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**Suzanne Ewing**

The University of Edinburgh, The Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture | Scotland

## Making (Hi)stories of Women in Scottish Architecture

**Where and How Are Women Found?**

In accounts of twentieth century Scottish architecture, architects, and related work, women are rarely visible as explicit subjects in their own right. How can they be recognised, acknowledged, placed and found? Names, institutions, social, cultural, political and educational networks of historical research endeavour and genealogies of practice underpin and consolidate disciplinary education and public discourse.

Where are the existing historical sources in Scotland? David Walker's ambitious *Dictionary of Scottish Architecture* project (DSA), now maintained by Historic Environment Scotland (HES), including the research notes for the project, is the most in-depth and consolidated public database.<sup>1</sup> It was built from *Scottish Architects' Papers: A Source Book*, a conscious salvaging of the records, documents and other donations from private architectural practices, working between the Royal Institution of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) and HES.<sup>2</sup>

Other significant inventories include legal records of drawings, specifications, construction and alterations, found in publicly accessible Local Authority or City Council Archives collections across the country. Architectural projects are also recorded in the broad-based systematic photographic site surveys undertaken by the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments (RCAHMS) from

1 David M. Walker, *Dictionary of Scottish Architects*, <http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/themes.php> (accessed October 5, 2017).

2 Rebecca M. Bailey, *Scottish Architects' Papers: A Source Book* (Edinburgh: RIAS Publishing, 1996).

the 1980s, including low/oblique aerial photography.<sup>3</sup> Material can be gleaned from organisations such as The Saltire Society, who have been reviewing the best public and private housing in Scotland for sixty years, and from the *Pevsner Architecture Guides: Buildings of Scotland* series led by Colin MacWilliam and John Gifford, developed to include public buildings and schools as well as the more familiar monumental projects of churches, civic buildings and large country houses.<sup>4</sup>

The focus and approach of historians working with Scottish Architecture and Architects in Scotland directly influence what is valued and transmitted through education and professional networks. This has been defined over the past thirty years as two primary threads. Firstly, framings of the nation motivated by nationally based organisations and professional bodies *in tandem* with the political climate.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, weighty monographs by teams of scholars with associated exhibitions continue to reinforce the singular, authorial architect and architectural object.<sup>6</sup> There are few reviews of the history of the architectural profession although David Walker's DSA essays begin to sketch this out.<sup>7</sup>

In the recent publication, *Scotstyle*, only one female architect is named in all the projects selected over the last one hundred years: Brit Andreson, who with Barry Gasson and John Meunier is credited with the design of The Burrell Collection, won in a competition in 1971.<sup>8</sup> Only one female architect, Margaret Brodie, was celebrated in a recent 2016 Festival of Architecture in Scotland exhibition.<sup>9</sup> Significant family and practice archives gifted with conditions of subsequent time and resource to analyse and interpret them, ensure an ongoing legacy and presence in professional and institutional narratives. More recent typologically driven work positions architecture within the complexity of

3 "Canmore database," Historic Environment Scotland, <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/archives-and-collections/canmore-database/> (accessed 5 October, 2017).

4 *Pevsner Architectural Guides: Buildings of Scotland*, series (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1988–2015); The Saltire Society, <http://www.saltiresociety.org.uk/about-us/> (accessed 21 June 2018).

5 Alan Reiach and Robert Hurd, *Building Scotland: A Cautionary Guide* (Edinburgh: The Saltire Society, 2nd edition, 1944); Miles Glendinning, Randal MacInnes and Aonghus Mackechnie, *A History of Scottish Architecture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996); Miles Glendinning (ed.), *Rebuilding Scotland: The Postwar Vision 1945–1975*, (Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press, 1997); Neil Baxter and Fiona Sinclair, *Scotstyle: 100 years of Scottish Architecture (1916–2015)* (Glasgow: RIAS Publications, 2016); Neil Gillespie, *Re Building Scotland* (Edinburgh: Saltire Society Scotland, 2016).

6 Jonny Rodger (ed.), *Gillespie, Kidd and Coia—Architecture 1956–1987* (Glasgow: The Lighthouse, RIAS, 2007); Miles Glendinning, *Modern Architect: The Life and Times of Robert Matthew* (London: RIBA Publishing, 2008); Lousie Campbell, Miles Glendinning and Jane Thomas (eds.), *Basil Spence: Buildings and Projects* (London: RIBA Publishing, 2012); Diane Watters, *St Peter's, Cardross: Birth, Death and Renewal* (Historic Environment Scotland, 2016).

