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Archives of American Art

The Woman's Building Records, Conference, "Women in Design: The Next Decade," 1975

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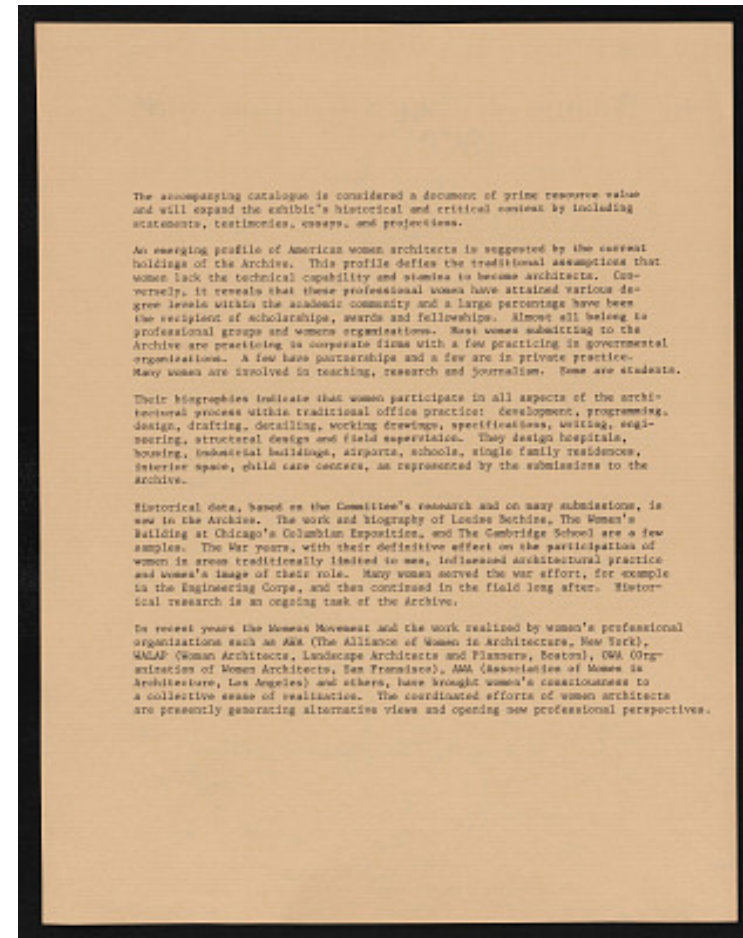
The accompanying catalogue is considered a document of prime resource value and will expand the exhibit's historical and critical context by including statements, testimonies, essays, and projections.

An emerging profile of American women architects is suggested by the current holdings of the Archive. This profile defies the traditional assumptions that women lack the technical capability and stamina to become architects. Conversely, it reveals that these professional women have attained various degree levels within the academic community and a large percentage have been the recipient of scholarships, awards and fellowships. Almost all belong to professional groups and womens organizations. Most women submitting to the Archive are practicing in corporate firms with a few practicing in governmental organizations. A few have partnerships and a few are in private practice. Many women are involved in teaching, research and journalism. Some are students.

Their biographies indicate that women participate in all aspects of the architectural process within traditional office practice: development, programming, design, drafting, detailing, working drawings, specifications, writing, engineering, structural design and field supervision. They design hospitals, housing, industrial buildings, airports, schools, single family residences, interior space, child care centers, as represented by the submissions to the Archive.

Historical data, based on the Committee's research and on many submissions, is now in the Archive. The work and biography of Louise Bethune, The Women's Building at Chicago's Columbian Exposition, and The Cambridge School are a few samples. The War years, with their definitive effect on the participation of women in areas traditionally limited to men, influenced architectural practice and women's image of their role. Many women served the war effort, for example in the Engineering Corps, and then continued in the field long after. Historical research is an ongoing task of the Archive.

In recent years the Womens Movement and the work realized by women's professional organizations such as AWA (The Alliance of Women in Architecture, New York), WALAP (Women Architects, Landscape Architects and Planners, Boston), OWA (Organization of Women Architects, San Francisco), AWA (Association of Women in Architecture, Los Angeles), and others, have brought women's consciousness to a collective sense of realization. The coordinated efforts of women architects are presently generating alternative views and opening new professional perspectives.



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