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WOMEN IN ARCHITECTURE

The *Architecture+Women New Zealand* Exhibition 2013 was held between 19 September and 19 November in four centres across New Zealand. It marked the 120th anniversary of women's suffrage in New Zealand and was an ambitious project, preceded only by the revolutionary first exhibition, *Constructive Agenda: 60 Years of Women in Architecture in New Zealand*, held 20 years earlier in 1993. On the following pages, we offer a snapshot record of the 2013 exhibition.

Photography **Rebecca Moldenhauer** and
Mary-Anne Thomson (for Mango Films)

EXPANSION

The Architecture+Women New Zealand exhibition 2013 was initiated from humble beginnings, as a defining goal of the Architecture+Women organisation founded by **Megan Rule**, Lynda Simmons, Sarah Treadwell and **Julie Wilson** in 2011. Here, Rule and Wilson provide an overview of the exhibition held across the country.

The Architecture+Women New Zealand (A+W·NZ) exhibition 2013 was a celebratory showcase for the Architecture+Women (A+W) organisation, held 20 years after the 1993 exhibition *Constructive Agenda. 60 Years of Women in Architecture in New Zealand*. Its aim was to 'make visible' the work of female architects, or women associated with architecture, working both nationally and internationally.

It also provided the opportunity to realise and highlight unsung heroes of New Zealand architecture, such as the extraordinary Lillian Chrystal, who has been quietly getting on with it for over six decades, along with Marilyn Reynolds and other inspirational contributors.

A large number of subgroups was established with participating volunteers to handle various activities and events in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Queenstown.

International speaker Cazu Zegers from Chile opened the event at Auckland Architecture Week on 19 September 2013 continuing on to Christchurch and Wellington events.

At Silo Park in Auckland, the 'Between Silos' exhibition opened with bluster to over 350 people, in parallel with the 'Re-Think' opening at NG Gallery in Christchurch, attended by 80 people. The opening of the 'Diverse Practice' Wellington exhibition, featuring Catherine Griffiths' graphic survey texts, was attended by over 100 people in early October at Victoria University of Wellington while, in Queenstown, 'Small Town Girl?' combined with the local branch awards at Remarkables Primary School with upwards of 150 people in attendance in mid-November.

A day-long symposium 'Architecture in an Expanded Field' held at AUT University in Auckland, was a sell-out event on the Saturday. Justine Clark, from Australia's Parlour organisation, opened with a statistical perspective and Japan's Yui Tezuka from Tezuka Architects wrapped up an outstanding day of discussion, offering views of the broadening field of endeavours in which women trained in architecture work. A publication of proceedings is due out within the year.

On Sunday, the Auckland Architecture Association organised a site tour by bus, taking in three defining projects: Mitchell & Stout Architects' Tertiary Education facility at Point Chevalier, Bossley Architects' McCahon's Artist Residence in Titirangi and Scartlet Architects' Intensive Housing in Newmarket.

Throughout the exhibition, engaging lunchtime and evening talks, panels and workshops were well attended. Lectures and events included: 'Practice Guidelines' 'How does she do it?' 'Pre-fabrication' 'Housing Innovation' 'Architecture and Feminism' 'Student Pecha Kucha' 'Children's Wharf Workshops' Wellington, Christchurch and Southern also staged locally initiated events that reflected their interests and conditions.

Ultimately, the objectives of promoting and celebrating women in architecture, through 'Visibility, Diversity and Role Models' has made some progress with both public and practice awareness of the broader talents of those trained in architecture.

LET'S LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

Lynda Simmons, architect and co-organiser of the exhibition, performs some number crunching around the statistics of women working within the architectural profession in New Zealand, discovering the good and bad news.

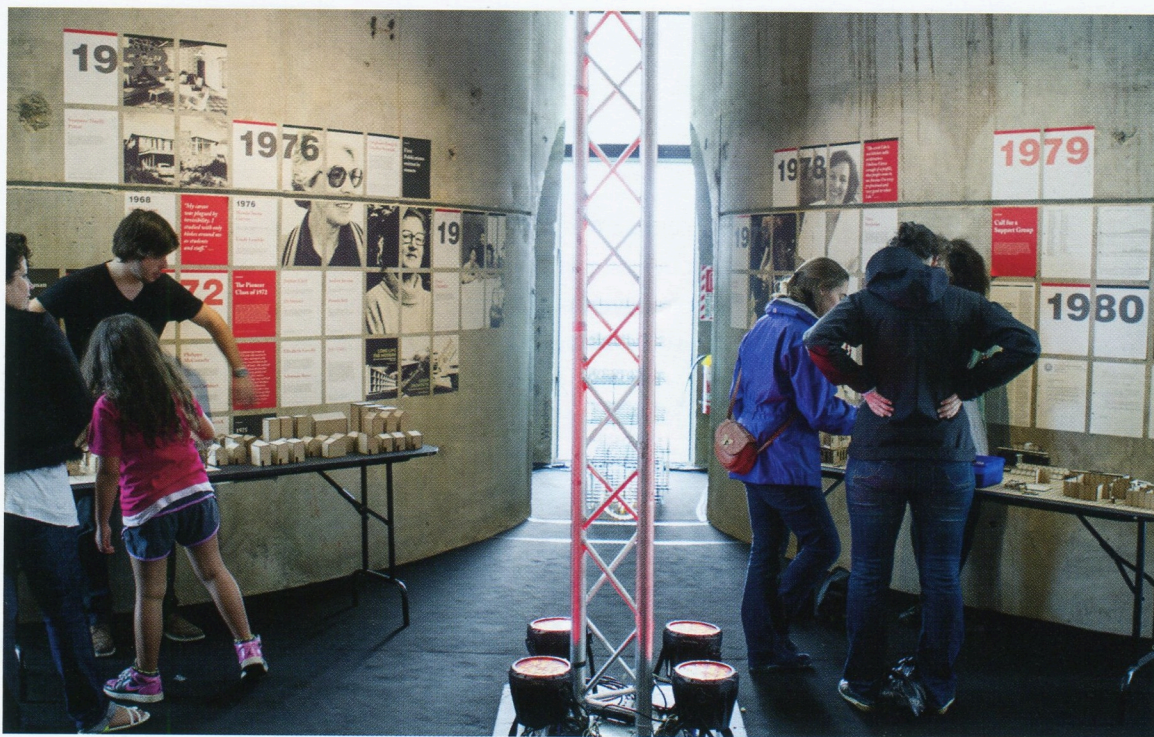
The *A+W·NZ Exhibition 2013* included the work of almost 500 women, a number we know only scratches the surface of the amount of women undertaking architectural work of one kind or another, but it is impressive nonetheless as a visual snapshot of the contemporary condition of how architecture and women relate in 2013.