7 David M. Walker, "The Architectural Profession in Scotland, 1840–1940: Background to the Biographical Notes," *Dictionary of Scottish Architects*, <http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/themes.php> (accessed October 5, 2017). David M. Walker, "Recent Developments in Scottish Architectural History," *Dictionary of Scottish Architects*, [http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/themes\\_developments.php](http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/themes_developments.php) (accessed October 5, 2017).

8 Baxter and Sinclair, *Scotstyle*, 155.

9 RIAS Festival of Architecture Programme, *Out of Their Heads*, Exhibition at Scottish National Portrait Gallery (2016).

the Twentieth century social and political history.<sup>10</sup> However, little work has been done to question what kind of (his)stories might be more attuned to the actual collaborative, negotiated realities of architectural practice in Scotland: the politics and hierarchies of work, programmatic evolution, and how architecture is occupied, used and altered, rather than just viewed or received. Feminist perspectives have been proven in other disciplines to offer a sharper, 'other' gaze of critical distance, situated practice and uncovering of hidden histories. These have begun to influence and open up new spaces in architectural publishing and discourse.<sup>11</sup>

Hints of the collective and complex aspects of architectural work are evidenced by women generating and gathering archive material as doctoral researchers or as family members, such as Gillian Blee in relation to the Spence archive/legacy.<sup>12</sup> 'Grey literature' embedded in schools of architecture, around the creation of curriculum, lecture delivery and dissemination, educational philosophies and practices, and examples of student project work tends not to be consistently valued, archived or easily accessible.<sup>13</sup>

While interviews are used in broader historical work, methodologies that foreground experience, or attend to working relationships, the actual rather than the image of architectural work, are limited. Peggy Deamer writes of '... architecture's peculiar status of material embodiment produced by its immaterial work, work that is at once very personal and yet entirely social.'<sup>14</sup>

The challenge then for considering women 'as subjects' in the historical and theoretical documentation, methodology, interpretation and enhancement of twentieth century architecture in Scotland, is more than just inclusion and addition to the existing canon. The idea of 'subject' needs to be interrogated and expanded to engage with the personal, social and immaterial as well as

10 Miles Glendinning and Stefan Muthesius, *Tower Block: Modern Public Housing in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1994); Diane M. Watters (ed.), *Homebuilders: Mactaggart & Mickel and the Scottish Housebuilding Industry* (Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 2015); Florian Urban, *The New Tenement: Residences in the Inner City Since 1970* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

11 Jane Rendell, Iain Borden and Barbara Penner (eds.), *Gender, Space, Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2000); Jane Rendell, "Tendencies and Trajectories: Feminist approaches to Architecture," *Architectural Theory Handbook*, edited by Stephen Cairns, Greg Crysler, Hilde Heynen and Gwendolyn Wright (London: Sage, 2012); James Benedict Brown et al. (eds.), *A Gendered Profession* (London: RIBA Publishing, 2016); Hélène Frichot, Catharina Gabrielsson and Helen Runtig (eds.), *Architecture and Feminisms: Ecologies, Economies and Technologies* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017); Jane Rendell, "Feminist Architecture: From A to Z," *Reading Design*, <https://www.readingdesign.org/feminist-architecture-a-z/> (accessed June 21, 2018).

12 Campbell, *Basil Spence*, 60, 65, 68, 156; Glendinning and Muthesius, *Tower Block*, 9.

13 Suzanne Ewing, "Tales and Tools: The Design Studio Brief in Architecture's Expanded Field," *Charette: Journal of the Association of Architectural Educators* 3, 1 (Spring 2016), 6–18, <http://docserver.ingentaconnect.com/deliver/connect/arched/20546718/v3n1/s2.pdf?expires=1528114493&id=0000&titleid=75008746&checksum=8CAB3FCECD4B654558F8524D36A60845> (accessed June 4, 2018).

