



NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

To honor 30 Years of the IAWA, in 2015, the IAWA Center designed, organized, and hosted The 18th Congress of the International Union of Femmes Architectes (UIFA) Congress at which many of you were present. – This special issue of the IAWA Center News offers a timeline to expand the IAWA Center mission presenting milestone excerpts as a glimpse into this fantastic journey. This issue, provided now in 2022, would have preceded the congress as the IAWA Center News, 2013/2014, No. 25/26.

Donna Dunay, FAIA, Chair, IAWA

MILKA BLIZNAKOV LEADS EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH ARCHIVE

*MILKA BLIZNAKOV, PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE, VIRGINIA TECH'S COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN STUDIES POINTED TO TWO OCCURRENCES THAT LED TO HER EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH THE INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVE OF WOMEN IN ARCHITECTURE.*

Bliznakov first became aware of a sparsity of information about women architects several years ago...

...when students asked her why they never heard the name of a woman architect, never saw a woman exhibiting her designs, and never heard a woman architect presenting a guest lecture, "I went to the library and found out that there is very little about women architects in the library." About the same time, an architect acquaintance who had practiced in Bulgaria and Germany for more than half a century died. "Her family saw no value in the sketches, in the drawings, specifications, business correspondence, everything she had created during almost 60 years of architectural practice, and threw it all away.

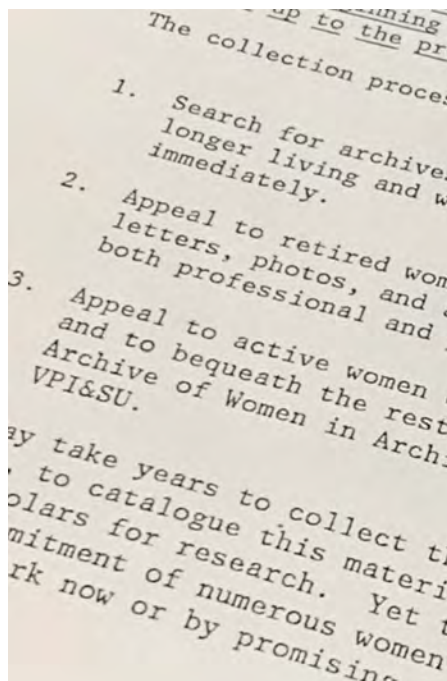
1985

1989

PROFESSOR MILKA BLIZNAKOV ORIGINAL LETTER INITIATING THE ARCHIVE



© Photograph of Milka Bliznakov, copyright The Roanoke Times, republished with permission



Photograph of Milka Bliznakov's original letter initiating IAWA

Because of her own work as an architect, an architectural educator, and an architectural researcher, Milka knew that women had made significant contributions...; yet these contributions remained unrecorded. The only source of information on these designs...was the architects' own records, and she realized that if these disappear, women's contributions will continue to pass unnoticed.

It may take years to collect the works of women architects around the world...to begin such an undertaking we need the commitment of numerous women architects "

*"AS A RESEARCHER, I FOUND I HAD TO CORRECT THE OMISSION OF WOMEN FROM ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY."*



## HAN SCHRODER DONATES TO IAWA

Noted Dutch-born architect Han Schröder, who grew up in the famous Reitveld-Schröder House on the outskirts of Utrecht and worked in Reitveld's office before establishing her own practice, has donated her archival materials to IAWA.



Han Schröder

1989

1990

87

## ALBERTA PFEIFFER



Alberta Pfeiffer in 1954

On her first day at Tallmudge & Watson in September 1923, Alberta Pfeiffer was sent to measure the basement of Chicago's St. James Church on the near north side. She recalls that the basement was a "dusty, coal-furnace heated, dark place," and that surely she was sent as a test of her fitness to do any kind of work in the firm. She notes that she "succeeded, with no lunch, to come back to the office with a sooty face, and hands, and a suit that had to be cleaned."

## MARY ROCKWELL HOOK

When Mary Rockwell Hook completed her final examinations in 1906 at the Atelier Auburtin, a studio of L'Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, French male students hurled buckets of water at her as she fled through the courtyard of the famous school.

