

Using Archives to Educate for Feminist Architectural Praxis

Caroline Watkinson
University of East London

ABSTRACT

This essay utilises the National Life Story Collection Architects' Lives and Matrix Feminist Architecture Archive to reflect on the experiences of women architects in the twentieth century. In so doing, it highlights the gender disparities affecting women in architecture and the problems posed by Authorised Archival Discourse in excluding women's voices from the archival record. It argues that a feminist praxis focused on positionality, intersectionality, and intermediation with end-users emerges from the experiences of women architects of the past and suggests that this might inform current architectural pedagogy and practice in the future.

KEYWORDS

Archives, architecture, pedagogy, women, feminist-praxis

Looking at R.B. Kitaj's painting *The Architects* (1981) of the architect husband and wife team Colin St John Wilson and M.J. Long, enables reflection on three key themes: positionality, intersectionality, and intermediation. First, the positioning of Wilson and Long in the painting creates a sense, to the viewer at least, of gender disparity. Colin St John Wilson is positioned centrally in the painting gazing confidently out towards the viewer while represented in the process of architectural creation. However, M. J. Long, appears almost side-lined as a result of her being placed to the side of the painting in a mode of multi-tasking in the background. Secondly, intersectionality: defined here as working collaboratively at the intersection of different disciplines with an understanding of the role played by multiple identities in defining privilege and experience. The painting's creation was forged as a result of a productive interdisciplinary collaboration between the architects, Wilson and Long, and R. B. Kitaj, the painter, where all three centred identity, privilege, and disadvantage in the process of collaboration. M.J. Long had recently completed Kitaj's Artist Studio (1979) and her signature *stepped bookcase*, steps created and framed by Kitaj's extensive library, can be seen to the left of the painting leading up to a vase of flowers. Additionally, Colin St John Wilson was an avid collector of twentieth-century art and a key patron of Kitaj so the collaborative process worked at the intersection of different disciplines. Thirdly, intermediation. The painting's title and concept is a reference to Henry James' book *The Ambassadors* where the central protagonist, Lewis Strether, is sent as an intermediary from the United States to Europe by his widowed fiancée to prevent the disproved of marriage of her son. In the process, he comes to understand the world from the perspective of the European son and ultimately fails in his duty. It is clear that the process of sitting for and painting *The Architects*, was similarly intermediary. Long and Wilson kept diary entries during their sittings, later published as *Kitaj: The Architects* (2008), reflecting on their role as end-users and on a conversation that ultimately centred co-creation. Moreover, Long went on to publish *Artist Studios* (2009) reflecting on the intermediation necessary to effectively design a studio for an artist and the need to centre their experiences and positionality. Kitaj's reference to Henry James' *The Ambassadors* can be seen as reflecting a similar centring of Long's experience since, like Lewis Strether, she moved from the United States to Europe. In addition, an allusion to Long's experience of architectural education in the United States is also made by Kitaj in his depiction of her Yale University sweatshirt. One might read Kitaj's painting therefore as a commentary on the positionality of architects, the intersectional nature of collaboration, and the intermediation necessary when working with clients.

Ultimately, the painting tells us a lot about the architectural as well as artistic process collaboratively envisaged by Wilson, Kitaj, and Long. It might also be used to reflect on the process of *archiving* architectural practice and the use of archives as a means to shed light on the development of pedagogy and practice within the discipline and the erasures created by this development. Long and Wilson were both interested in their own positionality and process and its relation to the archiving of their joint practice. Wilson was an avid

collector of paintings whose collection was given to Pallant House Art Gallery, essentially creating an *archive* of twentieth-century art. Similarly, Long saw positionality as central to her work and wrote regular reflections on her design process which ultimately enables an archiving of her architectural practice. This can be seen in her reflective *diary format* entries produced during the creation of The Architects painting where on the nineteenth of September 1979 she notes that 'he (Kitaj) decided to set us up in front of his new stepped bookcase'. Long was also central to the creation of the Colin St John Wilson and Partners archive at RIBA helping with donations and funding in 2017. This archive is still undergoing cataloguing but curators have noted that it might prove vital in shedding light on the role of M.J Long in Wilson's architectural practice. This is interesting in that it brings us back to the question of positionality and erasure, which Long's side-lining in The Architects painting prompts reflection on. Despite her keen interest in reflective practice and the process of archiving, a search for recent articles on M. J. Long's practice on JSTOR reveals three records compared to sixty-five for Colin St John Wilson. This suggests a partial erasure of Long's role in architectural practice symptomatic of the wider erasure of women from architectural history.

