

RELATED MATERIALS

The Women's Monument Project Archives 1990-1998
at Simon Fraser University Archives, Burnaby, BC Canada
www.sfu.ca

After The Montreal Massacre (video)
co-produced by NFB Studio D/CBC. 1991
Distributed by National Film Board of Canada

The Montreal Massacre.
Louise Malette & Marie Chalouh, editors.
Marlene Wildeman, translator. gynergy books. 1991

The White Ribbon Campaign
What every man can do to help end men's violence
against women. www.whiteribbon.ca

MARKER OF CHANGE

The Story of the Women's Monument

Executive Producer
Hilary Jones-Farrow

Producer/Writers
Sher Morgan & Pamela Millar

Director
Maira Simpson

Composer
Shari Ulrich

Principal Camera
Pamela Millar
Maira Simpson

Editor
Sher Morgan



Discussion Guide: Sher Morgan, Pamela Millar. Patrice Snopkowski, OutWest Design

MARKER OF CHANGE. *The Story of the Women's Monument* produced in association with BRITISH COLUMBIA FILM, CanWest Television Inc. a member of the CanWest Global System, Canadian Independent Film & Video Fund, Canadian Television Fund, CFCF 12 Montreal, SCN, Telefilm Canada, VISION TV. Contributors B.C. Ministry of Women's Equality, B.C. Ministry of Attorney General, B.C. Ministry of Transportation & Highways, B.C. Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing, Health Canada—National Clearinghouse on Family Violence.



MOVING IMAGES DISTRIBUTION

606-402 W Pender St, Vancouver, BC V6B 1T6 • 800.684.3014 • www.movingimages.ca

Marker of Change

The Story of the Women's Monument

Dec 6, 1989 Montreal. L'École Polytechnique. A man bursts into a classroom of engineering students, separates men from women, yells "you're all a bunch of feminists" and shoots the women to death. Racing through hallways, classrooms, the cafeteria he hunts down his victims. Within twenty minutes 14 women are dead and more are injured.

The Women's Monument 1990-1997 A feminist project realized by a small group of women in collaboration with Capilano College with love for all people.

The Women's Monument Inscription
Murdered December 6, 1989
Université de Montréal

Geneviève Bergeron
Hélène Colgan
Nathalie Croteau
Barbara Daigneault
Anne-Marie Edward
Maud Haviernick
Barbara Marie Klueznick

Maryse Laganière
Maryse Leclair
Anne-Marie Lemay
Sonia Pelletier
Michèle Richard
Annie St-Arneault
Annie Turcotte

We, their sisters and brothers, remember, and work for a better world.
In memory, and in grief for all the women who have been murdered by men.
For women of all countries, all classes, all ages, all colours.

December 6 is Canada's national Day of Remembrance and Action to Stop Violence Against Women.

DISCUSSION THEMES

1. What happened in Montreal on December 6, 1989? How might you have felt as a student at that time? Why did college student Christine McDowell want to build a Women's Monument?

COUNTERING DENIAL

2. The Women's Monument Committee believed to create social change

the monument had to say **who** was murdering women. Christine McDowell: "That's when we found out you can't say who's murdering women. Don't say it. It's all right to say women are being murdered and need to be remembered, but don't say who's doing it." **What was your reaction to the phrase "murdered by men"? How do you feel about the dedication in its entirety? For whom were the words controversial? Why? Why "name the reality"?**

3. Vancouver Park Board Chairperson Nancy Chiavario credits colleagues Tim Louis and Dermot Foley with contextualizing the controversy when they asked: "Who are we afraid of offending? A bunch of murderers?" **Why do you think criticism focused on the monument and the Monument Committee rather than on violence against women?**

4. For many Canadians, the murder of the 14 women in Montreal came to symbolise violence that women experience worldwide. Suzanne LaPlante-Edward: "The Polytechnique tragedy was not an isolated incident...the truth is that women are killed by men everyday in the world." **What is the relationship between the murder of these 14 women and systemic violence experienced by women around the globe?**

5. Vanessa Campbell on violence against women says, "The issue is not what these women looked like or where they came from. The issue is that these are all women who suffer because we are not intervening to save a life or to cherish a life." **In what ways might the Women's Monument contribute to healing for people who have directly or indirectly been hurt by violence?**

FEMINIST PROCESS

6. Capilano College dean Carol McCandless says the intent of the project "was to educate people about the issues around violence against women, but it turned out to be so much more than that." The Women's Monument Committee believed: "The way in which the monument was created was as important as the end product. It needed to empower women."

This statement represents a feminist-informed process. Feminist principles include: consulting with and believing the experience of people directly affected, acting collaboratively, being inclusive, accountable and flexible. **In what ways was the Committee's process different from a conventional construction project? How did the Committee's process impact its' decision-making? How did the Committee respond to criticism?**

CRITICISM

7. Women of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside were critical of the monument for a variety of reasons. In the film, Marion Dean Dubick says: "We don't have Canada-wide coverage of all the women that die right here in the Downtown Eastside. Why is that?...We're right here and we're dying everyday." **How did the Committee respond to this criticism? In what other ways might they have responded?**

THE DESIGN

8. It is estimated 2% of public art in North America is by women. Beth Alber's design incorporates 14 pink granite benches equally spaced in a circle, each bearing the name of one of the 14 murdered women. Carved in the top of each bench is a shallow depression "a scar that will never heal." On the outer face the dedication is inscribed in English, French, Chinese, Hindi, Spanish, Swahili and Chinook jargon. The Circle of Donors forms an outer ring of tiles handstamped with the names of the 6,000 people who contributed to the monument's creation. **How does the women's monument design compare/contrast with memorials in your community?**

Public art and memorials are testaments to the time in which we live. **What does this monument say about the period in which we live?**

Christine McDowell says "The monument was a gamble on the powers of art." **In what ways, if any, do you think art influences people? How has the women's monument story influenced your understanding of violence against women?**

ENDING VIOLENCE

9. At the monument unveiling December 6, 1997, Rosemary Brown says: "This circle is dedicated to peace in the lives of women and it marks our determination to bring about such peace. This circle is a place of remembering. And as we, women and men together, gather here today to remember...we are also here to re-dedicate our lives to the creating of a world that is safe for all its people." **Why do you think individuals/businesses/institutions like Capilano College, Vancouver Park Board, Rock of Ages and Sumas Clay Products chose to support this feminist action against violence? What can we do, as women, as men, and collectively as women and men together, to end violence against women?**