



# International Archive of Women in Architecture

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
Fall 2003

No. 15

## LILIA SOFER SKALA

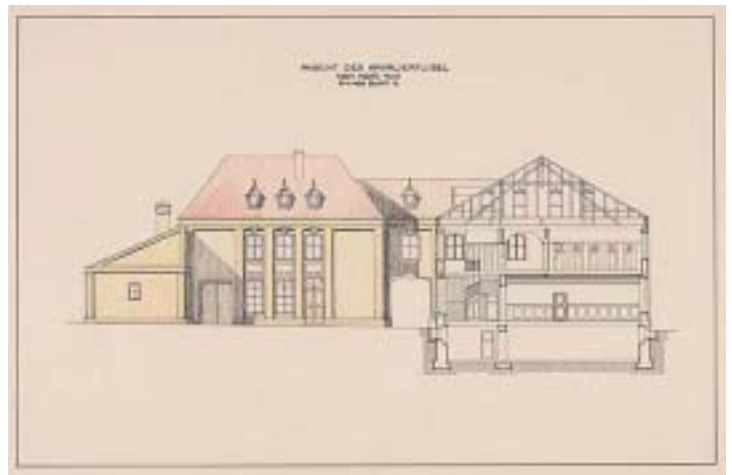
Lilia Sofer Skala, the first female architect in Austria, fled the Nazis in 1939 with personal belongings that included her student portfolio from graduate studies in architecture at the University of Dresden. Art and architecture historian Despina Stratigakos arranged for the donation of this remarkable portfolio containing 65 original watercolor, charcoal and ink drawings, sketches and plans. We are grateful to Lilia Skala's sons Peter and Martin for this generous donation. Following are some thoughts and memories that Peter Skala shared with us about his mother.

*Thank you so much for your letter of March 21<sup>st</sup> and your continuing interest in Lilia. As you know, she became well known as an actress rather than as an architect. I don't really know why she chose architecture as a career except that she had a penchant for beauty, for drawing and probably more important than any of these, she wanted to leave the restraining discipline of her family's home.*

*Rather early, and by that I suspect around the age of 14 or 15 years, she became fascinated by the theatre and when she finished her secondary education in a very traditional Austrian Gymnasium (languages Greek and Latin) she wanted to go on the stage. In Vienna at that time—approximately at the start of World War I—well brought up young women did not go on the stage. The stage was still considered to be a supply point for girlfriends of the aristocracy; also, Austria's Emperor, Franz Joseph, had a well-known and well-entrenched relationship with one of Vienna's most famous actresses. My grandfather, whom I remember well, and my grandmother were conservative, at least as far as the children were concerned, and although they were generous in their affections, going "on the stage" was just not done.*

*Getting out of a tightly disciplined parents' home in Vienna was probably very much on Lilia's mind when she decided to go to university. The University of Vienna did not accept women in its School of Architecture and probably did not accept women in any of its faculties. To get this ridiculous idea of becoming an actress out of her mind, her father decided to send her to finishing school in Dresden and, thereafter to the University of Dresden. That location was chosen because grandfather had close business friends in that town with whom Lilia could live and who would also look after her.*

*When she went off to Dresden to finishing school, World War I had already started. Grandfather's business friends were well off and Lilia was immediately introduced into the society of a number of young women and, apparently, thoroughly enjoyed herself. Starting university was a continuation of finishing school, with the addition of young men. She was a beautiful young woman, vivacious, bright and probably spoilt. At the University at that time there were already young men who were war invalids. She became very attached to*



Section/elevation drawing from Lilia Sofer Skala's student portfolio

*one of them. He had only one leg. I remember his name—she mentioned him to me. In the custom of the times they called each other only by their last names. His was Goedeke. I still have photos of them together, rather stilted and usually in a crowd with other young people. He was also an architecture student.*

*Lilia, as you know, finished with a Sum cum Laude. I am sure she was not an easy student, as she always had strong likes and dislikes and—particularly at that age—there were teachers whom she revered and others for whom she, apparently, had little respect.*



Plan drawing from Lilia Sofer Skala's student portfolio



Charcoal sketch from Lilia Sofer Skala's student portfolio

After her degree, towards the end of World War I, she was back in Vienna. My grandfather had visited her at the University and she had been to Vienna on visits and any permanent (i.e. marriage) relationship with Goedeke was not in the cards. My grandfather would not permit his daughter to marry "a cripple." Goedeke incidentally, stayed in touch with my family; he later married and had a son. I remember his visits to us in Vienna in the late 20s. Lilia returned to her family's home and my guess would be that it was a rather galling experience. The freedom she had in Dresden was gone. She continued to live at home and specialized, as you know, in Innenarchitektur. Prior to her specialization, she also had to work as a builder's apprentice which I imagine in conservative Vienna, created a certain amount of attention—a good-looking girl working with some rather rough types building a house!