This essay uses case studies from two archival repositories to reassess the historic role played by women in architecture and to argue that in re-examining this role architecture might better utilise feminist praxis in the development of its pedagogy. It utilises archival material from the British Library's Architects Lives repository and the Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative's archive to undertake a qualitative analysis of women's experience in architecture using case studies of the architects Mary Medd, Jane Drew, and M. J. Long, alongside those of Matrix as a women's collective. In so doing, it seeks to develop a model for feminist praxis centred on the importance of positionality, intersectionality, and intermediation. Ruth Morrow has argued that feminist praxis involves acting as a collective, rather than an individual, listening rather than telling, facilitating rather than controlling, being fluid rather than fixed, advancing practice in non-hierarchical ways, and being doubtful rather than certain. This essay contends that these practices are central to the themes of positionality, intersectionality, and intermediation and are in evidence in the experiences of women architects drawn from the archival record. First, the essay begins by reflecting on the three themes in relation to the theories of African American social theorist bell hooks whose work explored intersectionalities of race, gender, and class in relation to pedagogy. Secondly, building on Laurajane Smith's concept of Authorised Heritage Discourse, it considers the archive as a form of Authorised Archival Discourse and advances this concept in relation to the two archival case studies outlined here as a way of reflecting on the difficulties of locating women architects in history. Thirdly, it analyses the pedagogic and practical experiences of Medd, Drew, Long, and Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative from the existing archival record and argues that their reflections, taken as a whole, advance a feminist praxis centred on positionality, intersectionality, and intermediation. Finally, it suggests ways in which architectural pedagogy

today might draw on the feminist praxis advanced by the archival reflections of women architects. This essay traces the voices of women architects of the past through the archival record to argue that recapturing their experiences enables us to reflect on the power structures within the discipline of architecture that over-prioritises the practice of the white, male, architect today.

D i s c i p l i n a r y E r a s u r e s

In her ground-breaking 1979 essay, 'Why have there been no great women artists?', the art critic Linda Nochlin proposed that to truly give voice to women artists we must re-examine the structures that have fostered disciplinary exclusion. This involves critically examining the role of pedagogy and the factors informing the representation and visibility of women artists. From the standpoint of the late 1970s, Nochlin examined the pedagogical practices of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a way of understanding the impediments to women's participation in professional art. She noted that the way art was taught in this period acted as a barrier to women. For example, it was difficult for women to embark on a Grand Tour of European countries to view the paintings of the Great Masters because travelling alone as a woman was regarded as improper. It was also virtually impossible for women to gain the anatomical understanding necessary to produce history paintings because women were barred from taking part in life drawing classes on grounds of impropriety until the very end of the nineteenth century. These structural barriers created a climate where women were, at least partially, excluded from participation in art practice. This exclusion then helps to explain their underrepresentation in subsequent writing about art history. Nochlin's article has inspired reflection from other disciplines, notably Charlotte Druckman's 'Why are there no great women chefs?' It might therefore repay interrogation in the context of architectural pedagogy and practice. Indeed, recent writing by Lynne Walker, Elizabeth Darling, and others has sought to re-examine the history of women in architecture. Interestingly, Matrix Design Co-operative were not included in the initial 1984 RIBA Women in Architecture exhibition and catalogue and were only partially mentioned in the 2017 AA Women in Architecture catalogue because Matrix feared their full engagement with the project would compromise their questioning of the structures represented by bodies like RIBA. In order to redress this imbalance, they appear as a case study here. Just as Nochlin analysed the pedagogical practices of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to better understand the structural barriers of the 1970s, this essay uses the standpoint of the twenty-first century to analyse the archival recollections of architects educated in the mid-twentieth century. In so doing, it aims to interrogate the history of architectural pedagogy in relation to women architects to ask not what architecture is, but what it might become.

