



Barcelona  
2026

Capital Mundial  
de l'Arquitectura

# (in)visibles

## posada en valor d'un patrimoni arquitectònic femení

### Invisibilisation

// noun //

The action and effect of making invisible;  
of concealing.

This mechanism consists of concealing a person, a group or a social phenomenon. It may be conscious or unconscious, intentional or not.

**“Architecture is, above all, teamwork—like cinema. It’s just that in architecture there are never any credits.”**

Beatriz Colomina, design historian, catalogue of the Modern Women exhibition at MoMA, New York, 2010.

The (IN)VISIBLES exhibition was born during an evening of meetings on gender in architecture organised by the collective MéMo in 2021.

It initially featured thirteen portraits, but in some of its touring versions it has been expanded with new cases, reaching the current total of nineteen portraits.

The current exhibition in Barcelona includes three local portraits.

This exhibition aims to highlight the phenomenon of invisibility that has affected women architects, urban planners and designers throughout history, and which still persists today.

This phenomenon causes their contributions to be erased through multiple processes. It can involve relegating them to the background, minimising their actions, attributing their work to someone else, or failing to credit them. All too often, they have been seen as the wife or assistant of “so-and-so”, against their will and sometimes even against the wishes of their male collaborators. In some cases, they have also self-erased for political, social or family reasons, adapting to the rules imposed by patriarchy.

With this exhibition, we aim to help bring these women’s contribution to our architectural heritage into view.

We present portraits of various women architects, designers and urban planners, along with stories about the processes of invisibility they experienced—over the long term or at a specific moment in their lives. We invite you to “lift the veil” on those who have helped write the history of architecture from the nineteenth century to the present day.

### exhibition of

**MéMo (Mouvement pour l'équité dans la maîtrise d'oeuvre)**, a feminist association fighting for equality in the fields of architecture, urban planning and landscape architecture. MéMO is a French association founded in 2017 and made up of professionals and students working in architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning and design. Today, the association brings together around twenty active members who carry out various projects to achieve their shared objectives. MéMO is based at the Cité Audacieuse in Paris, a feminist centre that hosts numerous committed events and brings together dozens of feminist associations that work there every day to promote women’s rights.



**El globus vermell**, we are a cultural association founded in 2009 with the aim of fostering knowledge of the city and architecture through imagination, reflection and debate, and involving citizens in exercising the right to the city. We share knowledge and provide tools so that people can develop a stronger critical understanding of our built environment and, in doing so, participate more actively and constructively in “making the city”. The association’s role is to promote architecture and urban planning as a social value, as an integral part of everyday life, and as an educational value for the development of children and young people. We carry out our work through outreach projects (guided visits, routes, workshops, publications, exhibitions, etc.) and citizen-participation processes.



### as part of

This exhibition is part of the programme of **Barcelona 2026 Capital Mundial de l'Arquitectura**, a designation by UNESCO and the UIA (Unión Internacional de Arquitectos) that turns the city into a global forum for architecture, urban planning and landscape architecture. Over ten months, Barcelona City Council will roll out a multidisciplinary programme developed in collaboration with schools, universities, and professional and cultural organisations. In addition, Barcelona will also host the **Congrés Mundial d'Arquitectes de la UIA 2026**, consolidating its position as a world epicentre of architecture. Barcelona 2026 World Capital of Architecture is supported by the Ajuntament de Barcelona, the Generalitat de Catalunya and the Ministerio de Vivienda y Agenda Urbana.

Consult the digital version of the exhibition in the following languages.



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# Marion MAHONY GRIFFIN

American architect // 1871-1961

Marion Mahony Griffin was one of the first American women to graduate in architecture and the first woman to practise in the state of Illinois. Reyner Baham, one of the most renowned twentieth-century architecture critics, described Marion Mahony Griffin as “the first woman architect of America (and perhaps the world) who had no need to apologise in a man’s world”.

In 1894 she became the second woman to earn an architecture degree from the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

In 1895, she became Frank Lloyd Wright’s first employee. Alongside the great architect, she designed buildings and furniture and produced watercolours to illustrate his projects. The images she painted became Frank Lloyd Wright’s signature, although he never credited her for the various works she carried out.