14 Peggy Deamer (ed.), *The Architect as Worker: Immaterial Labour, the Creative Class and the Politics of Design*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 31.

the professional and material, to include the archivist, historian, institutional network, and informed by feminist perspectives and interdisciplinary lenses. Even the subject of architecture has 'weak' disciplinary edges contested in contemporary practice and theory, 'I am not sure the term architect really describes what we do anymore.'<sup>15</sup>

In the relatively small literature field of historical work which has taken professional (and other) architectural practice as its subject, Andrew Saint's book, *The Image of the Architect*, drew attention to the lack of focus and documentation of the realities of architectural practice in accounts of architects and the profession in the UK and USA in the twentieth century.<sup>16</sup> Saint identified conflicts between these realities and dominant 'ideals of creativity', setting out tropes where these were most at 'odds': the architect as 'Hero and Genius', as 'Medieval', as 'Professional' (nineteenth century UK), as 'Businessman' (nineteenth century USA), as 'Gentleman', as 'Bauhausian', as 'Entrepreneur'. More reflective practice and a questioning of the subject of the individual practitioner and their autobiographical authored outputs and processes underpin *Desiring Practices* and *The Architect: Reconstructing her Practice* which aims to uncover, write, and name new and emerging actualities of architectural work.<sup>17</sup>

### The Limits of Telling and Reading (Hi)stories through Biography

'Architectural biography in particular has favoured the imaginative approach because here the individualism natural to the purer arts finds its easiest outlet'.<sup>18</sup> The DSA advertises its scope as being the period from 1660 to 1980, but the most detailed information covers the one-hundred-forty years between 1840 and 1980 when professional records provide primary source material. Out of around 5000 entries, 194 feature women. Numerically there seems to be a general increase

15 Steve Parnell, "Flora Samuel: 'I'm not sure the term architect really describes what we do any more,'" *Architect's Journal* (February 26, 2010), 12 <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/home/flora-samuel-im-not-sure-the-term-architect-really-describes-what-we-do-any-more/5214835.article> (accessed June 4, 2018); Igea Troiani, Suzanne Ewing and Diana Periton, "Architecture and Culture: Architecture's Disciplinarity," *Architecture and Culture* 1, 1–2 (2013), 6–19, <https://doi.org/10.2752/175145213X13760412749917> (accessed June 4, 2018).

16 Andrew Saint, *The Image of the Architect* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 138, 161.

17 Sarah Wigglesworth and Katerina Ruedi (eds.), *Desiring Practices: Architecture, Gender and the Interdisciplinary* (London: Black Dog publishing, 1996); Francesca Hughes (ed.), *The Architect: Reconstructing her Practice* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1997).

18 Saint, *The Image of the Architect*, 163.

in recorded qualified female architects in Scotland until the 1960s although more recent entries act more like place-holders.<sup>19</sup>

There is ambiguity around the definition of a 'Scottish architect', which encompasses an individual's upbringing, education, and/or involvement in projects based in Scotland at some point in their life. The changing nature of admission to the UK profession over the course of the Twentieth century also affects DSA's scope and methodology.<sup>20</sup> A large proportion of women did not seem to progress beyond architectural study as they were only ARIBA student members, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s. The entries become very patchy and less consistent by the 1970s, showing how reliant the 'criteria' for entry to DSA is on already recognized figures. The (in)visibility of women or the 'not famous' in architectural work in Scotland includes many omissions, including participants in the *VoE* project.<sup>21</sup>

Of the 194 women in the DSA, only seven 'heads' or faces of women are visible with images included in the biographically organised record. The earliest female 'face' of a Scottish Architect is Edith Mary Wardlaw Burnet Hughes (1888–1971). The text emphasizes her family and social relations – daughter, granddaughter, niece, tutee, wife, assistant lecturer, 'assistant in the offices of'. She studied art and architecture in Paris, Dresden, Leipzig, Florence and other parts of Italy. During the First World War she was involved in teaching architecture in Aberdeen, and later in Glasgow.

Some parts of the account seem to need untangling, particularly around her controversial nomination to be admitted to the professional body of the Royal Institute of British Architects in the late 1920s, and the claim by some historians that she may be the UK's first female practicing architect, though she seems likely to be the earliest in Scotland.<sup>22</sup> The most publicly visible work attributed to Wardlaw Burnet Hughes is Glasgow's Mercat Cross (1930), with possible involvement in the urban building

behind. Other work was domestic as she specialized in kitchen design, indicating both the limited scope for non-male architects at the time and a familiar put-down: you can only design from your sphere of female experience.

