Delft University of Technology

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Publication date
2022

Document Version
Final published version

Published in
Teaching Design For Values

Citation (APA)
Thomas, A. R., & Novas, M. (2022). More than half the picture: Challenges at the encounter of feminism and architectural history. In R. Rocco, A. Thomas, & M. Novas-Ferradás (Eds.), *Teaching Design For Values: Concepts, Tools & Practices* (pp. 268-289). TU Delft OPEN Publishing.

Important note
To cite this publication, please use the final published version (if applicable).
Please check the document version above.

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MORE THAN HALF THE PICTURE: CHALLENGES AT THE ENCOUNTER OF FEMINISM AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

Historically, the work of white Western male architects has dominated architectural history education. In recent decades a large body of scholarship has attempted to critically question this, highlighting and subverting mainstream disciplinary values, which are informed by gendered, racial, classist, and colonial biases. This chapter explores the process of addressing the methodologically and epistemologically gendered blind spots that reinforce structural inequality in the academy. We reflect on our experiences developing two interlinked Architectural History courses on the MSc Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences between 2019 and 2021 at Delft University of Technology (TU Delft). The chapter explores the challenge of introducing traditionally marginalised forms of architectural knowledge – such as ones coming from feminist theory – within an existing institutional framework, while also interrogating the essential acts of collaboration between students, researchers, and teachers that take place in the process.

ARCHITECTURE, ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY, FEMINISM, GENDER BIAS, SEMINAR

1. INTRODUCTION

'Write yourself. Your body must be heard' says Hélène Cixous (1976: 880). A new period of intensification of feminist awareness is changing the way we live in the world. This 'fourth wave' of feminism has been identified by several scholars in different English- and Spanish-speaking contexts (Munro, 2013; Cobo, 2018), among others, as a 'global' or 'mass' movement spread via social and other forms of media and activist movements across the world in the first decades of the twenty-first century. Defined by the complex contemporary context of globalisation, the emergence and urgency of intersectional feminism, and serious crises of climate and care-work, the movement is inexorably changing all areas of life and every field of knowledge, including architecture and the built environment. In doing so, it has brought into focus the ways that specific (patriarchal) value hierarchies have reinforced inequality within the architectural profession. Such structures are rooted in the academy, as the first place that professionals encounter ideas of professionalism, excellence, and the filtering of 'ideal' practitioners (Brown et al., 2016).

Feminist movements started to transform architectural debates in the last decades of the twentieth century, as feminist practitioners and academics sought to challenge the barriers faced by women within the profession, as well as the exclusion of women and traditionally oppressed peoples from the history of architecture. Such work mainly took place following the second wave of feminism in the 1970s. Yet, the productive outcomes that arose from intersections between feminist theory and architecture remained outside the status quo, and were received with hostility within a highly masculinised academic and professional field. Feminists from an earlier generation had to wait for the progressive feminisation of architectural training and practice (i.e., the establishment of a critical mass), the career-advancement of some female academics, and the emergence of a more sympathetic societal context, to see the wider impact of their efforts. The brilliant work of these scholars in challenging and critiquing the 'universal' norms and values inherent within architectural history has become all the more pertinent in the information age as the 2010s saw the arrival of collectively built online databases and repositories such as *Un dia/una arquitecta* (launched in 2015, see Moisset 2017; 2018), *Pioneering Women in American Architecture* (launched in 2017), *Women Write Architecture* (launched in 2017), and *Women Writing Architecture* (launched in 2021), not to mention the various Wikipedia 'edit-a-thons' adding women in architecture. The latter, in particular, contributed to a major transformation of Wikipedia's database, where 90% of editors were male (Moisset, 2017, p.21) and whose consequent gender bias was publicly acknowledged by the organisation in their own article 'Gender bias on Wikipedia'. As Despina

Stratigakos wrote in 2016, this situation certified that '[history] is not a simple meritocracy: it is a narrative of the past written and revised —or not written at all— by people with agendas' (2016, p.65).

Critical to the diversifying of architectural education in recent years has been the questioning of the 'canon' in architectural schools across the world. Founded on the Anglo-European traditions of art institutions in the nineteenth century, the canon —a selection of the most important architects and their works in architectural history— remains the cornerstone of much architectural education today. Through the canon, exclusive practices, based on colonialist European power structures, are normalised in the academy through the selection of precedent studies, text books, exhibitions, invited speakers, and curricula, and consequently in the architectural profession.

A profound contribution of feminist architectural historians has been to address and critique this canon through edited volumes, which have become important and helpful alternative 'readers' in the classroom. Iain Borden, Barbara Penner, and Jane Rendell's influential publication *Gender Space Architecture* (2000) revealed how the discussions on gender and architecture have developed since the 1970s; where feminist scholars had initially been concerned with professional issues, such as the underrepresentation of women architects, protecting their heritage, and scrutinising the 'man-made' environment. The 1980s and 1990s revealed a shift into interdisciplinary work (such as anthropology, film studies, and cultural studies), exploring the spheres of experience and representation, while at the same time, architectural history began to explore the ways that architecture creates subjects. As Penner notes, Beatriz Colomina's essay 'The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism' in her book *Sexuality and Space* (1992) represented a fundamental shift in architectural history, as 'it made the case that gender (and other forms of difference) is actively produced and reproduced by architecture' (Penner, 2005, p.89). Since the intersectional approach to feminism gained strength during recent decades, there have been numerous endeavours to both break and remake the canon through edited volumes that explore different facets of feminist architectural history, including: ecological feminism (Rawes, 2013; Frichot et al., 2017), migration (Lee & Siddiqi, 2019; 2021), race (Cheng et al., 2020), and disability (Boys, 2014; 2017). Other recent broad scope publications, such as Zaida Muxí Martínez's *Beyond the Threshold: Women, houses, and cities* (in Spanish 2018, translated to English in 2020), the four volume *Women in Architecture* (edited by Sumita Singha, 2018), and the forthcoming *Bloomsbury Global Encyclopaedia of Women in Architecture, 1960-2015* (edited by Lori Brown and Karen Burns, forthcoming) offer resources to question the deeply established methodological and epistemological gender bias in Western architectural history.

