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# Proceedings of the 2nd MoMoWo International Conference- Workshop

Research Centre of Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, France Stele  
Institute of Art History, 3–5 October 2016, Ljubljana

**Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> MoMoWo International Conference-Workshop  
Research Centre of Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, France Stele Institute  
of Art History, 3–5 October 2016, Ljubljana**

Collected by Helena Seražin, Caterina Franchini and Emilia Garda

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## Content

### I Education and Publishing

#### Leafing Through the Pages of Specialized Magazines Seeking for Women Architects and Designers

- 7 *Women Contribution to Design through 'Domus' (1946–1968)*  
Caterina Franchini
- 31 *Women Contribution to Architecture through 'Domus' (1946–1968)*  
Emilia Garda and Chiara Serra
- 38 *Design and Women through the Pioneering Magazine 'Stile industria' (1954–1963)*  
Annalisa Barbara Pesando
- 48 *A Portrait of the Female Mind as a Young Girl*  
Iva Maria Jurić

#### Education

- 57 *First Generations of Women in Architecture and Design at University of Ljubljana*  
Helena Seražin

#### Presentation and Perception of Women Architects and Designers

- 63 *A Storytelling Overlooked: Feminisms, Modernity and Dissemination*  
Daniela Arias Laurino
- 69 *Exclusion and Inclusion in Dutch Design History: Female Designers in the Goed Wonen (Good Living) Foundation 1946–1968*  
Ilja S.Meijer
- 80 *AMS: The Work of Alison Margaret Smithson (1928–1993)*  
Alessandra Como and Luisa Smeragliuolo Perrotta
- 87 *The Makeable Landscape and Society: Gender, Representation, and the Male Architect as Post-war Hero*  
Marjan Groot

## II Politics, Policies and Political Regimes

### Position of Women Architects in Socialist Countries of Eastern Europe

- 97 *Women's Contribution in Architectural History of Rijeka during the 1950s and 1960s*  
Lidija Butković Mićin
- 108 *Role of Women in Architecture after WW2 in Slovenia: Olga Rusanova*  
Andreja Benko and Larisa Brojan
- 115 *Exploring Female Contribution to Slovenian Conservation in the 1950s and 1960s:  
Case Study of Cistercian Abbey of Kostanjevica na Krki Reconstruction*  
Barbara Vodopivec

### Position of Women Architects in Western Europe

- 127 *Marion Tournon Branly and Eliane Castelnau Tastemain: Two Leading Figures in  
French Architecture*  
Stéphanie Mesnage
- 137 *Juana Ontañón: An Architect Woman in Asturias*  
Esther Rodriguez Ortiz
- 145 *(Re)discovering the Objects and Actions of Lina Bo Bardi*  
Mara Sanchez Llorens

## III Research and industries

### Developing Industrial Design

- 154 *An Improbable Woman: Portuguese New State's Dictatorship and Design Leadership*  
Maria Helena Souto
- 156 *Stanka Knez, m. Lozar – A Slovenian Textile Designer in the Early Socialist Yugoslavia*  
Maja Lozar Štamcar
- 167 *Female Design History in Croatia, 1930-1980: Context, Production, Influences*  
Ana Bedenko

## Developing Architecture and Interior Design

### Typologies

- 180 *Vera Cirkovic's Contribution to Educational Architecture in Yugoslavia*  
Vladana Putnik
- 188 *Remarkable Public Health Service Architecture by Architect Zoja Dumengjić*  
Zrinka Barišić Marenčić
- 199 *Feeling at Home: Elisabeth (Kaatje) de Lestrieux's Personal Housing Designs*  
Florencia Fernandez Cardoso, Fatima Pombo and Hilde Heynen

### Approaches

- 209 *Three Projects for Council Houses by Lina Bo Bardi: From Virtual*  
Vincenza Garofalo
- 215 *Matilde Ucelay Maortua: Single-family House for Vincente Sebastian Llegat*  
Starlight Vattano
- 224 *Egle Renata Trincanato: Unbuilt*  
Francesco Maggio

## Innovation in Landscape Architecture

- 233 *Elena Luzzatto Valentini, the First Italian Women Architect*  
Monica Prencipe
- 242 *Italy-England 1946–1954: Maria Teresa Parpagliolo, Landscape beyond Borders*  
Lucia Krasovec Lucas
- 252 *Architect Juta Krulc, Garden Designer*  
Maja Kržišnik

## **I EDUCATION AND PUBLISHING**



## Leafing through the Pages of Specialized Magazines Seeking for Women Architects and Designers

### Women's Contribution through the Pages of "Domus" (1946–1968)

#### Design Exhibitions and Fairs (1946–68)

Caterina Franchini

The magazine *Domus* has proved to be an outstanding source for mapping the contributions of female architects and designers to contemporary design fields, as well as for studying their visibility and the reception of their works.

This chapter covers primarily women's contributions to the most relevant design exhibitions and fairs that were published, advertised or organised by the magazine between 1946 and 1968. The chapter presents some results of an original research study that focused primarily on furnishing, furniture design and exhibition set design, also taking into account organisational and editorial tasks that were covered by women.

The reasons for choosing this Italian magazine as a source for this historical investigation are twofold. First, unlike its competitors, *Domus* expressed a unified concept of design culture, from architecture to decorative arts and from art to industrial design, since its inception. Even today, the magazine continues to represent the world of design through a cross-sectoral approach. Second, but not least, *Domus* has always made a place for analysis and discussion by carefully selecting projects, ideas and innovations, including those of women.<sup>1</sup> The magazine

has played a pioneering role in recognising leading women of Modern design by publishing tributes, such as "Un omaggio a Eileen Gray. Pioniera del Design" (1968), that have stimulated public interest in the Modern Movement legacy. In 1968, the English architectural historian Joseph Rykwert, author of the tribute, wrote:

It is odd how no-one has paid homage to Eileen Gray for thirty years. [...] Eileen Gray is still working. What she has done up to date must not be taken as just a historical document; it will remain as an example of a remarkably humane and sensitive artist who has had the courage and the force to break new ground.<sup>2</sup>

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*Domus 1928-1999* (Köln: Taschen, 2006), 12 Vol. On *Domus* as a source for historical investigations, see: Fulvio Irace and Marianne Lorenz, *Domus 1928-1984: from the sources of modern to neomodern resources* (New York: Architectural League, 1984).

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Rykwert, "Un omaggio a Eileen Gray. Pioniera del Design," *Domus* 469 (1968), 33.

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<sup>1</sup> For a complete historical overview on the magazine, see: Charlotte Fiell and Peter Fiell (eds.),

## **Domus as a million-room house to be explored: Women in the editorial office**

For the celebration of issue 1000 of *Domus* in March 2016, Maria Giovanna Mazzocchi Bordone (b. 1947) clearly articulated the meaning of *Domus* as “a house of design, architecture, and urban planning, and of all the new dimensions where the organisation of space, the invention of beauty, the investigation of form, and the development of expertise are expressed”.<sup>3</sup> The magazine has also become a ‘home’ for all exceptional men and women, members of the editorial staff and consultants, whose enthusiastic work is still recognisable behind every issue.

Giovanna Mazzocchi has been *Domus*’s publisher, since 1975. She is the daughter of Gianni Mazzocchi who became the publisher of the magazine a year after it was founded by Gio Ponti in 1928. Gio Ponti’s female relatives also collaborated with *Domus*.

In 1928, Ponti’s wife, Giulia Vimercati, wrote a few articles for the column on plants, flowers and gardens,<sup>4</sup> and in 1930, the magazine published her table-setting decoration, which was exhibited at the *IV Esposizione Triennale Internazionale delle Arti Decorative ed Industriali Moderne* in Monza.<sup>5</sup>

Later, Ponti’s daughter Lisa, who was nicknamed Lisetta, took the helm of the magazine as deputy editor (1965–86). She worked for forty years in *Domus*’s editorial office under the direction of her father,

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<sup>3</sup> Giovanna Mazzocchi Bordone, “Gianni and Giovanna Mazzocchi Publishers,” *Domus* 1000 (2016), 3.

<sup>4</sup> Articles by Giulia Ponti Vimercati include the following: “Le orchidee,” *Domus* 2 (1928), 32, 48; “Piante d’appartamenti: le piante grasse,” *Domus* 3 (1928), 34; “Nuovi disegni per stoffe d’arredamento,” *Domus* 16 (1929), 33, 48.

<sup>5</sup> “Il concorso per l’ornamentazione della tavola alla Triennale di Monza,” *Domus* 35 (1930), 58–9.

having gained experience at the affiliated periodical *Stile*, where she had followed her father from 1940 to 1947.

Over the years, other women joined the editorial staff: journalist Enrichetta – Chicchetta– Ritter (1923–2015)<sup>6</sup> in 1954, Anna Marchi in 1964 and Marianne Lorenz (d. 2010) in 1965. Marianne or Marion –as she was dubbed by Lisa Ponti (b. 1922)– became the best friend and close collaborator of Lisetta, and both women ‘have been a central factor in the success of the magazine in its gold age’.<sup>7</sup>

Lisa Ponti was the editor-in-chief’s right-hand person, and at the height of the 1950s, she became an independent overseer of the pages offered to artists. She then outlined the standards of art with the authority of a veteran editor until the 1990s.<sup>8</sup> In 1950, Ponti wrote to his friend Gigi Radice, “My daughter Lisa is so like me at *Domus*, that programmatic

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<sup>6</sup> Enrichetta Ritter is the editor of the book *I pieghevoli, raccolta di oggetti progettati per ridurre il loro ingombro* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1980).

<sup>7</sup> In memory of Marianne Lorenz, Anna Foppiano wrote:

“Born in Vienna, Marianne studied at the German High School in Milan, the city she lived in having followed her father, who was in charge of the famous Italian Krupps branch (“Arthur Krupp Berndorf”). [...] Ponti often used to say, with his peculiar way of smiling: “Marianne is always right”. And he also added: ‘Marianne personifies the ancient heart of Europe’, expressing his real admiration for her as well as his deep-rooted affection for Austria”. Anna Foppiano, “Marianne Lorenz,” *Abitare Archive* 1 August (2010), <http://www.abitare.it/en/archive/2010/08/01/marianne-lorenz-1932-2010-2/> (accessed May 2, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> Lisa Ponti is the author of several books, including the book of poems, *Gio Ponti agli Amici* (Milano: Alfieri e Lacroix, 1941), the fairy tales *L’Armadio Magico* (Milano: Ed. Italiana, 1946) and *Gio Ponti. L’opera* (Milano: Leonardo, 1990). She has always practiced the art of drawing, and in 1992, the Galleria Toselli in Milan hosted her first exhibition. Some of her drawings were also published by *Domus*.

agreement with her is what is most beneficial".<sup>9</sup>

According to Lisa Ponti, 'Domus is a million-room house to be explored'<sup>10</sup> and what can be found within the magazine depends on which door we wish to open. This chapter opens the door of the female designers' room, bearing in mind that "save for a turbulent seven years (1941–47), *Domus* was Gio Ponti's magazine for the first 50 years, reflecting his idiosyncrasies and his curiosity", as underlined by Fulvio Irace.<sup>11</sup>

As an independent magazine, *Domus* represented a cultural project that aimed to promote a so-called *cultura dell'abitare* (housing culture) and intended to proclaim a type of modernity that did not coincide with either a style or a fashion. Therefore, since its early period – preceding the Second World War – the abstractionism of the artistic avant-gardes appeared to be mitigated, and the classical or folkloristic conservatism was not represented by the magazine. Probably for this reason, the magazine soon became successful abroad, turning into an ambassador of the Italian pride. As a matter of fact, *Domus* was one of the few international magazines in the era of nationalistic regimes, becoming an archetype for successive design magazines.

Due to the war, the publication was suspended in 1945 and resumed in 1946 under the leadership of architect Ernesto Nathan Rogers. From January 1946 to December 1947, the leader of BBPR (Banfi, Belgiojoso, Peressutti, Rogers) reinvented the magazine, embracing the motto 'The home of Man'. Nineteen issues were enough to turn *Domus* into both a

manifesto of Italy's rebirth and a symbol of a socially active cultural reawakening.

Between 1946, the year of its resumption, and 1968, the year of its fortieth anniversary, *Domus* reported on major design exhibitions, namely the exhibition of the Association *Riunione Italiana Mostre per l'Arredamento* (RIMA) at Palazzo dell'Arte in Milan (1946) and eight editions of the *Triennale di Milano* (1947–68).<sup>12</sup>

*Domus* became not only the magazine for architecture, design, art and urban planning –that we all know– but also a brand around which initiatives grew, giving visibility to a number of female Italian architects, designers and entrepreneurs.

Except for the many competitions organised by the magazine, such as *Formica-Domus*, *Vetroflex-Domus*, *Vis Securit-Domus*, *Ducotone*, which were not included in this chapter due to a lack of space, these initiatives were the first two *Eurodomus* fairs (1966, 1968) and the presentation *Domus Formes Italiennes* at the Galleries Lafayette in Paris (1967).

Exhibitions and fairs helped to launch Italian design and female designers on the international scene. In this context, *Domus* has published not only the works of female Italian architects who designed furniture for leading Italian companies but has also highlighted the contributions of foreign female designers and Scandinavians to design.

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<sup>9</sup> Fulvio Irace, "Lisa," *Domus* 1000 (2016), 8.

<sup>10</sup> Lisa Ponti Licitra, "Un saluto," *Domus* 669 (1986), 1.

<sup>11</sup> Fulvio Irace, "The editors-in-chief and the history," *Domus* 1000 (2016), 5.

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<sup>12</sup> For a history of the Triennali, see: Anty Pansera, *Storia e cronaca della Triennale* (Milano: Longanesi, 1978). On design at the Triennali, see: Alberto Bassi, Raimonda Riccini, Cecilia Colombo (eds.), *Design in Triennale, 1947-68: percorsi fra Milano e Brianza* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana editoriale, 2004).

## The second half of the forties: The RIMA Exhibition and the VIII Triennale di Milano

The RIMA Exhibition opened at Palazzo dell'Arte in Milan in 1946. From this event, *Domus* (212) published the chairs designed by architects Lucia Ponti Bonicalzi for Brenna e Cazzini (Milan) and Emma Pasquinelli Peressutti for Fratelli Cassina (Meda).

Both architects belonged to the Milanese circle of innovative architectural culture. Lucia was the wife of engineer Giovanni Bonicalzi, who was a professor at the Polytechnic of Milan, and Emma was married to BBPR's Enrico Peressutti, who was a colleague of *Domus* editor E. Nathan Rogers.

Made of wood and plywood, the published chairs were appreciated for their plain, flexible and ergonomic shapes and for their affordable cost, which made them available to the middle class.<sup>13</sup>

Pasquinelli's rocking chaise-longue – marked by its pierced plywood structure – is pictured in a domestic environment, together with the same teddy horses that were portrayed on her children's furniture in the previous issue (211) of the magazine, thus associating a maternal concern with both products.<sup>14</sup>

The fabrics that covered the thin upholstery of the chairs designed by Ponti and Pasquinelli were designed and manufactured by Fede Cheti (1905–78),

whose production was extensively represented and advertised in the magazine's issues until 1996 (783), reaching the covers of *Domus* since the 1950s. This outstanding craftswoman, designer and entrepreneur founded her textile firm in Milan in 1936, and Gio Ponti was among the artists who designed fabrics and rugs for her firm from the outset.<sup>15</sup>

Fede Cheti's creations – along with those of the renowned Gegia Bronzini (1894–1976)<sup>16</sup> and the less-known Emilia Bardi from Bergamo – were published by *Domus* (213) as examples of a productive and creative recovery of imagination and a love of Italian artisans for their work, featuring the section of the RIMA exhibition that was devoted to textiles, curtains and fabrics.<sup>17</sup>

The exhibition set design of this section – defined 'graceful' by E.N. Rogers – was created by architect Lina Bo.<sup>18</sup> She collaborated with Gio Ponti at the magazine *Lo Stile - nella casa e nell'arredamento* until 1943, and she was

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<sup>13</sup> Lucia Ponti Bonicalzi and Emma Peressutti Pasquinelli, "Due espositrici," *Domus* 212 (1946), 12–3.

<sup>14</sup> Mario Tevarotto, "I bambini nell'architettura," *Domus* 211 (1946), 28. In 1955, the same chaise-longue appeared in a long article devoted to Peressutti's home in Milan. This article highlights only the pieces of furniture that were designed by Pasquinelli's husband, Enrico Peressutti and some textiles designed by family friend Fede Cheti. Enrico Peressutti and Emma Pasquinelli, "Fra i Tetti di Milano," *Domus* 303 (1955), 16–26.

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<sup>15</sup> About Fede (Federica) Cheti's pioneering work, her friendship with Gio Ponti and her participation at the Triennali, see: Chiara Lecce, "Fede Cheti 1936-1975: Tracce di una storia italiana," *AIS/Design Storia e Ricerche* 2 (2013), <http://www.aisdesign.org/aisd/fede-cheti-1936-1975-tracce-di-una-storia-italiana>, (accessed 4 April, 2017).

<sup>16</sup> After having won the first prize at the National textile competition in 1936 and the silver medal for the tapestry shown in 1940 at the Triennale di Milano, in 1946, Gegia Bronzini founded together with her daughter Marisa (1920–2007) the Tessitura a mano Gegia Bronzini company. Gegia Bronzini received the Diploma of Honour at the X Triennale di Milano (1954). On Bronzini's work, see: Roberto Rizzi, *Omaggio a Gegia e Marisa Bronzini* (Cesena: Clac, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> "Al Palazzo dell'Arte. Stoffe. Allestimento dell'Arch. Lina Bo," *Domus* 213 (1946), 6–7.

<sup>18</sup> Ernesto Nathan Rogers, "Divulgazioni attorno a una mostra d'arredamento," *Domus* 211 (1946), 6.

the deputy editor of *Domus* from 1944 to 1945.<sup>19</sup>

For her exhibition set design, Lina Bo stated the need to choose appropriate home textiles in an informal and provocative way. She wrote on a giant blackboard, 'vi ricordate? L'intimità dell'abat-jour e i Damschi (finti) [...] BASTA!' (do you remember? The cosiness of the abatjour and the (fake) Damasks. Enough!)<sup>20</sup>.

Sharing Bo's point of view, the magazine appreciated Emilia Bardi's decorative use of warp, as well as the chromaticity and abstract motifs inspired by the Dadaist artist Hans Arp of Fede Cheti's fabrics.

Fede Cheti provided her home textiles for the widely celebrated experimental prefabricated residential quarter known as 'QT8', which was built for the VIII Triennale di Milano (T8, 1947), the first after the war. *Domus* editor E.N. Rogers devoted the entire issue 221 to this historical event, which focused on housing post-war reconstruction.<sup>21</sup> In this issue, Fede Cheti's textiles are also mentioned.<sup>22</sup> The T8 affirmed the social aspects of architecture by emphasising the key issue

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<sup>19</sup> Achillina Bo (1914–92) graduated in Rome in 1939 and later became known as Lina Bo Bardi. In 2014, to celebrate the centenary of her birth, *Domus* and the Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI secolo - MAXXI organised an exhibition about her foundational years in Rome and Milan. *Domus* published an article she wrote in 1947 in Brazil and re-printed the first issue of the magazine *A – Attualità, Architettura, Abitazione, Arte*, which was published in 1946 by Editoriale Domus under the editorship of Lina Bo, with Carlo Pagani and Bruno Zevi. Lina Bo, "Tutto quello che volevo era avere Storia. All I Wanted was to have History," *Domus* 986 (2014), 2–5.

<sup>20</sup> "Al Palazzo dell'Arte. Stoffe. Allestimento dell'Arch. Lina Bo," *Domus* 213 (1946), 7.

<sup>21</sup> By replacing Melchiorre Bega, E.N. Rogers became editor when the magazine was re-launched in 1946 after its break in 1945.

<sup>22</sup> Ernesto Nathan Rogers, "Sezione dell'industrializzazione edilizia," *Domus* 221 (1947), 12.

of housing for all. Italian women's contributions appeared in the exhibition sections devoted to furniture and daily-use objects. *Domus* published fabrics designed by Fede Cheti and Vanna Chiaretta and a dinnerware set designed by Lyda Levi (?), which was manufactured by the master of ceramics, Angelo Ungania.<sup>23</sup>

On the occasion of this outstanding Triennale that focused on the house for everyone, Cheti's firm launched a textile design competition that was advertised by the magazine.<sup>24</sup> One year later, the firm continued in launching design competitions in collaboration with *Domus*,<sup>25</sup> and the firm promoted design by organising a travelling exhibition on Italian modern furniture in Milan, Genoa and Rome. Cheti and Ponti had the same purpose, spreading quality of artisanal design productions in order to boost Italian exports.<sup>26</sup>

From the furniture section of the T8, *Domus* published the works of young architects Anna Ferrieri Castelli and Luisa Castiglioni, who graduated in Milan in 1943 and 1946, respectively.

After the war, Anna Ferrieri Castelli (1920–2006) became correspondent from Italy for the English magazine *Architectural Design* and was the editor-in-chief of the other leading Italian magazine, *Casabella-Continuità*. She had been in contact with architect Piero Bottoni –designer and promoter of QT8– and E.N. Rogers since

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<sup>23</sup> Ernesto Nathan Rogers, "Sezione dell'oggetto," *Domus* 221 (1947), 21, 27.

<sup>24</sup> "Nuovi concorsi di disegni per tessuti da arredamento," *Domus* 218 (1947), 53.

<sup>25</sup> "Concorso Fede Cheti – Domus," *Domus* 226 (1948), 9.

<sup>26</sup> About this exhibition, see: Enrico Freyrie, "Dimostrazione di qualità del nostro lavoro," *Domus* 226 (1948), 56–7.

she worked at Franco Albini's studio, at the very beginning of her career.<sup>27</sup>

In his article (issue 221, 1947), Rogers published a bent wooden armchair designed by Ferrieri Castelli and a sectional kitchen for minimal houses, which Ferrieri Castelli had designed together with Ettore Gentili. In addition, Rogers mentioned her –together with architect Luciano Canella and graphic designer Max Huber– as the set-designer of this exhibition section (*Mobile Singolo*), which was awarded with a Mention of Honour.<sup>28</sup>

In the same article, Luisa Castiglioni (1922–2015) gained visibility in *Domus*, publishing her metal-wooden office desk with chairs.<sup>29</sup> Ten years later, her mass-produced office furniture was again published by the magazine.<sup>30</sup>

Castiglioni was one of the few women to succeed in gaining professional visibility outside the boundaries of 'domestic design', to which most of her female colleagues were confined. However, *Domus's* main articles focused on architectural and interior design projects that Castiglioni undertook in collaboration with her colleague Margherita (Rita) Bravi Mori (1921–2006).<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> About Ferrieri's life and work, see: Cristina Morozzi, *Anna Castelli Ferrieri* (Bari: Laterza, 1993).

<sup>28</sup> Ernesto Nathan Rogers, "Sezione del mobile," *Domus* 221 (1947), 14, 19–20. Ten years later, the magazine published an inventive exhibition set designed by the same architect. See: Anna Castelli Ferrieri, "Un allestimento," *Domus* 322 (1956), 52.

<sup>29</sup> Ernesto Nathan Rogers, "Sezione del mobile," *Domus* 221 (1947), 15.

<sup>30</sup> Luisa Castiglioni, "Mobili per ufficio prodotti in serie," *Domus* 327 (1957), 44. In 1956, the same Castiglioni desk was published by Annibale Fiocchi, "Un ufficio a Milano," *Domus* 324 (1956), 49. The same year, a wooden desk by Castiglioni and Margherita Bravi Mori appeared together with desks designed by Finn Juhl and Gianemilio Piero and Anna Monti in the column "Rassegna Domus," *Domus* 322 (1956), no page.

<sup>31</sup> By Luisa Castiglioni, Rita Mori Bravi, see: "Da appartamento a negozio," *Domus* 278 (1953), 42–

## **The fifties, from the IX to the XI Triennale di Milano: Scandinavian design culture as a reference**

When Ponti returned to *Domus* as editor-in-chief in 1948, he immediately resumed his pre-war interest in Scandinavian design, at the same time promoting Italian modern design furniture.<sup>32</sup>

In 1950, the magazine was looking at Swedish mass production of functional, plain and low-cost furniture that combined tradition with modernity for a democratic idea of design. Within this context, female Scandinavian designers were invited to write articles about Northern design shops and firms.

Swedish furniture designer and interior designer Lena Rabenius Larsson (1919–2000) presented the design of home furniture that was mass-produced by Nordiska Kompaniet (NK) in her articles.

Rabenius Larsson was an artistic leader at NK, who suggested design solutions for the simplification of domestic lifestyles. Considering interior design as a matter of public interest, she recognised the NK concept of furniture design as the epitome of practicality to be emulated by Italians. In her article, she explained how small Swedish factories, working on an artisanal basis, chose to sell simple elements in order to obtain different pieces of furniture and facilitate export. Considering the similarities to Italian manufacturers,

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3; "Un negozio in vetrina," *Domus* 278 (1953), 44–6; "Aspetti di un arredamento," *Domus* 299 (1954), 35–9; "Camera studio per una persona," *Domus* 299 (1954), 40; "A Torino," *Domus* 315 (1956), 21–7; "Una casa a Brescia," *Domus* 317 (1956), 33–8.

<sup>32</sup> About this topic, see: Caterina Franchini, "From the Embroidery to the Construction. Women in Design and Architecture: Domus 1928-1950", in Ana María Fernández García et al. (eds.), *MoMoWo: 100 Works in 100 Years. European Women in Architecture and Design. 1918-2018* (Ljubljana: ZRC SAZU France Stele Institute, 2016), 249–53.

she suggested the adoption of the same strategy in Italy.<sup>33</sup>

In addition, the internationally celebrated Swedish ceramic and glass designer Tyra Lundgren (1897–1979), who had been admired by Ponti since 1934, wrote an article about Swedish designer Estrid Ericsson (1894–1981), who founded the renowned interior design shop Svenskt Tenn (Swedish pewter) in Stockholm and involved architect Joseph Frank in her furniture production.<sup>34</sup> Ponti supported the participation of Svenskt Tenn at the announced XI Triennale di Milano (T9, 1951), writing an enthusiastic article on that topic.<sup>35</sup>

Thanks to these Swedish authors, *Domus* helped to initiate the interest of both customers and Italian designers in Scandinavian design, thus favouring its visibility at the T9 “International Exhibition of Decorative and Industrial Arts and Modern Architecture”.

The T9 opened the doors of Italy and Milan to the world, inviting foreign designers to ‘display to the Italians the most efficient issue of their arts’. The aim was to form a ‘general climate of taste’, enhancing and regenerating ‘the traditional veins of spontaneous production which clearly meet the requirements of modern culture’.<sup>36</sup>

The magazine mentions female designers primarily in the pages devoted to the Scandinavian sections of the exhibition. Among all other national sections, only the Italian and the French sections granted some visibility to women’s works in the pages of *Domus*.

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<sup>33</sup> Lena Larsson, “La Svezia produce in serie,” *Domus* 248-49 (1950), 75–9. About the NK, see by the same author “La NK-bo di Stoccolma,” *Domus* 255 (1951), 53.

<sup>34</sup> Tyra Lundgren, “Valigia svedese. Conoscere Svenskt Tenn,” *Domus* 247 (1950), 43–4.

<sup>35</sup> Gio Ponti, “Valigia svedese. Svenskt Tenn in Stoccolma,” *Domus* 247 (1950), 45–56.

<sup>36</sup> “IX Triennale di Milano,” *Domus* 247 (1950), 1.

The works by Scandinavian women appeared to focus primarily on ceramic, glass and textile complementary furnishing, while the furniture design scene appeared to be dominated exclusively by men. Not even the furniture exhibited at the T9 by Danish designer Grete Jalk (1920–2006) was published.

Complementary furnishing objects were designed by specialised artists and craftsmen/designers who worked for leading manufacturers in those countries. Several pictures of these works were published in issue 259 (1951), and those pictures were preceded by a Gio Ponti article that was emblematically entitled “IX Triennale di Milano. Insegnamento altrui e fantasia degli italiani” (Other people’s teaching and Italians’ imagination).<sup>37</sup> The title of this article clarifies Ponti’s point of view, whose mission was to open up new design concepts that he considered able to enhance Italian design.

At the T9, among the Scandinavians, female Finnish designers and craftsmen were the most extensively represented by *Domus*.<sup>38</sup> An overview of the works of some of these designers had already been published by Gio Ponti a year earlier in order to stimulate readers’ interest in the forthcoming international exhibition.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Gio Ponti, “IX Triennale di Milano. Insegnamento altrui e fantasia degli italiani,” *Domus* 259 (1951), 10–3.

<sup>38</sup> “Finlandia. IX Triennale di Milano,” *Domus* 259 (1951), 14–27. About Finnish craftsmen, see: Goldstein Gallery and University of Minnesota, *Suomen naisten käsityöt eilen ja tänään - Finnish women's handcraft past and present*, [exhibition, May 18-July 18, 1986], (St. Paul: The Gallery, 1986).

<sup>39</sup> Lisa Johansson-Pape (1907–89) with her modern lamps, Helena Tynell (1918–2016) and Gunnel Nyman (1909–48) with their crystals, and Ruth Bryk (1916–99) with her ceramics, were heavily promoted in the articles “Formelle di Ruth Bryk,” and “Un anno di produzione d’arte finlandese,” *Domus* 247 (1950), 41, 58–61.

The ceramics manufactured at the artist colony Wärtsilä Koncernen A.B. Arabia were designed by Tonini Irene Muona (1904–87) and Tapio Wirkkala’s wife, Ruth Bryk (1916–99),<sup>40</sup> whose work inspired Italian artists at this exhibition.

Porcelains for Arabia were designed by Aune Siimes (1909–64) –who received the Gold medal in 1951 and 1954– while the glass-wares for Nuutajärvi-Nötsjö were designed by Gunnel Nyman (1909–48), who received the Gold medal for the T9 posthumously.

Rugs made by adopting ancient *täkänä* and *ryijy* techniques were designed by Alli Koroma and manufactured by Suomen Käsityön Ystävät. The tapestries were designed by Laila Karttunen (1895–1981) for Hämeelinnan Käsityöopisto and by Dora Jung (1906–80). Both textile designers were mentioned in *Domus* several times. Karttunen had already appeared in an article on the V Triennale (1933),<sup>41</sup> while Jung was mentioned for the first time in 1939.<sup>42</sup> Dora Jung received the Grand Prix at both the IX and X Triennale (1951, 1954) for her damasks<sup>43</sup> and at the XI Triennale (1957) for her curtains. In 1962, the magazine published

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<sup>40</sup> Ruth Bryk’s work was published by the magazine for the first time in 1949. “Ceramiche, sbalzi e smalti. Rassegna,” *Domus* 328 (1949), 38. In 1962, *Domus* devoted an entire article to the Wirkkalases: “Viaggio in Lapponia,” and “Ritorno a Helsinki,” *Domus* 387 (1962), 23–36, 37–45.

<sup>41</sup> Carlo A. Felice, “Le Arti Applicate Straniere alla Triennale di Milano,” *Domus* 65 (1933), 247. This article also shows a tapestry designed by Eva Anttila, a rug designed by Eva Brumer, ceramics designed by Elsa Elenius and toys designed by Eva Gardenberg, together with a chair designed by Alvar Aalto.

<sup>42</sup> “Artigianato straniero. Quattro nuovi tessuti,” *Domus* 136 (1939), 84; “Documenti d’artigianato straniero. Tessuti,” *Domus* 140 (1939), 73. In these articles, Finnish designers Maga Tikkanen and Greta Skogster Lehtinen are also mentioned.

<sup>43</sup> “Finlandia forme nuove per la Triennale,” 298 (1954), 46; “La Finlandia alla Triennale,” *Domus* 300 (1954), 22.

an article about her studio in Helsinki, showing her innovative sacred tapestries that made her famous in this field.<sup>44</sup>

From the Stokmann-Orno firm were published the innovative aluminium lamps designed by Lisa Johansson Pape (1907–89) through the exploration of the potentialities of new industrial techniques. Her revolutionary creations received medals at the IX, X and XII Triennali and had an enormous influence on the subsequent design of lamps.

The article about Finnish design at the T9 offered the perception that traditional materials and manufacturing techniques could peacefully coexist with innovative materials and manufacturing techniques in the field of modern design.

Regarding the Danish section of the T9, blankets designed by the female Icelandic pioneer of textiles and early member of the Danish Female Artists’ Society, Júlíana Sveinsdóttir (1889–66), are published in the same magazine issue 259 (1951), in addition to ceramics and textiles designed by other leading designers.<sup>45</sup>

All works created by female Danish designers were exhibited together with Finn Juhl and Mogensén’s armchairs and Hans Wegner’s tables and wooden chairs. Thus, the perception of women’s contributions to design was that of playing an ancillary decorative role in suggesting an *unicum* of a lively modern Danish lifestyle, even though some of these women designers were already known by

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<sup>44</sup> “Ritorno a Helsinki. Nello studio di Dora Jung ad Helsinki,” *Domus* 387 (1962), 46–7.

<sup>45</sup> Ceramics designed by Nathalie Krebs (1895–1978), Gertrud Vasegaard (1913–2007) for Bing & Grøndahl and Eva Stæher Nielsen (1911–76) for Saxbo-Stentøj, rugs designed by Ea Koch (1905–87), the wife of the architect and furniture designer Mogens Koch, and textiles designed by Marie Gudme Leth (1895–1997), Inger Marie Ostenfeld (1905–2016) and Helga Foght (1902–74) are published in “Danimarca. IX Triennale di Milano,” *Domus* 259 (1951), 28–33.



the magazine.<sup>46</sup> This ancillary perception of female creations appears to have also been assumed by the Swedish section, where women were represented through their home accessories in ceramic, glass and textiles.

Ponti had already demonstrated his admiration for Swedish design since the 1925 Paris exhibition, publishing some articles on Swedish design and on the exceptional productions of the department store Nordiska Kompaniet (NK), particularly the mass-produced furniture department, which was directed by Lena Rabenius Larsson.<sup>47</sup>

In the article devoted to the Swedish section of the T9, the productions of NK are largely represented by women designers, some of whom were already known by the magazine readers.<sup>48</sup> Among the textile designers mentioned, the most well known were the pioneer Märta Måås Fjetterström (1873–1941),<sup>49</sup> Viola Gråsten (1910–94)<sup>50</sup> and Astrid Sampe (1909–

2002),<sup>51</sup> who as director of the NK textile department was able to adapt artisanal ideals to industrial needs since the 1930's. Textile designers Märta Afzelius (1887–1961), Susan Gröndal (1901–95), and Sofia Widén (1900–61) appeared for the first time.

In addition to the works of the ceramists Tyra Lundgren and Anna-Lisa Thomson (1905–52) –recurrently mentioned in the magazine's issues– works designed by glass designer Monica Bratt (1913–61) for Reijmyre Glasbruk appeared in the magazine for the first time.

Scandinavian women's design was valued in the magazine for its poetic feeling, while Italian women's design was appreciated for its playful inventiveness. The 'La Garretta' tent designed by Fede Cheti and Gianni Ratto and a coffee set designed by the ceramic designer Antonia Campi (b. 1921) appeared as emblematic works of this trend.

The amusing weekend tent for ladies named 'La Garretta', in orange tint, had great success at the T9.<sup>52</sup> Equipped with scissors for gardening, magazines and small chairs designed by Marco Zanuso, this tent was presented as a perfect place for ladies to chat. The walking coffee-set in black and white was also funny and ironic, but in a different way.<sup>53</sup> The ceramic designer A. Campi was already known by *Domus* readers because her creations had been published together

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<sup>46</sup> Nathalie Krebs was mentioned by the magazine for the first time in 1934 in the column "Idee per la casa dalle Riviste di tutto il mondo," *Domus* 77(1934), 39. A vase designed by Gertrud Vasegaard was published in 1950. "Un negozio esemplare. Arredamento di Finn Juhl per 'Bing & Grondahl', Chopenaghen," *Domus* 250 (1950), 46. Two vases designed by Eva Stæher Nielsen were published in 1940. "Per voi e per la vostra casa Domus sceglie le migliori idee da tutto il mondo," *Domus* 149 (1940), 80.

<sup>47</sup> "Arredamento svedese con mobili tutti in serie," *Domus* 250 (1950), 20; "La serie per i bambini. La Svezia ci insegna," *Domus* 251 (1950), 33.

<sup>48</sup> "Svezia. IX Triennale di Milano," *Domus* 259 (1951), 34–41.

<sup>49</sup> Playing a leading role in the revival of hand weaving in Sweden between the two wars, Märta Måås Fjetterström was mentioned by the magazine for the first time in 1935, together with Elsa Gullberg (1886–1984), who was a pioneer of textile design for industrial production. Gio Ponti, "Un arte da incoraggiare," *Domus* 87 (1935), 35.

<sup>50</sup> Viola Gråsten, "Tappeti scandinavi," *Domus* 248 (1950), 80–1.

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<sup>51</sup> Astrid Sampe textiles were published for the first time in 1935. E. Rosselli, "Nuovi tessuti e ricami dalla Svezia," *Domus* 94 (1935), 32–3. In 1939, her fabrics for NK were published together with Tyra Lundgren's glasses for Venini and Aune Simes' ceramics in "Come le foglie," *Domus* 144 (1939), 56–7. Astrid Sampe is mentioned by *Domus* until the sixties.

<sup>52</sup> "Fede Cheti alla Triennale," *Domus* 259 (1951), 61–4.

<sup>53</sup> Gio Ponti, "Sezione ceramica – Italia," *Domus* 260 (1951), 35.

with tapestries designed by Gegia Bronzini (1894–1976) in issue 252 (1950).<sup>54</sup>

Up to this point, the perception provided by *Domus* concerning the contributions of women designers appears to be represented primarily by fields belonging to the applied arts, which were traditionally considered to be feminine, such as textiles<sup>55</sup> and pottery, but some exceptions appeared. A bed and a sofa designed by architect Franca Antonioli (later Helg) (1920–89) were published in the article devoted to the apartment realized by the Italian department store La Rinascente.<sup>56</sup>

*Domus* offered visibility to the ‘apartment *minimum*’ designed and furnished by architects Luisa Castiglioni and Margherita Bravi. In this interior design, walls became closets that combined the industrial material Formica laminate with plywood, thus obtaining an original solution.<sup>57</sup> This design was the only interior designed by women for the T9 that was published in the magazine issue.

Alongside Castiglioni and Bravi, the young architect Eugenia Alberti Reggio (d. 2015) stands out, together with costumer Emma Calderini (1899–1975). They were the authors of the exhibition set design of the “Straw section”, for which Eugenia Alberti

Reggio also designed a modern-shaped armchair that experimented with this traditional natural material.<sup>58</sup>

Again, *Domus* demonstrated its interest in the use of traditional natural materials for modern innovative design by publishing a bamboo table and wooden dining table designed by Charlotte Perriand (1903–99), which were presented in the French section.<sup>59</sup> This table was similar to the table Perriand designed for her attic that was published in 1946.<sup>60</sup> Perriand was also the set designer of the sections “Formes utiles” and interior design, while the widely renowned textile designer Paule Marrot (1902–87) was in charge of the set design for the textiles and tapestries section.

Concerning the T9, *Domus* provided once again the perception that women’s creations were mostly confined to the field of home accessories, even when they were subjected to mass production, as was the case for the USA’s selection of daily life objects.<sup>61</sup>

This perception changed slightly at the X Triennale (T10, 1954), which was devoted

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<sup>54</sup> Antonia Campi, “Ceramiche e stoffe,” *Domus* 252 (1950), 72. An ashtray designed by Campi was published the same year in the column “Galleria della ceramica,” *Domus* 245 (1950), 59.

<sup>55</sup> In the Italian textile section, besides textiles by Cheti and Bronzini, *Domus* also mentioned fabrics designed by Irene Kowaliska (1905–91). “La sezione dei tessuti alla Triennale,” *Domus* 261 (1951), 34–5. Born in Poland, Irene Kowaliska worked in Italy, becoming one of the leading figures of the German colony of Vietri. In 1954, at the X Triennale, she won the Gold medal for her textiles and tapestries.

<sup>56</sup> Carlo Pagani, “Un appartamento per quattro persone,” *Domus* 262 (1951), 2–5.

<sup>57</sup> “Alloggio a pareti armadio per tre persone alla IX Triennale di Milano,” *Domus* 262 (1951), 6–9; “Dispensa, tavolo e letto,” *Domus* 266 (1952), 64.

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<sup>58</sup> “Le paglie alla Triennale,” *Domus* 261 (1951), 36–7.

<sup>59</sup> “Francia. IX Triennale di Milano,” *Domus* 260 (1951), 27–31. In the article are mentioned the ceramics designed by Guidette Carbonell (1910–2008), Elisabeth Joulia (1925–2003) and the duo Pierre and Anne Mestre.

<sup>60</sup> “L’abbaino di Charlotte Perriand,” *Domus* 208 (1946), 6.

<sup>61</sup> Among the admirable examples of “Useful form” (as defined by Belgioioso, Peressutti and Rogers, who were in charge of the US exhibition at the T9), there were: a tea set designed by Hungarian-born American industrial designer Eva Zeisel (1906–2011); a porcelain spice mill designed by the ceramic entrepreneurs Trudi and Harold Sitterle; a metal table lamp designed by Swedish architect and furniture designer Greta Magnusson Grossman (1906–99), and a hand-held ashtray designed by Japanese American pottery designer Minnie Negoro (1919–98). Alberto Rosselli, “Gli oggetti alla mostra U.S.A.,” *Domus* 260 (1951), 43–6.

to the unity of arts and to Industrial design, which had its first international exhibition here.

Women won numerous prizes and awards<sup>62</sup>, and Scandinavian women started to gain visibility in furniture design. In addition to designs in ceramics, textiles, and glass and the lamps designed by the Finnish designer Lisa Johansson Pape, who received the Gold medal,<sup>63</sup> *Domus* (300) published a straw and metal chair by the Danish designer Grete Jalk<sup>64</sup> and a chair by the Finnish designer Maija Liisa Komulainen.<sup>65</sup>

Along with Scandinavia, Austria has been perceived among the countries where the applied arts have acquired distinctive features. *Domus* explicitly recognized the great role played by women in this country and mentioned the textile designers Eva Sobotka –winner of the Silver medal– and Paula Ptacek, who exhibited at the T10. The magazine prized the constant advancement of ceramics by Maria Bilger Bilyan (1912–97)<sup>66</sup>, who received the Gold medal, as well as the of Helene Fischer and the wooden toys of Grete Rader Soulek (1920–97), which were inspired by Finnish ceramics designed by Kaipainen.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Women from Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Great Britain and Israel won medals, primarily for textiles, ceramics and glass. Finnish and Swedish women received the largest number of medals and awards. “I Premi della Decima Triennale di Milano,” *Domus* 303 (1955), 27–34.

<sup>63</sup> “La Finlandia alla Triennale,” *Domus* 300 (1954), 18–23.

<sup>64</sup> “La Danimarca alla Triennale,” *Domus* 300 (1954), 30.

<sup>65</sup> “Allestimento per il Mobile singolo alla Triennale,” *Domus* 300 (1954), 61.

<sup>66</sup> See also Maria Biljan Bilger, “Ceramiche e arazzi viennesi,” *Domus* 271 (1952), 42–3; “Maria Biljan Bilger. Ceramiche,” *Domus* 299 (1954), 56.

<sup>67</sup> “L’Austria alla Triennale. Rassegna,” *Domus* 299 (1954), 9.

In addition to the interest shown in the playful and sometimes ironic combination of folk tradition and modernity, the magazine highlighted the surprisingly innovative and inventive use of plastic in designing dishes and cups that Zahara (Zohara) Schatz (1916–99) exhibited after having experimented with this new material for the creation of jewellery in the USA.<sup>68</sup> According to *Domus*: “Her production in Israel is original and new, and has been developed in the freest forms that enjoy this matter entirely pliant, weightless, transparent and with the possibility of great ‘inclusions’”.<sup>69</sup>

Concerning the section of the young State of Israel, in addition to the plastic items designed by Zahara Schatz, the article devoted to this section shows a picture of copper dishes designed by painter Louise McClure Schatz (1916–97), who was better known as one of the “California Seven” group from Big Sur. The first received a Diploma of Honour, while the second received the Silver medal. Zahara was the daughter of Boris Schatz, founder of the “Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts” in Jerusalem (since 1906), and Louise was her sister-in-law. When they all moved to Israel, they founded the arts and crafts workshop “Yad”, with the goal of creating and selling alternative art objects that differed in style from those of the Bezalel School.

Through the pages of *Domus*, Italian women are perceived as more involved than others in set design. They began also

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<sup>68</sup> Zahara Schatz’s pieces of jewelry were part of a large exhibition on industrial design that was organised by the Detroit Institute of Art in 1949. See “Una esposizione americana,” *Domus* 241 (1949), 15–21.

<sup>69</sup> “La sua produzione in Israele è originale e nuova, e si è sviluppata in forme più libere, che godono di questa materia del tutto pieghevole, senza peso, trasparente e con la possibilità di « inclusioni » fantastiche”. From “Israele alla Triennale. Rassegna,” *Domus* 299 (1954), 14.

to appear as members of committees and consultants.

The magazine devoted a well-illustrated article to the Hall of Honour's interior design by Architects Franca Antonioli Helg and Franco Albini, which received the Grand Prix.

In the well-known original hall, which was built by Giovanni Muzio in 1935, the two winners of the design competition created a suspended auditorium whose structure supported the showcases.<sup>70</sup> In addition, Franca Helg conceived the set design for both the "Retrospective" and "Italian Schools of Art" exhibitions,<sup>71</sup> and architect Eugenia Alberti Reggio, together with Sergio Favre, was in charge of the "Italian commodities sector" set design.<sup>72</sup>

Winner of the Gold medal for her textiles, Fede Cheti was the only female member of the organising committee, and she was in charge of the textile section, and Maria Luisa Pedroni was a consultant for urban planning projects<sup>73</sup>, a field of male prerogative, but no woman was a member of the Board of Directors, even at the next XI Triennale (T11, 1957).

In 1957, Milan became an aspired destination, as the Triennale event was already recognised by exhibitors as an opportunity to enter the world market, and *Domus* publisher Gianni Mazzocchi joined the executive committee.

A few women succeeded in joining commissions, primarily as collaborators or secretaries. Student Carla Federspiel and architect Lidia Bolieau were the only two

women involved in the "Mostra internazionale dell'abitare". Architect Raffaella Crespi (b. 1929) was responsible for the Straw section of the Art productions Exhibition, and architect Eugenia Alberti Reggio was in charge of temporary exhibitions. Only two women were commissionaires of the foreign sessions: Eva Benedicks (1902–75) for Sweden and Mia Seeger (1903–91) for Germany.<sup>74</sup>

About T11, *Domus* published only textiles, glass, and ceramics by female designers, keeping its appreciation for the Scandinavians, albeit female Polish ceramists also gained visibility.<sup>75</sup>

At the T11, many women from all countries were awarded the Gold and Silver medals by the international jury, which was formed only by men. According to "Notiziario domus" (issue 338, 1958), only two women received a Silver medal for their furniture: the French designer Janine Abraham (1929–2005) for the metal armchair she designed together with Dirk Jan Rol and the Cuban-born Clara Porset (1895–1981) for her chairs in straw and rattan that were exhibited in the Mexican section.<sup>76</sup> The pioneer of modern furniture design in Mexico had already gained visibility in *Domus* in 1953 (issue 281), publishing an article about the exhibition dedicated to 'Art in everyday life' that she curated in Mexico City in 1952. This exhibition was based on the concept of enhancing original artisanal features in association with modern

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<sup>70</sup> "Il Salone d'Onore alla Triennale," *Domus* 300 (1954), 6–9.

<sup>71</sup> "Le scuole d'arte italiane alla Triennale," *Domus* 300 (1954), 57.

<sup>72</sup> "Alla mostra merceologica alla Triennale," *Domus* 300 (1954), 64.

<sup>73</sup> M.L. Pedroni collaborated together with Giancarlo De Carlo, Gerardo Guerrieri and Jaques Lecoq in the scenario of the movie "Una lezione di urbanistica", which focused on ridiculing the rationality of houses in Modernist cities.

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<sup>74</sup> Lists of names of the collaborators for the T11 are published in the column "Notiziario Domus", *Domus* 331, 333 (1957), no page.

<sup>75</sup> A rug designed by the Finnish designer Uhra Simberg Ehrström (1914–79) was published together with Polish ceramics designed by Wanda Golakowska (1901–75), Julia Kotarbinska (1895–1979), and Lech and Helena Grzeńkiewicz (1908–77). "Per la XI Triennale," *Domus* 334 (1957), 47–8.

<sup>76</sup> "Notiziario Domus. I Premi alla XI Triennale di Milano," *Domus* 338 (1958), no page.

design for industry, a concept that was cherished by Gio Ponti.<sup>77</sup>

### **The sixties, from the XII to the XIV Triennale di Milano: From 'Home and School' to 'The Greater Number'**

The XII Triennale di Milano (T12, 1960) was marked by a subtle nostalgia, as if modernism was already starting to bend inward in self-admiration. Refusing to become an exhibition of items, this event was devoted to a specific topic: 'Home and School'. The contributions of three female Italian architects, Gae Aulenti (1927–2012, degree 1953), Anna Ferrieri Castelli (1920–2006, degree 1943), and Franca Helg, clearly emerged through the pages of *Domus*.<sup>78</sup>

Gaeatana (Gae) Aulenti was in charge of creating –together with Luigi Caccia Dominioni– a new route to access the Triennial from the park, hence negating the monumentality of Muzio's entrance in favour of a friendlier approach to the building. Moreover, Aulenti's 'apartment for urban centre' was considered to be among the most anecdotal works of this exhibition. Through an article published a few months earlier, readers were already aware of Gae Aulenti's professional practice as an interior designer.<sup>79</sup>

Anna Ferrieri Castelli was mentioned twice, for the prestigious set design of the Italian section, which she created together with her most renowned colleagues Achille and Piergiacomo Castiglioni, and for her set design of the 'House and

School exhibition'.<sup>80</sup> Here, the famous duo of Italian architects, Franca Helg and Franco Albini, exhibited its furniture for Poggi (Pavia).<sup>81</sup>

Unlike the foreign sections of the previous editions of the Triennale, the encounter with a new generation of designers was in full swing.<sup>82</sup> The magazine prized both glassware and woodenware designed by the Finnish designer Nanny Still Mckinney (1926–2009), who had already received a Mention of Honour for a set of cutleries at the T10.<sup>83</sup>

Eva Benedicks was again responsible for the Swedish exhibition, and for the first time, at the T12, Italian women were appointed to design the most relevant spaces, even if together with their male colleagues.

Finally, when at the XIII Triennale di Milano (T13, 1964), a new and different world was at the doorstep, two creative Italian women gained visibility for their emblematic works. Artwork by the young architect and artist Nanda Vigo (b. 1940) – known by magazine readers– enlightened the monumental staircase, offering to visitors a signal of an unexpected freedom in the relationship between art and design.<sup>84</sup>

Gae Aulenti's 'Arrivo al Mare' (Arrival at the Sea) gained the foreground, becoming a powerful iconic image of this 'Pop Triennial' dedicated to leisure. Published in issue 417, this installation gave life to Picasso's *Two Women Running on the Beach* by transforming the women into

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<sup>77</sup> Clara Porset, "Sedie messicane," *Domus* 281 (1953), 50–1.

<sup>78</sup> "Notiziario Domus. Commissioni e incarichi per la 12° Triennale di Milano," *Domus* 361 (1959), no page.

<sup>79</sup> Gae Aulenti, "Due arredamenti sullo stesso principio," *Domus* 367 (1960), 11–20.

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<sup>80</sup> "Alla XII Triennale di Milano," *Domus* 371 (1960), 13–6.

<sup>81</sup> "Alla XII Triennale nelle sezione italiana," *Domus* 373 (1960), 21.

<sup>82</sup> See "Alla XII Triennale nelle sezioni straniere," *Domus* 371 (1960), 17–30.

<sup>83</sup> "Nanny Still, vetri e legni," *Domus* 373 (1960), 49–50.

<sup>84</sup> "Prime immagini della tredicesima Triennale. La sezione introduttiva e la sezione italiana," *Domus* 417 (1964), 2.

nymphs undressing to the recorded sound of the waves. This work criticized the spirit of the whole event, which was about leisure activities, sports, hobbies, travel and experimental movies, and it was one of the most spectacular and best-loved works.<sup>85</sup>

A long and very well illustrated article on the interior design of the Olivetti shop in Buenos Aires by Gae Aulenti was published in issue 466 (1968), demonstrating the renown gained by the architect.<sup>86</sup> In the subsequent pages of the same magazine issue, the XIV Triennale di Milano (T14, 1968), which was devoted to “The Greater Number”, was documented. Concerning women’s contributions to this Triennale, the magazine acclaimed white ceramic panels designed by Rut Bryk (1916–99) for the Finnish stand<sup>87</sup> and mentioned the clothing rack shop fittings designed by the renowned architects Paola Lanzani (b. 1933) and Enrico Castellani.<sup>88</sup>

In addition, the magazine published a large photo of an ‘equipped space’, where Fede Cheti fabrics upholstered giant cushions. This space was designed by Giulio Confalonieri (1926–2008), the graphic designer who in 1966 created the legendary corporate identity of the *Eurodomus* exhibition. As in an Op Art work, a photo of a naked woman covered every surface of the empty cubic stand where Cheti’s cushions were lying down on the floor on both sides of the writing “Ti Amo” (I love you).<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> “Prime immagini della tredicesima ..,” *Domus* 417 (1964), 12–3.

<sup>86</sup> Gae Aulenti, “Buenos Aires, il negozio Olivetti,” *Domus* 466 (1968), 7–14.

<sup>87</sup> A picture of one of these panels is published in “A Milano la XIV Triennale,” *Domus* 466 (1968), 27.

<sup>88</sup> A picture is published in “A Milano la XIV Triennale,” *Domus* 466 (1968), 38.

<sup>89</sup> A caption of a large picture describes this stand. “A Milano la XIV Triennale,” *Domus* 466 (1968), 38.

On 30 May 1968, the T14 was occupied by students on the very day of its inauguration, thus becoming known as ‘The Triennial that lasted one day’. As mentioned by Marco Romanelli, “A few days later, the front facade of Muzio’s building bore the red writing ‘*La Triennale è morta*’ (the Triennial is dead)”.<sup>90</sup>

### **Women’s contributions to *Domus* events and their reverberations**

*Domus* became more and more an active stakeholder in the design scene, especially in the fields of furniture and interior design for modern housing. From the second half of the sixties, *Domus* began to promote new leading commercial activities and events that shared its aim of modernity, such as the *Centro Flay Casa* in Milan, the *Eurodomus* fairs and the exhibition *Domus Formes Italiennes* at the Galleries Lafayette in Paris.

In 1966 and 1968, *Domus* inspired the first two editions of *Eurodomus* in Genoa and Turin. *Eurodomus* was conceived by Gio Ponti –together with Giorgio Casali and Emanuele Ponzio– as a the first ‘pilot exhibition of the modern house’.

This international exhibition concerned the house’s modern design for both industrial and artisanal production, emphasising creative design values as those values were able to identify, on the cultural ground, the truth of the style of contemporary civilisation.<sup>91</sup> Both editions of the event represented the most significant values of their time in terms of good design, production, and utility in the new competitive market context.

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<sup>90</sup> Marco Romanelli, “*Domus* in the Triennale - The Triennale in *Domus*,” *Domus* 1000 (2016), 35.

<sup>91</sup> “Fiera internazionale di Genova, Eurodomus,” *Domus* 436 (1966), no pages.

*The 1st Eurodomus and Centro Fly Casa:  
Modern house design*

During the 1st *Eurodomus* in Genoa (1966), under the overall coordination of Gio Ponti, designers wished to encourage industrial standards in terms of embracing new materials or making use of traditional materials in a new way.

In addition to the experimental flat by Domusricerca, which was designed by the 'Gruppo 1' group formed only by men,<sup>92</sup> some women exhibited their works, whose images were published in *Domus* issue 440, among the most relevant designs of this *Eurodomus*.<sup>93</sup>

A detail of a heavy weft furnishing fabric and a McGuire's chair imported from the USA by Levi's gallery-shop represented the Milanese firms Fede Cheti and Lyda Levi, respectively.<sup>94</sup> The works designed by a young couple of architects, Afra Bianchin Scarpa (1937-2011) and Tobia Scarpa (b. 1935) –son of the famous architect Carlo Scarpa– featured the production of Stildomus, which was a firm founded in Rome by the equally young designer Aldo Bartolomeo in 1956.

Designed by the Scarpas, the magazine published a new lamp that looked like a theatre reflector –equipped with two flaps on both sides to orientate the light– and a modular series of shelves with glass showcases called 'Torcello'. The shelves were made of machine-made wooden panels, with the same profile on all four sides and held together by a special metal angle plate, thus being easy to assemble and adaptable to many different

compositions, according to the needs of users.<sup>95</sup>

Young artist-designer Nanda Vigo of the Gruppo Zero also gained visibility with one of her 'Cronotopi', an outstanding light trek formed by layers of glass panels through which light refracted.<sup>96</sup> It is worth noting that Nanda Vigo would be the first woman to conquer the *Domus* front cover in 1984 (650).

Together with furniture designed by Ettore Sottsass, Angelo Mangiarotti and others, a photo of Poltronova's multicoloured stand showed Gae Aulenti's 'Sgarsul' rocking chair in the foreground and the blown glass lamp/vase 'Giova' in the background.<sup>97</sup>

In addition, Aulenti saw published her set design for a series of furniture items by the *Centro-Fly Casa* (Milan), which was defined by the magazine as 'a lively space, almost a three-dimensional paint'.<sup>98</sup> In this stand, she exhibited her tubular green garden furniture pieces together with lamps designed by Umberto Riva.

It was no accident that Aulenti designed the Flay Casa stand; in fact, she was the architect –or better to say, the art director– in charge of the interior design of this department store for good furnishing. For this work, she studied department stores, design centres and showrooms in the USA and in Europe, thus achieving original results, as pointed out in a well-illustrated *Domus* article.<sup>99</sup>

From the same article, we know that among the exhibited items that were for

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<sup>92</sup> The Gruppo 1 team was formed by Rodolfo Bonetto, Cesare Casati, Joe Colombo, Giulio Confalonieri, Enzo Hybsch, Luigi Massoni and Emanuele Ponzio. "La prima realizzazione di 'Domusricerca'," *Domus* 440 (1966), 7–26.

<sup>93</sup> "Le immagini più significative della prima Eurodomus," *Domus* 440 (1966), 27–87.

<sup>94</sup> "Le immagini più significative...," *Domus* 440 (1966), 56 (Lyda Levi), 83 (Fede Cheti).

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<sup>95</sup> "Le immagini...Stildomus," *Domus*, 440 (1966), 76.

<sup>96</sup> "Le immagini...Nanda Vigo," *Domus* 440 (1966), 29.

<sup>97</sup> "Le immagini...Poltronova," *Domus* 440 (1966), 74.

<sup>98</sup> "Le immagini...Centro-Fly Casa," *Domus* 440 (1966), 44.

<sup>99</sup> Gae Aulenti, "A Milano, un 'grande magazzino' per l'arredamento moderno," *Domus* 438 (1966), 21–30.

sale in the shop, there were those designed by the women designers Renata Bonfanti, Anna Fasolis, Graziella Guidotti, Majia Heikinheimo, Elwine Lavene, Jela (Gabriela) Ferrario Mari (Enzo Mari's wife), Ornella Vitali Noorda (Bob Noorda's wife), Anna Nuzzo Olivetti, Carla Venosta, and Teresa Muzio Maffei in the children's corner. Furthermore, through its refined pictures, *Domus* advertised several of Aulenti's pieces, such as the 'Black and White chair' produced by the Centro-Fly, her widely celebrated 'Pipistrello Lamp' (by Martinelli Luce) and the 'Stringa' series of sofas and armchairs (produced by Ettore Sottsass' Poltronova firm, founded in 1957). Two years later, this series appeared in the article devoted to Aulenti's interior-design for Max Mara Maison in Milan, whose modern elegance was achieved through transparency and warm colours.<sup>100</sup>

Opened in Milan in January 1966, the *Centro-Fly Casa* was the first department store in Italy to be conceived around the ideas of quality design items, quality in use, price and commercial quality. Aulenti succeeded in creating a suitable set design for this purpose.

*Domus Formes Italiennes and the 2nd Eurodomus: Spontaneity and freedom of design*

The concept of *Casa Centro-Fly* appears to correspond to the *Domus* definition of quality, as explained in the advertisement for the exhibition *Domus Formes Italiennes* at Galeries Lafayette in Paris (1967):

[...] for *Domus* quality implies not simply good materials, perfect works and workmanship, and functional utility but also imagination and

visual expression, signified by form and colour.

When the idea of a civilisation equal for all has been finally fulfilled, there will be no fear of uniformity, if each nation will develop the expression of its own particular genius with greater spontaneity and freedom.<sup>101</sup>

In fact, following the success of the 1st *Eurodomus*, Galeries Lafayette entrusted *Domus* with the organisation of a special presentation on Italian productions that were able to disclose the '*Domus's* spirit'. This presentation, revealingly named *Domus Formes Italiennes*, was part of the exhibition *Présences d'Italie*, which covered 2000 m<sup>2</sup> of the department store in Paris. *Domus* followed the principles established for the 1st *Eurodomus*, which aimed to open Italian production to a wider international market.

This exhibition features three expressions of the 'Italian form', each one presenting itself through a modern design dedicated to a modern audience. The first expression centred on the quality of products brought within reach of a wide public, without social discrimination. The second expression was dedicated to the cultural presence of a public, which plays a part in the evolution and production of form. The third expression was represented by works of art and single pieces.

These three expressions were characterised by the common denominator of quality, which does not discriminate among things of major or minor importance, thus setting up an inclusive criterion for good style.

<sup>100</sup> "Per la moda", *Domus* 465 (1968) 32–3.

<sup>101</sup> "Aux Gallérie la Fayette. Présence d'Italie. Domus Formes Italiennes," *Domus* 446 (1967), no page.



Through these three expressions, *Domus* introduced to the public the promoters of a contemporary improvement of forms.

As advertised by the magazine, the exhibitors were “[...] “The Italians” of that great “international nation” of men working in “tomorrow’s hope””.<sup>102</sup>

Out of 100 creators, there were 12 women, and the works of a only few of those women were published in magazine issue 450, namely, the carpets designed by Renata Bonfanti, cylindrical night tables designed by Emma Schweinberger Gismondi for Studio Artemide, a prototype of an adjustable bookcase designed by Piera Uggeri Raimondo for Print laminate, and a modular coloured bookcase designed by Carla Scolari and Paolo Lomazzi –at that time, a couple who specialised in furniture for children– for the Xilografia Milanese firm. Once again, Gae Aulenti found her own place in this issue, which published from the Parisian exhibition her very colourful chairs, with a frame in tubular enamelled iron and a seat upholstered with a fabric she had designed and made in collaboration with the Pistoia Art School.<sup>103</sup>

Aulenti is confirmed as a constant presence in the magazine, being significantly represented in issue 463, which was devoted to the 2nd *Eurodomus* that opened in Turin from 22 March to 4 April 1968.<sup>104</sup>

*Domus* appreciated both her ‘Rimorchiatore’ (tugboat) and ‘La Ruspa’ (bulldozer). The first –produced by Candle (Milan)– is a single multipurpose object in yellow painted metal, housing two different lamps, an ashtray and a flower vase; the second is a table lamp in

enamelled steel, made by Martinelli Luce (Lucca).

Light fittings firms committed in their production other women architects, such as Franca Helg, Giovanna Massari and Eleonore Riva, whose works were worthy of publication.

Helg’s cubic lamp in moulded glass was presented within the stand of Fontana Arte (Milan), together with her ceiling lamps. A wide range of large glass light-fittings, designed by Giovanna Massari, was presented by Leucos (Mestre, Venice). Ponteur’s stand (from Bergamo) exhibited the lamp designed by the young architect Eleonore (Peduzzi) Riva for Studio Artemide, who would manufacture her iconic ashtray ‘Spyros’ just one year later.<sup>105</sup>

*Domus* gave space to designers who conceived furniture and home fittings that fully explored the possibilities of new synthetic materials with playfulness. ‘Cubo’, which was a cube made of expanded polyurethane foam that was surprisingly convertible into an armchair for two, was designed by Adriana Baglione, together with Luigi Moretti and Paolo Orlandini, for the French firm Airborne (Montreuil-sous-Bois, stand by Olivier Morgue).

Made of PVC were brightly coloured rugs, screens and tablecloths designed by Alda Casal that were presented within Ponteur’s stand (Bergamo) as new ideas for housing in a new low-cost material.

Plastic laminate low tables and chairs were offered by Carla Venosta and Marcello Pietrantoni within the small section of furniture and object prototypes.

<sup>102</sup> “Aux Gallérie la Fayette. Présence d’Italie...,” *Domus* 446 (1967), no page.

<sup>103</sup> “« Domus Formes Italiennes » una mostra a Parigi,” *Domus* 450 (1967), 11–38.

<sup>104</sup> All of the above-mentioned design pieces are published in “Eurodomus 2 in Turin,” *Domus* 463 (1968), 5–68.

<sup>105</sup> Eleonore Peduzzi Riva (b. 1939) was already known by *Domus* readers because her light metal furniture pieces were published in Eleonore Peduzzi, “Mobili italiani in grande serie, in lega leggera,” *Domus* 396 (1962), 52. In 1963, her works were advertised in the column “*Domus per chi deve scegliere mobili in serie*,” *Domus* 399 (1963), d105; *Domus* 401 (1963), d122.

In addition to this section of prototypes for mass production, the magazine prized the small section devoted to Italian handicraft, which was organised under the supervision of *Eurodomus*. In this section, Renata Bonfanti and Sandra Marconato gained visibility through their artisanal items.

Do-it-yourself furniture pieces were exhibited by the French firm Sébilleau (Rendon, France). In addition, *Domus* published a range of chairs and tables called 'Puzzle-wood', which were made of wood bricks designed by Nicole Schneegans and others, for both children and grown-ups. When unpackaged, the parts fitted one into the other like a puzzle, but they were packed in flat boxes for shipment.

Unlike in the issue devoted to the 1st *Eurodomus*, this time, Lyda Levi's and Fede Cheti's firms were finally presented entirely by their stands. Lyda Levi showed Whonen-Kurt Freygag (Hamburg) and McGuire (San Francisco) pieces of rattan furniture for which she was the agent for Italy, while Fede Cheti designed the stand of her firm as an all-white show-window to exhibit her new creations of furnishing fabrics, printed cotton velvets, linen and silks, which were all designed by her and specifically manufactured for the 2nd *Eurodomus*.

## Conclusions

From the mid-1940s to the first half of the 1950s, the presence and role of women in *Domus* appeared to be secondary, remaining in the shadows of their relatives or colleagues. Later, women slowly began to gain ground.

During a transitional period of the magazine's history, the young architect Lina Bo was able to become the deputy director of *Domus* from 1944 to 1945, a

position that was later covered by Ponti's daughter.

Except for a few Swedish women designers who have written articles on design companies in their country, women's contributions to the magazine have been limited to 'female' columns and topics, such as "Plants, flowers and gardens" (Giulia Vimercati Ponti and Maria Teresa Parpagliolo), "Antiquities" (Anna Marchi) and "Art" (Lisa Ponti).

Well-skilled professional figures belonging to the *milieu* of the high Milanese industrial bourgeoisie entered *Domus*'s editorial office in the mid-1960s, such as Marianne Lorenz, who had already received a master's degree in the USA – a rather unusual choice for the time – and had gained her first working experience in Gio Ponti's office.

During the short leadership of Ernesto N. Rogers, the magazine published furniture designed by women belonging to the Milanese circle of innovative architectural culture, who were wives or partners of the magazine editor's friends. Their creations at the RIMA Exhibition (1946) were considered to be advanced in terms of the use of materials and techniques, as well as of their affordable design, which made them available to the middle class.

Although women's works remained a minor presence in the magazine during the period covered by this study, *Domus* offered to its readers a lively perception of their contributions to the most relevant design exhibitions and initiatives. This perception seems to be related to the capability of women designers to express their creativity in both artisanal and industrial fields, experimenting with both natural and artificial materials and often developing playful and iconic items. This approach enabled design to cross the boundaries of narrow circles of connoisseurs, thus directing modern design to the widest public.

Once cited by *Domus*, women designers' names had a tendency to become recurrent over the years. Textile and furniture entrepreneurs, such as Fede Cheti, Gegia Bronzini and Lyda Levi, remained a constant presence for entire decades. Works by Gae Aulenti have dominated the scene since the 1950s, passing unconventionally through interior design, industrial design and exhibition set design, before conquering architecture. The multiple appearances of the Finnish ceramist Ruth Bryk can be explained by Ponti's admiration for Finnish design, as well as by the fact that she was the wife of the more well-known glass designer Tapio Wirkkala.

The perception of a gendered hierarchy in *Domus*'s 'unity of the arts' clearly appears from this study. Considering the full range of design, the 'male nature' of furniture design was still dominant in the 1950s, especially in the context of Scandinavian design. Conversely, ceramics, glassware and textiles were perceived as 'female' fields of design, as these fields were traditionally associated with domestic origins and were typically hand-made. Ponti's interest in artisanal tradition is played out in the pages of *Domus*, and women made up the majority of those practicing the modern craft-based design that was able to re-invent folk shapes and motifs.

In the 1950s, Scandinavian women's contribution to design helped to change the pre-war crystalline and paradigmatic interpretation of modernity. Through the pages of *Domus*, these women revealed an indisputable ability to master different materials, forms and production techniques, demonstrating their important role in the history of Scandinavian design. Their contributions facilitated the development of a more 'humanistic' design approach, especially

for products designed for mass production.

In addition to the great visibility offered to women designers in the fields of textiles and ceramics, Italian women gained visibility before Scandinavian women in furniture design. The young Milanese architects Anna Ferrieri Castelli and Luisa Castiglioni gained visibility in the magazine due to the publication of their furniture creations, which were exhibited at the courageous VIII Triennale di Milano (1947), "A Home for Everyone". Nevertheless, furniture and industrial design appeared to be a marginal option for women until the second half of the fifties. Mass-produced office furniture pieces designed by Luisa Castiglioni remained an exception of visibility achieved outside the boundaries of "domestic design".

In the sixties, this perception began to gradually change due to the commitment of young Italian women to the growing field of industrial design. These women were primarily young architects who belonged to a Milanese progressive elite. Considering the established male domination of architectural practice, the commitment to furniture design, interior design and exhibition set design would have appeared as a real professional opportunity for those women. Although the presence of women in *Domus* increased, at the exhibition *Domus Formes Italiennes* (1968), out of 100 creators, just 12 were women.<sup>106</sup>

The history of women designers that emerges through *Domus* appears to be more like a sequence of differences or

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<sup>106</sup> The women designers participating at *Domus Formes Italiennes* were Titina Ammannati, Gae Aulenti, Renata Bonfanti, Anna Ferrieri Castelli, Franca Helg, Maria Lai, Liisi Meronen Beckmann, Gabriella Saladino, Emma Schweinbeger Gismondi, Carla Scolari, Piera Uggeri Raimondo, and Nanda Vigo. "« Domus Formes Italiennes » una mostra a Parigi," *Domus* 450 (1967), 38.

exceptions rather than a progress in time, thus revealing Gio Ponti's idea of History, as her daughter Lisa pointed out –by quoting Edoardo Persico– when she left *Domus* in 1989.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Lisa Ponti Licitra, “Un saluto”, *Domus* 669 (1986), 1.

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# Architecture and Urban Planning in the Italian Panorama

Emilia Garda, Chiara Serra and Annalisa Stella

This paper investigates the female declination of architecture during the reconstruction years in Italy, using «Domus» magazine as a privileged tool and point of view. The study offers the results of a first systematic and critical survey on the presence of women professionals in «Domus», between January 1946 (n. 205) and December 1968 (n. 469). By observing the pages of 276 magazine issues - published on a monthly and bi-monthly basis by the Editoriale Domus (Milan) - this paper specifically focuses on articles dealing with architecture and urban planning. The research aims to reconstruct a historical frame and to map the contribution of women architects in the Italian architectural panorama. The objective is to critically analyse works and projects in order to show who the women are and how they had taken part in the Italian architectural debate during these two decades, highlighting their theoretical contributions as well as the technical aspects in terms of innovation and creativity.

To critically understand and frame professionals women's contribution in the field of constructions we intersected the specific investigation through the pages of «Domus» with a wider overlook on the Italian architecture of the second half of the XX century, in order to contextualise women's work within this very particular historical period. After a general introduction, the paper presents a comparative study among selected projects that were classified into specific categories of intervention. In fact, the

survey aims to put the attention on the architectural works through their features and characteristics, in order to show the female designers' specific approach to architectural research. The final outcome is a rich collection of projects and women architects that contributed to the Italian debate and animated the reconstruction period, giving their creative and personal solutions. The number of projects signed by female professionals published on the magazine issues is remarkable. By presenting some representative case studies, this paper finally aims to offer visibility to less known - and often forgotten - architectural projects as well as to their authors.

## **The Italian panorama: from the reconstruction to the sixties**

From 1946 to the end of the decade, due to the critical situation left by the devastation of the Second World War, a huge mobilisation for city reconstruction - houses, public structures and areas - took part in the whole country. The urgency of reconstruction had also to face the need for new low cost housing to host middle and working class people and in order to provide "a house for everyone"<sup>1</sup>. To this purpose in 1949 the INA-Casa programme was launched by the Italian government in order to implement public housing. The

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<sup>1</sup> Adalberto Libera, Gio Ponti, Giuseppe Vaccaro, "Per tutti, anzi per ciascuno. Appello di tre architetti per la Carta della Casa", in Giorgio Ciucci and Francesco Dal Co (eds.), *Architettura italiana del Novecento*, (Milano: Electa, 1990)

programme was thought to solve the problem of unemployment through the development of the building sector as a tool to foster the Italian postwar economic recovery.<sup>2</sup> Architects started to be involved in the project of wide public residential estates, located in the urban peripheral areas. With these large new neighbourhoods a season of great experimentation began, which concerned the urban vision up to the detail scale. Proposals for self-sufficient modern communities were designed which combined the traditional building typologies and techniques with the use of experimental precast concrete elements, giving a specific Italian declination to this wide international phenomena. Even if in some articles of «Domus» several projects for INA-Casa neighbourhoods were presented and shown, through them the contribution of women does not seem to emerge.

Starting from the INA-Casa experimentations, in particular from the beginning of the fifties, it started to be evident that the architectural language was moving from the essential modern aesthetic towards a more organic conception of architecture. From the project for the *Tiburtino* public residential neighbourhood by Ludovico Quaroni and Mario Ridolfi (Rome, 1949-54) to the *Pirovano* Refuge by Franco Albini and Luigi

Colombini (Cervinia, 1949-51) a season known as 'Neorealism' characterised the architectural production. The critical revision of the Modern Movement was supported by several authors, such as Bruno Zevi in his *Verso un'architettura organica* (Towards an organic architecture, 1945). In this vivid debate the role of the most important architectural magazines was crucial in the dissemination of the new ideas. The contribution of «Domus» had been remarkable especially under the direction of Ernesto Nathan Rogers (1946-47), then replaced by Gio Ponti (1948-79). By showing a wide and open range of architectural projects «Domus» succeeded in bringing tangible examples of the cultural and theoretical panorama. By observing the pages of the issues, it can be noticed that in the articles the attention focuses mostly on the architectural works conceived as process/products as well as works of arts/building. One of the main themes emerging from the magazine articles and the published projects, is the crucial role of history and traditional architecture in the ex-novo projects. The most recurring topics of research, especially in private houses, were the relationship between the new building and the surrounding context - urban or landscape -, the way in which the building touched the ground and the reinterpretation of traditional typologies, architectural elements and materials. Among the women, this research is well epitomised by architects like Anna Bertarini Monti who worked together with her husband Gianemilio Monti and his brother Pietro, or Franca Helg with Franco Albini and Luisa Aiani Parisi with her husband Ico Parisi.

The sixties were characterised by a vivid discussion about the relationship between architecture, urban planning and governance, and their specific roles. Some

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<sup>2</sup> On 24 february 1949 the italian Parliament approved the law proposed by the Minister Amintore Fanfani under the name "Measures to increase workers' employment, facilitating the construction of houses for workers", also known as 'Legge Fanfani'. The INA-Casa programme was launched by the State in order to realise residential public complex on the whole country. It was adopted for two cycles of seven years each, from 1949 to 1956 and from 1957 to 1963. It was founded by the *Istituto Nazionale delle Assicurazioni* (National Institute of Insurance). See Paola Di Biagi, *La grande ricostruzione: il piano Ina-Casa e l'Italia degli anni cinquanta*. (Roma: Donzelli Editore, 2001)

of the most influential architects like Aldo Rossi, Carlo Aymonino and Guido Canella supported the position that architecture is an urban phenomena, able to shape the city. The outcome of the architects' commitment to find solutions and strategies for the future development of the cities are visible through some proposals for large plans, such as the competition for the new directional centre in Turin (1962), published in November 1963 in «Domus» n. 408. The first prize was gained by the proposal '*Biancaneve e i sette nani*'. In the winner team the architect Gigetta Tamaro was the only women working with other eight well known architects - Giuseppe Samonà, Nino Dardi, Emilio Mattioni, Valeriano Pastor, Alberto Samonà, Luciano Semerani, Andrea Vianello Vos. Also in the second awarded project, named '*Akropolis 9*', Gabriella Esposito was the only female architect collaborating with Mario Bianco, Roberto Maestro, Sergio Nicola, Ludovico Quaroni, Antonio Quistelli, Nello Renacco, Aldo Rizzotti, Augusto Romano. In these projects the two women architects gave their contribution within the design teams, yet not emerging as distinct personalities within them.

On the other hand, the emphasis on the importance of tradition and identity became stronger and stronger during these years. In fact, the majority of architectural projects, showed in the issues of «Domus» during the sixties, regards renovation, transformation and reuse of historical buildings such as the numerous works by Anna Castelli Ferrieri, Luisa Castiglioni e Rita Mori Bravi. Another recurring typology of intervention concerns ex-novo proposals for suburban villas and holiday houses, where the female contribution by architects like Emma Pasquinelli Peressutti and Anna Bertarini Monti was consistent. Finally there were numerous projects of interior

design, pavilions and temporary structures and some of the most prolific designers dealing with this research were Eugenia Alberti Reggio, Luisa Aiani Parisi and Franca Helg. Working alone or together with their husbands, the contribution of women architects was specifically evident in these projects. In fact, this meant the possibility for women professionals to express their ideas and to manage the whole architectural process, from the drawing up to the construction and the interior design.

### **The female contribution: observing the pages of Domus**

From the first systematic survey on the presence of women professionals in «Domus» issues, between January 1946 and December 1968, a rich collection of projects and women professionals emerges. We analysed 276 issues collecting 197 projects and 39 women, mostly Italian, active in the field of both architecture and design. Although the works by women constitute a minority compared to the whole number of projects described, we noticed that these projects well represent the particular Italian architectural panorama and its role models exported abroad. In fact, to critically analyse and interpret these projects, we chose to divide them into four categories of intervention and research which were more constant and frequent. Intersecting this survey with the more general bibliography about the Italian context we also found that those categories could well epitomise the debate of the two decades analysed. Thus, by putting the focus of attention on the most representative projects in terms of architectural research, quality and value, and looking at their female authors, we could understand in which way women

professionals contributed in spreading ideas, creativity and innovation in the Italian architectural panorama.

The first group of projects deals with a constant research in the dialogue between the building and the surrounding context. This kind of research is particularly evident in ex-novo projects for residential or public buildings outside the urban consolidated fabric. This contact with the landscape and the natural environment lets the architect free to create and experiment. The Italian architect Lina Bo Bardi faced and solved this issue in her own way through an experimental relationship between solids and voids, built and unbuilt spaces. There are two remarkable projects. The first is '*Casa de vidro*' in Sao Paulo, Brazil (1951) and the second is the project (not realised) for the Museum of Modern Brazilian Art in Sao Vicente, Brazil (1951). The buildings seem to be suspended in order not to break the surrounding landscape, that continues uninterrupted even under the buildings. Gio Ponti, who had a particular admiration for Lina Bo Bardi referring to her as an "extremely clever woman", dedicated a long and very inspired article to '*Casa de vidro*' in the pages of the magazine. He describes this architecture as a perfect example of "those principles towards which modern architecture moves in its more clever exponents". Through those principles of "essentiality", "expressivity", "fantasy of precision" and "personality" the house "has to be recognised as modern architecture. It honours Brazil that inspired it, and the Italian school from which it derives"<sup>3</sup>. In the 'Museum on the seashore'<sup>4</sup> for the Modern Brazilian Art the conception of the continuous internal and external spaces, that directly look

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<sup>3</sup> Gio Ponti, "La Casa de Vidro", *Domus* 279 (1953), 19

<sup>4</sup> "Museo sulla sponda dell'oceano", *Domus* 286 (1953), 15

towards the sea, influenced the entire organisation of the building. In both of the projects Bo Bardi showed her research in the use of experimental materials and structures for the support of the buildings: in the first mentioned case of '*Casa de vidro*', steel slim pillars were used to allow a free plan, while in the second case five reinforced concrete portals were designed to support the whole building. Another relevant case under the category of the research in the relationship between the building and the natural environment is the 'Villa in the pine grove'<sup>5</sup> in Arenzano, Genoa. Designed in 1961, by Anna Castelli Ferrieri, the house is a well-structured building where the slabs, passing through the indoor volumes, reach the external environment as cantilevered plans. On these surfaces, terraces have been designed to create continuity between the indoor and the outdoor spaces, allowing the open view of the sea in front of the villa.