In asking what architectural practice might become, this essay makes use of bell hook's concept of yearning. For hooks, yearning entails focusing on one's positionality in relation to structures in order to bring about change. In other

words, it involves using history to focus not on *who we are* but on what we want to become. hooks' pedagogic theory is useful here because she focuses on the three themes of concern to this essay: positionality, intersectionality, and intermediation. In thinking about positionality, hooks argues that centring one's own experience is essential to the pedagogic process. Indeed, this is the only way of creating a culture of shared empowerment in the classroom and an essential means of subverting the outdated notion that knowledge and the learning process are objective pursuits. For, as bell hooks states, 'sharing personal narratives yet lining that knowledge with academic information really enhances our capacity to know' and underlines the need to examine our own positionality to ensure perceived 'norms' such as whiteness or heteronormativity do not go unexamined. This quotation, with its focus on race and sexuality in relation to gender, demonstrates the centrality of intersectionality to hooks' thinking. This reflects hooks' sense that pedagogy should be a transgression across 'closed boundaries', functioning as an assault on stereotypically perceived distinctions of class, gender, and race that prevent pedagogy resulting in shared understandings. In advancing this concept, hooks argues for the necessity of working across disciplinary and personal boundaries to transform oppressive structures of domination. In arguing for positionality and intersectionality as a focus for pedagogy hooks introduces the importance of intermediation. By this she means that the classroom should become a communal space of mutual sharing, free of hierarchy, rather than an area centred on the voice of the lecturer as a 'compelling benevolent dictator'. As such, a liberatory, self-actualising, 'pedagogy must insist that everyone's presence is acknowledged' and valued in a process which brings everyone together to contribute to the classroom dynamic.

Both Nochlin's sense of structural barriers to progression and bell hooks' argument that these need to be subverted through a radical transgressive pedagogy remain important in the context of twenty-first century architectural practice. Gender disparities continue to be a concern for the discipline and practice of architecture today. More women applied for architecture courses via UCAS than men in 2022 yet structural inequalities in the discipline still make it easier for men to progress in architectural practice. The average gender pay gap across the UK's architecture studios has widened in the course of 2022-23 with the median hourly gender pay gap being 16.7%. Since the median gender pay gap across the UK economy as a whole is 9.4%, architecture appears to face considerable issues of gender disparity. Moreover, out of fifty-six RIBA-validated UK-based architecture schools women lead only 12%. In addition, RIBA reports have noted the gendered allocation of architectural assignments, with women frequently assigned interiors while their male counterparts focus on the exteriors. This has led Women in Architecture to call out systemic discrimination in the profession in their 2023 Manifesto and to argue for a disruption to 'the traditional narrative of architectural history from which women have been largely erased'. Time and space constraints have led this essay to focus on gender disparities

and the voices of women architects in the archive but, as bell hooks has demonstrated, these issues need to be considered in the context of intersectionality and cannot be divorced from factors such as class, race, and sexuality. For example, the Architects Registration Board Equality and Diversity Data records that only 1% of UK architects are Black/Black British, with 7% Asian/Asian British, and 82% White. Moreover, global majority architectural students are often pedagogically excluded because the case studies presented centre white experiences. As Shawn Adams, the co-founder of the Power out of Restriction Collective (POoR), an architectural social enterprise focusing on youth empowerment, has argued 'racism is embedded in the way we talk about architecture because the 'canon' frequently focuses on Le Corbusier and Lloyd Wright rather than Paul R Williams'. In addition, the Architects' Journal second race and diversity survey found that over a quarter of global majority architects have experienced racism. Meanwhile, class continues to act as a barrier to the architectural profession. A 2021 report by the Creative Industries and Policy and Evidence Centre revealed that 73% of architects came from a *privileged* background while only 45% of architects featured in Architecture Foundation books were from state schools.

Archival Erasures

Addressing concerns over gender disparity and representation necessitates a rethinking of architectural pedagogy, which in turn requires a reassessment of the history of the discipline and the experiences of women in architecture. To analyse the origins of structural disparities in the discipline, especially as they relate to gender, one needs to explore the archival history of architectural pedagogy and practice and the experiences of those women who broke down barriers to become architects in the course of the twentieth century. Tracing female architects through the archives of the Architectural Association and RIBA provides ample evidence of patriarchal dominance within the discipline. The archival records tell us about the history of perceptions: how women were perceived within the profession and debates around the inclusion of women in architecture. For example, RIBA and AA committee meeting minutes provide evidence that the decision to allow women entry to architecture resulted from economic shortfalls in the aftermath of the First World War. It is noticeable that a quota on women was re-imposed from 1930 -1938 when there seemed to be enough men to fill the roles. The records also tell us about how gender stereotypes affected the architectural training and careers of women leading to future structural inequalities in the profession. For example, the oft quoted remark from Robert Atkinson, director of education at the Architectural Association, that women 'would find a field for their abilities more particularly in decorative and domestic architecture rather than the planning of buildings 10 or 12 storeys high' demonstrates the widespread view that women were suited to specific types of task. These gendered perceptions continue in the committee meeting records where debates focus on the notion that a female architect's skills were better suited to planning departments than architecture firms because, as women, they were better fitted to the *feminine* role of nurturing the social skills of society. This

history helps to explain why discriminatory structures around architectural assignments, which present design and interior architecture as best suited to women, remain.