But writing takes time. It takes time to produce and to disseminate, percolate and transform our institutions. It is in this lag that we continue to consciously and unconsciously reproduce long-standing narratives that only see less than half the picture.

Such narratives have serious structural and policy-based repercussions for our universities. Data shows that despite gender parity in most architecture schools among students, the situation is not good for women in practice. In the Netherlands, approximately 25% of registered architects are women (Architectenregister 2021), despite roughly equal numbers of female and male students at the country's top two architecture schools. While this process of attrition is inevitably linked to structural-societal factors (gendered division of work, parental leave policies, pay discrimination), there are other issues directly emanating from the culture of the profession. The UK's *Architectural Review* 2016 'Women in Architecture Survey' found that 83% of EU female architects saw having children as disadvantaging their career (44% said that architecture was a good career if you didn't have children), 72% experienced sexual discrimination on building sites, and 52% encountered discrimination in meetings (Tether, 2016). The situation for women of colour is undoubtedly worse, whereby commonplace issues, such as pay imbalance, lack of job security, and harassment, are exacerbated by racial discrimination and structural racism (Fairs, 2017; Mark, 2017). While there have been some highly valuable initiatives to understand inequality within the profession, such as the Parlour platform in Australia (https://parlour.org.au, launched 2012), at present we lack detailed scientific or broadly cultural research into the problems experienced by women and people of colour in architecture, or of effective measures to improve the situation (Brown et al., 2016).

Although it is not possible to attribute all of these problems to the academy, educational culture certainly has a part to play. In recent years, urged by their students, educators have begun to realise the importance of addressing equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) as a set of values that need to be explicitly explored within the educational context, and in doing so to re-assess certain 'tropes' of the architecture school that reinforce exclusivity and exclusion, such as: a single (white male) genius designer as the benchmark of excellence, the long hours working culture, highly public and highly aggressive 'crits' of student work, uncritical use of the canon, and elitist recruitment practices.

As self-proclaimed feminist students first, who subsequently became scholars and then teachers, we are deeply invested in contributing to such a paradigm shift. In the search for answers, we have for some years been actively studying, participating, and collaborating to find a way to establish both a theoretical and practical approach to the problem. This chapter presents our experience and situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988) gained at the Department of Architecture in the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of Delft University of Technology (TU Delft) after our encounter in 2017 at the History of Architecture and Urban Planning Chair headed by the then only female full professor, Carola Hein. We begin by outlining the context of the department and the initiatives already in place, then move on to discussing our own experiences of putting together courses that aim to foreground

equality, diversity, and inclusion as explicit values. Our goal with this paper is to show both the problems and opportunities with EDI in the architectural context, to acknowledge and amplify the existing work in this field, and to share our insights from the experience in the hope that they may encourage others to act.

2. LESS THAN HALF THE PICTURE: THE BACKGROUND

At the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, declared feminist activism has been present, though not always appraised, since at least the 1970s. As TU Delft researcher Charlotte van Wijk writes, second wave feminism had an impact on Dutch universities through the initiatives of students (predominantly from the social and historical sciences), who established 'sections for Women Studies at their faculties' from around 1974. '[From] the late 1970s onward', writes van Wijk, 'women active in the academic field of Women's Studies, or involved in the women's movement, showed increasing interest in the subjects of architecture and urban planning' (2018). At the faculty, the Women's Studies section was created in 1978 and remained active until the late 1990s, during which time it worked to fight against women's oppression in the profession (see relevant history theses by Alkemade (2018) and Andriessen (2021)).

Since then, there are no records of active feminist groups until the TU Delft Feminists emerged on the Campus in the mid-2010s (ceasing activity in the Faculty of Architecture around 2018). In 2015, a fictional *BNieuws #EI* (the magazine of the faculty) ironically welcomed 'Carlota Pérez', the woman to be appointed Dean of the faculty and published a piece on how Eileen Gray had rejected the Pritzker Prize (Het Grijze Ij, 2015). The TU Delft Feminists, whose Facebook group has been active since April 2016, described itself in its Wordpress website as a 'grassroots and horizontal organization for intersectional feminism led by students, PhDs and researchers at the TU Delft'. As part of their activities at the faculty, the group organised a book club, several actions and events, including a response to the all-male panel invited to celebrate Jane Jacobs legacy on 24 May, 2016, and the organisation of the Diversity Talks in 2018. The TU Delft Feminists were also the first group to draw attention (and offer alternatives) to the unequal representation of white men in the historical education within the faculty, most explicitly manifested by the permanent exhibition of portraits in the corridor of the Department of Architecture. This exhibition displayed a posthumous tribute to 80 unidentified deceased architects. The composition of the exhibition revealed the stark epistemic biases at play: 72 were men and only 3 were non-white (Figures 1 and 2). Through time, the antipathy towards the exhibition grew as living proof of normalised inequalities in architectural pedagogies.

Figure 1. The permanent exhibition in the corridor at the Department of Architecture. Photo by María Novas-Ferradás, 2018.

Figure 2. Portraits at the permanent exhibition in the corridor at the Department of Architecture. Photo by María Novas-Ferradás, 2018.