Life for a young woman in Vienna in 1920 was reasonably subdued because the post-war years had made life in Austria difficult. On the other hand, my grandfather was a well-to-do man with business connections throughout Europe and even in the difficult economic circumstances of post-war Austria, the family's standard of living did not seem to have suffered. For instance, Lilia continued to go to carnival balls. I have some of the programmes from that time. Eventually she met my father at a ball given by one of Vienna's rowing clubs. If one asked in later life why she married him, she said, probably only somewhat flippantly, "Oh, he was such a beautiful dancer." My own guess is that she wanted independence and, being the wife of a charming, easy-going and well-to-do young Viennese man gave her all of that. As a wedding present, my grandfather bought them a house in which they occupied one of three flats. Life in 1922/23 seemed to be fun. I came along about a year after they were married. My arrival was obviously very welcome as the first-born in the family and Lilia was an adoring and loving mother. At that time she had domestic help, a housekeeper, a baby nurse and later on a nanny. About a year after I was born, Lilia started acting lessons. I do not know to what extent this was planned but certainly the stage never seems to have left her mind. It became her abiding vocation; she felt this was where her creative talent could unfold and she stuck with it until the end of her life. She played her last part

when she was 94. Nonetheless, her love of beauty and her interest in architecture continued its pervasive influence. One of the reasons it was so difficult for her to feel at home in the United States was because she felt there was a "lack of beauty." I remember her first visit to Europe after World War II. It was to Paris where my family and I lived at that time and she became practically inebriated with the beauty of the city. She knew all the architectural details of the Renaissance houses and could explain to me why, for instance, there was an unequal spacing of the windows. When she returned to Vienna that same summer, it was the baroque architecture of the city which once again captivated her. Interestingly enough, during that visit I became aware of her insistence on being called by her title, Frau-Diplom Ingenieur. In the United States she was Lilia; in Austria it was different, even though she was a well-known actress.

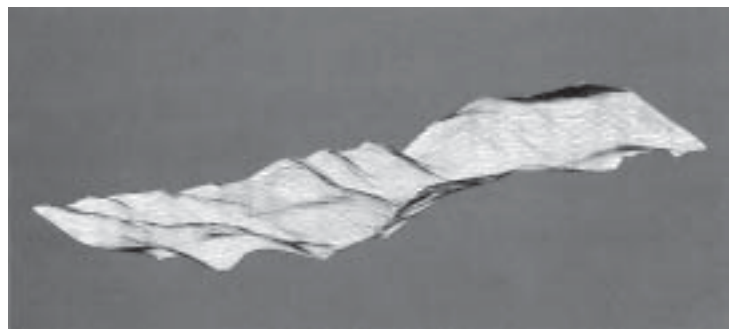
I am most grateful to you and the ladies at Virginia Tech for keeping Lilia's memory alive.

With best regards  
Yours sincerely  
Peter Skala

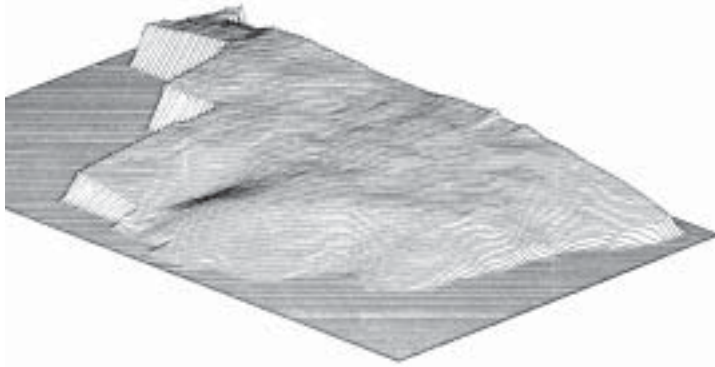
## BEVERLY WILLIS: Computerized Approach to Residential Land Analysis (CARLA)

In this time when computers seem indispensable to daily life, indeed sometimes seem to dominate daily life, it is difficult to think back to their nascence. One of Beverly Willis's generous donations to the archive allows us to look back to the time when computers were first used by architecture firms. In the early 1970s her firm, Willis and Associates Inc., was among the first three architecture firms in the country to program and use computers in design applications. Their program, Computerized Approach to Residential Land Analysis (CARLA) was used for environmental studies and land use planning.