In addition, it must be recognised that while archives enable reflection on the history of a discipline they also contain erasures. Thus, while this essay uses archives as a means to inform architectural pedagogy, it also recognises and analyses the hierarchies and structures implicit within archives themselves. Laurajane Smith, introduced the concept of Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD) in relation to the hegemonic power dynamics overriding what is classed as heritage, whose heritage this is, and how professional heritage practices are regulated. In a similar way, archives are perceived and constrained by power structures to the extent that they also operate in accordance with an Authorised Archival Discourse. Archives are not repositories of the past, but curated contemporary reflections of former concerns, which operate according to financial and political imperatives. Indeed, bell hooks' warning that the classroom ought never to be seen as an objective space because to do so would merely serve to reassert the dominance of perceived norms might just as usefully be applied to archives. Like classrooms, archives are subject to systemic power structures, created at specific times, and reflective of the concerns of the period they were created in. Using archives for research or pedagogical purposes must therefore involve a process of interrogation. Rather than being repositories for timeless objects and manuscripts, all archives are living archives reflecting a fragmented, incomplete, ephemeral picture of the past glimpsed partially through the lens of an ever-persistent present.

The archives being examined as in depth case studies for this essay reveal a lot about the Authorised Archival Discourses that contribute to the erasure of women's voices within the discipline. The first archive analysed here is the National Life Stories: Architects' Lives archive which forms part of the oral history section of the British Library's collections. This archive was established in 1995 to document the life and work of British architects and stems from a wider project to document the lives of leading British men and women in the fields of politics, industry, administration, the professions, culture, and religion. However, it is significant that the archive's creation was largely the initiative of sociologist and oral historian Paul Thompson and the historian of broadcasting Asa Briggs. Indeed, the initial endowment for the archive came from Paul Thompson's personal gift of a Henry Moore sculpture-Working Model for a Draped Seated Woman-which enabled the project to get underway. Both Briggs and Thompson were then central to the process of gaining sponsorship, charitable and individual donations to carry out the interviews reflecting the financial power structures that underpin the creation and continuance of archives. In addition, Thompson and Briggs were key to defining the structure the interviews should take. As such, each interview follows a clearly set 'life story' formula beginning with childhood and family background before progressing to education, work and leisure, and

community. In consequence, the interviews average between six and fifteen hours in length. This provides a clear structure for interview analysis but also necessarily limits the life history of the interviewee. At present, 141 architects have been interviewed but funding constraints have slowed down progress on the chronicling of further architects' lives.

The second archive considered here is the Matrix Open Feminist Architecture Archive, an online resource created by founders of Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative in response to the Barbican's 2021 exhibition *How We Live Now: Reimagining Spaces* with Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative curated by Matrix member Jos Boys. The death of several former Matrix Co-operative members reinforced the fear that there was 'no sense of a collection in the way that a lot of traditional architectural practices have a sense of their legacy', which demonstrates the often arbitrary nature of Authorised Archival Discourse, which requires an instigator to undertake the process of collecting and categorising an archive. The archive was created as a specific act of *living archive* practice, with the intention that it would be added to over time, and to remind everyone that archives 'are merely networks intended to bear witness to experience' and 'are all around us'. The archive's introduction notes that 'traditional archives are limited by the simple fact that certain kinds of traces and certain kinds of experiences are more likely to survive or be legible than others'. Jos Boys has noted that for a pre-internet practice like Matrix the act of assembling an archive was itself a difficult process because 'stuff is just under people's beds and in cupboards in Ikea and Tesco bags' and thus, like Matrix's architectural practice, it relied on a process of collaborative exchange and collective goodwill. Although partly funded by Jos Boys' employers, there is no central mechanism for financial support for the archive and those involved in setting it up have found themselves tied into complex administrative and ethical processes when deciding, for example, how archival material might be reproduced in publications or exhibitions. Again, this demonstrates the complexity of Authorised Archival Discourse in relation to the setting up of alternative archives prioritising women-led architectural practices.