Although not yet commonly archived or documented, students' work for diversity proved to be crucial to boost future events in the faculty (Heinrich & da Porciúncula Paias, 2022). In 2017, students from a variety of student organizations including Catherine Koekoek, Xie Hai, Nihat Mert Ogut, Meryam Ajary and Ijsbrand Heering edited the report Ground For Discussion: Inclusiveness. The report presented the results of interviews, a survey, an event and a letter to the Dean (Koekoek et al. 2017). After some time, i.e., on 16 May, 2018, a workshop and discussion forum took place. The public workshop Building Diversity (Figure 3), organised by Amy Thomas in association with the BauHow5 Alliance, aimed 'for an open and critical discussion about

Figure 3. Building Diversity workshop on 16 May, 2018. Poster by María Novas-Ferradás and Ollie Palmer, 2018.

intersectional approaches to architectural pedagogy, and the ways in which more diverse policies and teaching practices in schools of the built environment could be implemented to improve inclusivity and equality in the architectural profession' (Thomas, 2018). Attended by the student and faculty representatives of the five architecture schools of the BauHow5 Alliance, the workshop was divided into two instructive panels featuring scholars and practitioners from across the globe, such as Lori Brown and keynote speaker Harriet Harris, with the aim of exploring possible avenues for diversification at the structural and cultural level of the architectural academy.

In addition to the main workshop, an autonomous action group from the TU Delft Feminists led by Brigitte O'Regan and Tomi Hilsee organised an independent 'Rebel Workshop: Meeting for Students and PhDs', an informal student-to-student lunch workshop meeting that sought to provide 'a platform to each of the universities to share their stories and experiences on taking action for inclusion' (Rebel Workshop, 2018). More ideas guided the workshop, certifying the words already stated by Audre Lorde in 1984, 'the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house'.

Inspired by the workshops, some of the participants and other student and faculty activists came together to organise a collective action to enact change within the architecture department. Unsurprisingly, the corridor of portraits became the subject of the action and a counter exhibition took place after a long process: 'That Exhibition that Happened in the Corridor: Approaching Architectural Knowledge(s) Otherwise' (@exhibition_in_the_corridor). The counter exhibition, a collective work of many, was crafted in its last phase by María Novas, Alberto Altés Arlandis, Golnar Abbasi, Tomi Hilsee and Meryam Ajari. After a long collaborative research, development and design process, it was exhibited in the corridor at the Department of Architecture between April and June 2019 (Figure 4). It was also briefly displayed in the Study Centre at Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam in July 2019 (Figure 5). In parallel, another action took place in May that year: the mysterious appearance of the Blob chair in the faculty's permanent chair exhibition; a plastic pink inflatable chair in the shape of a penis, to draw attention to the predominantly masculine power of the collection (Figure 6). The Architecture Collection is significant; in 2022 it comprises 392 chairs, of which only 6 of those with attributions (102) are authored or co-authored by women. The

Figure 4. Counter exhibition in the corridor. Photo by María Novas-Ferradás, April 2019.

Collectie
Rijkscollectie voor Nederlandse Architectuur en Stedenbouw

EN

Home | Zoeken in de collectie | Onderzoek | Bewaren | Activiteiten | Nieuws | Architectuur (Achterlo)

Tentoonstelling

That Exhibition that Happened in the Corridor: Approaching Architectural Knowledge(s) Otherwise

That Exhibition that Happened in the Corridor is een experimenteel project van studenten en onderzoekers van de TU Delft, dat alternatieve perspectieven op diversiteit en gelijkheid in architectuuronderwijs en -praktijk onderzoekt door een kritische reflectie op het problematische en ontwarrelkende karakter van geschiedenissen die zich richten op succesvolle, individuele architecten.

1 / 3

That Exhibition that Happened in the Corridor: Approaching Architectural Knowledge(s) Otherwise. Foto Het Nieuwe Instituut.

Wielke verhalen vertellen we, wie vertelt het en hoe? In een wereld van levendige, rijke diversiteit en onrechtvaardigheid worden veel verhalen bijna nooit verteld: vrouwen, niet-binair, queer, trans, zwart, bruin, Aziatisch, Inheemse en alle andere groepen, niet-existente, onderzoeke (naeyche, niet-huwelijke, eenslaggeschiche, niet-genoeldeserie verhalen, verhalen van kennaccesstructie door fiklen, verhalen van collectief werk en geschiedenissen. Deze verhalen zijn gevormd door dominante ideologieën en structuren, die gebaseerd zijn op ras, gender, seksualiteit, klasse, etnisiteit en meer. Deze structuren zijn niet zomaar een abstractie, ze hebben een tastbare invloed op ons dagelijks leven en bepalen wie we zijn en wie we kunnen zijn. Ze bepalen welke verhalen we vertellen en welke niet, en welke stemmen we wel en niet horen. Deze verhalen zijn niet neutraal, ze zijn niet objectief, ze zijn niet vrij van vooroordelen, ze zijn niet zuiver en niet volledig. Ze zijn niet onschuldig. Ze zijn niet onpartijdig. Ze zijn niet objectief. Ze zijn niet neutraal