But when she reached her 100th birthday in 1977, she faced a different reception. Residents of Kansas City celebrated with a tour of the famous and the magnificent homes she designed there, and the American Institute of Architects, which she had not been allowed to join because of her sex, presented her with a plaque for distinguished service.



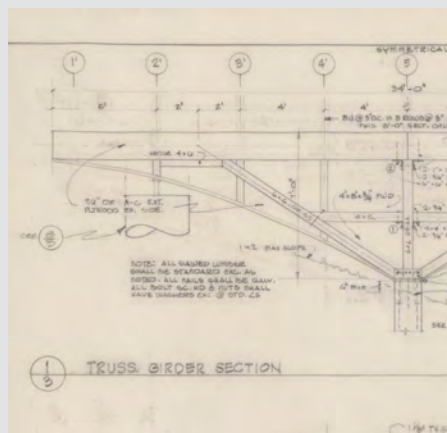
One of Hook's Pine Mountain Settlement School buildings

1991

1991

## ACQUISITION: ZELMA WILSON

Zelma Wilson, who was born in New York in 1918 and moved to Ventura County, Calif., when she was two years old, wanted to be an architect from the time she was 11. "However, those days, for a female to say she wanted to be an architect was like saying, 'I want to walk on the moon,'" Wilson said.



Meditation Groups, INC., Ojai, California

## HILDE WESTROM

Born in Neisse, Upper Silesia in 1912, Hilde Weström was among the few women enrolled in architectural studies at the Berlin-Charlottenburg Polytechnic in 1932. By 1957, she had joined the Berlin "Interbau," developing dwelling-types for the state financed housing program. "Women usually designed from the inside outwards, as they are more concerned with the elaboration of spatial sequences which give the user a feeling of freedom and well-being."

"I leave it to you to decide how to categorize my manifold contributions," Hilde Weström wrote when she donated her materials to the IAWA.



"Interleau" exhibition "The Town of Tomorrow", Berlin, 1957

1992

1993

## WENA DOWNS



Remodeled house by Wena Downs

Wena Downs was born in the California Central Valley on April 1, 1928. She decided to go to the University of California at Berkeley (UCB) because that is where all her family went. She took Architecture 1, and, in Wena's words, "This is work? This is FUN!"



## IN THE NICK OF TIME: THE LEGACY OF MARTHA CRAWFORD

Martha Crawford died this year without leaving her personal archive to the IAWA in a written will. Crawford had carefully assembled two scrapbooks, which she sent to the IAWA earlier this year, and up until her death she continued to organize the remainder of her papers, paintings, and drawings with the intention of sending them from Waukesha, Wisc., to Blacksburg, Va. Had it not been for a brief letter to Milka Bliznakov from a longtime friend of Crawford in Waukesha, we would not have known of her death, nor would we have known that her personal records -- the evidence of her long and enviable career as an interior designer and decorator -- were ready for the trash collection.



Crawford receives an honorable mention in the 2nd Annual Hexter Competition for Heironimus of Roanoke, Va

## A LIFE DEDICATED TO THE SPIRITUAL IN ARCHITECTURE

Helene Buchwieser was born in Vienna on November 26, 1912. Helene's father, Bruno Buchwieser, was a contractor and architect. Since early childhood, she visited his office and marveled over his drawings. The young girl began spending her summer vacations at the construction site. "By the age of sixteen, I was sure that I would love to become a mason or even a builder. My father agreed with me, but made me promise that I would never wear trousers."

