

NEW DAWN

NEW DAWN

BY MARY BRANSON

New Dawn celebrates the many brave women who campaigned
for the vote, to whom we are all indebted

Thank you

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SUFFRAGE

/ˈsʌfrɪdʒ/

noun

The right to vote in political elections: “universal adult suffrage”, “the women’s suffrage movement”

INTRODUCTION

New Dawn is a contemporary sculpture by artist Mary Branson celebrating the campaign for women’s suffrage (the right to vote). Commissioned by the Speaker’s Advisory Committee on Works of Art in 2015, *New Dawn* resulted from a six-month residency in the Houses of Parliament followed by over a year of design and construction.

‘This commission will honour the women and men who took part in the suffrage campaign as we approach the one hundredth anniversary of the first women receiving the right to vote.’

Frank Doran, former MP and Chair of the Speaker’s Advisory Committee on Works of Art (2010-15)

The metal and illuminated glass sculpture draws on concepts and imagery connected with Parliament and the votes for women campaign to celebrate the individuals and organisations involved in the fight for voting equality.

A significant addition to the Parliamentary Art Collection, *New Dawn* is permanently sited on the main public route through the Palace of Westminster and will be seen by the hundreds of thousands of people who visit Parliament each year.



ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE TO WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

In recent years the Speaker's Advisory Committee on Works of Art has endeavoured to recognise the unique contribution women have made to political life in the UK by making the representation of women a collecting priority for the Parliamentary Art Collection. As part of this effort, in January 2014 the Committee sought to commission an artist to undertake a residency in the Houses of Parliament that would result in a proposal for a site-specific artwork celebrating the historic votes for women campaign.

Following an open call for applications, Mary Branson was appointed Artist-in-Residence to Women's Suffrage in April 2014. As an installation artist and feminist, Branson's strong background in site-specific artwork and creative responses to project briefs eminently suited her to the role.



SUFFRAGIST

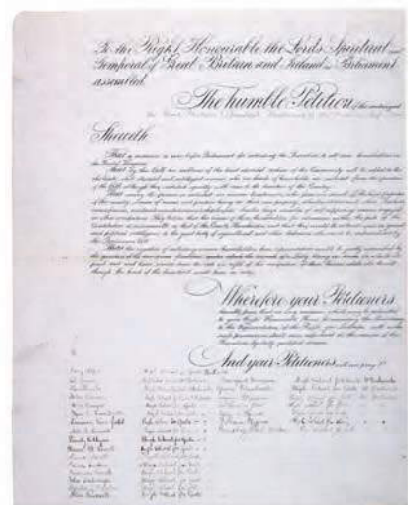
/ˈsʌfrədʒɪst/
noun

A person advocating the extension of suffrage, especially to women, by peaceful means

SUFFRAGETTE

/ˈsʌfrədʒɪt/
noun

A person seeking the right to vote for women through militant protest



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This is a wonderful opportunity to have access to the suffrage archives and to discuss with experts the complex journey women undertook to secure the vote.

Mary Branson on being selected Artist-in-Residence to Women's Suffrage

1. Votes for women petition from the Mistresses of Dulwich High School, 1884
Parliamentary Archives, HL/PO/6/11/A

2. Women's Social and Political Union Hunger Strike medal awarded to Caroline Lowder Downing, 1912
Parliamentary Art Collection, WOA S748

3. Suffragette banner unfurled from the House of Commons Ladies' Gallery, 28 October 1908
Parliamentary Archives, HC/SA/SJ/3/1

4. Mary Branson sketching in St Stephen's Hall
© UK Parliament

5. Women's suffrage postcard published by the Suffrage Atelier, c.1909-14
From LSE Library's collection, TWL.2002.226

6. National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies pin badge, 1911
Parliamentary Art Collection, WOA S745