Today, historians attribute to her the production of more than half the drawings in Wright’s portfolio *Ausgeführte Bauten und Entwürfe, von Frank Lloyd Wright*, published in Berlin in 1910 by Wasmuth after Wright left Germany, and described as one of the most influential works of the twentieth century.

Barry Byrne, another member of Wright’s studio, stated that Marion Mahony Griffin was “the most talented person in Wright’s team”, and doubted that anyone as gifted as her had ever emerged from the office. Even so, she was never truly recognised for her value within the famous architect’s practice.

In 1909, Frank Lloyd Wright left the United States, abandoning his studio and family, to flee to Europe with a married client. At that moment he offered Marion Mahony Griffin the opportunity to take charge of his office, but for unknown reasons she refused. The studio was ultimately acquired by Hermann Von Holst, and Marion Mahony Griffin became the lead architect.

In 1911, she married Walter Burley Griffin and together they founded a practice aligned with the Prairie School movement. They worked on several hundred projects in the United States, Australia—where they lived between 1914 and 1937—and India, including the design of Canberra, the Federal Capital of the Commonwealth of Australia, after winning a competition in 1912.

# Eileen GRAY

Irish architect and designer // 1878-1976

After studying painting at London's Slade School of Fine Art, Eileen Gray moved to Paris and began working in the art of lacquered furniture. It was through exploring this technique that she started to make a name for herself. In 1913, she exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Décorateurs, where she gained recognition among art lovers and collectors.

In this context, she met the man who would become her partner and through whom she would discover the modern movement: Jean Badovici, editor of the magazine *L'Architecture Vivante*.

In 1922, she opened a Paris shop, *La Galerie Jean Désert*, on the Faubourg Saint-Honoré.

In 1925, with the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts, Eileen Gray became fascinated by the De Stijl movement and turned towards creating functional furniture made from metal tubing, first lacquered and later nickel-plated or chromed.

However, as early as 1924 Eileen Gray began to move into architecture, which she learned mainly thanks to another young architect: Adrienne Gorska.

In 1926, while she was building Villa E-1027, Jean Badovici introduced Eileen Gray to Le Corbusier. The house was completed in 1927 and became a masterpiece of modern architecture.

From then on, the famous Franco-Swiss architect, unable to bear the idea of a woman succeeding with her own architectural style, maintained an obsessive relationship with the architect's work. In 1932 Eileen and Jean separated and Badovici kept the house. Between 1938 and 1939, with his approval but without hers, Le Corbusier "dirtied" the house—Eileen Gray's words—by painting several erotic frescoes while he himself was naked. This intervention was a trauma for Gray, who saw it as a complete contradiction of the sober, pure lines she wanted for her architecture. Later, Le Corbusier tried to buy the villa, but failed, and ended up building himself a small nearby cabin in order to keep watch over it.

Le Corbusier was obsessed with the beauty of the place; and he eventually died swimming at the foot of Villa E-1027.

Some will say he died of envy at the beauty and grace of this work, which he had never been able to match.

# Lilly REICH

**German designer and interior designer // 1885-1947**

Lilly Reich began her career in textiles—a field more easily accessible to women at the time—and in 1912 joined the Deutscher Werkbund, an association of craftspeople, artists and architects that promoted industrial aesthetics and the applied arts. In 1922, she became the first woman to serve as its director and, in this role, organised several exhibitions that received favourable reviews in magazines.

In 1932 she entered the Bauhaus school at the invitation of its new director, Mies van der Rohe. She was not there as a student, but as a “teacher”, and she led the weaving and interior design workshops. However, her collaboration with Mies van der Rohe had begun years earlier, in 1927. For years, each maintained an independent practice, yet together they co-signed several major collaborations combining architecture, furniture and interior design. She worked especially on the famous German Pavilion in Barcelona and its Barcelona Chair, although her contribution to this object—attributed to Mies van der Rohe—has never been documented. Even so, it hardly seems a coincidence that Mies van der Rohe’s years of furniture design coincide with his professional association with Lilly Reich.

