

10 Women



Cover Art: Marreya Bailey



Logo and initial design work by Julia Lipovsky

10 ___ Women Report

Briefly outline the project and primary objective.

The project 10 ___ Women celebrates a “first class” of 10 historic women who made an impact on Cincinnati. A few names will be familiar to some, but most are women who are not a part of our collective memories...but should be! The “___” is meant to be a placeholder for an apt descriptor that will distinguish and unite this first class. These women are creative, persistent, subversive, and plucky. Complicated, certainly...and definitely kick-ass.

Women have too often been relegated to the sidelines of history, their accomplishments overlooked or marginalized. Our goal was to share the stories of these largely unheralded women to celebrate what women of the past accomplished and to serve as inspiration what others can accomplish in the present and future.

By engaging artists and current women of note to help share the stories of these remarkable women in history, we sought to create multiple ways for people to experience them. Our goal was to give wider exposure to these 10 women within the Cincinnati community and to make their stories relevant to today. Renewed attention to the women and their accomplishments was particularly fitting now with the current political and social climate surrounding women as well as the centennial anniversary of women’s suffrage.

10 ___ Women utilized several different methods and approaches to share these stories. We created banners with brief biographies and commissioned portraits; we enlisted actresses to portray the women in person and in mini documentary videos; and we hosted an event at the historic Harriett Beecher Stowe House in Walnut Hills that showcased the banners and original artwork and had current women of note share about the 10 historic women. The project will continue online with bios, mini-documentaries, and a digital ebook.

Sarah Fosset
Initial design portfolio photo enhancement
by Julia Lipovsky





How was the project accomplished?

The first “class” of 10 women was selected through input from the community to represent a wide breadth of women and their accomplishments. We began the selection process by compiling a pool of candidates from our own research and “pre-picked” five candidates to ensure sufficient diversity. On February 21, 2019, we held an in-person event at the People’s Liberty offices in which a group of curious participants learned more about 15 fascinating women. Each group selected their top three candidates and shared them with the others, then each participant had three votes to narrow the field to the top four plus a few runner-ups. On March 8 (International Women’s Day), nine of the 10 selections were announced along with a call to the community to crowdsource the final member of the first class, chosen through a Facebook poll. The final woman selected was announced on April 5.

The first class of 10 ____ Women included: Theda Bara, the first sex symbol of the silent film era; Virginia Coffey, a civil rights advocate who helped desegregate Coney Island; Dorothy Dolbey, the first woman to serve as mayor of Cincinnati; Cora Dow, the entrepreneur of the Dow’s Drugs chain of drugstores; Sarah Fossett, an operative in the Underground Railroad who desegregated the city’s streetcars; Dottie Kamenshek, a champion baseball player of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League; Edna Murphey, the founder of Odorono anti-perspirant who changed advertising; Sister Anthony O’Connell, a nun who worked as a field nurse during the Civil War; Jessie M. Partlon, a pioneering journalist and women’s rights activist; and Venus Ramey, the former Miss America who turned to politics.

The project had several avenues to explore the women in a variety of ways to engage audiences in multiple formats and methods. Traditional biographies were written and published in a short booklet that was offered to the public for free. A lengthier version of the biography book that includes more citations and documentation will be forthcoming and will be offered as an ebook for the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County’s Digital Library. (We have reached out to the library but are still in the process of preparing the final manuscript.)

In addition, we sent out a “call to artists” to commission new original portraits of the 10 women by female artists. Due to the outstanding response to our call for artists, an artist was selected for a project “cover image” and an additional six artists were commissioned to create portraits for a future class. Each artist was given free rein to interpret the 10 women, and the resulting portraits represented a wide range of styles and mediums, from painting to woodcutting, photography, embroidery, and felt. The artists did their own research on the women they painted and parlayed their own reactions into the pieces. The artists were: Marraya Bailey, Jennifer Baldwin, Jo Ann Berger, Lauren Darpel, Arielle Goldberg, Natalie Grilli, Sara Leah Miller, Christine Ochs-Naderer, Hannah Parker, Kate Rowekamp, and Jamie Schorsch. The artists who have already created pieces for the next class are: Brenda Grannan, Cheyene Hamberg, Ellis McCarthy, Anissa Pulcheon, Deborah Ridgley, and Nadia Saraiva. The artists retained the original artwork while we have the perpetual rights to use the art for the project, such as on banners, in books, and online.

Portable banners of each woman were designed by graphic artist Steph Landry that incorporated bios, photos, and original art. The banners were put on display as part of a culminating event, and later at an artist show, with the intention of being temporarily exhibited at various locations throughout the city in the future. Vinyl banners were printed at the Main Library’s MakerSpace, which makes them cost-effective for replacement.

Actresses were hired to appear as the 10 women in person as historical re-enactors and in recorded mini-documentary videos filmed and edited by Sydney Cresap to be posted on the website. All artists, designers, and videographers were paid for their work.



Actors: (back row) Dava Lynn, Nicole Cornelius, Rachel Scardina, Mary O’Connell, Blair Godshall; (front row) Julie Locker, Jacqueline Daalema; (not pictured) Burgess Byrd, Patty Grasty, Karen Laven

We hosted a culmination event on June 12, 2019, at Harriet Beecher Stowe House, a historic home and museum located at 2950 Gilbert Ave., in Walnut Hills. For the event, we exhibited the banners and original art throughout the museum while historical re-enactors of the women engaged with visitors. We invited several current women of note to each present on one of the 10 women, to share what they learned about the stories of the historical women as well as how they are inspired by them. The intention was to build a connection between the past and present and to demonstrate the impact and relevance of the historical women to today. The women speakers included: Sharon Coolidge, reporter at *The Cincinnati Enquirer*; Kathyne Gardette, community leader and artist; Lisa Hill, advocate and mother of the late inspirational basketball player Lauren Hill; D. Lynn Meyers, producing artistic director for Ensemble Theatre; Jackie Reau, CEO of Game Day Communications; Mandy Smith, senior pastor of University Christian Church; Molly Wellman, mixologist/bartender and owner of Japp's; Vanessa White, chief of staff of Cincinnati City Councilman Greg Landsman; and Rolanda Wilkerson, Ph.D., principal scientist/senior manager of scientific communications at Procter & Gamble. In the process of the project, we ended up highlighting many times more women than the original 10, including the artists, actresses, graphic designers, and women in the community.