A second group of projects goes under the category of the renovation and reuse of historical buildings. Concerning this theme, there is an interesting comparison between two different architectural approaches, that reflects the debate of those times: the renovation of Regina Isabella Thermal Baths<sup>6</sup> in Ischia, Naples (1952) and the renovation of a Villa<sup>7</sup> in Somma Lombardo, Varese (1952).

In the first case, Elena Balsari Berrone and Ignazio Gardella were assigned to renew and make the thermal baths in Ischia more efficient. They chose to reconstruct the whole thermal complex, just preserving the original colonnade as evidence of the former building. In this way the colonnade, contrasting with the new

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<sup>5</sup> "Villa nella pineta di Arenzano", *Domus* 392 (1962), 15

<sup>6</sup> Gio Ponti, "Primizia su Ischia", *Domus* 268 (1952), 2

<sup>7</sup> "Applicare una facciata", *Domus* 274 (1952), 12

modernist façade, aims to highlight the intervention. In order to further underline this contrast, the colonnade has been kept separate from the façade and supported through a system of beams. In the case of the Villa, Luisa Aiani Parisi and his husband Ico Parisi - together forming the *Studio La Ruota* - were assigned to renew a single-family house, where the original conception of the building and the limited available budget did not allow substantial changes. They chose to add an external reinforced concrete structure, totally independent from the existing building - for technique and materials -, in order to change the aspect of the villa significantly and to create new outdoor spaces. Therefore, starting from different points of view, in both cases the architects' research in highlighting as much as possible the contrast between the new intervention and the old pre-existence clearly emerges. Another notable intervention is the one of Franca Helg and Franco Albini for the reuse of an old tower in the Lombard moorland<sup>8</sup>, in Somma Lombardo (1960) to host a single-family house. The project allowed the existing building to be maintained structurally intact and to create new spaces through the use of infill walls and partitions and through the opening of holes in the original walls to create a functional distribution of the interior spaces. The addition of new components, designed to respond to a modern conception of architecture, respects the character of the existing building and never tries to change its vocation. Similar to this intervention is the one by Luisa and Ico Parisi on a 'Rustic building facing the Como Lake'<sup>9</sup> reused as a holiday house for a couple. Here the two architects succeeded in renovating the

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<sup>8</sup> "In una antica torre nella brughiera lombarda", *Domus* 365 (1960), 23

<sup>9</sup> "Sul lago di Como un rustico trasformato", *Domus* 395 (1962), 19

indoor layout with a new entrance, bathroom, corridor, porch and terrace, by adding the new structures in a very clever and refined way. The renovation is conceived to preserve the external existing walls and to maintain the relationship between the renovated building and the historical context of the village.

A third collection of projects deals with the research in the reinvention of the 'rustic'. The 'House for fishermen'<sup>10</sup> in Como (1955), by Anna Bertarini Monti with Gianemilio and Pietro Monti, well epitomises this theme. In this project the architects' research emerges at the different scales and in specific elements. The prevalence of a simple architectural composition aims to reinterpret the traditional typology of a fishermen shack with its wooden light structure. Furthermore the use of local and traditional materials epitomises the research in linking the new building with its natural context. The same research emerges in two projects published in 1959 in a «*Domus*» issue specifically dedicated to the theme of the house. They are the 'Country house for a weekend'<sup>11</sup> (1959) in Como designed by Luisa and Ico Parisi and a country house<sup>12</sup> in Morbegno, Sondrio (1959) by Anna, Gianemilio and Pietro Monti. In both these two projects the reinterpretation of the traditional typology is referred to a farmstead. In the first project, an external brick wall surrounds the house, while the internal concrete pillars support a pitched roof with a complex geometry. In the second one, the structure is made by load-bearing brick walls and some typical elements evoked in a modern way, such as the

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<sup>10</sup> "Una casa di pescatori, sul lago di Como", *Domus* 302 (1955), 31

<sup>11</sup> "Casa di campagna per il fine settimana", *Domus* 350 (1959), 17

<sup>12</sup> "A Morbegno", *Domus* 350 (1959), 23

pitched roof and the porch. In 1962 Franca Helg and Franco Albini designed a three flats house<sup>13</sup> in Forlì where the reinvention of vernacular building is refined and referred to the use of traditional materials.

The fourth and last group of projects epitomises the research in innovative building typologies, technics and materials. Concerning the research and investigation in experimental building typologies, there is the representative case of the 'Cemeterial Towers'<sup>14</sup> designed by Nanda Vigo and Cesare Tacchio in 1961 to solve the problem concerning the horizontal expansion of the cemetery in the city of Pavia. Four squared towers are disposed, marking the corners of a squared space and each tower has a central block of service and distribution with circular staircases and a lift. The external façade was thought to be made of serial glasswork or precast *brise soleils*. Another remarkable example in this category of intervention is the residential building<sup>15</sup> in Milan (1954) designed by Anna Monti, together with her husband and his brother. Here the use of precast reinforced concrete in the façade system, allows a uniform external surface and great flexibility in the design of indoor spaces.

The research and systematic survey through the issues of «Domus» provides quantitative datas, which allow some final considerations and results. First of all comparing the whole number of female designers and architects mentioned and published in the magazine, the contribution of women professionals is larger in the field of design than in the

field of architecture.<sup>16</sup>

Secondly, while the architectural projects selected by «Domus» are signed mostly by Italian women, a considerable number of design products are signed by foreign professionals<sup>17</sup>, probably due to the Gio Ponti's particular passion and interest in the Scandinavian panorama.

From our research it also emerges that the most mentioned professionals are profiles of women who dealt with both architectural projects and interior and furniture design, such as Luisa Parisi, Anna Monti, Luisa Castiglioni and Franca Helg.<sup>18</sup>

Concerning the architectural panorama, we found that women designers gave their contribution mostly to housing projects - from ex-novo, to renovation and interior design - with just sporadic exceptions.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, in a few cases these professionals women worked alone, while most of them worked together with a relative such as Luisa Parisi with her husband Ico Parisi or Anna Monti with her husband Gianemilio Monti and her brother-in-law Pietro.<sup>20</sup> To conclude the output of our research we cite the women who used to signed their projects alone and those who are the most frequently mentioned in the magazine. In the first group we find Gae Aulenti, Lina Bo Bardi, Anna Castelli Ferrieri, Luisa Castiglioni,

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<sup>13</sup> "Una casa a Forlì", *Domus* 383 (1961), 19

<sup>14</sup> "L'idea del cimitero a torre/Cemeterial Towes", *Domus* 423 (1965), 8

<sup>15</sup> "Elementi di una facciata", *Domus* 292 (1954), 20

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<sup>16</sup> In the 276 *Domus* issues we analysed, the whole number of female architects is 39 while the number of designers is 123.

<sup>17</sup> On the whole 39 women architects 25 are Italian (64%), while on the 123 designers only 51 come from Italy (41%)

<sup>18</sup> On the 39 women professionals mentioned in the issues of *Domus*, 22 are women active in both the fields of architecture and design

<sup>19</sup> The total number of architectural and urban planning projects by women professionals in the 276 analysed issues is 90 and 50 of them are for residential buildings.

<sup>20</sup> On the 90 total architectural and urban planning projects by women professionals in the 276 analysed issues only 20 of them are signed by women alone.

Eugenia Alberti Reggio, while in the second group there are Luisa Aiani Parisi, Anna Bertarini Monti, Luisa Castiglioni, Franca Helg and Rita Mori Bravi.

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## Design and women through the pioneering magazine «Stile Industria» (1954-1963)

Annalisa B. Pesando

### A "new" magazine in line with the times

Since the fifties, Italy through a period of exceptional economic recovery driven by the industrial sector. The reasons for this increase depend on different factors: low cost labour, salary restraint with the effect of competition in market prices and exports (especially in the metallurgical, mechanical, automobile and chemical) and monetary stability. This "economic miracle" is also facilitated by a policy to bestow public budgets for the development of industry which also entails a significant change in the social structure of the Country, which has agricultural vocation goes to industrial and tertiary<sup>1</sup>.

In June 1954 in this climate of renewal and development comes a new trade magazine «Stile Industria» (hereafter «SI»). The magazine is dedicated to Industrial Design and is published by Gianni Mazzocchi as a magazine affiliated with the best-known architecture magazine «Domus». It is entrusted to a member and son in law of Gio Ponti, Alberto Rosselli<sup>2</sup>.

Rosselli since 1946 writes a column dedicated to "Design per l'industria". Notably in 1951, with the exhibition La

forma dell'utile, cared by the BBPR (Banfi, Belgiojoso, Peressutti, Rogers) and promoted at the IX Triennial, it opens a deep and methodological reflection. This will inspire the address of «SI», about the importance the use of products as cause of the choice of shapes and materials used. This vision, comprised by industrial aesthetics and by the functionalism of the product, becomes the leitmotif of the new magazine. The aim is to qualify the design discipline in relation to the industrial development, especially toward the building components for a renewal of architecture even before the study of furniture and interior. These unreleased analyzes go towards a responsible approach to technological problems, methodological, formal and also environmental related to the product of industry.

Significant that magazine birth coincides with the establishment of "La Rinascente Golden Compass Award" (1954) aims to honor the merits of industrial, artisans and designers which give the products the quality and form of presentation such as to make unitary expression of their technical, functional and aesthetic.

Among the great themes of Italian reconstruction, in addition to the industrial issue, also appears the woman question. From the Second World War, with the recruitment mass of female labor, women acquire awareness of their active role in society. In Italy, the universal suffrage the right to vote to women takes place in 1945, with participation in the first parliamentary elections on 2-3 June 1946 for the Referendum on the State institutional form: the monarchy-republic. Twenty-one women out of 556 deputies

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<sup>1</sup> Nicola Crepax, *Storia dell'industria in Italia. Uomini, imprese e prodotti* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002)

<sup>2</sup> Amalia Fracassi and Simona Riva (ed), *Stile Industria: Alberto Rosselli* (Parma: Artegrafica Silva, 1981)



participating in the Italian Constitution, a small but significant number of an ongoing change process. It will be the policy of the Left to deal with continuity of women's issues through media tools such as the magazine "Noi Donne" (the page of the lady of "L'Unità" is supervised by designer Lica Steiner since 1956<sup>3</sup>) and the social struggle against layoffs, strikes, wage disparities and foreclosed careers. Unlike the Democratic policy pushes little but strong women like Angela Maria Cingolani Guidi, the first woman in the history of Italy to be part of a Government (1951)<sup>4</sup>. It is in this period of renewal that the Italian woman comes knowingly outside its traditional home boundaries, taking scenarios and their anticipations of the intellectuals and artists of Futurism the early Twentieth Century (Rose Roso, Fulvia Giuliani, Benedetta Cappa Marinetti, Georgina Rossi...), claiming an active social role of women and subverting, in particular, consolidated scales of values<sup>5</sup>. In architecture and design the role of women in postwar period is still a secondary role, composed of figures professionally competent, faded due to a well-established history in the shadow of influential husbands and companions with whom often they share the study and

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.enciclopediadelledonne.it/biografie/>; <http://www.onalim.it/anna-steiner-racconta-i-suoi-genitori-albe-e-lica/>

<sup>4</sup> See the papers of the Centro Interuniversitario "Per gli studi sulle donne nella storia e nella società", directed by Ginevra Conti Odorisio, Sapienza Roma. Overall: Paul Ginsborg, *L'Italia dal dopoguerra ad oggi* (Torino: Einaudi, 1989, 2 vol.); Alisa Del Re, Valentina Longo, Lorenza Perini, *I confini della cittadinanza. Genere, partecipazione politica e vita quotidiana* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Katrin Cossetta, *Ragione e sentimento dell'abitare. La casa e l'architettura nel pensiero femminile tra le due guerre* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2000); Elena Doni and Manuela Fugenzi, *Il secolo delle donne: l'Italia del Novecento al femminile* (Roma: GLF Laterza, 2008).

design work. It is interesting to note such as the birth of the main and wellknown magazines in Italy after 1950 in the newsrooms are found placed the life partners of the important artistic figures. Affections often born by affinity of studies at school with circles of mutual friends that facilitate the insertion in professional fields still rather unusual for women or new experimental such as magazines<sup>6</sup>.

In newsroom of «SI» comes Franca Gualtieri<sup>7</sup>, Carlo Santi's wife, while Julia Banfi, BBPR Gianluigi's wife<sup>8</sup>, is editorial assistant of «Casabella Continuità». Under the direction of Ernesto N. Rogers (1953-1964) are inserted two other female figures who are going to succeed in architecture sector, first students then assistants of Rogers at the Milan Politecnico: Gae Aulenti (graduated in 1953) made her debut in «Casabella» with Gregotti, Purini and Aymonino and deals with graphic layout (1955-65)<sup>9</sup>, and Matilde Baffa (graduated in 1956) as young editor<sup>10</sup>. Achillina Bo, a young Roman architect, arrives in Milan entering the drafting of «Domus» of Gio Ponti and Pagano<sup>11</sup>. While still in «Casabella-

<sup>6</sup> Claudia Mattogno, "Muse, committenti, progettiste. Il lungo percorso delle donne in architettura", *Che "genere" di città per il futuro*, vol. 6 n. 10 (giugno 2013): 71-82; about the women professionals see the researches of Vanda. *Teorie e opere femminili in architettura*: <http://www.tempiospazi.it/spazi/findex1/>; Alice T. Friedman, *Woman and the Making of the Modern Architecture. A Social and Architectural History* (New York: Abrams, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> Franca Santi Gualtieri, *Design in redazione* (Mantova: Corraini, 2002); Ead., *Succede di passare attraverso la storia* (Milano: FSG ed, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> Gian Luigi e Julia Banfi, *Amore e speranza* (Milano: Archinto, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> Nina Artioli (ed), *Omaggio a Gae Aulenti* (Mantova: Corraini, 2016)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.acmaweb.com/costruirelemodernita/profilo/albini/matildebaffa.htm>

<sup>11</sup> Lima Zeuler, *Lina Bo Bardi* (London: Yale University Press, 2013)

Costruzioni» architect editor is Anna Castelli Ferrieri<sup>12</sup>, who graduated in 1943 enters to work in the studio of Franco Albini getting in touch with Piero Bottoni and Ernesto N. Rogers. In 1947 she won the gold medal at the VIII Triennale in Milan, with the competition organized by the Ministry of Public Works related to single-family homes for veterans to QT8 district in collaboration with Franca Helg, and in 1951 founded the company Kartell with Giulio Castelli. The magazine «Metron» founded in 1945 and directed by Piccinato and Ridolfi, presents only woman in a board of nine men, Margaret Roesler Franz as editorial secretary. Similarly in the early Sixties this introduction by influential people of wives and daughters within the newsrooms continue. For example since 1962 Anna Grasselli (philosopher Giulio's wife) and Letizia Frailich Ponti (Gio Ponti's and George Frailich's wife who in those same years began to write articles for the magazine) are aggregated to «SI». The magazine and editors experiences start to women professional career. In particular for «SI» Franca Santi Gualtieri, with the closing of the magazine in 1963, joined the almost exclusively female editorial staff of «Abitare», directed by Piera Peroni (1923-1974) out of which afterward she becomes director. While Maria Bottero, only female signing on the magazine, from 1963 to 1974 became editor of the trade magazine «Zodiac» by Bruno Alfieri.

### **Anatomy of a magazine: articles, writing and women's contribution**

The milieu in which the «SI» born is that of a circle of friends and long-standing partners, from cultural garde anti-fascist of Milan, that shares the enthusiasm to search for the new in the formula "more beauty utility". Especially in the early years of the magazine, Rosselli enclose friends who share thoughts and ideals in order to identify a specific and clear boundaries field for the Industrial Design. Meeting place is "Jamaica", a dairy-bar, whose name comes from the 1939 film "The tavern of Jamaica" by Hitchcock, where young intellectuals and artists comparing the experiences of the modern movement, before the war, and then since 1948. Here come together students, professors and professionals coming from the Brera Academy and the Milan Politecnico (the architects Banfi, Belgiojoso, Peressutti, Rogers, Pagano, Giolli, Albini, De Carlo, the painters and designers, Mucchi, Veronesi, Huber, Treccani, Birolli, Guttuso, Sassu ecc.).

The editorial staff that Rosselli sets up is composed of only four people, two men and two women: Alberto Rosselli, director, Giancarlo Pozzi (1954-1957) architect-designer at the time engaged with the company Cassina, her friend Franca Santi Gualtieri, just graduated at Brera, and Luciana Foschi first employed as a secretary and since 1957 elevated to editor. In April 1955 the team is joined by the graphic designer Michele Provinciali e Mario Galvagni, who works at "Notiziario Tecnico" (1954-1959).

Organized by the critics and designers referenced articles on the emerging discipline of Industrial Design, the magazine will change over time and increases of collaborators with the entry of Angelo Tito Anselmi (since 1957), Elena Viganò Scarpetta (Vittoriano Viganò's

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<sup>12</sup> Claudia Donà (Ed), *Anna Castelli Ferrieri: architecture and design* (Milano: FAAR 1997)

wife), secretary in 1956, later replaced by Gisella Forni. Since 1957 Enzo Frateili writes reviews and technical news that in 1959 switch to another woman, Maria Bottero. In the same year Costantino Corsini and Giorgio Wiskemann dealing with interviews in industry and Giorgio Moretti Madini in charge of technology in industrial design, joined the historical group Rosselli-Anselmi-Gualtieri. Since n. 35 of 1962 the editorial staff expands with two women collaborators Anna Grasselli (reviews) and Letizia Frailich Ponti (news) replacing Maria Bottero work.

The magazine design, whose layout is entrusted by Provinciali since 1955, includes a cover impactful commissioned to revolutionary-masters of visual communication. Meaningful it is the choice of the cover for the first issue of the magazine edited by Albe Steiner presumably with the inseparable wife Lica, of which still today it is hard to distinguish the authorship of the works<sup>13</sup>. Albe, recognized graphic setting proponent of much of the press of the Italian Left, sets the cover of the magazine in four colors - according to solutions of the post-revolutionary Russian avant-garde - choosing the profile of a chair in the sheet by Rima and the Olivetti's typewriter keys identified as production symbols of the Italian industry.

The magazine, first a quarterly than bi-monthly circulation, provides a set of building industrialized and furnishing companies advertising pages and the opening with the editorial signed by Rosselli, generally addressed the moral value research of the correct form of the object, according to recipe made of the relationship between form-function, form-environment, form-fabrication, form-material, form-mechanism. Followed by practical articles written by the main

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<sup>13</sup> Anna Steiner (ed), *Albe Steiner* (Mantova: Corraini 2006);

protagonists of the modern period of the Cultural Revolution (Alfieri, Gio Ponti, Max Bill, Zanuso, Dorflies) divided into three sections: industrial graphics, graphics and packaging<sup>14</sup>. At the end there are news with publications, exhibitions, events, new productions and competitions. Feature of the magazine is the rich photographic material supplied content, with images in black and white and color (still anonymous format) and Italian and English captions that increase the circulation and visibility from a European perspective.

Among the most important results of this editorial experience we note the foundation of the Association of Industrial Design (ADI) on 6 April 1956 that in the footsteps of a new "Deutscher Werkbund" brings together professionals and critics such as Rosselli (president), Ignazio Gardella, Vico Magistretti, Angelo Mangiarotti, Marcello Nizzoli, Enrico Peressutti, Giulio Castelli, Antonio Pellizzari, Gillo Dorflies, Bruno Munari and Albe Steiner, representatives of major Italian companies like Finmeccanica, Olivetti, Pirelli, Motom, Necchi, Borletti, Cassina and la Rinascente for a total of 60 initial members.

The role of women in the magazine is ancillary, always crowning and final assembly of articles by renowned experts and signatures of the design theme, hardly prominent. Franca Santi in her book *Design in redazione* tells how Rosselli relationship with women was sufficiency and tolerance, "Also a woman could do this" the motto with which he used to attend a job he thought was simple. A striking example of the hidden women work can be the article appeared on the numbers 26-27 of 1960 titled 1939-1959 *Appunti per una storia del disegno industriale in Italia* that collects a first

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<sup>14</sup> Grace Lees-Maffei and Kjetil Fallan (Ed), *Made in Italy. Rethinking a Century of Italian Design* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014)

critical investigation of the design of the last two decades. The article is signed by Bruno Alfieri with Anselmi captions, while article mounting, images search and selection are edited by Franca Santi, but the only name mentioned is Alfieri.

With this spirit of mission, the new magazine takes headway in June 1954 and ends with n. 41 in 1963, with a section dedicated to the farewell and thanksgiving to who contributed to making important «SI». Ninety-six figures are shown with photos among these are five women: Mia Seerer, Jane Fiske Mc Cullough, Josine des Cressonnières, Franca Santi Gualtieri, Luciana Rosa Foschi.

### **Design and women: critical success of the product made by women**

Analyzing a magazine that aims to defend and define the field of Industrial Design and presenting scientific papers involving the main professionals and critics of the Italian scene of the Fifties, the role of women can be identified in two parallel areas: the drafting work for research and selection of objects to be published under headings (Franca Santi and Maria Bottero as examples) and the work of established professionals in the design field.

Among the first women mentioned on «SI» it is cited Anna Castelli Ferrieri in 1955 (n.3) for housing built in Milan with Gardella and Menghi, and the German Marianne “Mawi” Feldner, graduated from the Academy of fine arts of Monaco and wife, at the time, of the American photographer Hans Wild who works for the magazine «Life», for the textures produced by the famous company Manifattura Jsa of Busto Arsizio<sup>15</sup>. In

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<sup>15</sup> Flaminio Gualdoni (Ed), *La Manifattura JSA e gli anni Cinquanta: tessuti d'arte, tessuti d'artisti* (Busto Arsizio: Museo del tessile e della tradizione industriale, 2002)

accordance with already well-established habit in the Bauhaus school (revolutionary Russia will give more free working area for women), many professional women are directed to carry out work in the more traditional field of textiles and manufacturing.

The interest in Manifattura Jsa, founded in 1949 and constantly quoted in trade magazines («Domus» and «SI»), is taken up in 1960 with an interview with Grampa led by Corsini and Wiskemann (Indagine sul tessuto stampato. Manifattura Jsa, 28/1960) which discusses the drawing vision printed as a natural evolution of modern architecture.

The Manifattura Jsa is at the forefront of technological and production process of the sector, combining vocation for integration of artistic research in manufacturing with a continuous comparison with the large international companies of design textiles such as Artek of Alvar and Aino Aalto, Grantex of Arne Jacobsen and American example of Charles and Ray Eames. The goal of the Italian factory is producing modern decorative fabrics with Italian characteristics and Mediterranean colors. Among the female personality, stable in the company, there are Cecilia Mora, Marta Latis, Marianne Feldner and Margherita Patocchi.

Absence of qualified designers in the textile field and ostracism of the big names to deal with what they consider a too humble field as patterned fabrics are among the main problems in stressing the importance of the printed fabric. Although tissues are still relegated to a mainly female work, it is interesting to note that in committee juries of competitions there are still no women. An example is the renowned competition organized by the XI Triennale di Milano with Jsa in 1957 which has an exclusively male jury (Ivan Matteo Lombardo, Tommaso Ferraris, Giuseppe

Ajome, Johannes Itten, Luigi Grampa, Marco Polacco and Alberto Rosselli).

Particularly it should be noted that in conjunction with the Triennial of 1957 dedicated to the textile sector there is the first woman awarded the "Golden Compass", Ruth Christensen with a higher premium, and Rita Rylander, with an alert, both in the context of production for Manifattura Jsa (15/1958). For another report it must wait until 1961 Raffaella Crespi, with "wicker toy" produced by G. Masciadri and the fabric for curtains designed by Renata Bonfanti (30/1961). Bonfanti will be awarded the "Golden Compass" for her tent fabric "JL" in the edition of 1962 and she is the first Italian woman to win the Prize. Instead to find the first woman to participate in the commission of the "Golden Compass Award" you have to wait 1984 with Cini Boeri<sup>16</sup>.

One of the first cases in which the magazine dedicates an important space to the product of a woman is in 6/1956, when it is described a modular stand Balzaretti and Modigliani, designed by Luisa Castiglioni architect, graduated in 1946 at Milan Politecnico. The stand, with its modular structure and easy to assemble, is appreciated for its ability to rationally solve the problem of the stands. Two pages are dedicated to project with captions in Italian and English, images, and drawings to complete. The works of Luisa Castiglioni, Albini and De Carlo's pupil and collaborator, are published on «Metron» and «Domus» since 1947, while on «SI» it remains an isolated case.

The attention to the female work in the «SI» remains generally anchored to the textile world, the Italian prominent figure is Renata Bonfanti art director of Rossifloor. Besides she is the architectural culture of northern Europe to excel.

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<sup>16</sup> Cecilia Avogadro (ed), *Cini Boeri, architetto e designer* (Milano: Silvana Editoriale, 2004).

In 1958 (n.16) about Sergio Asti review on Stockholm exhibition of five industrial designers (Stig Lindberg, Sigurd Persson, Sven Palmqvist, Carl Axel Acking and Alice Lund) about the technical innovation in homeware, mentioning the male figures but not Alice that in 1930 opened her own textile atelier.

In the field of analysis on teaching in European and Italian schools for the construction of industrial design sections are mentioned courses taught by Lidia Nicolisi and Marialuisa Scalvini at School of Naples.

The 1960 seems to open new frontiers to professional women, thanks to the industry highly sensitive to the Italian industrial design. Although the reports of their work are still marginal and confined to sections of exhibition or secondary articles, greatly increase women's works often laced with short but incisive critical comments. An example takes place in the packaging sector (26/1960) with the catalog of the exhibition "Packaging" at the Museum of Modern Art organized by Mildred Constantine which from 1943 to 1970 worked in the department of architecture and MOMA design<sup>17</sup>. The review reports Constantine opinion about an extension of the consideration of packaging-term also addressed the "bodywork" of the mechanical devices (telephone, radio, fridge) resulting publicity shock due to the rapid aging tied to market forces. This annotation allows the drafting to highlight the importance of a good design with quote Banham. Or the mobile toilets designed by Dorothy Lee (with attached photo) and full page published in the magazine «Design» of March 1960 as "the pace setters", that «SI» comes very close to Gerrit Rietveld'

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[https://www.moma.org/explore/publications/modern\\_women/history#lexicon7](https://www.moma.org/explore/publications/modern_women/history#lexicon7)

works of 1917, raising questions on originality of the woman's design.

In the same section "Notizie. Mostre ed Esposizioni" of 1960 it is mentioned the opening of "The four Seasons" restaurant in the Seagram Building (closed July 16, 2016), where it is not cited the architect Mies van der Rohe but the designer couple Louis and Ada Louise Huxtable for designing tableware. Ada L. Huxtable (Landman's maiden name) wins in 1970 the first Pulitzer Prize for Criticism for the first time bringing the debate on architecture to the general public<sup>18</sup>.

1960 opens the door to the great theme of Italian design crisis enshrined in the non-award of the National "Golden Compass Award"; to this crisis Rosselli devotes a lengthy report (Crisi del disegno o crisi del Premio?, 26/1960). The article shows forty interviews to Italian and foreign designers including one feminine opinion, that of Jane McCulloch Fiske, New York's magazine «Industrial Design» editorial director. Jane, better known by her married surname Thompson, at that time working with Walter Gropius in a new American Bauhaus project. Jane brings a breath of fresh air in a long and serious debate considering herself "as every American" confused and amused to hear about the crisis of Italian design. The cover of the magazine announcing the Italian design crisis is curated by Gae Aulenti already graphics of «Casabella Continuità». Crisis that «SI» also locates in the Mostra di nuovi disegni per il mobile italiano addressed to Neoliberty and proposed by a group of young architects, with the graphic catalog edited by Gae Aulenti. Next to the news finds place the attack of Bruno Zevi to new trends (Masochismo e neoliberty).

To this announced Italian furniture crisis, it contrasts the reporting of work in the field

of Jsa tissues of the painter Hella Henner Schmit and the work of Ponti's daughter, Letizia, about the exhibition of Design in London. Among women, famous wives of many influential architects, it mentions the birthday card drawn by the journalist Fernanda Pivano and Ettore Sottsass Jr., her husband.

Of particular relevance to the issues and for greater involvement in the women's debate, the contributions that appear from number 28 of 1960 on the XII Triennale devoted to the themes of the house and the school, where Rosselli opens an "invitation to the discussion" to involve visitors themselves in the debate on Industrial Design. A footer there is inserted the images and opinions of twenty-one professionals, industrial and critics among the most influential of the period, including four women, the American journalist Janice Elliott, the German designer Mia Seeger, the editor of «Domus», Henrietta Ritter, and Alima Backer. In the next number (29/1960) it starts publishing the opinions of journalists, critics and designers. Thirteen critics are consulted, including Banham, Misha Black, André Bloc, and the journalist of English magazines, as Arianne Castaing of «Woman», Janice Elliott of «Sunday Times», Monica Pidgeon, director of «Architectural Design», Patience Gray of «The Observer», Ann Ferebee of «Industrial Design» of New York and Margit Staber of «Neue Zürcher Zeitung» of Zurich. The main critical points that emerge are: the recognition of a dead Italian architecture with a fallback to mannerism, a return to class-differentiations (neo-liberty), lack of useful contributions on the theme of the design and of the house, nothing new in the field of school, still turned to crafts items and not to the industry, failure of the productive and social progress of the Italians, and in particular shortage of

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<sup>18</sup> Carter Wiseman, *Twentieth-Century American Architecture* (New York: Norton &C., 2000).

communication skills of Triennials for regular visitors. The article is completed with photos about general views and urban accommodation details on this Mannerist trend. Among the several comments, Patience Gray also notes the work of the Swedish Hertha Hillfon (1921-2013) about her ceramic innovative technique.

Also in 1960 in the "Notizie – Premi e varie" it reports the news that the prize Kaufmann International Design is won by Charles and Ray Eames (29/1960). The short article announcing the prize and introduces a short bibliography of Charles where he indicates that he has always worked in collaboration with his wife, Bernice Alexandra Kaiser, which only lately the historiography has re-evaluating the role. This recognition of Ray's work in 1960 is the result of the American environment more open to women's work and of Charles who say "Anything I can do, Ray can do better".

In "Recensioni e Segnalazioni" (29/1960) it is very positively reviewed the catalog of the painter Jean Fautrier edited by Palma Bucarelli for Saggiatore, at the time Rome National Gallery of Modern Art's director (1942-1975). Bucarelli, Adolfo Venturi and Pietro Toesca's student prodigy and Giulio Carlo Argan's friend, is the first woman director of a public museum in Italy, with a strong personality and recognized scientific value, operating in a male dominated scene. The Sixties were dotted with numerous public recognitions for her work.

Meanwhile, in the section awards at the XII Triennale (1960) it is once again the textile sector to report women, often faces already known and awarded by the Commission of the Triennale (particularly for the 1957 event sponsored by Manifattura Jsa). All are foreign from northern Europe (Finland and Denmark) or Czechoslovakia. They are rewarded with a

gold medal the weaver Paula Trock (1889-1979) for hers sophisticated processes and colorful Danish wool; the innovative designer "Nanna" Dinnie (1923) with her husband, Jorgen Ditzel, rewarded for strokes produced by Georg Nesen Solvsmedie; the Finnish textile artist Ritva Puotila (1935), working paper yarn and linen; the designer Marjatta Metsovaara Nystrom (1927) for fabrics produced by Metsovaara Oy in Finland; the architect-craftsman Ibi Trier Mørch (1910-1980) with silver pots with handles in ivory; the award-winning Finnish artist Uhra-Beata Simberg-Ehrström (1914-1979) awarded the Triennial of 1951, 1954, 1957 and 1960 for her textiles; the artist Kyllikki Salmenhaara (1915-1981) as a reformer of teaching ceramics in Finland, already reported at the Triennale of 1951 and winner of the gold medal with ceramic prod. Wartsila Arabia; the artisan Sigrun Berg (1901-1982) in particular known in Oslo for her production of garments and shawls, awarded with an honorary diploma at the Triennale of 1954 and in 1960 with a gold medal for fabrics; Grete Korsmo (1917-2010), born Adelgunde Margrethe Prytz, considered the queen of Scandinavian design for her works of jewelry with enamels, she already awarded in 1954; and finally the first woman to open an independent studio reporting of silversmith, Vivianna Bulow-Hube (1927-2004), Swedish, awarded with silver medal at the X Triennale and gold to XII with her jewels. In 1958 Pablo Picasso knows Vivianna and organizes an exhibition for her in Antibes.

1961 opens with the n. 30 of January and for the first time appears an article written by a woman, Billa Zanuso (30/1961) dedicated to Buoni giocattoli e sussidi didattici alla Triennale. Billa, histrionic woman of good Milanese bourgeoisie, in 1951 founded with Franca Valeri and Vittorio Caprioli the Teatro dei Gobbi and

then get on television<sup>19</sup>. Degree in philosophy and specialized in psychology Billa, for her skills, is called by Rosselli to take care of infant education through the games and school play areas and identifying areas-study, adequate arrangements and sizes for baby items. The toys exhibited at the XII Triennale are reported, with a particular focus on innovative productions of the British Hilary Page (1904-1957) that since 1932 she changes the face of the English toy industry. Among her best-known toys, the patent for the interlocking brick building now known as LEGO brick. On the productions of Page, Billa appreciates the attention to security from non-flammable material, the edges rounded off to such dimensions as not to be swallowed. The only flaw of English productions are not be directed by a stable team of educators. By contrast, the Ulm school opened in 1954 a "Committee for Quality toy" with annual prizes to the manufacturers of the best toys.

Also in 1961 n. 32 it is cited the entry in ADI the designer Renata Bonfanti from Bassano del Grappa. Bonfanti, artistic consultant of Rossifloor, called "Miss" in the report Wall to wall: il tappeto pavimento by Corsini and Wiskemann (37/1962), is interviewed on the samples she designed for moquettes in wool and in Leacril using 20 colors. The designer explains how to work with colors on large sizes and the stranded technique (twisting multiple wires of different colors and of equal value) to obtain the melange effect, using handlooms to reproduce as closely as possible to the final result given by machine and to have certainty on the designed effect.

One last important space is dedicated to Josine Des Cressonieres, figure of international prominence, referring to the

future of Design in the number 36 of 1962. Now the disciplinary matter has been debated and with the number 41 «SI» closes.

### Conclusions and ideas for research

The magazines become a litmus test for identifying critical fortunes and work of women in the mid-twentieth century. In the editing staff, the ancillary role, but absolutely irreplaceable, of women's work, there was sorting and careful selection of the design objects that appeared on the market, and as recalled Koenig "there was a percentage of "news", good and bad, vastly greater than today"<sup>20</sup>. In many cases this ancillary work has proven to be the launching pad for bright careers. In the practical field is rather interesting to note that women often rise in the textile sector, generally regarded as feminine vocation - field in which takes place the first award of the "Golden Compass" to woman, Christensen Ruth -, or in the area of childhood and education. Rarely women are present in the building sector (only cases Luisa Castiglioni and Anna Castelli).

Through the magazines of the period, however, it is also possible to develop an alternative and less known history of women. The visibility given to the many competitions organized by companies (Soc. Montecatini, Manifattura Jsa, Pirelli-Ferrania S.p.a., Pavoni ecc.), resulting in the reporting of the winners, allows you to build a new and nurtured geography of professional women, in particular in relation to northern Italy, competing and winning awards, through which broaden the horizons of the future research on the subject and help limit an absence important historiographical as the lack of

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<sup>19</sup> Emanuela Martini (ed), *Franca Valeri - Una signora molto snob* (Torino: Lindau, 2000).

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<sup>20</sup> Giovanni Klaus Koenig, "Alberto Rosselli", in Fracassi and Riva, *Rosselli*, 13-36.



many, almost all, biographies of professional women who have

contributed to the artistic and social history of the Second World War.

## A Portrait of the Female Mind as a Young Girl

Iva Maria Jurić

I

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of 'A Portrait of the Female Mind as a Young Girl'<sup>1</sup>, a novel by the renowned architect and writer Alison Smithson. Even though the work of Ms Smithson and her partner Peter Smithson has been a part of the architecture discourse since their very first project and the interest in their work seem to have only increased throughout the years, not much is said or written on the subject of Ms Smithson's novel. By the time of its publication in the year of 1966 the couple had already issued numerous essays on architecture and urbanism and continued to do so throughout their career, but the aforementioned novel remains Ms Smithson's only published work of fiction. Architects' affinity towards writing dates all the way to Vitruvius but in regard to Smithsons, the two practices are completely indivisible. In his essay 'What is it about the Smithsons?'<sup>2</sup>, Charles Rattray bluntly credits their large theoretical oeuvre to the lack of commissioned work. Albeit their built work consists of no more than a dozen of buildings, Rattray's argument can still be disputed by the fact that their theoretical work never diminished during the periods of more active architectural practice. And it is precisely their critical approach and their writing what made them one of the most influential architects of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the preface to Max Risellada's 'Alison & Peter Smithson – A Critical Anthology' Simon Smithson, the eldest of the three of the Smithsons' children, recalls both of his

parents as avid readers 'fascinated by the written word', crediting his mother especially for her love of children's books and a passion for writing letters.<sup>3</sup>

Born in Sheffield in 1928, Alison Margaret Gill studied architecture at the University of Durham in Newcastle-upon-Tyne where she had met Peter Smithson (b. 1923) whom she married in 1949. The young couple moved to London where they both briefly worked for the London City Council, leaving it to set up their own practice after winning the competition for the Hunstanton school. Praised for its classical modernist composition combined with 'the warehouse aesthetic' and its genuine treatment of materials, the design for the school ensured its authors a firm spot in the architecture history.

In the years to follow the couple continued working on competitions, though with far less success. However, these proposals helped them further investigate their ideas on the post-war city and housing, the topics which were part of the debate during the CIAM meetings in which the Smithsons participated. For the purpose of organizing the 10<sup>th</sup> congress in Dubrovnik in 1956, a group of younger generation architects who opposed the modernist architecture traditions and functionalist division of the city as defined by the Athens charter and re-introduced the ideas of belonging and context was formed. The group, among whose members were the Smithsons, continued under the name of Team 10 with their work, which was well documented by Ms

Smithson and subsequently published, even after the dissolution of CIAM. Apart from the Team 10, the Smithsons were also members of the Independent Group, an informal group of artists, architects, critics and writers who held meetings at the Institute for Contemporary Arts in London. The group's work concerning the popular and consumerist contemporary culture gained them the title of predecessors of the Pop Art movement and resulted in two exhibitions; 'Parallel of Art and Life' (1953) and 'This is Tomorrow' (1956). The late fifties and the sixties were the most prolific time of the couple's career regarding their architectural practice because of the commissions for the Economist Building, Robin Hood Gardens and St. Hilda's College. Being their first (and last) housing project, the Robin Hood Gardens in London commissioned by the London City Council gave the Smithson the opportunity to test their ideas on city and human association which they have been developing since the fifties. Conceived as a built utopia with 'streets in the sky' designed to encourage interaction, the architects' vision was overshadowed by the high crime rate in the housing estate and despite many efforts for its preservation as of August 2015 the Robin Hood Gardens buildings are awaiting their demolition. At the beginning of this controversial project, 'A Portrait' was published.

## II

The novel was published by Chatto & Windus, an independent (at the time) London publishing house established in 1855, among whose publications were works of Mark Twain, Samuel Beckett and Aldous Huxley. Its title 'A Portrait of the Female Mind as a Young Girl' deliberately

evokes that of another first novel, James Joyce's 'A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man'.<sup>4</sup> It was a common act of word play, adoption and referencing characteristic of the Smithsons *modus operandi* which they applied throughout their work. 'Not with a bang but with a flicker' an essay published in 1959, borrows its title from the often quoted 'Not with a bang but a whimper' line from T.S. Elliot's poem 'The Hollow Men', 'Waiting for the Goodies' is a funny reinterpretation of the title of Beckett's seminal play while 'The good-tempered Gasman' refers to Aristotle's 'good-tempered man', and so on. These associations work as calculated clues, as keys to unlocking the ideas that succeed them.

The intentional similarities to Joyce's novel do not stop at the title. Both novels can be characterized as *bildungsromane*, a coming-of-age stories solely concerned with the development of their main characters, mixing third-person narrative with indirect speech and using a language which evolves accordingly to the protagonists' maturing. Since the primary subject of both novels is inner worlds of their 'heroes', the dialogues are kept minimal as to include more stream-of-consciousness-like interior monologues. However, the dissimilarities between the two works are even greater. Where Joyce's character's name is an example of nominative determinism, an allusion to Daedalus, a talented artisan from Greek mythology, in order to give emphasis to the artistic nature of the protagonist as well as his interest to 'fly over' various society-imposed constraints, Smithson's main character is primarily referred to as 'Girl'. While Stephan Dedalus engrosses himself with the questions on aesthetic philosophy, ethics and Christianity, Smithson's Girl is absorbed by clichéd notions of great romances, escapes from

the mundane of her small-town life, and a 'big ring.'

“‘Marry you.’ ‘Big ring.’ ‘Have a baby.’”<sup>5</sup>

But the essential difference between the two novels is that one is concerned with a development of - a girl.

The anonymity of the Girl is a method to emphasize her ordinariness - she is *any girl*, but it also serves as a straightforward way of introducing the reader to the central theme of the novel – the search for one’s identity. Girl’s name nor those of her parents, the name of the street nor the town she wants to escape from are never given. The reason for it is simply that those names bare no significance and the Girl’s inability to associate herself with any of them creates an interior struggle that takes up most of her adolescent years. In order to find happiness, she has to make a name for herself: “‘I have to do something. I refuse to be a nobody just because he’s already out of it. ... Invent something? Find something? Both unlikely – she had nothing to invent anything with – and she had no land to find anything in. Then she would never get away like he did.”<sup>6</sup>

The concept of identification takes a central part in the Smithsons’ work involved with CIAM and the Team 10. At the 9<sup>th</sup> congress held in Aix-en-Provence in 1953, they offered their own version of the four functionalist divisions of the modernist city constituted by the Athens Charter, proclaiming that ‘life falls through the net of the four functions’.<sup>7</sup> Living, working, recreation and circulation were not to be replaced but rather supplemented with ‘a set of associative relationships or links that tied together the house, street, district, and city’<sup>8</sup> presented within their Urban Re-Identification Grid proposal. They would further explore these ideas within the Team 10, resulting in a new terminology of the post-war architecture, composed of

‘choice; identity; possibilities for change; connection (both actual and the sense of); protection from violation (by noise; of one’s sense of privacy; and so on); release from pressures of all kinds’.<sup>9</sup> For Smithsons, the concept of personal space and a home of one’s own is essential to the development of identity, especially after the loss and destruction that was the WWII. They stated: ‘We have to satisfy our need for a sense of “a place of our own”, not in a “universalist” way, but in a free way that allows for change and for everyone to be himself’.<sup>10</sup> This is employed in the novel as well, the insufficiency of Girl’s own space and the incapability to connect with that of her parents makes her question her true self: “‘But what is my own image?’ She pivoted her head and glanced back at the room. Was that her squinched in the mirror. Parents’ furniture. ‘What could one do with it? Paint it like the magazines said?’ She considered the work involved. The walls, the floor. ‘The beds would still look wrong. No, things are all the wrong shapes.’”<sup>11</sup>

However, the real association for the Smithsons began at the doorstep. Their ‘doorstep philosophy’ implies that ‘the basic relationship between people and life begins with the contact at the doorstep between man and man’.<sup>12</sup> This didn’t make things any easier for the Girl: “‘To merge. Somehow others had always seemed to integrate better. It had always been a constant slipping and struggling back, not easy to stay one of them.’”<sup>13</sup>

As a result, she often secluded herself from the outside, retreating in her room to give into adolescent day-dreaming. The Girl lies in her bed and tells herself stories. Over the course of time, she construes in her mind (at least) seven different stories. Although the complexity of these tales progress alongside their maker, they are in their essence quite

unremarkable, always ending in the same manner. The commonness of the stories is of course premeditated and serves to depict the ordinariness of the teenage imagination and its preoccupation with affairs of the heart.

Their interest in the ordinary and the everyday Smithsons started developing in the early fifties and it coincided with their engagement with the Independent Group. In fact, it was their photographer friend Nigel Henderson, a member of the IG, who inspired it. His experimental photographs of street life in Bethnal Green, a London neighbourhood in which he lived with his wife and children proved crucial for Smithsons' own development as well as the following 'This is Tomorrow' exhibition. Henderson took the couple and their mutual friend and collaborator from the IG, sculptor Eduardo Paolozzi with him on one of his regular walks in the East End. Although the area was ravaged during the war, the elements of the simple everyday life, such as children playing in the street, survived. The 'actuality' they saw in Henderson's photographs and on the walk lead them to the concept of 'as found'. 'Thus the "as found" was a new seeing of the ordinary, an openness as to how prosaic "things" could re-energise our inventive activity. ... We were concerned with the seeing of materials for what they were: the woodness of wood; the sandiness of sand'.<sup>14</sup> The newly discovered fascination with the ordinary is particularly visible in some of Ms Smithson's own writing. Just a year after publishing of 'A Portrait', her text 'Beatrix Potter's Places' was printed in *Architectural Design*. Her admiration for the work of the great illustrator and writer Beatrix Potter was already well-known, but in the published text Ms Smithson proclaims that interiors depicted in Ms Potter's books and the ones of modernist villas are in fact quite similar. It is 'the same sort of striving

towards good container-spaces, and even the same sort of forms can be found in both the books and in the post-war works of architects.'<sup>15</sup> According to Ms Smithson, it was the same with furniture: 'In Beatrix Potter's interiors, objects and utensils in daily use are conveniently located, often on individual hooks or nails, and are all 'decoration' the 'simple' spaces need, or in fact can take.' This appeal of the simple everyday objects is disclosed in the novel as well: "I am fond of my hairbrush. And all the brushes I have had. And some other people had. A cast aluminium one like the Fougasse, we got while getting petrol outside those walls on flat ground French go in for outside walls – sort of beaten mud with a kerb round."<sup>16</sup> Or: "I have known some good windows. So I like windows. Particularly bedroom windows. I have known and liked those that did not face south or the rising sun but looked upon it. West windows have been my greatest – I am a sucker for sunsets."<sup>17</sup>

In the *Architectural Design* text Ms Smithson emphasizes their importance in an even more convincing manner: 'Here then, we find basic necessities raised to a poetic level: the simple life, well done. This is in essence the precept of the whole Modern Movement in architecture'.<sup>18</sup> Although in reality a great deal of modernist architecture doesn't fit this description, as pointed out by Dirk van den Heuvel in his outstanding dissertation on the Smithsons<sup>19</sup>, the idea of 'simple life' was indeed behind most of the couple's projects for private houses, from Sudgen house to their own Fonthill weekend retreat. Solar Pavilion or Upper Lawn Pavilion as it was originally named was Smithsons' own private refuge in a small village of Fonthill, designed by the couple in 1959. Built on the remnants of an old stone wall which became the essential part of the design, the two-storey structure is so clean and basic that

it gives off a sense of utter essentiality. Envisioned as an opposition to the bustle of the metropolis, the house in Fonthill became a focal point in Smithsons' familial and creative life. The ideas of the domestic simplicity as constructed in the house are again presented in the novel, as the Girl often fantasizes about the easiness of the country life: "This house has not the ad's idyllic situation, fresh air blowing in, lambs; when I hang out I'm not on the sand dunes hanging out all yellow washing. But in the suburbs, in fine summers they reach their apogee – for theirs is the world of Sunday grass cutting – the sound pushes and pulls that you have not given up to be a free girl in the country."<sup>20</sup> And: "When they wanted to tear them down for road widening she wanted for herself an alms cottage, a simple cell, one of a row filled with friends ( -set in an area of sparse grass and old concrete?- ) out of which she could make her croft. There is nothing between the basic simplicity of a cowboy's existence and Getrude Lawrence's bedroom."<sup>21</sup> Smithsons' travels to the Fonthill residence are well documented by Ms Smithson in her notable book 'AS in DS' published in 1983. The book which is designed in the shape of a Citroën DS is a diary of travels to and from Fonthill, filled with photographs, maps and sketches of the journey, or as Ms Smithson stated 'A Diary of a Passenger's View of Movement in a Car', but it is also a celebration of movement and freedom made possible by the invention of modern vehicle.<sup>22</sup> The Smithsons' thoughts on automobiles and their impact on city and modern life are expressed in their Golden Lane competition entry from 1952 in which they first developed the concept of 'streets in the sky' as to separate pedestrian communication from the traffic, their 1958 essay 'Mobility. Road systems' and the 1965 'Love in a Beetle'

essay on couple's VW Beetle by Ms Smithson. In 'Mobility. Road systems' they declared: 'Mobility has become the characteristic of our period. Social and physical mobility, the feeling of a certain sort of freedom, is one of the things that keeps our society together, and the symbol of this freedom is the individually owned motor-car'.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, the idea and the symbolism of the car take central part again in the novel. In her fantasies, the Girl devises romantic plots between different (yet similar in character) men and women, alternately playing both parts. While women are often depicted as being held captive by their specific situation or position in the society, men are epitomes of freedom whose lives are results of their own choices entirely. Mill owners, scholars, engineers or car-owning soldiers they are always emblematic of the Girl's own inadequacies and desires: "He was bringing the railway, whence, by buying a ticket a brave person could leave. Leave the appalling lack of privacy. Go among strangers. That I wanted as much as marriage itself."<sup>24</sup> And: "A Cadillac, I thought. I have never been in an American car. What a way to travel! Somehow I must get to ride in it."<sup>25</sup> Men's attributes are conspicuously inspired by the Girl's real life neighbour Chris Downs, a charismatic race car driver and an embodiment of independence whom we learn near the end of the novel the Girl married, accomplishing what she had set out for herself: "She had always felt divided from what she was seeing but now – in a fast car – it all dropped into meaning. Living inside herself and feeling as though she were forcing forwards through life with this high wind at the sides of her head."<sup>26</sup>

During the course of the novel, the Girl's stories regularly end with marriage between the two characters, but in her

last one she takes us further. As a consequence, this is where the story line gets complicated: the distinction between direct and indirect speech, fantasy and reality as well as the past and the present, is blurred. Similarly to Virginia Woolf's novel 'Mrs Dalloway', Ms Smithson alternates modes of narration between third-person perspective and interior monologues in a stream of consciousness manner. The language becomes more complex as we learn the Girl is now a Married Woman, finally earning her name. Although it is in fact her husband's: "And Mrs Downs, what does it feel like to be the wife of a racing driver?"<sup>27</sup>

### III

In the aforementioned essay 'Mobility. Road Systems' the Smithsons attached an advertisement for a Plymouth car stating: 'Don't be dependent on your husband's free time or your neighbour's good nature. Go where you want, when you want in a beautiful Plymouth that's yours and nobody else's.'<sup>28</sup> Collecting was a habit of the couple, especially of Ms Smithson for whom it is said collected various magazine cut-outs from an early age, which resulted in the 1953 Independent Group exhibition 'The Parallel of Life and Art' and the influential 'But Today We Collect Ads' essay from 1956. Although praised as forerunners of Pop-Art, rebelling against high-brow culture, Smithsons' stance on consumerist culture was a far more critical one and in her novel particularly Ms Smithson tackles the imposed ideals of womanhood as portrayed by the advertising industry: 'Peculiar frustrations engendered by their education, ricochet among self-doubt, half-accepted freedom, house floundered cut-off from society half explored. ... We tear ourselves apart and shred ourselves.'

Appear like a model or lose your husband nags all the time while dusting.'<sup>29</sup> Just like in the groundbreaking 1963 book by Betty Friedan 'The Feminine Mystique' with whom Ms Smithson must have been acquainted with, the Girl is left with the consequences of following the wrongfully established social conventions, becoming a victim of the romanticized but in reality oppressive notions of marriage: 'You marry, and what happens to all those joys and tears? Now it's all yours. You're driving.'<sup>30</sup> In the book which is credited for inspiring second-wave feminism, Ms Friedan describes 'The Problem that Has No Name'<sup>31</sup>, the extensive frustration and unhappiness of suburban housewives of the 1950s and 1960s America as a result of society directing women exclusively in the roles of wives and mothers, suppressing their personal identities and abilities. She deduces that the question of contemporary women is a centuries old problem of identity, of never being expected to find their true selves. 'Marry me to be going on with and then it's rush rush to get things done for you feel you must have been wasting time all this day dreaming. Then you're exhausted and all is done the kids in bed short and there is actually nothing left to do but hate the shape, the unmouldability of face and unwillingness of hair to create ideals.'<sup>32</sup> And the Girl's disillusionment caused by the unfulfilled promise of happiness which should come with marriage and children leaves a lingering bitter taste, long after the novel is finished.

As being a happily married mother of three at the time of writing the novel with a fulfilling career to boot, Ms Smithson bares little similarities to the Girl in her later years, but the writer's insight of the formative period in a woman's life are of particular importance. In 1966 there was still very little literary works that portrayed girlhood, especially regarding

the expectations of girls to follow the discriminating paths of their ancestors. And if believing that every creative work is in its essence autobiographical, it is in this part of the novel where we can observe the distressing interior struggles which must have preoccupied Ms Smithson being a teenage girl in 1940s. Therefore, 'A Portrait' can be read as a cautionary tale, a letter to young women who too often neglect their own potential in order to fulfil the society appointed roles. Although her feminist beliefs can sometimes be questioned, especially regarding the celebration of women architects almost exclusively as halves in creative partnerships, as observed by Beatriz Colomina in her essay 'Couplings'<sup>33</sup> (though this can be attributed to the perhaps romantic fascination with artistic relationships and shared production), Ms Smithson's 'A Portrait' is still a strong feminist piece of writing that gives much needed account of the too often neglected world of girlhood, as well as the anxieties and sorrow that come with feminine adjustment, ingeniously interwoven with themes from its author's architecture practice. Proving by example that women can remain non-conforming individuals even within strong partnerships, the novel is a testament of Alison Smithson's great artistic talent. Not simple, but well-done.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Alison Smithson, *A Portrait of the Female Mind as a Young Girl* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1966)

<sup>2</sup> Charles Rattray, "What is it about the Smithsons?", in Paul Davies and Torsten Schmiedeknecht (eds.), *An Architect's Guide to Fame* (Oxford: Elsevier Architectural Press, 2005), 3-16.

<sup>3</sup> Simon Smithson, "Foreword: On Editing and Pruning", in Max Risellada (ed.), *Alison & Peter Smithson. A Critical Anthology* (Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafa, 2011), 14-17.

<sup>4</sup> James Joyce, *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* (New York: B.W. Huebsch, 1916)

<sup>5</sup> Smithson, *A Portrait*, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Smithson, *A Portrait*, 9.

<sup>7</sup> Alison Smithson, *Team 10 Meetings 1953-1984* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991), 9, in M.Christine Boyer, "Why Do Architects Write? The Case of Team 10 and Alison & Peter Smithson", in Max Risellada (ed.), *Alison & Peter Smithson. A Critical Anthology* (Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafa, 2011), 46.

<sup>8</sup> M.Christine Boyer, "Why Do Architects Write? The Case of Team 10 and Alison & Peter Smithson", in Max Risellada (ed.), *Alison & Peter Smithson. A Critical Anthology* (Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafa, 2011), 45.

<sup>9</sup> Alison Smithson, *Team 10 Meetings 1953-1984* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991), 9, in M.Christine Boyer, "Why Do Architects Write? The Case of Team 10 and Alison & Peter Smithson", in Max Risellada (ed.), *Alison & Peter Smithson. A Critical Anthology* (Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafa, 2011), 44.

<sup>10</sup> 'CIAM-RE-ORGANISATION', typescript dated 28-29 August 1957, in Dirk van den Heuvel, Alison and Peter Smithson. *A Brutalist Story* (diss., TU Delft, 2013), 100.

<sup>11</sup> Smithson, *A Portrait*, 93.

<sup>12</sup> Alison and Peter Smithson 'Draft Framework 4, 1956', in M.Christine Boyer, "Why Do Architects Write? The Case of Team 10 and Alison & Peter Smithson", in Max Risellada (ed.), *Alison & Peter Smithson. A Critical Anthology* (Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafa, 2011), 41.

<sup>13</sup> Smithson, *A Portrait*, 30.

<sup>14</sup> Alison and Peter Smithson, "The 'As Found' and the 'Found'", in David Robbins



(ed.), *The Independent Group. Postwar Britain and the Aesthetics of Plenty* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1990), 201-202.

<sup>15</sup> Alison Smithson, "Beatrix Potter's Places" in *Architectural Design*, December 1967, 573; re-published in Judy Taylor (ed.), *So I Shall Tell You a Story... Encounters with Beatrix Potter* (London: Warne, 1993), 78.

<sup>16</sup> Smithson, *A Portrait*, 279.

<sup>17</sup> Smithson, *A Portrait*, 274.

<sup>18</sup> Alison Smithson, "Beatrix Potter's Places" in *Architectural Design*, December 1967, 573; re-published in Judy Taylor (ed.), *So I Shall Tell You a Story... Encounters with Beatrix Potter* (London: Warne, 1993), 78.

<sup>19</sup> Dirk van den Heuvel, Alison and Peter Smithson. *A Brutalist Story* (diss., TU Delft, 2013)

<sup>20</sup> Smithson, *A Portrait*, 263.

<sup>21</sup> Smithson, *A Portrait*, 255.

<sup>22</sup> Alison Smithson, *AS in DS: an eye on the road* (Delft: Delft University Press, 1983)

<sup>23</sup> Alison and Peter Smithson, "Mobility. Road Systems", in: *Architectural Design*, October 1958, 385; in Dirk van den Heuvel, Alison and Peter Smithson. *A Brutalist Story* (diss., TU Delft, 2013), 95.

<sup>24</sup> Smithson, *A Portrait*, 74.

<sup>25</sup> Smithson, *A Portrait*, 133.

<sup>26</sup> Smithson, *A Portrait*, 210.

<sup>27</sup> Smithson, *A Portrait*, 278.

<sup>28</sup> Alison and Peter Smithson, "Mobility. Road Systems", in: *Architectural Design*, October 1958, 385; in Dirk van den Heuvel, Alison and Peter Smithson. *A Brutalist Story* (diss., TU Delft, 2013), 95.

<sup>29</sup> Smithson, *A Portrait*, 263.

<sup>30</sup> Smithson, *A Portrait*, 208.

<sup>31</sup> Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963)

<sup>32</sup> Smithson, *A Portrait*, 224.

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## Education

### First Generations of Women in Architecture and Design at University of Ljubljana

Helena Seražin

By now very few studies have been published that tackle the theme of women Slovene architects and civil engineers who studied at University of Ljubljana. As far as I know there are two articles only on female students at Jože Plečnik's school by my former doctoral candidate and research assistant Tina Potočnik, published in last two years. In this paper I will try to find some answers to the a couple of questions.

#### 1. What access did female students have to schools of architecture, design and building engineering?

To understand how the study and the role of women had changed after the 1946 in Slovenia, we have to present the study of architecture at University of Ljubljana from its founding in 1919. The first courses at the so-called Faculty of Technical Sciences began under professor Ivan Vurnik in 1919 already, although in 1920 with the arrival of Jože Plečnik true studies in architecture had taken place. Since I so far didn't have the access to data about all inscribed students to the architecture courses, I can't say with certainty in which year the first woman was inscribed in studies of architecture; from the documents of all graduated students it seems as that the first female student was Dušana Šantel. She enrolled to study architecture in the year 1925/26 and graduated in 1932. The gap between

her and the first male colleagues inscribed in 1919 was due to the Austro-Hungarian Empire school legislation (Slovenia was a part of Austria Hungary until its dissolution in 1918). This legislation didn't allow women to graduate with complete final exam of maturity at the *gymnasium* or *realschule* which was University study requirement. With their "incomplete" middle school education women could continue their studies only on specialised high schools, open only for women. After the end of the First World War, when Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, later Kingdom of Yugoslavia was established, the legislation was changed and women were allowed to inscribe at all schools and universities in the country. First Interbellum generations of women had to finish middle school first with the proper final exam to be able to enter the university studies. This could take place only from the study year 1923/24 on. The situation hasn't changed after the Second World War: study of architecture and civil engineering at the Technical Faculty was open to all potential students regardless sex under the condition that they had obtained the required middle school education. The only time that women and men couldn't enter university studies was during the Second World War. Faculty of Technical Sciences was closed in 1941, between 1943 and 1945 the the entire University of Ljubljana was closed. Although it seems that at least on paper Yugoslav women had equal access to

education before and after the second world war it is important to note that societal and political conditions for women in general were very different: Slovene women got the right to vote first in 1946 under the socialist regime when they gained also constitutional freedom for the first time, which meant equal rights and position in society.

## 2. Did women experience obstacles?

From the manual "Academic Profession: The Instructions for Choosing the Profession" written by Lovro Sušnik in 1932 it is obvious that study of architecture and civil engineering at the Faculty of Tehnical before 1945 wasn't warmly recommended to women. In this manual we read "Women are less recommending for technical professions. For studies itself, which comprise the vast majority of no classical subjects, does not fit the female psyche. Even more difficult, however, women will enforce their will in practice. Design of devices in uninhabited and hard to reach places, management of buildings in adverse living and housing conditions, work in factories and plants with predominantly male working forces, movements in the mines and on high buildings, living among unskilled male workers and employees are circumstances which will be only hard to meet a woman and which will rarely achieve better results. Exceptions prove the rule here. The most suitable profession for women would be architecture - interior design and chemistry. In other professions, they will be taken into consideration only for a limited range of activities, particularly for internal jobs in offices and technical offices. In the fieldwork women engineers will - at least for now - difficult achieve suitable position."

"As far as women are concerned, they will find it easier to thrive in the administrative department, whereas as an independent architect they would not always be able to enforce their will at workers properly. Most suitable for them would still be designing interiors (Innenarchitekt), which requires a separate specialization."

"The fact that the building engineer has to know itself from practice the demanding handling with materials and sundry sort of work and that he must have authority enforced to workers in any position, will hinder women. Rather than on the fieldwork, they would be likely to succeed in the internal preparation, drawing plans and others."

With such recommendation we cannot find it odd that before 1945 only 2 women graduated in civil engineering, Sonja Lapajne and Zorka Sodnik. Never the less at least 21 women began to study architecture before 1945, but only 10 of them graduated by that year.

Before the war Slovenians have not appreciated women in the so called men occupations: as it appears from by sporadic biographies of women architects they mostly originated from from middle class families which were directly connected with technical, artistic or political world. These families supported their daughters and through higher education tended to acquire better occupation for them apart from more common women occupation, low-paid primary school teacher.

Bogo Zupančič believes that apart from general social prejudices, also chauvinistic attitude of the male students and also professors at the Faculty of Technical Sciences itself made female students feel unwelcomed. This contributed to the low number of graduated women architects and civil engineers before the war. Just for the illustration: professor Foerster stated in 1928 for one of the female students

that he will sooner become an astronaut than she a civil engineer – and she really hasn't finished her studies.

But during the second world war situation of women slowly begun changing: one of the female students in architecture Albina Zorka Gradišnik was killed in summer 1944 during the fights between partisans and German army; as so many other Slovene women she was member of partisan troops and was fighting shoulder to shoulder with men to liberate the country. During the war through their active role in the resistance movement Slovene women gained power and more equal position in the society, which after the Second World War, in 1946 resulted in vote rights and changed state legislation with which they became equal citizens to men in every aspect of human life.

As a result, in the country quite devastated by war, architecture and civil engineering were highly in need and consequently no longer considered inappropriate for women. This resulted in increased inscription of women to studies of architecture and civil engineering; but from 48 inscribed students in architecture in the study year 1946/47 (among them were 13 women) only 25, that is 52 % graduated, among them only 6 women, which means only 46% of all inscribed women of that generation finished their study. As I don't possess numbers of all inscribed students yet, I can only confirm that number of graduated women in architecture during 1950s was slowly increasing, and in 1960s almost tripled.

### **3. How were women students included in the education process?**

In 1919 Ivan Vurnik planned the study programme of architecture similar to that of the pre-war Faculty of Technical Sciences in Vienna, which means that

engineering and artistic considerations of architecture were approached equally. Plečnik's idea differed substantially; he wanted to found his own school, which from afar seemed similar to the Wagner's school in a form of seminar: a novice first received a small task of craftwork, this was followed by a small monument, tombstone etc. in the second year. In the third year architectural drawing was replaced by architectural composition with more monumental tasks, such as buildings or urban planning. As we can see from the 4<sup>th</sup> book of Plečnik's students titled Lučine, which represent their achievements between 1928 and 1937, there wasn't any difference in completed projects as regards the gender: all students had to work equally hard after professor's ideas. Because of two different approaches 2 schools developed and in the end women students were more or less equally divided among them: each professor had 33 graduated female students.

Dušana Šantel, who was the first female to graduate in architecture in 1932, after failing final exam twice, was Vurnik's student. Gizela Šuklje who was second woman to graduate in architecture in the same year and passed with rather high notes in comparison also with male students ended studying with Plečnik. After the second world war study of architecture was reorganized and more seminars thought by new professors were organized. Tina Potočnik analysed the position of female students in Plečnik's seminar in comparison with others. She found out that between 1944 and 1956 the majority of his students were women. She sees two reasons of the situation; one is that they were rather unsuccessful at obtaining place in other seminars, especially in seminar by professor Ravnikar, and second that that more female students were inscribed in

Plečnik's seminar because of the nature of his teaching, which was prone to the artistic expression rather than toward more engineering aspects of architecture. Many of them even studied at the Academy of fine arts at the same time and later became artists as Vladimira Bratuž. If we look at the first post-war publication of student's achievements from 1946/47 we see, that several of the presented projects were made in collaboration between female students and professor Ravnikar or professor Mihevc, which means that not all female students landed at Plečnik. Far more interested is Potočnik's second hypothesis since it is inevitable to notice that when in 1960/61 the experimental study of design, called B course was established, which was in the first study year attuned to the fine arts, almost half of the students were women. According to the topics of their diploma projects it is obvious that professors included all their students in their regular work regardless to sex; it is true though, that they always had their favourites but this dependent on student's abilities rather than on gender. Seminars were often organized as professors' architectural studios and students worked on very specific tasks which were part of a larger project. Among diploma works made by women we can find projects for a building of Slovene parliament, which was first topical in 1947, or urban planning for Slovene coastal towns, plans for first Ljubljana's skyscraper built according to Mies van der Rohe's principles called Metalka, in the end planned by professor Mihevc, or planes of stores in the Ursuline convent, which were included in Ravnikar's project of the Revolution square.

#### **4. How were women professionals included in the education process? How were they represented in the academia?**

It is needless to say that before 1945 among professors and assistants at architecture and civil engineering studies there wasn't any woman; it is recorded though that Gizela Šuklje worked in Plečnik's seminar as assistant volunteer for the architectural drawing between 1934 and 1938. Unpaid assistant volunteers, who were hoping to get position at the university/ tenure and with that a position at University were quite common on all faculties, but women in general rarely achieved the academic position: until 1945 they were only 3 in total. They still had to fight prejudices about their supposedly lesser talent, grater emotionality and natural role as housewife. And even if they were allowed to work at University they could do it only until they got married, since their role as a mother was considered more important and it would obstruct their academic carrier.

It didn't become any easier for women in academia after the second world war: because of the big competition for rare academic positions in general, prejudices survived for a very long time in spite of political proclamations of gender equality. From the establishing of the University of Ljubljana in 1919 until 1968 only two women among 42 men achieved position of assistant professor in civil engineering: Carmen Jež Gala, who was assistant for iron constructions between 1952 and 1960 and assistant professor for firmness between 1960 and 1965; the other was Darinka Battelino assistant for soil mechanics between 1964 and 1987, when at last she became assistant professor. She will tell us more about her professional experience tomorrow at the interview.

Situation was a bit better at architectural studies:

First woman assistant was Jožica Strašek, assistant in urban planning at prof. Edvard Ravnikar between 1951 and 1954. In 1954 she was followed by Milica Detoni, assistant in history of architecture and restoration of architecture at professor Mušič between 1954 and 1961, and Olga Rusanova assistant in interior design at professor Edo Mihevc between 1954 and 1961. Next women assistant followed in 1963, Majda Verčnik Pehani, who was assistant in urban planning until 1970. From 1919 to 1968 there were only 5 women employed as assistant among 43 men and only one of them, Olga Rusanova

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managed to climb the academic ladder to position of associate professor in 1974. She also became the first and the last woman head of department of architecture in 1969, but we will hear about this remarkable woman more in one of tomorrow's paper. Let me conclude this short presentation with information that speaks for itself: for the first woman full professor in architecture, Živa Deu, Slovenians had to wait until 2014, almost 100 years after the study of architecture in Slovenia was established

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## Presentation and Perception of Women Architects and Designers

### A Storytelling Overlooked. Review to Reconstruct

Daniela Arias Laurino

This article introduces an ongoing research focused on studying and revealing how the contributions of women architects in the construction of modernity were invisibilized by the official history of architecture. There are four approaches to the subject which I consider essential for this research: the concept of 'invisibility', the need to revisit the historiography of modern architecture, the incorporation of gender as a category of analysis and deconstruction of the hegemonic discourse.

#### The invisibility of modern women architects

'Women in history are like a sand wall: entering and leaving the public space without a trace, the footprints erased'<sup>1</sup>

The historiography of a profession shapes its identity along specific guidelines, which often have implications in terms of gender. According to Joan Wallach Scott it is not the lack of information on women but the idea that such information had nothing to do with the story that led to the invisibility of women in the narratives of the past. The historiography of modern architecture is not an exception to this rule, because as a profession (like urban planning) tends to shape the identity of

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<sup>1</sup> Amorós, Celia. "Espacio público, espacio privado y definiciones ideológicas de 'lo masculino' y 'lo femenino'" *Feminismo, igualdad y diferencia* (1994): 193-214.

those who compose it by constructing a specific understanding of the past of that profession.<sup>2</sup> As Hilde Heyne<sup>3</sup> points, there is a built image that implies crossings out and exclusions, because it keeps alive certain memories while others are deleted.

In the architectural field this has implications in a number of practices and conventions that can be found at all levels of discourse and in the practice of the profession:

'... in its rituals of legitimation, hiring practices, classification systems, lecture techniques, publicity images, canon formation, division of labor, bibliographies, design conventions, legal codes, salary structures, publishing practices, language, professional ethics, editing protocols, project credits, etc.'<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the input provided by female architects to the construction of modernity and its consequent omission in the official history of architecture

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<sup>2</sup> Sandercock, Leonie. *Making the invisible visible: A multicultural planning history*. Vol. 2. Univ of California Press, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Heynen, Hilde. "Places of the everyday. Women critics in architecture." *Proceedings of the Conference, Gendered Landscapes. An Interdisciplinary Exploration of Past Place and Space*. 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Mark Wigley, "Untitled: The Housing of Gender," in *Sexuality & Space*, ed. Beatriz Colomina (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), 329.

represents one of these discriminatory practices.

The different forms of dissemination and media (which are a portrait of social, cultural and political contexts of their own time) have played a critical role in the transmission and construction of new paradigms. In particular media that belong exclusively to the field of architecture which produces influence as well as are influenced by the discourses and practices of the professional body.

In general terms there is an origin and common cause of those discriminatory practices related to language and communication. The best known aspect in Spanish (and from English translations) is the use of masculine as generic. Nouns, articles and adjectives written in the form of masculine subsume the feminine, in other words, they consider the feminine as part of a broader whole or submitted to a general order. According to the Spanish Association of Professional Women in Mass Media (AMECO), derive from this procedures the phenomenon's of Invisibility (not recorded); Exclusion (are omitted); Subordination (in a position of passive object); and Impairment (are mention them in a comparison as an example of inferiority).

Be conscious of the communication forms is critical for the analysis of absence: language is also a cultural construction and therefore a political issue.

One of the main questions on the issue of invisibility also involves the review of mechanisms that operate in the transfer of information, the 'lost time' in which a contribution made by a woman architect (practical or theoretical), than even though it materializes (a building, design, planning, article, book, etc.) cannot reach the status of being mention and even less a reference in the main texts of modern architecture. In order to address this reflection in a complete way we should

include two approaches about the concept of omission: On the one hand the consideration that the invisibility is also found in the ways of production and work. The role of partnerships, collaborations or joining work teams with those most published and renowned architects (according also to the official history) is essential in order to analysis the notions of 'individual and collective' in the architectural field.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, the diversity areas for the performance in the profession: architecture, design, urbanism, structure, history and theory, teaching, etc. seems to be another obstacle, as some fields are much more recognized and mediatics and therefore more published and more visible than others.

### **Review the historiography of modern architecture.**

The construction of the architectural narrative constitutes a central element as a starting point for exploration the aspects that caused such invisibility. A formal and content review through the foundational texts of the Modern Movement, could disclose, (in addition to mechanisms of exclusion) the roles, work and contributions of modern women architects played that at the same time. This means search for relevant works or projects coincident chronologically, in the same lines or opposed to those shown in the relevant historical narratives; search also for secondary publications; academic texts or manifestos. Also a complete review from the gaps (reading between

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<sup>5</sup> In words of Muxí and Montaner '(...) the construction of the myth of the creators often considered geniuses, is based on highlighting at the individual rather than teams. According to this simplifier device '(...) employees and collaborators are deleted'. Muxí, Zaida y Montaner, Josep M<sup>a</sup>, *La construcción del relato arquitectónico*, Revista SUMA+ No.143, 2015.

the lines) or through the relevant works of the movement and the male figures of reference.

The history of modern architecture has its basis mainly in texts considered essential as those of Emil Kaufmann (1933),<sup>6</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner (1936)<sup>7</sup> and Sigfried Giedion (1941).<sup>8</sup> On these authors the history and theory of modern architecture was built after 1945. At the same time, except for Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson in the United States (1932) or Manfredo Tafuri into the second half of the century, both Bruno Zevi (1951),<sup>9</sup> and Leonardo Benevolo (1960)<sup>10</sup> also put their investigations into with these genealogies. All of them give protagonism to the male, outstanding and remarkable figure (that it is not disputed), also on numerical majority, since architecture has been historically a masculinised and close to power profession. Thus the history of architecture that is built is based on individuals, the most published names and therefore the most recognized and visible, giving that way value to the creative man, often into detriment of the piece of architecture.<sup>11</sup>

Beyond the nuances into speeches of those renowned theoretical authors, there are structural similarities such as in Kaufmann and Pevsner<sup>12</sup> who demonstrate

their thesis as well as justify the new architecture based on the reference of the work (and name) of male architects. On Pevsner's narrative the figure of reference is Walter Gropius; On Kaufmann, Berlage, Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier; On Giedion, Mies Van der Rohe, Gropius and Le Corbusier. In order to face the enormous changes brought by the new architecture, the authors seek to link the architecture of the past by using different genealogies and give a logical continuity that settle the foundations of this new movement and thereby give historical legitimacy.<sup>13</sup> This rupture juncture is also identified through the work of individualities such as William Morris, Claude Nicolas Ledoux going through Arts & Crafts precursors, metal engineering or the Art Nouveau; Tony Garnier, Adolf Loos, Peter Behrens and the organic architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, among others.

The absence of women in these texts is evident. On one hand are the narrative structures that, since its inception, remain entrenched patriarchal patterns in the exaltation of heroism. This is about an historical cultural construction in which women are not part of the active class (granted to public) and is relegate to the private sphere. In addition, although during the 20s and 30s the women access to Universities was limited to a minority, those women architects who could studied did it with the conviction of practice and stand out. Women embraced the modern era, were eager to learn, to address the workplace and live the relegated recreation. The women architects were among the first

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<sup>6</sup> De Ledoux a Le Corbusier: origen y desarrollo de la arquitectura autónoma.

<sup>7</sup> Pioneers of modern design: from William Morris to Walter Gropius

<sup>8</sup> Espacio, tiempo y arquitectura.

<sup>9</sup> Historia de la arquitectura moderna

<sup>10</sup> Historia de la arquitectura moderna

<sup>11</sup> This pattern of heroic perpetuity refers to the respect earned and continuous assessment once achieved merit.

<sup>12</sup> To prove the thesis that architecture is new, both authors make an exhibition of their opposite (the antithesis) by morphological components. From a global interpretation of history, Giedion also uses opposites with a more complex genealogy based on the language of historical styles of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>13</sup> In the case of the theory of Giedion, the historical continuity is global and covers past, present and future. With this timelessness seeks to demonstrate that the Modern Movement and its architecture was not a style.

protagonists of a unprecedented socio cultural change.

### **Gender as an analytical category**

Gender as a social category, is one of the most significant theoretical contributions of contemporary feminism. This analytical category emerged in order to explain inequalities between men and women and emphasizing the notion of multiple identities. The feminine and masculine are formed from a mutual, cultural and historical relationship. As stated Norma Blazquez Graf defines science as free of bias would be a simplification as well as a false representation of science itself, since the objectivity is not just in individuals but on the result of consensus, reached in the scientific communities working within a cultural context.<sup>14</sup>

The women's studies faced a challenging problem to academic legitimacy. They should demonstrate their academic integrity to colleagues who doubted about them: those who disapproved all interdisciplinary program and those who felt that the explicit connection between the political and culture was a violation of the academy commitment to impartiality or objectivity.<sup>15</sup>

Talk about feminisms related to architecture and the city still an unknown and unexplored field in the Latin American academic context.<sup>16</sup> In contrast to other 'disciplines' as the social sciences, where

have been produced significant progress with the incorporation of so-called 'women's studies' as a new paradigm, in technical areas of knowledge seem to continue belted to their specificity. Gender itself is an interdisciplinary field,<sup>17</sup> is a cross-category, which develops a comprehensive approach and refers to traits and psychological and socio-cultural functions attributed to each of the sexes at every historical time and at every society<sup>18</sup>.

The historical constructions of gender are dominion systems with a hegemonic discourse that reflect the existence of social conflicts. Questioning these gender relations should be the way to stop the implicit idea of its natural character. It's not about activism vs. academia, but the approach from academia to reality, without implying a lack of rigor of any investigation.

### **Deconstructing the discourse**

The positions taken by both Derrida and Foucault (and sometimes, post-structuralist like Roland Barthes and Jacques Lacan) have much in common with feminist theories, especially in its rejections to a universal subject, the original essence and the notion of objective truth. Feminine becomes 'missing', 'absence', 'cannot be represented'; in other words, 'the other'.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Blazquez Graf, N. (2010). Epistemología feminista: temas centrales. Norma Blazquez, Fátima Flores y Maribel Ríos (Coords.), Investigación feminista: epistemología, metodología y representaciones sociales, 21-38.

<sup>15</sup> Scott, Joan Wallach. *El problema de invisibilidad*. Instituto Mora, 1992.

<sup>16</sup> Scott (1992) points out that the study of women's history originated in the American Academy Community much earlier and more successfully than everywhere else.

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<sup>17</sup> As a field of study emerged from different disciplines: of sociology from the 1950s, theories of psychoanalysis and the work of feminists such as Judith Butler.

<sup>18</sup> Gamba, Susana Beatriz, et al. *Diccionario de estudios de género y feminismos*. Vol. 38. No. 396. Biblos, 2009.

<sup>19</sup> The debate on 'the other' is being developed by contemporary philosophers as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Rosi Braidotti. The critics related to architecture and practice has been exposed by Mary McLeod and Francesca Hughes and the criticism of historiography, Hilde Heynen, Doris

In the light of this thought, an architecture that seeks to represent 'the presence of absence', other architecture, it could be linked to the practices of women.

Deconstruction as a strategy is useful for the rereading of the main foundational texts, not in the sense of negation of the texts itself, but opening up a range of other possible readings and assuming that it is not only about communication but of significance. These theoretical writings, as well as the historians themselves have played a key role in shaping and positioning the Modern Movement. They have introduced theoretical and methodological approaches in certain contexts in which Art History was not even considered a separate discipline. They have influenced many generations of architects (women and men) and have been subject of investigations, criticism and continuity of thought. The fact remains that as an Art historians they had a distant theoretical approach of architectural practice, away from the material work and even more from the environmental, social policies, small-scale urban planning or habitat of everyday life, even Bruno Zevi from its political, inclusive and democratic vision.

Publications such as *Befreites Wohnen* (1929) translated as *Liberated Living* Sigfried Giedion, which was a manifesto of the domestic aspects of everyday life, with strong considerations in reference to the political and social, clashes with the classical notion of modern architecture in *Space Time and Architecture*, written 12 years later (1941).

Nowadays an historiographical review with gender perspective<sup>20</sup> become

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Cole and Susana Torre, are some of the contemporary authors of reference.

<sup>20</sup> 'Gender' as substitute of 'women' is used to suggest that information about female architects is necessarily information about male architects, as one study implies the other.

essential realize of the other side. Unveil the women architects contributions to the modernity based on the predominant genealogy implies the establishment of some links that allow us to establish a state of the art and complete what is now presented as fragmented and isolated information on the real contribution of these women. These connections would be established: Among significant milestones in the history of modern architecture (the CIAM, the Bauhaus, exhibitions and Symposiums in America and Europe, etc); By relevant works, as well as work and personal ties of these with the most renowned architects and architects published.