Albert Pfeiffer would later say: “Mies van der Rohe was not very successful at developing furniture either before or after his collaboration with Lilly Reich.”

Moreover, Mies van der Rohe himself said he considered himself a “pure” architect, and declared: “A chair is a very difficult object. A skyscraper is almost easier.”

Sadly, Lilly chose to remain in Germany during the Second World War, which brought her career to an end. After her death, Mies van der Rohe took almost twenty years to return to Germany and recover the archives of his former partner and associate. He brought them to the United States and donated them to MoMA, ensuring that Lilly Reich would be remembered as she deserved.

# Ethel BAILEY FURMAN

**American architect // 1893-1976**

Ethel Bailey Furman was the first known African-American woman architect in the state of Virginia.

She was the daughter of Madison J. Bailey, the second African-American to obtain a contractor's licence in Richmond, Virginia—at the time, a common path for African-Americans with architectural skills. The obstacles to becoming a licensed architect were so great that many, even with drawing abilities, turned to the building trades. Thus, Ethel began her informal training in architecture and construction with her father. She followed him to building sites, and he used his drawing skills to secure more significant projects.

Around 1915, she moved to New York and trained privately as an architect with a tutor.

From 1921 onwards, she returned to Richmond and went back to work with her father while raising her children.

When she attended the annual builders' conference at Hampton Institute in 1928, she was the only woman among dozens of men.

She was not rendered invisible by any particular man, but by an entire racist and sexist system of her time. She faced discrimination from other architects, but also from bureaucrats who refused to review her projects or denied her building permits because they always found faults in her drawings. To get by, she often had to submit projects through the contractors she worked with, which has erased her name from architectural history. Even so, she designed more than two hundred buildings (homes, churches, hotels, and more) in the state of Virginia.

Despite her professional boldness, it was not until 1958 that Ethel Bailey Furman was listed as a draughtswoman in the Richmond directory, and not until 1968 that she registered as an architect. In 2010, her work was honoured by the Library of Virginia in "Virginia Women in History" for her achievements in architecture.

# Aino MARSIO-AALTO

**Finnish architect and designer // 1894-1949**

Aino Marsio-Aalto was born in Finland, at a time when architecture was considered an instrument of social progress.

As a child, she lived with her parents in a housing cooperative in Helsinki. There she met neighbouring carpenters with whom she ended up apprenticing, while continuing her architectural studies until she graduated in 1920.

Between 1920 and 1924, she worked for the architect Oiva Kallio and then for Gunnar Wahlroos.

In 1924 she joined Alvar Aalto's office and married him six months later. They soon embarked on a long series of travels before opening their own studio in Turku in 1927. They collaborated on numerous projects, including the Finnish Pavilion for the 1939 New York World's Fair. However, since the drawings produced by their joint office were never signed with their names, it is difficult to know how the work was divided—something that has undoubtedly contributed significantly to erasing the female half of the Aalto partnership from the history of architecture.

Aino designed some projects independently, such as Villa Flora in Alajärvi (1926) and the children's and health residence in Noormarkku (1945). She was also skilled in scenography and, in 1936, was responsible for the architecture exhibition at the Milan Triennale, for which she received an award.

Aino was also the artistic director of Artek, the company that produced Aalto furniture, before becoming its managing director in 1941. This furniture was always present in the couple's creations, which made them very popular. Unfortunately, because all these creations have been associated with her husband's company, this also helps explain why Aino has been forgotten.

Nina Stritzler-Levine, curator of the Bard Graduate Center gallery in New York, believes this is probably the most serious omission in the history of design.

# Charlotte PERRIAND

French architect and designer // 1903-1999

After graduating from the Union centrale des arts décoratifs school in 1925, Charlotte Perriand quickly gained a certain reputation. That same year she presented her creations at the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts and at the Salon des artistes décorateurs.

In 1927, aged twenty-four, she presented her work at the office of Pierre Jeanneret and Le Corbusier, who replied: “We don’t embroider cushions here, miss!”