The DSA entry on Edith Mary Wardlaw Burnet Hughes suggests she might be understood as an 'Architect Professional' according to Saint's categories. As part of the dynasty of John Burnet, she is also linked to a 'Hero and Genius' tradition of architects. Kathleen Veitch (1908–1968) could perhaps be termed a 'Gentlewoman architect'. Studying in London, she also travelled to Spain and Bombay, before returning to Scotland in the 1930s, becoming active in the local Art Club.

Alongside what is available from Scottish Architects' papers, many of the DSA entries are based on RIBA Nomination papers, where all proposers were men. One of her few known works, Little Salt Hall, also appears in local Scottish Borders accounts and historical archives as this building, was listed in 2008.<sup>23</sup> Margaret Brodie (1907–1997) was also working in the 1930s. She grew up and studied in Glasgow, worked in Scotland, London and East Anglia during the Second World War, and latterly in Edinburgh and Lochwinnoch, running her own practice. She is acknowledged as the architect for the site layout and some buildings of Glasgow's 1938 Empire Exhibition while working as an Assistant at the offices of Burnet, Tait & Lorne.<sup>24</sup>

Two less detailed entries are Margaret Love (1913–1979), admitted to ARIBA in 1938, and Margaret Makins (1913–1980), admitted to ARIBA in 1941 and also Chief Architect for Mauritius in the 1960s. There is a scant record for Margaret Beveridge (1926–?). Finally, Anne Duff, who is a contributor to the *VoE* project, was Assistant Principal Architect of Abrohill Development Plan for Cumbernauld New Town Development Corporation from 1966 to 1968, including some of its housing and community facilities. As David Walker admits, 'While much has been written about Scotland's most famous architects less is known about the many hundreds of architects who also

19 Nine women are listed who were born before 1900; 15 born over the next ten years; 29 born after 1910, qualifying around the 1930s; 33 born in the 1920s; 42 born in the 1930s or who qualified in the 1950s; 26 who qualified in the 1960s; 39 who qualified in the 1970s/1980s.

20 The Architects Registration Act was passed in 1931. ARCUK was established with an independent register with legal status, though admission to the profession continued via nomination papers to the RIBA. In 1985 the Women Architects' Forum was established in the UK, when less than 5% of registered architects were women. In 1997 The Architects' registration Board (ARB) replaced ARCUK as the regulating body of the profession.

21 See Elspeth King, *The Hidden History of Glasgow's Women* (Glasgow: Mainstream Publishing, 1993) which emerged from an impetus to rebalance the macho urban and civic histories that had been constructed around the city's Year of Culture. More broad attempts to reveal women architects in specific national, professional and educational contexts include: Despina Stratigakos, *Where are the Women Architects* (Princeton University Press, 2016); James Benedict Brown et al. (eds.), *A Gendered Profession* (London: RIBA Publishing, 2016); "Women in Architecture," ArchDaily, <http://women-in-architecture.com>; Lynn Walker and Elizabeth Darling (eds.), *AA Women in Architecture 1917–2017* (London: AA Publications, 2017).

22 In the UK, Ethel Charles is recognised as the first woman admitted to the RIBA in 1898, <http://women-in-architecture.com/index.php?id=39> (accessed Oct 5, 2017).

23 "Rosalee Brae, Little Salt Hall," British Listed Buildings, <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/200400091-rosalee-brae-little-salt-hall-hawick#.Wdocd0yZOu4> (accessed Oct 5, 2017); "Hawick, Roselea Brae, Little Salt Hall," Canmore, <https://canmore.org.uk/site/316373/hawick-roselea-brae-little-salt-hall> (accessed Oct 5, 2017); "Hawick, Roselea Brae, Little Salt Hall," Scotland's Urban Past, <https://scotlandsurbanpast.org.uk/site/316373/hawick-roselea-brae-little-salt-hall> (accessed Oct 5, 2017).

24 David Walker (DSA 2006/2016) mentions Margaret Brodie as featuring in an exhibition of Thomas Smith Tait's work, held in Paisley in 1998; Rory Olcayto, "Who designed the 1938 Empire Exhibition's women's pavilion?" *Architects' Journal* (posted February 7, 2013), <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/comment/who-designed-the-1938-empire-exhibition-womens-pavilion/8642299.article?search=https%3a%2f%2fwww.architectsjournal.co.uk%2fsearcharticles%3fkeywords%3dEmpire+pavilion+Rory> (accessed June 4, 2018); "The Fashion Theatre, Women of the Empire Pavilion Mitchell Library, Glasgow Collection," The Glasgow Story, <http://www.theglasgowstory.com/image/?inum=TGSA00413> (accessed October 5, 2017).

made an enormous contribution to our built heritage up and down the country.<sup>25</sup> And while the DSA privileges textual sources over the visual, there are some extraordinarily image-based, anecdotal comments not far below the objective veneer of this database, '[Brodie] retired in 1990 ... where she lived with her sister: although tall and extremely good-looking, even in old age, she never married.' 'In December 1957 Eleanor Thompson won a BBC TV competition for the viewer with the best dress sense.'