Social concerns are again on the rise globally, with gender-equity issues featuring prominently. This prioritising of equity and diversity affects architecture, which is undergoing its own self-analysis all around the world and the numbers are not as promising as may have been expected for 2013.

Recent research by Professor Errol Haarhoff in 2010¹ found that, while architectural student numbers are at an approximate 50:50 balance between genders in New Zealand, the percentage of female registered architects is as low as 18 per cent.² In Australia, more recent research shows that 21 per cent of registered architects are female³ and the good news is that March 2014 figures released

"THE NUMBER OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS WITHIN ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS IN NEW ZEALAND PLUMMETS TO ONE PER CENT AND THE NATIONAL RESEARCH ON SALARIES INDICATES A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GENDERS OF 14 PER CENT IN FAVOUR OF MEN."

LEFT *Archive of Atmosphere* installation by Emma Morris, 'Between Silos' exhibition in Silo 6, Silo Park, Auckland.



by the NZIA have seen the New Zealand registration rate for females rise to 27 per cent.⁴ However, the number of women in leadership positions within architectural firms in New Zealand plummets to one per cent and the national research on salaries indicates a difference between genders of 14 per cent in favour of men.⁵ And there are other interesting figures to consider: recent research by Dr Sarah Treadwell and Nicole Allen shows that women are not very visible in New Zealand architectural publications either, with a total appearance count of as low as three per cent of the total publication volume.⁶

'Where do all the women go?' was a question posed of architectural graduates in the 1980s. This has resurfaced and has effectively been re-phrased: 'Why do female architects remain invisible?'

At the 2013 Parlour 'Transform' conference held in Melbourne,⁷ Gill Matthewson suggested that female graduates do not, in fact, leave the profession in such large numbers but they are merely not being counted. The registration figure does not represent the actual numbers of women practising architecture, nor does it take into account the ways in which architecture is being incorporated into their wider lives. At a recent A+W-NZ meeting,⁸ a Jasmox representative told an office joke: that the office has become "a sea of pony-tails" This is anecdotal evidence that not only are the women there but they are there in high numbers.

Statistics, such as those above, are only a part of the full story and they represent a certain method of counting. Matthewson suggests that the invisibility of many women may lie in the act of counting – and that we find other methods of quantification.

Here in New Zealand, A+W has as one of its core objectives the issue of *visibility*. The organisation seeks to address this through four platforms: networks (e.g. the website database, mentorships), events (e.g. the *A+W-NZ Exhibition 2013*), research and publication (e.g. magazines, journals, books), and policy (e.g. Recommended Practice Guidelines).

Other numbers around women in architecture are incredibly positive: women have been educated in architecture in the Western world for only just over a century (for 80 years⁹ in New Zealand). Considering that the history of Western architecture is long and extensive, women have made a profound and positive impact on architecture in a comparatively short time.

The other numbers that portray a changing architectural workplace landscape are those from social media and the A+W-NZ national exhibition itself, with almost 500 members on the A+W website database, more than 700 following the Facebook page and over 300 followers on Twitter. The exhibition portrayed the work of almost 500 participants in the snapshot taken in September 2013.

But, perhaps, the numbers that will make the architectural profession really take notice are those emerging from the business sector. Research by Goldman Sachs has shown that flexible hours are possibly better for business and that diversity among the top layer of business leaders equates to a stronger balance sheet.¹⁰ This is likely to be the most effective piece of research that will have the highest impact on changing workplace culture in the architectural profession. When it comes to social change, the most powerful numbers tend to be financial.

FOOTNOTES: 'LET'S LOOK AT THE NUMBERS'

- 1 Haarhoff, Errol; 2010; *Practice and Gender in Architecture: A Survey of New Zealand Architecture Graduates 1987–2008*; School of Architecture and Planning, The University of Auckland, NZ.
- 2 Measured in 2009 Haarhoff, Errol; [as above].
- 3 Matthewson, Gill; 2013; 'Updating the Numbers, Part 2: at Work' Parlour; archiparlour.org.
- 4 NZIA Bulletin, 14 March 2014.
- 5 Cassandra Mason; 'Gender Pay Gap Widens in New Zealand' The NZ Herald; 12 Nov 2012.

ABOVE LEFT

A+W's Timeline of New Zealand women architects by Marianne Calveno, Joy Roxas and Lynda Simmons;

ABOVE RIGHT

Gabrielle Hanna's *Radial* inside 'The Reading Room'