C a s e S t u d y O n e : N a t i o n a l L i f e S t o r i e s : A r c h i t e c t s ' L i v e s

This case study considers the experiences of three women architects in the British Library's Architects' Lives archive: Mary Medd, Jane Drew, and M.J. Long. Mary Medd (1907-2005) was trained at the Architectural Association in London from 1927 and became known for her role in housing reform. She was the first woman architect to be employed by Hertfordshire County Council where she worked from 1941 as part of a team of architects building schools in the aftermath of the Second World War. Jane Drew (1911-1996) also qualified from the Architectural Association and designed public housing in England, West Africa, India, and Iran. She was prominent at the 1951 Festival of Britain and helped to establish the Institute of Contemporary Art. Finally, M.J. Long (1939-2018) studied at Smith College in Montreal in 1956 before embarking on a four-year architecture course at Yale school of architecture.

She was known for her work creating artist studios for Peter Blake, RB Kitaj, Frank Auerbach, and others and for working in partnership with Rolfe Kentish on museum and library projects such as the Jewish Museum in London and the National Maritime Museum in Cornwall.

The recollections of Medd, Drew, and Long reveal important considerations of their own positionality in relation to their experience of architectural education and some of the structural barriers and sexism experienced in the course of their studies. Mary Medd recalls that growing up with boys gave her a distinct advantage at architectural school and the interview demonstrates her annoyance at being considered in any way inferior to men. When asked, for example, whether she was inspired by any of her teachers at the Architectural Association she replies that she hoped 'she inspired them occasionally' instead. For Jane Drew, sexism came to the fore in her early architectural projects. She recalls, for example, the ingrained sexism she experienced while working on prefabricated kitchens during the war. While involved with one such project she was told: 'you don't understand a thing at all. Saving woman's labour doesn't help the economy at all'. Long, describes the arbitrary system of women being admitted to Yale based on whether the admissions tutor, who objected to women becoming architects, was on sabbatical or not. In addition, Long recounts the brutalising system of pedagogy at Yale where, with only six female students to over one hundred male students, and all-male panels of examiners, women were routinely left in tears by pedagogical techniques designed to *toughen* them up. These practices included the expectation of *all-night* working, lapses into silence on the part of examiners when judging projects, dismissals, and regular shouting. As Long neared the end of her studies the misogyny arguably increased. She recalls winning an architecture award for her final project where the prize was a year spent travelling. The judging panel assumed, since she always signed herself M.J rather than Mary, that she was male. On realising their error, they contemplated awarding the prize to the runner-up on the grounds that Long ought not to want to travel alone as a single woman.

Despite drawing on their own positionality in their experience of architectural education, the interviewees also demonstrate an understanding of intersectionality. Mary Medd, for example, remains adamant throughout her interview that she was never solely responsible for a building noting that

'I didn't build them on my own. I got a hand here and there. There was always people to help. I don't like to take the whole credit for anything at all because always I've been with other people'.

Indeed, she argues that she never saw herself

'as running my own private business. I was always working with other people and I always have worked with other people. In the 1930s I was working with a whole lot of different people'.

A similar sense of thinking intersectionally about issues led Jane Drew to argue for an interdisciplinary approach to architectural practice that takes account, not just of buildings, but of the wider environment. This makes her sceptical about the division between town planning and architecture. For, as she states, 'architecture and town planning ought to be one: which they are not, which is ridiculous...they should be'. Similarly, her reminiscences integrate a wider understanding of public policy and public attitudes to architecture focusing on the relationship between architects and local councils. She recalls being sent to redesign a house situated at the highest point in Winchester for a female client who wanted a roof garden. Despite the fact that one 'couldn't look down on this house from anywhere' the local council opposed the roof garden because they felt on account of its flat roof it was 'going to be used for immoral purposes....naked people....it was this conviction that somehow Modern architecture was tied up with immorality'.