If we delve, despite the fragmented and dispersed information into the contributions of female architects born in the early twentieth century<sup>21</sup> (those whom reached an academic and professional activity towards the 50s), several questions arise: If all these women exemplified had a professional relationship (directly or indirectly) with renowned architects in one way or another, or were drivers or essential part of the key events in shaping the modern movement; Why their contributions were relegated to a second plane?; Can we talk about another way of exercising the profession, other practices?; In which areas?; From what social and political places?; Is it possible to discern a trend towards a more inclusive architecture, less elitist and linked to the immediate social

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<sup>21</sup> As Marion Mahony (1871), Lilly Reich (1885), Aino Marsio (1894), Sibyl Moholy-Nagy (1895), Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky (1897), Jakoba Mulder (1900), Charlotte Perriand (1903), Lotte Stam-Besse (1903), Catherine Bauer (1905), Jaqueline Tyrwhitt (1905), Sadie Speight (1906), Jane Drew (1911), Minnette De Silva (1918), Anne Tyng (1920), Elissa Aalto (1922), Urmila Eulie Chowdhury (1923), Blanche Lemco (1923), Alison Smithson (1923) or Raili Pietilä (1926) among others.

and physical environment?; So, Is it possible to talk about another way of doing architecture?; Is it possible to say that the invisibility of women arises from the inability to have or create their own space of action?, put it another way, made us invisible integrate a community that until then was exclusively male?.

Call into question involves, as well as contributing to the visibility of women architects in history, build a broader, inclusive and overcomes vision of a paradigm so far hegemonic.

## The Women of the *Goed Wonen* Foundation

Ilja S. Meijer

Just after WWII a foundation called *Goed Wonen* (Better Living) was founded in the Netherlands. *Stichting Goed Wonen* was 'born from the critique on the disorder and lack of style of the old-finish furniture that was prevailing in the Dutch interiors [sic]' at the time.<sup>1</sup> One of its initial and most important goals was to promote a better lifestyle through better designed interiors. This research investigates some of the leading women designers of *Goed Wonen*. It's a case study that tries to shine a light on the process of writing design history and formulating design canons, in which selective inclusion and exclusion, either conscious or unconscious, plays an important role.

### The Rise and Fall of *Goed Wonen*

The establishment of the *Goed Wonen* foundation on 11 November 1946 was preceded by a century of civilization efforts inside the home, making them more hygienic, healthy and homely. In the nineteenth century people were living in small spaces with big families, without decent sewage facilities, which was a big risk for public health. Because of WWII these problems intensified. Besides infrastructure, around 87.000 homes were destroyed and more than 300.000 were damaged, creating big housing shortage. The so-called baby-boom (between 1946

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<sup>1</sup> Wies van Moorsel, "Contact en Controle: Het Vrouwbeeld van de Stichting Goed Wonen" (PhD diss., University of Amsterdam, 1992), 53.

and 1960 the Dutch population grew from 9,3 to 11,5 million) contributed to the reality that families were still living in small unhealthy spaces. Large-scale building campaigns marked the post-war reconstruction of the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup>

The goal of *Goed Wonen* was to promote better living standards in as many layers of the society as possible. They directed against 'lack in style, scarcity of materials and housing shortage [sic]'.<sup>3</sup> An essay by *Goed Wonen*-founder and activist Arnold Bueno de Mesquita was called 'The social function of the interior architect after the war [sic]' (1945). Bueno de Mesquita wanted designers to lead the 'taste of the masses' and pressed on the 'social demand' of feeling at home in one's own house.

Keywords were lightness, airiness and spaciousness. The ideals of *Goed Wonen* were rooted in the pre-war movements of functionalism and modernism.<sup>4</sup> Furniture needed to be functional, preferably produced by machine, low in cost and with a light and clear structure; interiors needed to be open, easy to clean and with a flexible lay-out. 'The home needed to radiate an optimistic and happy attitude of life [sic],' as Van Moorsel explains. Key in achieving this was the admittance of lots of sunlight and air in the house.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ellinoor Bergvelt, et.al., "Goed Wonen: Een Nederlandse Wooncultuur 1946-1968," *Wonen-TA/BK* 4/5 (1979) 9, 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> Renny Ramakers, *Tussen Kunstnijverheid en Industriële Vormgeving: De Nederlandse Bond voor Industrie* (Utrecht: Reflex, 1985), 84.

<sup>4</sup> Moorsel, *Contact*, 53.

<sup>5</sup> Noud de Vreeze, *Goed Wonen: Geschiedenis van een Keurmerk* (Bussum: Thoth, 2015), 51; Moorsel, *Contact*, 55.

Initially, the foundation was a collaboration between designers, manufacturers, distributors and consumers. The designers were united in the GKf or *Gebonden Kunsten Federatie* (Related Arts Federation), which was already established in September 1945. Willem Sandberg, director of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, became the first chairman.<sup>6</sup> The manufacturers were united in the pre-war *Bond voor Kunst en Industrie* or BKI (Association for Arts in Industry), in existence since 1924. From the beginning they set out to produce well designed industrial products.<sup>7</sup> Every group had a designated task: the *consumer group's* goal was to educate and provide information to the consumer; the *designers* obviously designed 'good' furniture, which the *manufacturers* would produce in series and low in costs; and finally the *distributors*, who would present all the approved objects in their window displays.<sup>8</sup> The networking circles of *Goed Wonen* also included many likeminded organisations, such as the *Nederlandse Huishoudraad* (Dutch Housekeeping board), architect-associations, housing cooperatives and many women organisations, such as local advise committees.<sup>9</sup> After a couple of years, conflicts arose between the sociocultural interests of the Consumer's Foundation and the economic benefits of the manufacturers and distributors. This led to the dismantlement of the four-pillar federation in 1954. From that moment on, *Goed Wonen* was led by the successful Consumer's Foundation; the GKf and distributor's group remained active on the side-lines, while the BKI ceased to exist.

<sup>6</sup> Ramakers, *Kunstnijverheid*, 81.

<sup>7</sup> Ramakers, *Kunstnijverheid*, 124.

<sup>8</sup> Moorsel, *Contact*, 54.

<sup>9</sup> Vreeze, *Keurmerk*, 50.

During the 1960s, *Goed Wonen* lost its popularity: with increasing welfare people choose comfort and status over functionalism and durability. It also became clear that to achieve better living conditions, *Goed Wonen* had to look beyond the inside of the home: their focus shifted towards architecture and the built environment. The end of the 1960s coincides with the end of *Goed Wonen*, which in 1968 changed its name to *Stichting Wonen* (Living Foundation) – hence losing the pedagogic *Goed* (Better).<sup>10</sup>

### Output and Ongoing Influence

As a self-proclaimed educator, *Goed Wonen* produced a very concrete and versatile output. Firstly, they opened a showroom with non-commercial and advisory purposes in 1948. It was run by Jos (Josine) Wibaut and Bé Niegeman-Brand until 1957. The showroom provided information on specific products and furniture, organized small exhibitions and hosted lectures. Most importantly, it was possible to get personal interior advice for a small fee. The goal was not to tell people exactly what to do, but to use scale models and teach people to come up with their own solutions. On average, the showroom had 20.000 visitors a year, with an absolute high in 1961 with 60.000 visitors. In 1962 *Goed Wonen* moved from Rokin 56 to the Leidsetraat 5 in Amsterdam. Five years later, a second showroom was opened at the Lijnbaan in Rotterdam and in 1968 a third one in Heerlen.<sup>11</sup>

The Institute for Arts and Crafts (IvKNO) in Amsterdam, later known as the Rietveld Academy, was closely connected to *Goed*

<sup>10</sup> Vreeze, *Keurmerk*, 51-52; Bergveldt, "Wooncultuur", 2, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Bergveldt, "Wooncultuur", 34-35.



*Wonen*. Director Mart Stam and teacher Johan Niegeman educated the new generation of interior designers in the light of the Bauhaus, where they both had been teachers. On Saturday, Niegeman often let his students work in the showroom of *Goed Wonen*.<sup>12</sup> The academy in The Hague, under supervision Cor Alons, also trained some proper modernist designers, such as *Goed Wonen*-frontman Wim den Boon.<sup>13</sup> The magazine '*Goed Wonen*' was the best way to reach out to the consumer on a large scale, although it never had more than 7300 members. The first issue appeared in February 1948. It featured different sorts of articles on design, aesthetics, family life, subsidized housing, decorating advice and much more. Illustrative of their pedagogic goals were the photos in which a 'right' and a 'wrong' interior were shown next to each other, with a big cross across the latter.<sup>14</sup> Full-page illustrated articles were dedicated to the model houses that were furnished between 1948 and 1969. They were part of subsidized housing projects, which perfectly showed the possibilities of a modern interior in a limited space. Each model interior was designed with a fictive family and budget – representative of the future neighbours – in mind.<sup>15</sup> The rubrics with individual interior advises were featured in a comparable manner: the composition of the family, including their profession, study and interests, was explicitly described before any reference to the rooms and décor was made. Successful – although short-lived – was the use of the *Goed Wonen*-quality label, given to objects that were approved by a

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<sup>12</sup> Gert Staal and Hester Wolters, *Holland in Vorm: Dutch Design 1945-1987* (The Hague: Stichting Holland in Vorm, 1987), 141.

<sup>13</sup> Moorsel, *Contact*, 56.

<sup>14</sup> Bergveldt, "Wooncultuur", 32.

<sup>15</sup> Bergveldt, "Wooncultuur", 37.

special selection committee. On behalf of the distributors a couple of product catalogues were published. Most of the time, however, furniture that matched the aesthetic, constructive and social standards of *Goed Wonen* was featured in the magazine.<sup>16</sup>

Other popular channels of communication were the lectures and courses that were organized throughout the whole country at housewife-societies, schools and art academies. In particular Cora Nicolaï-Chaillet and Huyb de Wijs were active lecturers. In 1962 Charles Huguenot van der Linden made a small educational movie – in color – called 'Mens en Ruimte' (Human and Space), which was shown in the showrooms and during lectures. The *Goed Wonen* foundation functioned as a much-needed platform for architects and designers after WWII and has been crucial in the formation of interior design as a professional field in the Netherlands.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, they only reached a limited audience during their active years. Many people still preferred fake antique and old finish furniture or just couldn't afford the modern objects, which were still quite costly despite the efforts of the designers and manufacturers.

### **Where Are the Women?**

The *Goed Wonen* foundation has been formative for the Dutch design climate in the second part of the twentieth century. Many of its contributors have secured a permanent place in Dutch design history. Unfortunately, this almost solely includes male designers and architects. To restore part of this wrongly gendered bias, this research investigates some of the leading female designers and architects that were

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<sup>16</sup> Bergveldt, "Wooncultuur", 14.

<sup>17</sup> Bergveldt, "Wooncultuur", 18.

active in *Goed Wonen*. Who were these women? How are they represented? And what can be said about their place in Dutch design history?

This case study tries to shine a light on the process of writing design history and formulating a master narrative of Dutch design, in which the politics of inclusion and exclusion are an important factor. In the comprehensive review, primary and secondary literature as well as a few general surveys that cover the subject of *Goed Wonen* will be discussed. Besides providing a small description of the different publications, it will be pointed out which female designers are featured in every source. After this, the lives and careers of the most prominent women will be described biographically. Accordingly, I will elaborate on their positions within Dutch design history and hopefully clarify that situation as a conclusion to this research.

### The creation of a narrative

‘In the most general term, to narrate is to tell a story,’ as Peter Lamarque sets out his article on fictional narration. Although design history is more a factual than fictional narrative, it’s true that ‘any kind involves the recounting and reshaping of events.’<sup>18</sup>

A history of design tells the story of frontrunners, iconic objects and extraordinary accomplishments; it recounts people, artefacts and events that have contributed to the evolution of design at a particular time and place. This story will be written down in history books. But it’s not a given or fixed

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<sup>18</sup> Peter Lamarque, ‘“Narrative and Invention: The Limits of Fictionality,”’ in Christopher Nash (ed.), *Narrative in Culture: The Uses of Storytelling in the Sciences, Philosophy and Literature* (London/New York: Routledge, 1990), 131.

narrative: it’s shaped by the process of discourse, which is an intersubjective phenomenon that produces and naturalises a reality or truth that becomes generally acknowledged in a specific discipline.<sup>19</sup>

Most important actors in this process are the academic world and museums: scholars and curators are purposeful individuals that shape the meaning and significance of individual objects on the basis of their own sets of ideas, attitudes and beliefs. By means of discussions, publications, exhibitions and other output they have the power over what is included and excluded from the historical narrative. This is called cultural politics, for it ‘implies the possibilities of agency.’<sup>20</sup>

Eileen Cooper-Greenhill writes about the creation of meaning of objects – and thus their significance – as a part of the museum narrative in her book ‘Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture’ (2000). She writes that museums are ‘one of the West’s signifying systems that have been used to construct dominant canons.’<sup>21</sup> She also makes an obvious but important statement, writing that ‘[o]ne critical element in the construction of meaning in museums is the presence or absence of particular objects’.<sup>22</sup> For example, the omission of female designers in the display of post-war Dutch design, signifies that there were no important women to be included in this part of the historical narrative, which is a wrong assumption. Feminist critique has already exposed this ‘primacy of the male’ in such master narratives of the arts.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> David Macey, *A Dictionary of Critical Theory* (London: Penguin, 2001), 100-101.

<sup>20</sup> Eileen Cooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London/New York: Routledge, 2000), 19.

<sup>21</sup> Cooper-Greenhill, *Museums*, 140.

<sup>22</sup> Cooper-Greenhill, *Museums*, 3.

<sup>23</sup> Cooper-Greenhill, *Museums*, 140.

Other than constructing, museum are also confirming the dominant discourse, according to the words of art historian Hans Belting. He states that a museum 'collects and displays only art that had already gone down in art history.'<sup>24</sup> This equally counts for design history. The continuous interplay between the master narrative and the museum and academic literature – which have similar roles in creating narratives – remains diffuse, without a clear beginning nor definite end of the construction process. Besides that, there are many uncontrollable factors that influence the amount of attention the 'curators and scholars' a movement, organisation or individual designer receives. Some simple things can make acquiring information much more difficult, like the availability and accessibility of archives, ego documents and the existence of actual work/objects.<sup>25</sup> Despite the impalpable process of discourse and the nature of a master narrative, I believe it's possible to understand some of its workings by analysing the stories that have been written down – or shown in museums – over the course of years.

### Written Histories

An exemplary book on the subject of Dutch female designers, is the comprehensive publication 'Vrouwen in de vormgeving 1880-1940' (Women in design) by Marjan Groot (2007). Besides providing an extensive sociocultural context, Groot highlights the pioneers as well as the lesser known female designers

<sup>24</sup> Hans Belting, *Art History after Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 8.

<sup>25</sup> Marjan Groot, *Vrouwen in de Vormgeving in Nederland 1880-1940* (Rotterdam: O10, 2007), 15-27.

in this period.<sup>26</sup> Although her work predates the period of *Goed Wonen*, it is an inspiring work that is in desperate need of a successor of the period after 1940. Another excellent but now unusable research, is the PhD-thesis of Wies van Moorsel on the image of women that permeates through the pages of the magazine *Goed Wonen* and other media. Although it was a very modern foundation, she sets out that *Goed Wonen's* ideology of a family and the woman's role was rather old-fashioned.<sup>27</sup> This review is about 'finding women designers' rather than critically describing the relevant publications. The most useful source for this research is, of course, the magazine '*Goed Wonen*' itself. Quite a lot of women were active as editor, writer or photographer. One of the prominent figures in the editorial board is Bé Niegeman-Brand, who participates from the beginning in 1948 until August 1960. More important are the women who are the subject of the articles, especially the features on interior advice and decorate model houses, because they include clear comments, photographs and floor maps. The most recurring names are Bé Niegeman-Brandt, Cora Nicolai-Chaillet, Lida Licht-Lankelma, Anne Margreet Six-van Krimpen, Elsbeth van Blerkom and Ineke Boks (who often worked together), and in a lesser degree Grete Neter-Kaeler, Jo Efficers, Titia Kuipers and Dora Mees. Most of the designers also wrote articles. Browsing through the product catalogues and the catalogue-pages of the magazine, there are surprisingly little women to be found. In the catalogue of 1964 Lisa Johansson-Pape, a Finnish designer best known for her lamps, is the only one.<sup>28</sup> Jo

<sup>26</sup> Groot, *Vrouwen*, 15-27.

<sup>27</sup> Moorsel, *Contact*, 106-116.

<sup>28</sup> *Catalogus: Meubelen en Lampen catalogus van de Distribuantenvereniging Goed Wonen* (Rotterdam: W.L. & J. Brusse, 1964), 97-99.

Elffers, Grete Neter-Kaeler, Bé Niegeman-Brand, Emmy Andriese, Lida Licht-Lankelma, Ans Bago and Lucie Bakker are about the only female Dutch designers mentioned in the catalogue-pages of the magazine. Although not every interior designer is also a furniture designer, this is a disappointing finding.

In the fourth issue in 1955 a list is published in *'Goed Wonen'* with all the members of the GKf. From a total of 51 names, 11 are women. In the ensuing magazine feature, however, the work of five female GKf-members is highlighted in a total of about ten selected designers. It illustrates that what women designers lack in numbers, they make up for in quality.<sup>29</sup>

An interesting piece of secondary literature, is the publication *'Intra Muros'* (1992) about twelve Dutch female interior designers. It accompanied a small exhibition in Amsterdam reflecting on the professional contribution of women designers on the growing discipline of interior design during the twentieth century.<sup>30</sup> From the period between 1946 and 1968 they choose to elaborate on the lives and careers of Cora Nicolaï-Chaillet, Lida Licht-Lankelma, Bé Niegeman-Brand and Elsbeth Bout-van Blerkom. It's specifically stated that the first three names were connected to *Goed Wonen*, while Bout-van Blerkom preferred to work on a smaller scale.

A small survey called *'Binnenhuisarchitectuur in Nederland 1900-1981'*, which gives a description of the institutional movements and important figures in the field of interior

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<sup>29</sup> "Afbeeldingen en Plattegronden van Werk van G.K.f.-binnenhuisarchitecten," *Goed Wonen* 8 (1955) 4, 57-65; Most information in this paragraph comes from my overarching analysis of all volumes of *Goed Wonen* magazine from 1948 to 1968/1970.

<sup>30</sup> Nio Hermes, *Intra Muros: Twaalf Nederlandse Interieurarchitectes van deze Eeuw* (Amsterdam: Furie, 1992), 9-11.

design, discusses the theoretical work of Cora Nicolaï-Chaillet elaborately. The book written by Mienke Simon Thomas is one of the few surveys that gives an broad historical overview of Dutch design. But the omnipresent problem with big surveys is that there is very little room for details and in-depth stories. In *Dutch Design – A History'* (2008) is remarked that Bé Brand and Cora Nicolaï-Chaillet were both pupils of Johan Niegeman at the IvKNO; that Brand married Johan Niegeman; and that Niegeman-Brand managed the showroom of *Goed Wonen* together with *Constance* Wibaut, what should have been *Jos* (Josine) Wibaut.<sup>31</sup> In another big survey on Dutch design, called *'Holland in Vorm'* (1987), Niegeman-Brand, Nicolaï-Chaillet and Dora Mees are again cited as students of Johan Niegeman. A paragraph later, Niegeman-Brand is also noted as a board member of the foundation.<sup>32</sup>

The newest book on *Goed Wonen* was published in 2015 and is a popularly written history that, at the end, states that where *Goed Wonen* failed in achieving a better living standard for everyone, the global firm of Ikea has succeeded in this goal. Still, it's valuable to note that Niegeman-Brand is mentioned specifically as a furniture designer, just as Dora Mees, who is praised for her children's furniture. Interior designer Nicolaï-Chaillet is noted for her lectures at the art academies.<sup>33</sup>

## Biographies

As other publicists have acknowledged, monographic and biographic research remains important to be able to nuance and deepen further research and come to

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<sup>31</sup> Mienke Simon Thomas, *Dutch Design: A History* (London: Reaktion, 2008), 118 and 122.

<sup>32</sup> Staal, *Vorm*, 141.

<sup>33</sup> Vreeze, *Keurmerk*, 52, 59.

critical analysis.<sup>34</sup> The women discussed below are the most prominent designers, based on the literary research. Some of them already have their biography published, some of them have not: nonetheless, they are all introduced in an equal way.

The first one is **Bé Niegeman-Brand** (1921-?). As a child she suffers from prolonged illness. In better health, she starts the gymnasium (Latin School) in 1933 after which she proceeds to the Interior Design course at the IvKNO. Her career as interior designer starts in 1946 at a new housing project in Hengelo, where she gives interior advice from an emergency store. Niegeman-Brand becomes one of the founders of the Consumer's Foundation and stays involved with *Goed Wonen* for years to come. From 1948 until August 1960 she's part of the editorial board of the magazine; in roughly the same period she manages the showroom together with Jos Wibaut. Some years later she becomes board member of the foundation. She also gives interior advice, writes articles, illustrates, decorates model houses, writes the booklet 'Wonen in de Lage Landen' (1958), takes seat in panels and committees and works on private commissions. Exceptional is her commission on the design of the first post-war built hospital (1951). This is a small breakthrough for her career as a self-employed interior designer. A well-known furniture design of Niegeman-Brand is her *kinderblokstoeltje* (children's' cube chair, 1949). She marries her former teacher Johan Niegeman.<sup>35</sup>

**Cora Nicolai-Chaillet** (1919-1975) was born in Borneo and lived as a child in Venezuela and Romania, because her father worked for BPM (now BP). In 1932 she moved to The Hague, where she completed the gymnasium (Latin School)

and studied Psychology for a little while. In 1938 Nicolai-Chaillet joined the London School of Interior Design, but when the war broke out she was forced to quit. Instead, she graduated on Interior Design at the IvKNO and proceeded with a part-time education in the field of engineering (VHBO) in Amsterdam. After the war she met her future husband Arno Nicolai at the architectural agency where they both worked. Arno got to work for Cora's father, who was now the director of the Dutch Oil Company (NAM). She started working as interior designer with a variety of commissions and clients. Sometimes she worked together with her husband for the NAM. Nicolai-Chaillet provided lectures on high schools, engineering academies and other educational centres. Her expertise interior design and the home was particularly appreciated by the *Bond van Plattelandsvrouwen* (Union of Women of the Countryside). At *Goed Wonen*, she was an educator and featured regularly in the magazine with model houses, interior advice and in-depth articles. She also wrote articles for a wide variety of other magazines. In 1960 she became a member of the GKf, where she later became chairwoman and board member for several years.<sup>36</sup> In 1955 Nicolai-Chaillet wrote a book called 'Woon Prettig en Practisch' (Live Pleasant and Practical) which included guidelines and her almost spiritual theories about human scale inside and outside the home. It was a big success and was reprinted a year later.<sup>37</sup>

**Lida Licht-Lankelma** (1920-?) was born in Purmerend. After three years of HBS (higher education) she quit in 1935 and switched to the IvKNO in Amsterdam.

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<sup>34</sup> Groot, *Vrouwen*, 22-23.

<sup>35</sup> Hermes, *Intra*, 48-53.

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<sup>36</sup> Wies van Moorsel, *Cora Nicolai-Chaillet: Interieurarchitecte en Woonpedagoge 1919-1975* (Rotterdam: Stichting Bonas, 2004), 7-48.

<sup>37</sup> Cora Nicolai-Chaillet, *Woon Prettig en Practisch* (Assen/Amsterdam: Born, 1956).

Licht-Lankelma wanted to become a painter, but joined the course of Interior Design pressured by her father. In 1941, during WWII, she graduated. In 1944 she met her husband Gerrit Licht, who was active in the resistance and went into hiding at her parents' house. Between 1948 and 1974 Lida and Gerrit, who was a furniture maker, managed their own store for furniture and interior design called *Het Woonbaken* (Beacon of Living). It was a unique store at the time with modern furniture, textiles, carpets, crockery and more. Lida gave interior advice to the customers and got in touch with *Goed Wonen* in the late 1950s. For *Goed Wonen*, she furnished many model houses and joined selection committee of the *Goed Wonen*-label. She was a successful designer and got grand commissions like a nursing home, doctor's residences, bookstore, music store and school for toddlers. Licht-Lankelma drew in every interior design a special place for the sewing machine – as a personal touch – claiming a private spot for women in their own houses.<sup>38</sup> After 1974 she moved to the island Texel, stopped working as interior designer, started painting and went camping in Scandinavia a lot. During an interview published in a local historical newspaper, the 92-year old Licht-Lankelma told the interviewer that her apartment was still filled with her own designs and paintings.<sup>39</sup>

**Dora Mees** (data unknown) was a pupil of Cor Alons at The Hague Art Academy, but completed her training together with Wim den Boon, Hein Stolle, Pierre Kleykamp and Coen de Vries on an exchange programme at the IvKNO in Amsterdam. Part of this group founded the *Groep&*

design initiative.<sup>40</sup> From 1948, Mees is a self-employed interior designer located in Amsterdam. Two years later she sets up the foundation *Mens en Huis* with Den Boom and J.W. Jansen. In 1953 she marries engineer W.J.G. Mees. In the same year she's invited by Olivetti – manufacturer of typewriters – to help design a small village for the staff of the factories in northern Italy. A small newspaper article notes that 'this invitation by Olivetti is an important moment in her early career[sic]'. In her earliest years she likely worked at the agency of Gerrit Rietveld.<sup>41</sup> Elsbeth Bout-Van Blerkom, Ineke Deenik-Boks, Anne Margreet Six-van Krimpen, Grete Neter-Kaeler and Jo Elffers are a few of the other names that repeatedly came up during the research. All these women have interesting stories and careers that are worth being retold and reshaped into pieces of history.

### **What is their position in the Dutch design history?**

Going through all the issues of 'Goed Wonen', it's clear that the field of design and interior architecture was still dominated by men at the time. The designs or articles of well-known Dutch designers like Willem Hendrik Gispen, Willem Penaat, Coen de Vries, Paul Bromberg, Gerrit and Wim Rietveld, Cees Braakman and others adorned many pages; foreign names like Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright and Alvar Aalto were treated like deities. But women claimed their rightful spot too. In every editorial board one to three (out of four to eight) women were present and many of the articles were written by them as well.

<sup>38</sup> Tim Peeters, "De Vrouw in de Bouw," *Pantheon* 9 (2006) 3, 38.

<sup>39</sup> Ruud Luiks, "Ik Leerde het Vak van de Beroemde Mart Stam," *Historisch Purmerend* 36 (2012), 44-48.

<sup>40</sup> Staal, *Vorm*, 143.

<sup>41</sup> "Architecte Vliegt Uit," *Telegraaf*, January 24, 1953, 2.

More importantly, as already discussed, were all the female designers that claimed their rightful place in the foundation, its activities and in the magazine. This is illustrative for the presence of women in the entire field of interior design in the Netherlands at the time – professionally or not.

‘There were female architects in those years, but not many,’ Lida Licht-Lankelma tells in an interview. ‘I didn’t had any troubles, being a woman. But I did buy myself a pair of thick black glasses once, just to look stricter [sic].’<sup>42</sup> Even before WOII a couple of women had already settled themselves as independent designers and architects. Margaret Staal-Kropholler is named the first female Dutch architect; Truus Schröder-Schröder cooperated with the architect Gerrit Rietveld and had a very outspoken few on living spaces, although she’s best known as the commissioner of the Rietveld-Schröderhuis in Utrecht; and Ida Falkenberg-Liefrinck, who had a very solid education, worked for the architect J.J.P. Oud on the Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart (1927), and for the well-known store Metz&Co in Amsterdam.<sup>43</sup> The last two had much in common with *Goed Wonen* in style and ideology, while Staal-Kropholler had success in *de style van de Amsterdam School* and *Arts and Crafts*. Also Lotte Stam-Beesse and one mysterious engineer W.C.M. Jansen were frontrunners in the architectural world in the Netherlands.

Like these pioneers, the women of *Goed Wonen* were also full-fledged interior designers and architects. They have impressive lists of works, ranging from advising, to the decorating of small homes, to the remodelling of public buildings. Besides that, Niegeman-Brand, Licht-Lankelma and mostly Nicolai-Chaillet

proved to be good writers and even theorists.

Compared to some male designers that were very active in the *Goed Wonen* Foundation, these women accomplished just as much or even more in their professional careers. Still, men like Willem Penaat, Hein Salomonson, Coen de Vries, Alfred Bueno de Mesquita, Johan Niegeman, Wim den Boon and Paul Bromberg are given more credit in general publications on *Goed Wonen* and in historical surveys. They can also count on more individual attention in printed monographs or, for example, online publications. Therefore, I presumed that these men would also more present in museum collections, which is an important step in establishing a dominant canon. But with the exception of Willem Penaat – of whom a total of 26 pieces of furniture is scattered between the Stedelijk Museum and Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague and the Centraal Museum in Utrecht – almost no objects of these male designers can be found in museum collections.<sup>44</sup>

That male as well as female interior designers are difficult to trace in museum, is probably because museum rely on material and preferably visually incentive objects to convey the reality. ‘Seeing the concreteness in objects enabled abstract ideas to be sustained’.<sup>45</sup> Not all interior designers also designed furniture, and if they did, it probably wasn’t on a large scale or with a clear personal brand or label. So even if someone like Lida Licht-Lankelma fabricated her own designs together with her husband, and even if they survived the ravages of time, it would probably not be identifiable as her work. Interiors are not durable works of art; what is left are drawings, photographs,

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<sup>42</sup> Luiks, *Leerde*, 48.

<sup>43</sup> Hermes, *Intra*, 13-29.

<sup>44</sup> Noted that some of the online catalogues are more complete than others.

<sup>45</sup> Cooper-Greenhill, *Museums*, 103.

descriptions and maybe a scale model. Most of the archives of Dutch designers and architects are located in the New Institute in Rotterdam. The *Bonas* foundation creates small biographies online or in written form, just like the monograph of Cora Nicolaï-Chaillet. Still, the question arises why the women of *Goed Wonen* are relatively neglected in secondary literature and design surveys? A couple of explanations is already provided by Marjan Groot in relation to the women designers in the period 1880-1940. She writes that many women were only active for a short period of time, produced less work in comparison to men, they were badly documented by others, there are no ego documents like diaries and letters and their work just didn't survive the ravages of time because of vulnerable materials.<sup>46</sup> This is also applicable to the period after WWII, when women were still expected to raise a family and care for the house. Many designers worked part-time. What is striking, is the apparent influence of the husband and his profession of architect or designer. Several cases show how women started working at the agency of their husband, working on projects collaborative as well as solo. Bé Brand marries teacher and designer Johan Niegeman, Cora Chaillet marries architect Arno Nicolaï, Lida Lankelma marries furniture maker Gerrit Licht and Dora Mees marries engineer Wouter Mees. Half a century ago, it must also have really made a difference that their husband shared their interests and supported them in their professional careers, because it wasn't self-evident that women pursued a career at all. It's not a competition on who should become part of history and who shouldn't. The women of *Goed Wonen* were in some ways less noticeable than the male designers, due to their positions in society.

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<sup>46</sup> Groot, *Vrouwen*, 23.

But in quality and sometimes even in quantity, they weren't subsidiary to men at all. But that doesn't really matter, because the life stories and careers of these women – and many more women – are just too plain interesting to *not* be told and remembered. It's all about politics, and we have the agency to write design history. History is about recounting and reshaping stories.



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## AMS: the work of Alison Margaret Smithson (1928/1993)

Alessandra Como, Luisa Smeragliuolo

### Introduction

Alison Smithson's work is known as intrinsically linked to that of her husband and work partner Peter Smithson with whom she worked at their studio, founded in 1950 in London. Alison Margaret Gill (1928-1993) and Peter Smithson (1923-2003) were pioneers in architecture ideas and experimentations during the post-war period, becoming soon influential through their design projects and theoretical writings in the architecture scene within and beyond UK, in particularly with strong connections with Holland and Italy, here through the ILAUD experience with Giancarlo De Carlo, also part of the Team 10. Alison and Peter were a strong partnership and their work stems from their fruitful collaboration. At the time there were several influential couples in the art and architecture world – some were close friends as the Banhams - and the most famous couple was the one of Charles and Ray Eames which represented reference and admiration for the Smithsons. It has been written on the fertile exchange of ideas and specifically on the team of couples<sup>1</sup> and the strong bond and creative collaboration is evident in the Smithson's publications, where often their writings intertwine, completing each other and building a discourse through the single voices. De Carlo wrote in his obituary article about the indivisibility of the couple: <It is impossible to distinguish her contribution from that

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<sup>1</sup> Beatriz Colomina, *Couplings*, in M. Risselada (ed.), *Alison & Peter Smithson. A Critical Anthology*, Ediciones Poligrafa 2011.

of Peter; they were a perfectly complementary team>. Moreover, their work extends in the common family life, involving the personal spaces, the houses, their children who have an important role in the photographs that show their architecture. For the Smithsons, in fact, architecture is actual and real, and the lived moments and activities in the spaces reveal its meaning.

If it is clear that the Smithsons were an entity, yet there are specific and individual contributions. As Peter himself explained when he was asked about the collaboration with Alison<sup>2</sup>: <It was friendly enmity. We were reciprocal, each the other half. Her talents and my talents were completely different. I think it's a normal thing with partnerships. Even the family side was not alike, but reciprocal. The books with Monacelli Press are an example of this reciprocity. It is not like the Eames's book, where the complete list of their assistants is running along the top of the page of each job. We don't have a record like that, but every drawing is attributed, and it says whether Alison or I was the lead architect. On a big project we would be both work on it, yet someone was making the major contribution; somebody invented the format and became the lead>.

This paper aims to focus on the specificity of Alison contribution looking at her individual work, developed with her own signature. In particular, this paper concentrates on the critical writings by Alison, a production, which represented a

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<sup>2</sup> Catherine Spellman, *P. Smithson. Conversation with students*, Princeton Architectural Press 2005.

strong and essential part of her role. As Peter said: <Alison was born a writer, and I wasn't>. The paper goes through the most important texts, constructing a trace of thought within the variety of the topics on which Alison dealt with. Alison's authorship production as writer, editor and critic consists in reporting the Team Group 10 activities – in books, articles, magazine's issues -, writing novels – *A Portrait of the Female Mind as a Young Girl* (1966) and a still unpublished text -, writing and editing the travel book *AS DS: An Eye on the Road* (1983), and in numerous articles published on architectural magazines, extensively on *Architectural Design* and *The Architectural Journal*. Over the years the topics Alison covered in her articles are many. Alison writes about architecture crossing it in a transversal way in time; she writes about ancient culture, historic and modern architecture, the contemporary city, and about urban and landscape issues. Those reflections are brought back into the design project work developed within the studio with Peter. The ancient and modern architecture are great references, as well as the ancient culture in general. Alison often quotes myths, legends and tales. Central in her interest are the masters of modern architecture and she writes on the role they assumed for the education and development of the new generation of designers to which Peter and Alison belong. The topic of Modernity and its legacy – faced with Peter in the text *The Heroic Period of Modern Architecture* (1981) - is for Alison an essential question to investigate and yet it remains an enigma complex to be fully deciphered. In the article *The legacy of the Modern Movement: some threads* Alison chases the traces which the Modern era left in order to find its sense again today. Her text *AS in DS: An Eye on the Road* (1983) develops her research on

modernity, through the observation from a car, a Citroen DS. What does it mean to travel by car? How the car changes the city and the landscape?

### 1. Alison's Modernity

<Our work has been like an embroidery on the canvas provided by the Heroic Period of Modern Movement [...] and if the needle, in sewing, seems to move away from the canvas, it returns. The threads in this way move back and forth across what i call 'the Earth of the Modern Movement'>. With these words A. S. opens the article *The legacy of the Modern Movement: some threads* published in the magazine *Spazio e Società* in 1982. In this paper Alison reflects on the legacy of the Modern architecture of the '30s. Weaving her thoughts to the words of Peter – who is frequently mentioned in quotation marks – she discusses the main architectural, urban and more broadly cultural transformations of the period.

As she wrote later on the paper, the main topics are discussed in the text written with Peter *The Heroic Period of Modern Architecture*, the text to which they had worked on for twenty years and published it in 1981. In the metaphor of the needle which continuously weaves a canvas, moving and coming back, there is all the feeling of the new generation of architects towards their predecessors. It is a bond which in Alison's words takes on the power of the myth, recognizing the role and precluding the right to <use idioms - pieces of buildings of cities>. The Spirit of Hope – as defined by the same author - who had invested the architecture after the First World War <for a 'clean' - cleansed - society, reconsidered> is not something that you can recreate. <Each period is inseparably flavoured by its style>. Yet <architecture is on a longer

cycle>, it is not like fashion, it doesn't easily end without leaving a trace. If it is impossible to repeat that Heroic Spirit of the early Modern architecture, Alison retraces its steps to look for its traces – reconstructing the myth – till the finding of the thread from which return to weave the canvas.

Using the metaphor of the Christmas tradition and observing its transformation, Alison refers to Modern Architecture clarifying the signs of its legacy from where it is necessary to start again [ripartire].

Christmas represents the renewal, and <renewal is something that all Europe needs to know about to do with the fabric of cities: but for what life style is this renewal to be for?>.

The Christmas festivity becomes in Alison's words the image of the change: the change that brought the Modern Movement's *Spirit of Hope* in its early years and yet the change that invites to look at the city with a spirit of renovation. Through the power of images the myth of the Christmas celebration is renewed – with Santa Claus, the stocking, the white roofs, the reindeers and the chimneys; similarly the two British architects – writes Alison - chose for their text on the Heroic Period of Architecture, images that could be influential. <One sight of one image is enough to change lives>. And as in the United States the Christmas has built his legend renewing itself through the contribution of the traditions of the people who migrated bringing with them their local culture baggage, in the same way Alison hopes for a new idea of the city from the individual contribution. <It is this difference...this twist made by each; the contribution of individual energy for renewal, that we are interested in...that is the aspect of the individual and society renewing their environment through the ephemera of celebration decoration... in

which we see hope, in England particularly, for people taking back from administrators the responsibility for the quality of places>.

Therefore in Alison's words the Christmas myth is intertwined with architecture threads, with reflections on Modernity and on the city. Christmas celebrates the renewal and its myth is kept alive regenerating itself through the individual contribution.

As fragments of a single reflection to mend, Alison then returns to the legacy of the early Modernism: <let us consider new possibilities of movement... that also gave man a wholly new view of the world>. During those years the technology and the engineering had opened the doors of a new and unknown universe. The new building potentialities and the new construction materials had brought the birth of a new spirit in architecture. The new transport means had changed the dimension of the world, making the distances small, creating a new collective imaginary - which Alison recalls in her paper quoting fragments of texts and stories - related to transportation and to its sites. Landscapes and cities were getting ready to change and to adapt to the Modernity and the new transportation means. The face of the city and the landscape were changing. If travelling by tram or by car, or viewing the city from a plane has become today habitual for the city and for its inhabitants, what is left of Modernity?

According to Alison this is certainly something that is not in the architectural books - especially those of the time – in which, as survey-books, the main projects of the new design project season were listed and described. <Many in the 20's could not bear to live with so many memories of the previous life style that had brought about the first world war: the Spirit of Hope wanted a new city. And with

cities we are on thin ground for the bulk of our inheritance of the Heroic Period is in individual buildings>.

With the Modernity the city has changed but the effects of its transformation were soon assimilated without leaving the time to reflect on the actual radical change. <It took us until even late 'sixties - write Alison - to fully understand the nature of the contribution of the 1930's ...whose import was that the new technology had been absorbed and was practiced in a quiet, unobvious manner. [...] The change between the 'twenties and the 'thirties was one of sensibility, because in that time, the presence of machines became normal>.

Alison shows the change of the «subtle» sensitivity through four different phases that range from the emphasis of the novelty, to the celebration of the machine's myth, until its total acceptance that she describes with a quote from her text *AD in DS: a diary of car movement*, still unpublished at the time. Here she describes, in an almost detached way, fragments of the experience of travelling by car. The last phase is not made explicit but it is to be found in the descriptions of the Berlin's proposals made with Peter. <In all the ideas we were involved ultimately with the hope of building structures that grow the sense of connection out of the hierarchy of movement in cities>. The legacy of the Heroic Period is therefore a new sensitivity which reflects the changing of the way of crossing through and living in the city thanks to the new transportation means. <The sense of connection to the city allows - encourages - the growth of a new sensibility to places; renews and so keeps on embroidering the city with the threads of our inheritance>.

## 2. Alison's narration

The strongest reference to the newfound sensitivity, consequence of Modernity, is Alison's book *AS in DS: an eye on the road*. Here she writes: <The car had changed our relationship with one another and how we observed our world and twenty years later we can work with this idea>. The text is a diary recording her travels from London to Wiltshire driving a Citroën DS. Here she observes the change of sensitivity in the perception of space. What does it mean travelling by car, going along the roads connecting cities, with the rain or the shine, during day or night, crossing the landscape which links distant places? The journey becomes a search of the car's meaning and role in the perception of the city and of the landscape. The narrative begins with the awareness of the new kind of freedom offered by the car. <There has been a change of perception, possibly bringing with it the beginning of an ability to distinguish between the inherited way of seeing and a fresh recognition of the nature of what we see. The growth of a new sensibility precedes the inventions we require; a new style of landscape gardening; an agricultural 'landscape' protected from pollution; settlements shielded from noise of movement and mechanism; dwellings that are protected in a way so that they may enjoy more of the benefits of 'nature' ...these we should begin to envisage as we look out while moving past everything in our own-climate-cell>.

The car, the <room on wheels>, as defined by Alison, and the understanding of a new world of the imaginary connected to the car use definitely change the way we have to design our cities.

In her travelogue Alison alternates short writings, broken phrases, with sketches, fragments of maps, single and sequence of photos as a movie clip. From the detailed

description of what she sees along the path she then describes the perceptions and the feelings of the trip. The description involves not only the landscape with its natural elements and geography, but also the effects of the meeting with other cars, other people and the animals along the way, as well as the traffic and the service stations. Also sounds, noises, smells, the play of light of the car headlights, the road illuminated by the sun or the moon, the water and the rain that read the landscape in different ways: <the moon's brightness, from high above, lights the paper written on ...the dark pine fringe walks the skyline which crests the fields that on both sides closely enfold the road's meander>.

Physical and natural elements are intertwined in the description of the feelings that arise from the movement in the car. The car follows the topography of the land forming a single compact element with it, together with the landscape with its natural elements which follows the rhythm of the car's route. <Particularly if the sky is full of large, puffy, clouds, each densely bright and these clouds are moving in the same direction as the car ...later by the swing of the road, or change of wind possibly, the cloud's movement flows across the car's movement>.

The road, with its forms, changes the perception of things that are around. The long streets expand the time, the winding streets like snakes move the horizon line. The landscape closes and opens, shrinking the view and the understanding of things changes along with the car's movement. The journey's account records the change of the seasons through the change of the nature's colours.

The landscape is animated also with something that is not visible; the perception turns on the imagination and the real is intertwined with the unreal through associations of images. Alison

describes an unusual landscape where <vehicles appear to pop-up on to the skyline of the other carriageway and as animated toys begin their run on the right>. Also day and night contribute to a new interpretation changing the perception of the things: <tonight, the graphics that would instruct movement include triangles that could be Klee's>.

In the experience of the route and in the observation of the outside world from her car Alison measures the sensitivity and the understanding of things also in relation to the position: <if the passenger's head is tilted and propped on one side by arm bracketed off the seat back, things passed are seen at quite a different angle and the sensation of movement becomes an oblique side-slip, a gravity-freed, trajectory sort of movement, as seen in some sequences of moon-landings>.

The tracking of the sensations linked to the movement, which Alison describes within her text, is the recording of the change in the sensitivity inherited from Modernity. The new sensitivity, linked to the movement, translates into in a variety of perceptions that come from the personal experience in the relationship between the space and the car.

### 3. Alison on habitation

Alison dedicates many writings on the topic of habitation. Her specific contribution involves a personal and experiential realm, which shifts the attention toward the investigation of the meaning of dwelling.

In the text *Beatrix Potter's Places*<sup>3</sup>, Alison identifies a connection track between the houses designed by Beatrix Potter in the

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<sup>3</sup> Alison Smithson, *Beatrix Potter's Places*, in *Architectural Design*, vol. 37, December 1967, p.573, and *Wiederhall architectural serial*, 19, 1996, p.8-9.

famous children's book, a classic in England, and the architects' imaginary. <Beatrix Potter's spaces ...touch something of the magic of our masters>. Proximity is pushed to the point of finding similarities of forms with Aalto's and Le Corbusier design projects, as between the house of Mrs. Tittlemouse and the Shodan house in Ahmedabad. What connects the two apparently distant experiences of the drawings by Beatrix Potter and modern architecture is the centrality which acquires the space observed in the real and lived life, as well as the attention to the objects and the everyday: <Their interest for architects is in their detailed and imaginative exposition of a way of life>. Alison highlights that those who are the user requirements, the so called needs - a central issue for the architecture of the Modern - can rise to poetic fact, as in the scenes of Beatrix Potter. Alison shows that in the drawings by Beatrix Potter the utensils are drawn with accuracy, the hook, the handle, and so on are observed in the foreground and arranged in central places of the interior spaces; those that are secondary objects of sporadic use are on the contrary housed in cubicles, a way that resembles the modern architecture container-spaces. <Beatrix Potter's interiors are tailored to meet the need of the individual and the individual room is tailored to its function; the group of rooms directly responding to their context in the environment>.

In the text this sensitivity is attributed to a common line of thought which involves certain artists, poets and architects, among which she cites Whistler, Wordsworth, Norman Shaw. To them is also associated the name of Lutyens, in the article quoted through the story of a moment of life, a note from a diary describing the drinking of hot elderberry wine and the eating of almonds, next to the fire place of Jertrude Jekyll cottage.

Alison's article on Beatrix Potter's places is therefore a clarification of the approach which sees in the everyday and within the physical and perceptual experience the real meaning of architecture: <The dwellings of her people fit the landscape with that sort of anonymity that is only achieved through building in a personally consistent language - or an internally consistent imagination>. Also in other articles and texts Alison develops this issue. The lecture *Signs of Occupancy*<sup>4</sup> is explicitly and primarily the description of the approach to the place in the experiential sense. It's a four-handed work, with Alison and Peter commenting in turn the slides. Alison's part, though, as well as being dominant is the one that mainly focuses on the topic.

The selected images besides presenting their design projects show their life moments, in particular through scenes of the play of their children, which the architects observe and portray to understand the meaning of architecture. The topic becomes here the poetic relationship between space and body; some projects - the Economist Building as the Robin Hood Gardens - are commented through images which catch precise moments where the relationship among architecture, person, and objects is realised, within a special condition of time and light. <The plaza of the Economist Building in St. James, London, 1969, when this picture was taken, appears empty; yet it is, by reflection of the sunlight off the windows, already occupied by the presence of the buildings themselves. It was our intention that the plaza would become decorated in this way, decorated by the weather, the seasons, people using it, but also, hopefully, that things would happen on the plaza>. The space among

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<sup>4</sup> Unpublished lecture by SMITHSON, Alison and Peter. *Signs of Occupancy*, 1979; British Library and PIGEON DIGITAL.

the buildings is <not the old-style residual space left between the buildings. It is a space that is thought of>, and it becomes a *plaza* through the occupation of the space, first through the traces of light on the stone paving, and then through the Paolozzi sculptures; when <you see a change in the space> because the space changes when the point of view and the relationship between things change. A small repositioning can generate a new meaning. Several images follow the play of children: the way of occupying the site demonstrate <the very basic urge to signify that you have occupied a space> and the experimentation in the moving <elements from inside to outside from one activity to another>, so that the objects design the occupation of space.

The topic is also interpreted as the leaving of traces, as in the case of fragments of wall paper in their bathroom at 46 Limerston St of Chelsea, placed <under the influence of Nigel Henderson>, and in this way the space changes, you have a <renewal of place>. All this is <seeing things afresh, and seeing new connections and possibilities for change in situations> which Alison highlights as <something that is a particular English contribution to the second Modern movement>. It is also a sensitivity in finding the poeticism of a place and in particular moments, that <magical quality> which it is shown as a discovery, as in the image of a simple shelf photographed after the removing of flower vases and <here you see petals fallen on a tiled shelf, the simplest of tiled shelves, the essence of Brutalism, the cheapest. ...And there is this extraordinary sprinkling of the decaying petals, which is something which, because of the whiteness, because of the reflectivity of the wall behind, you see these petals in their decay as incredibly beautiful things, beautiful things consequent on something done by the occupier>. The image and the

comment at the end of the lecture show a little girl <occupying her territory as if it was the most natural thing in the world>, showing as in the simplicity of the everyday, in absence of any redundancy, it is possible to grasp the meaning of architecture.

## Conclusions

Alison's texts – here selected and commented in an attempt to narrate and describe her figure - bring to light some aspects of her thought and of her individuality. It is not clear and easy to detect the individual role and creativity between Alison and Peter for each work, but certainly in these writings Alison has left some traces of important reflections. Her inner world and her feelings are a creative reserve where she often takes refuge and from which to draw small or more important thoughts. Her life and experience are occasions of thought. In her writings she introduces uncommon references which belong to the everyday of a family life with children - such as the Christmas or the texts by Beatrix Potter - a world which offers new opportunities of reflections. The focus on the sensory aspect of architecture, materiality, and the city are a unique contribution that Alison - although she was not the only creator - cultivated in a personal way. Her reflections open up a world of experiences that tell of feelings, emotions and personal perceptions. And if this could seem to have little to do with the world of the architecture, it is in the lecture *Signs of Occupancy* (1979) that is clearly expressed the idea that architecture and the city are strongly connected to the realm of perception and sensitivity through the actual experience of living and inhabit the space.



# The Makeable Landscape and Society: Representation, Gender, and the Male Architect as Post-War Hero in a Dutch Film Documentary

Marjan Groot

## Introduction

During the 2nd MoMoWo conference in October 2016 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, we watched the documentary *Een nieuw dorp op nieuw land* (A new village on new land) directed in 1960 by Louis A. van Gasteren after a scenario by Wim Povel. The aim of our collective viewing was to discuss the value of film and film documentaries for the history of architecture, urbanism, engineering, and design between 1945 and 1969, the time period covered by the 2nd MoMoWo conference. Historians in these fields usually work with static visual primary sources such as maps, plans, and architectural drawings. The representation of architecture and its effect on inhabitants is, however, significantly mediated through photography and film as well.

The documentary in question offers a good historical example. It narrates the strict planning and realisation of the modernist post-war village of Nagele (1958–1963) in the newly drained Noordoostpolder (Northeast Polder) in the Netherlands. The village has become well known in the history of Dutch architecture because it is the only one of ten new villages in the area that shows the ideal modernist planning and architecture on land between 3 to 4 metres below sea level.<sup>1</sup> The documentary lasts 30 minutes

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<sup>1</sup> Zef Hemel, Vincent van Rossem, *Nagele. Een collectief ontwerp 1947–1957* (Amsterdam 1984); recently also as regards the monument value of the village, Anita Blom, Peter Timmer, Willemijn Zwijkstra, *Nagele. Een moderne erfenis*

and was financed by the Dutch Ministry of Housing (Volkshuisvesting) and Building (Bouwnijverheid). It combines several categories of documentaries: those which are intended for institutional clients, interest groups within architecture, and newsreel shots for promotion of infrastructure and architecture.<sup>2</sup> The director made other documentaries, also on housing, but this one was the first to gain him more recognition at the time for its style and narrative composition of imagery.<sup>3</sup>

Idealising life in the new polder, the filmic style contributed to the documentary's fame and to the visual impact of the architecture. Its realist mode and didactic tone fit into the first Dutch 'documentary school' after 1945, while the topic of exploration reminds us of the optimism of modernist architects and designers after the First World War. Visual style elements of the film are derived from the 1920s-1930s avant-garde as well. Its striking variety in camera positions offers a powerful interplay of birds eye perspective and the classical fine-art linear perspective with a central vanishing point

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(Amersfoort: Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Categories indicated by Andres Janser, 'Only Film Can Make The New Architecture Intelligible!', Hans Richter's *Die neue Wohnung* and the Early Documentary Film on Modern Architecture', in François Penz, Maureen Thomas (eds.), *Cinema & Architecture. Méliès, Mallet-Stevens, Multimedia* (London: BFI publishing, 1997), 34–46, here 37.

<sup>3</sup> Patricia Pisters, *Filming for the Future. The Work of Louis van Gasteren* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), Chapter 1 'Land, House and City', 21–36.

at the horizon suggesting eye-level; the main visual feature of vast polder-landscapes in themselves invites to such filmic and photographic play with these camera positions. In addition, the film employs a frog perspective from below and effects of shadows. The shots of overall perspectives alternate with powerful close-ups of people and personages, who in their turn form a contrast with abstract-rectangular compositions of lines by zooming in on architectural details, such as a doorbell, mailbox, masonry, parts of a wall or window.

Such 'trivial' architectural details become elevated to meaningful elements by visually supporting the narrative of the voice-over. The authoritative 'voice-of-God' narration mode with a voice-over that offers a clear opinion about past, present, and future continues the style of 1930s documentaries as well. Its documentary form represents what has been called a discourse of 'civil sobriety' and 'democratic civics': publicity and propaganda for dominant or desired forms of behaviour.<sup>4</sup> The composition and didactic imagery of architectural planning are very important: within the overall narrative of the optimistic preparation of new land the documentary presents a group of leading male architects whose modernist buildings had an impact in the Netherlands after the Second World War and who were involved in the planning

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<sup>4</sup> Frances Bonner, 'Recording reality: documentary film and television', in Stuart Hall, Sean Nixon, Jessica Evans (eds.), *Cultural Representation. Second edition* (London: Sage/The Open University, 2013), 60–119, here 60–74, 106–7. The reality-factor of film documentaries is a much theorised issue. For an elaboration on this and notions of objectivity and subjectivity, see Noël Carroll, *Theorizing the Moving Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 'Part III: Avant-Garde and Documentary Film, XV From Real to Reel: Entangled in Nonfiction Film', 224–252.

and realisation of the village of Nagele and its green plan. Among them were Jaap B. Bakema, Aldo van Eyck, Cor van Eesteren, F. van Gool, Ernest Groosman, Benjamin Merkelbach, Johan Niegeman, and Gerrit Rietveld. Two women took also part: Lotte Stam-Beese and Mien Ruys.

This paper considers gender aspects enclosed in the cinematic representation of the village and by documentary photography afterwards. The first is heroic storytelling with a male voice-over supporting a male perspective. Secondly, it looks at the contributions to the architecture and landscape design of Nagele by architect Lotte Stam-Beese and landscape architect Mien Ruys, and at how both women feature in the film documentary as architects-designers next to male colleagues and female village inhabitants. Thirdly, it is concerned with how the spatial layout and planning in the film support gender roles as well as the modernist ideology to make and master a new, modern, and supposedly social communal future and society by means of post-war modernist architecture and landscape architecture after 1945. Fourth and finally, it observes how later documentary photography continued to adhere to gender roles.

All these are powerful factors in the representation of design and architecture, and the Nagele documentary above all pictures architects as heroes of a new age—they feature as male protagonists in a Dutch north-eastern Western for whom the conquering of this land, and thereby this age, holds endless opportunities.

#### *Nagele and the polder context*

The village of Nagele was planned in the 1950s for 2500 inhabitants, mostly land workers for the polder farms.<sup>5</sup> It was

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<sup>5</sup> It currently has 1885 inhabitants on 5039 hectares, of which 33 hectares are various areas of water.

designed in 1956 and built and developed between 1958 and 1963 from scratch in the newly drained Noordoostpolder (Northeast Polder, 48,000 hectares) in the Netherlands. This particular polder was one of several so-called IJsselmeerpolders that were developed to provide new land for agriculture and residential area, beginning in the mid-1920s with a test polder in Andijk. The first polder realised was Wieringermeer in 1930.<sup>6</sup>

Young men began the digging of ditches and drainage for the Northeast Polder in 1942 while living in barracks. A strict government population policy for the polders selected the best candidates interested in becoming future farmers or land workers because the polder simply had to become successful. Men were tested for their good farming practices, business insight, character, and pioneering spirit; their (future) wives had to support them and be eager to live with them in the new polder. Both men and women had to invest in community building too because previous nineteenth-century polder projects had proved that life in a bare and vast empty polder may be hard and required good health and a positive mindset. Selection protected individuals as well as the community from any problems coming from misplacement. The strict selection was able to function because a lack of affordable housing was one of the most urgent social problems in the Netherlands for the first twenty years

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<https://www.oozo.nl/cijfers/noordoostpolder/nagele>, (accessed January 29, 2018). Noordoostpolder measures 595,41 km<sup>2</sup> of which 460,05 km<sup>2</sup> land and 135,36 km<sup>2</sup> water.

<sup>6</sup> Margreet Gort, Anja van Oostrom, *Uitverkoren. De kolonisatie van de Noordoostpolder 1940–1960* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1987). The 1930s Wieringermeerpolder featured briefly in the 'Itinerary of The Netherlands' in *MoMoWO Women Architecture & Design Itineraries across Europe* (Ljubljana, Turin: Založba ZRC, ZRC SAZU, 2016), 142–3.

after 1945, and made a house or farm in the polders highly attractive, all the more so because it was customary for the oldest son of a family to inherit the farm of his father, leaving younger brothers to look for a farm elsewhere.<sup>7</sup>

Such were the conditions for Nagele village in Noordoostpolder as well. However, while houses in most polders were designed in a popular traditional style related to the so-called Delft School, Nagele celebrated functionalist modernism in all its finesse as a statement of the new architecture of the groups 'De 8' and 'Opbouw'. It was presented as a concept at the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) in Bergamo in 1949 and as a final plan in Dubrovnik in 1956.<sup>8</sup> Its architecture has made it a protected heritage site today, admired by architects and designers who very seldom live there themselves.

*The presence of architect Lotte Stam-Beese and garden architect Mien Ruys*

The two women involved in the planning and building of Nagele village, Lotte Stam-Beese and Mien Ruys, briefly feature halfway through the film. Their brief presence in the narrative makes them visually less important than their male colleagues but their inclusion as such is important to notice. The fact that both women participated meant that their ideas were recognised as being on a par with those of male architects. Lotte Stam-Beese was educated at the Bauhaus in Dessau the 1920s. Having pioneered with

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<sup>7</sup> Gort, Van Oostrom, *Uitverkoren*. Also, more recently, Eva Vriend, *Het nieuwe land: Het verhaal van een polder die perfect moest zijn* (Amsterdam: Balans, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> Recently for this Nelson Mota, 'Dwelling in the Middle Landscape: Rethinking the Architecture of Rural Communities at CIAM 10', in Akos Moravánszky and Judith Hopfengärtner (eds.), *East West Central: Re-Humanizing Architecture, Vol. 1* (Zurich: Birkhauser, 2016), 311–24.

the context of modernist social housing projects in the Soviet Union in the early 1930s, she developed her reputation when working as an urban planner on the redesign of the war-devastated city of Rotterdam after finishing architectural studies in 1945. Mien Ruys began in the 1920s as a grower before turning to garden design. She visited Berlin and took classes there at the Landwirtschaftliche Hochschule in 1929-30, followed by architecture classes at Delft Technical University in 1931-32. During the war she designed gardens, taught at an architecture school in Amsterdam, and became involved with 'De 8'.<sup>9</sup>

The documentary first features Lotte Stam-Beese. The shot is a few seconds only and shows her sitting at a table in an office, presumably her own office in Rotterdam. She is in tandem with the co-designer of the Nagele house-block and examining their plans and scale model. Clearly visible in the background is a photograph of a high-rise building, altogether something entirely different from their houses for Nagele.

Together with Ernest Groosman, Lotte Stam-Beese designed the first one of the seven residential courtyards in the village, the Karwijhof – named after an old anise-flavoured spice. The exterior of Stam-Beese's houses has subtle differentiations in design and lacks a visual hierarchy between front and back, in line with the ideology of the entire village; all had to deny visible distinction and underline equality of form in a spatial setting, and all houses and other buildings had flat roofs. Although the volumes of her concrete and brick blocks impressed as 'labourers' villas', these houses were the smaller ones and seemed to have functioned less well

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<sup>9</sup> The most recent biography about Mien Ruys is Leo den Dulk, *Zoeken naar de heldere lijn. Mien Ruys Tuinarchitect 1904–1999. De complete biografie* (Rotterdam: De Hef, 2017), 50-4, 96-105.

than larger middle-class houses by architects F. van Gool and J. Niegeman (presumably from 1954). However, when considering the village's status as a national monument in 2010 their concept was found to be still 'modern' and to meet present standards, and the advice was to change floor plans only and leave the exterior as originally designed.<sup>10</sup> They are now protected specimens of post-war Dutch modernist architecture and exceptional in the oeuvre of Stam-Beese. The plan is to furnish one of the houses as a model museum house in the near future.<sup>11</sup>

The second female architect-designer involved was Mien Ruys; she is shown individually and, in comparison to Lotte Stam, appears more actively involved through her design for the greenery plan of Nagele, on which she collaborated with the landscape architect W.C.J. Boer from the first plans for the village in 1948. The film documentary shows her while composing the 'green plan' in her office in a canal house at Amstel River in Amsterdam and the voice-over calling her the garden architect explicitly presents this design as her personal achievement. The final 'green plan' was established in 1953–1956, after the overall village plan

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<sup>10</sup> *Ontwerplab Nagele, M Karwijhof Advies* (Emmeloord: Ontwerplab Nagele, 2010), 16, 19-21. Online report of 31 pages with renovation-compass for monument status commissioned by Noordoostpolder Municipality and housing association Mercatus, <https://archisarchief.cultureelerfgoed.nl/e-bibliotheek/extern/Boekje%20M,%20Karwijhof.pdf>, (accessed January 29, 2018).

<sup>11</sup> The house-block with 32 dwellings was for sale before it was adopted for protection by monument organisation 'Vereniging Hendrick de Keyser'. See <https://www.hendrickdekeyser.nl/huizen-van-hendrick/de-hele-collectie/flevoland/nagele-karwijhof>, and <http://www.flevolanderfgoed.nl/home/erfgoed/noordoostpolder-2/nagele-3/karwijhof.html>, (both accessed January 29, 2018).

and during realisation of the contributions of the various architects. The design on Figure 8 shows the south-east corner of Nagele. Rows of houses are marked in dark grey, and above to the right is the village centre, which is largely an open grass lawn. A wide forest girdle marked the outer border in the landscape and protected the village from the wind sweeping mercilessly over the flat land. Green wedges separated the living areas and incorporated the main traffic loop into the village centre. Each living quarter was planned round a green court.

### **Women and gender**

The female architect and female garden designer certainly defy the stereotypical gender roles of women in most societal classes; the difference with the other women in the documentary: the new inhabitants of the village, is clear and becomes even stronger visually when comparing the sets of screen shots of Figures 5 and 7 with 9 and 11. The short duration of the presence of the female architect and garden designer, however, undermines their emancipated role when compared to the greater attention for female inhabitants of the village; the time of focus on female and male personages in effect supports traditional roles within the overall topic of the film. The documentary is drenched in post-war idealism and determination, and the confirmation of stereotypical male and female gender roles that at the time were more or less unquestioned in the societal status quo operates at various levels.

Firstly, there are no female voices. The narrator is a male voice-over and other spoken commentary is also by men; they dominate the discourse in sound and thus in overall authority. Carillon bells, a loud overall sound track of jazzy and Big

Band music, and quacking ducks are the only other distinctively audible elements. Secondly, the cast overwhelmingly supports gender roles by representing male architects as busy planners, draughtsman, and visionary intellectuals. It is modified only by the brief indication of role-breaking female colleagues; further comparative investigation would be needed to find out whether their inclusion in such architectural documentaries is exceptional for the time.<sup>12</sup> The architectural heroism clearly forms an intellectual counterpart to land development and building construction works by workmen who, literally, work with their hands. They too are male, presenting the village as an opportunity for male entrepreneurs, men who – as farmers or land workers – have the energy to work the bare new land ‘conquered’ from the sea and grow new crops. While the architects use their design ideas to create and master a makeable, new, and supposedly social, communal future and society by means of modernist architecture and landscape architecture, the labourers and farmers living there had to ‘prove’ that this future worked. The only woman who performs a continuous though minor counter-role is the wife of the pioneering family that we see leaving their old-land-house to move to the new

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<sup>12</sup> CIAM (modernist architecture) and CICI (Congrès International du Cinéma Indépendant for the art film that was active until 1930) were both founded at La Sarraz in Switzerland by Hélène de Mandrot and already cross-referenced at the time, sometimes demonstrating avant-garde filmic concepts and interventions. A comparison of some late 1920s-early 1930s German and French documentaries about modernist architecture offers Janser, ‘Only Film’, 34–45. Documentaries are generally shorter than fiction film and more resemble scientific and industrial films. Representations of women in film tend to focus more on fiction film. Further analysis of their role in non-fiction documentaries about architecture and design is interesting.

land. When they cross the border into the new land, she does not want to get out of the truck that is loaded with their furniture and other possessions to look with the rest of the family at the land lying ahead; instead, she is seen relatively long, for about seven seconds, in close-up while sitting alone in the truck. Slightly later, we get to see her when she enters and inspects her new house. She embodies the contrast with the educated female architect and garden planner most poignantly. Other new inhabitants perform traditional gender roles while representing a more sophisticated lifestyle, such as the couple in Figure 11 where the wife serves tea to her husband in their house furnished with new modern furniture. This furnishing has a didactic incentive: that is how it should be in a modernist house.

We get to see and hear how the male architects heatedly discuss their plans in unarticulated voices, sleeves rolled up, drawing and measuring, sitting round tables full of coffee cups and ashtrays and also heavily smoking, all indicating that planning and design is hard work. There is a special pedagogical role for the architect Aldo van Eyck who, in a seemingly simple drawing activity, explains to the viewer in his own voice the differences between the spontaneous layout of old country villages developed around a farm with houses lining a road, and the rationale behind the rectangular open-spatial centre of the planned new village. It was unavoidable for the female architect and garden designer to adhere to this masculine modernist ideal and that demonstrates the gendered nature of the ideological power of modernist architecture. The architects involved in the Nagele project were all well educated. Most of them studied at Delft University of Technology, at the time called Technical High school Delft. In contrast, the central

town of Emmeloord, just 9 km from Nagele and the first town in the new polder, was planned by an architectural town office and did not get the architectural acclaim of Nagele village. The documentary begins with this central town and we can see that its architecture is less exceptional. Above all, the Nagele documentary tells how architects take the role as 'heroes' of a new age. Of the attention paid to the two women, Lotte Stam-Beese and Mien Ruys, there is a longer focus on Mien Ruys. This works to confirm a more accepted role for a singular and highly radical female designer focusing on the spatial environment of gardens, nature, and greenery rather than built architecture which as modernist achievement carried the most overt masculine ideology.

A third gender discrepancy inherent to the village design is more subtle and lies in how it advocates (in)equality among inhabitants. It propagates religious inclusiveness and balanced tolerance by including all of the then-dominant religions in the Netherlands while simultaneously separating them by three different church buildings facing the central lawn: Catholic, Reformed Protestant, and Protestant / free thinkers.<sup>13</sup> These correspond with three different primary schools. This equality was surpassed in the design of a communal graveyard by Mien Ruys. Instead of burying the dead in a yard of their specific church, she designed one graveyard where all inhabitants would be together after their deaths. Although the Catholics had their own section in the yard, Ruys wanted to underline equality by not dividing the yard's planning into luxury

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<sup>13</sup> Catholic church designed by Aldo van Eyck and Daniël van Ginkel; Reformed Protestant by Jo van den Broek and Jaap Bakema; and Protestant / free thinkers by Wouter van de Kuilen.

and modest graves, as well as by creating a common entrance covered by a *berceau* of hornbeam. In its intended effect, however, the *berceau* was not realised until 2010!<sup>14</sup> In contrast to this balance of class, religious groups and unity of inhabitants after death, the documentary features living men and women in gender stereotypes that in effect meant unequal positions: men are farmers or land workers, or have such jobs as postman, owner of a bicycle shop, doctor, and milkman; while women are housewives, mothers, or are passively sitting in a house at the window watching men who are working on the garden. In the morning they see their husbands going off to work, leaving them to do the housework and care for the children. At most they are shown working as assistant of the barber, or helping their husband, who is butcher or milkman, in their shop. This extends to the gendering of space represented in the documentary: women are only pictured in the village context and near houses and residential areas, while men are also shown leaving these spaces to go out and returning to them, allowing for a powerful identification-effect of recipients and audiences with such different roles and spatial areas.<sup>15</sup>

The functioning of the village in real life, gendered as it was, sometimes disregarded the architects' ideal

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[http://www.museumnagele.nl/images/documenten/2012/Berceaufolder\\_deflRes.pdf](http://www.museumnagele.nl/images/documenten/2012/Berceaufolder_deflRes.pdf), (accessed February 3, 2018); Den Dulk, *Zoeken naar de heldere lijn*, 129–30.

<sup>15</sup> For gendering of spaces also Hilde Heynen, 'Modernity and domesticity: tensions and contradictions', in Hilde Heynen, Gülsüm Baydar (eds.), *Negotiating Domesticity. Spatial productions of gender in modern architecture* (London/New York: Routledge, 2005), 1–29; Jane Rendell, Barbara Penner, Iain Borden (eds.), *Gender, Space, Architecture. An interdisciplinary introduction* (London/New York: Routledge, 2000).

modernist designs. For one, this became obvious through the group who stayed in the village during the day: women. In 1976, the documentary's maker Van Gasteren wondered about the 90-degree grid of streets lining rectangular green lawns when he saw a mother simply traversing the lawn between straight streets as she pleased while pushing a pram, leaving a trail behind her that would soon become a footpath in the grass: 'It makes you think: why aren't there, when such projects are being built, any lanes and roads made that really suit the people, who are coming to live there?'<sup>16</sup> Figure 12 shows this shot to the left as opposed to a shot of one of the planned streets to the right.

Such an observation debunks the spatial design concepts of Mien Ruys and architect J.T.P. Bijhouwer, who also contributed to Nagele. Writing shortly after completion of the Nagele green plan in a book called *Leven met groen in landschap, stad en tuin* (1960), they scaled the Dutch attitude toward nature and green in landscape, city, park, and private garden, arguing that the Dutch preferred 'order' and 'clarity' in their gardens above meandering lines:

And in the bigger park we rightly do not tolerate confusedness; there we demand clarity, with far sightlines, which definitely cannot be obstructed by all kinds of 'junk'. [...] This all means that in the Netherlands, where types of vegetation that

<sup>16</sup> Quote in Dutch in Bert Hogenkamp, *De Documentaire Film 1945–1965. De bloei van een filmgenre in Nederland* (Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010, 2003), quote on 237, in Dutch: 'Dan ga je denken: waarom worden er, als zoiets gebouwd wordt, geen wegen gemaakt die echt bij de mensen horen, die daar komen te wonen?'

are not regulated by humans are rare, and becoming still rarer, the concepts of 'naturalness' of vegetation are not derived from nature but that we continuously, often unconsciously, are actively seeking the reasonableness of the self-created in naturalness.<sup>17</sup>

This mode of planning was, however, just as time specific as it was supposed to underline a Dutch identity, and became challenged in the early 1970s by the 'wild garden', less orderly parks and even semi-wild areas featuring Scottish highlanders in Dutch landscapes in the early 1980s.<sup>18</sup>

With regard to the pioneers who first came to live in one of Nagele's one-family houses, the documentary emphasises the advantages of the new houses and the new life by showing a woman as a housewife turning a kitchen tap and opening windows, reacting enthusiastically to streaming clean water and fresh air coming in. These were luxuries unknown in the old houses that they came from, even though their new houses did not have showers. For some,

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<sup>17</sup> J.T.P. Bijhouwer, Mien Ruys, *Leven met groen in landschap, stad en tuin* (Amsterdam: Moussault, 1960). The title translates as *Living with green in landscape, city and garden*, green in Dutch indicating plants and bushes as well as their colour. Mien Ruys wrote the section on 'The green in the residential area', 32–40. This quotation on 10 and 11 in Dutch: 'En in het grotere park verdragen wij de verwardheid eerst recht niet, daar eisen wij klaarheid, met verre doorzichten, die zeker niet door allerlei 'rommel' mogen worden toegenepen. [...] Dat alles betekent, dat in Nederland, waar niet door de mens geordende begroeiingen zeldzaam zijn, en nog steeds zeldzamer worden, de denkbeelden over 'natuurlijkheid' van begroeiing niet aan de natuur zijn ontleend maar dat wij voortdurend, onbewust vaak, bezig zijn er de redelijkheid van het zelf-geschapene in te zoeken'.

<sup>18</sup> Also Den Dulk, *Zoeken naar de heldere lijn*, 218–9.

however, the model architecture did not compensate for the feeling of being lost in a vast land with a sometimes hard climate; they left. These circumstances are also indicated in the film. In a way this was confirmed at our MoMoWo conference in Ljubljana in October 2016 by some participants from Middle and Eastern Europe who said that planned villages such as Nagele in remote areas failed for women, who became isolated and unhappy housewives. For other inhabitants of Nagele, however, things did work out. They socialised effectively and together built community life. While the modernist planning was not always practical, it did make inhabitants proud of their modernist village experiment.

*1980s to 2010s: continuation and re-evaluation?*

In 1985, '25-year-old' Nagele featured in a photo exhibition about life in post-war areas organised by the national Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Trees and greenery had grown and the planned environment of the village architecture seemed to have succeeded, although the community was found to be conservative and time seemed to have stood still. Photographers Theo Baart and Cary Markerink revisited it in 2005 to 2006 to record what had changed after they had documented the village in 1988 in their book *Nagele N.O.P.* They noticed how public space seemed to have been untouched by any intervention during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Nonetheless, houses had become too small, some were uninhabited, people had left. As in 1960, home interiors were furnished in traditional styles, making them 'curses' to puritan modernist architecture.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Theo Baart, Cary Markerink, *Warna Oosterbaan, Nagele [revisited]. Een modernistisch dorp in de polder* (Rotterdam: NAI Uitgevers, 2006), photographs between 1986 and 1988 on 68, 76–8; revisited in 2005–6 on 90, 106–7.



Theo Baart also realised that the photographs he took in 1988 had hardly focused on the group of pioneering women who helped on the farms and socialised village life by actively being involved in schools, clubs, and societies. Fourth and final, then, a gender bias in documentary photography was recognised and corrected in 2005 to 2006 by a new photograph section in the book *Nagele [revisited]. Een modernistisch dorp in de polder* (Nagele [revisited]. A modernist village in the polder).<sup>20</sup> In this photo book it was concluded that the village had become more open and outward looking. While increased motor mobility had stimulated inhabitants to buy their daily foods in widely assorted supermarkets a bit farther away and forced village shops to close down, relatively cheap rents had attracted newcomers, some from nationalities other than Dutch. Although a place may be admired for its static architectural design, its dynamics are made visible through such recordings; what at first sight seems dull and unchanged proves to be the development and ongoing growth of a community aware of its special situation and proud of its surroundings. It also proved to confirm gender roles, and only in 2005 was a modest gender correction made in new photo documentary, specifically by including two recent portraits of older women and two of younger women.

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<sup>20</sup> Baart, Markerink, Oosterbaan, *Nagele [revisited]*, 2-7, photographs from family albums depicting women between 1943 and 1963 on 20-1, 26-7, 30-1, 37; 1986-8 on 63, 70; revisited in 2005-6 on 91 and the recent portraits of women on 124-5.

## **II POLITICS, POLICIES AND POLITICAL REGIMES**

## Position of Women Architects in Socialist Countries of Eastern Europe

### Women's Contribution to the Architectural History of Rijeka during the 1950s and 1960s

Lidija Butković Mićin

Following the trail of women architects<sup>1</sup> in Croatia: research problem

As is the case in many other countries, researching the role of women in the history of Croatian architecture still represents a pioneer undertaking, one of taking the road less travelled, so to speak. For the researcher, this seems to entail a laborious 'filling of blanks', sifting through primary sources to map out the activities of the forgotten or neglected women protagonists in order to learn and understand their individual biographies and oeuvres, so as to enable the objective assessment of their achievements and their full (re)integration into the national architectural history. Applying this approach to the case study of Rijeka in the 1950s and 1960s, I hoped to find answers to questions such as the following: Were there any notable women architects?

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<sup>1</sup> The title is referencing a book by Sena Sekulić-Gvozdanić *Žena u arhitekturi: tragom žene kreatora i žene teoretičara u povijesti arhitekture* [Woman in Architecture: Following the Trail of Woman Creator and Woman Theoretician in the History of Architecture] (Zagreb: Croatian Architects' Association, 1998), a comprehensive historical study that first introduced this topic into the Croatian scientific circles. Sekulić-Gvozdanić (1916–2002) was a renowned Croatian architectural historian, the first woman to be appointed assistant at the Architecture Department of the Technical Faculty of the University of Zagreb (1948). She was subsequently appointed associate professor (1962), full professor (1975), dean (1979–82) and, after her retirement in 1986, professor emeritus at the same institution.

What were their chances of professional affirmation? How were they regarded by their male colleagues? Were they encouraged to pursue their own ideas?

A comprehensive research of the documentation (mainly building permits and other public records)<sup>2</sup> preserved at the State Archives in Rijeka,, as well as the perusal of local newspapers (*Riječki list*, *Novi list*), gradually uncovered the activities of about ten women architects and urban planners that helped shape the new urban physiognomy of Rijeka between 1950 and 1970. In the social climate that supported talented architects, what with the shortage of educated professionals in immediate post-war times and the complexity and scope of the rebuilding tasks, women architects found the opportunity to establish themselves among their male peers. They designed apartment blocks, mass housing

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<sup>2</sup> The documentation kept at the State Archives in Rijeka (*Državni arhiv u Rijeci*, HR-DARI) dating from the period between 1945 and 1970 is relatively well preserved and open to the public, although none of it is digitalised and only basic search tools are available (index lists). It contains only the public records of various branches of communal government, including location and building permits with attached copies of project blueprints. Unfortunately, most of the architecture bureaus and building companies active in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) were liquidated or privatised after 1990 and their documentation was not handed over to the State Archives, which represents a serious obstacle for researching Croatia's architectural production after World War II (WWII).

projects, schools, hotels, department stores, buildings for fine art galleries and workers' education – some unfortunately unrealised – and accepted managerial positions in architecture and urban planning offices. All graduates from the Architecture Department of the Zagreb Technical Faculty<sup>3</sup>, they represented a novelty in the local milieu, as real trailblazers in their line of work.<sup>4</sup> Judging by their reception in the media and, more importantly, the quantity and quality of the realised projects, the cases of Ada Felice-Rošić and Nada Šilović clearly stand

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<sup>3</sup> Up until the end of WWI, Croatian architects gained their university diplomas abroad, mainly in the leading centres of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (universities in Vienna, Budapest and Prague). Since the founding of the Architecture Department of the University of Zagreb's Technical Faculty in 1919, prospective architects, including female ones, could study in their homeland. Out of 1250 graduates between 1945–62 (when the Faculty of Architecture was established), 317 were women. The architects relevant to Rijeka's history graduated as followed: Nada Šilović, Nada Uhlík and Sonja Zdunić in 1948, Ada Felice in 1949, Tatjana Lučić in 1952 and Milena Frančić in 1955., Mladen Obad Šćitaroci (ed.), *Sveučilište u Zagrebu – Arhitektonski fakultet, 1919./1920.-1999./2000. Osamdeset godina izobrazbe arhitekata u Hrvatskoj* (Zagreb: Faculty of Architecture, Zagreb, 2000), 313–5.

<sup>4</sup> Before WWII, there was only one registered case in Rijeka of a building project done by a female architect: the train station in Sušak by Leposava Dinić, dating from 1938/39. Dinić wasn't a resident of Rijeka, but was completing the commission as an employee of the Ministry of Building in Belgrade. The project underwent much scrutiny by the local architectural community and press due to the perceived lack of transparency of the decision-making process, as well as the outdated, Neo-Historical look of the finished structure. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the public debate and negative criticism were never aimed at the author's gender, i.e. the project was not targeted and/or discredited because it was thought out by a woman; in fact, that aspect wasn't even discussed. The case is well-researched and published: Julija Lozzi-Barković, *Moderna arhitektura Rijeke i Sušaka* (Rijeka: Adamić, 2015), 23, 38, 414–21.

out as the most telling and valuable women's contributions to the architectural history of Rijeka in the first post-World War II decades. Their local oeuvres were presented at the exhibition in the Municipal Museum of Rijeka in 2013/14 and in the accompanying book<sup>5</sup> that delved into the achievements of other female protagonists working in Rijeka in the 1950s and 1960s.