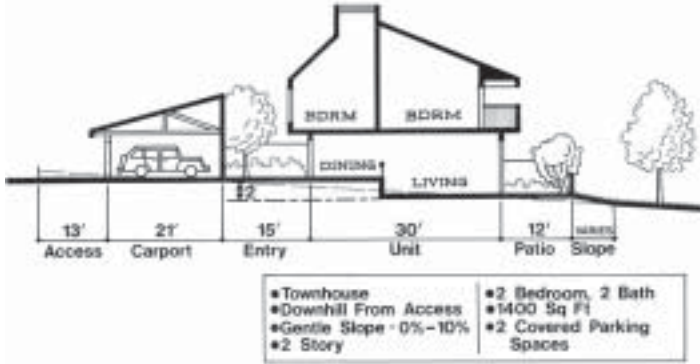
Throughout her career, Beverly Willis has been especially concerned with the relationship between building and landscape. This concern for the landscape and her innovative spirit prompted Willis to seek a solution to the problem of damage wrought by large scale housing developments constructed in the late 1960s. These developments had caused such problems as erosion, flooding, mudslide and general damage to the natural environment. Sensing that the new computer technology of the time might offer a solution, Willis hired two computer programmers to create the CARLA program in house for Willis and Associates, Inc. The program succeeded in minimizing both construction costs and environmental disturbance by mapping



Computer Drawn Site Perspective, Existing Land Form



Computer Drawn Site Perspective after Grading



One of several proposed planning units

the physical and environmental characteristics of the existing site, and matching building types and land uses to the areas of the site best suited for particular purposes. This determination of the best land use relationships was achieved by examining the interaction of a number of factors such as building unit types, the best placement of those buildings on the site, as well as the appropriate density and distribution of units. Existing slopes and drainage patterns were analyzed and graphic representations were generated by the computer; then cut and fill estimates, roads and building groupings could be considered. By means of the computer, twenty to thirty different configurations could be produced and checked against both budget goals and environmental concerns. Open space was preserved by minimizing the amount of land necessary for roads and building footprints. The cost evaluations generated by CARLA were based on actual quantities, such things as cubic feet of earth to be moved, storm sewers required, roads to be paved and foundation costs for different areas of the site, whereas before CARLA, construction estimates were based on the very costly guideline of historically grounded rules of thumb.

We are most grateful to Beverly Willis for her ongoing generous support of the IAWA and for this particular donation which gives us a glimpse of the first use of computer technology in the design firm.

## ZELMA WILSON: A New Addition to the Archive

Zelma Wilson, a female architect practicing in the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century, believed that women architects had a unique view on architecture that differed from men. She helped to set the path for women architects for generations to come. As part of a new generation of these women architects, I feel privileged to process her collection of architectural papers documenting her career. In my second year of Undergraduate architecture studies at Virginia Tech, processing this collection has shown me more of the world outside the classroom and has given me insight as to what projects come up on a daily basis in the life of a female architect. From correspondence to sketches of plans, her collection is making every element I work on in studio more relevant to the world I will enter upon my graduation in 2006.

Zelma Wilson was born in New York, New York in 1918 and received her Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Southern California. Her architectural career was impacted by her marriage to Michael Wilson, a screenwriter who was blacklisted during the McCarthy era in the early 1950s. At the time of his blacklisting, the family moved to France for eight years and was unable to return to the United States until 1964. During this time Wilson continued her graduate education at L'Ecole de Beaux Arts and Fountainbleau School of the Arts. This was a trying time for the family and their survival depended upon her meager income as an architect and the minimal amount that Michael Wilson received for his scripts.

Wilson received her architectural license in 1956 from the State of California and opened her firm in 1967. During her professional career she worked with a great many architects and had several partners with whom she participated in joint ventures. Highlights from her career include a 1977 award from the Ventura County chapter of the AIA for her San Antonio Creek Bridge Project and for Ojai City Hall. Wilson was inducted into the AIA College of Fellows in 1983.

In addition to practicing as an architect, Wilson lectured and taught at California Polytechnic. She also served as president of the Ventura County Chapter of the AIA and was an appointee to the Earthquake Preparedness Task Force from 1982 until 1985.

The IAWA at Virginia Tech was pleased to receive Ms. Wilson's Papers. Some of her larger projects include childcare centers for California State University, Los Angeles, for the Navy at Port Hueneme and for Vandenberg Air Force Base. She also designed single family residences, commercial buildings, churches, city municipal buildings, schools and recreational facilities. Documents of these projects are part of the archive's permanent collection.

The Zelma Papers were donated in 1991 and 1997 by Wilson and her daughter. I am happy to have the privilege of working with this collection and am pleased that it will be available for Virginia Tech students after me to learn from as well.

Jessica Caruthers, 2nd Year Undergraduate Architecture



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This year's message is taken from my annual report. However, I would like to begin by stressing the importance of our Annual Newsletter. We are seeking a funding source to support this annual publication. Please contact me if you have suggestions, contacts or deep pockets.

