



# **EQUAL** ARCHITECT

The Equal Architect Symposium 2019

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## The Equal Architect Symposium 2019

Hosted by: Missing in Architecture  
Isabel Deakin, Kathy Li, Miranda Webster

Supported by: Mackintosh School of Architecture, Glasgow School of Art  
Sustainability Group, GIA, Architecture and Design Scotland & Creative Scotland

Date: Thursday 7th March 2019  
Guest Lecture and Reception  
Symposium: Friday 8th March 2019  
Venue:

The Art Club, 185 Bath Street, Glasgow and the GSA Reid Lecture Theatre

### Abstract:

The Equal Architect symposium hosted by Missing in Architecture and the Mackintosh School of Architecture, Glasgow School of Art and in collaboration with Creative Scotland and Architecture and Design Scotland aims to enhance awareness and understanding of the significance of female architects within the education system and the profession and to provoke discussions to create a more equal environment for all whilst celebrating the work of past, present and future generations of architects.







## What?

The Equal Architect Symposium was held on Friday 8th March 2019, International Women's Day and was designed as a celebration and discussion focusing on architectural education and practice.

The Symposium was launched on Thursday evening by Lady Patty Hopkins, co founder of Hopkins Architect, Honorary Fellow of the RIAS and AIA and winner of the RIBA Gold Medal for Architecture in 1994.

The day was structured in a way that it removed the ego from the proceedings and a selection of guest speakers were all asked to talk on a theme for 10 minutes before the panel discussed topics raised with the wider audience. The audience consisted of 50 students from Schools of Architecture in Scotland and 50 people from Practice/ Academia.

To support inclusive discussions an interactive 'Padlet Page' was launched and hosted throughout the day where questions and comments could be made in real time. The venue and layout was aimed to support discussion and create a relaxed atmosphere which afforded honest and open discussions on sensitive and passionate topics.

The 4 themes discussed throughout the day were:

Equality and Diversity  
Education and Inspiration  
Identity and Practice  
Future

The guests were experts in their fields and talked about their work, research and experiences.

The day was structured as follows:

First Session: Equality and Diversity

Alisha Morenike Fischer –co- founder of Black Females in Architecture  
Urban Researcher and Landscape & Architectural Designer, Fisher is intrigued by identity politics, ecology, technology and urbanism within the built environment. With the goal of facilitating emerging built environment specialists to be leaders of social change, she is Founding Director of multi-disciplinary design collective 3°09. Additionally, providing access, support and infrastructure to young aspiring architects, Alisha is Co-Founder of the BFA network (Black Females In Architecture) which now has over 150 members in the space of 6 months and is Founder of 'Young Architects Network', an active network on Facebook which features over 200 students internationally. She is member of Academy of Urbanism as a Young Urbanist and DeepLab UK which investigates digital culture and the synergies between art, hacking and surveillance.

Jos Boys, Dis-ordinary Project

Co-founder of Matrix, Feminist Design Co-operative in 1979, and co-author of Making Space: women and the man-made environment in 1984. Jos most recently is working on 'The Dis/Ordinary Architecture Project which explores how disability and accessibility can be done 'differently' within architecture, interiors and related design practices.

Kathy Li

Kathy is a co-founder of 'Missing in Architecture' and as Stage 1 Leader at the Mackintosh School of Architecture is interested in introducing first year students to empathetic design approaches to architecture from their very first design experience.

## Second Session: Education & Inspiration

Dr Harriet Harriss

Dr Harriet Harriss (RIBA, PFHEA) is an architect, a Reader in Architectural Education and leads the Post-Graduate Research programmes in Architecture at the Royal College of Art. Her teaching, research and writing are largely focused upon pioneering new pedagogic models for design education as captured in *Radical Pedagogies: Architectural Education & the British Tradition*. Her 2016 publication, *A Gendered Profession*, asserts the need for widening participation as a means to ensure professions remains as diverse as the society it seeks to serve. Dr. She was most awarded a Clore Fellowship (2016-17), elected to the European Association of Architectural Education (EAAE) Council in summer 2017, and in 2018, awarded a Principal Fellowship of the UK's Higher Education Academy. Harriet's consultancy roles include the UK Department for Education construction industry panel, international programme validations, and pedagogy design and development. From 2018-2020, Harriet will chair the RIBA's prestigious Dissertation Medal judging panel.