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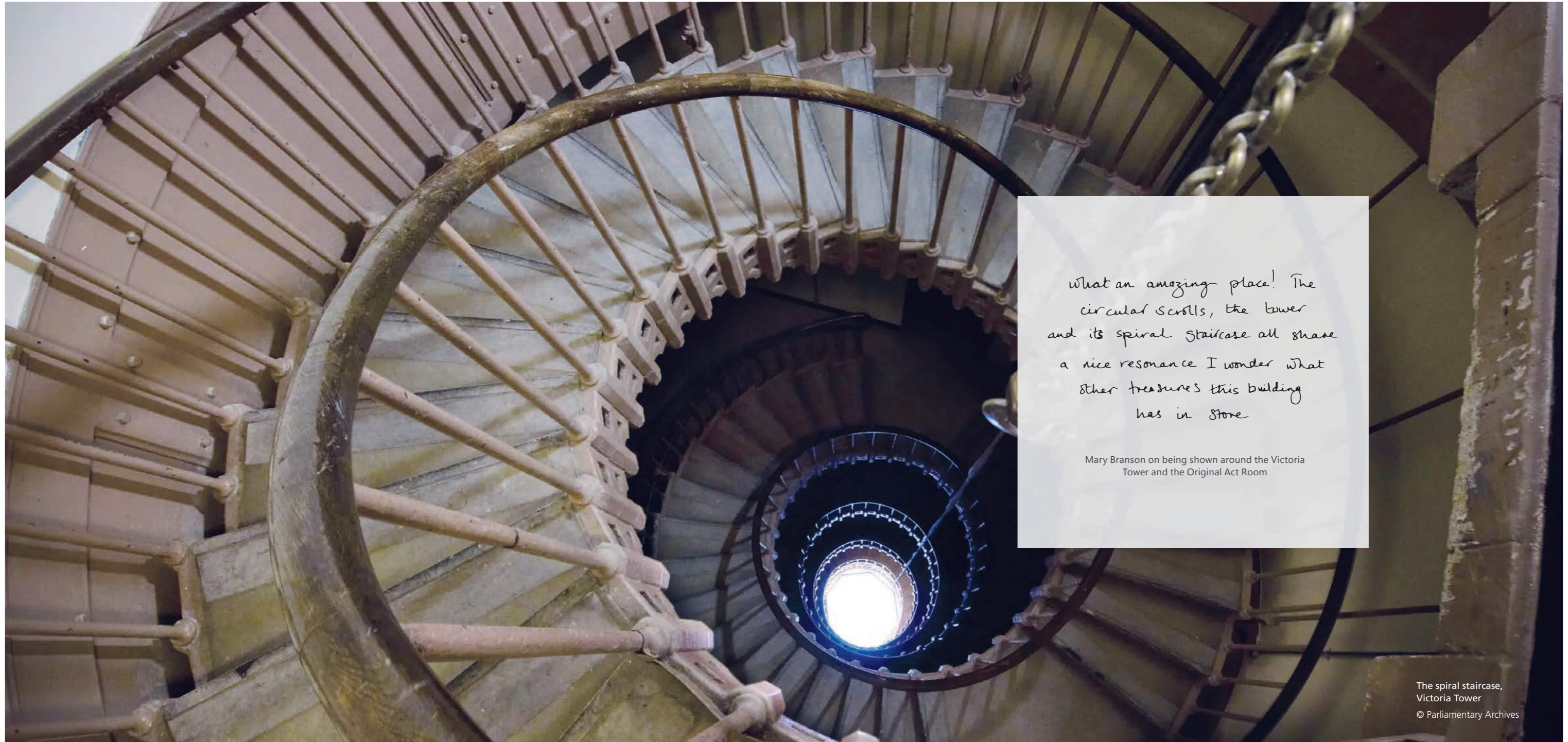
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During her six-month residency, Branson immersed herself into records relating to women's suffrage in the Parliamentary Archives, examined relevant works of art in the Parliamentary Art Collection, and visited other organisations with suffrage-related collections. She also explored the Palace of Westminster itself, both to identify a suitable location for her final artwork and discover the physical locations associated with the votes for women campaign.

Alongside this research, the artist spoke to a wide range of people from inside and outside Parliament with an interest in women's suffrage, including MPs, Peers, suffrage historians, curators,

archivists and other artists. A recurring theme in these interviews was the desire for the final artwork to represent the multitude of people involved in achieving the vote, not just a single figure or organisation.

The importance others attached to the scale and diversity of the campaign mirrored the artist's own conclusions borne out of her archival research. Of particular significance were the petitions presented to Parliament between 1866 and 1918, the extent of which –16,433 petitions with a total of 3,609,162 signatures – Branson established for the first time.



What an amazing place! The
circular scrolls, the tower
and its spiral staircase all share
a nice resonance I wonder what
other treasures this building
has in store

Mary Branson on being shown around the Victoria
Tower and the Original Act Room

VOTES FOR WOMEN SOME KEY DATES IN PARLIAMENT

1866

First mass suffrage petition

John Stuart Mill MP presented a petition signed by 1,500 women to the House of Commons marking the beginning of organised women's suffrage campaigning in the UK.