The Annual Meeting was only part of a weekend of research presentations, working meetings, exhibit openings, talks, discussions, and serious yet exhilarating devotion by the advisors and presenters to push the mission of the IAWA. On Friday, a day-long symposium provided an arena for discussion and presentations of original research in the area of Women in Architecture. Scholars, practitioners, and students described their work both formally and informally in sessions open to faculty, students, and other attendees. The symposium will expand as an annual event occurring during the IAWA annual meeting weekend. Special Collections, housing the IAWA, remained open throughout the day concluding with presentations by **Gail McMillan**, IAWA Archivist and **Catherine Obrien**, IAWA Manuscripts Curator. Saturday's annual working meeting of the Board of Advisors at **Milka Bliznakov's** home was followed by a reception at the Annual IAWA Exhibit, College of Architecture and Urban Studies Cowgill Lobby. The reception was held in honor of **Rosaria Piomelli**, Advisor Emerita, who (finally) received her Emerita certificate and who made brief remarks on her past and current practice and experience in teaching Architecture. The weekend concluded on Sunday with the Annual Meeting of the Board of Advisors. During that meeting, former advisor **Tony Wrenn** was elected IAWA Emeritus Advisor. Minutes from that meeting, as well as from past meetings, are available on the IAWA website.

Graduate and Undergraduate Architecture students are precious to us for their intelligence, enthusiastic originality, and vast energy. More often than not they are the reason the IAWA programs are so successful. **Dawn Bushnaq**, past IAWA Graduate Assistant, designed and mounted the annual exhibit with **Laura Boletti de Castro**. This year's exhibition featured a mockup (stage one) of a future traveling exhibition that will celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the founding of the IAWA. In addition to designing and building an inventive display panel prototype, Bushnaq and de Castro engaged in original research for each panel and developed/curated a compelling design for the exhibit structure. They reveal how design and research are integral components of creative and inventive making. The exhibit that they initiated and constructed is an important beginning for our next major program in 2005: the IAWA's 20<sup>th</sup> year anniversary celebration. The exhibit also included panels that detailed original student archival research on modern architecture within the IAWA. Another component of the exhibit included a series of posters of women architects who practice or build in Asia.

Dawn Bushnaq also worked with the editors of the 2002 IAWA Newsletter. Laura Boletti de Castro gave much of her time to the IAWA, processing and researching collections for Special Collections as well as assisting the Archivist, Special Collections, IAWA Chair and Executive Board of Advisors during her tenure with the IAWA.

This year we welcomed a number of new advisors to the Board. **Terry Clements**, ASLA and Associate Professor of LA was elected to take the position vacated by Bert Rodriguez. She is also the IAWA Treasurer. **Kay Edge**, Assistant Professor of Architecture at VT in the Graduate Program, elected to complete Brian Katen's position on the board, continues as co-editor of the IAWA Newsletter with **Heather Ball**, Art and Architecture Librarian. **Lindsay Bremner**,

Chair of Architecture at the University of the Witwatersrand in Killarney, South Africa, represents the IAWA in South Africa. Ms Bremner, a registered architect with the South African Council for Architects, studied at the University of Cape Town (B. Arch) and at the University of the Witwatersrand (M. Arch). She has been a chair and member of countless committees, tribunals, and forums including the Transvaal Institute of Architects Housing and Urbanisation Committee, the Executive Committee of the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, Chair of the Planning, Urbanisation and Environmental Management Committee, Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council; Chair of the Inner City Committee, Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council; Member of the Board of the Seven Buildings Project, Johannesburg; Member of the Board of the Inner City Housing Upgrading trust (ICHUT), Johannesburg; Chair of the Housing and Urbanisation Committee, Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council. **Yasmeen Lari**, the first woman Architect of Pakistan, is the Principal of Lari Associates, one of the best-known architectural practices in the country. After receiving her early schooling in Queen Mary's, Adbistan-I-Soofia and Kinnaird College, Lahore, she graduated from the Oxford School of Architecture. As President of the Institute of Architects, Pakistan (IAP) and the first chairperson of the Pakistan Council of Architects and Town Planners (PCATP), she was instrumental in bringing about recognition for the professions of architecture and town planning. In 1969, her work on squatter settlements persuaded the government to change its policy from slum clearance and uprooting of residences, to regularization and upgrading of these settlements. As Director of Heritage Foundation and an outspoken proponent of conservation, she helped save a number of important and unique architectural treasures in Karachi and Lahore. Her efforts resulted in the Sindh Government agreeing in 1994 to bring about a law for the protection of cultural heritage in the province and in 1997 the notification of over 600 historic buildings of Karachi published by Heritage Foundation. Yasmeen Lari's pioneering works include 'Traditional Architecture of Thatta' and 'The Dual City: Karachi During the Raj'. Her current work is "KaravanKarachi" a program with activities for women and children in Karachi. Lari has been named UNESCO Project officer to identify and save cultural landmarks and develop cultural tourism through these landmarks. **Solange d'Herbez del la Tour**, re-elected to the Board, was recently in Berlin to participate as a member of the French delegation at the UIA Congress. She writes that the next congress of UIFA, of which she is President, will take place in Hong-Kong in 2004. **Joan Wood**, although retired from the board knows that she will be tapped to contribute to our ongoing collecting strategies in the Boston/New England area for the upcoming Celebration of 20 years of collecting in 2005. Both **Brian Katen** and **Humberto Rodriguez** retired from the Board after a number of years of dedicated service to the IAWA.