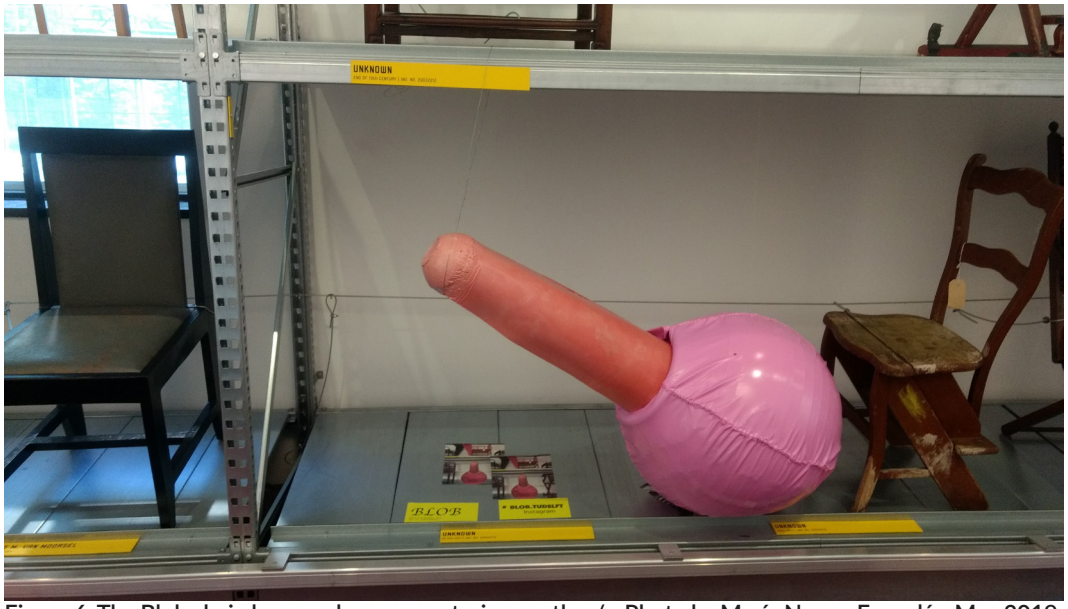


Figure 6. The Blob chair, by an unknown mysterious author/s. Photo by María Novas-Ferradás, May 2019.

a small minority, and no woman has ever directed the department, in contrast to the other departments within the faculty, which have all had at least one female head. The faculty itself has had just one female Dean, Karin Laglas (2011-2014). These numbers show an increase above the university, and national, average. As the Dutch Network of Women Professor's annual Monitor of 2021 showed, over the last twenty years the percentage of women Full Professors in Dutch universities has increased from 6.5% to around 20%, with some institutions like the Open University employing women for over 40% of full professorships. Yet out of the fourteen institutions surveyed, TU Delft was at the bottom, with only 17.9% of women as full professors, with 33.5% as assistant professors, and 22.5% as associate professors (LNVH, 2021; TU Delft , 2022).

In addition to these changes in employment, the faculty has endeavoured to make more cultural changes through the creation of the Diversity Office led by Roberto Rocco from 2021 and the organisation of the Department of Architecture Research Day on Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity, Architecture by Janina Gosseye in April 2022. While these changes indicate a step in the right direction, there is still much work to be done regarding the elimination of excluding cultural values that still define our architectural pedagogies. Which future directions should be taken to change our attitude towards architectural history education? How can we reframe sustainable structural shifts in our knowledge system in the context of the fourth wave?

For this epistemological and methodological challenge, we rely on radical pedagogies in architectural education, as expounded in the work of Daisy Froud and Harriet Harriss (2015). As Harriss notes, 'in ancient Greece a paid-agogus or pedagogue was a leader of the young. But for an aspiring "radical" pedagogue, educating involves more than leading, and learning involves more than being led. A radical peda-

gogy involves stepping away from orthodox practices and revisiting the real —and surreal— fundamentals of what and whom an education is for, and who delivers it' (Harriss, 2015, p.11). Perhaps more importantly, she claims that 'feminist pedagogies emphasize our interconnectedness: the need to share and redistribute and to work for collective good and not just individual goals' (Harris in Lange & Scott, 2017, p.92). And as acknowledged by bell hooks through her book Teaching to Transgress, 'The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy' (1994, p.12).

Following these theories, the two following sections present the results of the epistemological and methodological explorations developing and co-teaching two interconnected courses run between 2019-2021 at the TU Delft: the 'Delft Lectures on Architectural History & Theory' and 'Thesis in Architectural History'. Forming part of the first-year education for students of the Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences, these interconnected courses comprised approximately 450 students with mostly an international background. In the lecture part of the course the students received knowledge, in the seminars, they produced it. The 'Delft Lectures' involved the dissemination of knowledge via eight lectures (given variously by Amy Thomas, Herman van Bergeijk, Carola Hein, and Marie-Therese van Thoor) and four reading seminars. The 'Thesis' course comprised around eight seminars led by different tutors with approximately twenty-two students each, with the purpose of helping students to develop an 8,000-word master's thesis in architectural history. Students were taught by the same tutors, in the same groups, for both the reading seminars and the thesis seminars. This academic year included one thesis seminar explicitly on the topic of architectural history and feminism.

3. WHEN STUDENTS GAIN KNOWLEDGE

Initiating a radical pedagogical shift within a pre-existing academic system is a challenge. Curating a master's level course for 450 students from all over the world, with varying educational backgrounds, is difficult, both conceptually and logistically, not to mention the invisible institutional resistance to an explicitly politicised course. As the main history content of the master's degree, the Delft Lectures in Architectural History and Theory had to balance breadth with depth; the eight lectures and accompanying readings had to offer a general historical 'survey'—already a problematic concept, based on the longstanding tradition of Anglo-European art schools in which an expert delivers the (Western) canon of architecture through a series of lectures—whilst also offering a higher-level argument or critique. Even if this has been challenged through the addition of more global perspectives in recent years, the context of TU Delft as a technical, and technocratic, institution, created another problem: despite the fact that history is positioned as the foundation of a good architectural

education (via canonical 'reference projects' in architectural studios), its courses receive very few hours in the overall master's programme due to the devaluation of history and the humanities in architectural education. In short, the course had to offer a survey but at the same time be critical; it had to be foundational in content, yet minor in terms of hours; and, for us as teachers, it had to be political in its aims so as to change the narrative, but general (read: benign) in appearance.

These contradictions are not meant purely anecdotally. They are just some of the institutional barriers or decelerators to making architectural education and architecture inclusive. Architecture and feminism, race, disability, and sexuality have historically been niche subjects, given space through radical electives and studios led by women, people of colour, differently abled, and LGBTQIA+ individuals. These topics have been taught on the margins by those in the margins. Only recently has this work begun to enter into mainstream teaching, and to permeate the architectural history curriculum, thanks in part to the spread of knowledge through edited volumes, conferences, and other publications.