1867

First Parliamentary debate

Calling for all female householders to be given the vote, Mill became the first MP to speak in favour of women's suffrage in Parliament. The vote was lost by 196 to 73.

1913

Cat and Mouse Act

Allowed hunger-striking suffragettes to be released from prison temporarily to recover their health, then be re-arrested to continue their sentence.

1918

Representation of the People Act

The vote given to women over 30 who met minimum property qualifications.

1918

Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act

Enabled women to sit as MPs in the House of Commons.

1919

Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act

Enabled women to enter professions such as the law and accountancy for the first time.

1928

Equal Franchise Act

Gave women equal voting rights as men, i.e. all women over 21.

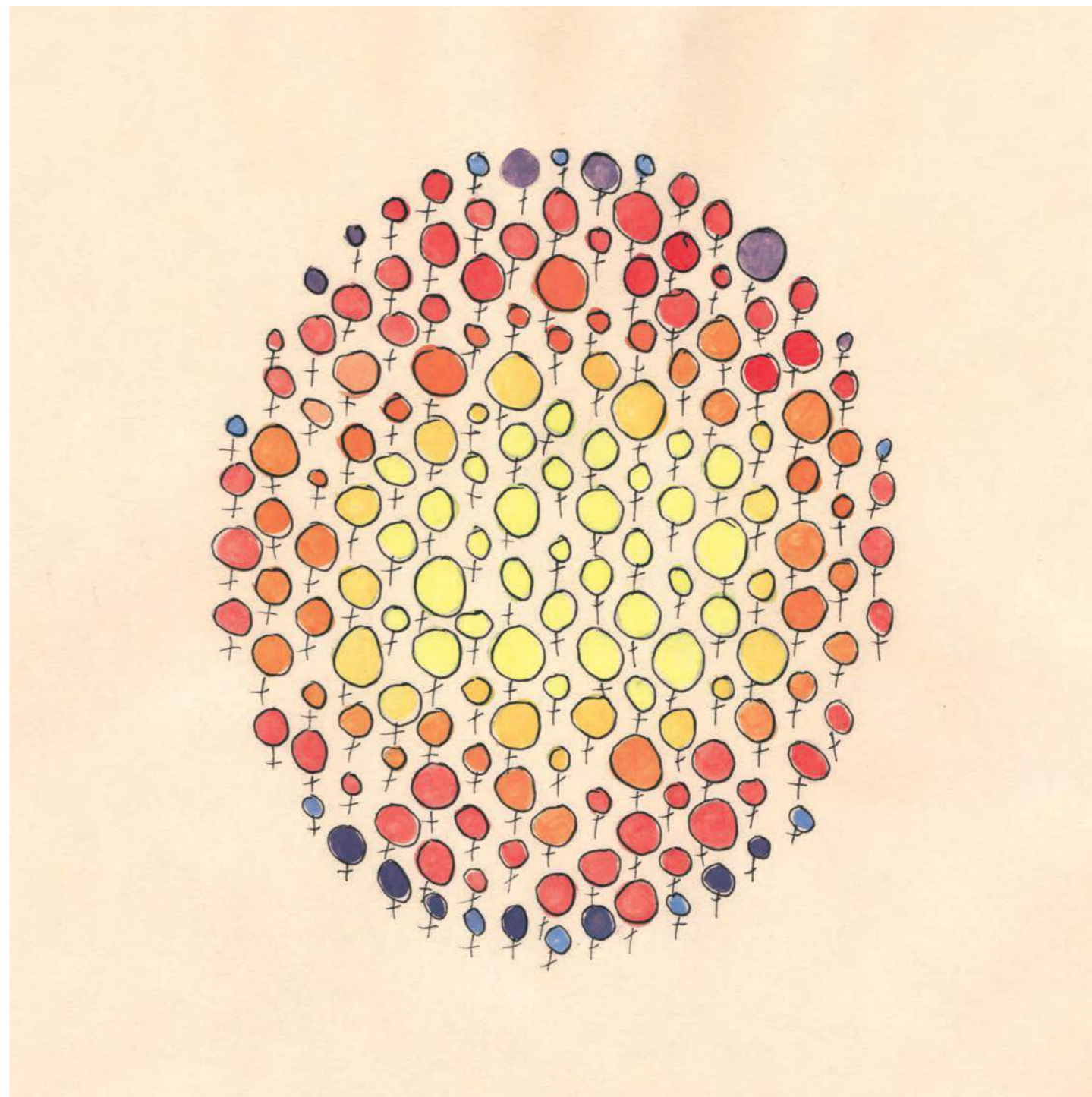
'Every female MP owes a debt to the suffrage campaigners, who did so much to create a modern, truly democratic Parliament.'