Social housing: an opportunity for professional affirmation

The Allied bombardments of Rijeka demolished a relatively small part of the town's housing capacities, mainly the already dilapidated structures of the Old Town and several housing blocks in the city centre's nineteenth- and twentieth-century extensions. However, the strain on the housing infrastructure was a constant characteristic of the following decades, due to Rijeka's intense expansion of industrial and harbour facilities that made it a very desirable destination for migrating workers from all over Yugoslavia. Thus, Rijeka's population increased from around 68,000 inhabitants in 1948 to almost 130,000 in 1971. The demographic growth was compensated for with an infusion of investments in socially funded housing, which had, before the establishment of the first complex residential neighbourhoods in the late 1950s, mainly entailed the insertion of multi-storied apartment blocks and clusters of free-standing housing towers into the already defined urban tissue of pre-war Rijeka, or the building of housing rows along the newly constructed thoroughfares at the outskirts of the existing city limits (Marksa i Engelsa Boulevard on the west and Janka Polića Kamova Street on the east). These housing projects adhered to the aspirations of

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<sup>5</sup> Lidija Butković Mićin, *Ada Felice-Rošić i Nada Šilović – ženski trag u arhitekturi Rijeke* (Rijeka: Municipal Museum of Rijeka, 2013)

inter-war Modernism with their focus on achieving comfortable, functional and contemporary living accommodations, providing all the amenities, such as built-in closets and rational kitchens, in the indoor design, as well as, whenever possible, enough outdoor space by including loggias, balconies and shared roof terraces. Šilović and Felice-Rošić's residential buildings are among the most notable examples, matched only by a few other locally active architects, such as Kazimir Ostrogović and Ninoslav Kučan. The interpolation at the intersection of Račićeva and Omladinska streets by Šilović (1954–6)<sup>6</sup> introduced a creative shift in the conceptualization of a standard city block by lifting the central three-storied volume onto pillars, therefore allowing for natural ventilation of the inner courtyard. Her distinct housing solitaires along Marksa i Engelsa Boulevard<sup>7</sup> (1954–7, today Liburnijska and Zvonimirova streets) fully exploited the sea views and southern exposure, while simultaneously providing adequate protection through insulation and the extension of usable space. At the time, the two-bedroom apartments with good-sized kitchens and dining areas, as well as living rooms bathed in light, were publicized as a model for affordable middle-class flats.<sup>8</sup> Nada Šilović was not only keenly interested in up-to-date tendencies in modern housing, but always took into account the micro-urbanistic setting of her buildings and how they could humanise their surroundings. For

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<sup>6</sup> Građevinski arhiv Skupštine općina Rijeka 1945.-1990. (JU-169), Folder 389, 857, 938, 1140, 2176, State Archives in Rijeka (HR-DARI), Lidija Butković Mićin, *Ada Felice-Rošić i Nada Šilović*, 38–41.

<sup>7</sup> HR-DARI, JU-169, Folder 31, 491, 1035, 1055, 1303, 1585, 1916, HR-DARI, Narodni odbor općine Zamet 1955.-1962. (JU-112), Box 108, Lidija Butković Mićin, *Ada Felice-Rošić i Nada Šilović*, 30–7.

<sup>8</sup> B. D., "Novi moderni stanovi," *Novi list*, July 31, 1955, Culture section

instance, in another three-storied housing slab in Janka Polića Kamova Street<sup>9</sup> (1954–6), Šilović allowed space for a small garden along the front façade, adding to the already dominant "green feel" of this desirable new residential community. She also collaborated with Rijeka's prominent painter Vladimir Udatny on the façade's colour scheme, adding her own contribution to the "hot topic" of the 1950s, i.e. the unity of visual arts and architecture. These quite delicate and unobtrusive, but intriguing examples of attention to the built environment confirmed Šilović's wide range of interests, which she will continue to nurture after leaving Rijeka for Šibenik in 1957, and then for Zagreb, where she would gain permanent employment in the city's departments for urban planning. Ada Felice-Rošić, Šilović's co-worker at the Construction and Planning Institute (*Građevno-projektni zavod* [GPZ]) during her eight-year stay in Rijeka (1948–56) and personal friend, exhibited the same willingness to pursue recent trends in housing architecture. Her two projects in Janka Polića Kamova Street<sup>10</sup> granted Rijeka some of the most individually articulated 1950s façades: from the carefully balanced orthogonal network of windows and loggias crowned by a pergola on the three-storied building adjacent to Šilović's previous one (1953) to the polychromatic experiment on the opposite side of the street (1955–7), where the horizontal parapets of deep red are flanked by light green wings, and on the southern façade, delicately perforated

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<sup>9</sup> HR-DARI, JU-169, Folder 11, 383, 1119, 1715, 2088, Lidija Butković Mićin, *Ada Felice-Rošić i Nada Šilović*, 20–9.

<sup>10</sup> HR-DARI, Narodni odbor općine Sušak 1955.-1962. (JU-111), Box 235, "Zgrade po nacrtima žena-arhitekata," *Riječki list*, August 28, 1953, Local news section, Lidija Butković Mićin, *Ada Felice-Rošić i Nada Šilović*, 20–9.

concrete *brise soleils* shadow the deep loggias.

The images of residential buildings by Nada Šilović and Ada Felice-Rošić were reproduced countless times in the local press, more than other local examples, and their authors were interviewed on several occasions. The newspaper articles, however, reveal certain, probably unintentional, gender preconceptions about women working in the field of architecture. Although the media coverage was overwhelmingly supportive, it implied that it was only natural for a woman architect to be so effective in housing design, given her own experience and natural predilection for domestic affairs. In the case of the apartment building commissioned by the paper factory in Strossmayerova Street<sup>11</sup> (1954), a joint work by Šilović and Felice, the journalist stated the following: 'Everything about the interior design of this property was thought out, and the architects, themselves young women, always kept in mind the needs of the contemporary woman, who is a worker, a mother, and a homemaker'.<sup>12</sup> This building in particular served to educate the readers on contemporary living in modernly furnished flats: the architects considered the woman's role in the household by trying to ease the burden and isolating feel of domestic chores. The efficient organization of the kitchen space reduced the time and manual effort needed for preparing meals and taking out the trash (there were vertical garbage tunnels attached to the building, at that time still an unusual feature in housing architecture), while the spatial interconnection of the kitchen and the living room helped improve

<sup>11</sup> HR-DARI, JU-169, Folder 50, 534, Lidija Butković Mićin, *Ada Felice-Rošić i Nada Šilović*, 14–9.

<sup>12</sup> T. F., "Kuća kod Piramide," *Novi list*, May 23, 1954, Local news section

communication between family members. **(Fig. 3)** Ada Felice-Rošić was especially interested in the topic of housing design and also possessed a very pronounced sense of moral obligation as an architect to engage more publicly and selflessly in women's social issues. She became a member of the Progressive Woman Society, founded in 1954 as the first women-only organization in the Rijeka region, with the aim of helping women take full advantage of their civil, workers' and domestic rights. Alongside another architect, Alisa Lovrić-Ilijašić, Ada Felice volunteered at the Society's Council by giving free advice on modern home design, offering practical solutions for clients and drawing blueprints for simple cabinets and kitchen furnishings that would fit in most modern flats and that any carpenter could make.<sup>13</sup> In 1959, she also took on the adaptation of a former dry-cleaning business venue in Križanićeva Street into the headquarters of the regional branch of the Institute for Home Improvement, that housed a room for lectures, exhibitions and practical lessons in modern cooking and use of kitchen equipment, similar to the ones set up in Zagreb and other major towns in Yugoslavia.<sup>14</sup> Ada Felice's penchant for ethical involvement came to the forefront in another housing project: an apartment block for the Association of the Visually Impaired (1956–61)<sup>15</sup>, a project that included specially furnished homes and common rooms for the tenants, presenting her, from the architectural standpoint, with the opportunity to work in the historical setting of Rijeka's Old

<sup>13</sup> B. D., "Dva nova savjetovališta," *Novi list*, September 20, 1957, Culture section

<sup>14</sup> HR-DARI, JU-111, Box 124, R. N., "U Rijeci su otvorene prostorije Centra za unapredjenje domaćinstva," *Novi list*, July 24, 1957, Front page

<sup>15</sup> HR-DARI, JU-169, Folder 855, 995, 1523, Lidija Butković Mićin, *Ada Felice-Rošić i Nada Šilović*, 52–5.

Town, where combining traditional and modern features was a welcoming challenge. It is worth mentioning that Ada Felice was one of only a handful of architects who would be given a chance to build interpolations into the city's historical core during this period, due to the sensibility, knowledge, skill and patience that this type of assignment required.

Another opportunity to discuss the role of women in housing architecture came up during an open competition for individual family home units organized by the Rijeka City Council in 1955. Nada Uhlik triumphed in all categories, winning a total of six prizes in a contest with 50 other participants. On that occasion, she gave a short interview for *Novi list*, mentioning that her own experience as a homemaker had helped her understand the functionality of living space, therefore inadvertently affirming the already widespread 'positive prejudice' that housing architecture is the natural domain of female architects.<sup>16</sup> This will be the only public competition she entered into independently during the ten years she spent in Rijeka (1948–58) working alongside her much more prolific and ambitious husband Josip Uhlik in the Central Planning Bureau (*Centralni biro za projektiranje*, later reorganized and renamed *Rijeka-projekt*). Employed in a bureau that had, until the mid-1950s, specialized mostly in building projects for industrial complexes and infrastructure (port facilities, bridges), the couple, as Nada Uhlik put it in another interview, 'feared that accepting a position away from the main centres would impair their chances for professional growth, but the experience was a completely opposite one – here they were given important project

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<sup>16</sup> R. N., "Razgovor s dobitnicom šest nagrada," *Novi list*, June 28, 1955, Culture section

tasks as young, untried architects'.<sup>17</sup> What their bureau couldn't provide in terms of the diversity of project tasks, they sought through open competitions, regularly achieving peer recognition, for example, for the apartment block for the *Vulkan* factory in XIII. divizije Promenade in 1952. Although it was a joint project, the final design was signed only by Josip Uhlik and seamlessly merged with the adjacent inter-war modernist housing blocks. Their other successes at competitions in Rijeka included the first prize for the preliminary sketch of the open and closed swimming pools in Pećine (1950, unrealised) and the second prize for the design of the department store in Brajdica (1956).<sup>18</sup> As for realised works by Nada Uhlik, it is still uncertain whether her blueprints for family home types were distributed to interested citizens, as was originally planned<sup>19</sup>, and even their layouts have not yet resurfaced in Rijeka's State Archives. As was the case with Nada Šilović, Nada Uhlik continued her career in Zagreb, finding employment at the City Department for Housing Planning.

The late 1950s brought significant change in housing policies, advocating stricter rules and norms for socially funded housing enterprises that now strived more towards cheaper, uniform, standardized building practices. Ada Felice-Rošić, having transferred from the GPZ to the project bureau of the Primorje construction company in 1958, had a major role in introducing large-scale housing developments in Rijeka by participating in the first open competition for the layout

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<sup>17</sup> "Posjetili smo Josipa Uhlika," *Riječki list*, July 25, 1953, Culture section

<sup>18</sup> Vicko Lucić, "Narodna vlast rješava važno pitanje unapredjenja plivačkog sporta u Rijeci," *Riječki list*, March 26, 1950, Sports section, Zdenko Kolacio, "Prilog uređivanju budućeg trgovačkog centra," *Novi list*, May 12, 1956, Culture section

<sup>19</sup> "Dobre i jeftine kućice," *Novi list*, August 9, 1955, Local news section

of the new housing estate in Turnić and its rational housing types (1958).<sup>20</sup> The prefabricated, mass-produced apartment buildings that were successively built in the southern part of Turnić reflected the then predominant principle of valuing economic calculations above the comfort of the tenants. However, the initial experiments were soon dropped in favour of more accommodating solutions, such as the rows of aesthetically unpretentious, but quite decent five-storied structures and 12-storied towers in northern Turnić.<sup>21</sup> With the latter, Felice got the chance to try out the design of the high-rise apartment building for the first time, here still holding on to the square shape with a centrally placed communication core (elevators and staircases) surrounded by flats. A few years later, her designs got bolder, keeping pace with *Primorje's* substantial investments in building mechanisation. The series of four 12-storied towers in Kozala<sup>22</sup> (1971–3) stands out because of their X-shaped, indented forms which enabled the architect to create more intimate dwellings with cross-ventilation and plenty of sunshine. Perched on top of the Goljak hill overlooking the canyon of Rječina, they are Felice's last contribution to Rijeka's housing architecture, and still a marked reminder of the bold and optimistic spirit of the 1970s.

Building the city: education, culture, community life

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<sup>20</sup> I. Sabol, "Za milijun dinara jeftiniji stan," *Novi list*, February 4, 1959, Local news section, "Uz natječaj za predio 'Turnić' Rijeka," *Čovjek i prostor* 88–89 (1959), 6., Vana Gović, *Andrija Čičin-Šain* (Rijeka: Municipal Museum of Rijeka, 2010), 19–20.

<sup>21</sup> HR-DARI, JU-169, Folder 900, 2136, Lidija Butković Mićin, *Ada Felice-Rošić i Nada Šilović*, 60–7.

<sup>22</sup> HR-DARI, JU-169, Folder 518, 621, 622, 628, 645, 781, 810, Lidija Butković Mićin, *Ada Felice-Rošić i Nada Šilović*, 84–91.

Apart from housing projects, women architects were given other sorts of opportunities to showcase their skills. As Rijeka was becoming the main metropolitan centre of the westernmost region of Croatia and the host to many new institutions and functions, there was a pronounced need for new spaces for administration, education, culture and leisure services. The first reaction was, naturally, to make use of the existing buildings through necessary alterations. One of the first and most encompassing initiatives of this kind was that of restoring an impressive late-nineteenth-century Neo-Renaissance edifice in Dolac Street, severely damaged in the war. Nada Šilović took on the assignment of turning this former Italian school for girls into a multifunctional cultural hub, the new seat of the Modern Gallery and the University Library. She coordinated with many experts, first on the methods of renovating and consolidating the building and then on the functional aspects of the interior design. For instance, the Gallery's new office furniture was designed by Sonja Zdunić, another architect working at the GPZ, while the furniture and the complex system of storage and pulleys for the Library was drawn by the architect Klement Miculinić. Nada Šilović herself focused on the features of the Gallery's main exhibition hall: the disposition of rooms, light fixtures and exhibition panels, although some of her ideas remained on paper.<sup>23</sup> The new House of Culture was officially opened in 1956, after two years of intense construction, welcoming its visitors to a fully restored entry hall with new wall decorations by Vladimir Udatny and prestigious exhibitions of contemporary Yugoslav fine arts. The building has retained much of its 1950s renovations to the present day and

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<sup>23</sup> HR-DARI, JU-169, Folder 77, Lidija Butković Mićin, *Ada Felice-Rošić i Nada Šilović*, 42–7.



still houses the same institutions, despite the many promises of more adequate solutions having been made over the decades.

With the strengthening of the public sector came a much-needed financial boost for erecting new schools and other educational facilities. During the 1950s and early 1960s, the municipality of Rijeka invested in additions and adaptations of many existing school buildings and financed the erection of five new primary schools, while the regional branch of the Chamber of Commerce accepted the responsibility for accommodating the growing student population of the High School for Commerce. The project for the new school building was entrusted to Ada Felice-Rošić, who made the most out of a very unfortunate location provided by the city authorities (Vončina Street, 1962–5). On an unwelcoming, sloping terrain, she placed two superimposed horizontal volumes, the lower enveloping a spacious vestibule and the upper three-storied one holding classrooms and faculty offices. The resulting disposition made the building appear more monumental and imposing than it actually was. It's a shame that some of the proposed finishing details weren't executed, such as bright yellow shutters and blue curtains on windows. When in use, they would have created a kinetic, ever-changing appearance of the building's outer shell, a very *Zeitgeist* idea of the 1960s successfully explored by Felice's peers, for example Ivan Vitić on his famous Laginjina Street housing block in Zagreb (1958–62).<sup>24</sup>

It would seem that the growing economic prosperity of the late 1950s and 1960s didn't automatically imply a generous budget for education and culture. Another very important project was not only left unfinished, but never really got off the

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<sup>24</sup> Lidija Butković Mićin, *Ada Felice-Rošić i Nada Šilović*, 68–73.

ground. It was the case of the ambitious Workers' University, envisioned around 1960 for the North Delta — an underused, but potentially very valuable plot of land situated at the very heart of the city, between the Mrtvi kanal and Rječina waterways, at the time under concession to import-export companies working out of the Rijeka Harbour. From the first post-WWII general urban plans onward, the Delta was singled out as the most suitable area for situating new culture, leisure, sporting and administrative facilities befitting a metropolitan centre like Rijeka. The Workers' University, with its library open to the public, a large cinema and lecture, concert and exhibition halls, would have provided an all-in-one solution to the deficiency in available space for cultural activities, as well as housed supplementary education programs for workers and headquarters of political organizations.<sup>25</sup> This mixed-purpose facility would have encompassed more than 6000 m<sup>2</sup> of usable space in a six-sided, distinctly articulated structure with a flexible ground plan. The Workers' University concept design was a collaboration of three architects: Milena Frančić-Sulovsky, Tatjana (Tanja) Lučić and Ladislav Sulovsky, Milena's husband.<sup>26</sup> Tanja Lučić most likely oversaw the project, while the latter two had a decisive creative role in the process. Milena Frančić was already known to be a promising young architect, having been awarded the second prize at the competition for the Health Centre in Virovitica in 1956, right after graduation, and her husband also enjoyed some success after pairing up with Rijeka's well-known architect Dušan

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<sup>25</sup> S. Škrbec, "Na Delti će se graditi nova zgrada Radničkog sveučilišta," *Novi list*, December 28, 1958, Local news section, S. Škrbec, "Dom Radničkog sveučilišta," *Novi list*, May 13, 1959, Culture section

<sup>26</sup> HR-DARI, JU-111, Box 168

Marčeta on his competition projects. Tanja Lučić's talents, on the other hand, leaned more towards management and organization, so she soon steered her career away from practising architecture. Some of her projects can be traced in the archival documentation, such as the adaptation of Rijeka's main market-place pavilion, a few housing developments, the office complex in Brajdica, the enlargement of the primary school in Pećine, along with her most notable realization: the new Employment Office in Oslobođenja Boulevard, Sušak (1962).<sup>27</sup> Her most interesting concept was, perhaps, the proposal for improving the communal standard of the local beaches commissioned by the district of Sušak in 1957.<sup>28</sup> Lučić's plan was to erect uniform changing stalls made from low-cost materials, such as coloured linen and metal bars required to stretch them into triangular and rectangular shapes. The stalls could be quickly assembled and disassembled each day by hired personnel and also stored at the end of the bathing season. The first batch was tried out in Grčevo, Sabličevo, Martinšćica and Žurkovo, but the implementation was met with too many practical problems and some very unconscientious citizens, so the idea was finally dropped.<sup>29</sup>

Commercial enterprises: tourism, business, shopping

As previously mentioned, Tanja Lučić showed more zeal and skill for project leadership than architectural design, so in 1958, she ran for and was offered a directorial position in Rijeka at the GPZ, one of the most prolific architectural firms in the region. Under her leadership (1958–

72), the GPZ executed many outstanding projects<sup>30</sup>, including the extension of the Bonavia hotel, the most substantial investment in tourist accommodation in Rijeka after WWII. Tanja Lučić teamed up again with Milena Frančić-Sulovsky and Vlado Sulovsky on the design and construction of an annex to the Bonavia hotel in downtown Rijeka (1959–65)<sup>31</sup>, this time acting as co-author and project manager. The old nineteenth-century nucleus of the hotel was already expanded in the 1930s, so many of the original decorative features were lost, replaced by a more modern, smooth façade perforated by an uneven rhythm of windows. After its nationalization in the late 1940s, the Bonavia was considered the best city hotel, although undercapacitated for Rijeka's new business, transit and commercial relevance in socialist Yugoslavia.<sup>32</sup> After the prospect of a grandiose hotel at the city's waterfront fell through (and it's interesting to note that the concept design was prepared by Nada Šilović in 1949), the Executive Council of Croatia allocated the funds for the extension of the Bonavia in 1959. The plot between the original structure and the public stairway leading to the Governor's Palace was cleared of the remains of a dilapidated building to accommodate the new, seven-storied annex. The authors insisted on a very clean, almost 'box-like' look that was in contrast with the predominantly nineteenth-century context of Dolac Street, but fitted well with the desired image of a modern establishment for the business clientele. The horizontal stripes of windows crossed by shallow vertical lines epitomized the early 1960s

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<sup>27</sup> HR-DARI, JU-111, Box 196

<sup>28</sup> HR-DARI, JU-111, Box 111

<sup>29</sup> N. V., "Dovršava se uređenje obala duž Pećina," *Novi list*, July 20, 1957, Local news section, N. V., "Još nije sve uređeno," *Novi list*, July 2, 1958, Local news section

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<sup>30</sup> "Post festum srebrnom jubileju GPZ Rijeka," *Čovjek i prostor* 248 (1973), 12–3.

<sup>31</sup> HR-DARI, JU-169, Folder 742, 824

<sup>32</sup> Igor Žic, *Riječka gostoljubivost* (Rijeka: Adamić, 2000), 131–2, 144–7.

enthusiasm for geometry, repetition and precision of form. The extension comprised the ground-floor restaurant, fully air-conditioned, other joint recreational spaces on the upper floors and about 300 beds.<sup>33</sup> The Bonavia hotel was completely remodelled and refurbished in 2000 by another woman architect, Jasenka Rechner, after being sold to an international investor.

The representative Bonavia hotel completed in 1965 symbolically marked Rijeka's turn towards catering to big businesses: financial institutions and service industries that could invest in impressive office and commercial spaces in the city centre. The new enterprises were to liven up the neglected Old Town and Korzo Street and bring a much-needed infusion of capital, though sometimes at the expense of conserving the historical authenticity and ambient. The revitalization of Rijeka's city centre took off in earnest by the late 1960s with three neighbouring building sites for department stores. Their projects were entrusted only to the most accomplished local architects that could be counted on to deliver solid architectural designs paired with the most advanced technological solutions. Ninoslav Kučan secured his commission through an open competition (for the Ri department store), Igor Emili was the logical choice for the Varteks store in Kobler Square, given his previous experience with historical structures in the Old Town, while Ada Felice-Rošić worked on the Korzo department store (1968–73), arguably the most complex of the three. Its complexity lay in the creative problem of connecting

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<sup>33</sup> "Donesen projekt za dogradnju i modernizaciju 'Bonavije'," *Novi list*, April 5, 1959, Local news section, "Prošireni hotel 'Bonavia' imat će 207 soba sa 310 kreveta," *Novi list*, October 21, 1960, Local news section, S. Kosier, "Do kraja 1965. kompletna Bonavia," *Novi list*, September 23, 1964, Local news section

several existing buildings along the northern front of Korzo Street dating from the eighteenth to the twentieth century into a unified, free-flowing space, while deciding which ones to keep almost intact and which ones to restore, alter or tear down. With the advice and supervision of the local conservation experts, the final result was a mix between the old and the new, Felice's main contribution to the Korzo side being a continuous glass wall where an inconspicuous façade of the previous structure had been. The department store also gained an extension in Kobler Square, an introverted structure constructed in reinforced steel and panelled with bihacite stone in a cannellated motif. The interior was dominated by sculpturally shaped escalators, a novelty for the era. An interesting point of the design was the inclusion of an inner street, an alternative shortcut from Korzo to Kobler Square through the department store, beneficial for the citizens and store owners. The Korzo department store was a great success when it opened its doors in 1973, as the first of the three, becoming the highlight of its author's career, although it did receive mixed reviews by some art historians who felt it overimposed on the inherited character of its historical surroundings.<sup>34</sup>

Conclusions and notes for further research  
The vast diapason of assignments that awaited architects, engineers and urban planners during the turbulent post-WWII decades in Rijeka left enough room for educated women to join in and do their part. The circumstances of dynamic rebuilding and urban expansion had the side effect of a more egalitarian attitude towards female architects, who had a greater chance to work on their own and

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<sup>34</sup> HR-DARI, JU-169, Folder 781, 792, 863, 864, 868, Lidija Butković Mićin, *Ada Felice-Rošić i Nada Šilović*, 74–83.

be accepted by their male counterparts. Their achievements were followed by local media and almost unanimously welcomed and endorsed as a sign of the overall advancement of women's equality in work, although occasionally exhibiting ingrained concepts of gender-appropriate tasks, mostly when it came to housing designs. Women formed a relatively small group within the local architectural community and the number and scope of their realised works certainly reflect that fact. The long-lasting and fruitful career of Ada Felice-Rošić was an exception rather than a rule, and some of her success must be attributed to the business prowess of *Primorje's* management, i.e. to their ability to secure prominent commissions. Her own recollection of working side by side with her male colleagues in an atmosphere of mutual respect and consideration<sup>35</sup> corroborates the notion that Rijeka showed a precocious willingness to accept women professionals in arts and architecture. Other examples point to the same conclusion: in the early 1950s, art historians Iva Perčić and Radmila Matejčić served as director of the Conservation Office and director of the Museum of the Croatian Littoral, respectively. Furthermore, architect Mira Ružić was in charge of the first Regional Urban Plan of Kvarner (1955–7), developed by the Centre for Urban Planning in Rijeka, and simultaneously worked on several proposals for the General Urban Plan of Rijeka, while her colleague at the Centre, architect Erika Roset, executed layouts for several new housing estates built in the 1960s. The role of these women, as well as of others whose names appear only once or twice in the archival sources, should be a part of further research, considering that the case

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<sup>35</sup> While conducting several interviews with Ada Felice-Rošić in 2013, I noted her explicit viewpoint on this issue.

of Rijeka, although very likely not unique in the context of the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, is a telling one. By looking closer at Rijeka's experiences, we can infer a lot about the overall representation of women architects in post-WWII Yugoslavia and see how the proclaimed support to women's economic emancipation and more prominent participation in the new socialist society was implemented in the field of architecture, as well as how that 'redistribution of power' affected future practices.

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# Role of women in architecture after WW2 in Slovenia: Olga Rusanova

Andreja Benko and Larisa Brojan

## Introduction

The role of women architects in the architectural design after WW2 was negligible. One can say that that launched as well WW2, as women started to deal with once men work and they became as good at it, but especially they were needed since WW2 demanded massive tax in human lives and as well as in ruined homes. The need for engineers who could help with the knowledge right after WW2 was in that way valid. This led to the fact that women often decided to study engineering profession although, they were mostly still reserved for male colleagues. Women position was no longer only at home, taking care of family and home.

In time, the number of women in architectural teams started to grow. Women did become part of the designing teams mostly as project co-workers, but team leaders were still mostly men. However, women in architecture were showing more precision than their male colleagues but mostly not that tough – but they became valued in the business because of their dedication and hard work. And in time they got a chance to do their own less significant projects – maybe that is why women mostly did focus on the field of interior design. Projects were mostly less significant but they were visible and people noticed them.

However, the position of women in Slovenia (former Yugoslavia) did not defer from the position of women around Europe or even in the world. But there were exceptions (for example Zaha Hadid,

Marion Mahony Griffin, Bea Betz, Denisse Scott Brown, Ann Tyng ...) who stood next to male colleague and pave the way to younger generations of female architects. In this paper we discuss the work of the Slovene architect, Olga Rusanova, whose position in society we compare to position of female architects in Europe.

## Early life

Olga Rusanova was born on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1927 in Murska Sobota (Prekmurje) to a Russian immigrant Igor Rusanov and a Slovene mother in Murska Sobota as only child. Her father was employed in the meat factory and her mother was working as a teacher in primary school. Olga finished primary school and secondary school (gymnasium) in Murska Sobota, which she graduated from in 1945. In the school year 1945/46 she became a student of “Department of architecture” at “Technical Faculty of University of Ljubljana”. In October 1954, right after obtaining her diploma in August, she became a teaching assistant of Prof. Edo Mihevc at the same department.

## Research work and work on faculty of architecture

In 1957/58 she was hearing lectures and researching study cases at the Ecolé de Beaux Arts with a scholarship at University of Nancy (France). Interior and industrial design was the main focus of her academic researches and architectural

practice.

In January 1961 Olga Rusanova became lecturer of courses named "Furniture and Equipment". She focused on working with students, lecturing the importance of theory and practice to successfully deliver an architectural idea and its execution. She was introducing students to architects, civil engineers and other members of building industry. In 1966 she went on exchange with the help of an international foundation to visit Switzerland and to conduct her knowledge on hotel business and design. There she was able to get in touch with hotel design experts. In year 1969 she was elected as Assistant Professor for the course "Furniture and equipment" and in the year 1974 she was promoted to Associate Professor for the same course at University of Ljubljana.

In the winter semester of 1967/68 she was guest student of Dutch government at the Faculty of architecture in København (Akademi for skønne Kunster) at the department for interior design and the department for residential and non-residential buildings. In 1968 the Swedish Committee for on International Health Relations enable her to visit and study facilities for the mentally and physically disabled young people in Stockholm, Upsally and Malmö. The knowledge got there, she started using in her own practice.

Rusanova set a milestone to Slovene academic field of architecture by becoming first a lecturer and later a head of the Department of Architecture of Faculty of Civil and Geodetic Engineering in 1969 and until 1971. Noteworthy is information that for several years Rusanova was the only female lecturer of the department in comparison to the year 2016, where there are 18 female assistants or associate professor at the

Faculty of Architecture. The number of them is still not equal to male colleagues (38).

Along her academic career Rusanova published several scientific and professional papers. In her papers she focused on the process of interior design and furniture. The same topic was discussed in few handbooks she wrote.

In her academic career as lecturer, she was also mentor to several diplomas at Faculty of Architecture, University of Ljubljana, mainly concerning interior and furniture design.

In 1990 she retired from the work at Faculty of architecture.

### **Her architectural practice**

During her professional career Olga Rusanova was mostly focusing on the interior design and designing/creation of interior space. She was monitoring the whole production process of her designs with various wood furniture factories. Part of her project which cannot be overlooked are interior designs of children's facilities and in facilities for disabled people. She had a special attitude for such a projects.

As it was outlined in previous paragraphs, Olga Rusanova took various study trips to foreign countries to learn and study from the best and she was implementing new knowledge to her architectural practice. In the next paragraphs some of her most important works are outlined. Her projects can be divided into three periods:

1. Work in France during her exchange (between years 1957 and 1958),
2. work with professor Mihevc (between years 1952 and 1971),
3. her late work.

During the first period she was an exchange student of French University

(1957-58), meanwhile she was also working in the design studio of architects Prouvé and Louis. She collaborated on projects such as:

- Project of holiday houses in Azure Beach (architect Prouvé),
- project of skyscrapers in Nancy (architect Prouvé),
- architectural competition for children's sanatorium near Nantes (architect Louis),
- project of blood transfusion object in Nancy (architect Louis),
- project of youth home in Nancy (architect Louis).

Her second period was also the most productive period. From the second period – collaboration with Edo Mihevc, the following works can be outlined:

- the interior design of Hotel in Koper (1952),
- interior design of bar Slon and business place in Belgrade (1952)
- store Omnia in Koper (1952),
- interior design of bookstore in Trieste (1955),
- interior design of hotel in Ohrid (1957),
- plans for the Slovenian students' dormitory in Trieste (1958),
- plans for the Yugoslavian pavilion in Klagenfurt (1957),
- interior design for the Home of sailors in Piran (1958),
- execution plans and plans of interior design for the primary school in Koper (1962),
- participation and work on execution plans and the plans for the interior architecture for the "Slovenian Cultural Centre" in Trieste (1964),
- organisation of 5th congress of ZKS (Zveze komunistov Slovenije) in Ljubljana (1964)
- study of hotel furniture (1966),
- refurbishment of the hall of University of Ljubljana (1969),

- interior design of Rectors room of University of Ljubljana (1969),
- interior design of bookstore and pharmacy in Portorož (1971),
- idea design and project for building permit for primary school in Črni vrh near Idrija (1971).

Third period - period of her late work:

This period consisted of mostly her own projects – those were mostly interior designs and design of single family houses. In that period, we can expose for example a study of puzzle furniture for flats – working together with architect Kerševan and architect Mušič in 1966; plans for interior design of special teaching classes on primary schools and secondary schools – working together with architect Lapuh. In the year 1974 she as well designed the idea plan for a special school near hospital Valdoltra in Slovenia.

Based on her works in architectural practice, she was mainly dealing with a more social building and living space. Her focus was mostly on other forms of temporary or seasonal dwelling and with the educational objects, although she also designed few single family houses. In collaboration time with architects Vladimir Brezar in Janez Mušič, she was dealing also with the problematic of Yugoslavian dwelling architecture and mass production of furniture in the special elaborate for the "Boris Kidrič Foundation".

Besides her work in architectural practice she was also participating in legislation preparation since her knowledge on social building was massive. For example she was part of a collaboration process with the governmental working group for new building norms for the "students' dormitories in Slovenia" in the year 1976. Also, her participation at competitions should be mentioned. In collaboration with architect Marjan Amalietti they won the second prize for new urban arrangement of Ljubljana Castle. The third



prize was won at architectural competition for the equipment of educational institutions in 1971 launched by AS Design.

### **Slovene cultural center**

Reviewing and studying Rusanova's work it is evident that one project stands out. It is important to outline the project in collaboration with architect Edo Mihevc – the biggest project in Trieste (Italy) – “Slovene Cultural Centre”. The project is important and significant for her career not only from an architectural perspective, more over it has a massive importance for Slovenian history and its heritage. The importance of the Slovene Cultural Centre was recognized by Trieste locals and it still widely and commonly visited as a cultural gathering point of Slovenes living in Italy. None the less Slovene community in Trieste is massive. This project led to other projects in Trieste like the design of a student dormitory and also a Slovene bookstore. The project is fully described in the following words:

"The *Kulturni dom* (Cultural Centre) in Trieste, housing the Permanent Slovene Theatre (in Italian *Teatro stabile Sloveno*) represents a phenomenon among theatre buildings in the Slovene cultural space. In order to understand this one has to know the history of Slovenes in Trieste and their literally fiery theatrical history. It was built in under twenty years after World War 2, in 1964, as a reaction of the Slovene community to the burning down in 1920 of the *Narodni dom* (National Centre). The first, burned down was designed by the architect Maks Fabiani (1865-1962), was finished in 1904 and united under its roof various activities such as theatre, a printing house, two cafes and a hotel, and housed various societies and offices.

The existence of Slovenes in Trieste has throughout been linked to cultural activities and the attention given to the Slovene language. Efforts towards the building of the *Kulturni dom* began in late 1950. In February 1951 a committee was founded which began a campaign of collecting funds among Slovenes in Trieste, in Slovenia, in Yugoslavia and among Slovenes living in the USA. The first plans were created in 1951, the main plans in 1954 and the foundation stone was laid on 21 July 1957. Construction was finished just over seven years later. The building is the work of the architect Professor Edo Mihevc (1911-1985), who was born in Trieste and graduated under Jože Plečnik, and was very much in favour of modernist trends in architecture. His buildings, such as the Impex business complex (1953-57) and the business and the residential building *Kozolec* in Ljubljana (1955-57), as well as the *Kulturni dom* in Trieste (1964) show that he was well acquainted with the work of Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe. Olga Rusanova, his assistant in designing the *Kulturni dom*, says that Mihevc during the time before he drew up the plans travelled a great deal to Vienna and around Germany where he studied theatre buildings. He had his own way of tackling the tasks he was given and resolving any problems, says Rusanova, adding that he also had a very good mastery of space. Due to the small size of the plot the building is built on – 1900 square metres – he designed the theatre so that space was provided by its height, the balcony had very soft lines, whilst the ceiling in the auditorium and the foyer provided a pleasant ambience. The contact between the walls and the floor is executed in such a way that it seems as if everything is floating, which gives the impression of spaciousness and grandeur.)

## Discussion

Even today, women architects are still having difficulties to succeed in the academic field. Women are nowadays encouraged to apply for the academic positions all over Europe, doing so they get extra credit for it. As well they are well known for the work they are doing. Maybe in near future, there will be no more questions about the gender in architecture, but the most important thing will be the work and its results. That is what architecture should be about.

The role of women in architecture calls various research field to discuss the topic (historians, psychologists, sociologists, architects) which is rather complex. The reasons we forget women architects are varied. *Until recently, historians assumed that there were no female practitioners before the mid-20th century* (<https://placesjournal.org/article/unforgetting-women-architects-from-the-pritzker-to-wikipedia/>).

The discussed topic is becoming more appreciated, since also female architects are getting more common in the business all over Europe. We can find as well books about women in architecture (for example *Münchener Nachkriegs Architektinnen: Bea Betz and Edith Horny*), where we can find out what women in architecture struggled with in the years after WW2 in Germany. But outlined problems can be correlated to the problematic of women in engineering business all over the world. Women who found the passion and their life mission in designing or architecture were simultaneously forced to deal with extra pressure by confronting different obstacles leading many at the time to highlight that woman had no place in the world of architecture. The role of women in the engineer business was and still is hard. Women have to break through the idea, that they are not suitable for the

engineering business or architecture for that matter. However, nowadays we can expose few female individuals who left a mark in architecture. One of the most remarkable or the most remarkable representatives of contemporary architecture is Zaha Hadid whose work simply cannot be misslooked. *She drew divisive response and was praised for showing how female architects can be well respected and successful, but criticized for failing to achieve work/life balance.* A special milestone in architectural practice was placed by Marion Mahony Griffin. She was not only one of the first licensed female architects in the world, but was the first employee of Frank Lloyd Wright, one of the greatest architects of his time. Rackard (2013) wrote: *"Being his first employee, Mahoney exerted a considerable influence on the development of the Prairie style, while her watercolor renderings soon became synonymous with Wright's work. As was typical for Wright at the time, he credited her for neither. However, she has become known as an architect who always put people first in her work, creating beautiful architecture"*

The role of Olga Rusanova was mostly no different than the role of her women predecessors and colleagues across Europe and the world. They had the knowledge, they knew how to work and design, but they still stayed in the shadow of their male colleagues. The reason of the mentioned situation or better said, status of women in architecture, was partially clarified and discussed by Desapina Stratigakos

(<https://placesjournal.org/article/unforgetting-women-architects-from-the-pritzker-to-wikipedia/>) who wrote: *"Women have sometimes contributed to their own disappearance. Male architects do not hesitate to take an active role in preserving their legacies by writing memoirs and ensuring the safe-keeping of*

*their models, drawings and correspondence. Women — taught that self-promotion is an unattractive female trait — have made less effort to tell their stories. Among older generations, some women in partnerships have chosen to stand in the shadows in order to shine the spotlight on their husbands."*

## Conclusion

Female architects are involved in architecture and its practice for a long period of time, but not discussed often as their male colleagues. Their position of discretion is justified on various grounds. However, there are numerous individuals who demonstrate the ability to work in architecture and be successful.

One of them is Olga Rusanova who is one of the most recognizable women architects in Slovenia, who was able to fight the general belief, and make a position and a career in the area (quietly) reserved for male colleagues, and which was quite an achievement for that specific time period. Rusanova achieved to get her own course at faculty and was elected for the academic habilitation of associate Professor at Faculty of Architecture; for longer time she was the only woman in architecture holding that position. She did stand out of the shadow and worked as an independent architect collaborating with male colleagues but anyhow stayed in the shadows until present time. Her academic journey and architectural practice was full of determination, perseverance, and dedication. Olga Rusanova, who lives by the Slovene seaside, presents a path for active female architects and the one who wants to become one.

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# Exploring female contribution to Slovenian conservation in the 1950s and 1960s: Case study of Cistercian Abbey of Kostanjevica na Krki reconstruction

Barbara Vodopivec

## Introduction

Definition of female contribution to Slovenian conservation in the first two decades after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War should derive from the knowledge of conservation profession's history and should be placed in a broader context of political and social development, related especially to the gender studies issues. Gender studies as a distinctive research field in Slovenia have been addressed in the 1980s and 1990s,<sup>1</sup> whilst the historiography has not dealt with the topic till the beginning of the 21st Century.<sup>2</sup> In the period from 1945 till 1991 Slovenia was part of the Yugoslav state, what determines a specific context for the monument protection field, as well.

Position of women in Slovenia after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War has changed for the better at least in formal terms. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, adopted in 1946, laid legal foundations for equal treatment of men and women (provisions on the right to vote, the right to equal payment for equal work, access to all public services and equal treatment

in the educational system).<sup>3</sup> However, exercising of this formal equality was neither fast nor predictable or monolith process. The gap between law and practice persisted till the end of the socialist regime at least. As Mateja Jeraj put it in her study on women in socialist regime: »In the atmosphere, still quite unfavourable to women, legally guaranteed rights were not easily implemented.«<sup>4</sup> This development, along with slow male-oriented mentality shift,<sup>5</sup> indicates why in the 1950s and 1960s women's participation in education<sup>6</sup> and consequently in professions, including conservation, was rather slow despite formally given equal rights.

History of contemporary Slovenian conservation can be followed primarily through extensive reviews, induced by important anniversaries<sup>7</sup> or through

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<sup>1</sup> E. g.: Marta Verginella. *Ženska obrobja. Vpis žensk v zgodovino Slovencev*. DELTA: Ljubljana, 2006; Aleksander Žižek (ed.). *Ženska skozi zgodovino*. Zbornik referatov 32. zborovanja slovenskih zgodovinarjev, Celje 30. september – 2. Oktober 2004. Ljubljana: Zveza zgodovinskih društev Slovenije, 2004; Milica Antič Gaber (ed.). *Ženske na robovih politike*. Ljubljana: Sophia, 2011. Zbirka Refleksija; 2011, 3. Cf Verginella, 2006, pp. 186-189.

<sup>2</sup> In Slovenian historiography, the first thematic issue was: Žižek (ed.), 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Mateja Jeraj: *Ženska naj bo mati in delavka (Vloga in položaj Slovenk v socializmu, s poudarkom na 1945-53)*. In: Žižek (ed.), 2004, p. 368.

<sup>4</sup> Mateja Jeraj: *Ženske v slovenski politiki v socializmu*. In: Antič 2011, p. 64; Mateja Jeraj: *Ženska naj bo mati in delavka (Vloga in položaj Slovenk v socializmu, s poudarkom na 1945-53)*, In: Žižek (ed.), 2004, p. 367.

<sup>5</sup> Cf Verginella, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Aleš Gabrič, in Žižek (ed.), 2004.

<sup>7</sup> For the basic overview of Slovenian conservation see Sonja Ana Hoyer: *Spomeniško varstvo*. Enciklopedija Slovenije, Ljubljana. Mladinska knjiga, 1987. Pp. 214–217. See also: Baš, F. *Organizacija spomeniškega varstva v slovenski preteklosti*. In *Varstvo spomenikov*, pp. 13-3, V/1953-54.; Komelj, I. *Leto 1945 in varstvo kulturnih spomenikov na Slovenskem*, *Varstvo spomenikov*, pp. 5-53, Ljubljana, XX/1976; Peskar, R. *60 let Varstva spomenikov*. In *Varstvo spomenikov*, pp. 7-16, 44/2008. Important push forward in reflection of Slovenian conservation was

outlines, introducing certain thematic studies.<sup>8</sup> However, female contribution to Slovenian conservation has not been among reflected topics, yet. Thus, exploring this not-yet revealed aspect of Slovenian conservation profession should rest upon primary sources analyses: above all professional periodicals such as journal *Monument Conservation. A Periodical for Research and Practice of Monument Conservation (Varstvo spomenikov. Revija za teorijo in prakso spomeniškega varstva; hereafter Varstvo spomenikov)*<sup>9</sup> and archives of the *Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia*, kept by the *INDOK Centre of the Ministry of Culture*, where also some conservators' personal archives are held. Process can be studied in details through the case studies. Conservation project of the former Cistercian Abbey in Konstanjevica na Krki reconstruction is presented in the third section of this article as a case study and is aimed to explore inclusion of women in

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anniversary »100 let službe za varstvo kulturne dediščine na Slovenskem / 100 Years of Service for the Protection of Heritage«, resulting in a number of studies and publications, most notably *Sto let v dobro dediščine*, Ljubljana: Zavod za varstvo kulturne dediščine Slovenije, 2015 in *Varstvo spomenikov* 47-48, Zavod za varstvo kulturne dediščine Slovenije, Ljubljana: 2014.

<sup>8</sup> E. g. Črepinšek, M. *Prenova stavbne dediščine v Sloveniji = The renovation of the Slovene architectural heritage* Info press, Ljubljana, 1993; Pirkovič, J. *Osnovni pojmi in zasnova spomeniškega varstva v Sloveniji*. Zavod RS za varstvo naravne in kulturne dediščine, Ljubljana, 1993. Vodopivec, B., Žarnić, R.: *Cultural heritage data management in the context of historical development of monument protection in Slovenia*, in: *Heritage protection from documentation to interventions : proceedings of the EU-CHIC International conference on Cultural heritage preservation*, 29 May - 1 June 2012, Split, Croatia.

<sup>9</sup> Journal is the central periodical publication for conservation profession, however to obtain the complete picture, also other publications should be taken into account, such as publication of the *Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage Vestnik* (since 1962).

conservation profession in the 1950s and 1960s.

### **Emergence and contribution of female conservators**

At first, conservation was predominately in hands of art historians but gradually from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century on other professions, such as architecture, history, archaeology and ethnology, became involved in the field of monument protection. Equally, in the 1950s and 1960s women started to appear both as designers and experts working on-site, as well as authors of professional and scientific articles and contributions.

Review of the professional periodical journal *Varstvo spomenikov*, which is published since 1948, reveals that in the period from 1948 till 1975 female authors were present, but in a smaller number compared to their male colleagues.

The majority of women contributions were papers, then conservation reports and finally, in the minimum they were engaged in editorial roles. The ratio broken down by the type of contribution is comparable between male and female authors.

First female editor in chief of the journal was Mica Černigoj in 1962, who in 1965 also became first principal of the *Institute*. In the same year, 1962, Helena Menaše became member of the editorial board and remained there till 1975. Seven years later, in 1969, another woman Iva Mikl Curk became member of the editorial board and in 1974 also main and responsible editor of *Varstvo spomenikov*. Even though the ratio is firmly in favour of male authors, female experts contributed significantly as authors of professional papers.<sup>10</sup> Marija Verbič published an

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<sup>10</sup> Women were almost equally represented in the field of natural protection from the beginning of

article on the preservation of archives in 1949 as the first from the field of culture. Among earlier authors were also Špelca Čopič, who in 1951 wrote about the issues of museums and exhibitions, Marija Jagodic, who in 1955 contributed a paper on the Anton Aškerc homestead and Milka Čanak-Medić, who published two articles on Kostanjevica na Krki reconstruction (in 1958 and later in 1967). Cultural heritage protection was more frequently represented by female authors in the 1960s: Fanči Šarf (ethnology, 1960), Nataša Štupar Šumi (build heritage and methodological issues, from 1962 till 1975), Olga Kastelic (monuments of the Peoples' Liberation Movement, 1960), Ksenija Rozman (restoration issues, 1965 till 1968), Ljudmila Plesničar Gec and Anja Novak (archaeology, 1965), Majda Žontar and Mirna Zupančič (castles in Western Slovenia, 1967), Vlasta Koren (ethnology, 1975) and Juša Vavken (Ljubljana, 1975). Several female conservators were engaged in writing conservation reports.<sup>11</sup> Among the authors of conservation reports for artistic and urban monuments Špelka Valentinčič-Jurkovič (regularly from 1960 till 1975), Olga Zupan (2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 1960s), Andreja Volavšek (1966-1972) and Nataša Štupar-Šumi (regularly from 1965 till 1975) were the most frequently represented. Among authors were also Vlasta Koren, Breda Kovič, Ksenija Rozman, Ada Baar, Elica Boltin (Tome), Juša Vavken, Majda Frelih Ribič, Miša Logar, Sonja Hojer and Anka Aškerc. Ethnographic monuments were covered by Ada Baar, Olga Zupan, Andreja Volavšek,

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the journal on – Angela Piskernik published papers continuously from the 1949 on. Ana Budmar and Tatjana Bregant also published papers on natural protection in the journal in the period 1948 -1975.

<sup>11</sup> Conservation reports are short reports on conservatiorn works, carried out in a certain period on a specific object. Reports, even though short and inexhaustible, are a rich and valuable source for conservation history studies.

Nataša Štupar Šumi and Fanči Šarf. Authors Olga Zupan, Andreja Volavšek and Sonja Hojer wrote most frequently on the monuments of the Slovenian Liberation Movement.

The largest number of female authors was engaged in preparing conservation reports on archaeological monuments. Most reports were contributed by Elica Boltin (Tome), Ljudmila Plesničar Gec, Iva Mikl Curk, Vera Kolšek, Vida Stare, Mehtilda Urleb, Zorka Šubic, Tatjana Bregant and Marija Jevremov (Tomanič). Authors of less than four reports in the period 1948-1975 were: Mirina Zupančič, Tatjana Bregant, Marija Rutar, Anja Uršič, Bernarda Perc, Sonja Petru, Paola Korošec, Anja Zwitter, Biba Teržan, Irena Horvat Šavelj, Irena Sivec, Mira Strmčnik and Nada Osmuk.

However, it is worth mentioning herewith that those authors do not represent the whole group of female experts, active in the field of conservation in the period 1948-1975. There were several others, engaged in a number of projects, such as Alenka Železnik or Staša Blažič, but they did not contribute to *Varstvo spomenikov* in the researched period.

### **Case study of the former Cistercian Abbey in Konstanjevica na Krki reconstructions**

In the late 1950s and in the 1960s a number of large renovation projects, led by *Institute for protection and study of cultural and natural monuments (hereafter Institute)*, begun in Slovenia. Strong focus was placed on the monuments, which were destroyed during and after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, Kostanjevica na Krki among them. These projects demonstrate shift from urgent preservation measures to integrated renovation approach, gradually comprising

reconstruction designs, valorisation methods and revitalisation plans. In this chapter, early involvement of women in conservation is explored through the case study of Kostanjevica former Abbey reconstruction .

Art historical evaluation places former Cistercian Abbey in Kostanjevica na Krki among the most prominent architectural monuments in Slovenia.<sup>12</sup> Reconstruction and revitalization of the monument, which was badly damaged during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, was one of the first large conservation and reconstruction projects carried out in Slovenia after 1945, and which was ended only recently.<sup>13</sup>

The whole complex of the former Cistercian Abbey St. Mary's Spring/*Fons beatae virginis Mariae* in Kostanjevica na Krki was declared monument of national importance in 1999 due to its cultural, archaeological, landscape, artistic, architectural and historical significance.<sup>14</sup> Today the complex is devoted to secular purposes only, especially appreciated for the reach collection of Slovenian 20<sup>th</sup> Century artists (in 1974 Božidar Jakac gallery was established),<sup>15</sup> Forma Viva (the largest 20<sup>th</sup> Century collection of wooden sculptures in Slovenia, est. 1961), and as temporary visual arts exhibitions and concerts venue.

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<sup>12</sup> France Stele, separat, p. 9; Zadnikar, 1994, p. 171, 186; More on art historical description of the complex see Komelj, VS 1960; Zadnikar 1994; Smrekar 2015; Smrekar (ed.), *Vekov tek*, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Železnik, p. 463. In: Smrekar (ed), 2003.

<sup>14</sup> *Odlok o razglasitvi Območja gradu Kostanjevica s samostanom in Galerijo na prostem – Formo vivo za kulturi spomenik državnega pomena*. Ur. l. RS, št. 81/99, 55/2002, 54/2003. The first decree protecting the site was issued by *Svet za prosveto in kulturo LRS* in 1952 (Ur. l. LRS, 15/7-1952, str. 20).

<sup>15</sup> Among artists Božidar Jakac (1899-1989), France Kralj (1895-1960), Tone Kralj (1900-1975), Zoran Didek (1910-1980), Janez Boljka (1931-2013). Železnik, pp. 82-83. In: *Kulturna dediščina meniških redov*, 1996.

The Cistercian monastery was established in 1234. Between 1739 and 1747 the major reconstruction in the Baroque style was carried out, which gave some of the most distinctive artistic features to the complex: free-standing Baroque façade of the church, reconstruction of the entrance with two towers and newly built wings.<sup>16</sup> However, in 1786 the monastery was dissolved; consequently the altars and other church fittings were taken away or sold in the next decades.<sup>17</sup> The monastery building became headquarters of the regional administration (thus, the object was also called the castle); yet the monastery church, now without function, was due to the absence of maintenance and thus improper use (storehouse and cart shed) left to decay.<sup>18</sup> It was only in the 1920s that France Stelè, head of the Monument office for Slovenia, started consolidation and renovation works, which ended in 1933. The campaign saved the monument, and by introducing stylistic renovation through presentation of older architectural elements, it was also important for development of conservation profession in Slovenia: "... it was one of the largest conservation actions in Slovenia. With brave disclosure and reconstruction of the authentic building elements, priority was given to the original construction design."<sup>19</sup>

In 1941, the Italian army used monastery as a headquarters and a firewood warehouse.<sup>20</sup> On 29 September 1942 partisans set the building on fire,<sup>21</sup> what caused major demolition, followed by the collapse of the church vaults in 1942, an

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<sup>16</sup> Zadnikar 1994, p. 41

<sup>17</sup> Zadnikar 1994, pp. 43, 51-71.

<sup>18</sup> Miklavčič, web exhibition:

<http://www.kd100let.si/dosje-nekega-spomenika/> - accessed 16. 9. 2016

<sup>19</sup> Komelj, VS 1958-59, p. 30.

<sup>20</sup> Ministrstvo za kulturo, INDOK center, Arhivski povzetki, p. 16.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem.



intentional blasting of the part of the west wing in 1947 (to enable heavy trucks to easily access wine cellar, which was then in the monastery), the collapses of the south wing in 1948, the west wing in 1949, the south-east wing in 1958<sup>22</sup> and the major collapse of the bell tower "... on Sunday, 14. 4. 1956, twelve minutes before 9 AM."<sup>23</sup>

In 1946 and 1947 Emilijan Cevc from the *Institute* organized art history students of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana (in the second year few students of architecture and high school students joined) to clean the ruins of the collapsed church.<sup>24</sup> Art historian Ivan Komelj, from the middle of 1950s in charge of the project, was among those students, as well.<sup>25</sup>

Architect Marjan Mušič draw plans for the roof cover of the church in 1947<sup>26</sup> and a number of conservation recommendations, however latter were not carried out.<sup>27</sup> In addition, architect Milica Detoni<sup>28</sup>, who worked in

Kostanjevica, "... on whose shoulders a large part of our work rests"<sup>29</sup> had to return to Ljubljana for another project.

Only on 12 July 1955 restoration works begun again, this time in more systematic manner.<sup>30</sup> Even though in years from 1947 till 1955 conservation actions were limited to urgent interventions, the Institute was active in preparing basis for proclamation of Kostanjevica (in 1951 local people were taking material from the ruins)<sup>31</sup>, but to do that ownership and related management issue had to be resolved first. In 1952 *Commission for the Agrarian Reform* issued decree, according to which Ljubljana diocese was expropriated and the Kostanjevica complex with the garden became people's property.<sup>32</sup> On 30 May 1952 *OLO Krško* assigned the Institute to manage Kostanjevica complex.<sup>33</sup> Since the legal issues were resolved, soon the proclamation act followed,<sup>34</sup> and foundations for larger conservation action were laid down.

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<sup>22</sup> Miklavčič, web exhibition. Works described also in: Milka Čanak, *Konsolidacija samostanske cerkve v Kostanjevici na Krki, Varstvo spomenikov*, 7, 1960, pp. 37 – 48; Ivan Komelj, *Cistercijanski samostan v Kostanjevici na Krki – njegova usoda in konservatorski posegi. Varstvo spomenikov*, 7, 1960, pp. 21 – 36; Andrej Smrekar, *Kostanjevica na Krki. Zbirka vodnikov Kulturni in naravni spomeniki Slovenije, Zavod za varstvo kulturne dediščine Slovenije*, 2015; Alenka Železnik: *Kostanjevica na Krki – prenova samostanskega kompleksa*, pp. 455 – 465, in *Vekov tek: Kostanjevica na Krki 1252-2002: zbornik ob 750. obletnici prve listinske omembe mesta*, Andrej Smrekar (ed.), *Kostanjevica na Krki. Krajevna skupnost*, 2003.

<sup>23</sup> Ministrstvo za kulturo, INDOK center, Arhivski povzetki, p. 31.

<sup>24</sup> Cevc, VS 1948, p. 14.

<sup>25</sup> Dokumentacija Galerije Božidarja Jakca, *Zapiski Ivana Komelja*, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Prav tam.

<sup>27</sup> Zadnikar 1994, p. 48.

<sup>28</sup> Milica Detoni was born on 25 September 1926. She studied architecture and graduated with professor Jože Plečnik on 27 June 1952 (*Knjiga*

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diplomantov Fakultete za arhitekturo Univerze v Ljubljani).

<sup>29</sup> Ministrstvo za kulturo, INDOK center, Arhivski povzetki, p. 5.

<sup>30</sup> Komelj, VS 1960, pp. 21-36; Čanak VS 1960, pp. 37-48.

<sup>31</sup> Ministrstvo za kulturo, INDOK center, Arhivski povzetki, p. 16.

<sup>32</sup> Ministrstvo za kulturo, INDOK center, Arhivski povzetki, p. 20.

<sup>33</sup> Ministrstvo za kulturo, INDOK center, Arhivski povzetki, p. 21. Institute signed a contract with *Vinarska zadruga* (winegrowers' Cooperative) to manage the object and to manage the maintenance and restoration works in close cooperation with the Institute. Works were done by Gradis and Pionir. In 1959 the Institute terminated the contract and management of the complex was given to the Community Videm-Krško with the contract, signed on 25. 7. 1959 – Ministrstvo za kulturo, INDOK center, Arhivski povzetki, p. 61.

<sup>34</sup> *Zaščitna odločba Sveta za prosveto in kulturo LRS* (Ur. l. LRS, št. 20-109/52, dated 15 July 1952). Ministrstvo za kulturo, INDOK center, Arhivski povzetki, p. 33.

Based on the recommendation from architect Marjan Mušič, in 1955 the Institute invited *The Federal Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments* from Belgrade to participate in the project and to nominate architect Milka Čanak<sup>35</sup> as a design engineer.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, Čanak arrived to Kostanjevica on 8 September 1956<sup>37</sup> and in the following two years prepared plans for the conservation project, from 1957 in close cooperation with static engineer Oskar Hrabovski.<sup>38</sup> Even though not all of her ideas were realized, the integrated renovation of the complex in the following years and decades largely derived from her plans and drawings.

Both institutes established joint *Expert committee for the restoration of the monastery complex*, comprised of France Stele, president, and Vlado Madjarič (president of the federal institute), Edo Turnher (director of the national institute), architect Marijan Mušič and engineer Svetko Lapajne as members.<sup>39</sup> Experts from Slovenia, appointed to the project, were conservator Ivan Komelj, static engineer Stojan Ribnikar and architect Špelka Valentinčič.<sup>40</sup> But both females, engaged in the project, were not members of the Committee.

Špelka Valentinčič was first mentioned in relation to Kostanjevica on 7 December 1957<sup>41</sup> and then periodically thereafter.

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<sup>35</sup> CV podatki

<sup>36</sup> Ministrstvo za kulturo, INDOK center, Arhivski povzetki, p. 33 and Dokumentacija Galerije Božidarja Jakca, Zapiski Ivana Komelja, p. 29.

<sup>37</sup> Ministrstvo za kulturo, INDOK center, Arhivski povzetki, p. 33.

<sup>38</sup> Ministrstvo za kulturo, INDOK center, Arhivski povzetki, p. 39.

<sup>39</sup> Ministrstvo za kulturo, INDOK center, Arhivski povzetki, p. 38.

<sup>40</sup> Ministrstvo za kulturo, INDOK center, Arhivski povzetki, p. 42.

<sup>41</sup> Ministrstvo za kulturo, INDOK center, Arhivski povzetki, p. 42.

On 24 July 1957 she is mentioned to be present on the meeting of the expert Committee,<sup>42</sup> which implies that she might be a member or at least an important expert support, while on 16 September 1958 she is already mentioned as a representative of the national institute,<sup>43</sup> what confirms her as an employee of the institution.

Architect and conservator Špelka Valentinčič-Jurkovič was born on 10 October 1931 in Ljubljana. She studied architecture and graduated with Jože Plečnik in 1956 and in 1958 she started to work at the *Institute*, where she also retired in 1992. Ever since the student years, she has been working in the field of protection of cultural heritage, starting in the municipality Šmarje. For more than 30 years she was in charge of renovation of castles in Dolenjska and Bela Krajina, which were ruined during and after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War (Mokrice, Prežek, Stari grad at Novo mesto, Hmeljnik, Otočec, Kostel, Pobrežje, Soteska, Turjak, Žužemberk) and churches in Pleterje, Žužemberk and Pobrežje. Till the recent years she has cooperated with conservation professionals as an adviser; among others also on the project of Kostanjevica na Krki.<sup>44</sup>

The campaign is in details described by Komelj, Čanak and Železnik.<sup>45</sup> Main pillars of the project were initial urgent intervention works (church, arcaded halls and south and west wings consolidation),

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<sup>42</sup> Ministrstvo za kulturo, INDOK center, Arhivski povzetki, p. 47.

<sup>43</sup> Ministrstvo za kulturo, INDOK center, Arhivski povzetki, p. 48.

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.nm.sik.si/si/eknjiznica/bioleks/> - accessed 16. 9. 2016.

<sup>45</sup> Naštej, Alenka Železnik. Cistercijanska opatija Kostanjevica, Cistercian Abbey of Kostanjevica. Kulturna dediščina meniških rodov - The Heritage of Monastic Orders, Zbirka Dnevi evropske kulturne dediščine, 1996. Zavod za varstvo kulturne dediščine, 1996.

which lasted from 1958 till 1961, subsequent reconstruction works (bell tower reconstruction in the Baroque style in 1969 and free-standing façade reconstruction in 1970) and revitalization plans, which were intensified from the 1970's on.

In her extensive project documentation, dated 1970, Milka Čanak-Medić emphasised urgent definition of the content for revitalization of the complex, stressing the importance to understand and interpret the object as an integral whole with ex gardens and economic facilities (well, workshops, mill), once used by the monks. In addition, she foresaw some new functions, such as restaurant, art gallery, headquarters of the regional conservation institute and premises of one of the strongest regional companies Krka. She cooperated closely with local authorities. Municipality Videm-Krško established Fund for Preservation and Management of Kostanjevica Castle,<sup>46</sup> based on the initiative of Vilma Pirkovič.<sup>47</sup> Local initiative in Kostanjevica was by no means passive, at all. Especially active was cultural worker Lado Smrekar, who was inter alia establisher of Božidar Jakac gallery.<sup>48</sup> Emilia Fon, head of the pharmacy in Kostanjevica, known also for being centre of the local social life,<sup>49</sup> wrote a letter to France Stele on 30 May 1947, urging him to visit Kostanjevica due to the bad condition of the St. Nicholas

church in Kostanjevica town.<sup>50</sup> The letter suggests that she was also actively following cultural life in Kostanjevica and certainly conservation project of the former abbey complex, as well.<sup>51</sup> Thus, she was another woman along with local functionary Vilma Pirkovič, related to the project. After 1970 national *Institute* continued the works with its team of experts, especially Ivan Komelj and Marijan Zadnikar, and under the leadership of Špelka Valentinčič-Jurkovič and later Alenka Železnik.<sup>52</sup> Nowadays, renovation works are almost completed.<sup>53</sup> Renovation of the monastery, which started in the 50ties, was unique conservation project in Slovenia. There are at least two reasons. It was the first large reconstruction of the monument, which was badly damaged in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War; due to its' complexity it is even compared to reconstruction interventions in Warszawa and Dresden.<sup>54</sup> And, it was the first project after 1945 in Slovenia, where federal and national conservation institutions jointly worked together.<sup>55</sup> Implementation of the

<sup>50</sup> Documentation UIFS ZRC SAZU, France Stele correspondence, 1947.

<sup>51</sup> Implication was confirmed by Marinka Dražumerič, conservator in ZVKDS OE Novo mesto (phone conversation 31 August 2016).

<sup>52</sup> Alenka Železnik (1952), conservator, worked at the Institute from 1980 till 2013 and was in charge of many renovation projects, one of the most notable castle Rajhenburg. She won Stele prize for outstanding achievements in conservation in 2012. See more:

<http://www.mestnimuzejkrsko.si/arhiv/alenka-zeleznik-steletova-nagrajenka-za-leto-2012> – accessed on 18. 8. 2016

<sup>53</sup> Smrekar 2015, p. 64

<sup>54</sup> Miklavčič, web exhibition.

<sup>55</sup> Initially, works were financed by Slovenian Institute and later on by the federal institute, Republiški sklad za pospeševanje kulturnih dejavnosti and community Videm – Krško. Cooperation with federal institute was beneficial for the monument both from the perspective of expert support as well as from the perspective of financial support. Ministrstvo za kulturo, INDOK center, Arhivski povzetki, p. 48.

<sup>46</sup> Miklavčič, web exhibition.

<sup>47</sup> Vilma Pirkovič (Bebler) (1918—1996). See more: <http://www.nm.sik.si/si/eknjiznica/bioleks/> - accessed 16. 9. 2016

<sup>48</sup> Lado Smrekar (1928). See more: <http://www.nm.sik.si/si/eknjiznica/bioleks/> - accessed 16. 9. 2016.

<sup>49</sup> Emilija Fon (1897 Celje – 1984 Kostanjevica na Krki). More in: Elizabeta Petruša Štrukelj: Emilija Fon, lekarnarica iz Kostanjevice na Krki, in njena povezanost z arhitektom Jožetom Plečnikom, pp. 627—635. In Smrekar (ed.) 2003.

project was led by a female architect and conservator Milka Čanak-Medić (1929) from Belgrade, whilst architect Špelka Valentinčič advanced her professional career on this project, especially after taking the lead after 1970. In addition, implementation of the project revealed many modern conservation doctrine elements, such as interdisciplinary team of experts (e. g. static engineers, geologists), strong cooperation with local community (municipality Videm-Krško), and integrated approach with emphasised issue of function and programme from the beginning of the project. Art historian Emilijan Cevc already in 1948 stressed the renovation of the object and its potential administrative, touristic and cultural function as an opportunity to foster development of “industrially passive Kostanjevica.”<sup>56</sup> In addition, definition of the renovation guidelines was neither simple nor evident. In 1956 decision has been made that the church should be conserved as a ruin,<sup>57</sup> but as Ivan Komelj reports, in 1962 team of experts decided for reconstruction; Čanak, Pirkovič and Valentinčič were in the team of experts.<sup>58</sup> When Ivan Komelj, long-time head of the project, decided to advocate primarily cultural function of the object, it was another important decision.<sup>59</sup> This development reveals that refinements of conservation approaches were constantly in the centre of reflections throughout the Kostanjevica project and thus in turn Kostanjevica project also influenced development of conservation profession in Slovenia.

But above all, Kostanjevica as a content-rich case study proves significant

involvement of female conservators in the reconstruction project. True, male art historians were in charge of the project; before the war France Stele, after 1945 Emilijan Cevc, from 1947 on Ivan Komelj. But it were women who from the late 1950s led design work and the projects' implementation, first Milka Čanak-Medić (from 1956 till 1970), then Špelka Valentinčič- Jurkovič (from 1970 till 1992), later Alenka Železnik (from 1992 till 2013), whilst now Marija Režek Kambič is a conservator, responsible for the complex. Beyond this chronological order, they often worked together on terrain; Čanak-Medić and Jurkovič-Valentinčič closely cooperated from 1957 on.

## Conclusions

Women were notable part of the earliest conservation projects after 1945. Their share compared to their male colleagues was in average 24%, as the analysis of *Varstvo spomenikov* revealed. This percentage is comparable to the share of women students enrolled to the higher institutions in Slovenia in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century; their share was 29% in the school year 1953/54. Aleš Gabrič estimates that share of female students at the architecture, which recruited many post war conservators, was “important”, whilst at the human and social sciences faculties in the 1950s and 1960s women students represented half of all students.<sup>60</sup> It can be argued, that female professional engagement in conservation at that time was in close correlation with their possibility to access the higher education. Based on the Konstanjevica na Krki case study it cannot be argued that relatively modern conservation approach, implemented in the project, was

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<sup>56</sup> *Varstvo spomenikov*, 1948.

<sup>57</sup> Miklavčič, web exhibition.

<sup>58</sup> Dokumentacija Galerije Božidarja Jakca, Zapiski Ivana Komelja, p. 60.

<sup>59</sup> Dokumentacija Galerije Božidarja Jakca, Zapiski Ivana Komelja, p. 66.

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<sup>60</sup> Aleš Gabrič: *Od moškega do unisex šolstva*, in: Žižek (ed.) 2004, p. 220

consequence of the gender issue, but it has more to do with the rhythm of the conservation profession development in Slovenia and Yugoslavia.

However, one can argue that female conservators from the 1950s and 1960s, many of them are mentioned in this article, are not as well-known (or are not known, at all) as their concurrent male colleagues, such as France Stele, Marijan Zadnikar, Ivan Komelj, Emilijan Cevc and others. This has to do with undisputable male domination in the profession in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, what gave them better starting position and visibility also instantly after the 1945, whilst women only started to establish themselves at that time. Another objective reason can be suggested that conservation profession extensively developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century not only in terms of internationalization<sup>61</sup> but also in terms of multidisciplinary and specialization of specific knowledges and skills, what shifts focus from one-man band projects to groups of experts, making it more demanding to detect extraordinary experts, both male and female.

But contemporary weak awareness of contributions of some excellent female conservators, which is still persisting today,<sup>62</sup> has to do also with male-oriented historiography. Marta Verginella in 2004 doubted, if Slovenian history has already caught the gender equality trend and thus

shifted the approach.<sup>63</sup> She recalls quote from historian Peter Vodopivec, who in 1994 claimed that women in Slovenian historiography were treated: "...as more or less anonymous and self-explanatory part of Slovenian history."<sup>64</sup> Rare studies, devoted to the history of conservation, reflect the same approach.<sup>65</sup>

The situation, especially the lack of female conservators' work evaluation, has also a lot to do with the absence of conservation profession self-reflection. It is especially worth mentioning that there is no undergraduate conservation study programme in Slovenia, and thus the profession remains on the level of specialization of some basic disciplines. Only recently, in the school year 2009/2010, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, accredited doctoral study programme "Heritology", devoted to heritage studies. This, alongside with epistemological and theoretical endeavours, promoted by the Slovenian monument protections service 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, indicates emergence of deeper insights into conservation profession development. At the same time, also project Momowo,<sup>66</sup> reflecting female contributions in traditionally male dominated professions, enables promising insights for the history of conservation profession in Slovenia.

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<sup>61</sup> The Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments. International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, Athens 1931; The Venice Charter: International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites. ICOMOS 1964.

<sup>62</sup> Situation is gradually getting better. Among 27 laureates of the Stele awards, given from 1990 on by Slovenian Conservation Society for outstanding achievements in conservation, there are 8 women so far. <http://www.s-kd.si/steletove-nagrade/> - accessed 19. 8. 2016.

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<sup>63</sup> Marta Verginella: Zgodovina žensk ali ženska zgodovina, in Žižek (ur.) 2004.

<sup>64</sup> Peter Vodopivec: Kako so ženske na Slovenskem v 19. stoletju stopale v javno življenje, Zgodovina za vse, I, 1994, 2, str. 30.

<sup>65</sup> See footnote 9.

<sup>66</sup> Momowo – Women Creativity since the Modern Movement is and European project, financed by the Culture 2007-2013 programme; [www.momowo.eu](http://www.momowo.eu)

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## Position of Women Architects in Western Europe

### Marion Tournon-Branly and Eliane Castelnau-Tastemain: Two leading figures in French architecture

Stéphanie Mesnage

My paper relates to two women architects born in the 1920s in France, and who succeeded in doing two things which were almost inaccessible for women at the time, that is before 1970:

- Eliane Castelnau has designed and was responsible for directing the works on public buildings as part of important programs
- Marion Tournon-Branly has attained a form of recognition from her colleagues, architects

In effect my research, as focused on the work of women architects before 1970 in France, has already allowed me to conclude that they mostly attended their business along variegated lines, investing their energies in many professional sectors such as urban planning, landscaping, journalism, the writing of history, etc. together with other, more traditional, practices such as project management.

My research also allowed me to make the assumption that this professional positioning of women, so to speak, did not give them access to important architectural commissions and is one of the reasons why the work of women architects is neither known nor acknowledged – considering the architectural community only « acknowledges » the work of project managers<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> XXXXXXXX, “Éloge de L’ombre,” *Criticat*, no. 10 (automne 2012): 40–53. ; XXXXX, “In Praise of

However Eliane Castelnau and Marion Tournon-Branly seem to be two exceptions to this rule, although they also had very diverse professional activities, in the manner of their lady colleagues.

#### I – Panorama of Marion Tournon-Branly and Eliane Castelnau’s careers

##### a - The *Ecole des Beaux-arts* in Paris

Marion Tournon-Branly and Eliane Castelnau studied architecture at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris<sup>2</sup>, which had welcomed women in its architecture section as from 1898, when Julia Morgan was admitted to second class<sup>3</sup>.

As a whole, the school enrolled 576 women out of a total of 18,141 students

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Shadows,” in *MoMoWo · 100 Projects in 100 Years. European Women in Architecture and Design · 1918-2018*, by Alain Bonnet et al. (Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 2016), 266–71.

<sup>2</sup> Marie-Laure Crosnier Leconte, “Tournon-Branly, Marion,” *Dictionnaire Des Élèves Architectes de l’École Des Beaux-Arts (1800-1968)* (Paris: INHA, 2016), <http://www.purl.org/inha/agorha/002/149045>.; Marie-Laure Crosnier Leconte, “Castelnau, Eliane,” *Dictionnaire Des Élèves Architectes de l’École Des Beaux-Arts (1800-1968)* (Paris: INHA, 2016), <http://www.purl.org/inha/agorha/002/156371>.

<sup>3</sup> Lydie Mouchel, “Femmes Architectes ‘une Histoire À Écrire’” (DEA Histoire socio-culturelle, Université de Versailles Saint Quentin en Yvelines, 2000), 23.

between 1800-1968 – women thus representing 3.17% of this number<sup>4</sup>.

Marion Tournon-Branly and Eliane Castelneau worked in a studio run by Auguste Perret<sup>5</sup>, the famous french architect, who was head of his own studio at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* between 1923 – 1930, then between 1942 - 1954<sup>6</sup>.

Marion Tournon-Branly was the first woman to be admitted to the studio in 1942 – the second was Eliane Castelneau the following year<sup>7</sup>. According to Marion Tournon-Branly, Auguste Perret insisted to have her admitted within the studio, as opposed to everyone's opinion<sup>8</sup>.

As a whole 13 women were to be admitted to the studio between 1942 - 1955, out of 291 students over the period 1923-1954.

Beside Marion Tournon-Branly and Eliane Castelneau, these thirteen women were: Jacqueline Desprez, Nadia Godar-Devinoy, Annette Duflos-Stoppa, Agnès Gelain, Ismene Georgiafendi-Benoit, Marie-Louise Chassot-Janin, Vera Jansone-deFisher, Jacqueline Laisney, Victoria Melchoff Joubert, Nectar Papazian, Carina Sperling<sup>9</sup>. Marion Tournon-Branly graduated rapidly, in 1946 after four years of study with a project called *La Maison des Marionnettes* (The Puppets' House)<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Personal research based on "Dictionnaire Des Élèves Architectes de l'École Des Beaux-Arts (1800-1968)," Base de données ; programme de recherche (Paris: INHA, 2016), <http://www.purl.org/inha/agorha/001/7>.

<sup>5</sup> Crosnier Leconte, "Tournon-Branly, Marion"; Crosnier Leconte, "Castelneau, Eliane."

<sup>6</sup> Marie-Laure Crosnier Leconte, "Perret, Auguste," *Dictionnaire Des Élèves Architectes de l'École Des Beaux-Arts (1800-1968)* (Paris: INHA, 2016), <http://www.purl.org/inha/agorha/002/82151>.

<sup>7</sup> Crosnier Leconte, "Castelneau, Eliane"; Crosnier Leconte, "Tournon-Branly, Marion."

<sup>8</sup> *Entretien Avec Jean Le Couteur*, VHS, Entretien (Académie d'Architecture, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> "Dictionnaire Des Élèves Architectes de l'École Des Beaux-Arts (1800-1968)."

<sup>10</sup> Crosnier Leconte, "Tournon-Branly, Marion."

Eliane Castelneau's career path is less well known but we know that she spent much more time within the school: she graduated in 1954 after 11 years of study<sup>11</sup>.

## **b - Marion Tournon-Branly's career**

Marion Tournon-Branly exercised her profession in a very comprehensive and diverse manner: As from 1950, she was a journalist for *Maison et Jardin*<sup>12</sup>. Shortly afterwards she set up her own office, within which she carried out many architectural projects (child care centre, secondary schools, private homes, offices) and urban studies among which we can mention: a planning study for the *Mehringplatz* neighbourhood in West-Berlin (with Pierre Devinoy and Bernard de la Tour d'Auvergne)<sup>13</sup> in 1962; a nursery rue Boulard, in Paris about 1963<sup>14</sup>; a club on the *Champs Elysées* in Paris (with Bernard de la Tour d'Auvergne) for the Martini-Rossi company about 1964<sup>15</sup>; the provincial House of African Missions located 31 rue du Général Brunet and 36-40 rue Miguel Hidalgo in Paris conceived with Pierre-E. Devillers about 1973<sup>16</sup>. As her father, Marion Tournon-Branly also worked a lot on religious buildings: we can

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<sup>11</sup> Crosnier Leconte, "Castelneau, Eliane."

<sup>12</sup> Marion Tournon-Branly, Interview of Marion Tournon-Branly by XXXXXXX, July 1, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> "Mehringplatz, Berlin (Allemagne) : Étude D'aménagement, Fonds Tournon-Branly, Marion (1924-2016), Dossiers 352 AA 2/3, 352 AA 2/4, 352 AA 3, Cité de L'architecture et Du Patrimoine, Centre D'archives D'architecture Du XXe siècle/IFA," n.d.

<sup>14</sup> Éric Lapiere, *Guide d'architecture Paris : 1900-2008*, ed. Pavillon de l'Arsenal (Paris: Éd. Pavillon de l'Arsenal, 2008), 1963.

<sup>15</sup> "Club Aux Champs Elysées, Paris," *L'Architecture D'aujourd'hui*, no. 112 (1964): 102-3.

<sup>16</sup> "PC 37255/71 - 31 Rue Du Général Brunet, 36-40 Rue Miguel Hidalgo - Cote : 1178W 2300 - Archives de Paris," n.d.

mention the extension of Saint-Benoit-sur-Loire monastery (1962-1991)<sup>17</sup> and the renovation of the Saint-Esprit church in Paris (1972-1979)<sup>18</sup>.

In 1956 she took part in the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM) in Dubrovnik, where she was Sigfried Giedion's secretary and translator<sup>19</sup>

In the 1950s and 1960s she carried out two surveys for the Ministry of Health on Mother and Infant Health Protection Centres and Medical-Educational Institutions<sup>20</sup>.

She also devoted a large part of her career to teaching:

In 1958 she began teaching at the American Art Schools in Fontainebleau, a position she kept till 1998. She was also head of the Art department of that institution between 1975 - 1989, and again between 2000 - 2003<sup>21</sup>.

As from 1966 she also taught in the USA at California State Polytechnic College in San Luis Obispo, then in Paris as from 1968 at *Unité Pédagogique 4* (UP4), then at UP7 as from 1975 - these *Unités* stemming from the splitting of the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in 1968. She also taught in Lebanon at the *Université du Saint-Esprit* in Kaslik as from 1980<sup>22</sup>.

One of the interesting features of Marion Tournon-Branly's career is that she was recognized by her peers and integrated into the 'recognition system' of her profession.

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<sup>17</sup> Marjorie Renaut and Centre des archives contemporaines, eds., *Le don de l'architecture: Paul Tournon (1881-1964), Marion Tournon-Branly (1924)* (Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, France: Archives nationales, 2013), 63.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>19</sup> Tournon-Branly, Interview of Marion Tournon-Branly by XXXXXXXXXXXX

<sup>20</sup> Renaut and Centre des archives contemporaines, *Le don de l'architecture*, 62–63.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 63–64

<sup>22</sup> Renaut and Centre des archives contemporaines, *Le don de l'architecture*, 63–64.

Several elements testify to this:

In a 1957 issue of *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui*, one of the most important architectural journal in France, Marion Tournon-Branly appears with Bernard de la Tour d'Auvergne among the seven *architectes français de demain* (french architects of tomorrow). This includes a common project for a tourist centre at the *Saut du Doubs* (Doubs river waterfall), and a project by Marion Tournon-Branly for a church at Le Hourdel<sup>23</sup>. The others architects are: Olivier Vaudou avec J.P. Jausserand<sup>24</sup>, Henri Maillard<sup>25</sup>, Roger Anger<sup>26</sup>, Michel Andrault avec Pierre Parat<sup>27</sup>, Alain Bourbonnais<sup>28</sup> et Jean-François Zévaco<sup>29</sup>.

Marion Tournon-Branly also won prizes: in 1951 she was awarded the first team prize as a reward for a projected church, as presented within the framework of an *Exposition d'art sacré* at the Municipal Museum in Metz<sup>30</sup>.

A few years later, she took an active part in the International competition for the restructuring of Berlin City Centre with the french architects M. Devinoy, J. Faugeron

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<sup>23</sup> "Marion Tournon-Branly (1924) Bernard de La Tour d'Auvergne (1923)," *L'Architecture D'aujourd'hui*, no. 73 (1957): 13.

<sup>24</sup> "Olivier Vaudou (1926) et J.P. Jausserand (1924)," *L'Architecture D'aujourd'hui*, no. 73 (1957): 7.

<sup>25</sup> "Henri Maillard (1924)," *L'Architecture D'aujourd'hui*, no. 73 (1957): 8–9.

<sup>26</sup> "Roger Anger (1923)," *L'Architecture D'aujourd'hui*, no. 73 (1957): 10–12.