A recent exhibition and publication examining 'the ebb and flow of opportunities for women to train and practice as artists' in Scotland reveals the social and legal limitations of work in the Twentieth century.<sup>26</sup> It was not until 1945 that The Education (Scotland) Act ended the Marriage Bar which prevented women from holding full-time teaching positions.<sup>27</sup> As in Architecture, the pursuit of art education by women was often only for those born into artistic families. Anne Redpath was the first female painter to be elected as a full member of the Royal Scottish Academy, and many women worked across the Applied rather than Fine Arts. Men-only membership continued of the Glasgow Arts Club and Scottish Arts Club until the 1980s. The Scottish Schools of Art encouraged crossover between Art and Architecture, nurturing, for instance, the well-known collaborative artistic group of Margaret and Frances Macdonald, Herbert McNair and Charles Rennie Mackintosh, educated under Fra Newbery at Glasgow School of Art at the very end of the Nineteenth century.<sup>28</sup> However, there is yet to be a female architect elected as a Royal Scottish Academy academician. In the professional context, there have been few females' leads in commercial practices or Architecture schools, with only one female president of the RIAS to date.<sup>29</sup>

Dominant practices of history, documentation and dissemination through biography are evidenced by the DSA. As alphabetical dictionary, it emphasises the historian and historical interpretation, the artefact, professional record, institution and reading. Searching by architect or building assumes pre-knowledge and correlative textual/archival/ published evidence. The discipline of architectural history and its historiographic practices, are usually a project of sifting, selecting, ordering, prioritizing, and distilling, but when looking for (hi)stories of women in Scottish architecture, these research practices have to be inverted to inventive searching, exposing, and explicit accumulation.

25 David Walker (DSA, 2006/2016); In design and cultural history research, attention to the contextual conditions of design and architectural practice in the twentieth century include Jessica Kelly, "Behind the Scenes: Anonymity and Hidden Mechanisms in Design and Architecture," *Architecture and Culture* 6, no. 1 (March 2018).

26 Alice Strang (ed.), *Modern Scottish Women: Painters and Sculptors 1885–1965* (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 2015), 7.

27 Strang, *Modern Scottish Women*, 10, 119.

28 Strang, *Modern Scottish Women*, 70.

29 Joyce Deans was President from 1991 to 1993, "Dr Joyce B Deans," RIAS, <https://www.rias.org.uk/rias/about-the-rias/past-presidents/dr-joyce-b-deans/> (accessed January 30, 2018).

Being open to architecture's expanded field and all its immaterial and material dimensions means working at the edges of, outside and beyond the existing domains which steward formal knowledge sustaining and controlling the canon.

### So how to Construct Histories of Experience and Practice?

The preoccupations, confluences, and contradictions between the image and identity of individual architects, the profession as a body, and the realities of architectural practice and work, frame the context and motivations for the *Voices of Experience* project. We actively explore alternative (hi) stories, practices of documentation and dissemination which might open and clarify the complexity and ecologies of 'what architects look like', and 'what architects do'. We do this by foregrounding conversation –the social, personal and relational– over authored biography.

Secondly, the project builds documentation in-situ –overlapping testimony in time and through experience– rather than focusing on already represented and completed artefacts and other professional sources which have inbuilt 'attributes and aims'.