This more holistic sense of working collaboratively with town planners, local councils, and the public led the interviewees to an implicit understanding of intermediation as a process for ensuring effective co-design with end-users. This is to the fore in recollections by Medd who began her early career in architecture during the Second World War working with the education officer John Newsom on Hertfordshire County Council Schools. This involved prioritising the needs of end-users to create kitchens in schools that would be capable of providing free school meals in order to safeguard the future of education post-war. In the aftermath of the war, Medd also recalled working alongside locals in Hertfordshire to engage communities in building their own container homes in the woods where she considered Scandinavian notions of prefabrication and relates working with teachers, governors, and schoolchildren to decide designs. Similarly, Jane Drew recalls the importance of developing a building philosophy centred on direct collaborative working with the local community in West Africa. She describes setting up a new research centre to work in tandem with locals in a setting they were familiar with in order to create bricks that could work with the soil in Africa. Likewise, Long repeatedly considered intermediation as a process for architectural design. She notes her dislike of her former teacher, Paul Rudolf's, architecture on the grounds that the buildings appeared to have been built without consulting end-users. For example, she notes that Rudolf Hall at Yale was used in a way entirely different to the plans because users had to play 'musical chairs in the building' to make it work for them. This experience, alongside her research into the building of sanatoriums for patients with TB under Dutch modernism, seems to have impacted on her decision to centre end-users in the design process. She notes, for example, her preference for moving away from 'the slightly self-indulgent, sculptural gymnastics' to focus on 'how to be really simple and direct rather than intruding your personality too heavily into

who uses the building'. This would lead her to involve artists like Peter Blake and Christopher Cornford extensively in the design process by getting them to participate in creating collages of images that were important to them as inspiration for the overall architectural design.

Case Study Two: Matrix Feminist Architecture Archive

Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative emerged as a left-wing collective from the New Architecture Movement in the 1970s. The New Architecture Movement had itself focused on unionising workers while providing architectural services to the community, such as Community Technical Aid Centres. Founded by Anne Thorne, Barbara MacFarlane, Sue Francis and others, Matrix was one of two feminist groupings within NAM. The second grouping, Mitra focused on gaining equity for women in existing architectural organisations while Matrix took a more militant stance by seeking to challenge the way architecture itself was taught and practised. Matrix focused on assessing the relationship between architecture, gender, and the built environment by taking a holistic approach to urban planning. In 1984 they collaboratively wrote *Making Space Women and the Man-Made Environment* to investigate the deficits of cities produced by male designers and concentrated their practice on the design of women's shelters and social housing. Key projects included the Stockwell Health Centre (1979), Jumoke Nursery (1986-88), the Jagonari Asian Women's Centre (1984-87), and the Women's Refuge in Essex (1992).

From the very start, Matrix focused on using their own positionality and experience to make architectural practice more accessible to women. As such, the archives show Matrix's recognition of the structural barriers to women's participation in architecture and the actions taken to address this. Minutes of meetings, for example, show that women with children were accommodated with core working hours and that two people were required on every project so childcare could be supported and continuity on projects maintained. Their 'Collective Working' guidelines (1987), for example, insisted on all members of the architectural practice at Matrix Collective working in pairs in order that they might offer mutual support and relief for childcare when needed. Matrix Feminist Design Collective used this positionality to create pedagogical incentives concentrated on training more women to enable access to the architectural profession as architects, builders, town planners, and surveyors. For example, Matrix members worked with Women Into Architecture and Building (WIAB) to teach courses that helped women gain entry to the built environment sector. In addition, they led training on helping non-architects to understand spatial design, elevations, sections, architectural drawings, and models. The archive contains advertisements and pamphlets for Women's Realm: A weekend event on women, building, and the environment (1987), held at the Polytechnic of North London, which served as a way for women to learn more about architecture and the built environment. In addition, Women's Education in Building (1986) acted as a means to advertise trade courses run

by and for women while *A Job Designing Buildings* (1986) was disseminated as a pamphlet during workshops and public open days. The latter included interviews with women architects, builders, and surveyors as a way to use visibility and representation to encourage increased entry of women into the construction industry.

As such, Matrix were interested in issues of intersectionality centred on designing with a view to the relationship between class, race, sexuality and gender and using this to reflect holistically on the nature of the built environment. The archives show Matrix working with communities that were marginalised in multiple ways. Interestingly, handwritten notes in the archive show Matrix collectively reading the work of bell hooks together in 1986. This is perhaps not surprising since central to the work of hooks is the notion that objectivity and rationality are fallacies perpetuated by existing power structures to normalise unconscious biases. The same ideas were integral to Matrix's process of design and the archives show their role in challenging the notion that the built space is a neutral canvas awaiting the architect's intervention. Instead, the archive details plans for the Home Truth exhibition in 1980, which questioned the 'natural' qualities of a home as a domestic space and instead demonstrated how, through sexist advertising and media coverage, these assumptions were always gendered. Central to the exhibition was the idea that architects need to incorporate a sense of the wider environment into their designs. This was deemed essential because 'nurseries, laundries, or community centres which provide necessary facilities for women and children are hardly ever included when houses are built'.