<sup>27</sup> "Michel Andrault (1926) et Pierre Parat (1928)," *L'Architecture D'aujourd'hui*, no. 73 (1957): 14–15.

<sup>28</sup> "Alain Bourdonnais (1925) Michel Fourtané (1926)," *L'Architecture D'aujourd'hui*, no. 73 (1957): 16–19.

<sup>29</sup> "Jean-François Zevaco (1916)," *L'Architecture D'aujourd'hui*, no. 73 (1957): 20–21.

<sup>30</sup> "Nouvelles Lorraines," *Le Pays lorrain : revue régionale bi-mensuelle illustrée* 9e volume (1951): 202–3, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6580643f>.

and Bernard de la Tour d’Auvergne<sup>31</sup>. Their project was graded in 1958 *H. Second achat* among the 10 published and prize-winning projects which were mostly designed by German architects. The winner of the competition was a German team of architects and engineers headed by F. Spengelin, F. Eggeling and G. Pempelfort<sup>32</sup>.

In 1968, she began to teach architecture at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, in the UP4; thus, she became the first female teacher in architecture in the *Ecole des Beaux-arts*<sup>33</sup>.

In 1975, Marion Tournon-Branly was the first woman to join the *Académie d’Architecture*, an elitist professional association of architects, created in 1840<sup>34</sup>.

### c - Eliane Castelnau’s career

After her internship with Paul Nelson in Paris<sup>35</sup>, Eliane Castelnau went in 1949 to Morocco to join her husband, Henri Tastemain<sup>36</sup>, who worked in the Urban Planning Department of Morocco, chaired by Michel Ecochard<sup>37</sup>. The latter, as an architect and urban planner, then in charge of plans for several cities in the

country, came to Auguste Perret's studio to hire assistants. Henri Tastemain was chosen; she was not<sup>38</sup>.

She then worked for another architect, Jean Chemineau, who was residing in Morocco, and for whom her husband worked between 1949 - 1950<sup>39</sup>.

Henri Tastemain and Eliane Castelnau then began to work together on their own projects, but they rapidly kept their respective activities separate<sup>40</sup>.

At the same time Eliane Castelnau continued her studies and drew for her diploma a project for a primary school<sup>41</sup>, which was later built, while she monitored the progress of the work<sup>42</sup>.

Her record for (diploma) admission, as presented by Auguste Perret<sup>43</sup>, was accepted on 9 March 1954<sup>44</sup>.

Now I think, but this is still a conjecture, that this could be the Rue Petit-Jean school complex in Rabat, of which the plan and some photographs were published in 1955, in an issue of the journal *l’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* - although in that paper the project was ascribed to Eliane Castelnau and Henri Tastemain<sup>45</sup>.

Between 1956 - 1962 she was Building inspector for the Province of Meknès and for the Prefecture of Rabat-Salé<sup>46</sup>.

Eliane Castelnau then developed several projects in her own name, among which a hotel and seaside resort complex at Skiriat, which was built in 1963; the hotel

<sup>31</sup> “Centre de Berlin (Allemagne) : Structuration (1958), Fonds Tournon-Branly Marion, Dossiers 352 AA 2/1 et 352 AA 2/2, Cité de L’architecture et Du Patrimoine, Centre D’archives D’architecture Du XXe siècle/IFA,” n.d.

<sup>32</sup> “Berlin Capitale,” *L’Architecture D’aujourd’hui*, no. 80 (1958): 47.

<sup>33</sup> Renaut and Centre des archives contemporaines, *Le don de l’architecture*, 12.

<sup>34</sup> XXXXX, “Éloge de L’ombre,” 49. This association was founded as the Société Centrale des Architectes in 1840 and became the Académie d’Architecture in 1953

<sup>35</sup> *Henri Tastemain, Eliane Castelnau : Réalisations 1950-1974* (Chiasso (Suisse): Ed. Score, 1975 ?).

<sup>36</sup> Eliane Castelnau, Interview of Eliane Castelnau by XXXXXXX, January 26, 2012.

<sup>37</sup> *Henri Tastemain, Eliane Castelnau : Réalisations 1950-1974*.

<sup>38</sup> Castelnau, Interview of Eliane Castelnau by XXXXXX.

<sup>39</sup> *Henri Tastemain, Eliane Castelnau : Réalisations 1950-1974*.

<sup>40</sup> Castelnau, Interview of Eliane Castelnau by XXXXXX.

<sup>41</sup> Crosnier Leconte, “Castelnau, Eliane.”

<sup>42</sup> Castelnau, Interview of Eliane Castelnau by XXXXXXXXX.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Crosnier Leconte, “Castelnau, Eliane.”

<sup>45</sup> “Groupe Scolaire Rue Petit-Jean À Rabat,” *L’Architecture D’aujourd’hui*, no. 60 (1955): 61.

<sup>46</sup> *Henri Tastemain, Eliane Castelnau : Réalisations 1950-1974*.

comprised 26 rooms, a restaurant, a lounge, an entrance hall, utility rooms, and an outdoor pool (33 m pool), together with changing rooms, showers, and paddling pool<sup>47</sup>.

At that time Eliane Castelnau also pursued, following her diploma, various projects for school buildings: in 1964 she built a school complex, Rue de Pau in Rabat: The Takkadom secondary school<sup>48</sup>.

When the Ministry of Public Health decided to set up a *Centre Hospitalier Universitaire* (CHU) (Teaching Hospital) in Rabat in the 1960s, Eliane Castelnau was called upon by the Health Minister to take care of the construction of this building. She asked for two days to be allowed to think it over, and accepted the offer<sup>49</sup>. In 1970 she became the architect for the Rabat Teaching Hospital<sup>50</sup>, an office she held until 1984<sup>51</sup>.

Eliane Castelnau designed and took charge, together with Louis Riou, of the work for the children's hospital and the maternity ward<sup>52</sup>. She designed and ran

(totally) by herself the building of the specialties hospital<sup>53</sup>, the general services buildings<sup>54</sup>, and the extension of Avicenne General Hospital which had been built in 1953.

A few years later Eliane Castelnau was entrusted – together with her husband, Henri Tastemain, and two other architects, Y. Melehi and A. Guedira - with the building of Mohamed-V Military Instruction Hospital in Rabat<sup>55</sup>.

We know that the majority of projects as undertaken by Eliane Castelnau and Henri Tastemain were carried out by the one or the other, and very seldom by both as a couple. However, some documents, including the book they published around 1975 about their work maintain some ambiguity about the authorship of the various projects, which are presented as common achievements<sup>56</sup>.

But how can one explain that these two ladies, moreover, had access to exceptional commissions and positions? In order to answer this, some clues may be found in their background.

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<sup>47</sup> "Ensemble Hôtelier et Balnéaire, Skirrat, Fonds Tastemain, Henri (1922-2012) et Castelnau, Eliane (1923-), Dossiers 420 IFA 100/26, Cité de L'architecture et Du Patrimoine, Centre D'archives D'architecture Du XXe siècle/IFA," n.d.

<sup>48</sup> "Groupe Scolaire Rue de Pau, Rabat, Collège Takkadom, Fonds Tastemain, Henri (1922-2012) et Castelnau, Eliane (1923-), Dossiers 420 IFA 100/18, Cité de L'architecture et Du Patrimoine, Centre D'archives D'architecture Du XXe siècle/IFA," n.d. ; *Henri Tastemain, Eliane Castelnau : Réalisations 1950-1974*.

<sup>49</sup> Castelnau, Interview of Eliane Castelnau by XXXXXXXX.

<sup>50</sup> *Henri Tastemain, Eliane Castelnau : Réalisations 1950-1974*.

<sup>51</sup> "Architecte — Tastemain, Henri (1922-2012) et Castelnau, Eliane (1923-). 420 IFA," *Architecte*, accessed November 10, 2016, [http://architecte.citechaillot.fr/fonds/FRAPN02\\_TASHE](http://architecte.citechaillot.fr/fonds/FRAPN02_TASHE).

<sup>52</sup> "Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Ibn Sîna, Rabat, Hôpital D'enfants et Maternité, Fonds Tastemain, Henri (1922-2012) et Castelnau, Eliane (1923-), Dossier 420 IFA 100/16, Cité de L'architecture et

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Du Patrimoine, Centre D'archives D'architecture Du XXe siècle/IFA," n.d.

<sup>53</sup> "Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Ibn Sîna, Rabat, Hôpital Des Spécialités, Fonds Tastemain, Henri (1922-2012) et Castelnau, Eliane (1923-), Dossier 420 IFA 100/12, Cité de L'architecture et Du Patrimoine, Centre D'archives D'architecture Du XXe siècle/IFA," n.d.

<sup>54</sup> "Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Ibn Sîna, Rabat, Services Généraux, Fonds Tastemain, Henri (1922-2012) et Castelnau, Eliane (1923-), Dossier 420 IFA 100/17, Cité de L'architecture et Du Patrimoine, Centre D'archives D'architecture Du XXe siècle/IFA," n.d.

<sup>55</sup> "Hôpital Militaire D'instruction Mohamed-V, Rabat, Fonds Tastemain, Henri (1922-2012) et Castelnau, Eliane (1923-), Dossiers 420 IFA 100/15, Cité de L'architecture et Du Patrimoine, Centre D'archives D'architecture Du XXe siècle/IFA," n.d.

<sup>56</sup> *Henri Tastemain, Eliane Castelnau : Réalisations 1950-1974*.

## II – Some clues to understand those professional trajectories

### a - Family networks

Marion Tournon-Branly was born 23 September 1924; she was the daughter of Paul Tournon, an architect, and Elisabeth Branly, a painter<sup>57</sup>. Paul Tournon was a renowned architect, recipient of the second *Grand Prix de Rome* in 1911, professor and head of the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* between 1942 and 1948<sup>58</sup>.

Now Marion Tournon-Branly succeeded in joining the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* the very year when her father became head of that institution. There is no doubt she was admitted in a regular manner, but we know her father helped her to succeed by giving her various lessons<sup>59</sup>.

Apart from this, Marion Tournon-Branly was able to meet, thanks to her father, many other architects, among whom Tony Garnier in France or Julian Clarence Levi in the USA, during her post-graduation study trip; which, moreover, allowed her to meet various architects in every american city she visited, and where she was recommended through many acquaintances<sup>60</sup>.

Eliane Castelneau had a totally different profile:

Eliane Castelneau was the daughter of Eugène Antoine Perpère, a medical doctor, and of Geneviève Jeanne Marie Percepied, without a profession. Born 1 September 1923, she was adopted at age

10 by Eugène Raymond Castelneau<sup>61</sup>, following the divorce (1924) and remarriage of her mother with the latter (1925), who was also a medical doctor<sup>62</sup>. Thus it seemed that she had no architect in her family circle.

Eliane Castelneau studied in a secondary school for girls in Cannes and grew up in the south of France in a protestant family<sup>63</sup>.

Although she had no relatives in the architectural profession, the family « network » seems, once more, to have helped this architect: According to her, the fact that she belonged to a protestant family from Montpellier, a religious affiliation she shared with the then Health minister of Morocco, did help her to obtain the position of Head architect of the Teaching Hospital in Rabat, which she was granted in the 1960s<sup>64</sup>.

### b - Personal situations

The personal situations of these two architects are very symptomatic of the problems encountered by women architects with their family life:

Marion Tournon-Branly remained single all her life, just as her sister, Florence, who was a painter<sup>65</sup>. She gave several times her opinion on this matter, notably in a paper published in *Le Monde*, a french newspaper, in 1963, about the activity of women architects: 'I quite often return to work after supper, until midnight or one

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<sup>57</sup> Renaut and Centre des archives contemporaines, *Le don de l'architecture*, 9.

<sup>58</sup> Marie-Laure Crosnier Leconte, "Tournon, Paul," *Dictionnaire Des Élèves Architectes de l'École Des Beaux-Arts (1800-1968)* (Paris: INHA, 2016), <http://www.purl.org/inha/agorha/002/82851>.

<sup>59</sup> Tournon-Branly, Interview of Marion Tournon-Branly by XXXXXXXXXXXX.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>61</sup> *Acte de Naissance, Perpère Castelneau Marie Anne Eliane*, 1923.

<sup>62</sup> "Acte de Mariage, Castelneau Raymond et Percepied Geneviève" (1925). It should be noted that her mother divorced for a second time in 1957.

<sup>63</sup> Castelneau, Interview of Eliane Castelneau by XXXXXXXXXXXX.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Tournon-Branly, Interview of Marion Tournon-Branly by XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

o'clock in the morning. Fortunately I am single: it is hard to imagine a husband putting up with such working hours<sup>66</sup>. Thus her life as an architect, head of her own office, seemed to her totally incompatible with a married life, and certainly with a family life. From this point of view Eliane Castelneau's situation was completely different: She married in 1949 Henri Tastemain<sup>67</sup>, an architect she had met in Perret's studio, and gave birth to four daughters. It seems that Eliane Castelneau was here again an exception to the rule – which may be explained in the context of Morocco. The couple never left Morocco thereafter, after 1949; thus Eliane Castelneau could benefit from the local house help system to raise her children, which allowed her to devote a lot of time to her professional activity – much more than for an architect living in metropolitan France<sup>68</sup>.

### c - General context

Here again, we cannot but observe that Marion Tournon-Branly and Eliane Castelneau have evolved in environments which were quite distinct, but which unmistakably have had an influence on their career paths.

Eliane Castelneau belonged to the many french architects who, after graduating from the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts*, became expats in Morocco, which at the time was still a french Protectorate. Three 'waves' of arrival may be distinguished as from 1912: the first one was made up of those architects who came during the First World War; the second was made up by

<sup>66</sup> Nicole Bernheim, "Trois femmes architectes parlent de leur métier" *Le Monde*, September 5, 1963.

<sup>67</sup> Acte de naissance, Perpère Castelneau Marie Anne Eliane.

<sup>68</sup> Castelneau, Interview of Eliane Castelneau by XXXXXXXXX.

those who went to Morocco by the mid-1920s and in the early 1930s. Finally, the third one, including Eliane Castelneau who arrived in 1949, was made up by architects who were active as from 1945<sup>69</sup>. Many of them left Morocco after the country became independent, in 1956; but Eliane Castelneau and Henri Tastemain belonged to those who settled for good.

French architects had the opportunity to design a large number of projects in Morocco for various reasons: on the one hand, the country had no or only few moroccan architects; and on the other hand the economic situation there was very favourable to the construction of new buildings. Expat architects thus had access to many architectural commissions, which, moreover, allowed them a greater freedom of expression, legal regulations not being very restricting, and private practice being open to modern architecture<sup>70</sup>.

Eliane Castelneau's career fits well into this perspective.

On the other hand the french context did not allow Marion Tournon-Branly access to very large construction programmes; as far as I know, her most important public commissions were the coeducational technical secondary schools in Grasse and Manosque, and the Central University Library of La Source in Orléans (for the latter building, with O. Cacoub)<sup>71</sup>.

Besides Marion Tournon-Branly complained that women architects in France were marked out to design certain specific programmes. Thus in an interview with *Le Monde*, she summed up the situation: 'Women architects come up against the same problems as all those

<sup>69</sup> Jean-Louis Cohen and Monique Eleb, *Casablanca: mythes et figures d'une aventure urbaine* (Paris, France: Hazan, 1998), 460.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 419.

<sup>71</sup> Renaut and Centre des archives contemporaines, *Le don de l'architecture*, 63.

who enter into professional competition with men: it seems that some jobs « suit » them, while others do not. They are offered to build schools, child care centres, private homes, or decoration work, but never factories, and even less official buildings. Yet private practice is hardly enough to get along<sup>72</sup>.

Here an important factor must be underlined: All architects who were *Beaux-Arts* graduates were not offered the same career opportunities. This varied notably according to their activities at the school, the studio they had been in, and whether they had obtained a *Grand Prix de Rome*, or not.

In their work on the city of Casablanca, Monique Eleb and Jean-Louis Cohen make an interesting observation: those architects who were active in Casablanca between 1912 – 1960 generally came from a modest family background, were not the sons or daughters of architects, and had not been particularly outstanding students at the *Beaux-Arts*. All in all, it is easy to think that for these architects, whose future was not at all certain in metropolitan France, Morocco represented an interesting career opportunity<sup>73</sup>.

We are bound to observe that these typical portraits apply to the two ladies I am studying today: Eliane Castelnau did not come from an architectural family, and received neither medals nor prizes during her studies<sup>74</sup>. She thus corresponds rather well to the typical profile as drawn up by the two historians.

As to Marion Tournon-Branly, she chose to stay in metropolitan France, as she was assured of her family network, and

considering she had been an outstanding student at the school<sup>75</sup>.

#### d – Others networks

It is interesting to observe that Marion Tournon-Branly began her career writing papers for a journal, *Maison et Jardin*, launched in 1950, and published by the Condé Nast Publishing House.

She refused to sign her articles, but carried on this work during many years<sup>76</sup>.

It seems that it was the head and chief editor of the Journal, M. Thomas Kernan, who really ‘launched’ Marion Tournon-Branly's career by offering her to build in Garches (in the Paris area) the house of Mr. and Mrs Barbas<sup>77</sup>, the latter being no other than the sister of Jean Patou, the famous fashion designer. Marion Tournon-Branly hesitated, pleading her lack of experience, but finally yielded on M. Kernan's insistence. The house was planned around a painting by Dunoyer de Segonzac, and the garden was designed by Russell Page, the famous landscape gardener. This project later allowed her to obtain many commissions for other private homes<sup>78</sup>.

Marion Tournon-Branly seems to have kept excellent relationships with the Condé Nast Publishing House, seeing that she designed at least two office projects

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<sup>75</sup> Crosnier Leconte, “Tournon-Branly, Marion.” She obtained during her studies various medals : two « 3<sup>e</sup> Médailles » in construction and history of architecture ; one « 3<sup>e</sup> Médaille » in building legislation ; two « Secondes Médailles » for projects ; First Prize and « 1<sup>e</sup> Médaille » at the « Concours d'art monumental »

<sup>76</sup> Tournon-Branly, Interview of Marion Tournon-Branly by XXXXXXXX.

<sup>77</sup> I think that the project of M. Tournon-Branly, published in *La maison suburbaine* in 1961, is the Barbas's House as it's located in Garches but I'm not absolutely sure it is.

<sup>78</sup> Tournon-Branly, Interview of Marion Tournon-Branly byXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

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<sup>72</sup> Bernheim, “Trois femmes architectes parlent de leur métier”

<sup>73</sup> Cohen and Eleb, *Casablanca*, 460.

<sup>74</sup> Crosnier Leconte, “Castelnau, Eliane.”



for them : in 1961 she filed an application for a planning permission relating to a project for heightening by two storeys an existing three-storey building located in Paris, 4 Place du Palais Bourbon<sup>79</sup> ; in 1966 she filed another dossier pertaining to an application for a planning permission with the Town Planning Department of the *Préfecture de la Seine*, concerning the extension of an office building, situated at the same address. However this application was cancelled in June of the same year, following the owner's withdrawal<sup>80</sup>.

## Conclusion

As zooming on two career paths of two women of the same generation who studied in the same studio at the *Ecole des Beaux-arts* in Paris, we can see they had very different careers partly determined by the general context, their networks, etc. It's important to study all those processes to understand how they could manage to access to exceptional commissions and positions. Now, Eliane Castelneau's career is more readable. But data are missing to understand how Marion Tournon-Branly accessed to architectural institutions, how she began the first female architectural professor at the *Ecole des Beaux-arts* and how she attained a form of recognition from her professional environment.

<sup>79</sup> Paris, Seine, and Paris (Département / 1975- ), "Demandes d'autorisation de construire," *Bulletin municipal officiel de la Ville de Paris*, December 21, 1961, 2925, Ville de Paris / Bibliothèque de l'Hôtel de Ville (BHdV). Available on Gallica :

<http://gallica.bnf.fr/>

<sup>80</sup> "PC 33027/66 - 4 Place Du Palais Bourbon 7e - Cote : 1178W 683 - Archives de Paris," n.d.

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## Juana Ontañón. An Architect Woman in Asturias

Esther Rodriguez Ortiz

### Historical Framework. Introduction.

Para comprender el retroceso que alcanzó la mujer durante la dictadura debemos remitirnos a un periodo de tiempo anterior como es el de la II República, un periodo en el que las mujeres logran posicionarse, gradualmente, en el ámbito de lo público ostentando cargos de responsabilidad jurídica, además de conseguir el sufragio universal, participar de forma activa en los partidos políticos, e incluso lograr que el código penal fuera modificado<sup>1</sup>. La Constitución de la República Española de 1931 dice en su artículo 43 que “el matrimonio se funda en la igualdad de derechos para ambos sexos, y podrá disolverse por mutuo disenso o a petición de cualquiera de los cónyuges, con alegación en este caso de justa causa”, además de otros puntos de interés para la mujer como es la igualdad en el ámbito laboral, la protección del trabajo y el seguro de maternidad<sup>2</sup>. La Constitución estuvo vigente hasta el final de la guerra civil en 1939, cuando los posibles avances en políticas de género

se ven truncados desplazando a la mujer al ámbito de lo privado.

Tampoco debemos olvidarnos de los cambios introducidos en el sistema educativo español, que comenzaron a notarse ya a finales del siglo XIX, a través de la figura de Julián Sanz del Río, un profesor de la Universidad Central que viajó a Alemania y se dejó influenciar por la corriente Krausista. Quizá una de las iniciativas más importantes que se instauraron en España y, cuyo fundador fue Francisco Giner de los Ríos, fue la Institución Libre de Enseñanza. Esta Institución fundada en 1876 tiene un proceso evolutivo paulatino pero firme que se ve interrumpido sobre todo cuando estalla la Guerra Civil, asentaba sus pilares educativos en “unos principios constantes: educar antes que instruir, dedicar el máximo respeto al niño, crear en la grata confianza entre alumnos y profesores, aproximar a las familias a la escuela para una mejor comunicación y comprensión. Formar hombres y mujeres íntegros, antes que profesionales especializados”<sup>3</sup> Lo que nos impulsa exponer las bases de esta institución no es otro motivo que este es el ámbito educativo en el que creció y se desarrolló Juana Ontañón, y no sólo por asistir a las clases sino porque sus padres, María Sánchez Arbós y Manuel Ontañón y Valiente, el primero maestro de Instrucción, y ella profesora, afines y seguidores a este sistema educativo, los mismos que asistieron a un quiebro de su carrera profesional cuando fueron

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<sup>1</sup> QUERO HERNÁNDEZ, Isabel, JAÉN GARCÍA, M<sup>a</sup> Dolores, “La imagen de la mujer en la postguerra española a través de la prensa de Almería” en NASH, Mary, TAVERA, Susanna, *Las mujeres y las guerras: el papel de las mujeres en las guerras de la Edad Antigua a la Contemporánea*, Barcelona, Icaria, 2003, p. 459.

<sup>2</sup> Constitución de la República española [en línea], <<http://www1.icsi.berkeley.edu/~chema/republica/constitucion.html>>, [consultada el 09-02-2015]. Sobre la situación de la mujer española en la II República y los logros de género conseguidos véase NASH, Mary, *Mujer, familia y trabajo en España, 1875-1936*, Barcelona, Anthropos Editorial, 1983.

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<sup>3</sup> ONTAÑÓN, Elvira. *Un estudio sobre la Institución Libre de Enseñanza y la mujer*. Valencia: Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, 2003, p. 203.

perseguidos y encarcelados por el régimen franquista.

Cuando comienza la Guerra Civil tanto los roles masculinos como los femeninos se ven alterados. Los hombres deben abandonar sus puestos de trabajo para salir al frente mientras que buena parte de las mujeres deben encargarse de las tareas que los hombres han abandonado en las fábricas, además de seguir a cargo de las actividades demandadas por el hogar. Falange Española es una "alternativa al sistema democrático representativo, con un marcado carácter conservador, autoritario y una férrea oposición a la trayectoria desarrollada por la República", además, respecto a los avances conseguidos por la mujer durante la República consideraban que su condición, su naturaleza, o aquel fin para el que había nacido era para atender las cuestiones de la patria cuidando del hogar y de la familia, regresando con ello, a las costumbres tradicionales<sup>4</sup>.

El establecimiento por parte del Ministerio de Educación Nacional del bachillerato femenino obligatorio durante los años 1941 y 1944, donde se menciona que las asignaturas necesarias para conseguir el grado, a parte de las generales como matemáticas, historia o lenguaje, entran las asignaturas de Formación familiar y social, con secciones de corte y confección, trabajos manuales, puericultura postnatal,

economía doméstica y convivencia social, o cocina<sup>5</sup>.

Con la exaltación del papel tradicional de la mujer y la glorificación del hogar se tiende a imponer la idea de que el mundo puede progresar perfectamente sin mujeres abogadas, doctoras o científicas, pero de ninguna manera podrá progresar sin las mujeres y su papel natural, el de ser madre o "sacerdotisas en ese templo que alumbren el espíritu familiar con la luz de las celestiales enseñanzas, dirigiendo a sus hijos hacia el bien, la verdad y la belleza"<sup>6</sup>. La ignorancia de las féminas se premiaba al igual que la belleza, así como la discreción y el silencio. Una mujer demostraba ser más femenina cuando reunía estas cualidades. Por el contrario, si una mujer mostraba un tipo de carácter fuerte e inconformista su destino era la soltería y, por lo tanto, la soledad. Como recoge Scanlon, "toda mujer letrada será soltera toda la vida mientras haya hombres sensatos en la tierra"<sup>7</sup>. Y por otro lado, como señala Enciso Viana en 1941 la mujer que "no soporta un mal genio o una cara hosca, o una contestación desabrida, la tenaz en sostener un punto de vista, está condenada a sufrir mucho"<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> DÍEZ FUENTES, José Manuel, "República y primer franquismo: la mujer española entre el esplendor y la miseria 1930-1950", en *Alternativas: cuadernos de trabajo social*, nº3, 1995, pp. 23-40. Véase también GALLEGU MÉNDEZ, María Teresa, *Mujer, Falange y Franquismo*, Madrid, Taurus, 1983 y SÁNCHEZ LÓPEZ, Rosario, *Mujer española, una sombra de destino en lo universal. Trayectoria histórica de la Sección Femenina de Falange (1934-1877)*, Murcia, Universidad de Murcia, 1990.

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<sup>5</sup> PRIMO DE RIVERA, Pilar, *La enseñanza doméstica como contribución al bienestar de la familia española. Razones de la formación de la Sección Femenina*, Madrid, Comercial Española de Ediciones, 1961.

<sup>6</sup> SCANLON, Geraldine, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868-1974)*, Madrid, Siglo Veintiuno de España, 1976, pp. 337.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324

<sup>8</sup> VIANA, Enciso, *Muchacha*, en DOMINGO, Carmen, *Coser y cantar: las mujeres bajo la dictadura franquista*, Barcelona, Lumen, 2007, p. 121.

## Vida y Obra de Juana Ontañón

María Juana Ontañón Sánchez-Arbós nace el 4 de diciembre de 1920 en La Laguna, Tenerife, nace en esta ciudad porque su madre por aquél entonces daba clases en el Instituto-Escuela, mientras que su padre compaginaba las clases de la Universidad con el Instituto Escuela.

El ambiente familiar en el que creció Juana fue un ambiente propicio para la cultura y el conocimiento, no sólo por el hecho de tener unos padres dedicados en cuerpo y alma a la docencia, sino porque ella, como no podría ser de otro modo, se formó en el Instituto Libre de Enseñanza y comenzó a tener muy pronto cierta inquietud hacia las Bellas Artes, la fotografía, el dibujo, el deporte y, por supuesto, la arquitectura. Debemos señalar en este punto que, tras el estallido de la Guerra Civil en 1936 hasta 1939, su educación se ve truncada, no sólo por la situación bélica del país, sino que se ve agravada porque su familia atravesó una dura situación, ya que sus padres fueron perseguidos, víctimas de las depuraciones sufridas por los maestros de la República, y su madre fue cesada de su profesión y encarcelada<sup>9</sup>.

Juana accede a la Universidad con 19 años en 1939, realizando el primer año un curso intensivo y al año siguiente cursa las asignaturas de Dibujo arquitectónico elemental, Dibujo de formas arquitectónicas elementales, Francés e Inglés. Tras este año su carrera sufre un parón y no se tiene constancia de actividad académica hasta el año 1943, año en el que ingresa en la Escuela Superior de Arquitectura de Madrid en la que es admitida<sup>10</sup>. Sabemos que su padre

por esos años daba clases particulares a aquellos alumnos que aspiraban a acceder a estudios en las escuelas técnicas, así que probablemente su hija Juana se preparara junto a su padre para acceder a la de arquitectura, pues hay constancia de que la familia Ontañón-Suárez era una familia unida<sup>11</sup>.

Juana estudiará la carrera de arquitectura desde el año 1943 a 1949, momento en el que consigue Licenciarse y convertirse en la cuarta mujer española en ostentar el título, pero cabe aquí mencionar que sus estudios se vieron interrumpidos a finales de 1947 porque debía compaginarlos con el Servicio de Prestación Social. Como mencionábamos en la introducción, una vez ganada la guerra y asentado el régimen franquista, la educación de la mujer se centra en aquellas cuestiones atribuidas tradicionalmente a la naturaleza femenina. Así el Servicio de Prestación Social era una actividad formativa obligatoria para aquellas mujeres solteras que tuvieran entre 17 a 35 años. Esta formación era impartida por la Sección Femenina y su duración era de seis meses: 3 de educación teórica (buena madre, buena esposa, abnegada y católica) y 3 de prestación obligatoria de trabajo en comedores, hospitales u oficinas<sup>12</sup>.

La situación política de España repercute en el hecho de que las escasas mujeres que acceden a estudios técnicos y, una vez finalizados, tienen graves problemas para desarrollar su trabajo a título personal, así que se ven obligadas a colaborar en un estudio dirigido por un hombre. Este hecho hace que sus nombres queden relegados a un segundo plano, siendo

<sup>9</sup> Borroy, Víctor M. "Juan. María Sánchez Arbós. Una maestra aragonesa en la edad de oro de la pedagogía", Rolde. Revista de Cultura Aragonesa, Nº 89, octubre-noviembre 1999, pp. 12-21.

<sup>10</sup> Vélchez Luzón, Javier. *Matilde Ucelay primera mujer arquitecta en España*. Granada: tesis doctoral, 2013, p. 794.

<sup>11</sup> Borroy, Víctor M. "Juan. María Sánchez Arbós. Una maestra aragonesa en la edad de oro de la pedagogía", Rolde. Revista de Cultura Aragonesa, Nº 89, octubre-noviembre 1999.

<sup>12</sup> Cerdeira Gutiérrez, Isabel, "Los Servicios Sociales del Franquismo a la Constitución", en *Cuadernos de Trabajo Social*, nº0, 1987, 135-158.

visible el nombre del arquitecto varón. En el caso de la arquitecta que estudiamos formó pareja profesional junto a su marido Manuel López Mateos constituyendo ambos un estudio de arquitectura, este hecho hace que se desconozcan cuáles fueron las obras ideadas por Juana ya que todas las fichas remiten a los proyectos de su marido<sup>13</sup>.

Estamos frente a una de las profesionales más prolifas del panorama arquitectónico español que comienza a participar en proyectos arquitectónicos de manera temprana y durante su etapa de estudiante en la Escuela Superior de Arquitectura de Madrid. Uno de sus profesores, Luis Moya, será quien le permita colaborar en la construcción de la Universidad Laboral de Gijón, siendo el Paraninfo uno de los espacios que se le atribuyen a la arquitecta y que veremos con detalle más adelante.

Un dato interesante sobre esta mujer es que junto a su marido Manuel López Mateos y Vázquez de Castro, participan en la proyección del Monumento del Valle de los Caídos, todo un símbolo de la ideología franquista con el que se pretende conmemorar a los caídos por la patria. El proyecto que presentan se caracteriza por poseer unas líneas modernas que se alejan bastante de la filosofía arquitectónica imperante durante la década de los cuarenta. Se trataba de un edificio con un amplio espacio en su parte frontal en el que los arquitectos juegan con dos volúmenes geométricos bien definidos, siendo uno de ellos el volumen vertical en cuya fachada principal se ubicaría una gran cruz, y el otro, de planta en arco y algo más discreto. El proyecto no interesó al caudillo y ni siquiera se llevó ningún premio.

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<sup>13</sup> Vílchez Luzón, Javier. *Matilde Ucelay primera mujer arquitecta en España*. Granada: tesis doctoral, 2013, p. 11.

Otro de los proyectos en los que participa durante la década de los 40 es el Plan de Ordenación Urbana Bidagor, impulsado por el arquitecto donostiarra Pedro Bidagor Lasarte, llevado a cabo a partir de 1946. Este plan de ordenación se centraba en los siguientes puntos básicos: la capitalidad, la ordenación ferroviaria, un plan de accesos, es decir carreteras y autopistas radiales, la zonificación, la ciudad antigua y su reforma, la terminación del ensanche, la prolongación de la Castellana, el extrarradio, los suburbios, los límites de la ciudad, la industria y los poblados satélites, es en este punto donde más trabajará Juana Ontañón junto a su marido, siendo Carabanchel una de las principales zonas a rehabilitar, concretamente en las viviendas sociales ubicadas en Pan Bendito y que las realizarán bajo la dirección de Luis Vázquez de Castro<sup>14</sup>.

Estas viviendas tienen una función primordial que es la de abolir de alguna manera los asentamientos en chabolas producidos por la migración masiva de la población rural a la ciudad. Son edificaciones sencillas y temporales que constan de dos o tres dormitorios, un salón, una cocina y un baño, resuelto todo ello en unos cincuenta metros cuadrados. La Unidad Vecinal de Absorción se componía además de una capilla, grupos escolares, guardería infantil, comercios de uso diario, servicio asistencial sanitario, servicios administrativos, la casa de baños y una zona de recogida de basuras<sup>15</sup>.

En San Sebastián colabora en el Plan General de 1950, debemos decir en este punto Juana Ontañón deja una ingente cantidad de obras en el Levante español,

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<sup>14</sup> Bidagor, Pedro, Sambricio, Carlos. *Plan Bidagor 1941-1946. Plan General de Ordenación de Madrid*. Madrid: Dirección General de Urbanismo y Planificación Regional, 2003.

<sup>15</sup> Vílchez Luzón, Javier. *Matilde Ucelay primera mujer arquitecta en España*. Granada: tesis doctoral, 2013, p. 818.

entre Valencia y Castellón, en Burgos, Jaén y Madrid, pues desde los primeros años de la década de los 50 hasta la década de los 80 su actividad es bastante frenética. Una actividad que compagina con su matrimonio y la crianza de sus dos hijos. Buena parte de sus obras no han llegado a nuestros días y tan sólo queda constancia de ellas a través de los proyectos arquitectónicos. Generalmente se trata de edificios destinados a viviendas, chalets o casas unifamiliares, hoteles en la zona del levante español, y alguna que otra nave industrial.

Su integración dentro del panorama arquitectónico español, siendo una más y formando equipo con otros muchos arquitectos, nos consta, entre otros motivos porque es la única mujer que firma el “Manifiesto de la Alhambra” de 1953, y su firma está al lado de arquitectos tan relevantes como Chueca Goitia, o Luis Moya. En este manifiesto dividido en apartados como formas, construcciones, decoración y jardines, se asientan las bases de la arquitectura española. Los arquitectos que reflexionan sobre eso tienen una clara conciencia del momento de cambio en que viven y llevarán a cabo sus conclusiones con el convencimiento de la necesidad de renovación de la arquitectura española.

Sus obras están censadas en el Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos de Madrid y parece ser que rondan la cifra de 219 proyectos, muchos de ellos no se han llevado a cabo y algunos no se conservan<sup>16</sup>. El grueso de su obra está formado por mayoritariamente por edificios de viviendas, casas individuales, o chalets si empleamos la jerga del momento, Hoteles ubicados tanto en primera como en segunda línea de playa, alguna que otra nave para taller, y alguna escuela. Hemos recogido una

pequeña selección de su ingente producción.

Uno de los primeros edificios que realiza es el *Edificio Azabache* para Alfonso Alfranca y Alfonso Romero en 1954, que está ubicado en el barrio de Carabanchel en Madrid. Se trata de un edificio de viviendas para el que tuvo en cuenta el aprovechamiento de la luz natural, y que llevó a cabo a través de una acertada orientación, distribuyendo las diferentes estancias a través de una pequeña entrada y empleando balcones al exterior. Un edificio de viviendas funcional y cuyo aprovechamiento del espacio es máximo.

Otra de sus obras, y muy cercana en ejecución a la anterior, es el Chalet para Aurelio Alfonso situado en la Avenida de Alfonso XIII de Madrid y que se realiza en 1955. En este caso la arquitecta también intenta aprovechar al máximo la luz natural y lo consigue abriendo un vano en cada una de las estancias. El chalet consta de dos plantas y la fachada gana plasticidad gracias al empleo de diferentes materiales como son la piedra y el ladrillo. Para el Edificio Urrea ubicado en la calle Centenera de Madrid construido en 1969, Juana Ontañón tiene en cuenta no sólo el aprovechamiento de los recursos naturales, sino también el clima de la ciudad donde se levanta. En su fachada predominan las terrazas por pisos que unifican las diferentes viviendas, además, estas terrazas ganan plasticidad gracias a la colocación de sendos toldos que sin duda aplacan el sofocante calor del verano y proporcionan frescor a la vivienda.

Una de sus obras más plásticas es el Hotel Koral de 1971. Está situado en primera línea de playa en El Tosalet, en Oropesa del Mar, Castellón de la Plana y se caracteriza por ser un pequeño rascacielos que rompe con las líneas horizontales predominantes en la costa levantina como vemos en la figura 4. Para realizar este proyecto Juana Ontañón cuenta con la

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<sup>16</sup> Vílchez Luzón, Javier. *Matilde Ucelay primera mujer arquitecta en España*. Granada: tesis doctoral, 2013, p. 818.

colaboración de otra mujer, la arquitecta María de Luxán y con su marido.

Como vemos en la imagen, el hotel consta de una planta rectangular y tiene una altura de diez plantas y la distribución de las habitaciones se realiza mediante el empleo de un pasillo central que atraviesa el edificio longitudinalmente, de forma que todas ellas tienen vistas a la costa. Se trata de una fachada abierta a través del uso de balcones individuales que se corresponden con cada una de los habitáculos.

El espíritu creador de esta arquitecta la lleva mucho más allá, y ha dejado constancia de ello a través de su participación en la enciclopedia *40 años en la vida de España* realizando sendos análisis de ciertas obras arquitectónicas de relevante interés y, notable es su apoyo al rugby como deporte siendo una de las promotoras, junto a su marido, de la revista *Arquirugby* cuyo primer número se lanza en 1976 escribiendo ella misma el editorial y siendo presidenta de Honor de la sección de rugby del Club Deportivo Arquitectura, en el que su marido llevaba muchos años participando como jugador. Su pasión por la arquitectura la lleva a participar en foros de opinión como se recoge en esta noticia de *ABC*, a raíz de la colocación de una pasarela anuncio en mitad del paseo de la Castellana en 1981:

“A mí me parece muy bien que se haga la pasarela, ya que es muy importante como acceso a los mundiales. Ahora se hacen pasarelas preciosas. En cuanto a si afecta a la estética de la Castellana, pues es una cosa muy relativa. ¿A qué estética? Porque lo que ha gustado ayer, puede que no guste hoy. Hoy lo que desentonaría allí es un puente gótico. Si la hacen bien, puede salir una pasarela

despampanante, si no, claro, puede quedar como un churro. Lo que no me seduce nada es la idea de la publicidad exterior”<sup>17</sup>

Tras leer este breve párrafo, no cabe duda de que estamos ante una mujer que ha sabido adaptarse a los tiempos, que ha luchado por y para su profesión, que ha sabido trabajar desde el lugar en el que un país, cerrado al exterior, hacinó a las mujeres a la sombra de un hogar construido por sueños, para unas inalcanzables, y para otras, el motor de su vida.

Juana Ontañón Sánchez-Arbós fallece a los 81 años el 13 de febrero del 2002 en Madrid, en compañía de sus hijos y familia.

### **El Paraninfo de la Universidad Laboral de Gijón**

La Universidad Laboral de Gijón es, probablemente, uno de los proyectos más destacados en el panorama arquitectónico no sólo regional sino de ámbito nacional, tanto por sus dimensiones como por lo ambicioso del proyecto, para hacernos una idea de sus dimensiones, decir que cuenta con una ocupación superficial de unos 442.550 metros, de los cuales 119.750 metros se corresponden con superficie edificada.

El proyecto lo lleva a cabo el ya citado arquitecto Luis Moya, profesor por aquel entonces de Juana Ontañón, junto con otros dos arquitectos de cabecera como son Pedro R. De la Puente y Ramiro Moya, la ejecución de la obra se llevó a cabo por parte de José Díez Canteli y se contó para su realización con la colaboración de

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<sup>17</sup> M. CH. G. V. “El tema de la pasarela continúa sin ningún tipo de acuerdo municipal corporativo”, en *ABC*, 24-01-1981, p. 21.



Enrique Huidobro, Manuel Thomas, Juana Ontañón, Manuel López Mateos y Luis García Amorena<sup>18</sup>.

El edificio, situado en una zona elevada del barrio de Somió en Gijón, consta de una serie de dependencias que se articulan en torno a un patio central porticado que organiza el espacio, siguiendo la línea de las plazas castellanas. Los elementos que la constituyen son la torre de 129,25 metros de altura, el convento, los talleres, los jardines, o el magnífico paraninfo, un ejemplo destacado de la arquitectura moderna asturiana concebido en forma de proa de barco. Pero además de estos destacables elementos, cabe mencionar también las aulas y las viviendas para aprendices que la convierten en una auténtica ciudad del trabajo, los talleres, las granjas y los campos de deportes. El conjunto se convierte en un “importante jalón en la difusión de cultura entre los económicamente débiles”<sup>19</sup> y se cumple con su construcción “una de las consignas del régimen: el mejoramiento de nuestra cultura”<sup>20</sup>.

El conjunto de la Laboral mantiene una estética clasicista y autárquica que se acerca a la estética moderna gracias a sus talleres y al Paraninfo.

Moya pensó el Paraninfo conectado con el ala sur, que sería residencia temporal de los Antiguos Alumnos. Manuel López-Mateos y su esposa, Juana Ontañón recibieron el encargo de diseñar este espacio singular y llevaron a cabo un diseño con forma de proa de barco siendo esta una solución vanguardista que rompe, pero a la vez consiguen integrar el volumen en el total del conjunto.

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<sup>18</sup> Zafrilla Tobarra, Ricardo. *Universidades Laborales: un proyecto educativo falangista para el mundo obrero (1955-1978). Aproximación histórica*. P. 164.

<sup>19</sup> NODO 526 A, año XI.

<sup>20</sup> NODO 526 A, año XI.

La parcela donde se asienta el volumen es una parcela irregular estando uno de sus lados incrustado en la línea general del edificio mientras que los otros

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## (Re)Discovering the Objects and the Actions of Lina Bo Bardi

Mara Sanchez Ortiz

When Lina Bo Bardi is remembered we usually think only about her built work but she was more else: a lot of years, places and creative atmospheres where she opened new ways of creating; she replanted and rethought about all the imaginative tools with an exceptional thought and an energetic intellectual encourage, and she did it in a men world. The first time somebody talked to me about Lina Bo Bardi it was in 2001 during a University staying in Latin America, then I took a bus from Rosario, Argentina, to Sao Paulo, Brazil, to visit the Museum of Art of Sao Paulo (MASP) that she designed in that city in 1968.

Later, in 2004, I visited the Biennial of Venice where I found as a surprise a monographic exhibition about the work of Bo Bardi. Metaphorically, Lina returned to Italy at that moment, the country she left in 1946.

In that exhibition I discovered the meaning of the objects she created. After that experience the fascination on her work came and I started a deep research about her way of understanding architecture and world. I travelled to Italy and Brazil trying to discover in those places her biography, her writings and her vital trajectory.

In the Venetian exhibition, I discovered a special object designed in 1988, *Grande Vaca Mecânica* [the Great Mechanics Cow] that it was inside a magical atmosphere consisting on a forest of colored masts and other imaginary objects coexisting with furniture, models and drawings of Lina's projects.

The Great Mechanics Cow is a display case and it synthesizes imagination and technology. Lina linked these two worlds,

to get a third one that was universal and Brazilian at the same time. She wrote:

' Great Mechanics Cow— Sculptural Object / Resounding and illuminating installation / Container articulated exhibitor for Brazilian popular craftwork objects..." Miracle Box"...'

However, was Bo Bardi's architecture a playground where her objects were displayed?

The complex creative work of Lina Bo Bardi is a response to European modernity from Brazil, differentiating itself from other works in the new expressive tools used and in the importance of collectiveness in public spaces. Her work can really be understood when user is involved and becomes a creator.

The limits of her creative universe disappeared when she travelled to Brazil to live in Sao Paulo in 1947; then, a new age of reflection and intense making appeared, with new criteria and priorities that are still existing and necessary nowadays.

Her idea on public spaces is an importance of her life experience, with a clear didactic vocation, and leading her to attempt to teach others how to observe and act upon the reality of the world around them and transform it. For Lina, architecture was not a utopia but a way to get collective wishes.

The second time I travelled to Brazil, I was thirty-one, the same age that Lina was when she travelled to Brazil firstly, and I followed the same steps she followed, I visited the same Brazilian destinations that she loved so much: Rio of Janeiro, Uberlandia, Sao Paulo, Salvador of Bahia and the rest of the northeast of Brazil.

Lina Bo Bardi opened new ways of architecture and linked our profession with the social problems of the moment [very similar to the current ones] design, arts and craft, art and participation. She changed the way of understand architecture and she changed the way of understand Brazil in the world.

She said that Brazil was free of prejudices and Occidental academicism, that Brazil didn't have a canonical and culture tradition but Brazil was another thing, Brazil was spontaneity and a bit of fullness for Lina, but that fullness was beauty her, so I have wanted to take part of that fullness too.

Achillina di Enrico Bo was born in Rome in 1914. She graduated in the eternal city as an architect in 1939. Her young drawings reveal us that she was a dreamy and humorous teenager. She used to relate funny stories too, as "Stones against Diamonds", in which we can deduce her deep character and sophistication. She wrote:

Ever since I was a child I've collected things: pebbles, shells from Abruzzi, strands of wire, little screws. While I was still very young I remember something momentous happened in the form of a chicken my mother was preparing for our Sunday roast. In its stomach was a collection of glass and pebbles worn smooth by water, in shades of green, pink, black, brown and white. My mother gave them to me, and that was the start of my collection, which I kept in a little powder compact, a present of my aunt Esterina, made from the blue steel of German guns abandoned after the France's

victory in the First World War.  
I was six years old.

When Rome was destroyed in 1941, Lina decided to move into Milano in search of a free cultural horizon. There, and during the war, she lived surrounded by contemporary creators. She kept in taught with famous artists and intellectuals, such as Giorgio De Chirico or Bruno Zevi.

Lina Bo Bardi was a legitimate daughter of the historical European Avant-garde. Her dream was close to the willpower of change of this movement. She always confirmed: 'The true international Avant Garde of the twentieth century, the metaphor, is still alive.'

She worked for Gio Ponti. They two started to review vernacular Italian architecture and collected crafts. Critics remember them as the last Humanists of the last century. Those craft-objects were economically appropriate for users. At the same time, she designed from that point of view as we can see in this emergency cot. Lina's sister, explained:

'Lina made a cot with a box of fruit! She found all that later in Brazil where natives made a lamp with a can or a branch of a tree.'

In nineteen forty-six, Lina Bo and Pietro María Bardi married. They moved into Rio de Janeiro to create an exhibition of Italian paintings.

The creative universe of Lina expanded its limits. The Bardi's were invited before to create the first Museum of Art of São Paulo. The couple worked very hard on this cultural project to open it in 1948.

After moving to São Paulo, Lina began a new stage in her life of reflection and intense creation with new criteria and priorities. Craftsmanship, design, and architectural production were all reconsidered and rethought, but always combining her creativity and intellectual courage.

They lived in Sao Paulo for the rest of their lives with the exception of seven years that Lina moved to Salvador da Bahia.

She taught at the School of Fine Arts at University of Bahia, created and directed the Modern Art Museum in 1958.

During those years she researched and explored the native craft-production, primal but very creative, she used to say that it was "the hand of the working-class".

She collected and inventoried diary crafts, votive offerings, toys, and so on. She deduced that recycling was the main tool, a concept of techno-craft.

From the first stage in her professional career she learned the trade and the necessary graphic and intellectual tools for the development of her career, commencing with the creation of museums.

In Bahia she imported some ideas of the German Bauhaus and experimented with them in the *Solar do Unhão* that she rehabilitated. The museum was a didactic experience increasing knowledge and culture and both were completed with each School of Industrial Design.

Lina's contact with these Brazilian handicrafts combined with European tools, tied to new field of design motivated her to fabricate objects. She created an inventory of human kind that changed her point of view and from which she extracted a creative process from a country which was humble yet able to resolve everyday needs without any intention whatsoever of obtaining beautiful objects, although this is exactly what they were. Her outlook, a product of the avant-garde, turned out to be anthropological, capturing the human essence.

Lina Bo Bardi activated the city of Salvador of Bahia: exhibitions, university activity, the Daily News of Salvador etcetera. These activities were developed and carried out

with Gilberto Gil, Pierre Verger, and Jorge Amado and together they were able to introduce Bahia into the country's artistic circuit, which at the same time, was seeking to become international.

Let's return to São Paulo. Before living in Salvador, Lina worked as a museographer and furniture designer. Lina intended to educate "the taste of the masses" from designing and turned into Brazilian economic driving force for change. This was the teaching-productive goal of Bardi's and it took place successfully.

In nineteen fifty-one, Lina designed the Bardi's Bowl. The deliver was in pieces: a spherical seat and a structure. The first one was available in different finishes. The Bardi's Bowl could be a user-adjustable furniture.

The seat was stackable and could be supported directly on the ground or on a metallic structure, which elevates us thirty-five centimeters from the floor.

Bo Bardi designed and industrialized this chair to join functionality, seriation, diversity of materials and multiplicity of positions for the user. It had an animalistic evocation like other contemporary designs.

Lina devoted an enormous effort to advertisement, doing a photographic campaign. She was the woman in shadow in the cover of the magazine "Interiors".

The MoMA Design Department acquired this magazine cover [that was awarded] and another poster designed by Lina too, we refer to the sign of the Agriculture Exposition. So, the international recognition of Lina Bo Bardi began as a designer.

The same year she created the Bardi's Bowl, she made reality her own house, named later the "Glass House". The house was not stackable like the chair; its roof was curve slightly [like a protective hand] to throw out the rainy water.

However, with this concept of house she worked the idea of an economic and social housing. She dispersed and repeated the Glass House as a pattern on the territory.

If we look at the current aerial image of the "Glass House" and we go across it, we cannot discover the old scenario of this house. Previously, a tea treasury devastated the Brazilian Atlantic Forest. Bo Bardi recovered this landscape.

The first action was controlling the access to the house with simultaneous perceptions: a kind of a choreographic movement.

The land support was resolved with a geographical strategy: a network of walls regulating the hill. The "Glass House" incorporated time for the full meaning of the project when it was absorbed by vegetation.

Lina built this house with concrete, metal and glass; however, the geographical and hydrographic-landscaping project was resolved with concrete, stones, colored tile, water and green.

Returning to the "Glass House", we can find dualities. The private and individual part of the house [as cells] is protected from the outside and its open slightly to a controlled courtyard, so, it's close to the earth because it's the most fragile fragment.

In this way, it was like the seat of the Bardi's Bowl when it's directly on the ground.

Over the years, many architects, students and artists visited the house and participated in the gatherings there: Max Bill, Gilberto Gil, Oscar Niemeyer, the *Tropicalista* circle, Aldo Van Eyck, Charlotte Perriand, Alexander Calder and so on.

The lounge of the "Glass House" became a kind of cultural forum, close to Lina's idea of public space.

Otherwise, this public part of the house might exist or even not; such as the Bardi's

Bowl on its structure. Symbolically, this house is like a subtly supported insect that can take flight at any moment.

The first time I visited the Glass House it was empty because of its restoration and it was when I could understand all this house was a *piazza* and a *tetto*.

These dualities were Bo Bardi's manifesto about the way of life she proposed.

Lina abstracted and synthesized them when she designed an insect-lamp, mimetic with its scenery and a kind of metamorphosis between nature and technic.

With this bug, she reflected on the scenario in which the "Glass House" inhabited, this "glassy object" could disappear in front of the observer magically.

Was the "Glass House" a transpose of an animal suspended on the Morumbi hill ready to go?

Lina used to work in the great hall of the "Glass House" looking at the city sleeping, there; she designed the new Museum of Art of Sao Paulo, that we called MASP, situated in the Paulista Avenue.

The MASP plays with a duality: the own concept of Museum between Le Corbusier's and Mies Van der Rohe's idea and it results a magic and floating box in concrete and glass over eight meters high and generate a void of seventy-four meters.

Bo Bardi had thought about this urban void at the Museum of Art in São Vicente. She tested there what happened under the building when it was left in a maritime context.

Inside, she created a space, nearly surreal. Let's make an experiment now.

If we mix the photomontage that Lina Bo Bardi created for this museum with other of her works, we have these three drawings with different techniques.

The repeated perspective is similar to the surreal window. A window as a metaphor

of the eye and the boundary between inside and outside.

We could understand these three images performed for three exhibition spaces as a single image and the result is a cluster of ideas. They loaded with tips, communication, research without the intention of been modern, original or exotic, but they are created from an absolute freedom of expression.

Well, in fact with this exercise we can get the atmosphere that Lina designed for the MASP.

This Museum was as if it was almost anything, "ready to go". We deduce that Lina Bo Bardi's architecture was a support for activities, in which the glass was the invisible limit between illusion and reality. As a matter of act, objects converted in a creative laboratory to get that illusion of reality comes true.

She created urban infrastructures to inhabit in them collectively and participate, in a way of learning and playing.

Therefore, she generated temporary atmospheres. The Great Mechanics Cow that we already narrated at the beginning of this lecture could have inhabited under the MASP.

The futurist Italian artist, Fortunato Depero came early with this idea as follows: "The city is a place for casual meetings, random and almost dreamlike, the location of the staging of existence."

These are evidences for understanding the double condition of Bo Bardi's work: utopian and pragmatic.

Until now, we have wandered around three bobardian works. Three scales, three situations, three actions and three spaces for participation. This spatial idea continued metamorphosing in other objects. First, the creative process of Lina got be reflected in the design of furniture; after, defining the objects and the atmospheres they inhabited.

*Tropicália* [also known as *Tropicalismo*] is the Brazilian artistic movement that got up in the late nineteen sixties. The Tropicalism's circle hailed from Bahia, the heartland of Afro-Brazilian culture, took an axe to these old divisions, invoking Oswald de Andrade's 1928 "Cannibalist Manifesto". This avant-garde brought art to life discursing with native postulates and with different references of international art, such as Art Povera, Conceptual Art and above all Pop Art.

The work of Lina Bo Bardi was a kind of precursor of *Tropicalismo* because she created situations of group surprise, confusion and exaltation, generating new relationships between the user and the place and a change in the sense of reality. Between 1968 and 1985, Lina carried out creative works for cinema and theatre, and particularly for the Office Theatre, the focus being on experimental culture and on the protests by people from São Paulo. The remodeling of this old garage, which Lina commenced together with Edson Elito in nineteen eighty, had to do with the idea of architecture and theatre, two close concepts for the architect. In fact, Lina returned a piece of street to Sao Paulo, through the Office Theatre that is a kind of magnetic public space for the city, a kind of assemble space.

In 1977, Lina began another collective project in the city of São Paulo, the SESC Pompéia, recovering an historic barrel factory and turning it into a culture, leisure and sports center. Bo Bardi incorporated the program acquired by the abandoned building itself and that neighbors in the area had manipulated for their own practice.

Lina used to narrate the creation of the SESC as follows:

The first time that I entered the abandoned factory Pompeia, in nineteen seventy-six, what really fascinated me,

thinking about a possible recovery to transform the existing space (...), was the rational English structure of the nineteenth century (...) I understood in my first visit that architecture was the natural response to a gripping work full of stories. My second visit was on Saturday, the atmosphere was completely different: (...) fathers and mothers, happy children, elders, all of them were having a very good time, all together.

The children were running, teenagers were playing football and basketball under the rain that strained through the cracks of the covers. Moms were preparing sandwiches and barbecue at the entrance of the street; there was also a puppet theatre...

I thought, all of this should continue with all this happiness. I went back again many other times on Saturdays and Sundays, trying to fix all of those funny and popular scenes in my head.

I found architecture in reality and I put it in value, to bring it to the surface and I gave it the form that it needs: to allow that what already happens should organize the city that we wish.

Lina completed the story of the visits to the factory, describing the day she found a closed door, she was fascinated with the following scene, and she deduced the final topic of the project:

The idea of free time was the key in the project that turned

her look towards the elderlies that were just enjoying much more time than current other users of the recycled factory. They were dancing in a room and the doors were closed because they were feeling embarrassed for being dancing but they were old people.

Lina ordered to open the doors and invited young people to dance with old people while children were running and enjoying under their legs. So the doors of the factory threw below in order that all of them were together, elderly, young and children. All of them were dancing and were taking part of the new Factory Pompéia. Little by little the users began to lift the arms and to dance, also in the drawings that Lina made.

The annotated uses by the residents only needed a formal condition that it was shaping them, that was sheltering them and was putting them in relation.

She completed the new factory with two interconnected towers for aquatic sports and football. She called this architectural ensemble, *cidadela da liberdade* [the citadel of freedom].

Since the opening there was a lingering festive spirit in the inaugurations and exhibitions that acted as a catalyst for the centre. Lina developed many of these activities herself, being the cultural director of the architectural complex.

In 1968, Lina Bo Bardi had proposed to move out the art from MASP to the rest of the city. It was the "train of Arts". In SESC Pompeia, she bears in mind to bring all the culture to SESC, and for this, she designed the small train of carts. This mechanic collective and moving object was a reminiscent of the factory Pompéia.

The machinery for the train could have been the Great Mechanics Cow, which contained the popular and the high culture, the creativity and the reality, the



freedom and the rigor. We could have manipulated this object to appreciate the way of made.

Now, we can overstep the limits of culture and enter, as Johan Huitzinga said “in the play-world”.

I’d like to finish this article with a reflexion about the same public project I started, the MASP, and the first plaything I discovered, the Great Mechanic Cow.

In 1946, Lina’s husband, Pietro María Bardi, was engaged to create and direct the new Museum of Art of São Paulo. The museum opened the doors of its first location in the center of the city, supported by the journalist Assis Chateaubriand. Ten years later, the new seat of the Museum was on Paulista Avenue, was projected by Lina Bo Bardi. At that moment the MASP was considered the most important museum in Latin America.

It was inaugurated in 1968 by the Queen Elizabeth the current Queen of England. The powerful tectonics of this well-known work of architecture, was intensified by the red color of its structure and the passing of time, has turned it into an iconic image of the city of São Paulo.

The Great Mechanic Cow, designed by Lina Bo Bardi twenty years later, was a zoomorphic object, a cow with a futuristic appearance to be displayed in the MASP: an expositor within another expositor. All of the objects that Lina found in Salvador of Bahia could be inside this cow, so those objects were art too and they were exhibited inside the MASP.

This collective toy focused on the simultaneity between the popular and the mechanical, and it created a playful atmosphere. Both expositors speculated on the identification and contemporary role of the museum. In the temporary dialogue between that toy and the museum Lina expanded on the airy essence of the museum, on freedom and

on the role of emptiness, as well as on the potential of the spatial lack of architecture.

She declared:

In the great void of the MASP on Paulista Avenue it was possible to put up an art exhibition but also a great Park for children. Its eighty meters of light were not anything; This was the main experiment of the international scene at that moment... It was inaugurated in nineteen sixty-eight and it was a large commotion in the country. I'm not saying that the Museum of Art of São Paulo is beautiful... it is not. I sought not beauty, but freedom. Intellectuals didn't like it but people did. People liked it very much. People wondered: who did create this? And it was answered: It was a woman!

The specific narration arising from the complete review of the works of Lina Bo Bardi in this lecture aims to: research her theoretical and practical experiences, as well as the academic keys defined by my own as “vital laboratory of Lina Bo Bardi”; reflect on her collective actions- learn, inhabit, play- and from a different playful standpoint, a selection of objects or collective toys and the key actions are established once, place over them on the public spaces which the objects inhabit and conclude that these, objects and collective actions, are precursors to Lina Bo Bardi’s architecture.

These are the reasons of why Lina was, and still is, a source of inspiration.

When the Almirante Jaceguay made port in Rio de Janeiro in 1946, an Italian couple disembarked, carrying in their baggage no small number of paintings: the man was a

gallery owner and art critic who since the thirties had developed the idea of bringing culture to Italian immigrants in South America. But they carried something else with them too. The woman, his wife, brought the desire to create modern architecture in a young nation, to create a new world and Lina created nearly impossible worlds, full of irony and fantasy, all for people relating intellectuality and playful, a big party for children and adults, dreaming, playing and learning, all together.

In other words, we could say that Lina Bo Bardi developed a sort of “Spatial Symphony” in which she designed objects to display, to get a playful spirit thanks to the actions, that make closer the collective memory to all of us.

The combination of her languages close to children's was an expression of playful, dreamlike and childish because when Lina was creating she was like a little girl playing to build cities.

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## **III RESEARCH AND INDUSTRIES**

## Developing Industrial Design

### An Improbable Woman: Portuguese New State's Dictatorship and Design Leadership

Maria Helena Souto

Portuguese design has played a key role in our aesthetic and cultural memory between the late 1950's and 1974, the era of the discipline institutionalization through the INII (National Institute of Industrial Research). Here the actions of a group of women designers lead by Maria Helena Matos (1924-2015) became fundamental for the affirmation, strengthening, authorship and disclosure process of Portuguese Industrial Design.

In the late 1950's, economic policies of the Portuguese New State's dictatorship changed with an enhancement of the industrial sector. One of the dynamic efforts to increase this sector was the establishment of the INII which began work in 1959 and was composed by several laboratories associated to technology that had the purpose of supporting industrial sectors, within a policy defined in the second Foment Plan (1959-1964), which led to significant changes in the 1960s.

In 1960, the architect António Teixeira Guerra (1929-2012), with the support of the INII's director, engineer António Magalhães Ramalho (1907-1972), created the Art and Industrial Architecture Nucleus, whose first activity was to develop aspects related to the designing of products and their production methods, establishing a seminal industrial design sector.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Helena Souto, "Design em Portugal (1960-1974): Dialéctica entre tradição, modernidade e utopia", *Arte & Utopia* (Lisbon: FCSH / CHAIA / DINAMIA'CET / FCT, 2013), 171-81.

These actions began at the Marinha Grande's manually crafted crystal-ware factory, the Fábrica-Escola Irmãos Stephens (Stephens Brothers' Factory School), where Maria Helena Matos had already worked, and where she deepened her knowledge in glass design through a scholarship granted by Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation). Knowing her work, Magalhães Ramalho invited her at the end of 1960 to collaborate with the Art and Industrial Architecture Nucleus, where she would replace Teixeira Guerra as responsible for it.

Under her leadership, the Nucleus organized in 1965 the 1st Fortnight of Industrial Aesthetics, presenting a series of conferences lectured by several European experts on industrial design especially concerned "to make accessible to all officers, technicians and artists the most modern ideas and work processes that interest the progress and expansion of industrial activities and about the most important and increasing current problem of industrial design"<sup>2</sup>.

This event was accompanied by an International Exhibition of Industrial Design<sup>3</sup> which established a milestone in the Portuguese design history: it

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<sup>2</sup> Tradução das conferências proferidas durante a 1ª Quinzena de Estética Industrial. (Lisboa: Ministério da Economia - Instituto Nacional de Investigação Industrial, 1966), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Exposição Internacional de Industrial Design. (Lisboa: Instituto Nacional de Investigação Industrial, 1966).

simultaneously materialized the first design display in Portugal and also integrated the English term design in the lexicon of the official discourse, when appearing in the title of the exhibition and its catalogue.

This was a daring realization by Maria Helena that contributed decisively to the assertion of design in Portugal. Moreover, she leveled men and women as designers, overcoming gender and putting in dialogue different crafts, such as Daciano da Costa (1930-2005) and José Maria Cruz de Carvalho (1930-2015) industrially produced furniture along with her own glasses and Miria Toivola (1933) ceramics for SECLA Factory.

Subsequently, in 1970 Maria Helena gave a favourable response to the challenge presented by designers Cruz de Carvalho and João Constantino (1940-1999) to gather a Portuguese Design Exhibition in 1971, under the patronage of the INII through the Art and Industrial Architecture Nucleus. In order to develop this remarkable task, she had the approval of the engineer José de Melo Torres Campos (the second Director of the Institute), to hire two young women designers – Alda Rosa (1936) and Cristina Reis (1945) - to assist on the exhibition production, namely working on its visual identity.

Held in March 20-29, 1971 at the FIL (International Fair of Lisbon), the main goal of this exhibition was to bring together the work that best represented the state of art in Portuguese design, for which included the projects presentation of sixty-seven designers, as a total of two hundred and sixty products. Most of these came from forty-five manufacturers, with only a few pieces submitted individually. In the exhibitions catalogue, the Nucleus established design as a "democratization of useful-pleasant, useful-comfortable that is no longer a privilege for a few"

making it "accessible to the general public"<sup>4</sup>. In November, this exhibition had a second presentation in the city of Oporto, on the Stock Exchange building whose iron and glass structure, welcomed the display of the Portuguese design products.

Following this 1st Exhibition, the Art and Industrial Architecture Nucleus finally changed to Industrial Design Nucleus with Maria Helena Matos as leader and, in 1973 the Nucleus organized the 2nd Portuguese Design Exhibition.

Once again, this exhibition was shown at the FIL (International Fair of Lisbon), in March 10-22, 1973, conducted by the Nucleus, and conceived by António Sena da Silva (1926-2001) and the Cooperative Praxis. As a result of this display, the design finally began to have a larger public recognition in Portugal and ceased to be understood as a simple embellishment of the product to a higher level of sales, but as a project-based subject that ensures the quality concept of industrial products, confirmed by the large number of stands, shown through the products representative from various companies, products submitted individually or through the attention given by the general and specialized press.<sup>5</sup>

In the aftermath of the Nucleus actions, Maria Helena would influence some enlightened industrials to understand that a metadesign approach in Portuguese industry answered to the quality demands of its industrial products, in order to achieve a competitive global market.

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<sup>4</sup> Iª Exposição de Design Português. (Lisboa: Instituto Nacional de Investigação Industrial, 1973), p. 115.

<sup>5</sup> IIª Exposição de Design Português (Lisboa: Instituto Nacional de Investigação Industrial, 1973).

## Stanka Knez, m. Lozar - A Slovenian Textile Designer in Early Socialist Yugoslavia

Maja Lozar Štamcar

*The purpose of pattern in printed textiles should be the expression of flow and rhythm which will move sympathetically with its surroundings, distribution of colour areas, and to give visual pleasure and tranquility on the one hand, and interest and thrill on the other.*

Tibor Reich 1960<sup>1</sup>

Stanka Knez was born into a clerks' family in Ljubljana in 1935. She was always passionately drawing, a coloured pencil constantly in hand, and at fourteen was enrolled in the Arts and Crafts School in her home city. Prof Črtomir Zorec (1907-1991),<sup>2</sup> a pre-WWII student of the Arts and Crafts School in Prague, induced her to enlist in the five-year textile course he created after he had been a teacher, textbook author and principal at the Textile school in Kranj. In the chaotic revolutionary post-Second World War years students at the Ljubljana Arts and Crafts School were provided with a creative as well as structured environment.<sup>3</sup> Many of the teaching staff

came from Ljubljana and Zagreb Art Academies and adhered to contemporary artistic movements grown in Vienna, Prague, Italy and Germany. Knez was tutored by architects Bogomila Avčin Pogačnik, Janko Omahen and Gizela Šuklje, a student of Prof Jože Plečnik, Srečko Kotar, the sculptor, Marjan Pogačnik the printmaker, Stane Dremelj the sculptor and medal maker, and Nikolaj Omersa the painter and illustrator. In addition to the general secondary-school curriculum with art history and history, the main subjects of the first year were modelling, freehand and architectural drawing; of the second year textile fibres, dyeing, technology, decorative, freehand and figurative drawing; of the third year technology, types of weaving, surface designing, printing, freehand and professional drawing as well as hands-on training; of the fourth year, freehand drawing and hands-on training, and of the fifth year creative drawing and costume history. Summers were partly spent in textile factories where young designers got first-hand knowledge of actual fabric-making processes. Of all the school's

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<sup>1</sup> Lesley Jackson, *Twentieth-Century Pattern Design. Textile & Wallpaper Pioneers* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 105, after Terence Conran, *Printed Textile Design* (Studio Publications: London, 1957), 48.

<sup>2</sup> Gregor Kocjan, »Črtomir Zorec, oris njegovega dela« / a sketch of his works, in Beba Jenčič et al. (eds.), *Avguštinov zbornik Gorenjski kraji in ljudje 24* (Kranj: Gorenjski muzej 2003), 194-200.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Spominska knjiga 1888-1938*. Ob petdesetletnici izdala Državna tehniška srednja šola Ljubljana / The 1888-1938 Commemorative Album. (On the 50th Anniversary Published by the State Technical School of Ljubljana: Ljubljana, 1938; Andrej Bremec, *50 let ustvarjalnega pogleda 1946-1996*. / Fifty Years of a Creative Point of View.

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Secondary School of Design and Photography (Srednja šola za oblikovanje in fotografijo: Ljubljana) 1996. The atmosphere at the school itself and in the artistic circles in Ljubljana in the wake of the Second World War has been superbly sketched in the memoirs of Marjan Pogačnik (Milček Komelj, *Kronika Marjana Pogačnika o zaljubljenih v umetnost / The Chronicle of Marjan Pogačnik about People in Love with Art* (Ljubljana: KUD Logos, 2005, passim). In 1960 the school's name was modernized into the School of Design.

courses<sup>4</sup> the textile curriculum was best suited to the industrial type of design. After graduation, together with several of her schoolmates Knez soon found employment at the Pattern Design Studio<sup>5</sup> in Ljubljana, launched a few years previously with the intention of providing weaving and printing designs to domestic fabric-making factories. Industrious and creative, meticulous and brisk, unassuming and sociable, Knez found herself fully equipped to work in her chosen profession. At just twenty-one, in 1956 she became a full member of Slovenian Designers' Association (DLUUUS).<sup>6</sup>

In the first half of the twentieth century, the aftermath of both the First and the Second World Wars brought about a pressing need to provide the market with unexpensive yet also good-quality goods. Following the horrors of the 1940s, Europe on both sides of the Iron curtain was keen to embrace life and have fun again. In the USA the New Look of 1947 by Christian

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<sup>4</sup> Architecture, Artistic metalwork, Ceramics, Decorative painting, Embroidery and lace-making, Interior decoration, Print-making and Wood-carving.

<sup>5</sup> Together with the Experimental Weaving Shop in Kamnik, the studio was affiliated to the Textile Research Institute in Maribor. Uroš Vagaja, »O tekstilnih vzorcih« / On Textile Patterns, *Arhitekt* 2/3 (1952), 18-20; Franjo Lipovec, »Kamniška tekstilna industrija« / Kamnik Textile Industry, *Kamniški zbornik* 1 (1955), 245-249.

<sup>6</sup> The same Association bore a succession of official names: since its foundation in 1951 till 1954: Društvo za dekorativne umetnosti / The Society of Decorative Arts; between 1954 and 1967: Društvo likovnih umetnikov uporabne umetnosti Slovenije (DLUUUS) / The Association of Slovenian Visual Artists of Applied Arts; between 1967 and 1975: Društvo likovnikov-oblikovalcev Slovenije (DLOS) / The Association of Slovenian Visual Artists - Designers; and since 1975: Društvo oblikovalcev Slovenije (DOS) / Slovenian Designers' Association. Lozar Štamcar, Maja. »Društvo oblikovalcev Slovenije prvo desetletje (1951-1961)«, *Acta Historiae Artis Slovenica* 15 (2011), 164 and note 25.

Dior took off with a new femininity of full bell-shaped skirts in an abundance of silks and other fine fabrics. In bankrupt countries, on the other hand, the quickest way to express the overwhelming joy at the arrival of peace was by using cheap colourful floral cotton-printed fabrics. Due to the measures introduced by the first and second five-year economic plans of the newly communist Yugoslavia which had little to do with the existential needs of the population, for Slovenians the after-war relief was delayed for almost a decade. To avoid hunger, large imports of grain and other foodstuffs, raw materials, fuels and machinery had to be bought in the West. The badly needed convertible currency could only be obtained by exports of consumer goods. At home, on the other hand, staple foods, let alone consumer goods such as ready-to-wear clothing<sup>7</sup> were rationed well into the fifties and in the decades to come shortages were permanently connected with daily life. There were no imports either. The ideologically-bred distribution of goods standing for genuine markets provided extra limited assortments of home-made low-quality fabrics, for womanfolk to sew for themselves what clothes, curtains and other items their families needed. Since 1955 the Ljubljana Fair annually staged the national Fashion Fair, and in the late 1950s and early 1960s to the model of similar western displays in Croatia the Zagreb Fair intended the Family and Household exhibition to improve the quality of home-made goods. Slovenian exhibits there were by far the best on all counts;<sup>8</sup> so huge was namely

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<sup>7</sup> Marija Simčič, »Konfekcija v ilegali« / Clandestine ready-to-wear clothing, *Tovariš*, 5, 1968, 6061.

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Informator* [Newsletter of the DLUUUS], 22. 6. 1961, 11; *Informator*, 12, 1962, 3-4; *Informator*, 16, December 1963, 4; *Informator*, July 1965, 9.

the difference in comparison with the rest of Yugoslavia, made up of countries with little or no tradition either in textile industry, fashion or interior decoration design. The fabrics and clothes shown by home manufacturers in trendy patterns and colours in the three Slovenian-made (and translated to other Yugoslavian languages) existing magazines *Naša žena* (*Our Woman* since 1945), *Maneken* (*The Fashion Model* since 1957) and *Naš dom* (*Our Home* since 1967) were not on offer in shops, except as export left-overs. In the early 1950s export-oriented government-appointed directors of nationalized factories drastically increased the numbers of the unqualified workforce and mass-produced domestically-woven woolen, flaxen, some silk, and above all cotton textiles. By mid-1960s these shifted towards various mixtures and synthetics. Our industry was unable to follow in the steps of the western development of cellulose and synthetic fibre fabrics, which were sturdier, cheaper, lighter, easier to maintain and had wholly novel characteristics. And it was not only with the materials that our industry could no longer keep up with. Home consumption remained almost depleted of appealing patterns even though they were being made by our designers. Journalists as well as designers were rhetorically asking why, over and over again and at the same time careful not to expose the core of the problem. Slovenian society namely had been thrown into an over-all egalitarianism.<sup>9</sup> Pre-war educated and affluent consumers were mostly gone and with them their cultivated tastes. As the result of an almost complete absence of

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<sup>9</sup> »On the street one still meets men and women in totally identical coats, suits and dresses, as if there were wearing uniforms«. An anonymous article commenting on the Ljubljana Fashion Fair, *Naša žena* 21 (1961).

artistic directors in manufacturing,<sup>10</sup> and next to none knowledgeable wholesalers or shop managers,<sup>11</sup> among the few available products there were even fewer attractive ones. The vicious circle was complete and there was little that the many talented designers could do in the middle of it could do.

Despite the fact that most of Slovenian up-to-date pre-war manufacturing machinery and expertise were exploited to build factories in the south of the vast state, the long-established Slovenian know-how in textiles together with their Central European work-ethics were still capable - until the arrival of the overwhelming exponential western advancements in technology and materials - of producing saleable fabrics, albeit for mostly low-end markets. Textile designers, predominantly female, were the uncredited first link in this production chain. To stay abreast with the latest Italian trends, the Pattern Design Studio team (including Stanka Knez-Lozar) were sent yearly to fashion trade shows in Milan, and were given access to international quality fashion and design magazines.<sup>12</sup> In the 1960s incomplete market-oriented reforms hoping for infusions of capital, technology and managerial know-how somewhat

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<sup>10</sup> Poglajen, Viljem, »O odnosu tekstilne industrije do potrošnika / On the attitude of the textile industry to a consumer«, *Sodobno gospodinjstvo* 7-8 (1956), 831-32.

<sup>11</sup> To by-pass the rigid and unyielding wholesale and retail managers, in Ljubljana in 1961 the consortium of Slovenian textile producers opened the House of Fashion department store in which their production was sold directly to consumers. (Cf. *Tovariš*, 50/8, 1961, 8; Sever, Meta, »Kako je z izbiro blaga na našem tržišču? / What about the variety of goods on our market?«, *Naša žena* 22/2, 1962, 46-47).

<sup>12</sup> The British export magazine *The Ambassador*, The European Textile-Export Journal. Internationale Messe Frankfurt. Export- und Mustermesse *Top Textile*, the Italian design magazine *Domus*, French and German women's magazines *Elle* and *Burda* and a few others.



alleviated the domestic day-to-day situation. In addition, Cold War threats prompted the USA to continue providing Yugoslavia with aid, in finance, equipment, expertise and supplies, as well as in sporadic pop-culture treats, such as Hollywood films, jazz, rock-and-roll dancing, art and design exhibitions. In the early 1960s came a somewhat differently based approach to textile design than the previously primarily Italian dolce-vita variant. After several courses for architects, in June of 1963<sup>13</sup> and 1964 a group of eminent Swedish textile teachers came to Ljubljana to promote minimalistic Modernist Scandinavian design, which was then at its peak of popularity both in Europe and in the USA. The goal was not only for Slovenians to work with Swedish and Near-Eastern textile producers, but the carefully prepared lectures and workshops were aimed at the education of the entire textile designer – producer – seller – consumer sequence. Lozar also joined the so called Colour and Shape Club by attending the courses on colour compositions of textile patterns based on the Swedish colour-spectrum scheme.

In the Pattern Design Studio, Knez (Lozar after the marriage in 1958) had already evolved a distinctive style. Her designs in gouache (opaque watercolour) on paper, hightened with Indian ink, were charming, light and lyrical, detailed and balanced, engaging and with ever new vibrant colour hues. Young Lozar, in her twenties and soon early thirties, liked to have fun. She was an enthusiastic dancer of swing, charleston and twist and in 1959 attended the first Louis Armstrong jazz concert in Ljubljana just a few weeks before giving birth to a baby girl. Her bright personality was reflected in her designs. A keen observer, Lozar was inspired by her

immediate urban surroundings as well as by nature and came up with a profusion of joyful images. In addition to a variety of original patterns for gay floral cotton prints, breathing natural spontaneity or outlining a rigorous stylization, she revealed a unique lyrical vein with childlike motifs suited for summer cotton prints and nursery furnishing fabrics. Her crisp geometrical configurations were widely usable both for clothing and home-decorating. Here her acute sense of rhythm kicked in, structuring, as well as sub- and super-structuring individual shapes and motifs. Simultaneously the very first choice of colours came to life, sometimes creating an overall-sensation of a fine melody. Lozar proved herself to be an outstanding and unorthodox colourist. She was proficient at both intense and mute colour spectra, and seemingly never reused a single hue again. In the strict professional manner her meticulously executed designs were adapted to the capacities of existing roller and screen printing machines and to the poor availability of dyes (normally permitting only four- or five-colour schemes) in textile factories. She was also noted while designing to also bear in mind, if known, the intended uses of the printed (and woven) yardage, such as the various types of clothing or furnishings. As textiles' functions alternate between the stretched and free-flowing modes, hang well or are at their best with folds, her designs, taking into account the properties of the materials and all-important element of motion, were conceptualized accordingly. Lozar was also accomplished in customizing patterns' shapes and sizes to general fashionable and popular cuts of womens' skirts and dresses, even though the few active Slovenian fashion designers were not encouraged to work together with their textile colleagues. And yet it was frequently precisely a successful

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<sup>13</sup> *Informativni bilten kluba Barva in oblika / Information Bulletin of the Colour and Shape Club, 1/3, September 1963, 19.*

pattern and the idea captured in its lines coupled with an attractive colour scheme that gave the garment and a furnished room a soul and a meaning, to the point of creating a certain atmosphere.<sup>14</sup> A patterned fabric might be able to make one feel and communicate in a certain way, create the mystery and elegance of an evening and the vivacity of a summer day. Its rhythms could conjure up either a sense of orderliness and decisiveness, or of wit and teasing. Lozar's imagination provided whole sets of variants inside specific families of patterns, such as the by then popular paisleys, distinctive intricate patterns of curved feather- or droplet-shaped figures based on an Indian pinecone design on Kashmir shawls. She pushed on to explore the upcoming black-and-white op-art options<sup>15</sup> as well as the colourful psychedelic style<sup>16</sup> which in the hippy era was seeking to express the inner life of the psyche. By the mid-1960s, fashionable pattern motifs were being sourced on the one hand from the dynamic pop culture (with the newly-cherished television, car, plane and space imagery) and on the other hand from history and art history at large and worldwide impressive prehistoric and ancient civilizations in particular.