Traditionally, the privileging of the Western canon, of superficial issues like 'style', and of the development of architectural modernism (a 'universal' technical and formal system), have side-lined these other discourses as electives and alternatives. Likewise, the lack of time given to teaching and studying these courses not only limits the content of survey courses, but it also limits the preparation time (a stranglehold that is all the more problematic with the neoliberalisation of architecture schools and the growing precariousness of academic work). The latter is fundamental to a course that challenges the hegemonic discourse of a Western, patriarchal canon; as teachers we have to 'unlearn', and then re-learn, our discipline through a more inclusive lens. We, too, are products of the system. But this process doesn't happen quickly. It requires us to read, re-read, and reassess old texts, as well as devouring the new.

Titled 'The Architect As…: Histories and Historiographies of Architectural Production' in the academic years 2019-2021, the Delft Lectures in Architectural History course attempted to balance these conflicts through the theme of the identity of the architect, exploring the idea that 'the transforming public identity of architects is not simply the outcome of changes in architectural practice, but also the product of changing thought paradigms in historical enquiry.' As expressed in the course handbook, the course outline, then, embedded (or perhaps concealed?) identity politics within the wider historical discourse of the architectural profession, looking at the way 'broad historical ideas such as progress, technological advancement, political propaganda, futures thinking, and the classification of knowledge (e.g., the distinction between intellectual and manual labour), have informed historical narratives of architectural practice'. In doing so, the aim was to show that the history of architecture was more than the interrelationship of buildings, architects, and their contexts, and instead 'dependent on the way these stories are told and framed, in other words,

on the historiography of architectural production' (Delft Lectures in Architectural History Handbook, 2019).

In this critical survey, 'the way these stories are told and framed' was in fact the focus, not the architect. Through looking at the way that patriarchy, colonialism, racism, and capitalism intersected with key ideas surrounding architectural knowledge, e.g., technology, professional institutions, modernism, and foreign travel, the course aimed to understand the ways that power has operated across class, race, and ethnicity in the architectural sphere historically. As Leslie Lokko writes, 'one of fourth wave feminism's major challenges to previous feminist discourses is its willingness to confront 'difference' in multiple ways' (Lokko, 2016). The aim was to articulate to students how the definition of 'the architect' we have today is largely produced by a Western historiography, in which discrimination and domination were hidden beneath terms like style, progress, heritage, standardisation, universalism, and mobility. Dividing the lectures thematically, the course was structured via the starting point, 'The Architect As…' with each week conceptually unpacking a different presupposed identity: 'Artist', 'Professional', 'Agent of Ideology', 'Dreamer', 'Preservationist', 'Ecologist', and in the second year, the addition of 'Migrant'. Each lecture then broke apart such terms, showing the historical genesis of these ideas, and the ways in which certain forms of knowledge were elevated, and others subjugated.

As teachers, we had some fundamental questions before us: How do continue challenging the canon in a foundational lecture course? Do you re-make (discard) the canon, bringing in less well-known examples, and thereby bringing new reference projects and names into the academy? Or do you break it, by using a critical line of argument to show the flaws in our previously held assumptions about such an elite selection?

In designing this course, 'unlearning' was only made possible through the help of many brilliant scholars and teachers who had done the hard work of both breaking and re-making the canon. Contacting friends and colleagues who kindly shared syllabuses (into which so much time and labour had been poured), and the acquisition of many open access syllabuses was essential to building up background knowledge to be able to retell this story. These included: Torsten Lange and Gabrielle Schad's in-depth series of seminars at ETH Zurich, taught between 2017-2019, 'On Gender', 'Care Work', and 'Body Building'; Huda Tayob and Suzanne Hall's ground-breaking open access syllabus on 'Race, space and architecture' for the London School of Economics and Political Science; the Global Architectural History Teaching Collaborative, an online platform of syllabuses and course content from a global perspective; the Space and Race reading list, produced by a group of architectural historians, art historians, architects, and urbanists in reaction to the August 2017 events in Charlottesville, and revisited in 2020 after the murder of George Floyd; and Carola Hein and Barbara Lane's courses on Modern Architecture at Bryn Mawr College.

Through the help of these syllabuses, it was possible to select readings and develop the lectures in a way that critiqued the dominant narrative, thus asking students to question and reframe the knowledge that most had received in their undergraduate education. For example, by positioning Le Corbusier's *When Cathedrals were White*, with Mabel Wilson's radical racialised critique, the central tenets of modernism were simultaneously explained and problematised. In other instances, central words like 'migration' were reframed through the lens of historical colonialism, with the work of authors like Jiat-Hwee Chang and Anthony D. King.

As well as unlearning, it became clear that collaboration is also essential. One key problem that re-emerged was the paradox of representation. How can one give voice to those that have historically been overlooked without enacting a further act of violence by speaking for them? Consequently, in the second iteration of the course, to enable a greater multiplicity of voices, informal conversations were recorded with experts in the specific topics, including, for example, Rachel Lee (co-editor with Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi of the innovative and brilliantly critical collections of *Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration: On Margins* (2020), *On Diffractions* (2021) and *On Collaborations* (2021)), and Adriene Brown on her text 'Erecting the Skyscraper, Erasing Race'. As an African-American scholar telling the story of American modernism from the 'other' side, Brown's situated perspective gave a new and important level of insight. We asked the students to bring their voices into the conversation, too, through the assignment of a group reflective writing task, asking them to reflect critically on the lectures and texts through their own situated perspective. This task, though challenging for the students at first, proved to be one of the most positively remarked upon aspects of the course in the student questionnaires, second only to the diversity and criticality of the content.

While it was, at times, extremely challenging to rethink and restructure a course of this scale, it was a tremendous learning experience. Curating a course that would be inclusive demanded self-reflection, the reassessment of the values that were instilled in our own education as architectural historians, and research into new and alternative ways of seeing. It seems that here the old adage that 'the true teacher is the learner' was indeed accurate.