As the project develops, we draw from and investigate oral history practices. The Scottish Oral History Centre undertakes thematic projects on the effects of de-industrialisation, minority cultures and local groups, but with little direct intersection with the making of the built environment.<sup>30</sup> The British Library Sounds National UK Archive has 1264 items under "Architecture," including the *National Life Story collection: Architects' Lives*. This is searchable by interviewee, an alphabetical list which constructs through biography.<sup>31</sup> A section on "Pioneering Women" has 174 entries.<sup>32</sup>

However, more methodologically relevant is the Listening Project, broadcast since 2012, where the material is categorized by the geographical radio station, the relationship between two participants and the chosen subject.<sup>33</sup> Working through the evaluation and design of methodological and pragmatic practices and parameters is essential to build a resilient, useful archive. The Glasgow Women's Library (GWL) is not subject specific or specialist, so attracts broad interest via women's studies and activities. Setting up an accumulative audio-archive of the *VoE* conversations that can be listened to as well as read demands making precise and inclusive search categories, conversation subjects,

30 Scottish Oral History Centre, University of Strathclyde established in 1995, "About the Scottish Oral History Centre," University of Strathclyde Glasgow, <https://www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/schoolofhumanities/history/scottishorahistorycentre/> (accessed January 30, 2018); Angela Bartie and Arthur McIvor, "Oral History in Scotland," *Scottish Historical Review*, 234 (2013), 108–36.

31 "Architecture," British Library: Sounds, <http://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives> (accessed January 30, 2018).

32 "Pioneering women," British Library: Sounds, <http://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Pioneering-women> (accessed January 30, 2018).

33 "Listening Project," British Library: Sounds, <http://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/The-Listening-Project> (accessed January 30, 2018).

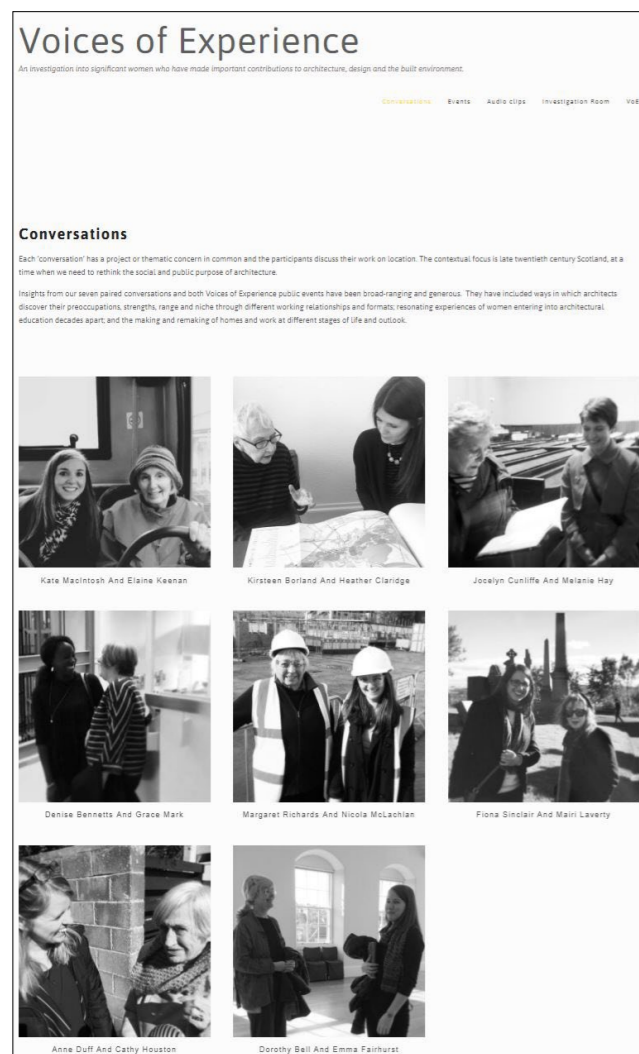


Fig. 1. Eight conversations in 2016–17, [www.voices-architecture.com](http://www.voices-architecture.com). Courtesy of *Voices of Experience* project.

transcription and translation practices, allied with sustainable recording and listening technologies.

Since 2016 we have constructed a series of eight conversations between a highly experienced architect or maker of the built environment in Scotland, and an architect or another professional at the outset of their career. Insights have been broad-ranging and generous, very much personal and social, and include: how architects discover their preoccupations, strengths, range and niche through different working relationships and formats; resonating experiences of women entering into architectural education decades apart; and the making and remaking of homes and work at different stages of life and outlook.<sup>34</sup> (Fig. 1)

Each conversation has a project or thematic concern in common, often crossing significant timespans of engagement, and the participants discuss their work on location, *in situ*, open to contingencies of encounter and the environment. Outline structuring ques-

tions including: how did you start? Who inspired you? What is/was your dream project? What is your advice to young architects? These have branched out into hours of fascinating reflection and connection.

