

Her-story Makers

Monuments and murals dedicated to extraordinary women

By Rachel Perry

Rachel dreams of traveling to Spain on her next adventure—and wherever she goes, she'll be on the lookout for monuments dedicated to women.

There's a staggering lack of statues and memorials honoring history-making women. Often represented instead as goddesses, muses, or symbols, it's hard to come by monuments dedicated to real-life women heroes. The ones that do exist are powerful celebrations of women's contributions to their home counties and the world. Here are some of our favorites.

Murasaki Shikibu Statue in Kyoto, Japan

With her flowing hair and robes, this sculpture represents one of the great writers of both Japanese and world literature. Known to history by her name used in the imperial court, Murasaki Shikibu, this 10th-century lady-in-waiting is often credited with writing the world's first novel. Her novel, *The Tale of Genji*, tells of the life and loves of the fictitious Prince Genji. It's still popular today, and has inspired numerous films, anime, musicals, and operas.



Monument to Chabuca Granda in Lima, Peru

In a garden park in Lima, Peru stands this regal statue with her hands up in dramatic fashion. The statue represents María Isabel Granda Larco, better known as Chabuca Granda, a beloved Peruvian singer and composer. Both her lyrics and her voice captured audiences across Peru and her songs have become iconic in Peruvian culture. She's known for her waltzes and Afro-Peruvian rhythms—and for singing with her hands positioned gracefully in the air.

Ingibjörg H. Bjarnason Statue in Reykjavik, Iceland

In 1915, Icelandic women finally gained the right to vote, and when they did, suffragette and schoolteacher Ingibjörg H. Bjarnason was chosen to address Iceland's parliament in a celebratory speech. Seven years later, she was sitting on the opposite side, among the seats of parliament, as the first elected woman in the law-making body. Throughout her political career, she maintained a strong mission of advocating for women's and children's rights.



Eva Peron Mural in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Politician ... activist ... philanthropist ... Eva Perón was everything and more to the people of Argentina. As one of the most celebrated figures in the country's history, many memorials honor her influence. Among those tributes are the gigantic steel portraits on the north and south walls of Argentina's Ministry of Health Building. The south side is her official portrait while the north depicts her giving an impassioned speech. The location is significant as it was where one million people gathered to show their support of her Vice Presidential nomination in 1951.



Monument to Marie Curie in Warsaw, Poland

While many people believe that revolutionary chemist and physicist Madame Curie was French, she actually hails from Warsaw, Poland where this tribute to her is located. Leading pioneering research on radioactivity, she discovered the elements of radium and polonium—and she is seen here holding an artistic symbol for the elements. She was not only the first woman to win a Noble Prize, but she was the first person and only woman to win it twice.

Marije Jurić Zagorke Statue in Zagreb, Croatia

Known by her pen name of Zagorka, Marija Jurić Zagorka was a pioneering Croatian writer for women in journalism and publishing. She's often considered the first woman journalist in Croatia and is still among the most read writers in the nation. From 1925-1938, she published and edited the first Croatian women's magazine and later became a founding member of the Croatian Female Writers' Association. Aside from her statue in Zagreb, her former apartment is now a museum, exhibiting items such as her typewriter.