The next stage in the working process was to translate the design into a true pattern. Having mastered the ancient art of one- and two-way infinite pattern by balancing attractive singular motifs, Lozar skillfully composed sequences, repetitions,

combinations, divisions, circlings, etc. The selected designs were set in a proper repeat, choosing from a diversity of manners: in fashioning an interlocking density, by bridging or tiling, i.e. by identical-plane shapes covering an area without overlapping, by either creating seamless mirror repeats on both axes, half-step, half-brick or half-drop repeats. With her fine paintbrush, Lozar perfected these miniature masterpieces, not by mechanical repetition, but by knitting a pattern of variations on the chosen theme, balancing the new and the old, the vibrant and the quiet. Next still came the putting-together of diverse colour ways, i.e. combinations of ground-versus-motif colour and shade schemes, from which the manufacturer was to choose the final one or several of them to actually print on textiles. It is quite magical how with different colour compositions a pattern can change drastically, can not even be recognizable as the same one. Colour-way creating was therefore again an opportunity for Lozar to play with her imagination and usually come up with more propitious design studies than needed. Sometimes the studio also provided the technical service of carrying out the colour separations of a particular design pattern for the factory print production itself. Lozar's work was continuously being selected for (mostly export-oriented) printed textile yardage production by Slovenian factories such as the largest Tekstilindus Kranj (a merger of Tiskanina and Intex), MTT Maribor, Svila / Silk Maribor, and Zvezda – tiskane tkanine / printed fabrics Kranj and IBI Kranj; home-textile manufacturers, such as Svilanit Kamnik (towels), Volna Laško (woolen covers), Tekstilna tovarna Prebold (table sets, kitchen cloths, aprons), Induplati Jarše (curtains), Metka Celje (patterned bedding for adults and children) and Tekstilana Kočevje (bed covers); as well as

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<sup>14</sup> The eminent English art historian Ernst Gombrich dedicated one of his most unique books *The Sense of Order* to the importance of patterns in the arts.

<sup>15</sup> A Lozar's op-art design and a dress with its print on fabric made by MTT were shown by fashion designer and journalist Eva Pavlin (»M kot moda,« *Tovariš* 3, 1966, 67; and »M kot moda,« *Tovariš* 16, 1966, on the inner back cover).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Eva Pavlin, »M kot moda,« *Tovariš*, 4, 1967, 67.

others, Eksperimentalna tkalnica / Experimental Weaving Workshop Kamnik, Štota Ljubljana and Pletenina / Knitwear Ljubljana. Commissions also came from exclusive Yugoslav producers and manufacturers in Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Greece. Lozar's work was shown each year at the Ljubljana Fashion Fair. From the late 1950s to the early 1960s her work was also included into the Family and Household exhibition at the Zagreb Fair. Several of her designs which had been used for ready-to-wear outfits were published in the *Maneken* magazine. This portion of her work was mostly anonymous, whereas her other activities inside the Slovenian Designers' Association were not. In the 1950s and 1960s the textile design section of the Association was strong and thriving and Lozar was its very active member. For the country's textile (as well as furniture) exports it was very important that, as a subtle way of advertising, our top-quality design was shown at design exhibitions abroad. Hence the Yugoslav union of designers' associations appointed juries for various occasions and Lozar's designs were regularly chosen to appear abroad. With the need to please the home manufacturers much less in mind - few of her designs of this sort were used in fabric printing, Lozar was free to experiment. The twentieth century brought an exciting cross-fertilization between the fine<sup>17</sup> and textile arts. After the Second World War, Italian, British, American and Scandinavian artists and designers<sup>18</sup> were again keen to translate fine arts' latest movements into

<sup>17</sup> Many greatest painters and sculptors of the period were interested in making textile patterns, among them Henri Matisse, Paul Klee, Juan Miró and Henry Moore.

<sup>18</sup> Lucienne Day, Natalie Gibson, Alexander Girard, Jacqueline Groag, Maija Isola, Marian Mahler, Verner Panton, Giò Pomodoro, Emilio Pucci, Ken Scott, Piero Zuffi, to name but a few of the most well-known.

affordable home furnishings and clothing textiles. In the 1940s, American painter Jackson Pollock introduced an immanent pattern-like quality into his dynamic Action-painting, and so did the American and Italian Abstract Expressionists<sup>19</sup> in the 1950s. At the same time Italian textile design was much influenced by Lucio Fontana's spatialism, seeking expression through the exploration of infinite and interflowing spatial dimensions. There was furthermore a fascination for wax-resist dyeing or discharge printing techniques and the aesthetics of batik.<sup>20</sup> Under the impression of these global occurrences with a strong impact on fashion and textile design, Lozar's explorations went into several directions. Between her abstract, typically organic shapes, floral and water-related designs she developed a gentle and sensitive style of multi-layered depths of colour, commanding her virtual space with an overlapping of lines, streams behind main motifs with various orientations, gradations of tonality and light, and shortenings. She arranged her fine airy motifs in stripes or dispersed structures, creating a series subdued and graceful, discreet and gauzy images with no limitations in colour, line or surface. Several of this-style textile designs were proposed and accepted in 1960 for publication in the issue of *Mozaik* dedicated to textile art.<sup>21</sup> At the fourth

<sup>19</sup> After Second-World-War painters were inspired by the very first abstract compositions of 1910-12 by Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), who in connection with abstract painting emphasized its proximity to the applied arts. Cf. Herbert Read, *Zgodovina modernega slikarstva od Sezanna do Picassa* / Helena Menaše, trans., A Concise History of Modern Painting, Ljubljana: DZS 1969, 218-89, esp. 248.

<sup>20</sup> Malaysian batik was put forward as fine art in an exhibition in London in 1959, triggering huge interest (cf. »Textilkünste der Primitiven,« *Top Textile*, 1960, 41-43).

<sup>21</sup> *Mozaik. Časopis za umetnost i industrijsku estetiku / Revue d' Art et d' Industrie* (Beograd), a

DLUUUS exhibition at Modern gallery in 1961 in Ljubljana, Lozar was awarded second prize for her textile-print designs and hand-painted headscarfs. After having been commended at the internal Association's competition,<sup>22</sup> in 1963 along with the selected fellow DLUUUS members, she represented Slovenian-Yugoslav design with a hand-painted length of silk for a dress and a headscarf at the Fourth International exhibition of Industrial Design<sup>23</sup> at the Louvre Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. In 1964 the Yugoslav Designers' Association participated at the founding congress of the World Council for Applied Arts in New York. Lozar's artwork was also included into the photographic presentation.<sup>24</sup> In 1966 Lozar showed her silk headscarfs painted in the batik technique at the home exhibition of the DLUUUS section of one-off artwork in Ljubljana. In 1969 she again exhibited her textile designs abroad, this time in the very heart of Italian textile industry, in Busto Arsizio north-west of Milan.

The extended decade between the mid-1950s and mid-1960s in Slovenia was full of moderate optimism. In the slackened socialist-regime's daily routines the living standard was slightly improving, while the gap between our stagnation and western rapid advancement was widening. It was important to imitate the styles of living

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Yugoslav magazine in Serbian and French, 11, 1960.

<sup>22</sup> »President's [Niko Kralj] report of the work done in the two previous years«, *Informator*, 22 June 1961, 11; »Report on the work of the DLUUUS«, *Informator* 15, and 16, 1963, str... in julij 1965...

<sup>23</sup> The exhibition was companion of the Third ICSID – International Council of Societies of Industrial Design – Congress. *Informator*, 15, 1963, 7.

<sup>24</sup> *Informator* 25, 1965, 7-8. The photos were afterwards left at the Applied Arts Museum and the Museum of Modern Art, both in New York, USA. The World Council for Applied Arts is today known as the World Crafts Council, and its base is in Geneva.

and fashion so close beyond our western and northern borders, but simultaneously the scope of possibilities to do so and the understanding of the deep economical, technological and social changes which yearly generated the newest fashion trends were narrowing steadily. The organizers of the first three editions of the new institution of the Biennale of Industrial Design in Ljubljana in 1964, 1966 and 1968, mostly men and architects, particularly shunned textile design, even though it represents an industrial type of design *par excellence*. Towards the end of the 1960s the enthusiasm for launching fine textile design was largely spent.

### **Lozar's Collective Exhibitions**

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1956 First Yugoslav Exhibition of the Art and Industry, Museum of Applied Arts, Beograd, Yugoslavia

Since 1956 Lozar continuously took part in the designing of fabric collections for the yearly fashion shows, Ljubljana Fashion Fair, Slovenia

1957 Second DLUUUS Exhibition, Modern Gallery, Ljubljana

1957 – 1961 Yearly Exhibitions of Textile Design at the »The Family and Household« Exhibit, Zagreb Fair, Hrvatska

1958 Third DLUUUS Exhibition, Modern Gallery, Ljubljana, Slovenia

1959/1960 The Yugoslav Association of Applied Artists Exhibition, Poland (Warsaw) and the Soviet Union (Kiev, Ukraine and Tbilisi, Georgia)

1961 Fourth DLUUUS Exhibition, Modern Gallery, Ljubljana, Slovenia

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1963 Fourth International Exhibition of Industrial Design ICSID, Louvre / Museum of Decorative Arts, Paris, France

1964 Federal Exhibition of Applied Arts, Municipal Gallery, Ljubljana, Slovenia

1966 Slovenian Designers' Association One-off Design Exhibition, Ljubljana, Slovenia

1969 Sesta Esposizione Mercato Internazionale di Disegni per l'Industria Tessile, Busto Arsizio, Italia

### Her Published Works

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*Maneken* (Ljubljana: Gospodarsko razstavišče in Center za sodobno oblačenje in opremo, Paralele), 1, 1957, s.p.

*Mozaik: Časopis za umetnost i industrijsku estetiku* (Beograd), 11, 1960, 14, 21, 26, 27, 31, 36, 37, 39, 44, 45, 46, 54, 62, 64.

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*Tovariš: ilustrirana revija* (Ljubljana: *Delo*), 1966, 3, 67.

*Tovariš*, 22, 1966, 83.

*Maneken*, June 1967, 29.

*Tovariš*, 1968, 11.

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Second Prize for textile print designs and hand-painted headscarfs at the Fourth DLUUUS Exhibition (1961), Modern Gallery, Ljubljana

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# Female Design History in Croatia, 1930–1980: Context, Production, Influences – Tracing the Female Presence

Ana Bedenko

## Introduction

The project *Female Design History in Croatia, 1930-1980: Context, Production, Influences*<sup>1</sup> was initiated in 2014 with the aim of elucidating the female presence, along with its implications, on the Croatian design scene.<sup>2</sup>

Since designers launched it, one could argue that the primary impulse for this type of gender exclusive research was the need to identify one's predecessor and to learn more about the history and evolution of one's profession. Conjointly, it raises certain questions like - what was it like to be a woman and to work as a professional designer at a certain period? The article will further explain how the research went, present the results, and also roughly examine the female design narrative through several political and socio-economic system shifts. Due to the sheer volume of historical periods, we will not be able, at this stage, to probe more profoundly specific historical backdrops of each designer. Nonetheless, a more

complex and ambitious endeavour is prerequisite for the continuity of the research and will be explored later with great assiduity.

The article will try to trace possible thematic directions in which the research could develop at a later stage, therefore it functions as an overview of the potential research trajectories.

The title of the project "Dizajnerice", a Croatian word for a woman designer, was chosen deliberately in order to avoid the misconception that women were merely passers-by instead of active participants in their respective fields. The meaning is however lost in the translation since there is no English equivalent and the closest thing to it would be a woman designer or a female designer, a syntagm that plays right into the sexist linguistic mechanisms. The term female designers or female design that we must recur to, if only for the sake of acknowledging the existence of women designers, leads us to envision female design/art/architecture as a unified, ideological category. However, in the words of G. Pollock, to interpret the works of women only in the light of their femininity is to reproduce the tautological principle that teaches us nothing about what it is like to be a woman, do and create something as a woman.<sup>3</sup> A potential trap of these types of projects is that, while they strive to illuminate and confirm women's role and contribution to a certain field, they inadvertently

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<sup>1</sup>The project was initiated by Maja Kolar and Maša Poljanec, members of the Croatian design collective Oaza. Ana Bedenko works as a researcher on a project. Responsible for the organization: Croatian Designers Association and Croatian Designers Association Gallery.

<sup>2</sup>Design scene is a somewhat misleading term since there is no consistent historical overview of the Croatian design and its protagonists. The historical narrative focuses mainly on the 1950s, a period of great enthusiasm and in a sense utopian lens through which the design was viewed. The 1960s were a period of a more scientific approach, influenced greatly by the HfG in Ulm, but it has to be noted that the later period hasn't been properly and systematically researched.

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<sup>3</sup>Griselda Pollock, "(Feministička) socijalna povijest umjetnosti?" in Ljiljana Kolečnik (ed.), *Umjetničko djelo kao društvena činjenica*, (Zagreb: IPU, 2005), 268.

undermine their active participation in said field by reducing their engagement to a vacuum existing female sphere. That is why the research of a female design history should be thoroughly revised in the broader context of Croatian design historical narrative, however fragmentary and flawed it may be.

### **Project Research Methodology**

A relatively non-selective data gathering that would give us an approximate idea of the quantity of the designers and design niches in which they operated marked the beginning of the research. Going through the archive of Croatian Association of Artists of Applied Arts we assembled a large number of names. It was the only place to start since the Croatian Designers Association hadn't existed up until 1985. Unmistakable discrepancies in the degree to which the designers had been researched were evident from the start. Some women like Ivana Tomljenović Meller<sup>4</sup> or the designers from Jugokeramika<sup>5</sup> had been thoroughly researched and even presented in the exhibition and exhibition catalogue forms. Others, like Jagoda Kaloper, Sanja Iveković or Jagoda Buić-Bonetti were well known as artists or filmmakers but their contribution to the field of design is marginalized or even utterly unknown to the greater public. There were women who have had lifelong careers in the fields of industrial design and even engineering

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<sup>4</sup>Bauhaus Ivane Tomljenović Meller: Radovi iz Kolekcije Marinko Sudac, Radnička Galerija [http://www.avantgarde-museum.com/production/\\_files/file/admin/Bauhaus-IT-Meller\\_katalog.pdf](http://www.avantgarde-museum.com/production/_files/file/admin/Bauhaus-IT-Meller_katalog.pdf) (accessed April 16, 2015)

<sup>5</sup>Koraljka Vlajo, (ed.), *Porculanski sjaj socijalizma, Dizajn porculana Jugokeramika - Inker 1953. - 1991. exhibition catalogue* (Zagreb: Muzej za umjetnost i obrt, 2010)

but were absent from specialized literature so contacting them or their families personally was the only way to obtain any information on their work.

Additionally, the material that we had used in the research is dispersed within several institutions<sup>6</sup> and gathering necessary data wasn't time efficient and required roaming through numerous archives, magazines, various publications and periodicals.

The greatest obstacle to researching the history of industrial design was the fact that after the disintegration of Yugoslavia most of the factories were closed and their rich archives irreparably lost.

### **The Issue of the Context and the Time frame**

Since there were so many designers belonging to various periods of the twentieth century, and to different socio-political systems, the first part of the project did not, and deliberately so, focus on trying to explain or present each profile within the complexities of its specific context. Instead, we were aiming for an overview of female design history. Through information gathering we wanted to examine who were or are these women, and later on, hopefully, through the differences in their professional careers, personal struggles and paths, a pattern would emerge that would help us reconstruct how the times in which they lived and worked influenced their careers. At this stage of the project we have decided to position the time frame of the research between the years 1930 and 1980. Therefore, the researched decades

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<sup>6</sup>Museum of Arts and Crafts; Association of Croatian Artists of Applied Arts archive (ULUPUH), The Archive of Fine Arts, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ARLIKUM), National and University Library in Zagreb

fall into the period of the so-called Second Yugoslavia.<sup>7</sup>

Anything earlier than that, doesn't really belong to the territory of design in the "modern" sense and is instead linked to arts and crafts. Certainly, it is a period strongly influenced by Bauhaus and the participation and contribution of Croatian alumnae such as Ivana Tomljenović Meller and Otti Berger should unquestionably be delved into.

However, it is only after the 1945 that favourable conditions for the development of design in the modern sense emerge (i.e. political and economic tendency towards modernization and a modernized industrial production).<sup>8</sup>

The part of the title "Context" is therefore, at least at this point, a bit misleading. It is extremely challenging to write about the context when the whole period encompasses at least five or six decades. To give each designer her historical *mise-en-scène* as well to position and anchor her work takes more time but is a direction that should by no means be avoided. In like manner, the context, specifically when we talk about professional domain of design, is not easy to reconstruct, since a consistent written design history in Croatia doesn't exist.

This reconstruction of history<sup>9</sup> is undertaken in a climate of an increased interest for Croatian design and specifically the archaeological efforts to systemize its history and historical theoretical development. However, the results are still scarce, it is primarily a succession of several famous names,

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<sup>7</sup>1945-1990

<sup>8</sup> Feđa Vukić. *Prilog poznavanju teorije dizajna u Hrvatskoj*

<http://hrcak.srce.hr/18282>, (accessed April 20, 2016)

<sup>9</sup>The method of history reconstruction calls to mind the introduction to the East Art Map by IRWIN

exclusively male and often from other fields like architecture, which is understandable considering the lack of continuous design education throughout our history.

When we talk about Croatian design history (with the assumption that before the 1950s we can't talk about design in the modern sense of the term), however fragmentary, we can discern roughly three periods. First is the somewhat utopian period, brought about by the post-war rapid industrialization and the significant influx of people to the big cities.

It is an era that praised science, technology and industrial development all wrapped in the total plastic synthesis i.e. total design.<sup>10</sup> The designer strives to re-educate the public; apartments should become didactic environments for obtaining visual literacy, a sort of polygons for reprogramming of the society. It was certainly an ambitious, if somewhat utopian idea. The artistic community wanted to change the world that we live in and design, as a discipline of giving shape to objects and phenomena, seemed like the perfect tool. The idea to bring the artist into the industrial process and thus create design was an underdeveloped and relatively erroneous conceptual basis for cultivating design methodology. It is a process far more complex than the simple fact of merging a creative force in the form of an artist with factory mechanisms. During the 1960s there is a gradual increase in the interest for science and technology, doubtlessly influenced by the Hochschule für Gestaltung (HfG), which unfortunately closed in 1968. A noticeable effort to give the industrial design a more serious theoretical and terminological

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<sup>10</sup>The concept of "total plastic synthesis" was the main tenet of the group EXAT 51. Members of the group also advocated the eradication of the difference between the fine arts and applied arts.

basis is evident. The main principles of the 1950s are being methodically elaborated and their theoretical approach to design based on a concept of an “artist in industry” is being critically re-examined on a more scientific basis during the 1960s.<sup>11</sup>

The science and technology principle is likewise visible in the organization of the series of international exhibitions in Zagreb titled *New Tendencies*, which, at least in the beginning, explored the development of science and computer technology and all the possibilities that this evolution entailed.

While the 1950s and 1960s were relatively thoroughly researched, the question of historical design narrative during the 1970s and 1980s remains underexplored, specifically regarding the industrial or product design. The 1990s mark a serious break with the Yugoslavian political, economic and cultural sphere and should be examined separately at a later stage of the project.

### Overview of Designers and Their Work

Due to a significantly heterogeneous character of the designers, we will at this point present only several of the names, their work and a contextualized, if somewhat simplified, historical narrative in which they operated. The heterogeneous selection criterion is chosen with the aim of demonstrating the wide range of domains where female designers were represented.

With a strong applied arts and especially ceramic tradition, the School of Applied

Arts and Design<sup>12</sup> educated generations of women designers. A notable contribution to the industrial design is evident in the collaboration between the school and Jugokeramika factory<sup>13</sup> that gave scholarships to students and employed them later on. The factory is an example of gender exception since it employed mostly women.<sup>14</sup> Designers who worked for Jugokeramika (Department of Prototypes) were Jelena Antolčić, Marta Šribar, Dragica Perhač Hercigonja and Mila Petričić. The pioneers of the modern ceramics in Croatia, Blanka Dužanec and Stella Skopal, were responsible for the education of young designers. Their progressive educational principles and new methodological approaches helped raise a generation of exemplary industrial designers. Dužanec, the first designer of industrial ceramics and a teacher, modernized the educational curriculum and introduced new subjects like Technical drawing of serially produced objects<sup>15</sup> with the aim of preparing her students for their future work within the industrial domain. A lot of the students continued their education at the Academy of Applied Art<sup>16</sup>, a progressive institution that

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<sup>12</sup>The School of Applied Arts and Design in Zagreb is a successor to the School of Crafts established in 1882.

<sup>13</sup>The factory was founded in 1948 but the building wasn't completed until 1951.

<sup>14</sup>Koraljka Vlajo explains in *Porculanski sjaj socijalizma* how this specific gender politics were due to the primarily “feminine” nature of the art of ceramics and porcelain and how some of the female students remember their teachers saying that had they been men, they'd advise them to enroll into the sculpture department instead.

<sup>15</sup>Vlajo, *Socijalizma*, 12.

<sup>16</sup>The Academy of Applied Art was opened in 1948 and closed in 1954. Branka Frangeš Hegedušić, cofounder and co creator of the educational program for the Academy of Applied Art, a renowned Croatian painter, illustrator, textile and lace artist, as well as educator, was the first and only female director of this prestigious institution. Within the Academy she founded the first program

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<sup>11</sup>Feđa Vukić. *Prilog poznavanju teorije dizajna u Hrvatskoj*  
<http://hrcak.srce.hr/18282>, (accessed April 20, 2016)

brought about a more studious approach to design that will be further, and on a more scientific and methodological basis, elaborated in the late 1950s and 1960s under the significant influence of Hochschule für Gestaltung (HfG) in Ulm.<sup>17</sup> Designers gathered around Jugokeramika demonstrated how, contrary to the popular belief, the medium of ceramics didn't lie exclusively within the sphere of the decorative but instead was an active participant of the industrial development and an important agent in implementing the principles of visual education via living environment, i.e. interior design of the epoch.

Some of the ceramics designers, like Milana Hržić Balić, primarily produced their work in small series and in that case we cannot talk about industrial mass produced objects.

Hržić Balić's work was nonetheless of significant quality, marked by the application of simple and clean geometric structures and the use of brown clay, left in its natural state, which became her trademark.

Her collaboration with Julija Pavelić-Glogoški, a graphic and packaging designer, shows their awareness of the need to work collectively and develop the product integrally – from the production to packaging and visual identity.

However, a grimmer picture is painted by Tomislav Kožarić<sup>18</sup>: while praising their

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of higher education for textile and costume design and taught the study of nude. She was also one of the cofounders of ULUPUH (Association of Croatian Artists of Applied Arts) in the 1950s.

<sup>17</sup>A more scientific understanding of design is especially evident in the work of Tomas Maldonado, school's director who espoused an integral and methodological approach to design. See: Maldonado, Tomas; Gui Bonsiepe, *Znanost i dizajn*, Bit International, 4(1969.): 29-51

<sup>18</sup>Tomislav Kožarić. "Fetišizam industrijskog oblikovanja: U povodu izložbe "Urbanizam, arhitektura, oblikovanje" na "Zagrebačkom salonu 1966.", *Čovjek i prostor* 160-161 (1966):14.

product, he stressed how it was made manually with no hope for mass production and how consequently the industrial design had been transformed into its antithesis – the fetish.<sup>19</sup> Mirjana Šimanović Tavčar<sup>20</sup> and Milica Rosenberg Bjelovitić<sup>21</sup> were among the few early female architects<sup>22</sup>. The work of Slava Antoljak represents a similar example because her textiles were featured in prestigious exhibitions<sup>23</sup> alongside the products of renowned Croatian male architects and designers, just like the textile of Jagoda Buić Bonetti.

Antoljak's work was featured, alongside that of her male colleagues, in various specialized journals and reviews such as *Čovjek i Prostor (Man and Space)* or *Arhitektura (Architecture)*. Likewise, Ljubica Kočica Ratkajec, designer of glass products, participated at the didactic exhibition *Porodica i domaćinstvo (Family and Household)*.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>A similar tendency can be noticed in contemporary Croatian design which is nicely illustrated in Vesna Vuković's article: Vuković, Vesna, *Dizajn: od proizvodnje za život do životnog stila*, Bilten

<http://www.bilten.org/?p=14211>

<sup>20</sup>Šimanović Tavčar was among the awarded participants at the Milano Triennial in 1957. She also participated at the exhibition *Stan za naše prilike (An Apartment for Our Needs)* in Ljubljana (1956). See: *Arhitektura* 1-6 (1956): 49

<sup>21</sup>Rosenberg also worked with glass and her work was highly esteemed by Radoslav Putar who called the only authentic designer in the sea of kitsch.

<sup>22</sup>The term "early" is used in the context of the project, meaning these architects were already active during the 1950s.

<sup>23</sup>Antoljak was awarded third prize at the first edition of the Zagreb Triennial in 1955 for applied textile used for seating furniture.

<sup>24</sup>*Porodica i domaćinstvo* was a series of didactic exhibitions held in Zagreb between 1957 and 1960. See: Galjer, Jasna and Ceraj, Iva. "Uloga dizajna u svakodnevnom životu na izložbama Porodica i domaćinstvo 1957.-1960.", *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 35, (2011): 277-296.

With the advent of a more market oriented economy in the 1960s, commercial sphere and graphic design continued to interlace increasingly.<sup>25</sup> However, a lot of graphic designers worked primarily for the cultural institutions and organizations.

The work of a graphic and textile designer Marija Kalentić<sup>26</sup> was particularly prolific in the context of the cosmetic factory Neva.<sup>27</sup>

As an author of complete visual identities she had worked for Neva for decades. Her body of work should be further explored within the context of a relatively new Yugoslavian consumer society<sup>28</sup> with all of its implications, ranging from the often undervalued field of packaging design to the latent ideology of beauty industry and the social construct of women as passive consumers in the society.

The example of Blaženka Kučinac is particularly striking and perplexing in the context of industrial design history and research. An architect and predominantly a furniture designer with a copious body of work, Kučinac is utterly, and unjustly so, absent from the more recent research in design history.

One of her first employments, as an “industrial aesthetician” was for the furniture factory Mobilia. She is an author of a modular room for children called “Pipi” for which she received an award in

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<sup>25</sup> Following an economic reform from 1965 whose goal was to establish a more market oriented socialist system, i.e. the increased integration into the international market sphere.

<sup>26</sup> Kalentić studied at the Academy of Applied Art in Zagreb.

<sup>27</sup> An excellent study of Kalentić's work is given by Koraljka Vlajo in the exhibition *Marijina industrija ljepote: Marija Kalentić i «Neva», dizajn ambalaže 1963.-1985.* The beautiful design of the catalogue, a sort of an homage to Kalentić's elaborate and refined packaging, was made by Bilić\_Müller Studio, a (female) design duo from Zagreb.

<sup>28</sup> Most of Kalentić's work was made during the 1960s, 1970s and the 1980s.

1972 at the Furniture Fair in Beograd. Kučinac spent most of her professional life as a head designer within the Design Department of the furniture factory Ivo Marinković in Osijek where she designed and oversaw the development of serial production of various elements and systems for the equipment of interiors.<sup>29</sup> Her furniture series Osijek I, II, III have been produced in 250 000 sets. Most of the models were exported to England, Switzerland and the former Soviet Union. The work and career of Blaženka Kučinca should unquestionably be examined further, preferably in a monograph form. A lot of designers worked within the domain of graphic design. The example of Sanja Iveković and Jagoda Kaloper is intriguing, primarily because both of the authors made a name for themselves in different artistic spheres.<sup>30</sup> Iveković's work included poster design<sup>31</sup>, graphic design of books and of various publications. She worked for the Croatian Graphic Bureau (HGZ) and for the Zora publishing.

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<sup>29</sup> Kučinac is an expert in chair design and she is an author of models like Zebra, Skakavac, Dora, Fotelja 49, A-1, T etc. She believes that the industrially produced design should have an educational role in the society and should introduce users to the advantages of the contemporary furniture.

<sup>30</sup> Both Iveković and Kaloper were active participants of the so-called New Art Practice phenomenon (ca 1966-1978). Iveković is a world renowned conceptual, new media and activist artist while Kaloper has been predominantly occupied with the film medium, both in front of and behind the camera. Iveković stated that graphic design was first and foremost a way to make a living and to continue her artistic development. She never felt the need to interlace those two spheres.

<sup>31</sup> Poster was an important art form within the synergetic atmosphere of the New Art Practice and many artists advertised their actions and performances in this manner, so the merging of the graphic design and conceptual art was indeed quite logical.

According to her testimony she was one of the few women who worked at the HGZ. Kaloper's work demonstrates a strong creative and artistic impulse. Her best work is probably the one made in the field of graphic book design and illustration. Design and illustration of the children's book *Tonkica Palonkica* or the exhibition design for *Marx and the Century of Marxism* in the 1980s. From 1975 she worked for Yugodidacta as a toy designer and also as a graphic designer for Školska knjiga publishing in 1975. She has also worked for Zvijezda oil factory for which she designed some of the iconic packaging.<sup>32</sup>

Another graphic designer and painter has been marginalized in the context of poster design research during the 1970s and 1980s – Nada Falout. Falout has produced numerous poster designs for the Gavella Theatre, all of them testifying to her awareness of and receptiveness to contemporary trends, and also for the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb. Although she has received her share of publicity, the historical narrative of Croatian poster design from late 1960s to 1980s seems to perpetuate the graphic triumvirate made of M. Arsovski, B. Bućan and B. Ljubičić, in that exact order.<sup>33</sup>

Within the realm of engineering and technology two names need to be mentioned: Marija Jeličić Plavec and Jasenka Mihelčić. Jeličić Plavec worked at the Department of industrial Design of the

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<sup>32</sup>It is interesting to observe how Kaloper's visual identity of Zvijezda is not very well known yet Zvonimir Faist's commercial graphic design for the same factory has been included in almost every publication on Croatian graphic, commercial and poster design. To the defense of the design historians, Faist is an author whose career begins in the late 1930s while Kaloper was born in 1947 so there is a considerable time gap between the two.

<sup>33</sup>A very important step was made on the 21st of January 2016 when an exhibition of Falout's theater posters was opened.

Electrical Engineering Institute Rade Končar where she participated in product research and development. She published several specialized articles and obtained a magister degree in 1980.<sup>34</sup>

Jasenka Mihelčić, at this point the youngest designer in the research, worked primarily in the domain of machine tools design, their development and implementation and later also as a graphic designer.<sup>35</sup> She is a member of the Team for the Product Development at the Institute for Machine Tools (Research and Development Institute) at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture. She is also one of the founders of The Association of Croatian Designers in 1985<sup>36</sup> and participated in creating of a part of the curriculum for the Zagreb School of Design.

### **Design Niches through the Gender Lens**

It is no coincidence that most of the women designers asserted their professional authority within domains that are usually considered more feminine. That might imply that the aforementioned fields or skills are in fact more suited to women or rather that the women are predestined to excel in those particular spheres. This mode of reasoning is precisely the type of trap one must be careful to avoid. Male work was valued more, industrial design had always been

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<sup>34</sup>The subject of Jeličić Plavec's magister degree thesis was Analysis of the Office Workspace from a Human Perspective. She produced other papers, all dealing with design and typization of workspaces, which shows a high awareness of the need for scientifically based environment design and entails the understanding of sociological and psychological aspects of designing a space in consonance with the human needs.

<sup>35</sup>Mihelčić developed a visual identity for the Prvomajska factory where she was employed.

<sup>36</sup>The association was later renamed The Croatians Designers Association.

considered more serious and more important than for instance weaving. Not coincidentally, all those fields are in one way or another linked to home management, bearing and raising children, looking pretty etc. Male roles become associated with culture while female are linked to nature; thus the rational vs. irrational bifurcation is perpetuated.<sup>37</sup>

Judy Attfield notices that women's' work, considering the epithets it is assigned - soft, subtle, decorative - becomes identified with form, that which is on the outside, the superficial. The logical and scientific imperatives, the technology and science, i.e. function is associated with men. Resulting from this syllogism is that form follows function, which again puts women in the position of subordination.<sup>38</sup>

Women excelled in certain fields because they worked hard and took their careers seriously. The reason they chose those specialties or were pushed in that direction is due to a patriarchal social system, which gave gender prefixes to professions. Men were architects while women were ceramicist or textile designers.

Some women were women architects or women sculptors but never just architects, just sculptors. After all, even at a school as progressive as Bauhaus, the backward and prejudiced attitudes of Walter Gropius kept women from enrolling in architecture course so they had to choose weaving or other "feminine" departments instead.

Maroje Mrduljaš has convincingly argued that, in Croatia, applied arts had been unfairly neglected and underestimated compared to the industrial, mass-produced objects.<sup>39</sup> On the contrary, countries with a much stronger design history like Finland or Sweden value their traditions of crafts, hand-made objects and materials such as wood, glass, and wool. The value and significance of the hand crafted and traditional objects highlighted even Radoslav Putar, Croatian curator, design critic and theoretician, when he wrote about the exhibition *Scandinavian form* held at the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb. He believed that crafts and manually produced objects could serve as a platform for relevant prototype research and experiment as well as a valuable addition to the industrial mass production.<sup>40</sup>

This seems to be the direction in which the more recent Croatian design has headed. However, the produced objects have a very narrow audience, due to their relatively high prices. Surrounded by an aura of exclusivity and elitism their target audience is primarily young professionals from creative industries. The social component or agenda is largely lost and so seems to be the tie with the past.

The "stigma of femininity" is however not completely lost. In the elaboration of their decision at the relatively recent design competition, one of the male jurors praised the winning work and added how

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<sup>37</sup>Cheryl Buckley, "Made in Patriarchy: Towards a Feminist Analysis of Women and Design (1986)" in Feđa Vukić (ed.), *Teorija i povijest dizajna: Kriička antologija*, (Zagreb: golden marketing – tehnička knjiga, 2012) 390.

<sup>38</sup>Judy Attfield, "FORM/female FOLLOWS FUNCTION/male: Feminist Critiques of Design", in Feđa Vukić (ed.), *Teorija i povijest dizajna: Kriička antologija*, (Zagreb: golden marketing – tehnička knjiga, 2012) 403.

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<sup>39</sup>Maroje Mrduljas and Mirko Petrić, "Komunikacija ili manipulacija sitnim strastima, Nacionalna dizajnerska konvencija, 9. i 10. lipnja 2006.; Izložba hrvatskog dizajna 040506, Galerija MMC-a i Galerija Adris, Rovinj, od 9.do 23. lipnja 2006." <http://www.zarez.hr/clanci/komunikacija-ili-manipulacija-sitnim-strastima> (accessed May 2, 2016)

<sup>40</sup> Radoslav Putar, „Skandinavski oblik: izložba u Muzeju za umjetnost i obrt u Zagrebu”, *Vijesti muzealaca i konzervatora Hrvatske* 5 (1962), 134-137



a lot of the recent Croatian design production is made by women and how one could notice the emergence of a women's writing<sup>41</sup> in the realm of design. Even though they were probably harmless and made with best intentions, these type of remarks evoke the binary division of art and design into feminine, soft and poetic niches and male, rational and scientific fields.

### Online Archive as a New Knowledge Dissemination Platform

The main platform for the presentation of the project is a web page in the form of an online archive [www.dizajnerice.com](http://www.dizajnerice.com). Thus, we can also observe the research through the prism of a digital archive, a medium of growing popularity. With the aim of a facile and uncomplicated search process, the archive is organized around three content axes – design, designer and text. The contents of all three categories are intertwined, however. If one could reproach an archive, the overly simplified conception and mode of presentation, it is precisely this quality that makes the platform user-friendly. From the user perspective, the *topos* of the material storage is simultaneously the place where the material is presented to the user suggesting that the power of *archont* – the one with who keeps and interprets the

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<sup>41</sup>The women's writing remark doubtlessly referred to the minimalistic and delicate design of the work – an unusual collection of poetry made by Bilić\_Muller Studio. However, the subversive and ironic procedure of collaging fashion adds instead of actual literature seems to be lost on him. The conceptual aspect of the work and Studio's penchant for experiment are far more important than the form, however elegant and beautiful it may be. One of the first steps, according to C. Buckley, is to recognize the ideological nature of the expressions such as feminine, subtle or decorative in the context of female design.

material – is levelled with the “power” of the user.<sup>42</sup>

With the development of information technology, the classical archival *topos* is joined by its digital version. The dynamic character of temporary storages substitutes the static trait of the archive as a place of permanent information storage; archives become places of constant data transfer.<sup>43</sup> The hybrid form of the platform, between the digital archive and a curated web page, is formally and conceptually open, and its blanks and voids are left visible intentionally. **(fig. 8)**. Its subversive concept is based on a democratic potential through giving a voice and visual space to unknown or neglected female authors.

The almost unavoidable question of diminishing the worth of an object or work by reproducing or digitizing it seems unsubstantiated in the context of industrial, serially produced objects. They might be negatively affected more, were they assigned an aura and therefore fetishized. Moreover, the digital “surrogate” takes on the role of a mediator between design and audience and in this manner accentuates once more the principle of free knowledge dissemination.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Jacques Derrida and Eric Prenowitz, “Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression”, *Diacritics* 25/2 (1995): 9-63.

[https://monoskop.org/File:Derrida\\_Jacques\\_1995\\_Archive\\_Fever\\_A\\_Freudian\\_Impression.pdf](https://monoskop.org/File:Derrida_Jacques_1995_Archive_Fever_A_Freudian_Impression.pdf), (accessed May 5, 2016)

<sup>43</sup>Wolfgang Ernst and Jussi Parikka, *Digital Memory and the Archive*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 95.

<sup>44</sup>Deirdre Brown, “Te Ahu Hiko: Digital Cultural Heritage and Indigenous Objects: Traditional Concerns, New Discourses” in Fiona Cameron and Sara Kenderdine (eds.), *Theorizing Digital Cultural Heritage: A Critical Discourse*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007), 77-93.

## Conclusion: A Path Worth Exploring

The Croatian design developed and evolved, for the greater part of its existence, in the context of Yugoslavia (Yugoslavian artistic and cultural realm)<sup>45</sup>, which implies a co-dependent relationship with other centres of the country. Design is a collective endeavour; its meaning can be determined only by examining the interactions of individuals, groups, institutions and organizations within the specific social structures.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, in order to get a clearer picture of a female design history it is crucial to explore the parallel phenomena in other republics, i.e. to extend the research and include all of the Yugoslavian female designers.

Likewise, what was unjustifiably left out in the first phase of the project - fashion, textile and toy design<sup>47</sup> - will be industriously researched and included in the existing database. Fashion design has been one of the most innovative creative fields in the twentieth century, yet the modernist principles considered it less significant since it supposedly reflected a more traditional, sometimes even trivial, field, primarily associated with women. Fashion was regarded as a marginal design sphere since it fulfilled the socially constructed needs and desires of women. The truth is exactly the opposite; fashion is often subversive and accentuates the relativity of aesthetic dogmas.<sup>48</sup> S. Antoljak's or J. Buić-Bonetti's textile designs were just as important as the

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<sup>45</sup>Dejan Kršić, "Grafički dizajn i vizualne komunikacije 1950-1975", in Ljiljana Kolešnik (ed.) *Socijalizam i modernost; umjetnost, kultura, politika 1950.-1974.* (Zagreb: MSU and Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2011)

<sup>46</sup>Buckley, *Antologija*, 396.

<sup>47</sup>The work of Božena Šulentić, a textile and toy designer should be explored as well as those of Nada Traub, Melanija Velikonja and Vlatka Truta.

<sup>48</sup>Buckley, *Antologija*, 397.

chairs made by male architects for the 1950s and 1960s design exhibitions.<sup>49</sup>

Once all the relevant names have been gathered, it is imperative to review them in their specific context and determine their quality without sentimentality or bias, especially once a wider "Yugoslavian" picture emerges. And while the comparison with their male colleagues certainly won't be completely fair<sup>50</sup>, their work should nonetheless be examined in the entirety of its context.

Regardless of the potential flaws and evident neglect of their participation, the important conclusion is that there were quite a few women who worked as professional designers. The niches within which they acted varied considerably. The majority of their work could be positioned within the fields of ceramics, glass or textile production. There exists, however, a substantial number of female designers who worked within what were traditionally considered "male" fields of expertise which shows that women equally excelled in more technologically based domains even at the time when socio-ideological constructs presented obstacles to their professional development.

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<sup>49</sup>There is a similar tendency in the work of the architectural studio 3LHD from Zagreb who often collaborate with a (female) fashion design duo I-GLE. I-GLE created curtains for the Hotel Dolder in Switzerland and the maids' uniforms for the Hotel Adriatic in Rovinj (both buildings were designed by 3LHD). A similar example of architecture-fashion collaboration can be seen in the award winning design from 2012 for the Donassy Fashion Studio, a work by Vanja Ilić, architect.

<sup>50</sup>Linda Nochlin, "Why have there been no great women artists?" [http://davidrifkind.org/fiu/library\\_files/Linda%20Nochlin%20Why%20have%20there%20been%20no%20Great%20Women%20Artists.pdf](http://davidrifkind.org/fiu/library_files/Linda%20Nochlin%20Why%20have%20there%20been%20no%20Great%20Women%20Artists.pdf) (accessed March 2016)

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## Developing Architecture and Interior Design

### Typologies

#### Vera Cirkovic's Contribution To Educational Architecture In Yugoslavia

Vladana Putnik

##### Women Architects and Educational Architecture in Serbia and Yugoslavia

The Serbian and Yugoslavian territory has surprisingly produced first female architects at the turn of the twentieth century. Since the first female architect Jelisaveta Nacic, women architects in Serbia and later in Yugoslavia were designing educational architecture. Jelisaveta Nacic was the author of Elementary School 'King Petar I Karadjordjevic' in Belgrade in 1906.<sup>1</sup> The interwar period was marked by many more female architects that often were responsible for designing educational objects. Milica Krstic designed the Second Female Gymnasium in Belgrade in 1929,<sup>2</sup> Jovanka Boncic Katerinic was responsible for designing numerous elementary

schools throughout the country<sup>3</sup> and Desanka Manojlovic was the author of two elementary schools in Yugoslavian capital during the 1930s.<sup>4</sup> Apart from the well known, there were several almost unknown female architects of the interwar period that also designed educational buildings, such as Jelena Bokur.<sup>5</sup> Even though a significant number of male architects designed schools, this frequent 'female' project task can be interpreted in a classical gender role manner. Since women's role in children education was far more distinct than men's throughout the history, it was stereotypically presumed that female architects would design better schools. The same theory can be applied to the presence of female architects in furniture and interior design, since interior is generally seen as a 'female' space.

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<sup>1</sup> Дивна Ђурић Замоло, "Грађа за проучавање дела жена архитеката са Београдског универзитета, генерације 1896-1940. године", *Пинус записи* 5 (1996), 45-49; Милан Минић, "Прва београђанка архитект - Јелисавета Начић", *Годишњак града Београда* 3 (1956), 451-458; Зоран Маневић (ed.), *Лексикон неимара* (Београд: Грађевинска књига, 2008), 296; Дивна Ђурић Замоло, *Градитељи Београда 1815-1914* (Београд: Музеј града Београда, 2011), 218-228.

<sup>2</sup> Дивна Ђурић Замоло, "Грађа за проучавање дела жена архитеката са Београдског универзитета, генерације 1896-1940. године", *Пинус записи* 5 (1996), 44-45; Недељко Трнавац, *Лексикон историје педагогије* (Београд: Завод за уџбенике, 2012), 19.

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<sup>3</sup> She was also the author of Women's College for Teaching and The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine; Ђурђија Боровњак, "Архитектура два школска објекта Јованке Бончић Катеринић у Београду: зграде Женске учитељске школе и Ветеринарског факултета", *Годишњак града Београда* 55-56 (2008-2009)

<sup>4</sup> Недељко Трнавац, *Лексикон историје педагогије* (Београд: Завод за уџбенике, 2012), 19.

<sup>5</sup> Дивна Ђурић Замоло, "Грађа за проучавање дела жена архитеката са Београдског универзитета, генерације 1896-1940. године", *Пинус записи* 5 (1996), 51-53; Vladimir Mitrović, *Arhitektura XX veka u Vojvodini* (Novi Sad: Akademska knjiga, 2010), 350.

After the Second World War educational architecture witnessed an expansion. It was estimated that 14% of schools in Yugoslavia were destroyed and 36% were damaged in the Second World War.<sup>6</sup> The increase of natality after the war faced Yugoslavia with a lack of schools by the mid 1950s. By that time numerous countries developed a serious strategy concerning the construction of modern schools.<sup>7</sup> Yugoslavian architects followed their example and in 1954 invited architect Alfred Roth to give a lecture in Ljubljana on new tendencies in constructing schools.<sup>8</sup> Alfred Roth published his capital work 'Das Neue Schulhaus' in 1950 and in 1953 in Zurich he organised an exhibition on school architecture. He was considered one of the most eminent specialists for educational architecture. He even designed one secondary school in Skopje, Yugoslavia in 1969.<sup>9</sup>

The strategy of building modern schools continued and in 1957 a Conference concerning educational architecture was organised in Zagreb.<sup>10</sup> In accordance with the International style, Yugoslav architects such as Mate Baylon promoted the idea of school buildings which would be adaptable to various functions. However, a good school position and orientation was the main feature apart from the important green areas in the courtyard.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Leon Kabiljo, "Izgradnja osnovnih škola", *Arhitektura urbanizam* 6 (1960), 4.

<sup>7</sup> Leon Kabiljo, "Izgradnja osnovnih škola", *Arhitektura urbanizam* 6 (1960), 4; Radmila Aćimović, "Povodom izložbe "Školske zgrade Beograda"", *Pedagoška misao* 7 (1963), 473.

<sup>8</sup> Mihajlo Mitrović, *Arhitektura Beograda 1950-2012* (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2012), 69.

<sup>9</sup> Adolf Roth, *Alfred Roth: Architect of Continuity* (Zürich: Waser, 1985), 118, 174.

<sup>10</sup> Leon Kabiljo, "Izgradnja osnovnih škola", *Arhitektura urbanizam* 6 (1960), 7.

<sup>11</sup> Mate Baylon, *Opšta pitanja u vezi sa izgradnjom školskih zgrada* (Unknown: Savez društava arhitekata FNRJ, Unknwnown), 3-5.

Again many female architects successfully designed school buildings, such as Nadezda Bogojevic,<sup>12</sup> Dana Milosavljevic,<sup>13</sup> Branislava Mitrovic<sup>14</sup> and Branka Milovic.<sup>15</sup> Some female architects even specialised in educational architecture, for example Olivera Obradovic,<sup>16</sup> Tatjana Savic Venjifatov<sup>17</sup> and Vera Cirkovic.

Vera Cirkovic's contribution to educational architecture is significant but so far has not been recognised as important in the history of architecture. Some critics, like Uros Martinovic, have named her co-worker Nikola Sercer the author of her projects by mistake. Unfortunately, there is not much information about her life nor was her work the subject of a more detailed analysis. She was born in Dimitrovgrad in 1911. She studied architecture in Belgrade between 1930 and 1935. After graduation she started working in the Ministry of Civil Engineering where she stayed until 1947 when she transferred to the architectural bureau 'Plan'.<sup>18</sup> This first period of her work in the Ministry is completely in the shadow, since the only known project is a Ladies'

<sup>12</sup> Nadezda Bogojevic designed Elementary School 'Veljko Dugosevic' in Belgrade in 1949; Трнавац, *Лексикон*, 18.

<sup>13</sup> Dana Milosavljevic designed the Elementary School in Fransuska Street; Uroš Martinović and Bratislav Stojanović, *Arhitektura Beograda 1945-1975* (Beograd: BIGZ, 1978), 179.

<sup>14</sup> Mitrović, *Arhitektura*, 379.

<sup>15</sup> Branka Milovic was the author of the Elementary School in the Block 11C; Martinović and Stojanović, *Arhitektura*, 184.

<sup>16</sup> Olivera Obradovic designed several elementary and high schools between 1959 and 1980; Зоран Маневић (ed.), *Лексикон неумара* (Београд: Грађевинска књига, 2008), 305; Трнавац, *Лексикон*, 19.

<sup>17</sup> Зоран Маневић (ed.), *Лексикон неумара* (Београд: Грађевинска књига, 2008), 349; Mitrović, *Arhitektura*, 398-399; "Tatjana Savic Venjifatov", WANS: Women Architects of Novi Sad, <http://www.w-a-ns.com/> (accessed August 22, 2016)

<sup>18</sup> Трнавац, *Лексикон*, 19.



Gymnasium in Kragujevac in 1940 which was never constructed. The year 1947 has proven to be very important in the work of Vera Cirkovic, since she participated in national competitions for the Communist Party of Yugoslavia's Central Committee building and the building of the Federal Executive Council.

The period of her working in the architectural bureau 'Plan' is especially important for this research since she designed almost all her school projects during that time. Architect Nikola Sercer<sup>19</sup> was the director of the bureau and her co-author on most projects. Apart from educational buildings, she also specified in projects for residential architecture and mass housing. Her most significant and memorable work is a residential complex which consists of three towers 'Rudo I, II and III', popularly known as the 'East Gate of Belgrade', constructed in the period between 1972 and 1980. Apart from many important edifices she constructed, she also did the interior reconstruction of the National Theatre in Belgrade in 1966. She died in Belgrade in 2002.<sup>20</sup>

Even though Vera Cirkovic was the author and co-author of seven schools in Belgrade between 1954 and 1960, the focus of this research will be on three educational objects she designed that depict her architectural approach and innovations in the most distinct manner.

### **Chemical and Technological School**

Vera Cirkovic originally designed this school with Nikola Sercer in 1954 to be a

gymnasium, however in 1957 the Committee of Education and Culture of Belgrade decided to readapt the building and turn it into a Chemical and Technological School. Nikola Sercer did the adaptation in 1957 which consisted only of adding another wing for the laboratories.<sup>21</sup>

The school was built on a vast lot which was bordered by three streets: Ljeska, Petra Mecave and Lazara Kujundzica Street. The entire lot surfaced 24345 m<sup>2</sup> while the school complex was 2730 m<sup>2</sup>. The main entrance from Ljeska Street serves also as a connection between the gym on the left side and the cabinet wing on the right. The gym is directly connected with the outdoor recreational area, referencing a pre-war concept of designing sport centres such as Falcon Halls.<sup>22</sup> The cabinet wing is again connected on the other side with the classroom wing which is facing South on the courtyard side. The composition of the cabinet wing's facade represents the main artistic and visual feature of this building. This is one of the first school projects where long terraces were introduced on the first and second floor). Although this architectural element is not typical for educational architecture, Cirkovic and Sercer withdraw the longer side of the wing and placed the terraces so that the eastern side can be more protected from the sun. In her later projects this will become a common solution, but never on the longer side of the wing.

All wings were covered with two-sloped roofs, which Cirkovic and Sercer used in all their later school projects due to its functionality considering the humid

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<sup>19</sup> Зоран Маневић (ed.), *Лексикон неимара* (Београд: Грађевинска књига, 2008), 378.

<sup>20</sup> Зоран Маневић (ed.), *Лексикон неимара* (Београд: Грађевинска књига, 2008), 369; Трнавац, *Лексикон*, 20.

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<sup>21</sup> Historical Archives of Belgrade, Technical documentation, f-55-1-1957

<sup>22</sup> Владана Путник, *Архитектура соколских домова у Краљевини Срба, Хрвата и Словенаца и Краљевини Југославији* (Београд: Филозофски факултет, 2015)



continental climate. The communication hall which connects the cabinet and classroom wings is especially well designed. The architects used two modular elements: a smaller rectangle and a larger square and placed them in a particular order as frames for glass on both sides of the hall therefore making a geometrical pattern which was a typical visual motif of the 1950s architecture in Yugoslavia).<sup>23</sup> Vera Cirkovic did not use this pattern in her later projects for schools, but she did apply it as a decorative *brise-soleil* grid on residential buildings she designed in the same period.<sup>24</sup>

The laboratory wing is detached from the rest of the complex and it is only connected by a long covered pathway. Since the schoolyard occupied a large area, it was very precisely designed, with several playground and green zones.<sup>25</sup> One of the greatest qualities of this project was that the concept of connecting school space with nature has entirely succeeded. This school complex is one of the rare examples in the region where pupils can still enjoy their breaks in green environment unlike the majority of concrete schoolyards.

The school design is very similar to Alfred Roth's Elementary School in Berkeley St Louis, USA from 1953.<sup>26</sup> Roth detached the gym in the same way as Cirkovic and Sercer did, and the position of the

classroom wings is very similar. Since Roth gave lecture in Ljubljana in 1954 it is very possible that Vera Cirkovic and Nikola Sercer both attended that lecture in order to specialise in educational architecture. Roth's influence will be visible in their later projects but more in spatial organisation than in visual design.

### Elementary School 'St Sava'

In 1957 Vera Cirkovic designed the extension of the Elementary school 'St Sava'. Unlike other projects, this school was located in an enclosed small lot which faced the two parallel streets, War Invalids (now Makenzijeva) and Avalska Street. The original school was designed by a prominent architect Dimitrije T. Leko in 1908.<sup>27</sup> However, it was demolished in 1940 in order to build a new and contemporary facility. Unfortunately, the school project designed by architect Marko Andrejevic<sup>28</sup> was never finished due to the outbreak of the Second World War.<sup>29</sup> The part which was constructed consisted of two detached buildings which Vera Cirkovic connected by adding another three wings therefore forming a U-shaped plan. The new part was again functionally divided: the left wing was reserved for the gym, while the classrooms were located in the right and central wing. The administration was located on the ground floor of the central, most representative part of the new school. The gym was connected to the rest of the building by a ground corridor.

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<sup>23</sup> Many architects of that period used this model for complex brise-soleils or glass windows such as Milorad Macura. See: Зоран Маневић (ed.), *Лексикон неимара* (Београд: Грађевинска књига, 2008), 267-272.

<sup>24</sup> Residential building on the corner of Kneza Milosa and Krunska Street from 1954, residential building on the corner of Dusanova and Francuska Street from 1959 and residential building in 26-28 Makenzijeva Street from 1957.

<sup>25</sup> Historical Archives of Belgrade, Technical documentation, f-55-1-1957

<sup>26</sup> Mate Baylon, *Školske zgrade* (Beograd: Građevinska knjiga, 1962), 118.

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<sup>27</sup> Ђурић Замоло, *Градитељи*, 208-218.

<sup>28</sup> Зоран Маневић (ed.), *Лексикон неимара* (Београд: Грађевинска књига, 2008), 4.

<sup>29</sup> Маја Николова, *Школске зграде у Београду до 1941*. (Београд: Педагошки музеј, 1999), 24; Трнавац, *Лексикон*, 18.

Cirkovic also placed the locker rooms on the both sides of the corridor.<sup>30</sup>

Apart from the well planned and functionally composed project, the main facade is by far the most memorable achievement of Vera Cirkovic. Unlike traditional spatial organisation and architectural treatment of the main facade, Cirkovic pulled the hallway towards the main street so that the classrooms could face a more quiet courtyard. With the hallway behind the main facade, Vera Cirkovic decided to position narrow windows to face the South-East, therefore gaining more light. The new placement of the windows caused a zig-zag form of the main facade, with the narrow window part and the wider part which consisted of terra-nova panels.<sup>31</sup> This composition formed a *trompe d'oeil*: when observing the front facade from the West, one cannot see the windows, only panels. However, when the observer moves its position to the East, the windows emerge and the panels seem more narrow than they actually are.)

This original solution was proven to be very inspirational for other Yugoslavian architects as well. A similar solution was produced by architect Leon Kabiljo in his project for an elementary school in Ulcinj in 1956.<sup>32</sup> Architect Danilo Furst also used a similar zig-zag form in his design for an elementary school in Strazisce. However, he positioned the classrooms instead of a hallway in such position in order to gain more light.<sup>33</sup> The same concept was again applied by Oton Gaspari on his project for the elementary and high school in Nova Gorica.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Historical Archives of Belgrade, Technical documentation, f-75-8-1957

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>32</sup> Зоран Маневић (ed.), *Лексикон неумара* (Београд: Грађевинска књига, 2008), 185.

<sup>33</sup> Leon Kabiljo, "Izgradnja osnovnih škola", *Arhitektura urbanizam* 6 (1960), 3, 5.

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem, 18.

Unlike her other projects, Vera Cirkovic had certain limitations considering the schoolyard design. The pre-war parameters for schools did not include large open areas for recreation, therefore the schoolyard in the Elementary school 'St Sava' is rather small. Although Cirkovic designed green areas, the effect is far from her other projects.

### Elementary School 'Filip Filipovic'

This school represents one of the four elementary schools Vera Cirkovic designed together with Nikola Sercer as a part of prefabricated experiment. The project was designed in 1958 and the school's construction was finished in 1960. The architectural and visual elements on all four schools of the group are identical. The only difference was in the position and interrelation of the wings. The main concept Vera Cirkovic and Nikola Sercer applied in every school was to merge similar functions in the same wings which would then be functionally interconnected, therefore applying a Bauhaus-like functional organisation. The classrooms were positioned towards the South. Like in Cirkovic's earlier projects, the gym was detached from the rest of the school in a separate wing connected with a ground hallway.

The gym, cabinet and classroom wing are all connected in a manner so that they form a circular connection, which was different than Cirkovic's previous solutions. The front facade of the main entrance to the administrative and cabinet wing is especially memorable. Below the two-sloped roof the facade is slightly withdrawn, leaving enough space to form terraces on the first and second floor like in Chemical and Technological School. One of the strongest elements in Cirkovic's composition is certainly the transparent

staircase which is positioned in the central part of the building's front. Certain parts of the facade were covered in selected industrial Rohbau brick, while the rest was terra-nova.<sup>35</sup>

As in previous project tasks, Vera Cirkovic managed to express her affection towards the landscape architecture and horticulture. She designed a detailed plan of the courtyard and managed to connect the educational zone of the classrooms with the recreation zone of the courtyard. She enriched the school garden by positioning a fountain in front of the transparent staircase and flanked by the two main wings. This type of schoolyard was the example Baylon gave in his book on school buildings in 1962.<sup>36</sup>

The first project assignment of this type was in 1953 when Nikola Sercer and Vera Cirkovic designed the extension of the Elementary School 'Vozd Karadjordje'. Although this was one of their first tasks, Cirkovic's name is signed only on the first draft of the project, while a more detailed project from 1954 was entirely signed by Sercer.<sup>37</sup> Unlike Elementary School 'Filip Filipovic', the base of this building is H-shaped with an additional original school building. The classroom wing is ending with characteristic terraces on both sides while the cabinet wing connects it with the gym.<sup>38</sup>

The Elementary School 'Marija Bursac' was another project from 1955 that Sercer and Cirkovic designed.<sup>39</sup> The visual and organisational concept was very much similar to the 'Filip Filipovic' Elementary School. Although they are not identical,

the same visual appearance was once more achieved by using the same architectural elements. Like Elementary School 'Vozd Karadjordje' this building is also H-shaped, but the gym is positioned by 90° to the classroom wing.<sup>40</sup>

Elementary School 'Jovan Sterija Popovic' was the fourth in the Cirkovic-Sercer series of prefabricated educational buildings. Unfortunately the technical documentation was not preserved, so it cannot be determined whether this team of architects were the authors or in which year it was constructed. However, based on the visual appearance and the spatial organisation it is very likely that Vera Cirkovic with or without Nikola Sercer was also the author of this project. The school has the same circular shaped base and all the architectural elements are the same. It can even be concluded that this school is practically a copy of the Elementary School 'Filip Filipovic'. It is also probable that the school was constructed in a later period, together with the construction of the residential block 63 on Novi Beograd in 1977-9.

It can be firmly concluded that Vera Cirkovic with Nikola Sercer tried to develop a specific prefabricated system for schools and used this project as a prototype for the later designed projects. This was not an isolated case, but a product of a general strategy since a large number of educational objects needed to be constructed in an efficient and economic way.<sup>41</sup>

It is interesting to observe that there were some similarities with the construction and composition treatment between the mentioned schools and an Elementary School 'Leonardo da Vinci' in Terni

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<sup>35</sup> Historical Archives of Belgrade, Technical documentation,

<sup>36</sup> Baylon, *Školske zgrade*, 218.

<sup>37</sup> Historical Archives of Belgrade, Technical documentation, f-6-9-1954

<sup>38</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>39</sup> Historical Archives of Belgrade, Technical documentation, f-43-26-1955; Baylon, *Školske zgrade*, 44.

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<sup>40</sup> Historical Archives of Belgrade, Technical documentation, f-43-26-1955

<sup>41</sup> Zoran Bajbutović, *Arhitektura školske zgrade* (Sarajevo: Svijetlost, 1983), 383.

designed by Mario Ridolfi in 1961.<sup>42</sup> Even though the materials and the environment are different, it is visible that Ridolfi also chose to make the facade more dynamic by introducing the protruding terraces on the corner in a very similar manner as Vera Cirkovic and Nikola Sercer, which is highly unusual for educational buildings.

## Conclusion

In her approach to modernise educational architecture, Vera Cirkovic introduced a system of functional groups, most likely adopted from Alfred Roth. In her projects for school buildings, she managed to arrange these functional groups in different well interconnected wings. This principle proved to be highly functional and very influential in Yugoslavian educational architecture which Mate Baylon recommended in his studies on school architecture from 1962.<sup>43</sup> By that time, Cirkovic's schools served as an example for younger architects. Some of them chose to embrace that principle and elaborate it, such as Petar Petrovic in his masterpiece project for the Elementary School 'Ratko Mitrovic' in Belgrade from 1972.<sup>44</sup>

Together with Nikola Sercer, Vera Cirkovic tried to form a distinct type of elementary school that could easily be multiplied. This was a very typical architectural approach in the 1950s, since there was a great need for schools, therefore a quick and efficient solution was favourable. The widely used term 'factory schools'<sup>45</sup> could apply to

their design strategy. However, the production has never reached a more impressive number and with tasks such as the Elementary School 'St Sava' Vera Cirkovic showed it is not possible to treat each project assignment the same way.

The post-war architecture in Yugoslavia was marked by a significant number of collaborations and co-authorships, like in the case of Vera Cirkovic and Nikola Sercer. Due to the nature of their work, it is very difficult to determine the contribution of each party when analyzing their projects. However, based on the project Cirkovic did without the co-authorship of Sercer, it can be concluded that her contribution was not only technical. Both her and Nikola Sercer are understudied and their work should become the subject of a more detailed research.

Vera Cirkovic also continued the tradition of female architects in Yugoslavia designing educational building of high aesthetic and functional quality. Her work in the field of school architecture showed a great affinity towards flexible and functional buildings, which appeared to be a very important feature of educational architecture in later decades.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Gianni Accasto, "La scuola di Terni", *Controspazio* 111-112 (2005), 134-139.

<sup>43</sup> Baylon, *Školske zgrade*, 135.

<sup>44</sup> Зоран Маневић (ed.), *Лексикон неимара* (Београд: Грађевинска књига, 2008), 318; Mitrović, *Arhitektura*, 69.

<sup>45</sup> Rena Upitis, "School Architecture and Complexity", *Complicity* 1 (2004), <https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/co>

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[mplicity/article/viewArticle/8713](https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/co) (accessed July 8, 2016), 20-21.

<sup>46</sup> Milutin Đorđević, "Neka pitanja izgradnje i organizacije školskog prostora", *Pedagoška stvarnost* 6 (1979), 522-523.

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## Remarkable Public Health Service Architecture by Architect Zoja Dumengjić

Zrinka Barišić Marenčić

### 1. Introduction

**Architect Zoja Dumengjić** with her work achieved remarkable contribution to Croatian modern architecture of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> Long working lifetime of architect Zoja Dumengjić covers almost the entire last century, and professional activity the period from 1928 to 1981. She established herself in the period between the two world wars through her uncompromising achievements in the spirit of modern architecture. With a number of architects of modernist tendencies, she contributed with her work during, and especially after World War II to the establishment of continuity of modernity Croatian architecture during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

She specialized early in the field of architecture for health purposes, and her projects and realization marked this specific segment of complex architectural production. The work of Zoja Dumengjić was recognized and indexed during her life with two major awards for lifetime

achievement, "Viktor Kovačić" (1979) and "Vladimir Nazor" (1995). The entire work was researched as part of the doctoral thesis of the author of this article: "Architect Zoja Dumengjić - the Remarkable Features of Her Oeuvre in the Context of Croatian Modern Architecture", defended the University of Architecture in Zagreb in 2007.

The work of architect Zoja Dumengjić<sup>2</sup> was clearly seen through several periods in Zagreb: 1923 - 1927 the study of architecture at the Technical Faculty in Zagreb, 1928 -1930 the first professional experience in Atelier Fischer, 1930 to 1941 the designer of School of Public Health, 1941-1948 the Second World War and the first reconstruction of the country, 1948-1954 the independent designer in Architecture Project Institute and 1954 to 1975 the head and the independent designer with Architectural project office "Dumengjić". During almost the entire period the architect was actively involved in over seventy public architectural and urban competitions, where she was highly ranked.

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<sup>1</sup> With her renowned contemporaries, architects Mladen Kauzlaric and Stjepan Gomboš, Marijan Haberle and Hinko Bauer, Vladimir Turina, Zvonimir Vrkljan, Antun Ulrich, Slavko Löwy, Stjepan Planić, Kazimir Ostrogović, Drago Galić and others, she represents a generation of architects who with their work formed the corpus of Croatian modern architecture during the tumultuous 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Croatia was stormed in the second world war and changed the two social and three political systems. Their realization marked the Croatian area, and the work as a whole is the heritage of today's generation as a cultural or architectural heritage of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>2</sup> Zoja Nepenina was born in 1904 in Odessa on the Black Sea in Russia. Father Peter Nepenin was a general in the Russian army. Idyll of a calm and happy childhood was interrupted by the October Revolution in 1917 and the disintegration of the Russian Empire. This was followed by a three-year exile of the Nepen family, who wandered through Europe with the two children looking for a suitable location for a new home. The family settled in Kikinda, in Vojvodina, and young Zoja began to study architecture in Zagreb in 1923.

Although the work was accomplished during substantially altered socio-political and economic conditions of the environment, a detailed inspection of works demonstrated a clear life and professional endeavour. Set through over thirty years of 20<sup>th</sup> century, project work of Zoja Dumengjić culminated after World War II with the specific architectural expression that in a particular way enriched the Croatian architectural heritage.

## **2. Opus of architect Zoja Dumengjić**

Rich architectural opus consists of one hundred and eighty-eight works, which in equal proportions make realization, awarded competition projects and unrealized projects. Architecture for medical purposes in the opus is the most common, and includes a total of seventy-five projects of hospitals and medical centres, specialized hospital pavilions and buildings of primary health care. In the opus of the architect buildings for education, residential buildings, and a stationary character of a building are highlighted. Projects of public buildings were realised mainly through participation in competitions, but also through regular employment, and include administrative and office buildings, production facilities, sports facilities, cultural and social facilities, canteens and railway stations. Precisely in the field of architecture for medical purposes work and contribution of Zoja Dumengjić are most distinguished, a primary tendency for enriching area of primary users is the most prominent. In the complex project tasks such as hospitals, the architect presented the sovereign mastery of all components of the discipline. By integrating the basic components of the architecture; functions, structures and forms with her

own innovative and aesthetic solutions, and efforts for enriching the space for man, she achieved consistent design solutions that are recognizable in expression that during decades of work were transformed in accordance with the universal development of the profession and individual reflection.

## **3. Professional Work after the Second World War**

After the Second World War the capitalist system is changed into a socialist. This is a big change for the architectural profession, because private architectural offices were closed, and the whole former system changed. All available architects were mobilized and organized in a number of republican ministries. The priority task was the reconstruction of the war-torn country. Problems they faced practically exceeded the material possibilities of society, technological capacity and organizational forms.

After the war architect Zoja Dumengjić was employed in the Ministry of Health of People's Republic Croatia. With a large number of projects of sanitary-epidemiological stations, apartment buildings, children's and student's dormitories, the modernist project of annex of the existing hospital in Biograd should be set aside, and her reconstruction and renovation for tuberculosis sanatorium for bones and joints in 1946.

The strongest project organization in the People's Republic of Croatia, National Project Institute, was founded in 1946, seceding from the Ministry of Construction People's Republic of Croatia, and in 1947 was renamed the Institute of Architecture Projects (Arhitektonski projektni zavod - APZ). In addition to the individual joining of Engineers to the

Institute, the most prominent example of that time "disposition" is a simultaneous transfer of dozen "officials from department of capital construction of the Ministry of Health, from 01.01.1948 "federally with a telephone conversation ... in the budget" of the Ministry of Construction, i.e. Institute of Architecture Projects "...<sup>3</sup> According to the official document the joining engineers are: "civil engineer Zoja Dumengjić, civil engineer Marijan Haberle, Juraj Bertol, Galina Feldt, Ivan Bartolić, Minka Jurković, and civil engineer Vlasta Doder".<sup>4</sup> This act completed the first project institute in the former Yugoslavia that by 1950 reached over two hundred employees. During 1948 to 1954 Zoja Dumengjić was an independent designer and head of the project group, i.e. of the project studio of Institute of Architecture Projects in Zagreb, that worked in Vlaška 69. She realised a very large number of projects to restore the war-torn country; buildings for education, buildings for collective housing, especially health buildings.

After the era of centralized planning and management in the early post-war period and the first independent offices of architects Kazimir Ostrogović, Marijan Haberle and Ivo Vitić, the Institute of Architecture Projects in 1954 was transformed to as many as thirteen architectural offices. The new design offices were named after their directors, former heads of studios within the Institute of Architecture Projects. Significant more important architectural-design offices were separately established

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<sup>3</sup> Darko Venturini *Arhitektonski projektni zavod – APZ, prilog poslijeratnoj hrvatskoj arhitekturi* (Zagreb: APZ - Arhitektonski projektni zavod, 1982):20

<sup>4</sup> Venturini, *APZ*, 20. It is to be noticed that all architects were treated as civil engineers. The construction and reconstruction of the country was considered. A construction task and construction operations imposed its supremacy.

by architects Bela Auer, Ivo Bartolić, Zoja Dumengjić, Ivo Geršić, Lavoslav Horvat and Harold Bilinić, Zlatko Neumann, Zvonimir Pavešić and Antun Ulrich.<sup>5</sup> In the period after World War II, based on the observed activity in the thirties architect Zoja Dumengjić was recognized designer specializing in the field of health architecture.<sup>6</sup>

### **3.1. Healthcare centres and buildings of primary health care of architect Zoja Dumengjić**

With a number of significant achievements regarding hospital, specialized hospital wards, in the post-war period she distinguished herself in the cycle of health centres, whose project realisation culminates in six realized projects in the fifties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> During 1952 to 1967 the architect realized

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<sup>5</sup> Independent became also Architectural project office Delenardo, Novak, Plehati, and Tučkorić.

<sup>6</sup> As part of the School of Public Health achievements of Zoja Dumengjić realisation of Infectious Diseases pavilions of the city infectious hospital on Mirogojska cesta 8 in Zagreb in 1934, the Children's spa for tuberculosis in Šumetlica from 1936 to 1938, the Pavilion for tuberculosis and infectious diseases pavilion of General Hospital in Varazdin from 1936 to 1942, and school for assistant nurses and boarding school on Mlinarska cesta in Zagreb from 1939 to 1941 should be noted.

<sup>7</sup> The cycle of twenty-eight projects in primary healthcare purposes the architect realized almost during the entire professional activity in the period from 1931 to 1967. During this period a number of different socio-political systems was changed. Consequently, the various institutions also within which she participated in design on healthcare architecture (from the School of Public Health in the interwar period to the post-war Ministry of Health and Institute of Architecture Projects). At the same time there was a very intensive development of medical science during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



fourteen projects of healthcare centres. Six realizations date back to the period from 1952 to 1962, and that are the healthcare centres in Ploče, Kutina, Omiš, and Trnje, Črnomerec and Medveščak in Zagreb.

Articulation of the layout structure was dually conditioned; as the need of differentiation of individual tracts and enabling a series of separate entrances, so because of the required staging construction.<sup>8</sup> Healthcare centres were designed from the longitudinal tracts (wings), which due to the program and spatial conditions constitute indented orthogonal structure. Longitudinal wings include or tangent the external landscaped spaces that enrich and humanize working medical facilities and patients' waiting areas. Wings with ambulances are interlinked by connecting wings with lecture rooms or porches. Facilities are low; having ground floor, floors or extremely double-floored. In the ground floor there are located wards with separate entrances, a shadowy porch of the ground floor indicates the entry zone. Expansion of entrance area at the first floor gallery distinguishes healthcare centres in Ploče and Omiš, and Medveščak in Zagreb.

A series of mutually isolated entrances were formed, which were conditioned by medical-hygienic reasons of isolation of individual functional groups. Such an approach enabled the reduction of the corridor, thereby achieving economical realization, and also better functional coherence i.e. required separation of functional units. By reduction of corridor system of two tracts layout of the first

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<sup>8</sup> Deviations from the projects of architect Dumengjić in the last stages of realization, and frequent devastation of quality of original projects marks the realization of healthcare centres in Kutina and Zagreb; Črnomerec and Medveščak.

floor, the central zone was transformed into a waiting room area with bilateral lighting and cross ventilation.

One of the design priorities of the architect was to provide natural light and ventilation of space particularly that designed for patients. The aspiration for natural bilateral lighting the architect resolved by cross section, by height differentiation of the roof panel between the polyclinic area and the waiting room. By increasing the height of the waiting room bilateral lighting and ventilation through skylights was realised. Two-floored wings of two-tracts disposition marks the raised central roof panels above the waiting room, which allows the formation of a two-sided skylights (Trnje, Črnomerec, Medveščak in Zagreb). When programming smaller healthcare centres, she transformed striving for bilateral lighting in specifically designed theme of higher entrance porch and waiting room tract (Ploče, Kutina, Omiš). The ground floor entrance porch was articulated in the distinctive tectonic structure. Series of columns of the early fifties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were made of reinforced concrete (Ploče, Kutina), i.e. of steel in the late fifties (Omiš, Medveščak). Indented longitudinal facade of the porch is not flat, but plastically broken; through cross section - vertically, or in plan - horizontally. Vertical disjunction of recessed facade was realized with the aim of forming skylight zone of waiting rooms. It was articulated by the lower cubes (of windshields or toilets), or by pulling the facade of the waiting room in the area of skylights (Kutina or Ploče, Omiš, Medveščak in Zagreb).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Varying depths of porch in plan (Črnomerec in Zagreb) was realized at the same time as a theme in much larger scale at the gallery front of the Split General Hospital.

Healthcare centre facilities of larger scales had indented disposition. Upper floor with ambulances was marked by prominent corpus (with ribbon windows of the facade of ambulance spaces in Črnomerec and Trnje in Zagreb or first floor gallery in Medveščak in Zagreb and Omiš). Denivelation of roof slab was designed due to waiting room skylights. Entrance area of ground floor was articulated by the shady porch and stone cladding. The impact of health centres realisation by Zoja Dumengjić is noticeable in the realization of a series of health building by architect's contemporaries (Ivo Geršić, Juraj Bertol, Zvonimir Pavešić, Žarko Vincek and Nada Šilović). In the context of the architecture of buildings of primary healthcare purposes, the impact can be felt in realisations of Professor Mladen Vodička (healthcare centres in Samobor, 1962-1965; 1977-1980 and Labin, 1963-1969, competition project with Boris Magaš). At a time when designer Dumengjić completed her rich body of work, within the narrow profiled segment of healthcare architecture the tradition of quality continued by the realization of the former assistant professor Vodička, architect Dražen Juračić in cooperation with architect Branko Kincl, who from 1983 to 1988 realized noticed Healthcare centre Centar in Zagreb.

### **3.2. The General Hospital complex in Split**

The major achievement in the oeuvre of architect Zoja Dumengjić is the General Hospital complex in Split, designed by Zoja Dumengjić, which was put up in stages between 1951 and 1969. The hospital location is situated about a hundred meters from the coast and provides a magnificent view of the sea and the Split archipelago. Despite obvious advantages, there were also some limiting

circumstances: a considerably sloping terrain and the existence of small-size hospital units which restricted the height of the future structures. The complex is primarily designed and organized according to the existing units, the terrain configuration, high-quality insolation and views from the hospital units.

The main hospital complex is essentially conceived as the two longitudinal, parallel interconnected wings. The already built four-storey surgical unit (1936-1940, arch. Lav Horvat) is integrated within the structure and limits the height of the complex. A splendid gallery on the south-facing facade is the most recognizable feature of the complex. It integrates several functions: it protects from blazing south sunshine (especially in hot months); it serves as a parallel internal communication link designed for the patients and their visitors (and thus relieves the internal corridor); it acts as a shaded outdoor living room (which can possibly be used throughout the year); it commands superb views and allows patients to enjoy fresh air and for this reason has an important psychological and social effect on their recovery.

A dynamically broken wing of the building allows better insolation of the existing Horvat's wing, articulates a functional organization of the hospital units, ensures a better proportioning of the large scale space organization, and stimulates the patients' sense of belonging. A dynamically broken wing of the gallery front is articulated by the extended white horizontals of the gallery and the shaded outdoor living rooms. The patients in the General Hospital are almost like voyagers on the ships in the Split archipelago. On their shaded galleries, like on the decks, they take part in this picturesque landscape which certainly contributes to their effective treatment. It is precisely the architect's care for the patient that is

clearly manifested in her work: in an effort to maximally integrate the quality of the wider environment and sunlight into the designed building, she successfully manages to adjust her design to the purpose of the building.

The polyclinic complex is organized along the northern access square. The outpatients, who visit the hospital on a daily basis, may enjoy bright and airy waiting rooms. The health care facilities designed by this architect in the 1950s and 1960s are clearly recognized by her intention to render the spaces for patients more humane. Her design is therefore characterized by ample daylight and airy spaces as well as an integration of the features of the surrounding landscape into the designed spaces.

The tuberculosis unit (1954-1958) was put up first between 1954 and 1958. Its specifically designed inverted cascade section is the first step in the articulation of the south skin. Taking into consideration the program and function of the tuberculosis unit, the designer adjusts her work to psychological and curative purposes. She integrates various types of hospital room organization and in an innovative way achieves a specific articulation of the building skin. The multi-layered south-facing building skin is designed with the purpose of exploiting the quality of sunlight and the play of light and shade of the Mediterranean climate. The architect thus successfully demonstrates her mastery of all architectural components. Her innovative integration of function, structure and form has ultimately produced an architectural masterpiece. Today, however, this remarkable achievement is threatened by demolition due to a tender that in its propositions callously foresees demolition and construction of the building of the Integrated emergency hospital admission (sic!).

Health care facilities design has proved as a rich field for some of the most outstanding works of modern architecture. Creative architects know how to exploit and develop the complementary principles of modern architecture and medical programs to maximum effect. They successfully manage to integrate modern structural and technological advances with the humane and hygienic principles and thus endow these facilities with psychological and social value as well as with design articulation creating an entirely new architectural value.

An innovative design of the Split General Hospital generates themes that had already been present in Z. Dumengjić's work from the 1930s. A building that exerted an exceptionally strong influence on her numerous projects was certainly the Sanatorium in Paimio, Finland, designed by Alvar Aalto between 1928 and 1933. This project had an obvious influence on the Tuberculosis Unit in Varaždin (1936-1942) and on a splendid State Tuberculosis Sanatorium Snopljak on Medvednica from 1941.

She finally integrated all these experiences in her major achievement in Split in 1951. Special care for a patient bears obvious resemblance to Aalto's approach: her design of a broken southwestern wing of the Split General Hospital provided not only a better insolation of the existing northern wing but also a more harmonious organic integration of a massive building into the sloping terrain in Firule.

According to dr Šegvić's words, a work of architecture becomes truly outstanding if it makes contribution to urban design and development, ensures continuity in art and culture, plays an important role in society, and serves as inspiration for new works. Zoja Dumengjić was aware of the main problem of south Mediterranean

architecture, in particular the need for sun protection: she works it out in her own way and brilliantly succeeds in the integration of functional and design components by means of a creative use of the structure itself.

An outstanding value of this complex is confirmed through its influence on the generations of Split-based architects, primarily Ivo Radić, Lovro Perković, Dinko Vesanović and Ante Kuzmanić who dealt with the concept of double skin in their work.

The intervention is not far from the historic nuclei of Split. It was built in the vicinity of the historic nucleus - the Diocletian's palace (3rd-5th century AD) which is widely considered as one of the best preserved monuments of Roman architecture in the world. The traces of Roman parcellation are still visible on the hospital site itself and form its northern boundary.

An important component of the realisation of the General Hospital by Zoja Dumengjić is its cityscape component. The urban layout of the facility of Split General hospital in the context of the ancient core of Split reinterprets *cardo* and *decumanus* of Diocletian's Palace in the west.

Deflection of the southwest wing of the hospital is associated with a string of family houses on Bačvice in the immediate environment of the west. On the other hand, it anticipates deflection of parallel streets of the urban plan of the more eastern Split III (Slovenian architects Vladimir Mušič, Marjan Bežanec and Nives Starc, 1968-69)<sup>10</sup>. The theme of the

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<sup>10</sup> The deflection of the newly formed *Cardo* of the pedestrian streets Ruđer Bošković which climbs towards recently completed Split campus, in comparison to the structure of parallel pedestrian street Split III, has the same deflection angle of the southwest wing of the General Hospital in relation to the basic structure.

pedestrian promenade is present in all of the above mentioned constructions. Furthermore, cityscape component of this particular hospital realization comes to the fore in the formation of the south face of the city, where two hospitals of architects Dumengjić and Ulrich<sup>11</sup> by their calm horizontals balance the vibrant silhouette of Split at the foot of Mosor and Kozjak. South views from the open sea to Split, are primarily the most important for the formation of the image of the city port from the open sea.