Isabel Deakin

Isabel is co-founder of 'Missing in Architecture' and Stage 1 co-pilot at MSA and is interested in female role models in education and looking at ways to introduce inclusive design into the curriculum.

Helen Aston– Manchester Univeristy, Praxis

Helen Aston has taught at Manchester School of Architecture since 2005 having previously undertaking a Senior Researcher post for many years at Kingston School of Architecture. She currently leads BA3 at the MSA and is the atelier leader for PRAXXIS a feminist BA3 and M.Arch studio atelier. All of her teachings have been feminist for the last twenty years approaching most things from a personal and political position at all sorts of scales whether building with others or developing alternative pedagogical approaches.

Abigail Patel – Part 2 architect and member of the RIBA Council

Abigail is a graduate of The University of Edinburgh (ESALA) and is now in her final year of her MArch (Masters of Architecture) at The Manchester School of Architecture where she is studying within the feminist atelier PRAXXIS. She has been involved with the RIBA since 2015 and is currently a student representative on the RIBA North West regional council and the RIBA National Council. Individually, Abigail is interested in researching and writing around the topic of the gender gap in the architectural industry and discussions this brings about equality, diversity and inclusion. She is currently working alongside her fellow RIBA student/associate representatives to establish the Future Architects Network- a representative student body that will create, drive and deliver an agenda that clearly sets out how architectural education should be focused in the UK.

Kirsty Lees

Kirsty is the stage 3 co-pilot at MSA and has developed the 'Interact' project, a unique collaborative design project with architecture, engineering and quantity surveying students, for the 21st century.

### Third Session: Identity and Practice

Flora Samuel, University of Reading – 'Knowledge architects- women who design processes and make stuff happen'

Flora Samuel is the first RIBA Vice President for Research, a twice nationally elected member of RIBA Council and Professor of Architecture in the Built Environment at the new School of Architecture at the University of Reading. Before this she was the first female Head of School at the University of Sheffield. Because of her frustrations at the way in which architects have been marginalised from the production of the built environment, she has over the last ten years focused her attention the way in which Architects evidence and communicate their value. Her book *Why Architects Matter* (2018) is the result of over £500K of research council funding to investigate this issue. She is passionate about supporting the development of research in practice - in 2016 she set up the Research Practice Leads, a group of over 30 practices that meets quarterly to advance the cause of research of architectural research. Their current focus is on the development of a Social Value Toolkit for Architects to demonstrate the wellbeing value of buildings. She also leads the Place strand within the UK Collaborative Housing Evidence Centre (CACHE).

Miranda Webster

Miranda is a co-founder of 'Missing in Architecture', Stage 5 co-pilot at MSA and is a partner in the award winning practice Cameron Webster Architects. Miranda is interested in how the drawing process in both practice and studio can benefit the design process.

Voices of Experience – Jude Barber, Nicola McLachlan, Suzanne Ewing

A collaborative project motivated by the lack of recognised female presence and role models within architecture and the built environment. Voices of Experience is an investigation into undiscovered legendary women who have made important contributions to architecture and the built environment.

### Fourth Session: Future

Young architects – Nadia Malekianpour, Conor Keapock + Another Perspective – Shemol Rahman, Louisa McGuigan, Gaelen Britton

Recently graduated from the Mac, Nadia is currently working as a part 2 architect at John Gilbert Architects and is interested in a feminist approach to architecture and urban design.

Conor graduated from the Mackintosh School of Architecture in 2018 where his

thesis focused on the development of a new public space for Madrid, informed by the development of a queer architectural framework. His dissertation examined changes in LGBTQI+ nightlife within the city of Glasgow between 1997 - 2017. He currently works as an Urban Design Officer at the London Borough of Hackney. Another Perspective is a student initiated project founded in response to a gap in the curriculum in architectural education.

John Thorne -Sustainability

How can creative people assist us to make sense of our lives and planet, helping us recognise and take action on the global challenges we face? How can we adapt practice and future careers and work to better protect the environment, challenge social problems and improve ethical use of resources?