Mary Macleod, former MP and Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Women in Parliament (2010-15)

DESIGNING *NEW DAWN*

Mary Branson's ideas for the artwork that became *New Dawn* developed during the course of her residency and were finalised in the months afterwards. Following the successful presentation of her proposal to the Speaker's Advisory Committee on Works of Art, the commissioning of *New Dawn* was formally announced on 5 March 2015 at an International Women's Day event in Parliament.

Although the precise form of *New Dawn* took time to evolve, from early on in her research the artist was drawn to a number of recurring images and themes. These came together in the proposal, leading to the creation of a work of art that is both beautiful and layered with meaning.



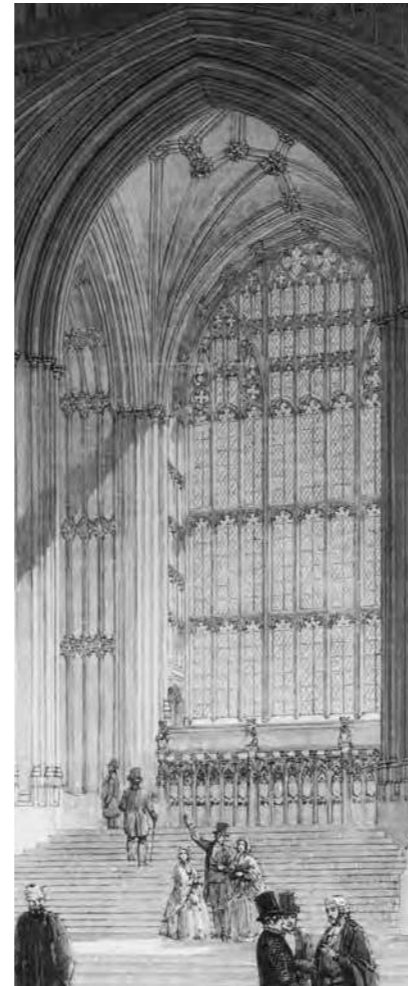
I kept gravitating to this area which is the entrance to the corridor where many of the suffragettes protests took place - it was like a corridor of power

Mary Branson

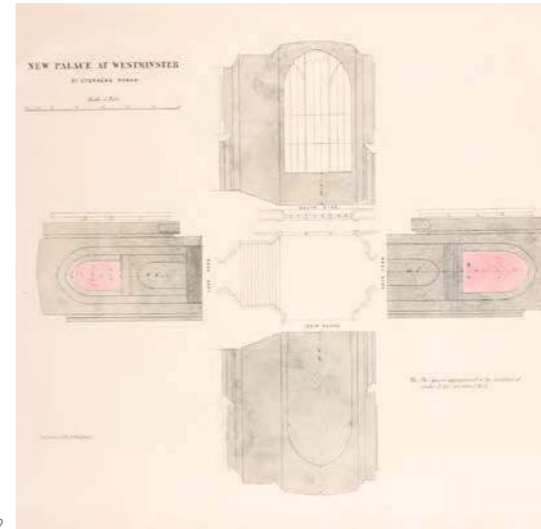
LOCATION

Charles Barry's richly decorated Victorian Gothic building made Branson's search for an appropriate site for a new artwork no easy task. However, the artist kept returning to one location - a large, arched compartment in St Stephen's Porch at the southern end of Westminster Hall.

Branson's chosen space sits above the entrance to St Stephen's Hall in an area closely associated with women's suffrage campaigning and protests. Originally destined to contain a wall painting representing peace, despite occupying a prominent location on the public route through the building the site had remained empty since its completion in the 1850s.



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I like the idea that such a powerful space has almost been ignored up until now.