Banners on display with original art at the Harriet Beecher Stowe House

The 10 ____ Women project received publicity through WVXU on John Kiesewetter's blog: <https://tinyurl.com/y42em2ur>; *Movers & Makers* magazine; and *The Cincinnati Enquirer*: <https://tinyurl.com/y3qfsrjf>.

The project continues with a website (<https://www.10womencincinnati.com/>) that, when fully populated, will feature the women's biographies and videos with actresses performing as the women as well as a section documenting the project. Furthermore, a "second class" is in the works with several women already selected and commissioned portraits completed for that class. The banners are scheduled to be on temporary display at a few other locations, with the intent of finding several more exhibition spaces in the future.

Banner display at 3 Points Brewery



What were the biggest barriers?

We don't feel we had barriers with this project, more like challenges or obstacles to overcome. At no point did anyone tell us we couldn't do something. Perhaps our biggest obstacle to overcome was juggling time with our other commitments, our jobs, our family, producing a musical, and writing a book—all during the six-month grant period. Another challenge was moving outside our circle of friends to engage artists and actors that we did not know, and having to let go and trust that others would do what was needed.

How was the project's effectiveness measured and evaluated?

The effectiveness of the 10 ____ Women project can't be measured in numbers alone. Our goal was to share about these remarkable historic women and get them to be better known within the community. We can count how many people participated: we began with two project members and expanded to 17 artists, 10 actresses, 9 speakers, 2 graphic designers, 2 videographers, 1 make-up artist, and on and on. We can count how many people attended the culmination event: whereas we had anticipated about 40-75 people, we had well over 150 in attendance. The staff at the Harriet Beecher Stowe House said for the first time they were concerned about the fire code because so many people were there. We can count how many potential readers were exposed to the article in *The Cincinnati Enquirer* or on Cincinnati.com: in the thousands. But that doesn't tell the whole story. We had several people—people we did not know—come up to us to tell us they had not known anything about these 10 women before, while others offered suggestions for women to be included in the next class. Everyone we spoke to, from the artists to the staff at the Stowe house to people at the public library watching us print the banners, seemed to be intrigued and supportive of the idea of sharing these women's stories. There has been interest from others in us continuing the project and displaying the banners elsewhere. By that measure, the project exceeded expectations.



Banner printing at the MakersSpace

How is the project replicable or scalable?

From the outset, we planned on making the project replicable. The website will soon feature documentation of how we executed the project for others to use as an example and template to repeat. For the future of our project, we made an investment in hard assets, including banner stands and easels, that can be reused. The banners can also be exhibited again and, if damaged, they can be reproduced with minimal cost. Because so much of the project's structure and materials remain usable, most of the funding needed to continue 10 ____ Women with a next

class will go to paying for talent rather than materials. The various methods (i.e., banners, bios, art, actors, speeches) we used to explore the women's stories to address the different ways people learn can be used or easily adapted by other projects even of a different topic. To that end, it is as much the approach to sharing the information and stories that is replicable as it is the specific materials and execution of the project. The project can also be expanded in scope to include resources such as student study guides, school residencies, or other artistic and educational endeavors that are only limited by imagination and budget.

What advice should be given to future grantees?

Trust the process. The folks at People's Liberty have faced and tackled many different setbacks and scenarios. Rely on their experience and advice to keep you moving. Time management and deadlines can be your friend—six months flies by! Give yourself small deadlines to keep the project moving rather than have everything due at one time at the end. Find ways to involve others. We found that by bringing in different perspectives from ourselves—whether from collaborators, fellow grantees, or People's Liberty advisors—we got a more holistic way to think about the project. Everyone is busy, but try to support your fellow grantees by showing up to their projects.

How could People's Liberty improve?

We would love to see the People's Liberty grants continue. While this was the last group of grants, we hope to see more innovative ideas flourish with the support of People's Liberty. We personally benefitted greatly from the many projects and years of experience that People's Liberty has enabled these projects, and we felt the process worked very well.

How has the experience with People's Liberty impacted current goals and future ambitions?

Doing this project with People's Liberty has made us more confident in our abilities. Having the organization and the advisors support us and encourage us has helped to validate our ideas as possible and worthwhile. We feel that we can actually keep the 10 ____ Women project going. Having seen through the first class of the project to a conclusion makes us feel we can do that again. Our experience with People's Liberty also validates that there is value in doing something for the community *for the sake of the community* rather than just for financial compensation.

What are you most proud of?

We wanted to give to our daughter, Dashiell, two things through this project: Not only the example of tackling an ambitious project, but also inspiration of what women can accomplish—what she could accomplish. We are proud of the caliber of artistry that the project attracted. And, we are proud that we saw our vision through and created something that hadn't existed before. There is a special feeling in that. Although we played with many words to describe the 10 women featured in this project (innovative, pioneering, subversive, etc.), our word for our investment was "legacy." We hope that we have laid the groundwork to leave a creative legacy with 10 ____ Women.

Cora Dow, whose legacy and
"hidden history" inspired the project.

