

Project Summary Report

PREPARED FOR

**Bryn Mawr College
The ARCH Project (Art Remediating Campus Histories)
Campus Public Artwork**

PREPARED BY

**Monument Lab
September 21, 2022**

1. About the *ARCH Project*

Bryn Mawr College (BMC) is engaging Monument Lab (ML) on a five-year collaboration to design a process for commissioning a campus public artwork that responds to the legacy of exclusionary practices at the College. Titled, the *ARCH Project* (Art Remediating Campus Histories), this process is informed by engaged campus research that seeks to reckon with, dismantle, and reimagine narratives of the College's history in order to help offer an artistic and reparative vision for its future. This vital work builds on previous and ongoing, College-supported efforts by students, staff, alumni, and faculty to reveal and repair harm, ensuring an honest reckoning with Bryn Mawr College's history and a clear-sighted look at the way to a future of truth-telling and reconciliation.

As part of this process, this past academic year (2021-2022), the College hired a cohort of student researchers to work with Monument Lab to extend an open question to the campus community: ***What stories are missing from Bryn Mawr College?***

As the multi-year process moves toward artistic engagement, this dossier is meant to provide a layered snapshot of the campus, to offer baseline research for artistic inquiries, and a roadmap for ongoing storytelling and engagement.

2. Monument Lab Campus Research – Engagement Report

Summary: Key Themes

To guide year one’s research, Monument Lab and a cohort of student researchers asked the campus community “What stories are missing from Bryn Mawr College?” In-person campus engagement events yielded 300 hand drawn responses to this central question. In analysis of these responses, several strong themes emerged as significant for artistic engagement and further inquiry. These key themes were arrived at through close study and consideration of the full collection of engagement forms by multiple Monument Lab team members and their subsequent discussions.

Evolving Campus Architecture and Spaces of Belonging

How to build and nourish spaces for new narratives amidst a campus largely defined by mighty stone architecture?

Advancing Acknowledgement of Tunnels and their Role on Campus

How to intentionally call attention to the history and enduring presence of passageways originally built to conceal the presence of Black servants, maids, and porters?

Commemorating Support Staff Past and Present

How to more fully incorporate staff into campus public memory, in both honorific and collaborative ways?

Marking the Legacy of the 2020 Strike


How to summon legacies of student activism on campus, especially through 2020’s strike, into physical recognition on campus?

Healing the Psychic Wounds of the Perry House/Perry Garden

How to embrace intergenerational stories of care and resistance on campus for students/staff/faculty of color as central to the campus’ narrative?

Methodology

- ① question
- ② gather
- ③ transcribe + analyze
- ④ reflect

**Monument
Lab**

**WHAT STORIES ARE MISSING
FROM BRYN MAWR COLLEGE?**

NAME YOUR MAP:

SKETCH/DESCRIBE A MAP OF BRYN MAWR COLLEGE'S CAMPUS:
MARK SIGNIFICANT SITES (CURRENT, POTENTIAL, HISTORICAL, AND/OR ERASED)
MAP FROM ANY PERSPECTIVE AND AT ANY SCALE

DESCRIBE YOUR MAP:
WHAT DID YOU CHOOSE TO MARK AND WHY?

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL):

WHAT IS YOUR BRYN MAWR AFFILIATION? (OPTIONAL): STUDENT / STAFF / FACULTY / ALUM
CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY

monumentlab.com **RESEARCH ID (INTERNAL USE):**

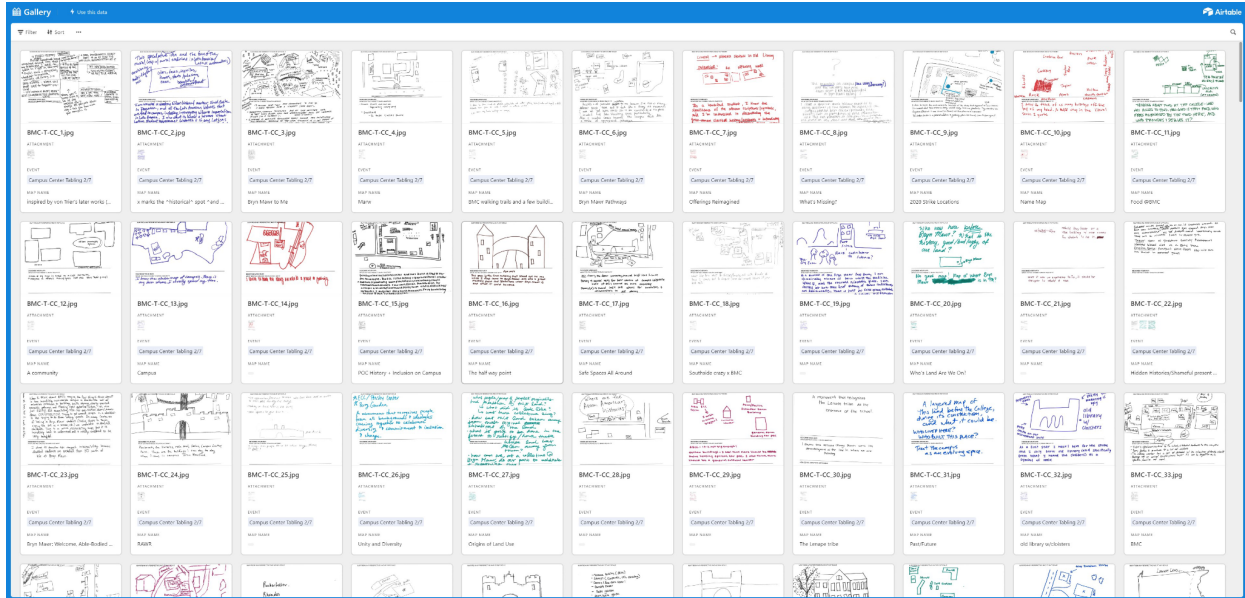
Question

During the 2021-2022 academic year, Monument Lab posed a central research and engagement question to the campus to guide the project: *What stories are missing from Bryn Mawr College?* Rather than seeking a single “winning” response to guide the future commission, we sought to enact a broad collective and creative mapping of the campus across time. The central question aimed to serve the reckoning with, dismantling, and reimagining of narratives of campus history that may offer an artistic and reparative vision for its future. We arrived at this question in order to anticipate grounding the invitation to an artist with a project dossier that reflected a multitude of campus voices – and a campus that was dynamic and open to interpretation.

Gather

Bryn Mawr College hired a cohort of student researchers to work with Monument Lab to extend the research question to the campus community. This process utilized Monument Lab’s practiced paper engagement form methodology for participatory research projects and adapted it with our partners at Bryn Mawr to fit the scope of their inquiry. (For more on Monument Lab’s methodology, please see “On Paperwork” from our [Reflecting Authority](#) project.) During an Engagement Week in February 2022, the student research cohort facilitated on-campus events in which BMC’s students, staff, faculty, and alums were invited to respond to the research question through paper engagement forms that asked respondents to map the campus according to their own perspectives and experiences. Respondents could draw, sketch, and/or describe their maps. The prompt was intentionally open-ended.

As part of Monument Lab’s approach, it was important to ask questions about the campus within the public spaces of the College. In line with one of our studio’s core values, this process mattered as much as the outcome—it was not just about the finished forms, but also the connections and conversations sparked through engaging the question together in public. “Through tabling and communicating the goals of the project with other members of the community, I was happy to see how excited people were to share their ideas and stories toward creating a more inclusive campus,” one of the student researchers shared of the engagement experience.



Airtable Gallery view.

Transcribe + Analyze

After the Engagement Week events, with the assistance of Bryn Mawr College’s Library and Monument Lab, the student research cohort digitally transcribed and coded the forms. This meant delineating unique features identified and modes of storytelling employed by respondents through this mapping as well as synthesizing insights gleaned from each and every form. From our initial reflections and analysis, we have witnessed a composite mapping of the campus that highlights its layered multiplicity—places of trauma and transformation, erasure and memory-keeping, individuality and collectivity all exist simultaneously.

While the engagement forms were Monument Lab’s primary mode of research collection, our findings are also informed by what the student team saw in the process of collecting research. Each paper engagement form was manually transcribed into an Airtable by one of our team members and checked by another, creating an individual digital record for each form linked to the scanned original document. We transcribed all map text (map name, map description, identification field contents, and any additional text) into the Airtable, where a search bar made all text searchable across records. Beyond record identification number and collection event, the maps were further organized by tags for feature type (artwork, college/university, group, named building, miscellaneous, neighborhood, notable figure, notable site, office, other places, park space, path, personal site, social movement, street, traditions, unnamed building, or vehicle), feature name (i.e. building or place name); feature status (marked/current, current groups potential/imaginary, erased/demolished, or none); and participant status (student, staff, alums, and/or faculty). This system of tags allowed for efficient quantification by selected inventories. All records are weighted equally (one to one). View the complete Airtable gallery [here](#).

ID	Name	Location	Description	Tags
1	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
2	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
3	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
4	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
5	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
6	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
7	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
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11	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
12	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
13	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
14	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
15	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
16	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
17	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
18	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
19	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
20	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
21	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
22	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
23	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
24	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
25	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
26	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
27	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
28	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
29	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
30	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
31	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
32	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
33	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
34	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
35	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
36	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
37	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
38	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
39	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina
40	BMC PCC 2022	University of North Carolina	How do you identify?	University of North Carolina

Airtable Records view.