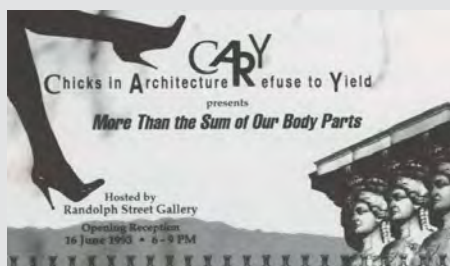


Row houses, Hinterbruehl, 1960's

1994

1994

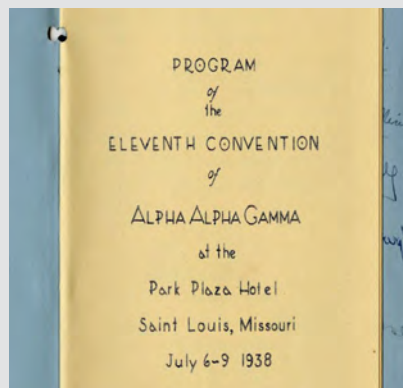
## MORE THAN THE SUM OF OUR BODY PARTS



CARY, or Chicks in Architecture Refuse to Yield to Atavistic Thinking in Design and Society, is a group originally formed as "a Chicago-based collective of women and men whose goals are to focus attention on the status-quo of women and the position of women in the field of architecture." From June 16 to July 2, 1993, an exhibit called "More than the Sum of Our Body Parts" produced by the group was shown at the Randolph Street Gallery in Chicago. The intent of the exhibit was to provocatively illustrate the many subtle ways that women architects are discriminated against in the workplace by their male colleagues.

1995

## A HISTORY PRESERVED



In 1915, four young women in the School of Architecture at Washington University, St. Louis, organized "La Confrerie Alongiv" (Vignola backwards) in order to encourage each other and initiate contact with women architecture students. The organization, Alpha Alpha Gamma, from the first letters in the Greek phrase meaning "advancement of architecture among women." May Steinmesch insisted on preserving the Association's records; thus [the IAWA was] able to reconstruct its first years.

1996

1995

120

## A DECADE OF COMMITMENT: THE IAWA BOARD MEMBERS ASSESS THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

The International Archive of Women in Architecture celebrates ten years of collaboration, support, and generous donations by its friends and members. Love for knowledge, curiosity for yet uncharted grounds, need for diverse professional models, contemporary tendencies for inclusion and wider horizons, have been motivating forces sustaining IAWA's growth.

It's time to look back and trace the path of women into the design professions. A preliminary survey indicates a shift from conformity to the design principles imposed by the dominant culture to new explorations in search of pluralistic paradigms. Of course, at the end of this millenium Western cultures have arrived again at a point of re-assessment, verification of existing values, and preparation for change. Our pluralistic society asserts the recognition of diverse needs and values and demands a multitude of design responses.



## THE WORK OF LOIS GOTTLIEB, ARCHITECT

During a visit to the Virginia Tech College of Architecture and Urban Studies in the spring term, Lois Gottlieb made a generous donation of a life of work to the IAWA.

In a presentation to the students and faculty, she displayed great enthusiasm, saying "I am an explorer by nature. I perpetually look for better, more practical, and yet aesthetically pleasing ways of doing things."



Portrait of Lois Gottlieb

1997  
1998

## PRESERVING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL PAPERS



The important factor in determining the longevity of your materials is the environment. Paper lasts longest in a cool and dry environment, so strive for a section of your home or office that maintains a constant temperature and humidity level. Direct sunlight and strong fluorescent lighting can fade and embrittle materials.

## UNCOVERING HIDDEN ARCHIVES

Soliciting work of women for the IAWA requires intuition, patience, and persistence. Some letters are never answered. Occasionally, you have to be lucky that some circumstances such as marriage or an out-of-town job and a subsequent move will cause a potential donor to send her holdings to the Archive. For some architects, it can be very difficult to let go of their work.



Berta Rahm, Barn, Nägelliseehof Farm, Hallau, 1951

1999  
2000

## FIRST IAWA RESEARCH PRIZE IN HONOR OF MILKA BLIZNAKOV AWARDED TO CLAIRE BONNEY, PH.D.

The First International Archive of Women in Architecture Research Prize in honor of Milka Bliznakov has been awarded to Claire Bonney, Ph.D., of Basel, Switzerland, for her original research on architect Adrienne Gorska (1899- 1969).