The IAWA continues to expand its following. Recent applicants for both stages of the **Milka Bliznakov Prize** revealed a number of compelling proposals for the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Milka Bliznakov prize. Five proposals have advanced to the second stage of the Prize. Five finalists of the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Milka Bliznakov prize submitted projects each making its own original contribution to the mission of the IAWA. The winner is announced elsewhere in the Newsletter. All applicants have the potential to make important contributions to knowledge related to Women in Architecture.

Last year 2500 Newsletters were printed and distributed around the world. The IAWA Newsletter along with brochures and information about the Milka Bliznakov Prize was exhibited at the EDRA



conference in Philadelphia, PA as well as at the SAH and other national and international venues. An interview with Susana Torre was published in CAUS journal "The Reflective Practitioner," available on both the IAWA and the CAUS Websites. I have applied for a number of grants from within the University to support IAWA activities. Our application to the Diversity Incentive Grant for the IAWA 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition for \$4400, Phase One, was not funded. This seed money would have provided matching funds as well as money to develop the design and organizational strategies, a prospectus (in the form of a catalogue and exhibit panels) to promote the future 20<sup>th</sup> year celebration. Recently, I have asked to be included on the Deans' (of Architecture and Library) requests for outside funding for endowed students fellowships, and other educational and research related activities. The annual Women and Minority Artists and Scholars Lecture Series awarded a grant to support travel and other expenses for Yasmeen Lari, Architect to lecture and attend the 2003 Annual Meeting of the IAWA. This series also supported international travel of Brinda Somaya in 2001.

I look forward to hearing from you next year as we expand our plans for the 20<sup>th</sup> year celebration of the IAWA in 2005 and search for alternative funds and gifts to support our ongoing projects (such as this newsletter). Thank you for your dedication and continued interest and welcome to our newest advisors - we look forward to working with you on the 2005 celebration.

Marcia F. Feuerstein, Chair, IAWA

## ARCHIVIST'S REPORT: Highlights of New Collections



Ink drawing, Lilia Sofer Skala

Both paper and stone serve as relics that teach us about the events and people of yesterday. Though it might seem that stone is stronger than paper, for the purposes of preserving history, the reverse is often true. Paper at times proves more durable than stone and provides the only crucial link to history. The International Archive of Women in Architecture (IAWA) has been collecting and preserving these paper records for almost twenty years. The archive captures, preserves and perpetuates the contributions of women to the field of architecture by providing access to celebrated as well as unknown designs and structures. Honored to be its archivist, I offer this column to briefly share some of the highlights in this year's additions to the IAWA legacy

as well as comment on the resources and strategy needed for its care and continued development.

**Lilia Sofer Skala**, the first female architect in Austria, fled the Nazi's in 1939 with personal belongings including her student portfolio from graduate studies at the University of Dresden. Art and architecture historian Despina Stratigakos arranged for the donation of this remarkable portfolio containing 65 original watercolor, charcoal and ink drawings, sketches and plans donated by Skala's two sons, Peter and Martin. Though Lilia studied architecture, she is better known for her acting career, performing on stage, in television, and film. Presently touring is a one-act play entitled, *Lilia*, by Skala's granddaughter Libby. The play recently received a glowing review from the New York Times. <http://www.liliashow.homestead.com/>

**Brinda Somaya**, founder trustee, donated a collection of outreach materials from The Hecar Foundation's exhibit, "Women in Architecture – 2000 Plus" that documents the dynamic work of women architects from South Asia. The donated collection is comprised of twenty-nine exhibit panels, a published catalog, and her book wherein, "twenty-six committed women architects from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and a representative each from Singapore and from Australia, speak about the ideas, emotions and beliefs that inspire their work." (<http://www.hecarfoundation.org/publications.html>) Brinda Somaya, India's 2000 Designer of the Year is an architect, conservationist, post-modernist, abstract minimalist, and urban activist from Bombay. She received her architecture degree from the Sir JJ College of Architecture and a Master of Arts degree from Smith College, Massachusetts, USA. Somaya has offices in Mumbai and Bangalore. **Iris Alex**, Development Administrator for the Facilities Development Corporation of the State of New York, building consultant for the Young Women's