Mary Branson

1. 'Westminster Hall and St Stephen's Porch' *Illustrated London News*, 1853
Charles Barry designed St Stephen's Porch to connect the medieval Westminster Hall with his new building. Parliamentary Art Collection, WOA 5275
2. Architectural elevations of St Stephen's Porch with spaces for planned paintings of war and peace identified in pink, c.1847
Parliamentary Art Collection, WOA 5543
3. The arched compartment above the entrance to St Stephen's Hall, 2015
Grant Wakefield © UK Parliament

A NEW DAWN FOR EQUAL RIGHTS

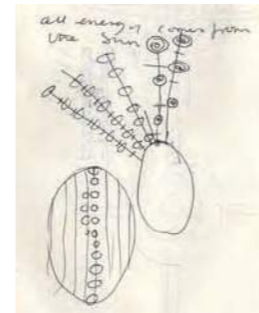
As the artwork's name suggests, the first impression that Branson wanted *New Dawn* to convey was that of the rising sun. This mirrors a common visual and rhetorical image in women's suffrage campaigns, in which gaining the vote represented a 'new dawn' for gender equality. By illuminating a previously shadowy space, the artist intended that *New Dawn* would bring light to the dark just as the fight for voting rights for women sought to replace discrimination with equality.



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During my research, it quickly became apparent that the imagery of the 'new dawn' was a key symbol in women's suffrage iconography

Mary Branson



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1. *The Anti-Suffrage Ostrich: 'The sun is not rising'*, poster designed by Catharine Courtauld and published by the Suffrage Atelier, 1912
From LSE Library's collection, TWL.2002.249

2, 3, 4, 5. Early drawings in Branson's sketchbook influenced by new dawn imagery, 2014
© Mary Branson



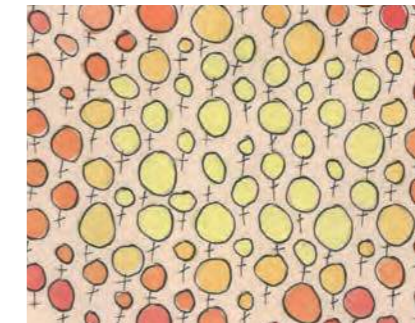
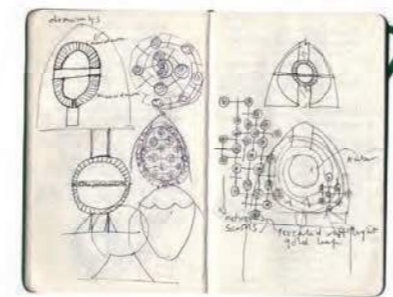
Mary Branson in the
Original Act Room,
Victoria Tower
© Mat Clark

CELEBRATING EVERYONE

To create an inclusive artwork representing the multitude of people involved in the campaign, Branson devised *New Dawn* as a constellation of back-lit glass 'scrolls'. Based on the rolled Acts of Parliament she found so captivating in the Original Act Room, the artist designed these scrolls to incorporate the colours used by women's suffrage organisations.

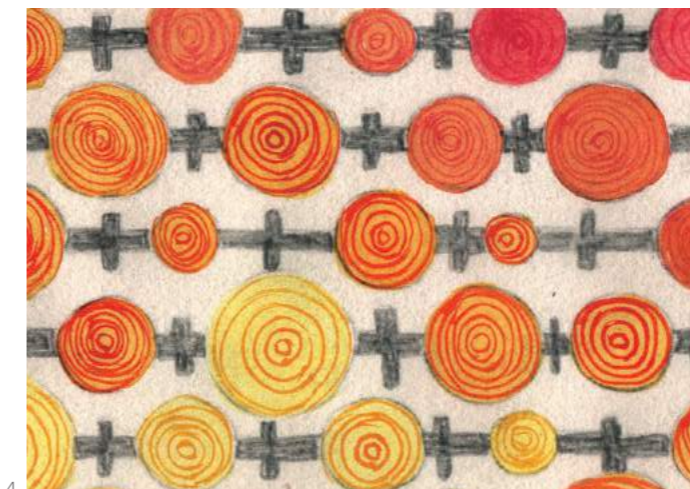
To further link the artwork to its specific location, Branson decided that the green used by some organisations would be provided by the existing wall covering. This also includes floral symbols of the UK nations, reflecting the national nature of the votes for women campaign.

- National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (red, white and green)
- Women's Social and Political Union (purple, white and green)
- Women's Freedom League (green, white and gold)
- Catholic Women's Suffrage Society (blue, white and gold)
- Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Association (pale blue, white and gold)
- Jewish League for Woman Suffrage (purple and celestial blue)
- Men's League for Women's Suffrage (black and gold).
- Actresses' Franchise League (pink and green)



1,2. Early ideas for using scrolls in the artist's sketchbook, 2014
© Mary Branson

3, 4, 5, 6. Drawings by Branson developing the use of scrolls and colours for *New Dawn*, 2014
© Mary Branson



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THE TIDE OF CHANGE



The campaign for votes for women was often represented as an unstoppable tide of change sweeping the nation. To reflect this, Branson conceived *New Dawn* as a dynamic sculpture, with the scrolls' lighting directly linked to the tidal River Thames running past the Houses

of Parliament. The artist's idea was that the light levels would fluctuate with the river's ebb and flow. Linking the artwork to the world outside Parliament, this would reflect the continuing battle for equality in all areas of life.