This superb work of architecture has been included in the monographs on Croatian health care facilities and presented in a great number of international publications. This paper is a contribution to its evaluation and registration.

#### 4. Conclusion

The work of architect Zoja Dumengjić includes central five decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although in the terms of reference she focused on the wider area, her projects and performances were focused mostly on Croatian territory. After emigration from the territory of the former Russian Empire (Odessa, now Ukraine), Zoja Petrovna Nepenina enrolled the study of architecture at the Zagreb Technical Faculty, Department of Architecture, where she graduated in 1927. With professional architectural education she was connected in almost the entire life and creative span to Croatia. Professional activity included nearly two hundred works of various project tasks, which were mainly focused on the area of healthcare architecture. Professor emeritus Bruno Milić knew and met architect Zoja Dumengjić during the

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<sup>11</sup> Military hospital, today KBC Split, 1958 - 1965

Second World War and immediately after its completion.<sup>12</sup> Evoking his memories, professor emeritus B. Milić succinctly describes the architect Zoja Dumengjić: *"She held her head high and stared straight ahead. ...She did not speak Croatian entirely correctly, but that did not bother her to be categorical, and to say a sentence as a command. Most of the women who studied and completed architecture studies never went to the construction site, did not come upon or overcome all the difficulties that profession on construction site and the profession in society bears. Our profession requires a hard perseverance, courage. Which woman would climb the scaffolding? None of them dared! But Zoja did.*

*She climbed the scaffolding whenever it was needed. She was deeply appreciated at the construction site, they had feared of her, as opposed to other young women. The women at the construction site were not present. I do not know a single architect who was a fighter in this sense. She had a hard shell, network around herself which protected her from the brutality of life. She had all the attributes. She gained a reputation in any field, not only at competitions or academic level."*<sup>13</sup>

Such grit and perseverance led to the establishment of an independent Architectural design office Dumengjić in 1954, where until her retirement in 1975 she was director and chief designer (the first architectural office run by a woman). On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of autonomous activities of Architectural design office spouses Dumengjić published in 1964 the catalogue of works produced

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<sup>12</sup> At the time when he worked on the tender projects with architect Marijan Haberle

<sup>13</sup> Statement of Prof. Emerituss Bruno Milić, Ph.D., November 16 2004, Faculty of Architecture, University of Zagreb..

in the office: Architectural design office Dumengjić, Zagreb 1954-1964.<sup>14</sup>

Beside professional work, architect Zoja Dumengjić presented her projects and realization at the most important world exhibition in Brussels in 1958 (Yugoslav section at the World Exhibition), the exhibition "Medicine and Technology" in Zagreb in 1961, and the "Zagreb Salon" in 1966. Beside the professional work, she formed important and rich bibliographic cycle. In the period from 1950 to 1975 she published the many summaries of their projects, competitions and realizations in professional journals (Zagreb magazine "Architecture and Urbanism" i.e. "Architecture" and Belgrade's "Architecture - Urbanism").

Great support to her professional work architect Zoja Dumengjić certainly found in her husband, architect Selimir Dumengjić. Architect Selimir Dumengjić focused his action on programming, theoretical and pedagogy, work, and the main highlighted features of institutions devoted to healthcare. While her affirmation at first was in the shadow of a successful architect husband<sup>15</sup>, with today's distance situation is just the inverse. His theoretical and pedagogical work faded with time delay, and the architect's realization aroused the interest of the professional public.

There are two facts that characterize very different starting points of architect Zoja Dumengjić compared to most fellow contemporaries. She was an immigrant from the territory of the Russian Empire, and a woman. There were very few women architects in the professional

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<sup>14</sup> Selimir Dumengjić and Zoja Dumengjić. *Arhitektonski projektni biro Dumengjić, Zagreb 1954-1964 (katalog radova APB Dumengjić, jubilarno izdanje biroa povodom 10. godišnjice samostalnog djelovanja)*. Zagreb, 1964.

<sup>15</sup> Statement of architect Juraj Bertol, November 10 2004, Horvatovac 62, Zagreb

world of architecture in the thirties, but also in the post-war period. Although nowadays successful women in business are not uncommon, during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it used to be the exception rather than the rule. This is evidenced in several inscriptions, even the headlines, such as the Zagreb "News" in 1935: "... *Female engineer built a modern pavilion infectious hospital*".<sup>16</sup> Even after the end of World War II in the papers there were in these headlines: "Woman architect executed norm"<sup>17</sup> or "First woman architect who carried out her five-year plan"<sup>18</sup>.

Architect Zoja Dumengjić died in the ninety-sixth year of life, in 2000 in Zagreb. She is the laureate of the highest professional awards for lifetime achievement, "Viktor Kovačić" and "Vladimir Nazor". The latter is awarded as Lifetime Achievement Award "to prominent artists who, through their creativity marked the time in which they worked and whose creative path is completed and works remain the permanent Croatian heritage".<sup>19</sup> However, after the end of her life her work does not fade. On the contrary, the number of publications dealing with the topic of her work is on the rise, especially after 2007 and the finalization of theses dedicated to her integral and special work<sup>20</sup>, her work is the theme of lectures

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<sup>16</sup> Enes, „Prenatranosti zagrebačke zarazne bolnice doskočit će se novim bolničkim paviljonom (žena-inženjer izgradila najmoderniji paviljon zarazne bolnice)“ *Novosti* 323 (20.11.1935)

<sup>17</sup> J.M., „Jedanaest inženjera i arhitekata Arhitektonsko-projektnog zavoda Hrvatske rade za drugu Petoljetku“. *Vjesnik*, April 08 1950 : 10.

<sup>18</sup> J.Ž., „Jedanaest inženjera Projektantskog zavoda Hrvatske konstruiraju za drugu petoljetku“. *Rad*, May 04 1950 : 2.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.min-kulture.hr/default.aspx?id=407>

<sup>20</sup> Barišić Marenčić, Z.: „Arhitektica Zoja Dumengjić – Osobitost djela u kontekstu hrvatske moderne

and interviews, and included in numerous retrospectives of modern architecture in Croatia and abroad.<sup>21</sup>

However, paradoxically, as only rare achievements of the architect Dumengjić are included in the lists of protected heritage, her works are subjected to arbitrary user intervention and devastation, and recently the demolition of the TB Pavilion in Split was announced (sic!). On the other hand, the youngest generation of architects and students lively resonate with the power and freshness of her realisations, and the

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arhitekture.“ (Ph.D. diss., University of Zagreb, Faculty of Architecture, 2007)

<sup>21</sup> Stjepan Planić. *Problemi savremene arhitekture*. Zagreb, 1931/32.; reprint 1996. (Biblioteka Psefizma, Nakladništvo Udruženja hrvatskih arhitekata, Zagreb)

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works are more frequently included in publications that present the anthological modern achievements of Croatia.

Projects of architect Zoja Dumengjić are marked clearly by structured functional solutions, realized on the basis of the rigid analysis of the project program and location characteristics.

Reflecting functionality not only from rational-organizational aspect, but also from the psychological and sociological aspects, she focused her efforts to the primary user (patient - the patient in medical buildings, a student in educational buildings and so forth.).

For primary users she designed bright and airy interior spaces, enriched by the attributes of the surrounding landscape, open views and outdoor spaces. Realized through the mastery of the functional and structural components of the architecture, design efforts of architect Dumengjić manifested in the specific design expression, and represent an exceptional contribution to the corpus of Croatian modern architecture.

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Photo: Zrinka Barišić Marenić



# “Feeling at Home, Elisabeth (Kaatje) de Lestrieux’s Personal Housing Designs”

Florencia Fernández Cardoso, Fátima Pombo and Hilde Heynen

## 1. Introduction

From the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, married women have been deemed responsible for the decoration of their homes.<sup>1</sup> Professional, independent women might have escaped this expectation, but they often had interiorized social convention that strongly relates women with the home. Many professions that were seen as particularly suitable for women, such as nursing or interior decorating, built upon this expertise, by professionalizing tasks that in private life belonged to the domestic sphere.

Elisabeth de Lestrieux (1933-2009) - also known as Kaatje – was such a woman, who turned feminine interests and expertise into a career. She was an unusual and very independent Dutch woman, who was completely self-made and who turned her expertise in cooking, decorating and gardening into a livelihood that brought her many admirers and followers. After unsuccessful years at the university, De Lestrieux found herself a job as a journalist for women’s magazines. Her profile rose over the years. Whereas she first was portrayed as a cooking editor, she gradually took over other responsibilities, such as the interior design section of the lifestyle magazine *Avenue*. In this she excelled, detecting and describing new trends, familiarizing her

readers with innovative design and, after some years, becoming a role model by using her own homes as experimentation ground. She was a trendsetter in combining antique and modern furniture in interiors that were not newly built, but situated in reconverted old farmhouses.<sup>2</sup> Gradually her writing shifted to another of her interests: gardening. Upon request, she designed several gardens for acquaintances and clients in the Netherlands, Belgium and Portugal. She published more than 35 books about plants, flowers and garden design, many of which were translated into English, French, German, Spanish, and Italian, thus reaching a multi-cultural audience all across Europe. Her influence as a mediator and trendsetter is undeniable. Nevertheless, her writings and designs have not yet received scholarly attention.

This article first introduces de Lestrieux’s career as an architectural writer, interior and landscape designer. We examine her six self-designed homes, from articles published in multiple journals and books, through which she invited readers into her own space. We study her own renovated farmhouses as well as her self-designed tomb in the south of Portugal. In the analyses of those case studies, we stress four elements that constitute a recurrent core of her quest to

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<sup>1</sup> Yves Schoonjans, “‘Au bonheur des dames’  
Vrouw, smaak en het burgerlijk interieur in de  
negentiende eeuw”, ed. Christine Delhay and  
Hilde Heynen, *Tijdschrift voor Vrouwenstudies*, De  
zij-kant van architectuur, 18, no. 2 (1997): 136–52.

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<sup>2</sup> Karl-Richard Könnecke, ‘Ein Altes Haus Mit  
Charme Erfüllt’, *Schöner Wohnen*, 11 November  
1970; Dieuwke de Rijk, ‘Zo Wonen Mensen Die  
over Wonen Schrijven’, *De Telegraaf*, 17 April  
1973, 37; Thea Detiger, ‘Acht Ezels in de Wei Om  
Te Aaien’, *De Telegraaf* 99 (29 March 1991): 2.

feel at home - nature, in-out-in, purity and abundance.

## 2\_The Career of Elisabeth de Lestrieux (1933 -2009)

### 2.1\_Kaatje: an adventurous and independent woman

Elisabeth de Lestrieux was born from Dutch parents in 1933 in Maracaibo, Venezuela, and lived most of her life in the Netherlands. Although she was parentless at age 15, de Lestrieux carried an independent life. She gained a high school diploma in garden architecture,<sup>3</sup> but never completed her university degree in French. She travelled and experimented with multiple artistic disciplines: music, theatre, cuisine, architecture and landscaping. From the mid-1950s, de Lestrieux started writing articles in several journals where she focused on fashion, French cuisine, interior design and gardening.<sup>4</sup>

De Lestrieux was an autodidactic woman, who learned about architecture and modern design through reading and writing. In figure 1, de Lestrieux is photographed in an article celebrating nine successful culinary writers.<sup>5</sup> She is the one on the bottom-right, elegantly sitting on the grass.

### 2.2\_De Lestrieux's architecture writings

De Lestrieux joined the staff of, *Avenue* from its first issue in October. Dutch photographer Joop Swart had

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<sup>3</sup> 'Rijkstuinbouwschool Te Boskoop', *De Leidse Courant*, 7 July 1953.

<sup>4</sup> W. H. Smith, 'Een Toonaangevend Tuintalent', *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, 12 October 1990, 17.

<sup>5</sup> 'Negen Prominente Kook-Redactrices Geven U Tips Voor 9 Lekker-Makkelijke Pinkster-Hapjes', *Utrechts Nieuwsblad* 71, no. 25 (29 May 1963): 22.

transformed the previous titled *Romance* magazine, into a more modern magazine portraying high-level photography, in glossy pages, depicting travels, fashion, cooking as well as architecture and interior design. De Lestrieux was in charge of the last two, writing long, monthly articles.

Since the first issues of *Avenue*, her writings won her a spot in the architecture and design milieu. Her articles were case study reports of modern living, titled "Living in the Netherlands" or "Living today" and research reports proposing multiple solutions to interior design problems. For the latter, she sometimes involved another Dutch architect, Bart Olof van den Berg to produce multiple domestic architecture designs for diverse styles and needs. She advised the readers about decorating with a low budget or integrating new technologies inside the home. By writing in *Avenue*, a magazine that had first presented itself as "the new magazine for the new woman,"<sup>6</sup> de Lestrieux constructed her career as a designer and invited women into the art of designing their own individual spaces.

In her later books, she also defended the reader's right to one's own home design. In *Decorating With Plants: Living colour in the home* de Lestrieux explained that the authors aimed to "illustrate and describe" how to integrate new and traditional plants into the home, "with particular attention being paid to their place in your interior design."<sup>7</sup> Here, she placed ownership of the design as being the readers', experimenting under de Lestrieux's advice. Finally, in *The Modern Art of Flower Arranging* de Lestrieux elucidated her overall objective

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<sup>6</sup> Joop Swart, 'Cover: Nieuw Blad Voor Nieuwe Vrouwen', *Avenue* 1, no. 1 (October 1965): 1.

<sup>7</sup> A. C. Muller-Idzerda and Elisabeth de Lestrieux, *Decorating With Plants, Living Colour in the Home* (Arco, 1981), 7.

of in producing her design writings. She explained, “[this book] does not aim to lay down strict rules for preparing arrangements or test pieces... even less to give you rigid instructions (...) *The Modern Art of Flower Arranging* is not just about arranging flowers, for it also has much to say about the pleasures of cultivating plants for yourself.”<sup>8</sup>

### 2.3\_A garden woman and landscape architect

In her late published books between the 1980s and 1990s, de Lestrioux’s interests shifted towards decorating with plants, landscaping or using flowers in cuisine. De Lestrioux taught gardening lessons and cooking lessons for those interested. When describing one of her courses de Lestrioux stated, “We want everyone to learn about how to use more fantasy in their gardens.”<sup>9</sup> During this time, she continued to write in magazines like *Magriet* and *Terdege* focusing more on landscaping and on integrating gardening inside the home.

The author and educator also left her mark in the built environment of Belgium by designing landscapes of two great domains: the Orshof Hotel-Restaurant in 1983<sup>10</sup> and the Gravenwezel Castle run by Axel Vervoordt, in 1984.<sup>11</sup> In 1979, a prospective client of de Lestrioux also wrote to a Dutch journal asking for the landscape designer’s coordinates, with the interest of having her renovate her

own home.<sup>12</sup> Finally, in Portugal she designed a restaurant for Dutch clientele and the landscapes of a Dutch couple<sup>13</sup> and of a family villa<sup>14</sup> with swimming pool and contemporary art sculptures.<sup>15</sup>

### 3\_De Lestrioux’s personal homes: from de Meije to Loulé.

De Lestrioux explored a quest of defining her own home and of keeping vivid the feeling of being at home in her six self-designed houses that she shared with the public through publications and TV interviews.

Her first self-renovated house was in De Meije, Netherlands—where she lived from 1964 to 1966. Sadly, very little is known about this first project. Some information can be found indirectly in articles about her other houses. In an interview with Marian Spinhoven titled “Living for your house” she mentions that it was also a renovated farmhouse but small in size and it was here that she started her first garden, having lived in apartments before that.<sup>16</sup>

In July 1966, she published her second home<sup>17</sup> which she had bought and renovated with the financial help her own

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<sup>8</sup> Elisabeth de Lestrioux, *The modern art of flower arranging* (Twickenham: Hamlyn, 1986), 7.

<sup>9</sup> Bert Huls, ‘Creatief Tuinieren’, *De Telegraaf*, Woonkrant, 4 February 1987, 31.

<sup>10</sup> Lannoo, *Cartes topographiques Belgique*, Lannoo et Touring (Brussels: Institut géographique national, 2005), 340.

<sup>11</sup> Jean-Pierre Gabriel, ‘Lijnen in de Sneeuw’, *Knack Weekend*, 30 October 2013, 71.

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<sup>12</sup> J. Wentink-Frumau and J. J. Wentink, ‘Uw Probleem Ook Het Onze’, *Trouw*, 12 March 1979.

<sup>13</sup> van Schouwenburg Nicole and van Schouwenburg Pieter, About Kaatje, interview by Florencia Fernandez Cardoso, In person, 12 November 2015.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Villa for Sale in Boliqueime, 7/8 Bedrooms’, *Golden Visa Properties*, accessed 2 September 2016, <http://www.golden-visa-properties.com/villa-for-sale-boliqueime-78-bedrooms/>.

<sup>15</sup> Rik Felderhof, ‘Felderhof Ontmoet’, *Felderhof Ontmoet* (Portugal and Monaco: NCRV, 23 October 2000).

<sup>16</sup> Marian Spinhoven, ‘Leven Voor Je Huis’, *No Name*, No date (circa 1975).

<sup>17</sup> Elisabeth de Lestrioux, ‘Voorheen Boerderij’, *Avenue*, July 1966.

inheritance in Zennewijnen.<sup>18</sup> Interestingly enough, de Lestrieux did not mention that it was her own home that she described, illustrated, and photographed for others to discover. According to her article in *Avenue*, it was the home of a single woman owner who worked as a journalist.<sup>19</sup>

Her home appeared as an example amongst two others. All three were examples of owners who had renovated and re-designed their own homes from old Dutch farmhouses. Amongst the cases, lies a 1784 farmhouse renovated by a Dutch woman architect, A. Neunzerling, for a family of a medical doctor in Zijtaart.<sup>20</sup> This sixteen-page long article included floorplans of the three farmhouses before and after, and construction details of de Lestrieux's fireplace design. The article can be seen as a form of invitation, encouraging the readers to also partake in this modern act of renovating one's own home according to one's needs. The inclusion of floorplans and technical details also shows the level of precision and the form of architectural knowledge that de Lestrieux was transmitting. Her citing of a non-specified woman property-owner and a woman architect are also significant in promoting women's financial independence and their role as architects.

De Lestrieux's second home was next published in the German magazine *Schöner Wohnen* in 1970.<sup>21</sup> This time, however, it was openly introduced as de Lestrieux's home in a seven-page interview about her and her "old house full of charm." De Lestrieux's fireplace appears in multiple photographs because of its placement in the open space and its significance in defining the living areas.

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<sup>18</sup> Peter Brusse, 'De Tuinvrouw', *Vrij Nederland*, 11 April 2009, sec. Uit het leven.

<sup>19</sup> de Lestrieux, 'Voorheen Boerderij', 86.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 84–5.

<sup>21</sup> Könnecke, 'Ein Altes Haus Mit Charme Erfüllt'.

The fireplace was multi-faceted and geometrical providing multiple functions depending on the needs. This was in fact, an ingenious design made by de Lestrieux with the help of her colleague, architect van den Berg (see figure 4).

On one side, the white fireplace proposed a fire at eye-height for a person sitting in the living room, with a platform on its left that proposed a sitting area or a space for plants in pots. On the opposite side, the fireplace turned into a cooking-fire at hand-height for a person standing. Finally, a wood-burning stove was connected to the ventilation of the fireplace to supply extra heating for the open space.

De Lestrieux's third home was in Montfoort, Netherlands from 1971 to 1983. Interestingly, this one was also placed in the eye of the public. It was published in multiple journals and rendered open to the public through an antique shop, social events and fashion exhibitions.<sup>22</sup> Her farm complex in Montfoort was named "De Witte Swaen" (The White Swan). This was her biggest and the most expensive to maintain. Her interior design was similar to her Zennewijnen home, with a multi-faced fireplace in the middle that acted as an interactive element. Once again, she requested the help of architect van den Berg to build it.

As figure 5 depicts, on one side, one could sit down in the couches to read and look at the fireplace from sitting height. On the other side one could use the fireplace at hand height to cook and warm oneself near a dining area.

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<sup>22</sup> Stan Huygens, 'Kaatje Een Week in Het Wit', *De Telegraaf*, 16 November 1977; Stan Huygens, 'Mode in de "Witte Swaen"', *De Telegraaf*, 19 August 1978, sec. Journaal; Marijke Hultzer, 'Elisabeth de Lestrieux Laat Zien Dat Antiek Vrolijk En Sfeervol Kan Zijn', *De Telegraaf*, 24 September 1977..

De Lestrioux bought the farm complex with a romantic partner in 1970 and renovated it according to her own design aesthetics and feeling at home sentiments. Here, she also managed her own antique shop that she named again "De Witte Swaen." This shop was advertised numerous times in Dutch journals and it got her notoriety in the milieu of antique connoisseurs.

In 1973, her home was published in a *De Telegraaf* article about how interior designers conceived their own homes.<sup>23</sup> Her house and Dutch designer Annelike Hoogeweegen-Reinders' were shown with interviews about their personal house projects. De Rijk described, "If a house is the mirrored image of someone's character, then Elisabeth de Lestrioux is a warm, open and down-to-earth person."<sup>24</sup> De Lestrioux was in fact intimately linked with the design of her houses. In the article she also exclaims, "everyone has a right to their own taste and to their own kitsch corner. (...) I believe that a person must conceive their own house so that they can feel as comfortable and happy as possible."

De Lestrioux's fourth home came from financial difficulties in 1983. After separating from her romantic partner, she could no longer afford such a grand domain. Belgian designer, Axel Vervoordt helped her obtain a house in Othen, when she could no longer sustain her previous farm plot without the second co-inhabitant and without a stable job.<sup>25</sup> In March 1991, Ati Dijckmeester interviewed her for a "Passage Extra" TV Programma where her renovated farmhouse and garden were shown to the Dutch public.<sup>26</sup>

In 1995, the flooding of the river Waal destroyed her farm and her neighbourhood. "The garden was buried under sandbags" stated Brusse in his article 'Tuinvrouw'.<sup>27</sup> She then bought a property in Portugal, a sunny country to where she moved. "I did not run from the water, but I longed for the sun" quotes De Heer adding that "she was very fond of southern plants."<sup>28</sup>

Her fifth home was perhaps her last big project. It was not published in journals but was publicized through a TV interview by Rik Felderhof in *Felderhof Ontmoet*<sup>29</sup>. Her house in Loulé was all white, on top of a hill with a big garden area delimited by white walls.

De Lestrioux carried multiple concepts throughout the design of her houses. In her last home, we can see a crystallisation of some significant design elements. First of all, all of her homes were originally single-level farmhouses with four façades and big living areas with windows on opposite ends. In all of them, she prioritized a connection with the gardens. She often made use of a large fireplace to distinguish different areas within the open spaces. Finally, her built-in storage shelves also covered the walls in white and exposed bricks, maintaining a form of purity and abundance that she developed in her feeling at home.

In Portugal she continued gardening and designing, which resulted in a lengthy book on gardening in this climate and multiple client-requested landscape projects. Sadly, her health regressed, suffering from back pains. When she could no longer work in the garden, the fun went away. "When I look outside, I always see something that

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<sup>23</sup> de Rijk, 'Zo Wonen Mensen Die over Wonen Schrijven'.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Brusse, 'De Tuinvrouw'.

<sup>26</sup> Detiger, 'Acht Ezels in de Wei Om Te Aaien'.

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<sup>27</sup> Brusse, 'De Tuinvrouw', 82.

<sup>28</sup> Monique de Heer, 'Liever Planten En Dieren Dan Mensen; Elisabeth de Lestrioux 1933-2009', *Trouw*, 23 March 2009, sec. De verdieping.

<sup>29</sup> Felderhof, 'Felderhof Ontmoet'.

needs to be pruned, but I cannot," she said.<sup>30</sup>

De Lestrieux who moved from several houses after transforming, restoring, reforming, redesigning them to make them a home, was also very busy with her last address, her tomb in the cemetery of Loulé, in Portugal. Her final and sixth home project, also published in several journals, is her own self-designed tomb. This project was built with the help of de Lestrieux's niece, Nicole van Schouwenburg in 2009.<sup>31</sup> Her tomb represents the essentials of what she believes are the most important elements for inhabiting: nature, inside-outside, purity and abundance.

De Lestrieux selected an old sink from where "little birds could drink the water that gathers there" to signalize her eternal home.<sup>32</sup>

In the bottom of the 'tomb-sink' one can read the text she prepared herself, "Under this stone rests as food for the roots of flowers and trees Kaatje De Lestrieux, 08 08 1933 Maracaibo, 09 03 2009 Goldra de Cima, Loulé."<sup>33</sup> The scenery was completed with other elements brought by her niece and nephew: a garden chair with her complete name, an ashtray and an oleander. Under the Portuguese sun, Kaatje symbolically remains connected with nature in the style she expressed along her life. She made the natural cycle of seasons part of her way of living, supported by simplicity and wisdom.

#### 4\_De Lestrieux's leitmotifs for feeling at home

De Lestrieux' paramount statement about the ability of making a house into a home is the skill of transforming it in a cosy place. She partially diverted from the sobriety of modernist interiors, with their sparse furniture and bare decoration. Despite the fact she wrote untiringly about lifestyle, decoration, furniture, houses' interiors and exteriors as mean to create harmonious atmospheres between people and nature, she considered that all had a right to a home design of their own.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, she presented her own house designs and interior solutions as inspiration and not as models. She did, however, voice clear ideas about the recurrent core of her quest to feel at home, which can be recognized in all the interiors she decorated for herself. The authors grouped it in four main elements interplaying among them: nature, purity, in-out-in and abundance.

Nature was for de Lestrieux a partner for daily life, therefore accompanying and also influencing the mood of the inhabitants of the house. Plants, flowers and animals were as important elements to consider in the design of a house as the colour of the walls, the angle of the fireplace or the width of the windows. 'She had an average of twenty cats, a sheep, a few dogs, chickens and three dozen peacocks', assured Peter Brusse.<sup>35</sup> And 'when the children of her sister, Nicole (who later would illustrate eight books of her aunt) and Pieter van Schouwenburg [who photographed some of his aunt's designs], came to stay, they were allowed to sleep between the animals and were given

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<sup>30</sup> de Heer, 'Liever Planten En Dieren Dan Mensen; Elisabeth de Lestrieux 1933-2009', 21.

<sup>31</sup> Alexandra Sweers, 'Voedsel Voor de Bloemen', *Vakblad Uitvaart* 27, no. 10 (November 2011): 17.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>34</sup> de Rijk, 'Zo Wonen Mensen Die over Wonen Schrijven'.

<sup>35</sup> Brusse, 'De Tuinvrouw'.

chocolates at breakfast, but had to work in the garden” states Brusse.<sup>36</sup>

Nature was faced in its own idiosyncrasies like the transformations brought by seasons and consequently the new picture into which falls the relation between people and nature. ‘She knew every plant, but she made her knowledge accessible for the general public. Decorating gardens was her greatest love and she wrote one book after another. (...) From de Lestrieux you could also get advice on how your plant carefully propagates from a seed, how the plant should then be nurtured, and how the plant finishes blooming in a pot.’<sup>37</sup>

In her *Serres en Wintertuinen* (Greenhouses and Winter Gardens), de Lestrieux proposes ‘one selection of constructions in glass (...) from large winter gardens to small corners in order that it can be available to everyone’.<sup>38</sup> The space created in a greenhouse is to her an extension of the house and therefore integrating the concept of making of a house a home. Each greenhouse, large or small is a ‘mini world with the right temperature and humidity and above everything a lot of light’<sup>39</sup> that invites to relax, to contemplate the rain while enjoying the scents inside. She goes even further and completes the scenery of pleasure remembering that there is the right place to drink a glass of wine, enjoy a breakfast or an autumnal dinner.

The greenhouse is also an example of her in-out-in concept. She shared with modernism the preference for spaces that were open and interpenetrating. Especially the connection between inside and outside was paramount for her. The

greenhouse thus is not only a transparent spot where it is possible to enjoy nature at any circumstance but also an extension of the house. She calls the greenhouse a living room and if the greenhouse is a separate structure, there inevitably is a path that directly connects it to the main building. De Lestrieux argued as well for a position inside her houses from where she could look outside broadly and in that way breaking the boundaries between inside and outside. Figures 10 and 11 illustrate that permanent tendency in her architectural design. In all her houses there were very open and spacious living rooms and kitchens, where intermediate elements such as columns, low walls or chimneys articulated the space, while allowing a generous flow of light and air.

In this self-designed home, she used the wooden columns of the space to integrate nature inside the home, making them appear as “trees”. From the couch one could see the “trees” inside and those outside through the big windows.

Even in a warmer weather, where winterhouses would no longer be necessary, she found a way to create an “inside feeling” within the outside garden. Two sitting areas facing opposite directions can be seen. De Lestrieux designed these to fit different needs and atmospheres, proposing a sitting-eating area with blue metal furniture and a cozier, laying-down area with yellow pillows for comfort and hanging plants acting as a shade cover.

In fact, Kaatje while searching for a certain interpenetration between exterior and interior gave particular attention to all spaces in-between, like windows and all sort of openings and to mimetic patterns

by bringing nature inside, namely flowers, plants and animals. For de Lestrieux the absence of a garden should not be an

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> de Heer, ‘Liever Planten En Dieren Dan Mensen; Elisabeth de Lestrieux 1933-2009’.

<sup>38</sup> Elisabeth de Lestrieux, *Serres en wintertuinen* (Zutphen; Tiel: Terra ; Lannoo, 1991), 5.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

excuse to exclude the 'green' presence in one's life. Therefore she also focused on small places like balconies or terraces suggesting thousand and one possibilities to grow plants, aromatic herbs and flowers in vases or even baskets along the whole year. She encouraged people to 'experiment with colours and scents'<sup>40</sup> and even in the winter time. She wrote profusely about it in lifestyle magazines, in books and by teaching courses which took place in different green locations that could 'teach people to use phantasy in their gardens' as she is quoted in *De Telegraaf*'s announcement of her creative courses.<sup>41</sup> The presence of green and coloured flowers is a pleasure to all senses and an element needed to accomplish the idea of domesticity, feeling at home, feeling happy in daily life.

Nevertheless, despite the prolific presence of colours, her homes were also a reference to the purity of whiteness. 'Elisabeth is crazy about white', writes Marijke Hultzer in *De Telegraaf*.<sup>42</sup> Indeed white gave her the neutral environment where objects and all sort of elements could claim pertinence.<sup>43</sup> The preference for white walls was another feature of modernism that de Lestrieux adopted, next to openness. In all her homes, the majority of the walls were whitewashed – to lighten up the atmosphere and to provide a neutral background for the many things that she collected. Indeed, she did not reject the new trends or the modernist designs that she encountered in her professional life. She adopted them in a selective way, idiosyncratically combining them with things she liked that came from elsewhere: flea markets,

antique shops, found objects, souvenirs, etc. She indeed had a lot of everything. Abundance is a word that describes Kaatje. She was always surrounded by multiple and diverse objects, combining modern with antique, bringing together tradition and memory with innovation and surprise.

De Lestrieux picked white as her way of showing purity and the immobile elements of the home. She used bricks painted white in fireplace and the walls to keep a minimalism in the architecture of her houses. She also used white bricks and wood panels to make bookshelves and kitchen storage. The elements inside the shelves were in abundance, constantly changing and in different colours. However, the structure of the shelves used for storage remained the same in her last three homes.

She cooked with abundance for friends, organized exhibitions and enjoyed inviting others into her own home. De Lestrieux spread untiringly and with exuberance her thoughts and design experience in newspapers, lifestyle magazines, books, courses, interviews, and TV programmes.

## 5. Conclusion

Elisabeth de Lestrieux was a self-made woman: without the support of parents, without a formal degree and without a strong social network, she was able to forge a very successful career as a writer and designer. She made herself and she did this, arguably, through the making of her homes. Her life trajectory is punctuated by her many moves and her many houses, and she used them as

laboratories for experimenting with

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<sup>40</sup> 'Toppers in Potten', *Limburgs Dagblad*, 17 June 1993, sec. Woonblad.

<sup>41</sup> Huls, 'Creatief Tuinieren'.

<sup>42</sup> Huygens, 'Kaatje Een Week in Het Wit'.

<sup>43</sup> Hultzer, 'Elisabeth de Lestrieux Laat Zien Dat Antiek Vrolijk En Sfeervol Kan Zijn'.



settings and elements that she would later publish about. In molding her homes to suit her own way of living, she adopted many ideas of professional modern architects and designers, while always modifying them and linking them with her own special preferences and interests. In doing that, she shaped alternative models of domesticity – not straightforward ‘modern’, nor simply traditional - which became very influential in the Netherlands and Belgium. Her preference for reconverted farmhouses and for aesthetics of tasteful plenty certainly had an impact on a considerable amount of higher middle class consumers. The success of the lifestyle magazine *Avenue*, as well as the bestselling qualities of her books, testify to that.

In her 1998 article “The Exhibitionist House,” Beatriz Colomina discusses the complex relationship between the house and the media in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The architectural historian claimed that, “*many of the most significant houses of this century did not have a conventional client. They were produced for exhibitions, publications, fairs, competitions, and journals, rather than for traditional building sites. (...) In this sense, ... they are all exhibition houses.*”<sup>44</sup> Given that de Lestrieux published her own houses in multiple books, newspapers and magazines, and used her own houses as places for exhibitions, her houses, we claim, certainly deserve a place among these significant exhibition houses.

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<sup>44</sup> Beatriz Colomina, ‘The Exhibitionist House’, in *At the End of the Century: One Hundred Years of Architecture*, ed. Russell Ferguson (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 1998), 126–66.

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## Approaches

### Three Projects for Council Houses by Lina Bo Bardi: from Virtual Reconstruction to Graphical Analysis

Vincenza Garofalo

Italian by birth and Brazilian by adoption, Lina Bo is one of the most significant figures in contemporary architecture. During her activities, she is involved in architecture, design, scenography, museography, teaching, publishing.

She studied and started his professional activity in Italy during the war, collaborating until 1943 with Gio Ponti and Carlo Pagani in Milan and also performing an intense editorial activities. In 1946 she marries Pietro Maria Bardi and with him she moved to Brazil, the country where chooses to live for the rest of her life.

The war deeply marks the life and professional activity of Lina Bo Bardi. The rubble and destruction caused by the bombings led her to deal with the theme of the house as a refuge and consolation for human life. The war makes it clear that the house can no longer be considered the expression of unnecessary vanity, but it must be agile and useful.

‘A casa do Homem ruiu (...) Não pensávamos que ela fosse desaparecer assim; era muito “segura”, era um “baluarte”, havia alguma coisa mais “firme” do que a casa? (...)

Sim, não pensávamos que as casas fossem assim frágeis, assim sutis, assim “humanas”, e que pudessem morrer assim. Foi então, quando esperávamos naqueles momentos de pesadelo, que as casas comesçassem a ruir que nos apercebemos que elas “eram humanas”, que eram o “espelho” do homem, que eram “o homem”. E sentimos também que era culpa nossa se morriam, nós as

havíamos erguido para que fossem o espelho do nosso orgulho mais falso, da nossa incompreensão da vida e dos homens, e por culpa nossa ruíam também as pequenas casas sem culpa, as pequenas casas sem luzes róseas e sem drapeados de seda. Foi então, enquanto as bombas demoliam sem piedade a obra e a obra do homem, que compreendemos que a casa deve ser para a “vida” do homem, deve servir, deve consolar; e não mostrar, numa exibição teatral, as vaidades inúteis do espírito humano; então, compreendemos porque as casas ruíam, e ruíam os estuques, a mise-en-scène, os cetins, os veludos, as franjas, os brasões; porque, de manhã, tudo era montinhos cinzentos desoladoramente idênticos. (...) E, pela primeira vez, os homens devem reconstruir as casas, tantas casas no centro das grandes cidades, ao longo das estradas de campo, nos vilarejos; e, pela primeira vez, “o homem pensa no Homem”, reconstrói para o Homem. A guerra destruiu os mitos dos “monumentos”, também na casa, os móveis-monumentos não devem existir mais, também eles, em parte, entram na causa das guerras; os móveis devem “servir”, as cadeiras para sentar, as mesas para comer, as poltronas para ler e repousar, as camas para dormir, e a casa assim não será um lar eterno e terrível, mas uma aliada do homem, ágil e serviçal, e que pode, como o homem, morrer<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Lina Bo, “Na Europa a casa do Homenum ruiu”, *Rio* 92 (1947), 53-56.

The house is a recurring theme of study in the poetic of Lina Bo Bardi, Mediterranean, spontaneous, rural, primitive and popular home. Her reflections on this subject are often published in major Italian architectural reviews and already in her early articles Lina observes the Italian "minor" architecture and its relationship with the landscape.

The houses designed by Lina have a constant, simplicity, which is also expressed through the choice of furniture that needs to be contemporary and create harmony between the house and its inhabitants<sup>2</sup>. In her projects there is always a great attention to man and his needs, the desire to create an architecture with the active participation of the users to whom the project is intended. The early projects concern the council house, the house for the man, ever since Lina arrives in Brazil. Her conceptual references for popular home are the indigenous maloca, the Italian rural house and the Japanese house-temple.

The indigenous maloca is a community house used by the natives of the Amazon. It is inhabited by several families and has two separate entrances for men and for women. Its rooms are arranged around a central elongated space which is the heart and the most important room of the house. It has an inner garden, where fruit is grown and a second garden, where manioc is grown.

The Italian rural house is that of the peasants. The core of the house is the kitchen, the environment lived longer where the whole family gets together and where the fireplace is located, real hearth that heats and which also serves for cooking food.

Japanese house-temple has a framed structure made of poles and wooden

beams. The external walls are applied on this structure and are made of wood and rice paper panels to allow ventilation of the environments. The external and internal walls are sliding, which ensures plenty of flexibility and the possibility to freely adapt the space to the changing needs of the home in relation to the hours of the day and the activities of the inhabitants.

The paper deals with three studies conducted in 1951 in Brazil on the issue of council houses for the people, made of building materials mainly cheap and locally available.

The three examined examples were never realized but these projects help to describe the poetics of Lina Bo Bardi, namely its commitment to divulge, even among the lower classes, a "rational" way of living, from a small house until reaching a housing estate.

The archives of the *Instituto Lina Bo e P. M. Bardi* collect 45 tables of geometric drawings and sketches of council houses, often in the form of annotations, sometimes even rejected by the same Lina<sup>3</sup>.

Through the critical reading of original drawings and sketches of the architect it was possible to redraw and virtually reconstruct the houses of the three projects. The drawings of Lina Bo Bardi are indeed dimensioned and detailed and often show indications on materials and colors used in finishes.

The first project concerns a small house of about 38 m<sup>2</sup>, designed for a specific but not specified location. It is a compact volume with a rectangular plan, with a pitched roof. Internal distribution is simple and basic. One room serves as a living room, study and sleeping area. From the living, through a small filter space between two cabinets, it leads to the

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<sup>2</sup> See Lina Bo, Carlo Pagani, "La casa semplice", *Grazia*, 170, 1942, 26-27.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://institutobardi.com.br/> (accessed September 2, 2016).

kitchen and bathroom which are of equal size and are placed against one of the short sides of the house. Simplicity, efficient and rational distribution characterize these small spaces in which everything is directly proportional to the functional requirements. The whole volume has only three windows all opening on sides of the room. On the main façade only opens the door and the rear elevation is blind.

The original drawings, made with ink, colored pencils and graphite, are contained in a sheet of parchment of size 38 cm by 53 cm. Lina represents at 1:50 the furnished plant, the main front and the two side, the longitudinal section passing through the kitchen, a detail in scale 1:20 of the eaves and an external perspective. The designs are all dimensioned and also provide information on vegetation, materials, used colors: white exterior plaster, blue fixtures (*azul marinho*), red vermilion chimney and gargoyles (*vermelho*).

The second project involves three distinct rectangular housing units that embody the idea of the living cell as a compositional piece of a community. The lot measures 35 meters by 28.50 meters. Each unit has two entrances: the main one on the living and the secondary one on the kitchen, which is accessed through an interior patio. The houses are surrounded by an external garden on which the living room overlooks, the most representative space for its location and the most important for its size and its function. The three units have three double bedrooms and two bathrooms, a guest room with independent access to the interior patio. The spaces of this room are separated by movable curtains that make the use more flexible<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> L'uso di elementi separatori trova riferimento nella casa giapponese e nelle sue pareti mobili.

The housing types to which Lina Bo Bardi has probably reference for this project are the indigenous Maloca, community house used by the natives of the Amazon, with its two entrances and its two gardens, the Italian peasant house with its living, the heart of domestic life and the dom-kommuna (communal house), settlement model made in the Soviet Union between 1925 and 1932, modular cell designed for a full lifestyle Community.

In a sheet of 50 cm by 64 cm Lina draws the general plan of the housing complex in watercolor, graphite and ink and a prospective sketch of the whole system<sup>5</sup>.

The plan is dimensioned; the three units - denominate A, B and C- are furnished and include information also on the design of the floors and on the external vegetation.

The sectioned parts are red. Another sheet of 50 cm by 70 cm shows a longitudinal section of the residence C, a longitudinal section of the residence A, a longitudinal section of the residence B, the front face of the residences A and B, a side elevation of the residence C<sup>6</sup>. The drawings are made with graphite and ink.

The third project concerns a urban complex which is based on a typology of council houses on *pilotis* in regular lots. The complex also includes two buildings for community services, sports equipment and other common areas.

The drawings of this project that are part of the *Instituto Lina Bo e P. M. Bardi* are located in four different sheets.

The first includes drawings made with graphite, ink and pastel of the dimensioned plan, the longitudinal fronts,

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<sup>5</sup>

[http://www.institutobardi.com.br/ficha\\_desenho.asp?Desenho\\_Codigo=709](http://www.institutobardi.com.br/ficha_desenho.asp?Desenho_Codigo=709) (accessed September 2, 2016).

<sup>6</sup>

[http://www.institutobardi.com.br/ficha\\_desenho.asp?Desenho\\_Codigo=710](http://www.institutobardi.com.br/ficha_desenho.asp?Desenho_Codigo=710) (accessed September 2, 2016).

a side face and the section of the roof<sup>7</sup>; the second has the redesign of the plan in ink of a residence on *pilotis*, with an indication of furniture and graphic scale<sup>8</sup>; the third contains the main front in ink<sup>9</sup> and the fourth shows a series of colorful perspective sketches<sup>10</sup>.

The latter are contained within a large sheet of 70 cm by 100 cm, in the middle of which Lina Bo draws a perspective with a bird's eye view of the complex and around this five internal perspective views of the parents' room, the children's room, the bathroom, the kitchen and exterior of a residence.

The drawings are made with ink and watercolor on cardboard. The general perspective shows an ordered sequence of single-family houses all the same that are distinguished by the color of the wall of the room of the children on the rear face (yellow, blue, red). The houses insist on rectangular lots with gardens and palm trees. A reservoir with an organic shape, probably an artificial lake in the foreground and in the center, is followed along the central axis of symmetry, by two big collective buildings, from which it is separated by a neat row of palms. The two big buildings are close and placed perpendicular to one another, have very different planimetric scheme, rectangular one and sinuous the other. On both sides

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[http://www.institutobardi.com.br/ficha\\_desenho.asp?Desenho\\_Codigo=708](http://www.institutobardi.com.br/ficha_desenho.asp?Desenho_Codigo=708) (accessed September 2, 2016).

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[http://www.institutobardi.com.br/ficha\\_desenho.asp?Desenho\\_Codigo=711](http://www.institutobardi.com.br/ficha_desenho.asp?Desenho_Codigo=711) (accessed September 2, 2016).

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[http://www.institutobardi.com.br/ficha\\_desenho.asp?Desenho\\_Codigo=712](http://www.institutobardi.com.br/ficha_desenho.asp?Desenho_Codigo=712) (accessed September 2, 2016).

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[http://www.institutobardi.com.br/ficha\\_desenho.asp?Desenho\\_Codigo=703](http://www.institutobardi.com.br/ficha_desenho.asp?Desenho_Codigo=703) (accessed September 2, 2016).

of the complex Lina Bo draws some tennis courts and a large space for recreation. The skyline on the bottom lets imagine that the project has been developed for a specific place. The other perspective views in the sheet also provide information on the choice of colors and materials for the floors, the furnishings and interior walls. With an original language, as if they were illustrations, these free-hand drawings also dwell on the details, describing the tablecloth on the table, the sofa upholstery, fantasies of bedspreads, a pair of shoes, a ball, an open book; they tell of possible moments of life, the children playing with the dog on the grass watched by the mother who looks at them from the window as the father in the background, is moving towards the bedroom. The perspectives of the interior are constructed as open boxes in which two sides were removed.

The house has rectangular plan and a rational distribution, with a clear division between the living and sleeping area, consisting of two bedrooms with the same size. The element that acts as a hinge between the two areas is the block with kitchen and bathroom which is located at the center of the large rectangular room that houses the living. Its position defines two elongated spaces: a loggia, distribution filter area from the entrance on the main front that leads to the living, the kitchen and the bedroom, and a veranda which is developed in continuity with the living area, along the rear front and which opens to the surrounding landscape through a large glass area. The structure consists of brick walls and by two series of 4 thin *pilotis* that characterize the entire height of the longitudinal fronts, are detached from the floor slab that is raised by about 1.30 meters from the ground and supporting the roof. The longitudinal fronts are widely glazed, the lateral ones are full and no

openings. The house opens to the light and the surrounding landscape, maybe a quote from the Casa de Vidro, architect's residence in São Paulo, designed and built in 1951 by Lina and her husband Pietro Maria Bardi.

In the drawings of Lina Bo Bardi is always clearly delineated the relationship with the landscape and the respect for the surrounding environment<sup>11</sup>. Constant is also its focus on rural architecture of the place and the local building materials, as early as the *Casa sul mare di Sicilia*, his first project experience with Carlo Pagani. Her language is strongly influenced by the European rationalist current but also by organic architecture of Wright.

Ventilation, exposure, orientation, window arrangement with respect to the landscape features are common to the three projects analyzed. The houses have simple shapes and volumes, proportioned spaces compared to the inhabitants' needs and large distribution flexibility through the elimination of load-bearing walls which allows freedom in positioning the furniture that often serves to separate the space<sup>12</sup>.

According to Lina Bo Bardi, the architect's task is to intercept the needs of people in houses and help to solve the difficulties that complicate life. The house is the starting point for more complex projects that aim at the welfare of the community. If the architectural drawings, as Riccardo Florio writes, can certainly express more than the built architecture<sup>13</sup>, the drawings that accompany this essay are a reinterpretation of the compositional process of Lina Bo Bardi. The digital model is a verification tool of design intentions

that provides new and unusual representations of buildings that have remained on paper.

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<sup>11</sup> Lina Bo, "Architettura e natura - la casa nel paesaggio", *Domus* 191 (1943), 464.

<sup>12</sup> Lina Bo, "Sistemazione degli interni", *Domus* 198 (1944), 199-209.

<sup>13</sup> Riccardo Florio, *Sul disegno. Riflessioni sul disegno di architettura* (Roma: Officina Edizioni, 2012), 24.

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## Matilde Ucelay Maórtua. Single-family house for Vincente Sebastian Llegat

\*Starlight Vattano

### Introduction

In a famous passage of the proto-feminist novel *Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Brontë, we read, «Anybody may blame me who likes, when I add further, that, now and then, when I took a walk by myself in the grounds; when I went down to the gates and looked through them along the road; or when [...] I climbed the three staircases, raised the trap-door of the attic, and having reached the leads, looked out afar over sequestered field and hill, and along dim sky-line - that then I longed for a power of vision which might overpass that limit; which might reach the busy world, towns, regions full of life I had heard of but never seen - that then I desired more of practical experience than I possessed; more of intercourse with my kind, of acquaintance with variety of character, than was here within my reach»<sup>1</sup>.

Similarly to a barefaced Jane Eyre who dreams going on the world through unknown travels, with her lively intelligence and deep knowledge through which juggling the conformist and ruthless society where the same Charlotte Brontë lived, we recognize in the audaciousness of Matilde Ucelay a true cultural and inward challenge for her time. The Madrilenian architect understands what tools she has to use to carry out, in more than forty years of professional career, about 120 projects, mostly single-family houses in Spain and in Italy.

### Matilde Ucelay Maórtua

Matilde Ucelay was born in Madrid on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October, 1912 and was the first of four daughters. Her family belongs to the Madrilenian intellectual middle class, closely linked to the world of arts; indeed, her mother, Purificación Maórtua, played an important role to the formation of the liberal thought of the era, collaborating with Federico García Lorca, with whom directed a group of independent theater<sup>2</sup>. Her father, Enrique Ucelay Sanz, was a great man of culture, belonging to the local intellectual middle class who transmitted to his family the love of music, opera and literature. Therefore, the young Ucelay grew up in a very close relationship with art, literature, music and a liberal political thought, which led her to carry on the work despite the cultural limits to which women were confined during the long period of the Spanish dictatorship. In that period Spain witnessed the birth of a new form of liberalism, in which women could count on their rights including, since 1931, also that of vote.

Matilde's academic choices, like those ones of her sisters, moved toward institutions where women and men could compete on an equal way, such as the Institute of Free Education of Madrid (*Institución Libre de Enseñanza*), which would allow Matilde to obtain economic and professional independence, until then, barred to women<sup>3</sup>. We are witnessing, in those same years, the drafting of one of the most eloquent feminist treatises of the twentieth century, *A room of one's own*, by Virginia Woolf, who in 1928 brings together the idea of an independent

woman with a restless intellect, the need for a wealthy economic status and the chance to grow in a social context in cultural ferment. In fact, she writes: «Intellectual freedom depends upon material things. Poetry depends upon intellectual freedom. And women have always been poor, not for two hundred years merely, but from the beginning of time. Women have had less intellectual freedom than the sons of Athenian slaves. Women, then, have not had a dog's chance of writing poetry. That is why I have laid so much stress on money and a room of one's own»<sup>4</sup>. While Virginia Woolf was working on a milestone about the status of women in society, Matilde Ucelay, in Spain, was trying to write her "poetry" through architecture. She projected the "room of her own" in the "unlimited" paper sheet, with her meticulous and detailed drawings; she showed the path of her inward need to assert herself in a still male sphere, getting her professional freedom only after 1940. Since 1929 to 1931, Matilde Ucelay carries out two preparatory courses at the University of Salamanca and later, since 1931 to 1936, she attended the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Madrid, with high marks.

Between 1920 and 1930, Madrid is actively involved in many transformations of the architectural panorama due to the modern architecture influence in Spain. In those years, several factors contributed to this change, including the establishment of an important group of architects of the whole Spain, the GATEPAC (Group of Architects for the Progress of Contemporary Architecture), which included Josep Lluís Sert, Josep Torres Clavé and Joan Subirana, founding members of the Spanish group of CIAM. The two groups helped to spread the Modern Movement and rationalist culture in Spain, starting from Barcelona, although

a short time later, the Spanish Civil War and later by the Franco dictatorship stopped this process leading to the spread of a deliberately nationalistic architectural style.

Another event that helped to spread modern architecture in Spain, before the stall of the Franco dictatorship, was the visit of Le Corbusier at the Faculty of Architecture of Madrid and Barcelona that was a stimulus to many students, including Matilde, who glimpsed in the French architect's plans a new way to conceive and build architecture.

Matilde Ucelay concluded her college career in 1936. She was not the only woman to study architecture in those years, but compared to her female colleagues, she managed to finish her studies before the Civil War, receiving the professional title only in 1946<sup>5</sup>.

There are very few the documents belonging to the academic period, testifying the Ucelay's way of working. A drawing of 1931 shows the outside of a store, where Matilde meticulously elaborates the sign, characterized by simple curves contrasting with the first rationalist influences of the time.

In 1936, Matilde Ucelay gave an interview to Felipe Morales for the newspaper *La Voz*<sup>6</sup> with no polemical tone toward female employment status nor it is revealed a sense of discrimination suffered during the academic years<sup>7</sup>. Again quoting Virginia Woolf, one might say, «Here was a woman [...] writing without hate, without bitterness, without fear, without protest, without preaching»<sup>8</sup>: the Madrilenian architect led, so, her personal rebellion into the silence of her project.

Two days after her graduation, the 17<sup>th</sup> of July 1936, the Civil War broke out in Spain. Matilde Ucelay moves away from Madrid and undertakes a long journey with her future husband. She visits Paris, Berlin, Moscow and Leningrad and, after

marrying José Ruiz Castillo<sup>9</sup>, in 1937, she moved to Valencia where she will spend the entire period of the war. The cultural and working environment from which Matilde's husband came, favored her to meet new future customers. The project of the house for the son of the philosopher and essayist Spanish Ortega y Gasset, carried out in 1958 in Madrid, is an example of it. In 1937, Matilde Ucelay was appointed secretary of the Official College of Architects of Madrid (COAM), but later she was banned from the profession's exercise for a period of five years and forced to pay a substantial fine. The penalty level was very high, but at no time, she gave up her professional activity. In fact, during these years, two architects with deep rationalist and avant-garde roots, with the same way of conceiving architecture, signed her projects; they were Aurelio Botella and José María Arillaga<sup>10</sup>.

She does not consider the architect's work as a solitary activity, but as a teamwork. She was strongly convinced that builders, site managers and technicians should work together to achieve good results, putting their skills at the service of the project. There is often the Swiss landscapist Pedro Couchepin among the figures mostly present, like for the project of a house in Madrid for Victor Oswald in 1952, which was the first work in which Matilde Ucelay is both designer and site manager.

The Madrilenian architect also focuses on the design of the details, like handles and railings, handrails, fireplaces and moldings, considering the interior space as important as the facade. The relationship with the outside is always fluid, in a continuous exchange between the inside and the surrounding natural environment. Distinctive feature of the Ucelay's architectural production is her clientele mainly characterized by wealthy families: figures of the cultural and social

Madrilenian environment, including Ortega y Gasset, Francisco Utray and Benitez de Lugo and entrepreneurs belonging to the high national and international nobility, as the pianist Alexis Weissenberg, the Oswalds, Helene Kirby or Bernstein.

Matilde Ucelay never realized public works ever since the court had forbidden her to accept such assignments. However, she went further the design for domestic use, also making industrial works, such as the Vicálvaro factory, the *Laboratorios Medix* and *Gráficas Reunidas* in Madrid, but also hotel complexes, like the Arturo Soria Hotel in Madrid, and residential as *El Bajondillo* in Torremolinos, near Málaga.

Most of her works is located in Madrid and its suburbs, but Ucelay took commissions in the rest of the country: Galicia, Ávila, Gran Canaria, Málaga, Seville and Palma de Mallorca, in some cases even going beyond Spanish borders. Indeed, you can trace documents testifying work requests in Italy on two occasions, a project for the house of Luisa de Present Bargose in Boves, in the province of Cuneo and another project for Carlo Molineris in San Remo, but the only time her drawings crossed the Atlantic was for the house project in Long Island for her sister Margarita.

Matilde Ucelay's projects show a marked classicism, evident in the first studies and early works, then evolved researching a very personal style, linked to the landscape aspect of the geographical and cultural Spanish environment, with modern formal traits. In her interior projects, we find usually a circular path facilitating the movement of occupants and design details aimed at maximum architectural economy, such as built-in closets occupying the unused spaces of the house.

## Projects

You can trace some recurring elements in the Ucelay's projects carried out between 1950 and 1970<sup>11</sup>. This is, for the majority, single-family villas built in Ciudad Puerta de Hierro, as the *House of the guardian José de Arce* in 1951, the *House for Victor Oswald*<sup>12</sup> in 1952, the *House Weissenberg*<sup>13</sup> in 1962, the *House for Don Guillermo Bernstein*, in 1954. Other well-known projects are the *House for Francisco Utray*<sup>14</sup> designed in 1960 in Somosaguas, the *House Benítez de Lugo*, in Gran Canaria in 1963<sup>15</sup> and *House El Monte* in Madrid in 1970.

Her projects are mostly developed on one or two levels. Large gardens with a pool define the character of her work, along with a close relationship with orographic complexity and the landscape aspect becoming essential for the articulation of internal paths.

Matilde also designs the surrounding landscape placing plants and transforming the natural environment aspect in relation to the passing of the seasons (petunias, pine trees, shrubs, grass, poplars, sage and fruit trees), also thinking of a good circulation of air inside the house.

The villa is conceived as a country house; it is enveloped with typical materials of the project area, with one or two-pitched roofs, wood carpentry and ventilation systems in the ceiling to avoid overheating in summer.

She organizes the volumes according to their functions by the complex topography of the terrain, important design feature where she usually reserved the south area for the large garden.

The gallery with porch, along the corridor emptied by the large windows, as telescopes facing the landscape, defines the filter-element between inside and outside.

Facades show simple lines that, in the early works consist of the classical form of the pediment, framing the main entrance with arches and ovals; large spiral staircases break the rigor of the straight line with large curvatures of their delineations. The building structure is made with reinforced concrete, while the materials used are usually granite and white limestone.

In some projects, Matilde uses a stone base developing along the perimeter of the building, marking the separation between the horizontal plane of the ground and the vertical extent of volumes. Moreover, often the interfloor height varies (from 2.80 to 3.20 m) furthering, as well, a major volumetric roof variation, so determining a skyline that seems to follow the lay of the land.

The large living space with chimney is another design element, which constitutes the invariable of her interior design, and very often the presence of a library at the living room. Matilde usually makes large openings using sliding doors to enter to the dining room, so to obtain an outright open space, generally with at least two open sides and large windows overlooking the garden.

According the compositional point of view, the external volumes recall the different functions of the house, the independent ones, often with patio and small ponds with aquatic plants, contains office, ironing, laundry, bathroom, dorm and garage. The spatial organization is the result of joints and overhanging volumes that mark the distinct areas of the house outside too (public-private spaces, master-service spaces, day-night spaces), often linked to the main module via an outdoor paved corridor.

In this way, Ucelay tries to deal with the dynamism of the external landscape, changing the surroundings by dense

vegetation to avoid the view from the street.

The long career of Matilde Ucelay ends without great noise, in fact, the recognition will come after years<sup>16</sup>. In 1998, a first step was made, when the Association *La Mujer Construye* exposes a part of its architecture at the second meeting of Architecture at the University of Alcalá. On this occasion her design proposals according to the new historical path identified in the architectural field, which facilitated the dissemination and knowledge of new ways for urban design, were considered very important.

Later, between 2003 and 2006, Matilde Ucelay's projects will be exhibited at the temporary exhibition *Costruir en paridad*, organized by the *Instituto Andaluz de la Mujer*, with the aim to raise awareness among women and society to become aware about the importance of their role in building the city.

In 2004, Matilde Ucelay, along with colleagues sanctioned and disabled from the profession during the Francoist regime, received a compensation by the College of Architects of Madrid at the headquarters of the *Ministerio de Vivienda*, in order to give back professional dignity to all architects stroked by the *purificación profesional* of 1942 and recover the historical memory of time when everything was left hanging.

Finally, the most important recognition came in 2006, when many editorial staffs received a press release in which the jury of the *Premio Nacional de Arquitectura* in 2004 intended to propose Ucelay as the winner. Therefore, at the age of 94, Matilde saw recognized the whole her professional career<sup>17</sup>.

### **Graphic analysis of the *House for Sebastian Llegat in Pozuelo de Alarcón, 1968-1971***

In order to understand the architectural practice adopted by Matilde Ucelay, this study takes into account an emblematic project of the Madrilenian architect, that is the *House for Vicente Sebastián Llegat* in Pozuelo de Alarcón (Madrid), built between 1968 and 1971.

The goal is the knowledge, through the re-drawing, of original documents that have led Matilde towards a subjective and critical "crossing" process of architecture.

The archive drawings include a draft of the master plan of the villa with the building and the pool inserted into the lot, two plans of the ground floor and first floor, and four elevations at scale 1:100.

The detached villa has all the features previously traced. The layout develops according to a simple organization with two modules, the "L" module and the rectangular one, to which Ucelay adds two autonomous volumes, with rectangular layout, the garage, with a space for the boiler and the other one for garden tools, and a place to for the clothes drier, connected to the house through a large patio.

In the "L" volume, Matilde puts the common and service spaces. There is a barycentric office with a private entrance; laundry, dormitories and bathroom are on the right and kitchen and a small dining room are on the left. In the corridor providing access to these spaces, Ucelay obtains several spaces for built-in closets.

The "L" volume also contains a large dining room and a living area with fireplace, both with direct access to the veranda. Matilde gets the union between this module and the rectangular one of the sleeping area through a gallery, where also she places the main roofed entrance with a long porch, continuous to the background. This

other module has two double bedrooms with built-in cabinets, a single room, a shared bathroom, a bedroom with wardrobe and bathroom and a common area. Again, she treated the volume obtained with large windows, characterizing it by two open spaces, where at the ends puts up two ponds with aquatic plants, in order to foster a form of intimate communication with the garden, probably designed by Pedro Couchepein, as happened in other contemporary projects.

At the porch gallery, Ucelay places the staircase leading to the basement, where you can arrive via an outside staircase that she puts in the outside, just behind the living room. You can think to walk between the two levels of the villa, through the observation of perspective views obtained by the production of three-dimensional model.

The impression that it takes is to wander between buildings with porches, as if you were in one of the Spanish cities translated into the language of the country landscape. The construction of the digital model, following the analysis of the original drawings, places the knowledge of the project in a stadium that we could call "transfer". Indeed, reading the words of Karl Marx about the Hegelian dialectical method «according to Hegel the process of thought, that he transforms into an independent subject, under the name of idea, is the demiurge of the real, while the real is the external phenomenon of the thought process. To me, on the contrary, the ideal element is nothing else than the material one transferred and translated into the human brain»<sup>18</sup>.

At the basement, the Spanish architect puts a warehouse for garden tools, a pantry, female and male changing rooms for the pool and a living room open on two sides for the barbecue.

As you can see from the elevations, the act of re-drawing focuses on the different heights of the one and two pitched-roof, dominating on the linearity of the base volumes from which the three stone chimneys stand over.

The garden crosses volumes shaping the human intervention, treated as an integral part of the natural landscape and orographic complexity. In fact, Matilde inserts into the project of the surrounding green different types of plants, trees and shrubs: weeping willows, cherry, apricot, poplars, lavender, sage, magnolia.

Sections obtained through the re-drawing allow appreciating the inside spatial connection of the project that rhythmically follows the height difference, deploying the spaces of the villa on two levels, diversifying the functions further. Once again, the connective element consisting of the porch gallery dominates the drawings both horizontally and vertically, guiding the viewer to focus on the internal dynamics of distribution and therefore the possibility of occupants' movement.

On the re-drawing of the plan, we carried out an additional graphic interpretation, through which it was possible to trace three geometric modules.

The "a" module, which determines the size of the smaller side of the two rectangles of the sleeping area, whose longer side represents the sum of submultiples  $a/2$  and  $a/4$  and of the same module "a" repeated twice. The "b" module corresponding at  $1/3$  of the longer side of the space for the clothes drier and repeated three times in the long side of the garage and four times in correspondence with the long side of the dining room. A third module "c" is used to identify the short side of the rectangle of the service rooms and the large dining room and the sub-multiple  $c/2$  corresponding to the rhythm of the long porch. Another graphic interpretation

phase allowed to track down three overturns: the longer side of the rectangle of the sleeping area (side “d”) coincides with the back porch at the outer stair; the diagonal “e”, drawn from the edge of the veranda, corresponds to the service spaces rectangle; the side “f”, once overturned, tracks down a square with the insertion of two independent outside volumes, identifying the vertex of internal staircase.

The project of the *House for Sebastian Llegat*, shows an architect who through her “drawing”, conceived as other meaning of “design”, tells her architecture, defines open spaces gradually resting on the orography and focused on the detailed study ranging from the handles doors, to the internal and external paved areas, from the color scheme of surfaces to the material geometry, until the interpenetration of volumes, constituting the new sign of the Madrilenian territory by subtraction of land.

Her attention to the movement within the volumes suggests the reflection of Paul Valéry on the dynamics dissipation in connection with spatial organization, «There is a noteworthy form of this kind of our forces expenditure: it is to order or organize our dissipation movements. In this sort of movements, Space was the place of acts: it does not contain their subject. Now the Time plays the leading role. It is the organic Time, which is found in the system of all basic functions of life. Each of them performs, with a muscular acts cycle, as if the conclusion or completion of each would generate the pulse of the next one»<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, Matilde conceives the porch gallery, that defines a dynamic space from the outside to the inside and from the inside to the outside through which to distribute the movement: she punctuates her time inside her canvas. She provides a new identity to the designed landscape and with her

drawings customizes the Spanish architectural vocabulary.

Through this graphic analysis, the drawing follows the relationships between volumes, heights, distances and empties, categorizing the features of Ucelay’s project that, in the critical re-drawing place, become the body and forms of a high and solemn dialogue. This is the silence and eloquence of representation, metaphor of oscillating thought, in a transitional phase, between past and present: «Now the essence of nature must express itself symbolically; a new world of symbols is necessary, the entire symbolism of the body, not just the symbolism of mouth, face, and words, but the full gestures of the dance, all the limbs moving to the rhythm. And then the other symbolic powers grow, those of music, rhythm, dynamics, and harmony all with sudden spontaneity»<sup>20</sup>.

## Footnotes and references

1) Cf. Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, Newton Compton Editori, Rome 2015, p. 111.

2) Purificación Maórtua in 1926 founded the *Lyceum Club*, the first Spanish feminist association, whose aim was to educate young women on different disciplines, such as literature, science, visual arts, civics, and music. Mostly middle-class women formed the club, but Purificación Maórtua was also committed to defending the rights of women belonging to the middle class and the lower strata of society. In fact, in 1931, she founded *La Cívica*, women association for civic education, which aimed at the training of women who had not had the opportunity

to attend the university (Cf. Shirley Mangini, *El Lyceum Club de Madrid, un refugio feminista en una capital hostil*, in "Asparkia", n. 17, 2006, pp. 125-140).

3) Cf. Inmaculada Sánchez de Madariaga, Marion Roberts, *Fair shared cities. The impact of gender planning in Europe*, Routledge, London-New York, 2013.

4) Cf. Virginia Woolf, *Una stanza tutta per sé*, Bur, Milan 2013, p. 215.

5) Cf. Inmaculada Lafuente, *Agrupémonos todas: La lucha de las españolas por la igualdad*, Aguilar, Madrid 2003.

6) Cf. Felipe Morales, *Reportaje en una escalera*, in "La Voz", n. 3, July 1936.

7) Cf. Rosa Maria Claramunt Vallespí, *Mujeres en ciencia y tecnología*, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Madrid 2012.

8) Cf. Virginia Woolf, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

9) José Ruiz Castillo was a young intellectual, who worked as a civil executive for the Ministry of Agriculture. Later he became owner of a publishing house, the *Biblioteca Nueva*.

10) Cf. Inmaculada de la Fuente, *El exilio interior*, Colección Noema, Turner, Madrid 2011.

11) For further deepening about graphical documents of Matilde Ucelay Maórtua's projects, see Javier Vilchez Luzón, *Matilde Ucelay: Primera Mujer Arquitecta en España*, PhD Dissertation, Tutor Prof. Elena Díez Jorge, Editorial de la Universidad de Granada, 2012.

12) Victor Oswald, important Swiss entrepreneur.

13) The *Weissenberg House* was designed for the Bulgarian pianist Alexis Weissenberg.

14) Francisco Utray, Spanish Ambassador in New Zealand.

15) The *Benítez de Lugo House* was designed for the marquis of Lanzarote, Luís Felipe Benítez de Lugo.

16) AA.VV., *100 mujeres del siglo XX que abrieron camino a la igualdad en el siglo XXI*, Consejo de la Mujer, Madrid 2001.

17) Cf. Inmaculada Sánchez de Madariaga, Marion Roberts, *Fair shared cities. The impact of gender planning in Europe*, Routledge, London-New York, 2013.

18) Karl Marx (ed.), *Il Capitale*, Libro I, Editori Riuniti, Rome 1968, p. 44.

19) Cf. Beniamino Del Fabbro (ed.), *Paul Valéry. Degas Danza Disegno*, Abscondita, Milan 2013, p. 23.

20) Cf. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Verità e menzogna*, Special edition of Corriere della Sera, Milan 2010, p. 38.

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3. Rosa María Claramunt Vallespí, *Mujeres en ciencia y tecnología* (Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia 2012).



4. Inmaculada de la Fuente, *El exilio interior* (Madrid: Colección Noema, Turner 2011).
5. Roberto De Rubertis, *Il disegno dell'architettura* (Roma: Carocci 2004).
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8. Riccardo Migliari, *Disegno come modello* (Roma: Kappa 2004).
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10. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Verità e menzogna* (Milan: Special edition of Corriere della Sera 2010).
11. Franco Purini, *Comporre l'architettura* (Rome: Laterza 2000).
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13. Inmaculada Sánchez de Madariaga, Marion Roberts, *Fair shared cities. The impact of gender planning in Europe* (London-New York: Routledge 2013).
14. Vittorio Ugo, *Fondamenti della rappresentazione architettonica* (Bologna: Società Editrice Esculapio 2000).
15. Javier Vílchez Luzón, *Matilde Ucelay: Primera Mujer Arquitecta en España*, PhD Dissertation, Tutor Prof. Elena Díez Jorge, Editorial de la Universidad de Granada, 2012.
16. Virginia Woolf, *Una stanza tutta per sé* (Milan: Bur 2013).
17. Bruno Zevi, *Storia dell'architettura moderna* (Turin: Biblioteca Einaudi 2004).

## Egle Renata Trincanato: Unbuilt

Francesco Maggio

“Being an architect always led her to unbalance the role of technician with the artist’s soul. Her work as historian was inseparable from that of relentless experimenter”<sup>1</sup>.

Urban planner, designer, artist, restorer, Egle Renata Trincanato affected the Venice physiognomy due to her multifaceted figure. She was born in Rome in 1910, and moved with her family to Venice in 1926 where she attended the High School of Art<sup>2</sup>. Soon her artistic skills will demonstrate superior than those of other colleagues, so that the sculptor Adolfo Wildt<sup>3</sup>, noting her sculptural talent in plaster models that she made, asked her to become her pupil in Milan. However the young student preferred to continue her studies at the High School of Art. After that, she attended the college and graduated in 1938 at the Regio Istituto Superiore di Architettura in Venice.

The relationship between Egle Renata Trincanato and the city of Venice became indissoluble. She put her professionalism serving her city, but it is also true that Venice taught and transmitted a lot to her, as it was the constant object of her studies. These ones were based on the understanding of the environment that according to Renata means being able to “feel the face of the city” and “interpret the feeling with which people acted

inserting themselves into the natural environment”<sup>4</sup>. Her famous book *Venezia minore* is an example of it. It was published in 1948 in Milan, focused on non-monumental architecture of Venice, which tries to give a new interpretation of the architectural heritage of Campiello and Dorsoduro districts, dividing it into ‘types’ through a completely original inductive method of analysis<sup>5</sup>.

Her expertise served the city throughout her career as she was a militant for the protection and conservation of Venetian buildings.

During an architectural period of about fifty years, a clear vision dominated her work: her message for Venice to collect and persevere<sup>6</sup>. Renata Trincanato tackled each of her works with a clear idea of Architecture, conceived as environmental order, and never referred only to the construction element<sup>7</sup>. The ‘Venetian’ architect intended the environment as the intense interweaving of cultural expressions, economic dynamics, social balances and political intentions. As historian, she felt the need to look back not betraying the past with the project, in order to highlight the quality of civilization told.

In 1960, Egle Trincanato is strenuously engaged in the battle for the protection of Venice against the building speculation:

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<sup>1</sup> Maddalena Scimemi, *Riscrivere l’architettura: Venezia minore e il volto delle città*, in Scimemi M., Tonicello A. (ed.), *Egle Renata Trincanato 1910-1998*, Venezia 2008, p.19.

<sup>2</sup> Emiliano Balistreri, *Egle Renata Trincanato: regesto delle opere*, Mestre 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Adolfo Wildt, sculptor, Professor of Plastica at the Accademia di Brera of Milan.

<sup>4</sup> Maddalena Scimemi, *Riscrivere l’architettura...*, cit., p.19.

<sup>5</sup> ibidem, p.12.

<sup>6</sup> Lion Angela, *Egle Renata Trincanato 1910-1998: verso una rappresentazione organica di Venezia e dell’architettura minore*, Venezia, 2000, p.61.

<sup>7</sup> Paolo Torsello, *Il restauro attraverso la narrazione*, in Scimemi M., Tonicello A. (ed.), *Egle Renata Trincanato...*, cit., p. 27.

published articles and research carried out within the University Institute of Architecture add to conferences during which she dealt with the situation of Venice problems.

Dates back to 1982, the award of the Pietro Torta prize for her studies about the lagoon city, perhaps the most important awards related to Venice and its context. On this occasion Egle Trincanato said: «the study of the city's monuments was the deepest reason of my cultural life, I have been drawn in a special way by the diffuse urban fabric, non-aulic architecture, as a little expressive element of the city's image»<sup>8</sup>.

In her autograph production we can identify some recurring elements like the study of history, the importance of the concept of environment, the use of photography as a first survey tool on the built environment, the approach of a general register to systematically collect the whole knowledge about built Venice, and the detailed analysis of the architectural elements. Drawing, sketching, and graphic annotation are the main tool of her way of surveying: she used the drawing as an extension of the word, never abandoning new research scenarios<sup>9</sup>.

The Trincanato's method was based on the drawing technique as an essential guide in the direct experience of the building's forms<sup>10</sup>. The survey operation at sight is essentially linked with the drawing, which is able to clarify and explicate something better than words. Indeed,

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<sup>8</sup> Cfr. Egle Renata Trincanato, *Il restauro della struttura edilizia più diffusa e la sua importanza nel futuro di Venezia*, in AA. VV. Ateneo Veneto - anno 1982- XX n.8, I e II semestre, vol n. 20, Venezia, 1982.

<sup>9</sup> Paolo Torsello, *Il restauro attraverso la narrazione*, in Scimemi M., Tonicello A. (ed.), *Egle Renata Trincanato...*, cit., p. 26.

<sup>10</sup> Maddalena Scimemi, *Riscrivere l'architettura...*cit., p. 11.

through the technique of drawing she carried out a study on the urban planning and the building environment of Venice in the book *Venezia minore*, published in 1948 in Milan, through which she added a new method on non-monumental architecture investigation. This inductive method, based on the combination of historical-critical and descriptive sheets with several freehand drawings, will form the analytical basis and *modus operandi*, which she will adopt in future. In the book *Venezia minore* you can identify the codification of repeated and in series elements, while the architectural heritage is standardized into 'types'. The building is divided into two categories: the former lofty and bourgeois, referred to the palaces, the latter utilitarian and popular one<sup>11</sup>. The alternation of text and drawings, photographs, paintings to describe particular items or technology solutions characterizes the Trincanato's work. The photographic document is therefore a useful tool for in-depth investigation of reality, to study the relationship between built and natural environment. However, this must be accompanied by graphic representations, because you have to take into account that the photograph of the buildings, in confined spaces such as the Venetian ones, is not able to return the accuracy of architecture because the image is distorted by the optics of the camera. The hand drawing with its precision and perfection completes the photographic documentation, which assumes a value of authenticity's demonstration of what has been represented by hand<sup>12</sup>. The method of investigation on the built environment, adopted by Trincanato, proofs that the recurrent element in her artistic and

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<sup>11</sup> *ibidem*

<sup>12</sup> Maria Ida Biggi, *L'archivio fotografico*, in Scimemi M., Tonicello A. (ed.), *Egle Renata Trincanato...*, cit., p. 93.

architectural research is the drawing. Most of all this is a practical way to analyze the visual reality, perceive lights, colors, masses and shadows, to include the prospective view, stereometry, composition and architectural representation inserted in the urban context. In other words, the drawing becomes a «speculative exercise of image decomposition to understand each constitutive object of the reproduced object “two-dimensionally” on paper»<sup>13</sup>. Drawing is the only device of knowledge of things<sup>14</sup>, especially when we talk about unbuilt projects. If architecture has to be understood as a set of signs, then drawing is a particular type of language through which express a theory, a concept, and in particular the perception of the designer<sup>15</sup>. So representative tools, including the simple line, become words making tangible an idea, create in our minds, as well as on paper, a project that probably will never be built. Through the line, you can understand with satisfactory accuracy the structure of bodies, because it is what connects and separates with a resolving power<sup>16</sup>. The purpose of this study is to highlight some of the Egle Renata Trincanato projects through the operation of the critical re-drawing and graphic interpretation encoding the architectural process at every stage, before the final project. All this with the certainty that «the statement that no design event can fully be reconstructed, perhaps even by the protagonist, even more so is based on the certainty that it is impossible to know

down the line a building»<sup>17</sup>. The critical re-drawing is a complex work because it means deeply understand a building even though this is a plural knowledge, because there are many factors that contribute to the conception of the project to which the reader should go back. For example, the complexity inherent to this knowledge comes from mutual influences developed between who analyzes the object and the object itself. The identification of a building, involves a preliminary “empathizing with it”, because the object is able to activate independently a composite network of relations. The analyzing subject knows that the design thinking led by the architect is so complex to make impossible its returning through a telling<sup>18</sup>. The designer expresses the concept of drawing, referring to the representation, cataloging and imagination during the architectural process, giving rise to the observation of the real environment (cataloging) and then to the extraction of those concrete objects, useful for the project to be realized, to the application of *ratiocinatio*<sup>19</sup> (imagination), to express a shift intention, and representation, to make manifest the design intention. Representation, in fact, is an indispensable tool of knowledge that need of the logos and theory, reasoning, and things intended in their empirical meaning. Therefore, the representation is a conceptual and formal structure (*Vorstellung*) not a simple graphic drawing

<sup>13</sup> Emiliano Balistreri, cit.

<sup>14</sup> Cfr. Franco Purini, *Un disegno plurale*, in FIRENZEARCHITETTURA, anno VII, nn. 1-2, 2003.

<sup>15</sup> Cfr. James S. Ackerman, *Convenzioni e retorica nel disegno architettonico*, in *Architettura e disegno. La rappresentazione da Vitruvio a Gehry*, Milano 2003.

<sup>16</sup> *ibidem*

<sup>17</sup> Franco Purini, *La conoscenza degli edifici*, in “Disegno” n. 8, Istituto di Rappresentazione della Facoltà di Architettura di Genova, Genova 1984, pp. 161-164.

<sup>18</sup> *ibidem*

<sup>19</sup> When Vitruvio talks about *ratiocinatio* in *De Architettura* he refers to the theory and meaning of “reasoned calculation”.

an end in itself (Darstellung)<sup>20</sup>. Going back to this conceptual and formal structure which gave rise to the project, one must set up a parallel process to that conducted by the designer because who analyzes a work has to advance some arguments, think about the why of structural or formal choices and, sometimes, find answers through a comparison with other projects carried out by the designer, in order to produce a critical redrawing, resulting in a second “representation” of the object and not with an “end to itself graphic drawing”. This representation will have an important task: to communicate new knowledge.

The drawing, conceived in this sense, is the survey tool of an unbuilt and little-known project of Egle Renata Trincanato. In the spring of 1947, the ‘Venetian’ architect took part in the competition, organized by the Municipality of Venice, for a series of houses to be built in the north and south estuary of the Venetian lagoon, obtaining the first and second prize, both *ex aequo*, with projects for residences proposals in Burano and Pellestrina. In these two unbuilt works, we can trace some important methodological aspects about the approach to the project by the architect who will make Venice the city subject of her later studies. According to Egle Trincanato the relation with history is necessary, because the project must highlight the qualities of told civilization as she hoped an integration between conservation and innovation. Her interest focuses on the drawing of a schematic layout, with the repetition of some building models on which to make many formal variations. The attention put on non-monumental architecture and the analytic approach highlighted in the book *Venezia minore* published in 1948, can be

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<sup>20</sup> Vittorio Ugo, *L’architettura e i suoi doppi*, in Ugo V., *Fondamenti della rappresentazione architettonica*, Bologna 1994.

found in house projects designed for Burano and Pellestrina, where we find the intention of making clear the rigorous functionality, pure rationalism and witty spatial organization, typical of the city. «In no other city like Venice, the unique urban topography has so strongly influenced close architectural features, especially the minor one, more connected to the environment, maintaining in part the original medieval appearance. [...] Of course, the changes in taste and the overlapping of the new buildings on the oldest ones transformed some primitive features»<sup>21</sup>. For this very strong relationship between the Venetian territory and the forms of built environment, was essential, for the architect, to face to with the Venetian construction in order to design several houses in the lagoon city. The study carried out is therefore strictly scientific, analytical and technically controlled, intended to catch those formative criteria of the system of spaces unchanged over the centuries<sup>22</sup>. In the project, Egle offers various building, from “A” to “E” types in Burano and from “F” to “H” types in Pellestrina. These ones do not refer to the general concept of ‘type’ applicable everywhere because Renata banishes from old architecture any typological discourse, typical of a predetermined reality. She is convinced that the type is pre-eminently in the architectural mentality and that it must be linked to the context and the site in which insists. Thinking that architecture, like Venice, may arise in any other city is a nonsense: every place has its own unique building of structural elements, an architectural taste

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<sup>21</sup> Egle Renata Trincanato, *Venezia minore*, Venezia 1988, p. 35.