The archival material demonstrates Matrix incorporating these wider concerns into their design process. For example, documents relating to the designs for the Jagonari Women's Educational Centre reflect concerns about the intersectional needs of users highlighting issues of gender, religion, disability, and race. The Jagonari Women's Centre was created for a group of Bangladeshi women in East London in 1987. Included within the building's design were 'safe spaces' for domestic abuse survivors and areas, including a secluded mosque-style courtyard, a craft room, and a communal dining area, where leisure and spiritual activities might coalesce. Moreover, accessibility features were incorporated into the design, including a fully accessible lift and WCs on every level, which met many of the requirements of the much later (1995) Disability Discrimination Act and were ahead of their time in responding to Building Regulation Disability mandates. In addition, meeting minutes from the archives demonstrate that all Matrix staff were given regular training on disability, racism, and sexuality. Matrix's Equal Opportunity Policy states that 'no worker will be discriminated against on grounds of their politics being determined by their being a member of an oppressed group' and argues that as a feminist collective 'committed to helping redress the unfavourable treatment in a male-dominated society, we prioritise work that predominantly benefits women and girls'.

This focus on wider, intersectional, concerns led Matrix to create a collaborative, participatory, practice actively incorporating the views of end-

users through an intermediating process. As Ann Thorne from Matrix recalled, this was focused on 'thinking about different ways of looking at the process, not just "we're the experts, this is the design you're going to get"'. The archives demonstrate that aesthetics were less important to Matrix than the process of incorporating end-user designs into the final building. For example, the Jaganori Centre developed because of cross-cultural collaboration with clients on issues such as the ratio of Indian to Western toilets and the need for 'defensive' windows opening internally to guard against racist attacks. As such, the South-Asian inspired window grilles took account of the client's concerns about potential racist violence against the community, in the wake of a spate of local letterbox fires, by being kept deliberately narrow at 11.5mm to guard against voyeurism and assault. In addition, community consultation taking the form of a 'brick picnic' was used to determine the bricks clients would prefer for the Jagonari Project. This brick picnic involved members of the Bangladeshi community becoming actively involved in choosing bricks alongside the architects and in the process learning about issues of design and materiality. A job description for a Feminist Architectural Worker at Matrix reveals the importance of community-curation and intermediation. This new recruit was required to carry out close consultation with clients 'to involve them in the whole design'. In addition, they were to focus on working with communities to ensure they could 'understand the process of designing, specifying, and building' and to prepare 'visual and educational aids and graphic work to supplement the more conventional procedures' so as to ensure effective communication with the wider public.

Using Archives in Pedagogy

In a recent teaching intervention, the author asked students to reflect on the painting of R.B. Kitaj's *The Architects* with which this essay began. They used the archival material from M.J Long's British Library interview to discuss the artist's studio created by Long that, in the form of the stepped bookcase, frames the painting. Having considered sections of the interview, the students noted that they were in a better position to assess the relationship between architect and client and the legacy of the buildings designed by Long. This is because both the history and legacy of Long's architectural practice can be traced through the archival record. This record details that in 1994, Kitaj had a retrospective at the Tate and was widely vilified by art critics in the press for his artwork. In the same year Kitaj's second wife, Sandra Fisher, died unexpectedly. This led to Kitaj abandoning his Long-designed studio, selling his house, claiming that he would never again exhibit in England, and moving to California. Long recalled that she then had a phone call from the new owner of Kitaj's house and studio asking whether she had the drawings of the building's state before Long's changes were made as she wanted to put it back to its 'original' design. Long 'sent them to her with sadness'. The current cataloguing of the Colin St John Wilson Archive at RIBA seems likely to offer more insights into Long's under-studied architectural practise and into the legacies of the buildings she created. It is to be hoped, therefore, that those with responsibility for architectural and design pedagogy might encourage

their students to get involved with the cataloguing of, and commentary on, these collections. This pedagogical intervention might usefully act as a way of subverting the Authorised Archival Discourse by intervening in the way women architects are categorised and represented in the repository. In addition, getting students to participate in the act of 'archiving' might enable them to reflect on their own positionality in relation to the archival process. Hopefully, if this archive is treated as a "living" one, in a state always of imperfection and incompleteness, this significant collection will enable a reassessment of the role played by Long in major commissions by the Wilson practice.