From the IAWA collection, pen and ink sketch, "Naglgare" by Ilse Koci



Christian Association, and Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, donated 8.5 linear feet including original drawings from Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, Related Designs, and N.Y. State Facilities Development Corp. She also donated her original correspondence with California architect Julia Morgan (Morgan designed nearly 800 buildings from 1900-1950) and architectural historian Sara Boutelle, Morgan's biographer. Other materials in the collection include photographs, negatives, plans, medals, and plaques and are now combined with Alex's 2000 donation of correspondence, articles, drawings, and her manual, "A Building Manual for the YWCA," written in 1978.

This year architect A. Jane Duncombe contributed original drawings and other records documenting her career spanning 1957-1994. Duncombe, born in 1925 in Ontario, Canada, graduated from the Art Institute of Chicago's School of Industrial Design where she studied under Marya Lilien. During World War II Lilien was the first woman to receive an architectural degree in Poland and was a Charter Apprentice at Taliesin. Lilien told Duncombe early in her studies, "You must be an architect, you have it!" Lilien's insight predicted Duncombe's apprenticeship under Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin from 1950-1951. In 1956 after working for a year in the Chicago area and in Canada, Duncombe moved to San Francisco to work with Lois Davidson Gottlieb, also a graduate of Taliesin. Duncombe has practiced in the San Francisco Bay area for forty years where she has completed a broad range of projects. The IAWA now proudly includes documentation of those projects.

**Lois Gottlieb**, a contemporary and partner of Jane Duncombe and a residential designer in San Francisco, California, donated a significant addition to her collection already housed in the IAWA. Gottlieb was born in San Francisco in 1926 and attended Stanford University from 1944 to 1947 before studying at the Harvard Graduate School of Design from 1949 to 1950. She served as an apprentice to Frank Lloyd Wright in 1948 to 1949 as a part of a Taliesin Fellowship. Gottlieb has designed residences in California, Washington State, Idaho, and Virginia and is the author of *Environment and Design in Housing*, published by Macmillan in 1965. Significant materials in this year's addition include her handwritten Harvard class notes, her masters thesis, over fifty original drawings, photographs, correspondence, articles, and a storyboard for the film, "Building a Dream: The Gottlieb House". Overall, the Gottlieb collection gives a rare view of this woman's career as it developed. Additional collections that space constraints preclude full description of include a donation from **Jane L. Hastings**, the Principal of Seattle, Washington's oldest woman-owned architectural firm The Hastings Group – Architects (1959). She has donated the Group's architectural records. Included are 8 cartons of original drawings and 2 boxes of display boards, medals, plaques, awards, articles, photographs, negatives and plans. **Paula Treder** donated architectural records documenting her designs of South Carolina buildings (1969-1972) including a library, fire station, college building, and residences. **Tony Wrenn**, former Archivist of the American Institute of Architects and Board Member of the IAWA purchased for the IAWA **Barbara Parker Robinson's** drawings for an addition to and remodeling of Washington DC's Wherlich Residence.

### Caring for the Collections

As the archive continues to attract significant collections of original drawings the Library acknowledges the present need to focus on preservation and access to these collections. This is necessary in

order to achieve a sustainable collection of excellent research value, especially now as the IAWA Call for Collections is under way. Preservation of larger collections of original drawings must take priority over the immediate processing of, and online access to, small collections of brochures and other printed materials. Last year the IAWA processed 40 collections totaling 26 linear feet. This year, reflective of prioritizing preservation, the archive has processed 6 collections totaling 70 linear feet with the goal of reaching 100 linear feet by the end of the recording period (October-September.) (please see Jessica Caruther's article in this newsletter describing her work on the Zelma Wilson collection) This is exciting news as it reflects the strong commitment of the library to the preservation and care of the IAWA.

The support of the IAWA community is also needed. Ultimately, the collection needs to have a full-time archivist devoted to its development, outreach, access, and preservation. Until it does, the beautiful sketches and drawings documenting the work of women in architecture can only be preserved and organized. With more support for the archive (perhaps by creating an endowment to fund a position) online access can continue to be provided worldwide through the Internet. First, we must preserve the collected documentation and then we can share it, for without it, we might not remember or learn about the contributions of women architects to the history of the built environment.