The prize, named in honor of Dr. Milka Bliznakov, founder of the IAWA and Professor of Architecture at VPI (Virginia Tech), was established in 1998 by the Board of Advisors of the IAWA with a cash award of \$1,000.00. The intent of the prize is to use IAWA files as the basis for additional research, or to further enrich the collection through original research in the area of design. Dr. Bonney's research on Gorska will become a part of the permanent collection of the IAWA once her project is complete.

## UNION OF MONGOLIAN ARCHITECTS

Architect Sigrid Rupp, who donated her complete archive to the IAWA, recently returned from a trip to Mongolia where she collected work by D. Tsevelmaa and O. Sarantsatsral, winners of the 1999 Laureate Prize of the Union of Mongolian Architects.



D Tsevelmaa, Mongolian National Wrestling Palace, 1992-98

2001  
2002

## FOCUS: SOUTH ASIA



In February 2000, Brinda Somaya organized a conference and exhibit titled "Women in Architecture: Focus South Asia," to celebrate, in Ms. Somaya's words, "the built work of architects in South Asia who happen to be women." The exhibit boards and catalog of the exhibit, "An Emancipated Place," were donated to the IAWA by Ms. Somaya.

In response to this exhibit, Preeti Goel Sanghi of the Indian Express Mumbai wrote:

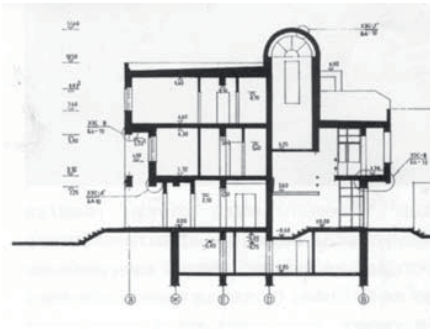
"The architectural institution has over the years been dominated (or plagued) by a Howard Roarkian idea of a Creator. Ayn Rand's hero of The Fountainhead was the individual



## LAUREATE PRIZES



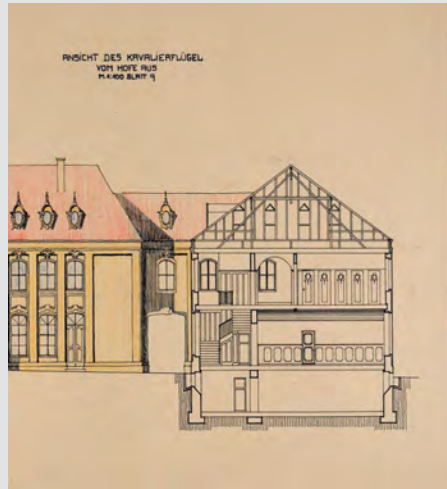
O Sarantsatsral, Margad Shopping Center, section, Ulan Bataar, 1990s



Section, Margad Shopping Center, located on one of the major intersections of Ulan Bataar

## LILIA SOFER SKALA

Lilia Sofer Skala, the first female Architect in Austria, fled the Nazis in 1939 with personal belongings including her student portfolio from graduate studies at the University of Dresden...containing 65 original watercolor, charcoal, and ink drawings, sketches, and plans. We are grateful to Lilia Skala's sons Peter and Martin for this generous donation.



Section/elevation from Lilia Sofer Skala's student portfolio

2003

2004

## GAE AULENTI

In 2003 the College of Architecture & Urban Studies Summer Travel Abroad Program included a visit to the studio of architect Gae Aulenti in Milan, Italy. There were two parting comments to the students as the visit ended. "It is better to die for surprise, than to waste yourself on waiting," Aulenti said, and noted that the adage was better told in Italian.



Gae Aulenti

2005

2006

## A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN WITH T-SQUARES

man, isolated from the world whose creative genius was always at odds with current social structure. The role assigned to women, both in the book as well as in reality, was either in the kitchen or as the adoring supporter of the male genius.... Today the works of these women represent a way in which women have managed to make an impact in a male-dominated world."