By using a tidal clock to control the intensity of the light, the piece can come alive - transitioning imperceptibly from one moment to the next, in a continuous arc that driven by the tide, will move with the seasons and the phases of the moon.

Mary Branson

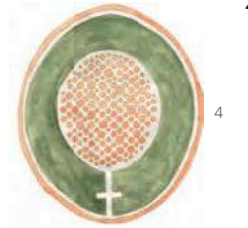


RAISING THE PORTCULLIS



To physically support the glass scrolls and create *New Dawn's* overall shape, Branson designed a metal framework resembling a portcullis, the symbol of Parliament. Sited above the public route through the Houses of Parliament, this raised portcullis symbolises the opening of the democratic process to women.

When combined with the glass scrolls, metal crosses on the framework create the symbol for women known as the 'Venus symbol'.



1. *The New Mrs Partington (of the Anti Suffrage Society)*, postcard by Ernestine Mills, c.1910

In the 19th and early 20th centuries cartoonists often used Mrs Partington, an anecdotal character who attempted to mop up the rising tide, to represent those resisting inevitable change. Here she is depicted as a member of one of a number of anti-female suffrage organisations.

By kind permission of the Museum of London © Ernestine Mills, administrator V.I. Cockroft

2. Early ideas for the metal framework from the artist's sketchbook, 2014 © Mary Branson

3. Holloway Prison brooch designed by Sylvia Pankhurst, 1909

This brooch was awarded to imprisoned members by the Women's Social and Political Union. It incorporates the parliamentary portcullis and the WSPU colours.

Parliamentary Art Collection, WOA S694

4. An early watercolour design consisting of a single large Venus symbol, 2014

© Mary Branson



I wanted to create an open,
portcullis like structure above
the doorway to show that
Parliament is now open to women
that we can go in, and
that we are here to stay.

Mary Branson

Computer
generated image
of *New Dawn*
created as part
of the artist's
proposal, 2015
© Mary Branson

MAKING *NEW DAWN*

Mary Branson worked with a team of artists, craftspeople, engineers and technicians to realise her vision for *New Dawn*. Over the course of a year, these specialists helped turn the artist's concept into a reality.

After several stages of development, prototype trials, production and final testing, May 2016 saw *New Dawn* installed in the Houses of Parliament. On 7 June 2016 – the 150th anniversary of the first mass petition calling for women's suffrage – the artwork was unveiled in front of hundreds of MPs, Peers and invited guests.

03



GLASSWORK

To create the glass scrolls that are so central to *New Dawn*, Branson enlisted the skills of leading studio glass artist Adam Aaronson. Of varying sizes, all 168 unique glass discs were hand-blown and carefully 'spun' to flatten them. To produce the scroll pattern, Aaronson applied powdered glass colours and silver leaf to the molten glass at specific points in the process.



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Balancing a contemporary feel with traditional craftsmanship and materials
 New Dawn's glass scrolls provide a modern interpretation of the stained glass windows found throughout the Palace of Westminster.

Mary Branson



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1. Caroline Nokes MP during a visit by MPs to Adam Aaronson's studio © Mat Clark

2. Mary Branson and Adam Aaronson © Mat Clark

3. Emily Thornberry MP during a visit by MPs to Adam Aaronson's studio © Mat Clark

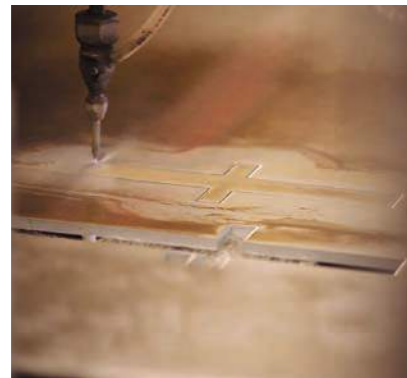
4. Gisela Stuart MP during a visit by MPs to Adam Aaronson's studio © Mat Clark

