# The Map of Inclusive Symbols and Spaces at Harvard

Jeff Blossom[a]*

[a] *Center for Geographic Analysis, Harvard University – jblossom@cga.harvard.edu*

* Corresponding author

**Keywords:** inclusion, diversity, community, history, web map.

**Abstract:**

The Map of Inclusive Spaces and Symbols[1] (MISS) at Harvard is an interactive web application that visualizes inclusive symbols and spaces around campus. The goal of MISS is to document and increase the visibility of these symbols and spaces to allow for offices, centres, and schools to begin to recognize their importance, commit to increasing space and symbol diversification efforts, and contribute additional datapoints to our map. Specifically, the objectives of MISS are to: 1) Create an accessible, design-focused, interactive map for the Harvard community to identify and learn more about inclusive symbols and spaces on campus, 2) Collaborate with centres, offices, and departments on campus to diversify their spaces and showcase their work on the map, and 3) Create a movement in which all Harvard community members work to increase representation on our walls and in our common spaces and acknowledge and reckon with the University's history. MISS is designed for use by the entire Harvard community – staff, faculty, students, student families, fellows, and more. As a public facing website, the site is available to anyone.
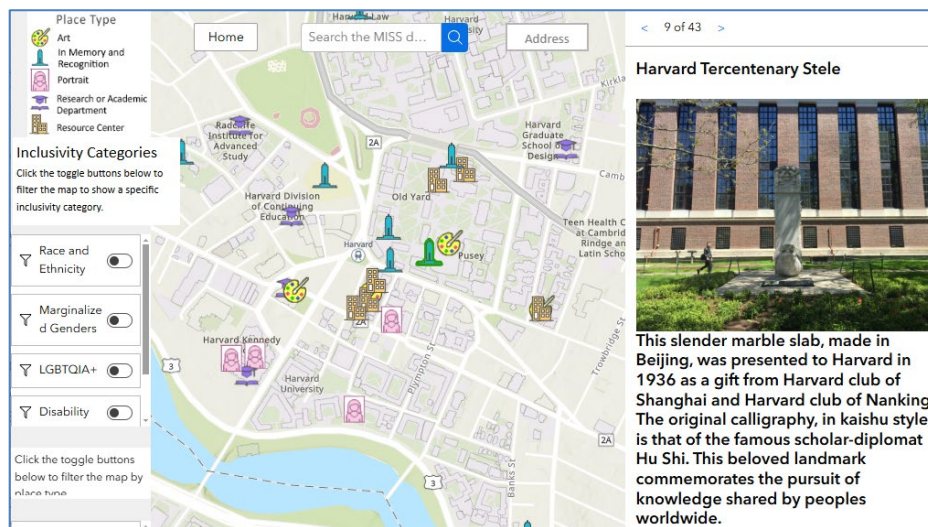
Figure 1. Screenshot of the MISS map interface, displaying the Harvard Tercentenary Stele inclusive space.

The MISS interactive web map interface[2] (Figure 1 above) is designed to 1) Showcase each inclusive space at Harvard, and 2) Provide the map user a highly interactive interface. The map showcases each space by displaying photos, a narrative with detailed background and historic information, and web links to resources a particular space might offer and how to obtain them. Interactive features include the ability to filter the map by Inclusivity Categories (race and ethnicity, marginalized genders, LGBTQIA+, disability, and socioeconomic status), or Place Types (art, in memory or recognition of, portrait, research or academic department, resource center). Additionally, the user can search the MISS database for keywords and zoom to an address. To scroll through the entire list of MISS locations one by one the user can use the back and forward arrows. Clicking on map icons displays that location's information in the side bar window. Lastly, the map interface includes a link to the submission form (Figure 2, below) if a user wants to submit an inclusive space for consideration for adding to the map. Understanding that many map actions cannot be accessibly presented for those with audio or visual impairment, all map content are also presented in text format, and all images contain "alt-text" information.

Figure 2. Screenshot of the MISS suggestion form.

Cartography for the MISS map included creating custom pictographic symbols for the different Place Types, and colouring them differently using a pastel palette. The Esri Topographic basemap was chosen for it's neutral colour tones, and this allowed for the pictorial symbols to occupy the top level of visual hierarchy on the map. To give the map reader a sense of locations of Harvard owned vs. non-Harvard owned buildings on the map, the official building outline layer published by the Harvard University Planning and Design was added to the map via a web service. This layer is symbolized to show Harvard buildings in a medium grey outline with light grey fill. Further, the MISS team is evaluating implementing additional design changes to MISS to increase accessibility for the visual impaired, in particular using enhanced contrast with colours, and textured fills.

Future work on the MISS site and additions to the map are reviewed by the MISS Executive Committee, who meet on a quarterly basis. We aim for MISS to grow, evolve, and continue to serve as a resource to the Harvard community and beyond.

### Acknowledgements

### References

1. https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/miss

2. https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/2aae08d2f3054a4e9cc56a6ea41264f0/