at Glasgow Women's Library, 2017.

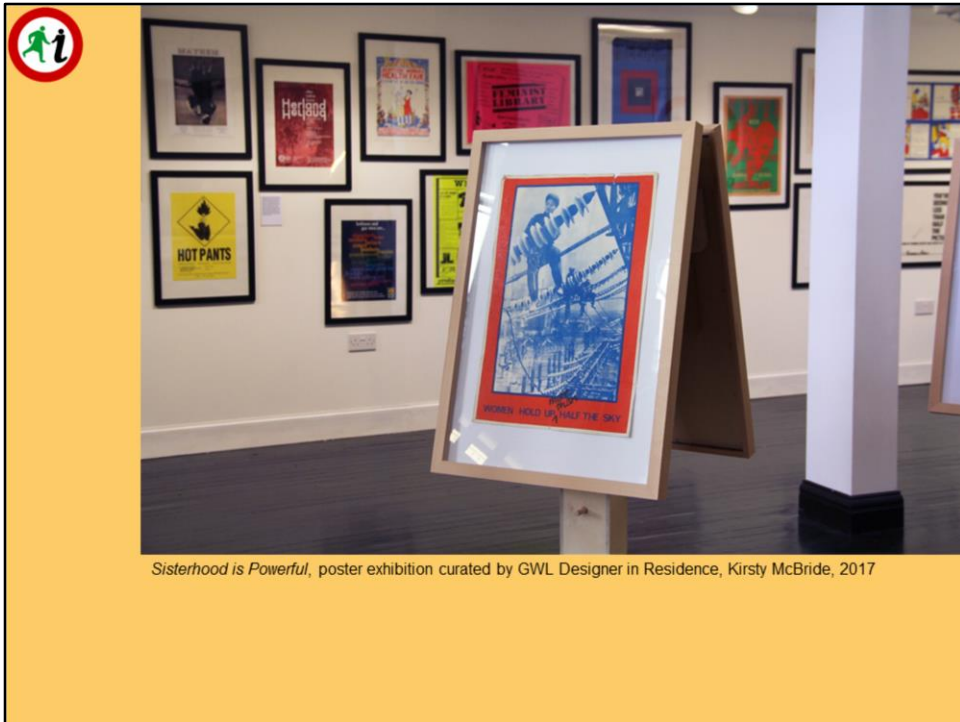
For an organisation with a limited core budget for programming (we had just under £15,000 in 2017) and only a part time Museum Curator we have a disproportionate impact locally and great reach national and internationally. In 2017 we collaborated on a critically acclaimed GWL based Residency and exhibition at Castlefield Gallery Manchester, and works from our collection were loaned and GWL print works bought by Liverpool Walker Gallery, Manchester's People's History Museum and Sheffield City Art Gallery and Museum.



Glasgow Women's Library feature on the cover and their work profiled in a chapter of the *International Women's History Yearbook*, 2017

In 2017 we were active and foregrounded in many national and international discussions, whether at Van Abbe in Eindhoven, keynoting at Museum Galleries Scotland's annual conference and our work featured in many publications.

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GWL's museum model is now the focus for researchers and museum innovators. As colleagues in the mainstream sector (including Mary Beard) are trying to get back to the floor, on any day all our team can be found there, whether Board members, senior managers or archivists and the traditional divide between access and collections has been radically breached.



2017 was the year when our exceptional and innovative organisation came of age: completing a capital build invested in by a wide range of stakeholders including hundreds of individual donors, the commissioning of high profile art stars or making our mark in the international discussions on the future of the sector.



GWL are a unique phenomenon with a singular voice in the museums sector. With the upsurge in demand for the records of activism and the unprecedented media and public interest in intersectional feminism our collections have never been more in demand. However it as a museum that is built on an equalities agenda that GWL is finding itself vividly modelling an institution of acute relevance today.



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Sam Ainsley signing her edition of *This Land is Your Land*, screenprints, 2012 for Glasgow Women's Library's *21 Revolutions* exhibition.



Committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