Reflect

“Any historical narrative is a bundle of silences.”
 —Michel-Rolph Trouillot

As reflected in the central question at the heart of this study, while we gathered overview findings of how the campus was mapped, we were just as drawn to how missing stories, sites, and narratives were engaged. Each map in its own sense may hold vital information – the larger key was to read them as a dataset to see how patterns and themes did or did not emerge across them. And likewise, how the maps did or did not relate to our ongoing conversations with students, staff, faculty, and alumns.

Through this process, we sought to reveal and engage silences and gaps in the narrative. In analyzing this kind of collective knowledge—crowd-sourced, varied, personal, and reflective of individual experience we highlight the oft-unquestioned falsehood that data is neutral and without messiness. Throughout the process of analysis, we used the central research question and the myriad conversations, exchanges, and moments of dialogue around it to begin a longer-term process of reflecting on our findings.

Overview Reflections

303

BMC community members made maps (out of a total campus population of 2496). That's 12% participation.

56

BMC alumni filled out engagement forms online.

156

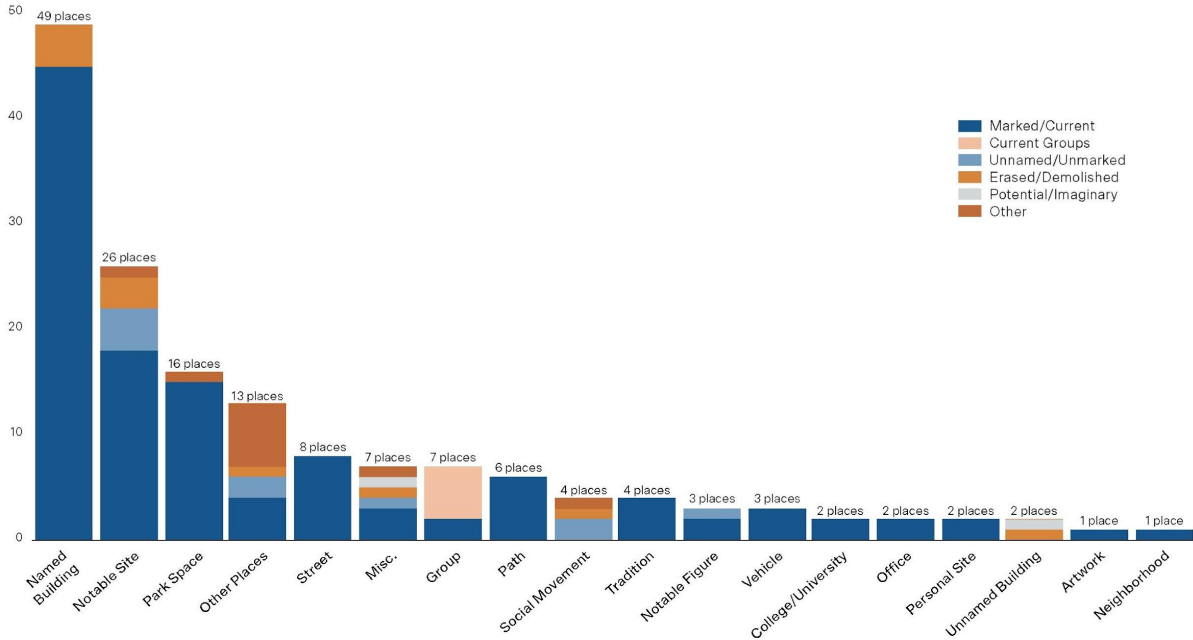
unique sites mapped

These 44 sites appeared on more than 10 maps
(ordered by frequency)

Old Library	Health and Wellness Center
Taylor Hall	Schwartz Gymnasium
Erdman (General)	Perry Garden
Campus Center	Perry House
Park Science	Athletic Field
Canaday Library	New Dorm Dining Hall (formerly Haffner)
Merion	Cloisters
New Dorm (Dorm)	Guild
Senior Row	English House
Dalton Hall	Rockefeller Arch/"Rock Arch"
Pembroke/McBride Arch	Taft Garden
Denbigh Hall	Cambrian Row
Pembroke West	Wyndham
Rockefeller Hall ("Rock")	Merion Green
Pembroke East	Pond/Lake
Enid Cook Center (ECC)	Arnecliffe
Rhoads Dorms (North and South)	Merion Avenue
Carpenter Library	Old Pensby Center
Radnor Hall	Blue Bus/Stop
Brecon and Backyard	Russian House
Collective Pembroke Dorms	Tunnels
Goodhart/Goodhart Arches	Trees