4. WHEN STUDENTS PRODUCE KNOWLEDGE

In parallel to the Delft Lectures, the History Thesis course offers diverse seminars on different approaches in connection with the interests of each of the teachers. In the academic year 2020-21, the seminar led by María Novas Ferradás concerned the topic of architectural history and feminism. In these courses, students can choose their tutor and seminar after reading a short description of the aims of the seminar. With certain fear of leaping into the unknown, the group was finally described as follows:

> History of architecture and urban planning, with a focus on social and political history, gender theory, and cultural studies. Social values in architecture and urban design, especially those developed in connection with the feminist movement over the centuries. Unveiling the hidden history of women's (devalued/appropriated) work in the architectural world.

The group was fully subscribed, with a vast majority of female students (21/1). Then the work began. One of the major challenges when working with students during the first weeks (in the phase when they should define their topic of interest) was to empower them to become agents of social change; to recognise their ideas and themes as valid for writing a scientific document on architectural history. Unexpectedly, one of the biggest challenges was to understand how epistemic authority has been historically built and continues to influence valued and undervalued architectural research through history. Some students automatically assumed some topics would be 'better' or 'more scientific' than others to get a better grade. Based on the ideas of feminist philosopher Norma Blázquez Graf (2012), we identify some of the issues that were present in class:

1. Women's knowledge is considered subjective and confronted with the doctrine of objectivity, which is not less than what feminist thinker Remedios Zafra (in accordance with Adrienne Rich) establishes as the term that many men have given to their own subjectivity (Zafra, 2017, p.78). Currently, excluded, depreciated, minimised, subordinated, or invisibilised '(her)stories' (as opposed to the dominant 'his-stories') continue to inhabit the margins, and 'the work of recuperating these histories is ongoing and has yet to radically alter what and how history is taught' (Merrett in Lange & Scott, 2017, p.90)
2. Theories produced from women's experiences are presented as inferior or deviating from the norm (the androcentric paradigm, see Novas Ferradás, 2021)
3. Theories are produced from social phenomena which omit inequality in power relations and how they affect women's and historically oppressed groups' lives
4. Scientific knowledge is produced, reproduced, and legitimated from the top of the pyramid of power, reinforcing itself and contributing to consolidating inequality

Thus, even for somebody in a position of influence and academic authority, the fact of promoting feminist pedagogies could be a question of risk, as Harriet Harris explains:

> For a mistress pedagogue in a position of influence, explicitly promoting feminist pedagogies can often be discredited as 'subjective', 'personal' and 'politicizing' (i.e., actions

> considered 'un-academic '), fueling the fear that such 'activism' will worsen already poor chances of promotion and increase isolation. Yet feminist pedagogy emphasizes collective over individual action, to protect rather than expose its own. It demands that the false dichotomies that divide us are deconstructed – from student v tutor to end-user v architect – disrupting the debilitating and exhausted power relations that have served to perpetuate partitions based on gender identity, ethnicity, class, age, ability and sexuality (Harris in Lange & Scott, 2017: 92).

Feminist theory and literature produced by feminist academics in the English language helped to question these biases – mostly historical ones produced during the second and third wave of feminism. As Donna Haraway claimed in 1988, 'feminists don't need a doctrine of objectivity that promises transcendence, a theory that loses track of its mediations just where someone might be held responsible for something, and unlimited instrumental power. We don't want a theory of innocent powers to represent the world' (1988: 579).

The results of the seminar were analysed for the first time in the *I Spanish Congress Women and Architecture*, *Towards an Egalitarian Profession* (Unizar, October 2021). There, this experience in the Netherlands was examined together with the one developed by Lidewij Tummers in Germany (Novas Ferradás & Tummers, 2021). From these two complementary perspectives, this collaborative work acknowledged that gender biases were always present in education – explicitly or implicitly – which was confirmed not only through the selection of themes and contents but on the methodology employed; the research methods followed to gain and produce knowledge. In particular, at TU Delft, the experience had contributed:

> ...to document and disseminate the hidden history of women's work in the world of architecture (traditionally devalued and/or appropriated); not only figures made invisible or underestimated over time, but also artefacts (buildings, books, documents ...) that can constitute interesting case studies. During the process, the understanding of the barriers that future architects will still have to face in their professional careers – and that precisely have historical roots – is promoted, while their topics of interest are validated with a scientific basis, providing confidence and safety (Novas Ferradás & Tummers, 2021, translated from Spanish by the authors).

Also, once the ideas were set, in order to write a master's thesis with scientific character, students faced extra challenges. How could we document historical silences? During the research and writing period, the development of the course required some innovation in relation to classical research methods. Archival information was insufficient, if not non-existent. When setting references, we had to mostly look into literature produced by women or feminist scholars since they were the ones who have

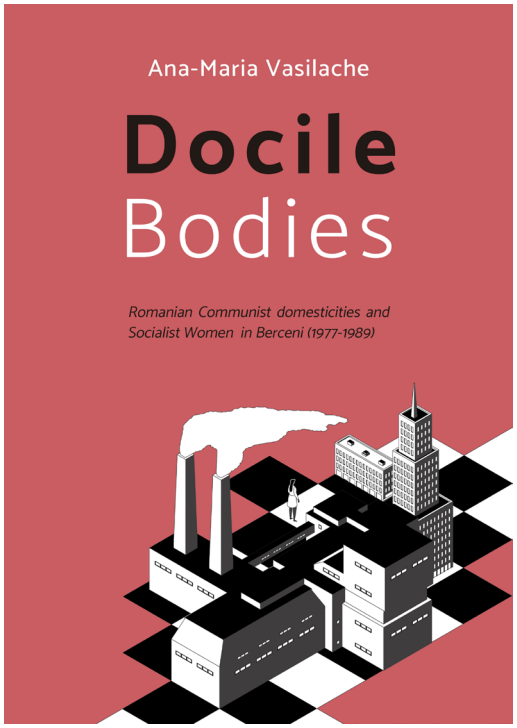


Figure 7. 'Docile Bodies: Romanian communist domesticities and socialist women in Berceni (1977-1989)', History Thesis by Ana Maria Vasilache, TU Delft, 2021.

mostly documented the work of other women in the field. Also, serendipitous interviews played a key role. Oral history was especially important in the form of semi-structured interviews with family members or researchers who knew the subject of study to document things that everyone knew but had never been put down on paper. Furthermore, other qualitative research methods, such as participant observation and image analysis, in the case of an object, artifact, or work of architecture, contributed to bringing the feminist analysis to life.

