

Session at SAH 2025 (Atlanta, 30 Apr-4 May 25)

Atlanta, Georgia, Apr 30–May 4, 2025

Deadline: Jun 5, 2024

Frida Grahn

Female Agency in Practice: Strategies, Tactics and Maneuvers.

Session Chairs: Cathelijne Nuijsink, ETH Zurich; Frida Grahn, USI Lugano/Mendrisio.

In recent decades, scholars have started to reveal the influence of female professionals in shaping the built environment. Charlotte Perriand's modernist visions, Aino Aalto's timeless designs, and Denise Scott Brown's interdisciplinary analytical methods uncover the pivotal role that women have played in interior design, architecture, and urban planning, nuancing our perception of the male-dominated canon. This scholarship has highlighted the long-standing neglect of women's contributions to the built environment and appropriately attributes authorship to these females. However, knowledge regarding the specific tactics these women employed in their daily negotiations – vis-à-vis their boss, partner, client, co-workers, or society at large – remains limited.

This session explores the strategies used by women to establish themselves in professional roles and achieve agency in shaping the built environment. Authors should analyze a concept, a project, or a historical event from the perspective of a female designer, focusing on her ability to overcome patriarchal structures, media bias, and chauvinistic attitudes from her peers. We are interested in, for example, how architect Noushin Ehsan used her diplomatic skills and determination in her organization of the International Conference of Women Architects in Ramsar (Iran, 1976), in immigrant Eliane Castelnau's subtle differentiations of traditional Moroccan hierarchies in her position as inspectrice of the region of Morocco's Meknes, or how architect Norma Merrick Sklarek applied her outstanding technical expertise in the design and execution of the 1976 American Embassy in Tokyo.

How did the female architect surmount the obstacles presented by sexism? What personal skills and maneuvers facilitated her acceptance as practitioner? How did she strategically align herself with her social setting to gain influence and control over her own scope of actions? By gathering various strategies and identifying important challenges and opportunities, this session seeks to contribute to the ongoing efforts to attain gender parity in architectural practice.

Submission Guidelines:

Confirmed 2025 Session Chairs are not eligible to submit to the Call for Papers

Abstracts must be under 300 words.

The title cannot exceed 65 characters, including spaces and punctuation.

Abstracts and titles must follow the Chicago Manual of Style.

Only one abstract per conference by an author or co-author may be submitted.

A maximum of three (3) authors per abstract will be accepted.

Please attach a two-page CV in PDF format.

Please submit an abstract no later than 11:59 p.m. CDT on June 5, 2024, via SAH website:

<https://www.sah.org/2025/call-for-papers>

Reference:

CFP: Session at SAH 2025 (Atlanta, 30 Apr-4 May 25). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 14, 2024 (accessed Jan 7, 2026),

<<https://arthist.net/archive/41635>>.