In 1948, the AIA boasted over 1,000 registered women architects and devoted two issues to exemplifying their work in every section of the country, yet not one was recognized for her work in the South Atlantic Region...until a concentrated effort enabled by the one-time funding from a Virginia Tech ASPIRES grant added 182 additional women from the post-Civil War period to the present.

## THE USEFULNESS OF THE IAWA



Conceptual Design Drawing by Gae Aulenti

The Archive is to learn about other architects - women architects in particular. I just read in the IAWA Newsletter about the students meeting with the Italian architect Gae Aulenti...[who] re-designed the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco. I called the museum's administration and could find no one interested in my request to obtain these drawings. It took months, but I finally succeeded. I mention this event because it is not easy to obtain drawings. Architects are particularly attached to their work and one must think of various ways to get them. *Lois Gottlieb*



Anupama Kundoo, Fire Stabilised Mud House "(Gunvanthi Balam, The Times of India - Mumbai, March 9, 2000)"



Amaza Lee Meredith, Azurest South, Petersburg, Va



### AN INTERVIEW WITH NOBUKO NAKAHARA AND HATSUE YAMADA

**N**akahara: Contrary to our expectation, women quit their job so easily. The women, who I want to continue working longer, tend to give up working, they wouldn't grow up as experts in this field. They decide to quit their job not only for their own sake, but also for their family, or because of social environment. It must be difficult for them to continue working unless they have [a] strong will.

Yamada: The number of women who keep on working is relatively small, [compared] with the number of women who graduated from the architectural course in university. It is concerned with whether they have a strong will to continue...it has become more difficult to keep on working than before. The problem is that the child-rearing support system of the society has not matured enough yet. Today, it is not an age when only women must bring up their children alone. Regardless of man or woman, both should cooperate with each other in different fields, which is especially important.

### NATALIE DE BLOIS PAPERS COME TO THE IAWA

**I**t is only recently that [Natalie de Blois] is gaining the attention she deserves. Her story, like that of many women architects, is one that reflects the reality of practice in 20th-century America—it is that of a professional with immense talent who contributed so much. Yet, even with the publicity her work indirectly received in the 1950s related to Skidmore, Owings & Merrill projects, her name and career deserve much more.



Mario Salvadori, Natalie de Blois, and Philip Johnson in 1948

### THE ELEANORE K. PETTERSON COLLECTION

**P**ettersen's collection encompasses 50 years of project files, sketches, drawings, blueprints, models, and photographs representing approximately 600 designs. Currently, processing on the Pettersen collection is 75 percent complete and the collection is well on its way to being processed by year's end.



Eleanore K. Pettersen Residence and Studio



The home of former president Richard M. Nixon, Englewood, N.J.

2007

2008

2008

2009

2010

355

### COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF NOBUKO NAKAHARA



Junko Matsukawa-Tsuchida presenting the work of Nobuko Nakahara at the 2008 IAWA Center Annual Meeting

**N**obuko Nakahara, first president of UIFA JAPON and vice president of UIFA, died on July 5, 2008, at the age of 79.

To commemorate the life of Nobuko Nakahara, copies of exhibition boards by her were displayed at the IAWA Center Annual Meeting at the Virginia Tech College of Architecture and Urban Studies.



Nakahara's house for a single working woman related to the design of a garden for the tea ceremony

### PROCESSING THE WORKS OF SIGRID LORENZEN RUPP, ARCHITECT

**A**fter a European tour and several years of practical training, [Sigrid Rupp] struck out on her own in 1976 with a small nest egg, a mortgage, no clients, and no safety net. 10 years later, the nest egg remained untapped and her firm, SLR/Architects, had grown to 10 employees. Rupp states: "I was never very good in school...I was the maverick, only I wasn't brilliant. Lack of brilliance is forgiven in men, not in women. I set out to prove that a mediocre woman could get (and should get) as far as a mediocre man."