Jennifer Gunter, Coordinator, Special Collections

### CALL FOR COLLECTIONS

You are cordially invited to become actively involved in the planning the 20th anniversary celebration of the International Archive of Women in Architecture in 2005! A major exhibition (with an online component) is being planned that will travel following the IAWA's 20th anniversary celebration. As a part of this important effort we are issuing a Call for Collections to contribute to the growth of the IAWA, an institution to which we are all deeply committed. At the 2002 annual meeting of the Board of Advisors, we discussed several events for the celebration of the anniversary, among them a conference, an exhibition, and a call for collections. Although the Archive now has an astonishing 260 collections, the goal is to significantly increase the holdings and to fill gaps in geographic and cultural representation of women in architecture and other design professions. With this letter we are asking friends to donate at least one project from their own work or to solicit a collection by January 1, 2004. If you do not have any appropriate contacts, please refer to the IAWA Guide to the Collections (<http://spec.lib.vt.edu/iawa/guide.html>). Many women have only submitted a resume or firm brochure and could be contacted to donate actual projects.

IAWA 20th Anniversary Celebration Call for Collections Committee

Donna Dunay, IAWA past Chair, 1994-2000; Inge Horton, IAWA Board of Advisors, 1989 to date; Gail McMillan, IAWA Archivist, 1995-2002

To donate materials to the Archive please contact:  
Jennifer Gunter, Coordinator, Special Collections  
Digital Library and Archives, University Libraries  
Virginia Tech  
PO BOX 90001  
Blacksburg, VA 24062-9001  
Telephone: (540) 231-9215



## INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVE OF WOMEN IN ARCHITECTURE (IAWA): A Celebration of 20 years of Collecting

In 2005, the International Archive of Women in Architecture will celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Planning is underway for an International Conference on Women in Architecture, to be held in conjunction with the opening of a 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition. The exhibit will open at the annual conference and then will travel, carrying the celebration throughout the country and world. The projected date for the conference and start of the traveling exhibition is autumn of 2005 or spring 2006.

In 1985, Professor Milka Bliznakov founded the International Archive of Women in Architecture (IAWA) at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia. She initiated the IAWA to fill a void in the historical record of women's achievements in architecture. The IAWA is located in the Special Collections unit of Virginia Tech's University Library's Digital Library and Archives, in Blacksburg, Virginia. The Library and the Department of Architecture, College of Architecture and Urban Studies of Virginia Tech, mutually support the IAWA. Recognized as a national and international treasure, the Board of Advisors of the IAWA is targeting the nation's capitol for this exciting celebration. In addition to being the nation's capitol, Washington, D.C is home to many of our nation's most important and impressive museums – museums that celebrate the extraordinary power of the diverse peoples who have made the designed world. Some of these include the Women's Museum, the Building Museum, and the National Gallery.

The IAWA 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration conference and exhibition offers an opportunity to reveal the historic wealth and beauty of the archive's collections to the nation, the world, and to society at large. The international conference will include lectures by well-known designers and scholars as well as plenary sessions for presentations of current research and design. The conference will augment the exhibition through historical, theoretical, and practical discussions on Women in Architecture. The exhibit catalogue will include essays by scholars and designers who appear at the conference. Conceived as a traveling show, the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration exhibition will primarily focus on women pioneers in the field of architecture (broadly defined), whose work makes up the core of the archive. The exhibition will also include contemporary architects whose presence in the exhibit will act as a counterpoint to the work of pioneering women.

A gala event will open the exhibit expanding the themes begun in "Work in Progress". The exhibition will be complemented by a catalog with essays by conference participants who are prominent scholars in the field. This scholarship will serve to expand in-depth development of the exhibition's context and themes as well as engage the audience of the exhibition and conference with primary source materials used by the scholars. The exhibition will interest professionals active in architecture and related fields (including practitioners and academics), and those with a casual interest in design. Those curious about women's history or social history will also find much to interest them. Young women considering careers in the field may find inspiration in the achievements of an earlier generation. Even children could be included with our plans for the interactive-based displays. We anticipate that it will travel to Universities, Museums, and academic, trade-related, and student conferences throughout the world. The conference will open with a keynote address by a prominent woman

architect or planner and will provide a forum for discussion on various issues relating to women and architecture, viewed from a historical and contemporary perspective. Invited speakers will deliver papers in panels focused on specific themes. Both the conference and the exhibit will be open to the public, students, scholars, and practitioners.

In preparation for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, the Executive Board of the IAWA has made a general call for collections. Additionally, with support of the Department of Architecture at Virginia Tech and Special Collections the IAWA launched a smaller-scale interactive traveling exhibit, entitled "Work in Progress." This exhibit identifies some of the early architects whose collections comprise the core of the Archive. We have already received requests from universities for this smaller exhibition, which bodes well for the popularity of the larger show to open in 2005.

