

A Path Forward

Bronze, stainless steel, concrete, 2020

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Gift of Better Days 2020

Capitol Preservation Board, Utah State Capitol Collection

A Path Forward commemorates the 100-year anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment and the 150th anniversary of the first ballot cast by a woman under an equal suffrage law. This historic first female vote took place here at Council Hall.

This sculpture gives form to the words and deeds of advocates who achieved landmark victories for the women's suffrage movement. In contrast to the tradition of grand monuments that place emphasis on verticality and tower over the individual, this sculpture extends at ground level, evoking the communal and collective struggle for equal rights. On this horizontal plane, the space unfolds as a blurring of boundaries between interior and exterior, or private and public. An interior without walls symbolizes the suffragists' success in breaking barriers to enter the political sphere. The words of local and national suffrage leaders frame the first passage toward the Capitol.

While table and chairs allude to domestic space, they also contain references to significant moments in suffrage history. The table is a recreation of the mahogany tea table used for the signing of the Declaration of Sentiments in 1848 at the Seneca Falls Convention. In this document, Elizabeth Cady Stanton put forward a resolution for the "sacred right to the elective franchise." The chairs are replicas of the wooden chairs in the Salt Lake City and County Building, where Utah lawmakers drafted and signed the state constitution in 1895. Article 4 of the Utah State Constitution, which prohibits voting discrimination on the basis of sex, is engraved on the table top. The doorframes mark a timeline of voting rights legislation achievements for women and people of color. As the path winds towards the Capitol, thresholds widen to allow greater passage as access to suffrage expands.

This sculpture celebrates those who fought for and continue to advocate for voting rights and equality for all.