



The Museⁿ. a source of inspiration

The newsletter of CHICAGO WOMEN IN ARCHITECTURE

Promoting the interests and addressing the issues of women architects since 1973

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DESIGNING FOR DIVERSITY

Please join Chicago Women in Architecture (CWA), the Society of Professional Hispanic Architects (Arquitectos) and the Illinois National Organization for Minority Architects (INOMA) for a hot discussion on sustaining design and dialogue amongst diverse communities.

What: Panel Discussion

Where: The Knoll Showroom
The Merchandise Mart
Suite 1111

When: Tuesday, October 9, 2001

Time: 5:30 pm - Refreshments and Tour
6:00 pm - Discussion

Panelists: Kathryn Anthony
Yves Joanty
Edward Torrez
Thomas Zurowski

Moderator: Roberta Feldman

Admission: Free

RSVP: Call the CWA Voicemail
@312.409.8855

BOOK REVIEW

A word about CWA Book Reviews. Readers of The Muse are invited to inform the Editor of new books which could be reviewed in the newsletter. In addition, it would be nice to feature reviews of relevant museum exhibits, films, videos and other "non-print" formats that convey information and ideas about architecture and the built environment.

Anthony, Kathryn H., *Designing for Diversity: Gender, Race & Ethnicity in the Architectural Profession*. Urbana and Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2001.

In the June 2001 issue of "Town and Country," you will find on page 93 an article entitled "Connoisseur's World: Architects in Sync (Why do Jim Polshek and his partners keep winning some of the best commissions in the nation?)" by Philip Herrera. As you read along, you form an opinion about the \$900 million worth of active nationwide in-house projects in the office. The article continues, "The firm has taken home some fifty awards from the American Institute of Architects in the past two decades." It goes on to state that this is a fine record and one which Polshek acknowledges with characteristic modesty: "I end up getting the credit; that's how the system works. But I also have very talented partners."

This 'star system' in which appropriation of labor and misattribution occurs in the architectural profession in a far from 'modest manner' is one of the many subjects in Kathryn Anthony's wonderful new book. (In passing, I must note that the book is dedicated to the author's late husband, Barry D. Riccio, the historian, who passed away earlier this year. It is also dedicated to her parents and sister and to "architects of the past, present and future.") We of the Chicago Women in Architecture extend our most heartfelt sympathy to Kathryn, whom many of you know personally. She has been at work on this book for a decade and the results are outstanding. She draws the veil away from one of the architectural professions's dirtiest little secrets: the shabby treatment of women and minority-group architects.

Among the topics covered with impressive scholarly detail and methodology are the insensitive design of buildings by certain architects, inequities in the pay and advancement in the profession for women and minorities, discriminatory treatment of various kinds including that against gays, the history of under-represented groups in the profession, and attitudes and experiences uncovered by a series of interviews. She also offers some startling advice on "managing diversity." Our American culture is a complex one, and some of the difficulties encountered by architects are also experienced in other lines of work and are abetted by the prejudices of the larger society. Success in architecture is somewhat enigmatic and based on several factors, sometimes the least of which is talent. She observes on p. 29, "No longer can we tell under-represented designers to either sink or swim and offer them no life raft. Managing diversity calls for a systematic holistic approach to revamp what may architects would call a "chilly climate" or an "inhospitable corporate culture." Having been the CWA representative to the Illinois Women's Agenda for several seasons during the 1990's, I know that what is called a "hostile work

environment" is against the law. But, subtle or overt, discrimination does go on in the profession. Anthony concludes, rather sadly, on p. 65: "Despite significant gains, however, women remain marginalized in the architectural profession." (This, despite profiles of several successful women architects.)

This is a book CWA members should all pick up and read, especially for the marvelous histories of architecture as practiced by some members of the underrepresented groups. We gain an international perspective by reading about women in the profession in Britain, the Orient, Norway, Russia and Argentina. When reading of the African-American architect Paul R. Williams, we learn that "ironically his race prevented him from entering some of the projects he designed, such as the Polo Lounge at the Beverly Hills Hotel." Our consciousness is raised concerning what one does not learn in architectural school history classes, such as the vernacular architecture of the black community (or indeed, much about women architects although I personally remember Queen Hapshetsut of Egypt being presented in lecture.) Married women who are part of an architectural partnership are likely to suffer from getting their work submitted under that of their husbands; even though these women have more visibility than the single woman practitioner, their husbands sometimes steal the credit. Personally, I feel that single women practitioners also work in anonymity. As Virginia Woolf would say, "Anonymity was a woman."

In a profession where it is still difficult for a white male to succeed, it is indeed heartening to have a report on the difficulties and gains of women and minority architects. Perhaps if this book is read in academia, schools will heed its clear message: pay attention to all possible sources of architectural talent in our diverse culture. And let us hope that this "crossroads" will result in a more supportive environment in the profession for all of us. As the trend continues for more "inclusiveness" in history, let us also take courage that our individual contributions will be appreciated. Thank you, Kathryn Anthony, for Designing for Diversity.

ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN SOCIETY

THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

SHEDDING NEW LIGHT ON WRIGHT

A 2-Day/2-City Symposium

October 23-24, 2001

- Day 1: Chicago October 23, 6:00-7:30 pm, Rubloff Auditorium, the AIC
Frank Lloyd Wright and the Chicago School
Panel Discussion with Neil Levine, Carol Ross Barney, Tom Beeby, Doug Garofalo, Stanley Tigerman and Dan Wheeler
For more information: 312.443.4751
- Day 2: Grand Rapids - October 24
12:30 Lunch; 2:00-3:30 pm Symposium
Frank Lloyd Wright and the Midwestern City
Tickets: \$25.00. Contact: 616.831.2927