Apple testing facility, Sigrid Rupp



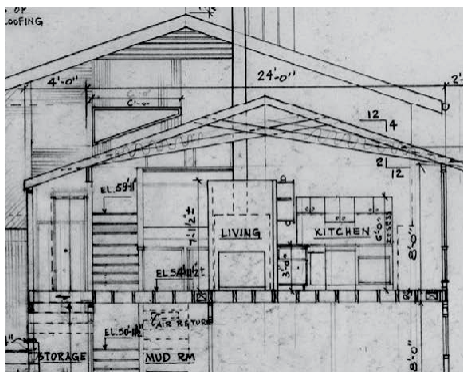
## PROFESSOR DR. MILKA TCHERNEVA BLIZNAKOV

**D**r. Milka Tcherneva Bliznakov, Professor Emerita of Architecture at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Founder of the International Archive of Women in Architecture, passed away from natural causes on Thursday, November 3, 2010, at age 83. She was born in Varna, Bulgaria, on September 20, 1927.

A distinguished architect, scholar, and educator, Dr. Bliznakov joined the faculty of architecture at VPI & SU in 1974 to teach architecture, urban design, and architecture

history until her retirement in 1998. Prior to teaching at Virginia Tech, Professor Bliznakov taught at the University of Texas from 1972 to 1974. With her trailblazer attitude, she was the co-founder of the Institute of Modern Russian Culture in 1972. In 1985, she founded the International Archive of Women in Architecture (IAWA) at Virginia Tech that has grown through her enthusiasm to secure for history a collection of over 350 archives of the pioneering generation of women in architecture - a true legacy.

We recently held the IAWA Center Annual Meeting at Virginia Tech on Saturday, October 30, 2010. Milka was, as we all remember her, an active presence at the meeting, unwavering in her support for the goal of the IAWA Center. We will cherish her enthusiasm for the legacy she established. Family, colleagues, and friends will dearly miss her.



Tall Oaks Residence, Blacksburg, VA. 197

2010, 2011

2012



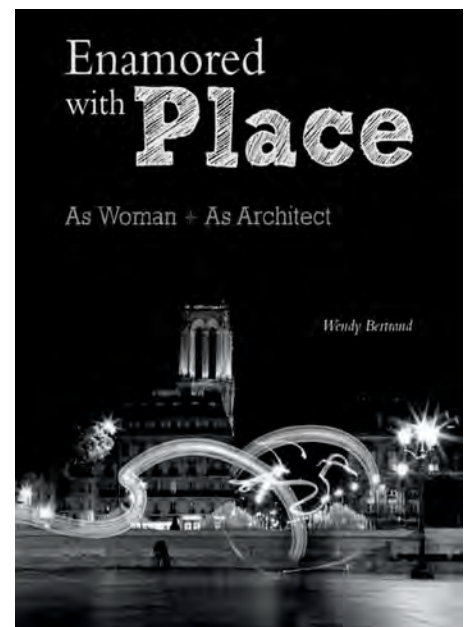
Scheme from the "AMHERST ALIVE" revitalization project. The theme was chosen by Virginia Tech Urban Design graduate students, led by Professor Bliznakov.

## WENDY BERTRAND: ENAMORED WITH PLACE: AS WOMAN + AS ARCHITECT

**W**endy Bertrand discovered the importance of female networks through OWA [Organization of Women Architects], which became a cohort for the women, employing feminist attitudes that fed into her design and management philosophy. This group-centered non-hierarchical approach to management was based on group consensus and open participation, allowing flexible work schedules that adjusted to family and personal needs. Yet Bertrand remained frustrated by constant discriminatory practices that prevented good design and good works, observing that the tremendous waste of talent created by direct and indirect discrimination zapped emotional energy from women trying to do their best work within a climate of negativity. While we may think these days are gone, on March 22, 2012, Denise Scott Brown warned "being a student for a woman is about the best it gets ... young women today, don't cast out your feminist awareness: when the glass ceiling hits you, you will think it is your fault, unless you know a bit about feminism, and it will destroy you."



Wendy Bertrand standing with one of her hand-spun, hand woven rugs at her weaving studio



Cover photo by Chanette Manso, Paris, 2011



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Beverly Willis, presentation drawing, Bay Club, Yerba Buena Gardens development project, San Francisco, California, 1980-1981 (Ms1992-019)



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