5. Powdered glass colours © Mat Clark



METALWORK

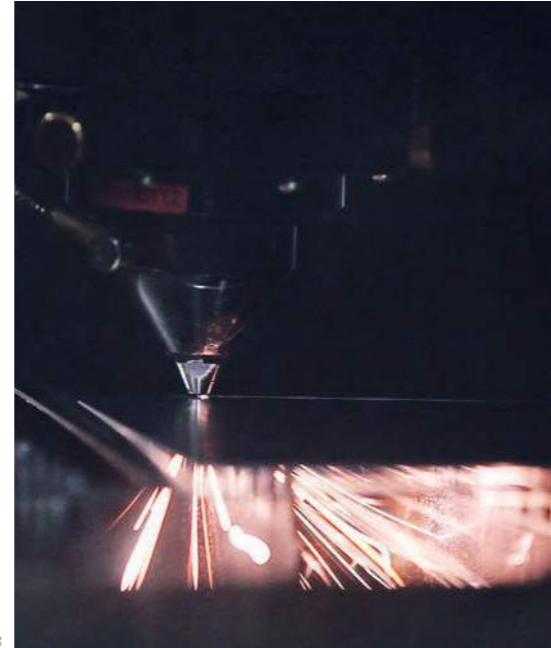
Branson placed the engineering of *New Dawn's* portcullis-like framework in the hands of father and son team Ian and Colin Musson. Experts in designing unusual and bespoke metalwork, Musson Engineering employed specialist contractors to produce the structure using stainless steel and aluminium.



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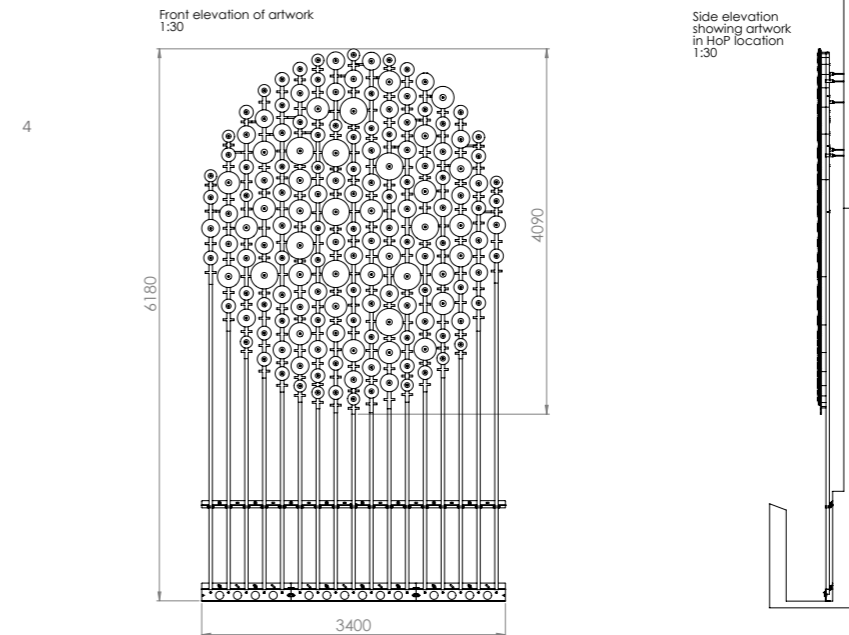


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A.W.N. Pugin designed much of the Palace of Westminster's decorative detail and I wanted my sculpture to take into account his architectural philosophy. The craftsmanship in the metalwork is in Pugin's words "rendered to show off its simple beauty and practicality".

Mary Branson

New Dawn - Space Envelope & Fixing locations
Page 1 of 2



1. Waterjet cutting of the aluminium crosses of the Venus symbols
Grant Wakefield
© UK Parliament
2. Ian Musson, Musson Engineering Ltd
Grant Wakefield
© UK Parliament
3. Laser cutting of stainless steel elements of the portcullis structure
Grant Wakefield
© UK Parliament
4. Technical drawings of the metalwork
© Musson Engineering Ltd

LIGHTING

Designed by Chris Wilson of WLX Productions, *New Dawn's* glass scrolls are lit by computer-controlled Applelec LED light sheets. Programmed by the artist, and linked to tidal monitoring of the Thames, a continuous series of slow transitions build from low tide, where only one disc is lit, to high tide, where the whole piece is illuminated. Within these transitions, selections of suffrage society colours emerge and then fade back into the rhythm of the artwork.



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The sculpture uses light and colour to radiate a bold, positive energy illuminating this space unlike any other area within the Palace of Westminster.