<sup>22</sup> Cfr. Angela Lion, *Egle Renata Trincanato 1910-1998: verso una rappresentazione organica di Venezia e dell’architettura minore*, Venezia 2000, p. 67.

formed for centuries and by society that lives there. Some stylistic and formal solutions are sometimes the result of a constriction with respect to the conformation of the site<sup>23</sup>.

The study previously carried out by Trincanato on the typical features of the minor Venetian architecture affects a lot the design of these houses and looks like the son of Venetian culture while obeying a modern language. The common features between the project studied and the 'venetian house' are not few. Indeed, we can catch important similarities observing the houses in calle Cappello, going back to the seventeenth century, and type "D" of the house designed for Burano: «houses are the result of the coupling of two buildings, each comprising two overlapping apartments [...] This planimetric layout, symmetrically repeated with respect to a central cross-cut wall, presents well-structured and balance. Important elements are also the powerful redundancy fireplaces and staircase that allows access to two different apartments, sharing the staircase»<sup>24</sup>.

The planimetric layout of the project in Burano consists in specular buildings in relation to a central cross-cut wall, like the "H" type designed for Pellestrina, and responds to the typical Venetian residential type of twin house. However, the "D", "E" and "B" types are row houses, the "A" type is a single two-family house, the "C" type is a multi-family house, the "H", "F" and "G" types are multi-family houses. The distribution of the inner spaces, common element of the houses designed, meets an organization that

responds to the typical layout of the "Venetian house", with separate living and sleeping area: the central space, where you access by the entrance, is formed by the dining area, lighted by a window, while the side and rear rooms are independent<sup>25</sup>. You can also argue that these houses are a modern version of what that Giorgio Gianighian<sup>26</sup> called "the complex Venetian house"<sup>27</sup> and in particular, it can be compared with Le case dei Cappello, in Calle del Magazen, dating back to 1547. Furthermore, Egle Renata Trincanato drew these houses in her book Venezia Minore, published a year later than the competition. This is due to her study on the Venetian urban fabric carried out over many years before the publication of the book and then, in 1947, she was very familiar with the Venetian housing types and used these knowledge for the preparation of the two projects. Among the Venetian houses and those ones designed for Burano and Pellestrina you can recognize many common features: the privacy of the entrances, two overlapping floors, the solution of stair that allows each family its own entrance and private staircase. After all this is a traditionally Venetian way of living, with a well-equipped ground floor as service room (entrance, warehouses), the first and second floors, where you find the

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<sup>25</sup> *ibidem*

<sup>26</sup> Giorgio Gianighian, *La casa veneziana complessa del rinascimento: un'invenzione contro il consumo di territorio*, in [http://www.persee.fr/web/ouvrages/home/prescript/article/efr\\_0000-0000\\_1989\\_act\\_122\\_1\\_4610](http://www.persee.fr/web/ouvrages/home/prescript/article/efr_0000-0000_1989_act_122_1_4610).

<sup>27</sup> With regard to the "complex" Venetian house Giorgio Gianighian means the residential building formed as a result of structural changes over the centuries, that already in the early sixteenth century begins to make its appearance. It is characterized by elements such as the privacy of the entrances, the presence of the inner cistern, the overlap of two noble and interdependent floors, and the use of stairs at the Leonardesque way.

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<sup>23</sup> *ibidem*

<sup>24</sup> Umberto Franzi, *Studio di restauro, risanamento, conservazione e utilizzazioni di edifici monumentali e di complessi edilizi residenziali a Venezia*, in <http://www.comune.pv.it/museicivici/pdf/atti/10%20Franzi.pdf>

residential functions of the family (kitchen and bedroom), and finally the loft<sup>28</sup>. However, compared to Le case dei Cappello you may notice some differences because Egle also pursues a modern language, not totally imitating the Renaissance Venetian house, but extracting the essential characteristics such as, for example, the overlapping floors in the project are not interdependent like in the Cappello family's houses.

However, we can obtain a greater number of similarities comparing the "A" type with one of the two Case in Campo della Pescheria, in the Castello district: the distanced rhythm of the single-lancet windows, the compositional unity of the whole characterized by the balanced spacing windows, the symmetrical layout of shops at the ground floor and the dormer which rises on the central axis of the two buildings with gable roof<sup>29</sup>.

You can make a comparison also between the "D" type and Case a schiera in campiello e fondamenta Tron, in the Dorsoduro district<sup>30</sup> where the common features are: the presence of powerful chimneys that form a magnificent architectural motif, enhanced by smallness of square windows, the distribution in rhythmic groups of doors and windows, the great simplicity of the stair allocating different apartments. This is a clue of less individualism<sup>31</sup>.

However, in order to explain the issue we need to briefly deal with the Venetian architecture.

The buildings of the XII and XIII centuries show, in the minor Venetian topography, a lively participation at the general harmony

of the whole, both for the ingenious distribution of their planimetric layouts, and for the sauciness and the picturesque taste with which they are composed in the facades determining the balance of volumes. Very elementary layouts form this construction responding to the basic needs of housing, in accordance with the local use of living, and, as far as possible, it refers to "major" architecture in order to imitate its characteristics<sup>32</sup>. Indeed, it is obvious the intention of tracing, according to a pare-down issue, the porch forms of the great stately palace with the emptying of masonry masses at the ground floor made of discontinuous elements on beamed pillars, as with different taste, inserting the shops, reiterated characteristic even after the Gothic period. You can catch this use in the "A" type of the project for Burano.

However, in minor buildings, built between the XII and XIII centuries, the main characters are: a taste of opposing large breaks, with a wall, and groupings of close spaces in facades, from which probably the triptych composition of the facades derives, with the absence of the loggia on the upper floors and a monumental court.

During the Gothic period, the stately palace is characterized by a portico in the ground floor and in the upper one corresponding to a multi-arched window. While the minor architecture finalizes its types: it uses a more closed pattern, with one or two doors on the canal and the calle, designed in a wide variety of ways, or adopts an open layout with discontinuous beamed elements, inserting shops and the entrance rooms to dwellings, alternately arranged.

During the Renaissance period, in minor architecture, where there are no shops, the part relating to the basement is full, with sparse high windows and some

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<sup>28</sup> Ibidem

<sup>29</sup> Egle Renata Trincanato, *Venezia minore*, cit.

<sup>30</sup> Cited houses in Castello and Dorsoduro, going back to the '700 and belong to the "minor" building of Venice.

<sup>31</sup> Egle Renata Trincanato, *Venezia minore*, cit., pp. 375-376

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<sup>32</sup> *op.cit.*, p. 51.

doors, echoing compositional schemes of gothic buildings of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Some of these schemes have two doors, with a different-sized few decorated volume in the middle, which corresponds to an interesting planimetric organism of twin house symmetrically disposed relative to a central axis. This is also in the competition project of the "D", "B", "E" and "H" types. In Post-Renaissance architecture, the triptych motif is often used. It is a characteristic of Venetian architecture since the Gothic period, which organically corresponds to planimetric configuration of the house with central living room overlooking the elevation through a multi-mullioned window. The two side spaces overlooking with two single-lancet windows, one at the edge of the building and the other at the multi-mullioned window. This arrangement allows to obtain in the lateral spaces a large part of wall between two windows, to lay out a piece of furniture and in many cases the chimney appears in the outside and marks even more clearly the cadence of the openings. The layout just described has been adopted, revisited, in "A" and "H" types where the multi-mullioned window turns into a central group of four windows. In lofty architecture, the chimneys appear in the main facade while in minor architecture these elements are used as a picturesque resource in the spatial composition of its facade. The layouts of this typical way of composing with fireplaces and triptych elements are of extraordinary variety<sup>33</sup>.

Usually the 'head' zones, located at the end, are full, Egle Renata Trincanato repeats this in the "F" type, and only occasionally they are linked to the main facade with an angular two-mullioned window. The other windows are arranged with wider and shorter spacings,

alternating with respect to the chimneys, which take a rhythmic preeminent value, often marking the 'head' of the building. This can be seen in the "D", "B", and "E" types.

This scheme and other ones very similar, that in the palaces are in secondary elevations, are taken and developed with endless variations at the main facade of minor houses, where the double fireplace or the central one assume a prominent value in determining the rhythm of spacings.

You can consider very interesting the rear elevations of those buildings whose plan, for the prolongation of one or two rows of chambers adjacent to the living room over the rear wall of this, assumes an "L" or "U" shape. The buildings in this case are composed with vigorous spatial effects of masses: the projecting wings, often very narrow and high, are generally drilled in the front 'head' by a pair of windows that allow a solid volume at the center. The built-in part, corresponding to the living room, is usually open by a continuous arched fenestration. Such differences, created by the dwelling's internal needs, make more picturesque the setting of volumes. The "D" type resumes this particular feature of the facade.

Egle Renata Trincanato, experiencing contamination between rural architecture building uses and modern architectural features, realizes a project that consists of two poles of research oscillation; combining modernity and tradition, she tries to develop a new language based on the knowledge of the past.

The minor architecture elements of Venice have some specific features. We have already talked about the presence of the shop at the ground floor and fireplaces. However the Venetian window has a wide variety of forms, from the simple single-lancet window, to the oldest round arched windows, to the two-mullioned and three-

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<sup>33</sup> ibidem



mullioned windows, to the lancet Gothic window, to the Renaissance rounded window. Egle revisits the window shape for her project, as this is more than any other element, a result of the style of the historical period in which it was produced, so she adopts a rectangular shape, more related to the language of the modern movement. Often entrance doors, at the ground floor are beamed shaped.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth century, in place of the balconies was used a parapet, in correspondence of the wall or slightly projecting, feature that in the competition project is taken for the "H", "B" and "E" type.

Other elements, like the chimneys, contributing to the picturesque minor buildings, are the dormers and roof terraces. The dormer window is very common in the minor architecture and can be of two types: the former, very simple, is formed by a small elevation covered by a lean-to roof and front consisting by a rectangular window, the latter, more complex and generally larger is that one covered by a gable roof developing on the facade as a pediment. This feature is clearly manifested in the "A" type.

However, the roof terrace, which is accessed by a small skylight, is a unique wooden terrace on the roofs; it consists in four, six, eight brick pillars, according to the size of the building, on which stands a wooden structure of pedestals and horizontal beams with a rectangular or round cross section<sup>34</sup>. This element are also in the "C" type

Almost all Venetian palaces and many stately houses owned, in the past, a portion of garden, arranged as a vegetable garden in the minor tone houses; Egle takes up again in the project an outdoor space dedicated to this latter function.

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<sup>34</sup> Egle Renata Trincanato, *Venezia minore*, cit., p. 93.

In the minor architecture since the sixteenth century a type of cross-ramps stair spreads. It is said "in the Leonardesque way", which reaches two apartments with two independent entrances. The apartments are located at the opposite sides of the same plane or at different planes. This type of stair is widely used until the seventeenth century even in the poorer building, for space saving, which creates an independence that allows various entrances. The house of "C" type adopts this characteristic type of stair.

With the "Concorso per case nell'estuario nord e sud della laguna di Venezia" (Competition for houses in the north and south estuary of the Venice lagoon) Trincanato also demonstrates a strong interest not only for the building form, but also for the environment on which it insists. The project includes, in addition to construction of housing, a reorganization of the surrounding environment.

The real goal of this work of Trincanato is to strive towards a planning able to throw the preconditions for a project planning, not an end in itself, but able to communicate with the changes that are going to happen in the years ahead. So, the project is characterized by significant purpose as well rich in comparison with urban issues<sup>35</sup>.

The project is woven in the territory for which it was designed, and if it had been carried out, it would seem that in that place it has always existed, both in Burano and in Pellestrina, because its roots lie in the Venetian architectural culture.

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<sup>35</sup> Angela Lion, *Egle Renata Trincanato ...*, cit.

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## Innovation in Landscape Architecture

### Elena Luzzatto Valentini, the first Italian woman Architect

Monica Prencipe

In Italy, the question of women in Architecture started to become a relevant field of investigations a couple of decades ago, especially after the foundation of the group *Vanda* at the *Politecnico di Milano* in 1990. The focus of the entire group of research was to deepen the role of women in the architecture of nineteenth and twentieth century<sup>1</sup>. The group actively worked until 1992 and then passed to a more 'virtual' stadium<sup>2</sup>, which it led slowly to an *impasse*.

Besides this early attempt, any other study on women architects in Italy can be considered an isolated effort, deepening single masters of the twentieth century, like Lina Bo Bardi and Gae Aulenti.

This lack of a long term research, without a more complete understanding of the context where women were working, left out a consistent part of smaller protagonists, like Elena Luzzatto Valentini (Ancona 1900 – Rome 1983), who also had the privilege to be the first Italian woman to held a degree in Architecture in Italy.

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<sup>1</sup> The group *Vanda* focused his work mainly towards three main fields of investigations: the first on deepening the work of the "Mothers of Architecture"; the second to understand a "feminine sense of living" and the third, the interest for women in urban utopias and planning. See also Annalisa Marinelli, "'Vanda' una comunità accademica femminile", *Controspazio* 1 (2000), 78-80; Ida Faré, "Ragione e sentimento femminile della casa", *Controspazio* 2 (2001), 16-19; Katrin Cosseta, *Ragione e sentimento dell'abitare. La casa e l'architettura nel pensiero femminile tra le due guerre*. Milan: Franco Angeli, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Annalisa Marinelli, "'Vanda' una comunità accademica femminile", *Controspazio* 1 (2000), 80

This essay is one of the very first attempt<sup>3</sup> to organize the existing biographic information (very few), with the new material offered by the discovery of Mauro Ferroni's private archive, Elena Luzzatto's nephew, published in this occasion for the first time.

#### Early life and education (1900-1925)

Elena Luzzatto was born the 30 October 1900, in Ancona, a capital city of Marche region, in central Italy, on the Adriatic coast. Elena's father – Vittorio Luzzatto – was a railway engineer<sup>4</sup>, probably transferred from another city before her birth. In fact, even if the surname Luzzatto was quite common for many Italian Jewish family, they had no relatives in the city of Ancona<sup>5</sup>. Her mother Cloe Valentini<sup>6</sup> – a

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<sup>3</sup> Elena Luzzatto's work with a small biography was published for the first time only few months before her death in 1983, in occasion of a bigger exhibition dedicated to 23 designers, enrolled within 1930 in the Board of Architects of Rome, the earlier in Italy, founded in 1923. Elena Luzzatto is the 31st person to enter the *Albo* of Rome, and of course the first woman in the country as an architect.

<sup>4</sup> *Copia integrale estratta dal registro degli Atti di nascita dell'Anno 1900, Atto n°1301*, Archivio storico dell'ordine degli Architetti PPC di Roma e Provincia, Busta 1, matr.31.

<sup>5</sup> The city of Ancona, since the sixteenth century, was home of one of the most important Italian Jewish community. According to the city Jewish registry there is no evidence of a Luzzatto family before the twentieth century. The Ancona Jewish archive with the registry of the first part of the twentieth century is today in Tel Aviv.

housewife- was a catholic, and Elena was never educated too close to any of the two religions<sup>7</sup>.

Only in 1942, after the 1938 racial laws by Mussolini, Elena Luzzatto was forced to take her mother last name Valentini, that she will continue to use until her death<sup>8</sup>. Finally, the difficulties related to the various versions of her last name -at the base of some misunderstanding on her life and work- were worsened by the fact that in the 1920s she married the roman engineer Felice Romoli, name that she will also use sometimes, with or without the other two.

In 1920, after her degree at the *Liceo Classico Rinaldini* in Ancona, she moved to Rome -probably with the financial help of an wealthy relative<sup>9</sup>- in order to attend the school of Architecture, opened for the first year with 55 students<sup>10</sup>.

The *Regia Scuola Superiore di Architettura* in Rome was founded by Gustavo

Giovannoni and approved with a Regio Decreto at the end of 1919<sup>11</sup>. Preliminary conditions for school admission were: a degree from a *Liceo* or a Physics-Mathematic section of a Technical Institution and the positive result on a test on Geometric Drawing and Architectural Ornaments. With this law, in 1920 were also abolished the *Architetto civile* course at the *Scuola di Applicazione per Ingegneri*, and *Architettura* course at the *Istituto di Belle Arti*, both placed in Rome. In this way the new born School of Architecture became the only one in central Italy<sup>12</sup> devoted to educate a figure of a modern designer, as conceived by Gustavo Giovannoni: the *architetto integrale*, as 'uomo d'arte, di tecnica e di

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<sup>6</sup> Elena's mother Cloe, is sometimes confused with Annarella Luzzatto Gabrielli, another italian female architect, who enrolled few years later after Elena in the Board of Architects of Rome. Name and profession of Elena's mother as 'Cloe' is ensured by Elena's birth certificate, at the Archivio storico dell'ordine degli Architetti PPC di Roma e Provincia, Busta 1, matr.31. On the other hand Annarella was born Gabrielli and Luzzatto is instead her husband last name, acquired when she married him in 1932 and moved to Genova. «Seduta 28 gennaio 1937-XV» in Maria Letizia Mancuso, *L'Archivio storico dell'ordine degli Architetti PPC di Roma e Provincia (1926-1956)* (Guidonia: CSC Grafica, 2015), 84.

<sup>7</sup> Monica Prencipe, Interview with Mauro Ferroni, 15 July 2016.

<sup>8</sup> For the small retrospective organized in 1983 (few months before her death) from the Roman Board of Architects, Elena is still named as Luzzatto Valentini.

<sup>9</sup> Monica Prencipe, Interview with Mauro Ferroni, 15 July 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Dell'Osteria Graziella, Luigi Vagnetti, *La Facoltà di Architettura nel suo cinquantesimo anno di vita* (Rome: Edizioni della Facoltà di Architettura di Roma, 1955), 203.

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<sup>11</sup> Regio Decreto legge, 31 october 1919, n. 2593, *Per la Istituzione in Roma di una Scuola Superiore di Architettura*. In Italy, the serious debate on a reform for the school of Architecture started around 1870, with the First Italian Artistic Congress (Parma), with the proposal to release the 'Architecture' course either from the universities of engineer, or the school of *Belle Arti*. The first was mainly a technical education made after a high school degree, while the second was a seven years course after an elementary degree, focused on drawing skills and art history. See also Guido Zucconi, "Il programma dei cultori", in *La città contesa. Dagli ingegneri sanitari agli urbanisti (1885-1942)*. Milan: Jaca book, 1989; Roberto Gabetti, Plinio Marconi, "L'insegnamento del sistema didattico franco-italiano (1789-1922)", *Controspazio* 3-6-9-10/11 (1971); Guido Zucconi, "La professione dell'architetto. Tra specialismo e generalismo", in Francesco Dal Co (ed.), *Storia dell'architettura italiana. Il secondo Novecento*, Milan: Electa 1997; Barbara Berta, "Il dibattito sulla formazione della figura professionale dell'architetto e la nascita della Scuola Superiore di Architettura di Roma", in Maria Letizia Mancuso (ed.), *L'Archivio storico dell'ordine degli Architetti PPC di Roma e Provincia (1926-1956)* (Guidonia: CSC Grafica, 2015), 32-48.

<sup>12</sup> Only in 1932, with a national law, all the Superior Schools became Universities. After Rome, other schools were soon born throughout Italy: Venice (1926), Turin (1929), Florence and Naples (1930), Milan (1933).

*coltura*<sup>13</sup> (man of arts, technique and culture). In few words, this new program was studied in order to overcome the persisting separation between technical classes and human studies, trying to balance this two opposites with a more mature approach.

These clarifications are important to understand the role of education in Elena's work, who was very influenced by some of her teachers, like Vincenzo Fasolo, for whom she will also work as assistant after her degree, between 1928 and 1934<sup>14</sup>. She graduated in 1925 with one of the highest grade in her class (100/110), with a project on a Sanatorium on the Como Lake<sup>15</sup>. Although today there is no trace of her thesis, is still possible to have an idea of her training from other works during the universities: a project for an "Archeological Museum" as an exercise on classical orders and proportions, and a design for a "Cemetery Chapel in a countryside village" as a clear reference to

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<sup>13</sup> Gustavo Giovannoni (1873-1947) was an influent roman architect, trained first as civil engineer at the University of Rome. After that in 1897 Giovannoni started to follow Adolfo Venturi courses on history of Architecture. This double formation was at the base of the future reform for the schools of Architecture. For a selection of Gustavo Giovannoni writings on the idea of 'architetto integrale' see Gustavo Giovannoni, "L'architetto e i suoi compiti", in Guido Zucconi (ed.), *Gustavo Giovannoni. Dal Capitello alla città* (Milan: Jaca book, 1997), 127-150.

<sup>14</sup> Renata Bizzotto, Luisa Chiumenti, Alessandra Muntoni (eds.), *50 anni di professione* (Rome: edizioni Kappa, 1983), 141. Vincenzo Fasolo (1885-1969), an influent architect during the first decades of the twentieth century, was teacher at the *Regia Scuola Superiore di Architettura* since 1920, where he directed the courses of: "Quantity surveying" (1920), *History of Architecture* (1921-54) and *Caratteri stilistici dei monumenti* (1934-1941). Dell'Osteria Graziella, Luigi Vagnetti, Dell'Osteria and Vagnetti, *Architettura*, 198-9.

<sup>15</sup> Dell'Osteria and Vagnetti, *Architettura*, 203.

the Santa Costanza funerary monument in Rome<sup>16</sup>.

As a matter of fact, besides Vincenzo Fasolo, Elena was also trained by other important roman architects, like Arnaldo Foschini (design) and Gustavo Giovannoni himself (restoration), who raised their students not only to Classicism, but also to the legacy of the Middleage and the rural mediterranean architecture<sup>17</sup>.

### **Early career (1926-1943): competitions, first realizations and new ideas**

Very soon after her degree, in 1926, Elena Luzzatto wins the concourse to enter the the Roman Town Planning Office (*Uffici del Governatorato*)<sup>18</sup>, where she had the chance to deal with the designing -and building- of many different public typologies. By the way, she also had the opportunity to keep her own firm for private commissions, especially villas, interior designing and small shops.

One of these first early works is the 1929 project presented at the *Fondo Edilizio* of Rome for a private house in Via Vincenzo Troya<sup>19</sup>: a simple block where is still strong the relation with her previous academic projects. Although it is interesting how each facade is designed slightly different from the other, any simmetrical reference is carefully avoided, and the stair connects the outside directly with the big terrace-

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<sup>16</sup> Private Archive Mauro Ferroni, Rome

<sup>17</sup> For the influence of rural architecture on the roman architects at the beginning of the twentieth century see, Michelangelo Sabatino, *Pride in Modesty: Modernist architecture and the Vernacular tradition in Italy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Bizzotto, Chiumenti, Muntoni, *50 anni di professione*, 141.

<sup>19</sup> *Fondo Ispettorato Edilizio, prot. n.16413, 1929*, Archivio Capitolino, Roma.

roof. On the other hand, in 1928 Elena will also design a beach house at Ostia Lido for the fascist politician Giuseppe Bottai<sup>20</sup>, resembling the new ideas coming from the contemporary *Gruppo 7*, that in the same year had their first exhibition (*Prima Esposizione Italiana di Architettura Razionale*) led by architects such as Adalberto Libero and Gaetano Minnucci, this one also coming from the *Marche* region like Elena Luzzatto.

The fascist decades, in 1920s and 1930s, will offer Elena many chances to compete in national competitions, where she won several prizes in different occasions<sup>21</sup>: in 1928 for a funerary tombstones at the Verano Cemetery (Rome); in 1930 for small villas of the *Società Immobiliare Tirrena* and a second award for a 'Flowery Railway Station', an early demonstration of interest towards landscape and greenery as "building elements".

In 1932 Elena won the first prize for housing in Genale (Somalia) by the *Unione Agricola Coloniale*, and for beach houses at Ostia Lido with another female engineer: Maria Casoni Bortolotti<sup>22</sup>, a

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<sup>20</sup> This project for Ostia is also published in: Laura Marcucci (ed.), *L'altra modernità nella cultura architettonica del XX secolo* (Roma: Gangemi, 2012), 144.

<sup>21</sup> The information are coming from the first –and only– exhibition made in 1983 on Elena Luzzatto, and published in Bizzotto, Chiumenti, Muntoni (eds.), *50 anni*, 141. Most of these references, besides Elena herself, are clearly coming from a 1935 article: Anna Maria Speckel, "Architettura moderna e donne architetture", *Almanacco della donna italiana*, 1935, 120-134. This essay is the first and only article (between the 1920s and the 1980s) not only on Luzzatto herself, but on different female protagonists of that time, such as Annarella Luzzatto Gabrielli, Maria Casoni-Bortolotti and Attilia Travaglio Vaglieri.

<sup>22</sup> Maria Casoni Bortolotti was born in Bologna in 1880, daughter of a railway employee, like Elena Luzzatto. She graduated in Mathematic in 1916, and in 1918 in Engineering, and in 1919 she was be the first women to enter the Board for this

mathematicians from Bologna and also the first women to enter an Italian Board.

In 1933 is the first prize for the competition on shops in Via Roma (Torino) and also a formal invitation to present a prototype at the *V Triennale di Milano* for «Public Housing and Sanatorium», the same exhibition where Figini and Pollini realized the famous *Casa elettrica*.

As we can see, in this period the influences of the new modern architecture coming from the Razionalist Movement are much more clear in the competition projects rather than in the built ones, like the big market at *Piazza Principe di Napoli*<sup>23</sup> (Roma), completed in 1933 by the Town Planning Office.

The concrete –and rather modern– inner structure is still covered with a much more confident *facade*: bricks arches and windows as echoes of the Diocleziano's Terme, placed only few blocks away from the market.

In these years Elena also marries the engineer Felice Romoli, who will collaborate with her in several occasions like the competition for the new hospital in Bolzano (1934, second prize).

Romoli's work is also widely unknown, so today it's difficult to have a precise idea of all the collaboration between the two. Romoli anyway was also well known by other architects in Rome: one example is a

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profession. Maria will open a private firm with others, including her husband Mario Casoni, a lawyer. Only in 1929, after the worldwide economic crisis, she moved to Rome, where she met Elena Luzzatto Valentini. See Elisa Abati, Anna Barozzi, Vittoria Toschi, "L'ultimo capitolo delle storie di una conquista: la facoltà di Ingegneria", in *Alma Mater Studiorum. La presenza femminile dal XVIII al XX secolo. Ricerche sul rapporto donna/cultura universitaria nell'ateneo bolognese* (Bologna: Clueb, 1988), 215-49.

<sup>23</sup> Today Piazza Alessandria, close to Porta Pia. This work was published by Anna Maria Speckel in 1935 as an exemple of a 'monumental and social Architecture', against any distrust of Mussolini on women in Architecture.

project for a little city called *Rometta*, signed with the seal "Piccinato-Romoli"<sup>24</sup>.

### **Later career (1944-1977) in Postwar Italy: Landscape, Funerary architecture and public Markets**

After the market at *Piazza Principe di Napoli* in 1933, during the 1930s Elena Luzzatto's private commissions are rather few, probably focusing her efforts in the Town Planning Office.

The first major occasion presents in 1944, shortly after the freedom of Rome by the Allied troops in June.

Elena Luzzatto, who in 1942 was forced by Fascism to change her Jewish name with the Catholic 'Valentini', takes part to competition for a French Military Cemetery in Rome, with the help of another important woman of that time: Maria Teresa Parpagliolo (1903-1974).

Maria Teresa Parpagliolo, after being the first woman to be involved in conferences on landscape in 1922 and to travel several times in northern Europe in the 1930s, in 1938 became part of the planning team for the *Esposizione Universale* in Rome, proposed for 1942 and never occurred.<sup>25</sup>

In her designs, she was following the Mussolini's ideals of '*romanità*' and '*italianità*', using the principles of Italian Renaissance garden, like Elena Luzzatto was interested in both classical and also Mediterranean rural architecture, as

shown in the project '*villino per Capri*', published in 1935.

The two women, coming from different backgrounds, shared a series of common interests, as well as a fine 'sense of the place', that led to a successful plan in 1944.

Although the official location -today a high clearing at Monte Mario- will be officially ratified by the local government only in 1945, the French Commanders Morlot and Ruze (in charge of the choice by the army) decided to pick this area as designated for the competition<sup>26</sup>.

The plan had also several restraints, coming from the French regulation on military cemeteries<sup>27</sup>: a central corridor that cuts a series of aligned rows of tombstones, a bush of roses on each tomb, and -the most important- individual stones with no distinctions between the soldiers. The only consideration was the religious symbol on the grave: a cross for Catholic and a half-moon for the Islamic platoons.

The winning project was a dynamic combination of traditional elements of the Mediterranean and Italian gardens and architecture. The entrance was placed south, at the opposite side of the '*piazza d'onore*', a monumental square for gatherings and commemorations, that faced a stunning view on the old city of Rome from Monte Mario<sup>28</sup>. From the square, a pair of stairs led to a higher semi-circular plaza, the head of the central

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<sup>24</sup> Archivio privato Mauro Ferroni. The work refers to a close collaboration between Felice Romoli and Luigi Piccinato, who was trained engineer and also a graduate from the Roman School of Architecture in 1923, only a couple of years before Elena Luzzatto.

<sup>25</sup> Sonja Dümpelmann, "Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard (1903-1974). Her development as a Landscape Architect between tradition and Modernism", *Garden History* vol.30, n.1 (2002), 61-62.

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<sup>26</sup> Sonja Dümpelmann, *Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard (1903-1974). Ein Beitrag Entwicklung der Gartenkultur in Italien im 20. Jahrhundert* (Weimar: VDG, 2004), 208-9

<sup>27</sup> "Circularaire sur l'Ornementation des Cimitières Militaires", 24 February 1927

<sup>28</sup> At that time there were no high trees or buildings around the cemeteries, so the view was clear not only towards Rome, but in all directions. The description refers to the Plan for the French Military Cemetery, Archivio Privato Mauro Ferroni, Rome.

long corridor, that distributed to different 'garden rooms'. The central axis (called '*viale dei cipressi*') divided the two parts of the cemetery: the first around a Catholic chapel, positioned perpendicularly to the main corridor, and a second rectangle with a Muslim chapel and a 'secret garden'. This last element was oriented perfectly south, slightly differently from the main axis, conferring the general plan a glance of movement, against the rigid combination of the other elements.

Finally a smaller longitudinal axis went from the catholic church to a third 'piazza' with an altar, for other religious commemorations: the path was organized in green squares at different heights, each one with a single row of tombs, like soldiers in an official parade.

The general composition was made even more dynamic by the difficult topography of the place: from the central axis every monumental element, as well as all the secondary 'streets' for the tombs, were placed at different levels, creating a complex combination of views.

As a resemblance of an arabian architecture, the Muslim chapel was a double-height square covered by a simple dome, all clad in white plaster, also typical of the Mediterranean area<sup>29</sup>.

Other echos can be found with several arabian garden in Spain: like the proposal for a long strip of water coming from a fountain (a symbol typically connected with the muslim idea of heaven and eternal life), through the *viale* to the chapel, like in the *Patio dell'Acequia* in the Alhambra Palace. The water fountain - today the only element referring to the original plan for a Muslim chapel- is covered with white and blue tiles: sacred colors and also a clear reference to the arabian architecture.

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<sup>29</sup> Private Archive Mauro Ferroni, Rome

A plate of the competition is also dedicated to the house of the guardian<sup>30</sup>: a simple and informal house with references in rural italian architecture, while the office has only two columns as reminiscence of a monumental building.

At the end, although all architectural forms are rather simple and strictly connected to mediterranean influences, their combination with a meticulous study of the place and of all the green elements, makes the project a monumental and evocative place, in search of an eternal peace, so far from the current situation of Rome in 1944.

In 1945, very soon after this competition, Elena Luzzatto Valentini will also win the first price for a second cemetery: the '*Cimitero Flaminio*' at Prima Porta<sup>31</sup>, today built only in a small part as the original plan. This second occasion is a much larger application of many of the elements already presented in 1944: a monumental entrance and a series of axis combining in multiple ways and focusing on different landmarks. The interesting elements are once again the close relationship of the plan with the general topography of the place, and also the definition of a series of sinuouse secondary paths, presenting the features of english gardens.

This natural interest of Elena Luzzatto for landscape architecture will become stronger in the following years, after Parpagliolo's marriage in 1946 with the english Ronald Shepard<sup>32</sup>. In fact, in june 1948, Parpagliolo was in charge of the exhibition for the First International Conference on Landscape Architecture, held in London.

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<sup>30</sup> Private Archive Mauro Ferroni, Rome

<sup>31</sup> Private Archive Mauro Ferroni, Rome

<sup>32</sup> Sonja Dümpelmann, "Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard (1903-1974). Her development as a Landscape Architect between tradition and Modernism", *Garden History* vol.30, n.1 (2002), 64.



As part of the Italian delegation Elena Luzzatto and her husband Felice Romoli were invited –probably by the same Teresa- with Pietro Porcinai to take part to the conference<sup>33</sup>, starting to plan the foundation of the First Italian Association of Landscape Architects (*Associazione Italiana Architettura dei Giardini e del Paesaggio*, 1950)<sup>34</sup>.

Besides this peculiar interest in landscape architecture, a second typology that will characterize Elena's work in postwar Italy is the public Market.

After the 1933 experience in Piazza Principe di Napoli (Rome), she will continue to conceive different kinds of markets. The first occasion arrives in the early 1950s, with a national competition for Pescara's Central Market.

The project -signed by the team Lombardi-Luzzatto-Pellizzari- is one of the most appreciated for its clarity, winning a second place<sup>35</sup>. The plan is a square-shape building on three different levels, with a great void in the center, for the fresh goods. The group also thinks a series of well-detailed solutions either for the small shops all round the central area, as well as a series of light structures (steel and plastic panels) for the 'fruits and vegetables' shops, at the center of the *plaza*<sup>36</sup>.

Some of these ideas will be also used in the Public Market of Primavalle (Via Sant'Igino Papa, Rome), in 1950, built by Elena Luzzatto Valentini and the Town Planning Office. The concrete structure is now completely shown outside: a series of

arches to form a continuous gallery and the presence of long windows for natural lighting. As we can see from the historical pictures, the central area is occupied by a light steel-structure, suitable for different uses.

Another interesting project was finally found in Mauro Ferroni private archive in 2016: a modern market for Piazza Monte d'oro (Rome), on Via Tomacelli, facing the ancient ruins of the *Mausoleo di Augusto*.

This long-lasting interest in public markets and cemeteries though, does not conclude Elena Luzzatto's work, that is also based on private commissions for houses, villas and various interiors. This second production is still widely unknown, and a further deepening is required.

Besides this clarification, we can add only one interesting information: some of her most important clients were psychiatrists, due to the fact that for most of her life she was in their care.

In fact, since early age, she was affected by a form of agoraphobia, that prevented her a calm and serene frequentation of big crowds. One of her best friend was Nicola Perotti, a worldwide known psychiatrist, for whom she also built a house in his hometown, Penne (Abruzzo region)<sup>37</sup>.

## Some Conclusions

It is a fact that Elena Luzzatto's fortune did never occur, even if she worked and knew many of the most influential protagonists of her time. Only in 1983, a few months before her death (occurred in August 1988), the Roman Board of Architects dedicate her a small and partial retrospective of her work, the first Italian female architect.

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<sup>33</sup> G.P. Youngman, "International Conference on Landscape architecture, London, August 1948", *Institute of Landscape Architects Journal* 14 (1948/11), 15.

<sup>34</sup> B. Guccione, "La Storia dell'AIAPP, Associazione Italiana di Architettura del Paesaggio", *Notiziario AIAPP* 12 (1988), 12.

<sup>35</sup> Bizzotto, Chiumenti, Muntoni, *50 anni di professione*, 141.

<sup>36</sup> Private Archive Mauro Ferroni, Rome

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<sup>37</sup> Monica Prencipe, Interview with Mauro Ferroni, 15 July 2016.

Everything written after 1983 is mainly based on this catalogue.

In July 2016 it's finally found part of Elena Luzzatto's private archive, held by her nephew Mauro Ferroni, since she did not have any children during her life. This material is now at the attention of the local *Soprintendenza Archivistica*, in order to start the necessary cataloguing operations, as a base for any further deepening. This material is also improved by the new opening of the *Archivio Privato dell'Albo degli Architetti di Roma e provincia*, with the original panels made for the 1983 exhibition. This core could today be considered the beginning of a progressive rediscovery of Elena Luzzatto's architecture.

Finally, deepening her work as modern female architect, is also a way to reflect upon the lack of some elements, usually present (and highly useful) in an historical interpretation: first of all a complete absence from any contemporary magazine (with the exclusion of the 1935 article written by the female critic Anna Maria Speckel) and –last but not least- a certain personal misunderstanding of her value in her own context. This is one of the reasons why today we are left with a very small part of Elena Luzzatto's work, because she did not consider it valuable and she was not interested in conserving a private archive.

This is a truthful consideration on women in architecture in twentieth century, always trying to find an independent and strong position in the world, but sometimes not well conscious of her own value.

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## Italy-England 1946–1960

### Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard, *Landscape beyond Borders*

Lucia Krasovec Lucas

After her important experience started with the project of gardens and parks for the E42 in Rome with Pietro Porcinai and Raffaele De Vico, Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard moved in England, in 1946, after her marriage with Ronald Shephard. At time, she was yet well known in London, and in the European community of landscape architects, as contributor for *Landscape & Garden* (1) and *The Journal of Landscape Architects*, and for her participations in the International meetings of Landscape Architects in Germany, Sweden, France, England.

Maria Teresa Parpagliolo started working in England, becoming known as Maria or Marie Shephard. However, she remained always in deep contact with Italian architects, especially in Rome and Florence. (2)

An early project of Parpagliolo Shephard was to assist Sylvia Crowe to draw up plans for the renovation of sand dunes, and the development of a series of public parks at Mablethorpe in Lincolnshire, and Sutton on Sea. One preliminary report on planting conditions of the area started in 1946 for the Urban District Council. (3)

In December 1946, Sylvia Crowe (1901-1997) wrote an evidence supporting the opinion that the proposed measures for Dune Gardens will be successful. The general idea was the building up of dunes and the reconsolidation by Marram grass, that have been yet carried out with success both in England and Denmark, Holland, Germany and Northern Ireland. Also, she suggested to plant Thorn, Elder and Privet, as trees that can grow on the sand dunes (4). After the inundation of

1953, the site conditions were of ground sodden with sea water, overlaid with sand and strewn with broken sea defences. All vegetation was killed, even because of the frequent severe east wind. The problems was to re-establish plant life and bring back the sea-side attraction, on which the livelihood of the community depended, with the least possible delay. In 1954, parts of the gardens were in use in early summer and were officially opened at the beginning of August.

This first English experience of Parpagliolo Shephard was strongly important for her future landscape projects. The acknowledgement of modelling surfaces and the use of different materials was very useful for her professional growth, and it would be clear in the expression of the gardening language she would later use. The Mablethorpe' projects (1946-1955) – Sutton Pleasure Gardens, Bohemia Caravan Camp and Dune Gardens, were as a result of a strong understanding of a place and how to work on: whale-backed plateau consisting of sand and broken concrete, the curved terrace, the garden as a long lawn, contoured in waves, and flowing up to the dunes, with planting and seating bays on each side, were elements able to design aesthetic and functional aspects. (5)

The principal plants and wind screen were: *Acer Pseudo-Platanus*, *Huppophae*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Prunus communis*, *Salix vitellina*, *populus canescens*. *Huppophae*, *Tamarix*, *Euonymus Japonica*, *Olearia Haastii*, *Senecio greyi*, *Eryngium*, *Centranthus*, *Statice latifolia*, *Armeria* and *Santolina*, and for paths: *Breodon*

gravel. In sheltered parts were: roses, herbaceous plants; Garden: Roses, herbaceous, Tamarix, Olearia haastii, Genista hispanica;

About materials, for terraces were used concrete paving, part coloured, and Khaki colorcrete in various finishes, exposed aggregate – cobble – asphalt; and for access road, tarmacadam.

The materials used for walls & colonnade were: formal walls reinforced concrete, finished with cementone, rough retaining “rock face” walling re-inforced concrete (shuttered with corrugated iron) finished snowcem, and, for the pergola, white painted metal barrel. For pools: reinforced concrete, Rim finished wooden bumper-board and looped road.

The 1948 founding of International Federation of Landscape Architects, or IFLA, resulted from meetings held in London and Oxford – England, the same year. As Parpagliolo Shephard wrote, it was a memorable year, marking a definitive turning point for the Institute.(6) Discussions centered on the mission of landscape architecture, its relations to garden design and planning. The London conference took place between 9 and 11 August and focused on the theme “The Work of the Landscape Architect in Relation of Society”, thus hinting at a departure from the rule of aesthetic consultant for the elite. From Italy, the delegates present at the International Landscape Architects Conference at County Hall, probably invited by Parpagliolo Shephard, were: professor Pietro Porcinai (1910-1986) from Firenze, Elena Romoli Luzzato (1900-1983), with her husband Felice Romoli, from Rome. Copiously delegates went from Austria, Chile, Denmark, great Britain, Holland, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and USA.(7)

Even the concurrent exhibition entitled “Landscape of Work and Leisure”,

reflected a change of focus for a profession more concerned with everyday life and hygiene than garden design. Curated by Frank H. Clark (1902-1971) (8), Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard and Geoffrey Jellicoe (1900-1996) (9), on a tight budget, the exhibition nevertheless featured materials from 13 countries on display from 10 to 21 August. The London conference and exhibition recorded the development of prewar ideals and their application to the reality of reconstruction, the planning of new towns, and land reclamation. Parpagliolo Shephard, a former supporter to the Third Reich landscape planning policies, presented her Roman work simultaneously in to the sections of Italy under her maiden name, and Great Britain, under her married name of M.T. Shephard. The differences about her name, generates sometime mistakes and difficulties to identify her contributions, as papers as works. Infact, in 1967, she wrote a note in the Members Notes Section of the Journal of the Institute of Landscape Architects (10), to explain her identity.

On Building, about the exhibit, she wrote: *“Landscape architecture is not only a science, but also an art. Its ultimate aim is to create beauty, and beauty is based on two things, sensibility and perfect technique. Sensibility is a quality which is now almost old-fashioned, but it is in essence that feeling which enables the artist to grasp the essential structural basis of a composition; or, in other words, to develop its inherent ‘form’. Technique is an extension of this quality into the practical business of giving it expression. (...) The introductory screen of the Exhibition, at County Hall, explained that the work of this profession generally takes place in collaboration with the town planner, the architect, the engineer and the sociologist. And the results of this team-work between the members of these*

*professions were illustrated by the excellent examples shown by such countries as Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Poland, America and our own country. (...) Used to dealing with the slow growth of plants, it realizes that, when planting has been done well, the reward will be sure even if it takes time. For this reason it looks to the future with high hope.”(11)*

Even in England, and all over the world, landscape architecture was a young profession, though based on an old tradition. One of the main objects that the Institute of Landscape Architects, or ILA, was tried to fulfil, since its foundation in 1929, was to establish a better training in this field. At time, Reading, Durham (1949) and London (1949), had all their landscape faculties. Shephard participated actively at the Education Committees, held in London during the Fifties and managed by ILA.

Marie T. Shephard started soon to work for the Institute and the Journal. In 1949 she wrote the Editorial (signed (A) Hon. Editor.) on the International Conference and Exhibition of 1948 and the Lectureships at Durham and London Universities.(12)

Among others echoes of the Conference, and reviews, she noticed that “(...) a first meeting has been held in Italy for the Establishment of a professional institute under the stimulus received from the London conference.” And this, mostly by her, will happen in Italy only in Seventy years.

She was also influenced by her colleagues and ILA members as Sylvia Crowe, Brenda Colvin (1897-1981), Frank H. Clark, and in general by the interests of the Institute of Landscape Architects, about themes as: roads in the landscape, trees in the street and in the landscape, the Japanese gardens, the projects of Roberto Burle Marx (1909-1994). All this will influence Shephard in all her projects.

After the exhibition on public landscaping (1948), Clark and Pargagliolo Shephard became two of the four landscape consultant for 1951 Festival of Britain, held at the South Bank in London, Clark being the overall coordinator (13). The Festival celebrated modern design and the influence of science and was grounded in the 18th-century notion of Picturesque.

The naturalistic approach to landscape design is probably England’s most important contribution to the visual arts, and the informal tree planting, the use of water, and of natural walling and paving throughout the South Bank illustrate this preoccupation.

The landscape of South Bank was conceived as being part and parcel of architecture. Architects and landscape architects worked as a team under Sir Hugh Casson (1910-1999), director of Architecture to the Exhibition to create a consciously designed townscape in the informal English tradition. Peter Shephard (1913-2002) was landscape architect for the area downstream of Hungerford Bridge; upstream, the Concourse area, was by Clark and Pargagliolo Shephard, and the rest by Peter Youngman (1911-2005).

The Regatta Restaurant, with one side on the river Thames and beside Hungerford Bridge, had a capacity for 500 people; the space had a panoramic view of the Thames and Westminster beyond. It was decorated with furnishing and tableware derived from patterns taken from crystallography, led by Cambridge crystallographer Helen Megaw (1907-2002). Chairs designed by Ernest Race (1913-1964) for the Festival, the Antelope and Springbok constructed of steel rods stove-enamelled white, filled the café and restaurants of the South Bank. Used internally and externally in exhibitions, they removed the barrier between indoor and outdoor furnishing. (14) The building

of the Regatta Restaurant has a quasi-science theme based on molecules and crystals with a garden space surrounded on three sides. Shephard, now liberated from pre-war fascism, responded by designing a large amoeba bed inside its square pond onto which she planted a mature zelkova tree as a focal point. (15). "Owing to the very heavy pressure of visitors on space, the various gardens themselves are not open to the public; they are barriers, vistas, or set pieces of one kind or another with water often used (as in historical designs) as a hazard." (16) This organic form with its swirling gravel and low foliage planting was probably influenced by Roberto Burle Marx's roof garden in Rio de Janeiro from 1937, published in architectural periodicals. (17) There were a fountain, marginal plants, and a sculpture by Lynn R. Chadwick (1914-2003). The garden could be viewed from a variety of levels, within the glass fronted building as well as a series of lightweight external stairs and terraces. In contrast to this dazzlingly modern statement, the internal jungle garden Parpagliolo Shephard designed, with its Picturesque theme, was based on a pool and anchoring alder tree.

The scheme relied on lush and dense shade-tolerant and humid-loving plants to give an impression of primordial vegetation, overlooked by an open-air at ground level.

Clark and Parpagliolo Shephard created the illusion of a primeval forest in a narrow space, between the back of the People of Britain pavilion, and the vast brick wall of the railway bridge. *Betula*, *Dicksoniana* and *Arundinaria* formed the canopy planting with *astilbe*, grasses, ferns, and ivy as ground cover. As Sheila M. Haywood wrote, "*The garden by Frank Clark and Marie Shephard, upon which one looks down from an elegant flight of steps, is particularly successful. (...) Marie*

*Shephard has done a magnificent job here in her unremitting supervision of, not indeed daily, but almost hourly clearing up. (...) pools with fountains seemed to come off rather better than those without them.*" (18)

The South Bank was the focus of a national post-war festival and thus this garden at the Regatta Restaurant was particularly significant. Its landscape demonstrated the strong contribution landscape architects could make to public spaces. Once more, the lesson of the South Bank was the value of a multidisciplinary approach working together as a team.

Commissions continued with Clark and the London County Council. However in 1954 Maria was appointed landscape consultant for the Italian company Generale Immobiliare, they had a common office in London – 46 Well Walk L. NW3 and 3 Lake Close Lake Road L. SW19, as Clark and Shephard – Landscape Architects. (19) In any case, Maria Shephard had always her office in Rome in via Marianna Dionigi 29.

The influence of the English culture trend in the postwar era is clear in the Parpagliolo's projects, which she participated actively in the international debates on it. Her associate Frank H. Clark, that was President of ILA in 1954, published a lot of articles on the Journal of ILA and Country Life, about: "Man and the Landscape", "The Sense of Beauty in the 18th, 19th, and 20th Centuries", "Landscape Architecture in New Towns", "New Landscape Gardening", "Trees", etc. In 1959 R. W. Rose wrote an article (20) on the insufficient cooperation and exchange of ideas between the engineering and planning institutions and the ILA, and the fault of the Institution that was not forging a strong link between the professions. The constitution of the ILA included, among its objects, "the advancement of the Art of Landscape Architecture, and the theory

and practice of garden, landscape and civic design”.

About the Public Works Congress, held in November 1958, she wrote that twenty-two papers were being presented by Institutions representing almost all technical and professional, apart IFLA, although at least four of the papers being presented deal with landscape problems. In the article, there are two pictures and a plan of Mrs. Maria T. Shephard works in Italy.

Vigna Clara, with a view of the terraced garden on the North side slope: the area was so restricted and so steep that the only way was to build on several terraces of different sizes of which the largest is big enough for a volley ball playground and another one has a hard surfaced bowling green.

All the trees were mature specimens prepared and transplanted two years before.

The Casal Palocco project was a communal playground which will be owned and used by ten families whose private gardens and houses close it on the three sides. Play facilities for children and adults were provided: tennis court, bowling green, minigolf, dancing platform, volley ball, etc. During the end of Fifties and the Sixties, the debate about the importance of the landscape architecture in projects of any size, was discussed in every congress organized by IFLA all around Europe, and more.

In 1962 an article condensed the paper given by Prof. Bruno Zevi (1918-2000) to the IFLA Congress in Israel, held in the same year.(21) Zevi talked about the importance of the history of landscape as well as the study of the development of towns, for a more complete understanding of the history of environment, in sympathy with the wide field of design was required, in modern times, of the creative professions. Zevi put

out five questions on the field, still actually today, as: how to revitalize the lost interest on landscape; how to establish the difference between garden design and landscape design; how to relate gardens to architecture without being a compensation of it; how to manage the limes between city and country in the new era, and how architecture and landscape could help the creation of a continuous urban landscape of tomorrow.

He concluded: *“Our culture is in a state of crisis. Someone must lead out of this. Will it be the Town Planner or the Architect? Perhaps Landscape Architects will do this leading, if they are able to rise above their professional routine to give a modern dimension to their art”*

In 1963, Parpagliolo Shephard began landscaping the new Hilton Hotel (now the Roma Cavalieri) on Monte Mario in Rome. She designed a serpentine drive, now the trade entrance, which snaked up through the grounds to the entrance circle, allowing a quieter experience on the terraces and rooms looking over the gardens and city. Today the garden appear timeless and natural whilst the hotel, a cutting-edge at the time, appears dated. The Rome Hilton is sited on Monte Mario on the right bank of the Tiber overlooking the town. (22) Originally this area was one of Roma’s Papal defences against the nationalist forces in the wars for independence from 1848 to 1870.

The Società Generale Immobiliare bought the abandoned fort in the 1930’s for future development. The Hilton Hotels Company agreed with the SGI on a combined venture to use the site for the Rome Hilton, and presented their first scheme about 1954-55.

After prolonged and heated debates, the City of Rome in 1958 granted license to build, provided the three following points were taken into account: the roof level of the building had to be kept at 137 m.a.s.l.



(Monte Mario Observatory was at 155 m.a.s.l.); the new construction must be blended into the Monte Mario skyline; two hills reaching 120 m.a.s.l. had to be built before building was started; evergreen trees 17 m. high had to be planted before the building was going to emerge.

The area of about 5 hectares has two access roads, one at 110 m.a.s.l., the other below at 88 m.a.s.l. But what with the space asked by the Hilton people and the height limit imposed by the City Authority, the building extended sideways and had to be sunk into the ground for two floors.

The hills were built with the excavated soil. No top soil was saved. There were no trees on the site, apart from a group of Aleppo Pines, which have been kept on their old stand, and 5 Casuarina Tenuissima. Of these, a Casuarina 18 m. high had to be prepared and transplanted. It is now one of the features of the front terraces of the Hotel. (23)

The area that had to be landscaped for the RAI new offices in 1966 consisted of three strips of ground along three roads, the largest being on the front facing viale Mazzini, plus a patio in the centre. The palace of the Headquarters of the state radio and television company RAI is a building placed in Rome, not so much on the Viale Mazzini itself, as happened with an even more severe design of the highest quality of the "Rinascete" building by Franco Albini (1905-1977), in accordance with a declared intention to impose a principle that would be valid for further town planning projects, on an area anonymous and devoid of all meaning.

Francesco Berarducci (1924-1992), designer of the building, demonstrates with his work a cultural consciousness that freed him from manneristic displays on the one hand and conceptions of a monumental kind on the other. It is a group of buildings of primary functions,

placed in immediate proximity with the city, and furthermore, communicating through the glass partitions with the external spaces which are disposed round a green quadrangle with a pool of water which constitutes the point of greatest luminosity, and the ideal visual centre for the further developments of any kind. The square courtyard is completely glassed in all around, with a garden which constitutes the focal point of the whole ground floor, the point to which the perspective lines converge and centre of attraction for the surrounding spaces. (24) The patio is one of the hopeful ideas of an architect. It is seen from all the main halls, and yet it is the most awkward place for plants to live in: damp, dark with no circulation of air, since no door can be left open even in summer because of the air conditioning. The suggestion to have it paved met with a firm denial. Green it had to be.

There were no trees on the site, apart from one old cedar (*C. Atlantica*), and all the planting had to be carried out on a concrete platform (the roof on the underground services and garages, except for one olive tree. Unfortunately most of the ventilation shafts and the ducts for the air-conditioning system were sited in the largest planting area. The depth of soil allowed was 40 cm. (1 ft. 3 in.). but Berarducci insisted on having trees at least as high as the first floor windows. Luckily the soil load had been very generously considered so that mounds could be piled up where the trees had to stand, giving a more undulating earth modelling.

Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard started to design the garden in the patio, conscious that a good drainage is essential. With such a restricted depth of soil, it was necessary to find a material thin enough but able to secure a clear flow of water either from rain or irrigation. Roman tiles were finally chosen, placed on

contiguous rows towards the outlets, with gravel filling the ridges between the rows. The difficulty in using such a breakable material arose when three of the four olives had to be planted. These were trees of about 60/80 years old, with branches 5/6 m x 5/6 m, and a root ball 1 m depth x 1 m diameter at the tree collar. Preparation and transplanting was done in one continuous operation in May. The tiles and gravel were placed first where the trees had to stand; over them a thin layer of soil.

The trees, moved by crane to the site, were carefully lowered. Then before the soil could be piled up, stone walls were built to contain the mound of ventilation shafts were near. Next the rows of tiles were placed over the whole surface and immediately covered by good soil of high humus content. Once the soil is in position walking and planting does not harm to the tiles underneath.

No staking was necessary, the weight of the root ball was being such that the trees once placed did not move. These olive trees, pruned back each year, seem not to mind the air that blows out of the ventilation ducts. The same applies to *Cotoneaster horizontalis*, *Juniperus pfitzeriana* and *tamariscifolia*, *Yucca aloeffolia*. But *Verbena pulchella* on the retaining walls disappeared completely after the first year. The plants chosen after one unsuccessful attempt are: *Dichodendra repens* as a carpeter, small leaved ivy, gardenias, rhododendrons and azaleas in their own peat filled pits, one hazel, a few Japanese maples. All plants tend to grow upwards, drawn by the sky 12 floor above, become spindly and need continuous pruning and checking. To relieve the uniform green aquarium-like atmosphere, sedimental rocks of a golden colour were placed in the patio, their shapes almost modern abstracts. (25)

The project reveals the international experience of Pargagliolo Shephard and how she was opened to experiments and receptive to new trends in landscape design. The geometrical organisation of plants and paths highlights the influence of Japanese gardens, which had a substantial interest from the member of ILA (26), and Pargagliolo's endeavours to employ cross-cultural references and contemporary design in her works.

The garden has a square shape with the side of about 15 meters overlooking the lobby. Its original design shows species belonging to the "flora classica" and low herbaceous ground, inserted wisely in a main modular grid of 5 meters, of which one third is a water basin, where flows the water of the artist's bronze fountain Federico Brook (1933-). Fifteen years ago the garden was restored by making many changes, unfortunately breaking the philosophical concept of the project.

During the Fifties and Sixties, only exceptionally it was a consultant landscape architect brought in architectural projects, as when Brenda Colvin and Sylvia Crowe participated in the post-war Hertfordshire 'Schools Planting Programme'. Maria Teresa Pargagliolo Shephard and Frank Clark's landscaping of the Festival of Britain site inspired many British landscape architects and may help explain the decision of the London County Council to commission the pair to design the grounds of a number of new primary schools in south London. (27) These include Horn Park Primary School, Greenacres Primary School and Kidbrook Park Primary School, all in Eltham; Glenbrook Primary School in Lambeth; Sullivan Primary School in Fulham, and Langbourne Primary School in Dulwich. (28)

## Notes

- (1) Maria Teresa Parpagliolo, "Garden Theatre at Villa Reale di Marlia, Near Lucca", *Landscape & Garden*, Vol. 1, 1934, n. 3, pages 28-29; Maria Terese Parpagliolo, "The Lost Gardens of Pompei", *Landscape & Garden*, Vol. 1, 1934, n. 4, pages 24-27; Maria Teresa Parpagliolo, "18th Century Italian Villas", *Landscape & Garden*, Vol. 2, 1935, n. 2, pages 45-48; Maria Theresa Parpagliolo, "A Roof Garden in Milan", *Landscape & Garden*, Vol. 3, 1936, n. 1, pages 34-35.
- (2) "Rome. For members who wish to spend a few weeks studying or sightseeing in Rome, a self-contained furnished studio (two beds, bathroom, small dressing-room with built-in wardrobe and cupboards, stove (wood), electric tea kettle, toaster and cooking ring, drawing table and easel, small terrace) is to be let fortnightly or monthly. Details from Marie T. Shephard, 2-4 Tudor Street, E.C.4. (Telephone: CENTral 9154)", *Journal of the Institute of Landscape Architect*, 1949-October, n. 16, page 12.
- (3) Sylvia Crowe "Preliminary Report on Planting Conditions on the Sutton – Mablethorpe Coast, prepared for O.A. Jellicoe", December 12, 1946, Reading Museum Archive, Folder AR CRO PF7A/8.
- (4) Sylvia Crowe, "Mablethorpe and Sutton-on-Sea. Report for submission to the Ministry of Health on the scope of the plan and the methods to be employed in the reclamation and development of the sand-dunes north of Mablethorpe town centre", Reading Museum Archive, Folder AR CRO PF7A/8. She was a member of ILA, and his office at time was in 28 Baker Street, W.1.
- (5) "Work in Progress. A Scheme Prepared for the Urban District Council of Mablethorpe and Sutton on Sea", *Journal of the Institute of Landscape Architects*, 1957-March, pages 10-13.
- (6) Marie T. Shephard (A), Hon. Editor, "Editorial", *Journal of the Institute of Landscape Architects*, 1949-April, n. 15, page 2.
- (7) "List of Delegates Present at International Conference", *Journal of the Institute of Landscape Architects*, November-1948, n. 14, pages 14-15. Marie T. Shephard is included in the list of Great Britain delegates, as member of the Institute of Landscape Architects.
- (8) F. H. Clark was a teacher and authority on the 18th century English landscape garden, publishing in 1948, *The English Landscape Garden*. By the late 1950s he was one of the most distinguished Modernist landscapists active in Britain, and President of the Institute of the Landscape Architecture. He was a lecturer at Reading University until 1959, and in July 1959 he was appointed senior lecturer for landscape architecture at the new architecture department at the University of Edinburgh by Robert Matthew, whom he had first met

- whole working with the Festival of Britain team. He directed the new landscape architecture postgraduate diploma course which was set up in 1962.
- (9) Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe was one of the 20th century's leading landscape architects with a career spanning almost seventy years. A trained architect, town planner, landscape architect and garden designer, his interest was in landscape design, describing it as "the mother of all arts".
- (10) "Maria Teresa Shephard (F) (Mrs. Ronald Shephard) wishes to state that she is not Mary Shephard (Mrs. Peter Shephard) and her addresses are: *The Four Winds Garden Cottage, Lynchmere, near Haslemere, Surrey, or via Marianna Dionigi 29, 00193 Rome, Italy*". Announcement in the section "Members Notes", *Journal of the Institute of Landscape Architects*, n. 80, November-1967, page 4. Ronald Shephard was another very important landscape architect of the Institute.
- (11) Marie T. Shephard, A.I.L.A., "Landscape of Work and Leisure", *Building*, Vol. XXIII, n. 9, September-1948, pages 271-274.
- (12) Marie T. Shephard, *Journal of The Institute of landscape Architects*, 1949-April, n. 15, page 2.
- (13) Kristina Taylor, *Women garden designers, 1900 to present*, Garden Art Press, Woodbridge-Suffolk, England, 2015.
- (14) Lady M. Allen of Hurtwood, Susan Jellicoe, *The Things we See: Gardens*, n. E07, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1949-1953.
- (15) Harriet Atkinson, Mary Banham, *The Festival of Britain: A Land and Its People*, I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, London-New York, 2012
- (16) *Great Exhibition. The Festival of Britain*, 1951, Official Book, 11|27, Reading Museum Archive. Guide to the Exhibition of Architecture, 10|15, edited by H. McG. Durnett, Reading Museum Archive. Regatta Restaurant was designed by Misha Black (1910-1977), with Alexander Gibson, of the Design Research Unit – DRU, one of the most significant post-war design practise in Europe.
- (17) Articles, such as those that follow, probably inspired Parpagliolo Shephard in her landscape gardens design: William McCance, H. Frank Clark, "The Influence of Cubism on Garden Design", *The Architectural Review*, 1960-March, pages 112-117. H. Frank Clark, "Reflections on Burle Marx", *Journal of the Institute of Landscape Architects*, 1956-July, n. 36, pages 12-18. "A Garden in Caracas, by Roberto Burle Marx", *Journal of the Institute of Landscape Architects*, 1964-February, n. 65, pages 5-8.
- (18) Sheila M. Haywood, Planting Design at South Bank, *Journal of The Institute of landscape Architects*, 1951-July, pages 6-9.
- (19) Parpagliolo Shephard was also involved by Clark in the Education

- Committee for the University of Reading, managed by the Institute of Landscape Architects (with G.P. Youngman, B. Colvin, H. Richmond, S. Crowe, T.F. Thomson, B. Hackett, T. Sharp, K. Booth); see Letters of Clark to Douglas Brown, Secretary of ILA. July 30th, 1954, Reading Museum Archive, Folder SR LI AO 2/2/1/22.
- (20) R.W. Rose, "Engineers, Planners and the Institute of Landscape Architects", *Journal of The Institute of Landscape Architects*, 1959- May, n. 46, pages 6-9.
- (21) Bruno Zevi, "A Modern Dimension of Landscape Architecture", *Journal of The Institute of landscape Architects*, 1962- November, n. 60, pages 18-19. Bruno Zevi was at time Professor of Architectural History at the University of Venice, and editor of "L'Architettura".
- (22) Kristina Taylor, op. cit. Chapter: "Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard (1903-1974)", pages 112-117
- (23) "The Rome Hilton. Landscape. Architect: Marie T. Shephard", *Journal of the Institute of Landscape Architects*, 1969- August, n. 87, pages 15-17.
- (24) Giuseppe Mazzariol, Francesco Berarducci, Marziano Bernardi, *Un edificio per la RAI*, Alfieri editore, Venezia, 1967
- (25) "The Radio-TV New Office Building, Rome. Architect: Marie T. Shephard", *Journal of the Institute of Landscape Architects*, 1969- August, n. 87, pages 18-19.
- (26) Jeremy Dodd, "Stone Gardens". Akira Sato, "Rural Landscape in Japan". Gordon Patterson, "Japanese Tour". *Journal of the Institute of Landscape Architects*, 1964-August, n. 67, pages 8-10, 11-14, 16-17.
- (27) Geraint Franklin, Elain Harwood, Simon Taylor, Matthew Whitfield, "England Schools 1962-88. a Thematic Study, research Report Series 33-2012", *English Heritage*, Portsmouth, UK, page 88.
- (28) Sonja Dümpelmann, *Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard (1903-1974): Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklung der Gartenkultur in Italien im 20. Jahrhundert*. Weimar: Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, VDG Weimar, 2004.

## Architect Juta Krulc, garden designer (1913-2015)

Maja Kržišnik

Juta Krulc was among the first architects who graduated from the Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana, she completed her studies within Professor Vurnik class in 1937, with a thesis "Outdoor Swimming Pool Facility in Radovljica". Although the topic could imply that during her studies she had already showed a knack for positioning architecture into the landscape, she was particularly drawn by studying interior design<sup>1</sup>. After graduating she lived and worked in Belgrade, designed houses and surveyed their construction. After returning to Ljubljana after World War II she decided for a shift in her life, a new beginning was needed. Since the love of botany always accompanied her she began to draw flowers, first for herself, then for the Hydrometeorological Institute, where later she was entrusted the drawing of the Phenological Atlas (published in Belgrade in 1955).

During the work she met Professor Ciril Jeglič, a pioneer of horticulture and landscape architecture in Slovenia, a professor at the newly founded Department of Landscape Architecture at the Biotechnical Faculty in Ljubljana and he offered her a position of an assistant for the course "Horticulture and landscape dendrology". The young architect, involved in the planning and implementation of planting within an extremely extensive project of Volčji Potok Arboretum, was faced with new challenges. Getting to know the technique of horticulture, the history of the emergence of gardens; she was only well

acquainted with botany and knew how to draw plans. Juta Krulc was fascinated by the work, learning from nature which she loved and building good fundamentals for her further work. Professor Jeglič guided and encouraged his staff to expend their knowledge of indigenous flora. In his books, numerous promotional lectures and articles he tried to express his thoughts and feelings in the spirit of his idol Izidor Cankar<sup>2</sup>, which also reflected in his descriptions of the planned planting. With his words Jeglič wanted to stimulate the awareness, desire and a sense of landscape architecture as well as introducing professional terminology at the same time. His concise expression left traces in the description of the planting of Juta Krulc<sup>3</sup>. At that time mainly foresters and agronomists were still involved in creating gardens in Slovenia. In the first half of the twentieth century in Slovenia gardens were arranged by Cecil Pinsent, Georg Potente and Ilse Fischerauer<sup>4</sup>. Occasionally few architects were involved with designing gardens, as both professors, Ivan Vurnik and Jože Plečnik, like their students (in particular Gizela Šuklje, Katarina Grasselli).<sup>5</sup> When Juta Krulc left the Faculty in 1957, the profession of landscape architecture was in its early days. However, the basis she obtained studying in the seminar of professor Vurnik and the work with

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<sup>2</sup> Bogo Zupančič, *Usode ljubljanskih stavb in ljudi* (Ljubljana: KUD Polis, 2008), 94.

<sup>3</sup> Juta Krulc, »Predvrt podeželske hiše«, *Rože in vrt* I, May 25, 2002, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Gojko Zupan, *Gledati, videti, razumeti, čutiti: Življenje z vrtovi* (exhibition catalogue, Ljubljana, Galerija Dessa, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Fran Šijanec, *Sodobna slovenska likovna umetnost* (Maribor: Obzorja, 1961), 472.

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<sup>1</sup> Polona Mlakar Baldasin and Matevž Granda, »Dotik z zemljo pomirja«, *Hiše* 76 (2013), 102.

professor Jeglič in Volčji Potok Arboretum was a good fundament for her further work. There was very little professional literature and one had to get organized and rely on his own exploration. There was almost no work in this field, only few urban reconstruction sites included the planting of public areas and even fewer private investors for their garden designs.

## I.

Among the early works in the period between 1958 and 1968, the most important work is certainly planting Tartini Villa Park (1958). Working there Juta Krulc first got acquainted with Mediterranean vegetation, which she grew very fond of. The coastal region was among the Slovenian public still largely undiscovered and unknown world, the valuation of its cultural and natural heritage was at the beginning. Tartini Villa with accompanying outbuildings and the church were demolished and replaced by a new protocol building, which was planned by architect Vinko Glanz<sup>6</sup> between 1958 and 1964. The park itself was heavily overgrown and abandoned since nobody lived in the villa after the death of the last owner in 1906<sup>7</sup>. The new facility kept the location of the villa from the early 18th century, which was carefully placed and protected from the weather impacts and was likely to continue the ancient construction of the coastal area. The entry to the property was ascending from the pier up the stairs through the terraced garden up to the platform in front of the

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<sup>6</sup> Sonja Ana Hoyer, »Strunjan, Vila Tartini« in *Zgodovinski vrtovi in parki v Sloveniji* (Ljubljana: MK, Uprava Republike Slovenije za kulturno dedščino, 1995), 32-34.

<sup>7</sup> Mojca M. Kovač, »Vila Tartini in nova vila Vinka Glanza v Strunjanu« in *Patriae et orbi, Essays on Central European Art and Architecture: festschrift in honour of Damjan Prelovšek* (Ljubljana: ZRC Publishing, 2015), 378-406.

church and continued to the villa. The new plan of greening largely kept the old layout but it wanted to enlighten the park with a new life, and to provide a firm foothold for further growth.<sup>8</sup> After thorough cleaning traces of the original baroque arrangement of the park were revealed with splendid scenic overlook to the sea, the scarp walls and staircases of grey local stone were cleaned. New trees and Mediterranean plants were planted; roses climbed over the pergola, which was supported by columns of white Istrian stone<sup>9</sup>, the original road alignment was preserved. Unfortunately the plan of the park was not preserved, but its author remembered it very well, because the work had taken several years. It required close cooperation with coastal gardeners who knew the natural laws of the local flora, which grew in different conditions and climate. At that time there were only few nurseries in Primorska even with fewer plants for sale.

The designer of the park tackled it with all due respect to its original form in her intuitive and, above all, creative attitude to cultural heritage, as in our country the evaluation of historic parks and gardens began to develop just half a century later. Later Juta Krulc got in touch with a historical garden also with a plan for the revitalization of Plečnik's garden at Karunova 4 in Ljubljana (first in 1986 and later in 2002). Unfortunately, the realization of her plan did not occur. In 1960 a plan for planting a park in front of the main office building of Soline Portorož was made and a plan for planting the area in front of the Institute of Forestry in Ljubljana.

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<sup>8</sup> Juta Krulc, »Moji vrtovi« (Lecture at the University Botanic Gardens Ljubljana, January 12, 2011)

<sup>9</sup> Mojca M. Kovač and Igor Sapač, »Vila Tartini« in *Slavne vile na Slovenskem* (Praha: Foibos, 2013), 224-228.



The first works include planting of public areas at the new urban planning of Radeče and Hrastnik (1961, 1963). Greening accompanied new residential building areas, blocks of flats, the main radial transport road, and a petrol station. In the spirit of the time it was reserved for local residents and migrant workers in factories to spend their leisure time.

All those first realizations of greening were characterized by being repeatedly deviated from the original plan, since they needed continuous adaptations. In spite of everything Juta Krulc closely monitored and surveyed their realizations, planting lasted sometimes for several seasons. In the meantime, several gardens for private clients emerged in coastal Primorska and Istria. Those were smaller gardens and courtyards, atriums, mostly for holiday houses, designed for spending time in the open air, in conjunction with the planned interior. Professor Vurnik had already said that the garden should be designed in the way that the housewife could see through the kitchen window the one who was coming into the house<sup>10</sup>. Herb gardens were near the kitchen, decorated and paved areas with pergolas functioned as an extension of the living room, enrobed by the native vegetation, which escalated in height towards the borderline of the estate and locked the border with neighbours or opened the view and became a framework for a landscape panorama.

When designing those small areas Juta Krulc masterfully composed natural resources and the use of materials that were available or accessible, fascinated by Japanese gardens as an inspiration for minimalist interventions and the exploitation of natural resources, for the

perfect compositions of Mediterranean vegetation and stone details. A courtyard was planned for the family holiday house in Piran (1958) extending from the living room as a shallow body of water with a few thin bamboo stems growing at the side, then crossing it by stepping on larger semi-circular natural stones and accessing the staircase. The idea of the water was not realized. In all of her work carefully thought details can be seen, functional organization of space, airiness, planned emphasis on the structure of green spaces, the principle of contrast of filled and empty spaces as well as pruned, form-cut and wild growing, and above all, fragrant Mediterranean shrubs .

## II.

With the growth of new settlements around the capital of Ljubljana, such as Murgle, Koseze, Dravlje, Galjevica, Mostec an increasing number of orders emerged for planting gardens around the houses, which occupied up to three-quarters of the entire plot. Given the social conditions of the time and changing ways of living gardens were becoming more and more habitable, although investors rarely accounted for more than a mown lawn, a patio in front of the living room, and at most one tree. Garden arrangements by Juta Krulc usually included peripheral plantings that bordered the property, encircled it; many times a pond with aquatic plants was incorporated. The exception was, in the words of the author<sup>11</sup> , a very small garden near the lake Koseze, where the owners themselves wanted it to be designed in accordance with the surroundings.

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<sup>10</sup> Tjaša Zorc, »Vrtovi Jute Krulc« (graduation thesis, Univerza v Ljubljani, Biotehniška fakulteta, oddelek za krajinsko arhitekturo, 2008), 2.

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<sup>11</sup> Juta Krulc, »Moji vrtovi« (Lecture at the University Botanic Gardens Ljubljana, January 12, 2011).



In the garden there is a pond, a wooden footbridge connects the terrace, garden and the exit from the garden into a whole, which is highlighted by a dense planting of botanical species of plants, in conjunction with shrubs.

Juta Krulc, in the choice of plants for planting, always adapted, looking for compromises. She wanted to achieve customer's satisfaction because that was a prerequisite for the successful growth and development of the garden and she adapted to the current offer from the nurseries, which was until recent years very limited.

The element of water is often present in the plans of Juta Krulc gardens, as well as the focus on the scent of the plants. Smaller ponds are incorporated in the gardens to attract other living organisms, necessary for a sustainable balance. We could say that it is a picture of paradise on earth, resulting from the transfer of a piece of nature which we cohabit with. Constant changes represent laws of all processes of gardening. The development of the garden is not exactly predictable. Sometimes the gardens are just planted and then never more maintained, repeatedly planted according to the changing needs of the owners, changing of the owners, and eventually there are very few gardens where the original plan can be recognized. Gardens make their own ways, have a similar fate as the carefully designed interiors which are left to the users to live their lives with, which is usually quite different than planned. Of more than three hundred planned gardens designed by Juta Krulc, you might find traces of her plan in less than one tenth preserved.

At first glance, many of her gardens look as if planted by themselves, as if they were created by nature, only a detailed examination shows that even the chances were well thought and considered. The

selection of plants is based on the integration of native and cultivated plants that are adapted to the spatial and climate conditions on the site. To provide a natural planting look the plants are planted in groups of the same species and in different colours; trees often in pairs since the plants are mutually supportive and create better conditions for the growth of each other. Juta Krulc was the first in our country who started introducing planting perennials in gardens<sup>12</sup>. Perennials are beautiful in the garden at different seasons, they only have to be seen in all their life cycles, in four seasons they bring gardens completely different effects. Only in years they show their expression, that is difficult to be predicted because it depends on the environment in which they are planted, what the plant will look like depends on many factors. In the gardens of Juta Krulc perennials are planted in their organic, biomorphic forms. They soften built structures in the garden, in curves border the paved surfaces, establishing the rhythm of transitions, transitions of the interior to the outer surfaces. For her gardens she selected the trees which have a more transparent leaf structure, trees which are coloured differently or bloom in different seasons or have unusual bark. She knew that working with plants requires constant observation of the plants and their monitoring.

Following and understanding the work of some of her contemporaries, artists, big names of the world architecture and garden design as well as tours in arboreta, parks, gardens and horticultural exhibitions Juta Krulc gained a considerable amount of knowledge that was continually expanded. Her visits to the gardens of Belgium, Normandy, England

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<sup>12</sup> Irena Keršič, »Jutini vrtovi«, ( exhibition catalogue, Ljubljana, galerija Marjan Lovšin, 2003).

and their owners (such as the garden Vasterival and Princesse Greta Sturdza, Le Parc des Moutiers and Robert Mallet in Normandy, Belgian Arboretum Kalmthout and Jelena de Belder Kovačič, Sissinghurst Castle Garden in Kent or Ninfa garden in southern Italy, gardens of Jacques Wirtz, Henk Gerritsen and Piet Oudolf), confirmed her way of thinking and working. At home she had very few people she could discuss or share her expertise with. The development and direction of the profession of landscape design, as it was developing at the newly established Department of Landscape Architecture, was going the other direction. Her garden design was based on the tradition of English gardens and on the laws of the period of modernism, in respect of plant life. Her gardens are never violent to nature; on the contrary, they are reassuring because the awareness of the needed coexistence between man and nature is always present. With her tireless curiosity she followed new discoveries in the world of plants, more and more she learned about the laws of nature, which she respected immensely.

Her sensitive observation of nature is proven in particular in her many botanical drawings of plants, which were created from an early age on. A drawing collection of mountain flowers, irises, hellebores, wild orchids and geraniums was created with the aim to preserve the knowledge of their presence on our territory or the territory of our neighbours, since they are all labelled with the location and date of creation.

Juta Krulc also participated at competitions, first with her fellow architect Saša Sedlar in the horticultural arrangement of Skopje, continued with the architect Fedja Košir in a competition for the Marjan Park, Split, and a few times with the architects Marko Cotič and Darja Polak.

Many plans for individual clients often remained at the stage of sketches so that the clients could review and update them up to their wishes. The drawings were made in charcoal, a custom retained from her student days, in order to facilitate further corrections. She was always involved in planting, especially if there were no gardeners around; she planted the plants herself so that she was convinced that the work was done correctly. She kept in touch with numerous clients for many years making them happy with her hand-drawn botanical seasonal Christmas cards.

### III.

In the last two decades more and more complex spatial arrangements of large surfaces emerged, the desire for designed landscapes that were the exact opposite of the previously small gardens of intellectuals in residential neighbourhoods or around their holiday homes. However, it was the skill of the planner, which had been developed in hundreds of small gardens, that was an excellent basis for planning the content and landscaping of large areas. The planning always began with careful transfer of the geodetic bases, measurement and orientation of the plot. The owners became aware of the need to plan the surroundings, which could not be handled since it exceeded the interests of everyday living. Accompanied by a growing ecological awareness the owners were guided, some in the cultivation of vegetables, others in the cultivation of olive trees or beekeeping or similar. Juta Krulc was faced either with steep slopes, which could be managed only by skilled gardeners with whom she always cooperated, or by the siting of new olive trees on abandoned littoral terraces, or determining space for vegetable crops.

All these areas were integrated into a comprehensive planned garden with landscaped entrances or outdoor living spaces and ornamental plants. She monitored their development and growth, worked with the owners and tried to guide them. All those new designed landscapes were being developed for several years, including the plans that were complemented over the years with the cooperation of the owners and the designer.

Among these large landscaped garden areas it is certainly the most "hers" Kržišnik Garden in Žiri, which was evolving over twenty years during her first periodical, then permanent residence in Žiri. In addition to this garden she created thirty gardens in Žiri, planted according to her plans, which evolved since the first renovation of the park in front of the elementary school in 1976 (re-arrangement in 2015) to the last major work in 2015, with the architect Beta Poljanšek Koman where Juta Krulc participated as a landscape designer of the exterior of the restored cultural centre in the old part of Žiri.

In the Kržišnik garden all the experience Juta Krulc gained throughout her work is built in and implemented. The garden itself was not continuously growing and developing, it extended according to multiple purchases of the land of the former pasture. It was changing due to the urban and land reclamation works and was being therefore repeatedly planned. The wishes of the garden owners were taken into account, a garden which would embody a unity with the house together, a garden which would be open, connected with the environment and not a confined space. Juta Krulc positioned the garden in the surrounding landscape with all her knowledge and sense of space. It consists of different ambiances, connected into the whole. The flora from the nearby hill, river

and marsh continues in the garden. Native indigenous vegetation relates to non-native, creating highlights and new, unexpected compositions. There is a pond, marsh and a creek in the garden adjacent to the river. It is different in every season, largely adapted to the harsh climate conditions, long winters, short springs and recent hot summers.

The landscape crossing into the garden and the garden transition in the interior is aided with installations, interventions of different materials, with paths that are interrupted with paving made from recycled scrap bricks, wood, stone and iron. They are incorporated in the garden as visual accents and were made in collaboration with Tomaž Kržišnik, BFA painter, who was engaged with them with the same creative energy and artistic sensitivity as he designed the residential interior of the house. Sometimes these visual accents are accompanied by plants more or less obscure and overgrowing them, the diagonal path across the garden is transformed into a marsh oak lined promenade. As it was written by Gojko Zupan the garden had a special meaning to Juta Krulc – it was an experimental garden area, a laboratory and her silent interlocutor.<sup>13</sup>

The essence and main characteristics of her work from the first to the last plans were not changed much. Boldness and ambition in the designs of gardens was subject to spatial constraints and investors. With her work Juta Krulc opened new high-quality integrated solutions of living, much appreciated and respected by numerous garden owners. The work of Juta Krulc had long been marginalized by Slovenian public professional interests. Similarly, the awareness of the presence of professional

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<sup>13</sup> Gojko Zupan, »Gledati, videti, razumeti, čutiti«: *Življenje z vrtovi* (exhibition catalogue, Ljubljana, galerija Dessa, 2015).

design gardens that are not only a collection of horticultural plants or vegetable garden for a useful purpose or formal park with green lawns. After her ninetieth birthday her lucidity and longevity gradually awakened interests for her way of life, her thinking as well as the specifics of her work. She was a designer who was well aware of the simultaneous global development trends in designing gardens and landscapes, analysing them, and incorporating them with great creative sensitivity, enormous botanical and horticultural expertise and the knowledge of Slovenian native plants in the design of gardens.

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