To realize the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, the IAWA seeks the support of public and private organizations interested in supporting the mission of the IAWA. This is a tremendous opportunity to celebrate not only the archive, but also achievements by women in the field of design.



From the IAWA collection, untitled watercolor, Virginia M. Currie

### Women with T-squares: Tracing the Forgotten Architects and Design Professionals

Gail McMillan (director, Digital Library and Archives at Virginia Tech's University Libraries) recently received a \$20,000 VT ASPIRES grant that will fund the systematic expansion of the International Archive of Women in Architecture, improve the record of women's contributions to the built environment, and share the information online. With this grant she will focus on compiling the record of women in architecture and the design professions who worked in the south Atlantic region (coastal states from Virginia to Florida, and Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands). The grant will also support programming improvements to the IAWA (<http://spec.lib.vt.edu/iawa>) biographical database and bring it up to current national standards for interoperability. Anyone with information should email [gailmac@vt.edu](mailto:gailmac@vt.edu).

Support from many contributed to the success of the application, including past and present IAWA Board of Advisors Terry Clements, Donna Dunnay, Marcia Feuerstein, Eileen Hitchingham, Inge Horton, and Tony Wrenn; Sara H. Turner, Archivist, American Institute of Architects.



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**Second Milka Bliznakov Prize Winner; Third Milka Bliznakov Prize Finalists**

The Milka Bliznakov Prize, conferred in recognition of research that advances knowledge of women's contributions to architecture and related design fields, was created to encourage the use and growth of the International Archive of Women in Architecture (<http://spec.lib.vt.edu/iawa/>). The Board of Advisors of the International Archive of Women in Architecture (IAWA) is pleased to announce a Winner and Honorable Mention of the Second Milka Bliznakov. Dr. Elizabeth Birmingham, Department of English, North Dakota State University, was awarded the Second Annual Milka Bliznakov Prize of \$1000 for her research, "Searching for Marion Mahony: Gender, Erasure, & the Discourse of Architectural Studies." The Jury found that the work was one of the best pieces on gender and architecture written in the past few years. The introduction alone makes a substantial contribution to scholarship on women and architecture and in itself would be worthy of the prize. As a whole, the book is tremendously important. Honorable Mention was awarded to Ms. Jane Hession, Independent Scholar, Eden Prairie, MN for her work, "The Houses of Lisl Close."

The Board is also pleased to announce the finalists of Stage One (Review of Proposals) for the Third Milka Bliznakov Prize. Those finalists are:

- Lynn Boyle: "The History of Koryn Rolstad's Contributions to Architecture;
- "Ozlem Erdogu Erkarlan, PhD: "Turkish Women Architects from the late Ottoman and Early Republican Era 1908 - 1960;
- "Maribel Guerra, Architect, Project: Ahimsa S.A. Laboratorios, La Plata Buenos Aires;
- Barbara A. Nadel, FAIA: "Security Design: Achieving Transparency in Civic Architecture;
- "Maria Rentetzi, ABD: "Politics and Gender in the Viennese Architecture of the 1930s: The Case of Helene Koller-Buchwieser;
- "Cathrine Veikos: "Lina Bo Bardi's Museum Picture Gallery: Research through drawings and paintings by Bo Bardi;"

These finalists have been invited to continue their projects to compete in Stage Two for the \$1000 Milka Bliznakov Prize in Fall 2003.

**Annual Milka Bliznakov Prize**

The annual Milka Bliznakov Prize commences each year with a first review of submissions. Proposals consist of a 250-500-word abstract that must be postmarked by 1 September. Projects may include original design work or scholarly research relative to the IAWA collections, and which will contribute to and advance the recognition of women in design. Proposals for Stage One should be sent to IAWA Milka Bliznakov Prize Committee, ATT: Donna Dunay AIA, 202 Cowgill Hall (0205), Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061 ([Ddunay@vt.edu](mailto:Ddunay@vt.edu)) For additional information, please see: <http://spec.lib.vt.edu/iawa>

We are grateful to the following individuals who generously donated funds to the IAWA:

- Milka Bliznakov
- Annette P. Burr \*
- Maria Conforto
- Virginia M. Currie
- Donna Dunay \*
- Kristine Fallon
- Ann Harvey
- Inge S. Horton \*
- Eva Zimmler Huebscher
- Vera Jansone
- Jane Hall Johnson, Estate of
- M. Rosaria Piomelli
- Robert Reuter
- Sigrid Rupp
- Robert E. Stephenson \*
- Despina M. Stratigakos \*
- Vermont Women in Design
- Beverly A. Willis

\*These individuals contributed to the 20th year anniversary fund.