Mary Branson



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1. *New Dawn* sketches and prototype in the artist's studio
© Mat Clark
2. Kengo Kurimoto with *New Dawn* prototype in the Houses of Parliament, Spring 2015
Grant Wakefield © UK Parliament
3. Testing the LED light sheets
© Mat Clark
4. Temporary warehouse installation, Winter 2015
© Mat Clark
5. The artist keeping warm during temporary warehouse installation, Winter 2015
© Mat Clark
6. Programming the lighting during temporary warehouse installation, Winter 2015
© Mat Clark
7. Chris Wilson of WLX Productions Ltd during the temporary warehouse installation, Winter 2015
© Mat Clark

Temporary
warehouse
installation,
Winter 2015
© Mat Clark



INSTALLATION

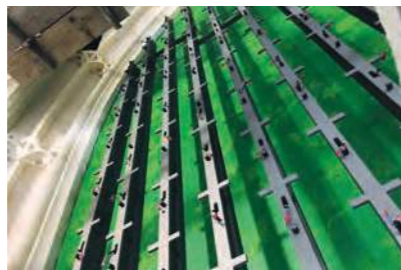
Over two weeks, Branson and her team, assisted by specialist art handlers, carefully installed the 3.4m diameter artwork. After final tests, it was ready to be seen by the hundreds of thousands of visitors to Parliament each year.



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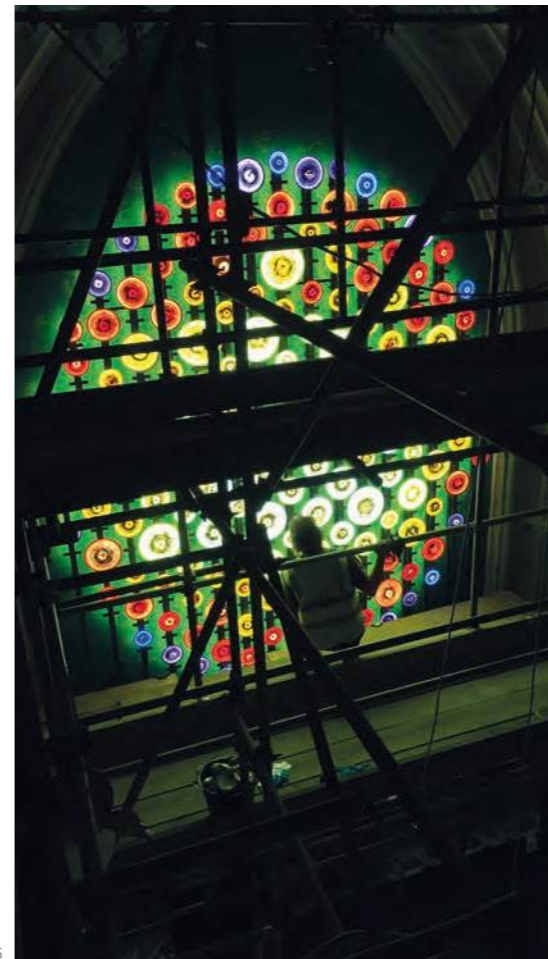
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From my first notebook sketch on the brain, two years later - there it was. It was up - big strong and beautiful

Mary Branson



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1. *New Dawn* arriving in Westminster Hall, May 2016
© UK Parliament
2. The metal framework during final installation, May 2016
© Mat Clark
- 3, 4. Ian and Colin Musson during final installation, May 2016
© UK Parliament
5. The glass scrolls in position, May 2016
© Edd Jordan
6. *New Dawn* switched on for the first time, May 2016
© Mat Clark
7. Chris Wilson and Edd Jordan wiring in the lighting, May 2016
© Mat Clark

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

New Dawn was conceived and designed by Mary Branson and made by

Adam Aaronson
Akimasa Kurimoto
Applelec Sign Components Ltd
Edd Jordan
Jacob Farrell
Kengo Kurimoto
Mat Clark
Musson Engineering Ltd
Paul Clark
Peter Bridgeman
WLX Production Ltd

With assistance from:
CEVA Logistics
Momart
The White Wall Co

New Dawn was commissioned by the Speaker's Advisory Committee on Works of Art supported by the Speaker's Art Fund and the House of Lords.

Melanie Unwin, Parliamentary Curator's Office, project managed the commission.

New Dawn could not have been achieved without the generous help and support of many people both inside and outside Parliament.

www.parliament.uk/newdawn





NEW DAWN



HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT