

We Have Looked for 4,000 Years; Now We Have Seen! (Online, 27 Mar 25)

Mar 27, 2025

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Inspired by art critic Carla Lonzi's seminal 1970 manifesto *Female Revolt*, this panel aims to examine the critical transformation from passive observation to active engagement in the architectural realm. Researchers, scholars, and practitioners will explore how women have reshaped architectural narratives across time, roles, and geographies. Discussions will cover efforts to disrupt canonical narratives, redefine authorship and authority, and expand the architectural canon to include diverse voices. We also seek to highlight unconventional outputs and subversive methodologies that demonstrate the potential of "seeing" as a critical tool for reimagining architecture today.

FULL ABSTRACT:

Description

In her 1970 manifesto *Female Revolt*, art critic Carla Lonzi underscores a pivotal shift: women, no longer confined to the role of passive observers, break free as active protagonists capable of charting new directions for the present and the future. "We have looked for 4,000 years; now we have seen!", she announced. We are hosting a session to which researchers, scholars, and practitioners are invited. The aim is to offer a platform to explore how women embraced the transformative shift from passive "looking" to active "seeing" critically interrogating their roles in reshaping architectural narratives.

Contributors examine the multifaceted ways in which women—writers, historians, theorists, editors, curators, directors, archivists—have redefined the way we discuss, interpret, and see architecture. We welcomed papers without temporal or geographical restrictions that may address the following themes: The efforts by women to confront and disrupt canonical and dominant historical narratives; the impact of feminist paradigms on historiography through approaches based on difference, equality, constructionist and intersectionalist thinking; the redefinition of authorship and authority within architectural histories; the expansion of the architecture canon to include diverse and pluralistic voices. We are particularly interested in understanding how these objectives have been pursued through both public and uncredited roles, disseminated through varied and unconventional outputs (such as exhibitions, anthologies, autobiographical publications, personal journals, etc.). Contributions explore individual or collective initiatives, and the subversive use of sources (oral histories, archives) to revolt against established norms and narratives. Ultimately, we seek examples that demonstrate the possibility of "seeing" as a critical project, able to guide us through the redefinition of what it means "architecture" today.

Session Chairs:

Silvia Groaz, ENSA Paris-EST; Université de Liège

Bianca Felicori, UCLouvain
Beatrice Lampariello, UCLouvain

Organized in collaboration with the SAH Women in Architecture Affiliate Group (SAH WiA AG) as part of their Annual Special Event in Celebration of Women's History Month in March 2025.

Participants:

Anne Massey, School of Architecture and Design, University for the Creative Arts, Canterbury

Léa-Catherine Szacka, University of Manchester

Women Writing Architecture collective (Helen Thomas, Emilie Appercé, Jaehee Shin, Estelle Gagliardi)

Link to the video conference:
<https://sahwomeninarchitectureaffiliategroup.sah.hcommons.org/?p=1766>

Reference:

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