This essay has argued that architectural pedagogy would benefit from engaging architectural students with archives since archives enable us to position ourselves within the discipline, critique the perceptions and power structures underpinning architecture, and enable a reassessment of feminist praxis in architecture. Getting back to this alternative history of architectural practice necessitates that we re-think the categorisation of archives themselves to reassess the nature of the archival record as a living one. Doing this requires a centring one's own positionality at the outset of the pedagogical journey while using archives to spark students' reflection on their own lived experience of education. In a second recent teaching intervention, the author played a group of integrated art history, architecture, and graphic design students select passages from the interviews with Mary Medd, Jane Drew, and M. J Long and asked them to reflect on the educational experience of these women architects in relation to their own pedagogic experience today. The students compared and contrasted their own experience with those of Medd, Drew, and Long and used this experience to generate discussion on the current position of women in architecture, noting ongoing issues for intersectional inclusion such as the lack of understanding over the caring responsibilities of students and the impact for student attendance at evening events. Importantly, architecture pedagogy is beginning to reflect on the importance of centring student positionality in relation to the history of the discipline. The IZK Institute of Contemporary Art, part of the Graz University of Technology, currently teaches a course entitled 'Why have there been no great women architects?' This course uses the Nochlin article discussed earlier to explore the historical, structurally institutionalised, sexism within the discipline. Pedagogic interventions such as these will enable us to advance bell hook's concept of yearning by using the experiences of the past to create a more intersectional, inclusive, learning space for the future.

Creating a more intersectional space within the discipline of architecture also necessitates wider consideration of the needs of end-users and practices that prioritise intermediation as a method for community-led co-creation. This type of community engagement has, for example, been central to the work of Power Out of Restriction Collective (PoOr) who use techniques similar to those used by Matrix Feminist Design Collective to intermediate with communities with the aim of getting young people involved in architecture and urban planning. They have been key facilitators for the Architects' Climate Action

Network education group seeking to teach climate literacy to young people while entering into community engagement on architectural design around embodied carbon, the circular economy, and natural materials. Architecture students might usefully employ archival resources such as the Matrix Design Collective's documents on the Jagonari Asian women centre's end-user focused brick picnic and Jane Drew's experiences of working on collaborative brick-work projects in West Africa, to reflect on ways of centring end-user experience into the design process.

The final factor remains the issue of how current architects might work to secure the legacy of more diverse, feminist-centred, pedagogies and practices for the future by creating 'living archives' in the present. This process has already begun with Part W, a group committed to challenging systems that disadvantage women in the built environment, who created the Alternative List to both address the lack of awards for women in architecture and to create an archival record of women's achievement in architecture. Part W noted that at the campaign's commencement in 2019, only one woman had been rewarded the Royal Gold Medal since it was inaugurated in 1848 and no global majority architect had ever received it (since 2019 more women have received the RIBA award). This led them to create an archive of alternative RIBA winners for each year from 1848 to 2020, which both heightened the visibility of women in architecture and provided a powerful record of the role of architects like Lady Anne Clifford (1848), Sophy Gray (1868), Mary Watts (1896), and Minnette de Silva (1948). Similarly, the Black Architects Archive and the Black Females in Architecture Archive have also emerged as living archives to the experiences of global majority architects in the profession. By collaboratively creating archives we intervene in the power structures of Authorised Archival Discourse to increase the visibility of women in architecture and, in so doing, we enable reflection on the feminist praxis located in the experiences of women architects of the past.

This essay has sought to highlight the radical history of women architects of the twentieth century through understudied and recently created archives. It has argued that these archives offer significant insights into a feminist praxis that if used in architectural pedagogy might inform a more inclusive approach to architectural design and urban planning. Using case studies from the British Library's Architects' Lives testimony and the Matrix Feminist Architecture Archive, this essay has argued that a feminist praxis centred on positionality, intersectionality, and intermediation with end-users emerges from the experiences of Mary Medd, Jane Drew, M.J. Long and Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative. These themes map on to the pedagogical theories of bell hooks whose work argues for the importance of positionality, intersectionality, and intermediation in creating a student-focused experience that 'teaches to transgress'. A study of archives helps to enable this transgression because it utilises the experiences of women architects in the past to challenge the structures that create gender disparity in the present. By being conscious of our positionality and our responsibility for archiving the present for a more

inclusive future, we can intervene in Authorised Archival Discourse and follow Matrix Feminist Design Co-Operative in the creation of new archives that centre women's involvement in architecture and the feminist praxis of the future.

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