Extensive travels and 25 years living and working across Scotland brought me to the GSA in 2013 where I work with students and staff to challenge traditional thinking and approaches.

Keynote Speaker

Sarah Wigglesworth

Sarah is director of her London-based architectural practice which she founded in 1994. Her work is acknowledged as a pioneering influence in British Architecture. Specialising in exploring ecological solutions, her practice has designed buildings for the educational, community, masterplanning, cultural and housing sectors, in particular specialist housing, and has won many awards for its work. Drawing on careful research, exploring the context behind each project and working closely with clients and users, Sarah aims to create inspiring sustainable environments suited to the budget, maintenance regimes and capability of their occupants.

Sarah also writes and speaks about her and the practice's work, authoring two books and many articles. She was granted the title Royal Designer for Industry in 2012 and was awarded an MBE in 2003. Between 1997 and 2016 Sarah was Professor of Architecture at the University of Sheffield where she headed the DWELL research project designing exemplary neighbourhoods and housing for older people.







## Why?

The Equal Architect symposium aimed to enhance awareness and understanding of the significance of female architects within the education system and the profession and to provoke discussions to create a more equal environment for all whilst celebrating the work of past, present and future generations of architects.

The intention is to use the Equal Architect Symposium as the launch pad for a longer term research strategy that focuses on equality and diversity within architectural education and within the architecture profession.

The first research output will seek to address the research question:

How do the current teaching methods within architectural education influence the graduate roles within practice surrounding gender equality?







## How?

Through both quantitative and qualitative research methods undertaken through the symposium it is the intention to develop an extended strategy of research into the topic. It is also the aim to establish a key networking group through the invited guest speakers to further advance and support the research within a wider academic and professional setting. This network support is intended to extend beyond the initial research questions and form the basis of further research questions within the topic that will be addressed sequentially over a period of time.

### Qualitative Research:

Guest speakers and guests will be invited to take part in a survey which seeks to investigate their experiences within both academia and the profession in relation to equality and diversity focusing on gender. This survey will be an anonymous paper survey issued prior to the symposium as part of their welcome pack. The responses will form the basis of the research into the current conditions surrounding gender inequalities firstly within education and its relationship with practice.

### Qualitative Research/ Action Research:

Through the recorded discussions involving guests speakers and the audience framed around the symposium topics of 'Equality and Diversity', 'Education and Inspiration', 'Identity and Practice' and 'Future', individual interviews/ podcasts with



the guest speakers and field notes taken throughout the day it is the intention to collect sufficient data in relation to the research question to establish themes to investigate further.





# Findings

## Conclusions

The wide ranging discussions and overwhelming support from the symposium has highlighted the significance of this topic.

The data from the on line questionnaire and padlet page will be analysed and the findings collated in a series of infographics.

All the talks from the day will be accessible via our website.

The network of guests from the symposium are intended to grow and create a strong supportive environment for change.

This will be developed and disseminated through a variety of channels.







## OUTPUT

Each of the members of Missing in Architecture presented a paper at the symposium.

The papers presented were as follows:

Isabel Deakin: What Rebecca Showed Me....

Kathy Li: Architectural Education- it's not just about the architect

Miranda Webster: Learning through Drawing - sketching your identity

These are all available on planet-e-stream.





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & REFERENCES

## Sponsors

- Mackintosh School of Architecture
- GSA Sustainability Group
- Creative Scotland
- Architecture and Design Scotland
- GIA (Glasgow Institute of Architects)

## Acknowledgements

- Sally Stewart, Head of MSA, GSA
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- Sam Currie, MSA, GSA
- Vivian Carbalho, MSA, GSA

## References

- Architectural Reviews annual Women in Architecture Survey
- AAXX100: Celebrating 100 Year of Women at the AA, conference and associated book
- Lean Out: Dawn Foster
- Women & Power: A Manifesto: Mary Beard
- We Should all be Feminists: Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche
- Men Explain Things to Me: Rebecca Solnit
- A Gendered Profession: Ruth Morrow, Harriet Harriss, James Benedict Brown, James Soane
- Where are the Women Architects?: Despina Stratigakos