18

types of sites mapped



181

mapmakers responded to “how do you identify?”
 selections from Identification field:

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL): **NON-BINARY, Black student**

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL): **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT**

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL): **MIXED RACE, TRANS, QUEER**

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL): **Latinx / Mexican-American**

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL): **Staff**

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL): **any persons ;**

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL): **Asian American**

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL): **Hispanic/white**

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL): **Indigenwst Latinx**



HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL): **I'm a smart autistic Italian-American lesbian who can't drive (She/her)**

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL): **Black, Haitian-American, ~~and~~**
and

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL): **white, queer student**

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL): **Transmasc Nonbinary**

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL): **Black Queer Cis Woman**

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL): **Cis, queer, white woman**

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL): **S. ASIAN / FEMALE / INTERNATIONAL student**

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL): **she/her Latinx**

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? (OPTIONAL): **Female (but a little butch :))**

Staff & Alum Engagement and Interviews

Monument Lab

Bryn Mawr College x Monument Lab – Alum Engagement Form

Bryn Mawr College is engaging Monument Lab, an independent nonprofit public art and history studio, on a multi-year collaboration to design a process for commissioning a campus public artwork that responds to the legacy of exclusionary practices at the College.

A central question guides the project: What stories are missing from Bryn Mawr College's campus?

On campus, our student research team is engaging fellow students, staff, faculty, and alums around this research question. We invite you to respond to this prompt regardless of your proximity to campus. There are no wrong answers. Your own experiences and ideas should lead your responses.

Please complete by March 15, 2022.

What stories are missing from Bryn Mawr College? *

Describe stories based on significant sites (current, historical, potential, and/or erased)

Is there any other information you would like to share with Monument Lab and our partner at BMC?

How do you identify? (optional)

What is your Bryn Mawr affiliation? *

Select an option

Name (optional)

Email Address (optional)

Submit

While the project prioritized the engagement of the current campus community, the research question was extended to off-campus alums through an adapted survey online due to challenges in distributing forms for hand-drawn engagement. 56 alums submitted responses. Monument Lab did not analyze these responses to the same extent as the 303 campus community engagement forms, but several noteworthy themes emerged. In general, alums' responses that directly engaged the question of missing stories echoed those of current campus community members, centering on the importance of BMC staff and the experiences of students and staff that were people of color, queer, trans, international, and/or Jewish. Notably, alums mentioned wealth disparity and economic privilege as prominent lines of exclusion. Additionally, alums brought up career opportunities lost due to having children or

being discouraged from certain fields. Perhaps predictably, on the whole, these responses were less connected to specific campus spaces and more generally focused on experiences and histories. Eight respondents stated their opposition to this project and/or the politics of grappling with exclusion. All alum responses are transcribed into the [Airtable](#).

Over the course of two weeks in spring 2022, the Monument Lab's student research cohort conducted seven interviews with Bryn Mawr College staff, faculty, and alums. The interviews were designed to be conversational, inviting the interviewees to share autobiographical information about their individual backgrounds, how they came to Bryn Mawr, and open-ended reflections on and memories of their time at Bryn Mawr in terms of relationships, experiences, and the physical space of the campus. After transcribing, analyzing, and discussing the seven interviews, Monument Lab arrived at seven prominent throughlines:

- Positive, long-term work experiences are shared by many Bryn Mawr College staff.
- Staff have a long vision and understanding of Bryn Mawr that some feel may not always be visible to students.
- Relationships are central to the Bryn Mawr experience for staff and students alike.
- Relationships with staff are vital for student support, care, and well-being.
- Staff are the community's lifeline, and students worry for them.
- Students of color experience Bryn Mawr differently than the majority.
- Students and alums want to know about who came before them, particularly those from outside of the majority.

3. Conclusion

At the conclusion of the first full year of the collaboration between Bryn Mawr College and Monument Lab, we look at the processes and reflections presented in this report as touchstones to continue thinking, planning, and refining work ahead. "What stories are missing from Bryn Mawr College?" proved to be a potent starting point for an exploratory deep dive into the College's past, present, and future as understood, experienced, carried, and envisioned by its community members. This participatory research collection process has resulted in a body of deep, collective knowledge of campus history. Composed of a multitude of campus voices, it creates the foundation of a comprehensive artist dossier that we believe will be essential to artists' understanding of Bryn Mawr College and the process of reflecting on the ways a campus public artwork may function as part of a constellation of interventions and actions by the College in order to take accountability for its institutional history and move forward with a new chapter in its history.