Despite the difficulties, some excellent and completely innovative master's theses based on primary sources emerged from this process – some already published (see Jackowska & Novas Ferradás, 2022). For example, student Ana Maria Vasilache wrote about 'Docile Bodies: Romanian communist domesticities and socialist women in Berceni (1977-1989)' through the analysis of the housing architecture and domestic standards of the neighbourhood of Bercini in Bucharest, Romania, built before the fall of the Berlin wall (Figure 7). Quirine van Thiel wrote historical research on *De Menselijke Maat* (1980-2005), a Dutch booklet for architectural students prepared by a professor at TU Delft that had two editions, one in 1980 and one in 2005. In this case, it was very interesting to see the similarities and differences in the representation of gender roles in both editions. Besides, in the process the author found that the person who had made its illustrations, and whose name was abbreviated to a simple initial, was a female engineer, Danielle Leever-van der Burgh (Figure 8). Student Oliwia Jackowska wrote on 'Women's Everyday Lives in the City: A groundbreaker exhibition on gender and urban planning in Vienna (1991)' (Figure 9). This exceptional work documents for the first time the exhibition that gave rise to the influential Women's Office led by Eva Kail in the Urban Planning Department of the City of Vienna in the early 1990s, that would develop dozens of social housing projects for more than twenty years. Finally, Lucie Castillo Ros wrote the master's thesis 'Memoires de cuisines: The kitchens of the French Reconstruction Era (1945-1970)', for which she interviewed her grandmother, and found, during the process, not only the history of her family but what most of the kitchens of the French work-

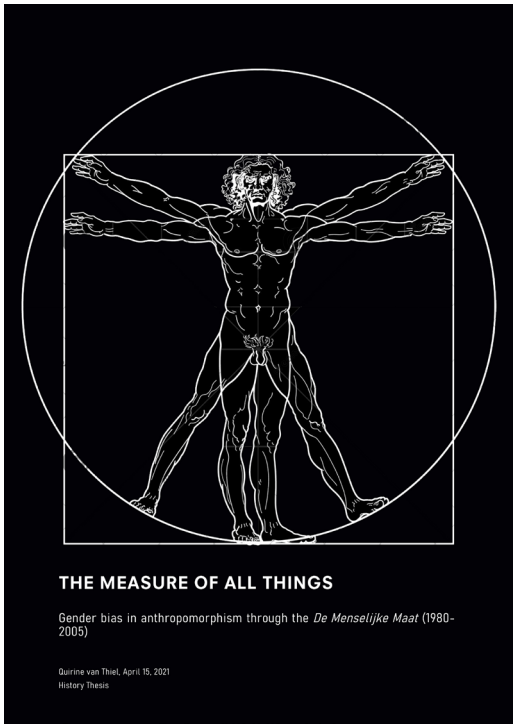


Figure 8. , 'The Measure of All Things: Gender bias in anthropomorphism through De Menselijke Maat (1980-2005)', History Thesis by Quirine van Thiel, TU Delft, 2021.

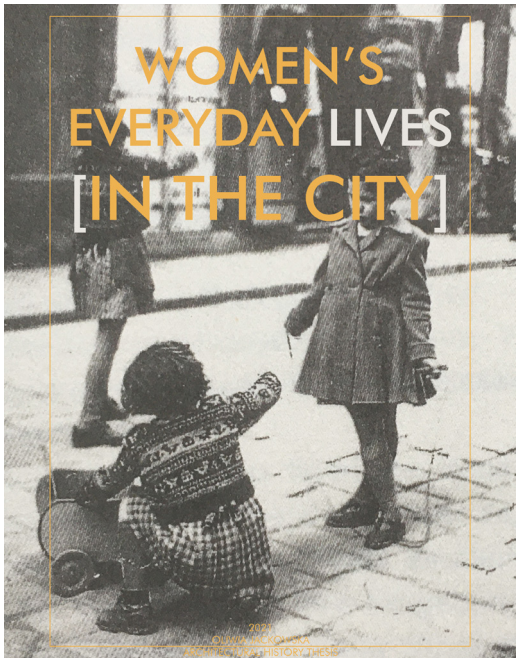
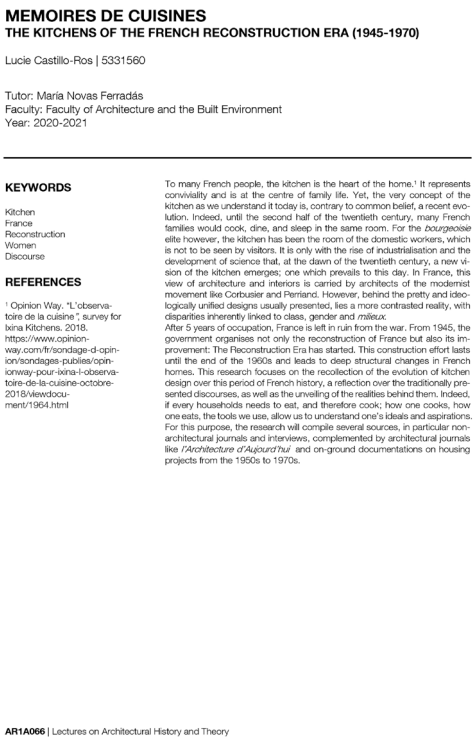


Figure 9. Oliwia Jackowska, 'Women's Everyday Lives in the City: A groundbreaker exhibition on gender and urban planning in Vienna (1991)', History Thesis, TU Delft, 2021.

ing class were like – which often had little to do with the bourgeois stereotypes and the precepts of modernity that the magazines illustrated (Figure 10).

