In 2013, Argentina’s then-President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner sparked controversy for her decision to replace a monument of Christopher Columbus in Buenos Aires with one of nineteenth-century mestiza revolutionary Juana Azurduy. This article examines the history, iconography, and public use of these monuments to explore the intersections between public space, art, politics and memory. It argues that these monuments--one representing Argentina’s previously maligned Italian immigrant heritage; the other its forgotten indigenous cultures -- demonstrate how official and public actors have used the capital city’s monumental landscape to both embed and contest shifting notions of Argentine national identity, in ways that remain influential.

“Columbus, Juana and the Politics of the Plaza: Battles over Monuments, Memory and Identity in Buenos Aires”