Excerpts have been shared at the "Architecture in Conversation" ArchiFringe/ GWL events in October

<sup>34</sup> Contributors to the project include architect Margaret Richards, conservation architect Fiona Sinclair, architect/historian Dorothy Bell, teacher/architect Anne Duff, planner Kirsteen Borland, conservation architect Jocelyn Cunliffe architect, Denise Bennetts and architect, Kate MacIntosh. They have been joined by Mairi Laverty, Nicola McLachlan, Cathy Houston and Emma Fairhurst of Collective Architecture, planner Heather Claridge of Glasgow City Council, designer-activist Grace Mark, conservation architect Melanie Hay and local council architect, Elaine Keenan. Over a series of autumn and late spring site days, they discussed their work and shared their experience of working within Cumbernauld New Town, Glasgow Necropolis, Linlithgow, on schools, housing and Edinburgh's historic centre. The *VoE* project was initiated by Jude Barber and Suzanne Ewing.

2016 and July 2017, where the paired conversations offered the opportunity to listen into others' conversations and became a larger, more public conversation around tea and cake. *Voices* embody the different ages, backgrounds, bodies and geographical journeys of participants, and the conversations engender a wonderful sense of 'listening in' where the personal is mixed with quite significant insights as 'valuable first-hand testimony of the past.' (Fig. 2) Audiences at events have responded positively to the social history aspects of the conversations. They state favourite aspects to be 'The modesty of these great architects', 'The variety of issues raised that show bold insights and achievements' and 'An insight into all aspects of architecture'. This project has demonstrated to us a public appetite to understand what architects actually do rather than what some selectively choose to show. We are learning about the ranges, tones and scales of conversation which reveal different types of insights and exchanges: one-to-one, panel discussion, public listening and reflecting.

Architecture is the most public of arts, entangled with conceptual and literal constructions of society and environment. It determines how we shape neighbourhoods and expresses the hopes and dreams of the communities we dwell in and move through. Yet, how do we 'see, hear and talk' about architecture in public life? Architectural projects and the people who make them are usually exposed through professional and academic channels. The authority of formally designated critics, designers and historians of architecture, validated by their media, professional or educational institutional status, tend to hold a monopoly on who can speak for and about architecture. Histories are hidden, always in relation, personal and social, and there are many gaps that we need to re-read and re-make. They reach public audiences through grand design media stories only when they become controversial – or through the persistent self-publication and cult of the figure-head, the 'starchitect'. Making good architecture is a complex endeavour that is potently significant within our collective public life. Architectural knowledge is practice-based and experiential. We, therefore, need to pay more attention to the real sophistication of the production of our built environment, the teams, interrelationships and roles of expert and skilful practice and negotiation positioned deeply within it, and all the many women who have made –and are making– Modern Scotland.



Fig. 2. Project participants in conversation, Glasgow Women's Library, July 17. Courtesy of *Voices of Experience* project.



# Women's Creativity since the Modern Movement (1918–2018)

Toward a New Perception and Reception



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THE MODERN MOVEMENT



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Andrea Furlan



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### TEXTS REVISION

#### Chapter A

Alenka Di Battista, MoMoWo, ZRC SAZU  
Katarina Mohar, MoMoWo, ZRC SAZU  
Helena Seražin, MoMoWo, ZRC SAZU  
Barbara Vodopivec, MoMoWo, ZRC SAZU

#### Chapter B

Henrieta Moravčíková, MoMoWo, STUBA  
Nina Bartošová, MoMoWo, STUBA

#### Chapter C

Ana María Fernández García, MoMoWo, UNIOVI  
Isabel Barro Rey  
Noelia Fernández García  
Esther Rodríguez Ortiz, MoMoWo, UNIOVI

#### Chapter D

Elena Masala, MoMoWo, SITI

#### Chapter E

Maria Helena Souto, MoMoWo, ENSILIS IADE  
Eduardo Côrte-Real  
Silvia Rosado

#### Chapter F

Marjan H. Groot, MoMoWo, VU  
Ilja M. Meijer, MoMoWo, VU  
Caterina Franchini, MoMoWo, POLITICO - DIST

#### Chapter G

Caterina Franchini, MoMoWo, POLITICO - DIST  
Emilia Garda, MoMoWo, POLITICO - DISEG

### PROOFREADING

Helena Seražin, ZRC SAZU  
Katarina Mohar, ZRC SAZU  
Barbara Vodopivec, ZRC SAZU  
Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence

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