Some of the final remarks, co-developed with Lidewij Tummers in the paper on feminist didactics for the *I Spanish Congress Women and Architecture: Towards an Egalitarian Profession* are still valid to refer to some reflections. Through this seminar the personal became visible. Students gained awareness of existing inequalities in the profession (salary discrimination, double standards in assigning tasks, the historical devaluation of the feminine workforce and its consequences in recognition and wage procedures, etc.). This awareness also helped students break with stereotypes and not only read and handle male references and role-models, while developing a sense of social and spatial justice. The challenges faced through the research process and questioning of first-hand available sources also contributed to fostering an inclusive classroom culture based on listening, talking, and sharing research experiences. And perhaps more importantly, the seminar contributed to the academic validation of (situated) knowledge; their ideas were considered relevant, human, and universal.



MEMOIRES DE CUISINES
THE KITCHENS OF THE FRENCH RECONSTRUCTION ERA (1945-1970)

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Tutor: María Novas Ferradás
Faculty: Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment
Year: 2020-2021

KEYWORDS

Kitchen
France
Reconstruction
Women
Discourse

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To many French people, the kitchen is the heart of the home.[1] It represents conviviality and is at the centre of family life. Yet, the very concept of the kitchen as we understand it today is, contrary to common belief, a recent evolution. Indeed, until the second half of the twentieth century, many French families would cook, dine, and sleep in the same room. For the *bourgeoisie* elite however, the kitchen has been the room of the domestic workers, which is not to be seen by visitors. It is only with the rise of industrialisation and the development of science that, at the dawn of the twentieth century, a new vision of the kitchen emerges; one which prevails to this day. In France, this view of architecture and interiors is carried by architects of the modernist movement like Corbusier and Perriand. However, behind the pretty and ideologically unified designs usually presented, lies a more contrasted reality, with disparities inherently linked to class, gender and *milieux*.
After 5 years of occupation, France is left in ruin from the war. From 1945, the government organises not only the reconstruction of France but also its improvement: The Reconstruction Era has started. This construction effort lasts until the end of the 1960s and leads to deep structural changes in French homes. This research focuses on the recollection of the evolution of kitchen design over this period of French history, a reflection over the traditionally presented discourses, as well as the unveiling of the realities behind them. Indeed, if every households needs to eat, and therefore cook; how one cooks, how one eats, the tools we use, allow us to understand one's ideals and aspirations. For this purpose, the research will compile several sources, in particular non-architectural journals and interviews, complemented by architectural journals like *l'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* and on-ground documentations on housing projects from the 1950s to 1970s.

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Figure 10. 'Memoires de cuisines: The kitchens of the French Reconstruction Era (1945-1970)', History Thesis by Lucie Castillo Ros, TU Delft, 2021.

5. FINAL REMARKS

It is never easy to evaluate how 'successful' a large course like this has been. From the students' perspective, we have only the results of the student questionnaire (answered by around 25% of the attendees) to base our conclusions on, and though these were largely very positive they too can be problematic in terms of gender bias and the influence of external factors. Yet it was clear that the overall student satisfaction was high, with a notable number of comments about the challenging, critical content that was more diverse than in their bachelor's education. Feedback from tutors teaching at the seminar/thesis part of the course were equally positive about the new content, with a notable increase in the number of tutors offering thesis courses on topics like gender in the second year than the first. From our perspective, there is certainly still much work to be done. The addition of more diverse geographical contexts and diverse lived experiences of women in the Global South, the introduction of critical race theory, and disability theory are a necessity if the course is to become truly inclusive and diverse in its content. Despite two years of work and research, we still have large knowledge gaps that only serve to reinforce the central biases at the core of an architectural history education.

While organising and teaching these interlinked courses was a hugely enriching and informative process, it was also challenging, both professionally and personally. For one, it induced fear and vulnerability about possible hostile reactions. Yet, as stated by bell hooks 'If we fear mistakes, doing things wrongly, constantly evaluating ourselves, we will never make the academy a culturally diverse place' (1994: 33). Such work thus requires acknowledgment of the difficulties, as well as the methodological and epistemological evolution in the process. This was not easy to do, and indeed, it did not happen accidentally. It also needs awareness and support. In this case, the students' claims as well as the support of the full professor who oversaw the course at higher academic levels were key in the process, not to mention the

Figure 11. From left to right, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, João Filgueiras Lima, and Huig Maaskant portraits in the permanent exhibition in the corridor of the Department of Architecture in 2018. Photo by María Novas-Ferradás, 2018.

Figure 12. Feminist architect Jane Drew portrait, with Enric Miralles (left) and Charlotte Perriand (right), in the permanent exhibition in the corridor of the Department of Architecture in 2019. Photo by María Novas-Ferradás, May 2022.

progressive rise of awareness at the wider department level (Figures 11 and 12). More importantly, the design and teaching of such a course needs trust and generosity to validate the epistemic authority of those that have been historically in the margins and that never had the opportunity to become part of the academic world.

On the other hand, this learning experience is far from finished. Curriculums and academic disciplines exist by virtue of selection. To define what architectural history is about, it is necessary to define what it is not. This poses uncertainty when taking the risks and responsibilities of making decisions; it requires 'staying with the trouble' (Haraway 2016). These 'new conditions of uncertainty' that the resurgence of feminist thinking in this fourth wave is raising, prevent us from setting up conclusions that traditional academia would require. History will have the last word. As stated by Nancy Fraser:

> But even given this lack of agreement, despite the uncertainty and abnormality, the struggle against injustice will go on, and indeed must go on; we cannot sit back and wait for a new grammar to resolve these problems. My idea is that we have to be able to do both things at once; we should be capable of keeping up the struggle against injustice through the specific ways we choose to deal with these new conditions of uncertainty. (Fraser in Palacio Avendaño, 2009)

In this always unfinished process, we might evolve a new language where feminist epistemology, new methodologies, and situated knowledge are taken into account.

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