A few days later, Charlotte Perriand exhibited her metal furniture, Bar sous le toit, at the Salon d’Automne of the Union centrale des arts décoratifs. On discovering this work, Le Corbusier reconsidered his decision and chose to hire her.

Thus began a collaboration that would last ten years. She designed the furniture for emblematic buildings such as the Villa La Roche and the Cité Radieuse. Her contribution became indispensable to Le Corbusier, who at the time was facing several setbacks, especially with tender proposals that included interior design.

In 1929, she founded the UAM (Union of Modern Artists), together with René Herbst, Pierre Chareau and Eileen Gray.

A great lover of nature and deeply socially committed, Charlotte Perriand was also profoundly influenced by her travels, particularly her experience in Japan, where she stayed for six years. All these facets of her personality were reflected in her creations.

Never receiving the recognition she deserved for her work alongside Le Corbusier—who said she had merely “held the pencil” in the design office for the rest of the collaborators, no more and no less—Charlotte eventually decided to step out of the great master’s shadow and work on her own.

Today, some of her designs sell for several hundred thousand euros. Once, she remarked ironically: “I should have collected myself.”

# Egle Renata TRINCANATO

Italian architect and artist // 1910-1998

After finishing secondary school in 1930, Egle Renata Trincanato found her first job as a draughtswoman at the Jesorum company. In 1933, when she was already teaching at a vocational school for women, she enrolled at the Istituto Superiore d'Architettura in Venice. During her university studies, she met Carlo Scarpa (1906–1978), who became a colleague and friend, and with whom she collaborated on several exhibitions. In 1937 she travelled to Libya to study the ruins of Sabrata with other students and professors, including Guido Cirilli, her first mentor. During this trip, when the group stopped over in Naples, she met Giuseppe Samonà, becoming his assistant and partner.

In 1938, she became the first woman to graduate in architecture from the Venetian university, doing so with the highest marks. Two years later, she obtained a post as a lecturer in geometric drawing and architectural elements at the Higher School of Art in Venice.

The year 1948 was crucial, as she published the book *Venice Minor*, an essay that consolidated her reputation as a specialist in Venetian architecture. Samonà's arrival that same academic year as a professor at the Istituto Superiore d'Architettura in Venice gave her the opportunity both to study the morphology of Venetian buildings and to delve deeper into building restoration—knowledge and skills she implemented boldly in projects she developed between 1948 and 1950 for various competitions and direct commissions.

During the 1950s, she took an active part in the design and construction of the urban neighbourhood of San Marco in Mestre, an exemplary urban and architectural project. She also designed the Via Cecchini building in Mestre in 1959.

In parallel, in 1954, she was appointed head of the Technical and Artistic Department of the city of Venice—a role that until then excluded women. Trincanato appealed and obtained a modification of the call, thus also becoming director of the Doge's Palace Museum.

In 1964, she became professor of architectural elements and monument restoration at the Polytechnic University of Turin. Likewise, in the late 1960s, she collaborated with Aldo Rossi on drafting the document “Venetian Cities”, developed for the territorial coordination plan of the Veneto region for the Venice Water Authority.

In 1974, she became deputy director of IUAV and, the following year, director of the Institute of Topography and Restoration, a department she conceived, initiated and founded. In 1985, Trincanato concluded her term as director of the Department of Science and Technology of Restoration.

Although Egle Renata Trincanato developed projects from start to finish alongside Samonà, she never felt the need to impose her signature on them, as they were the result of a constant dialogue between the two. Each sketch and drawing retained the freshness of a conception that remained present throughout her work until her death. She always took daily well-being into account—especially within architectural interiors—looking both to the past and to modernity.

# Ray EAMES

**American designer, architect and filmmaker // 1912-1988**

Ray Eames, whose real name was Alexandra “Ray” Kaiser, revolutionised the world of design together with her husband, Charles Eames. Before that, however, she had already built a reputation in the art world by studying abstract expressionist art with the German painter Hans Hofmann.

Ray met her future partner while studying at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan (USA). Together, they formed a highly successful collaboration and complemented one another perfectly.

In 1941, the year they married, they began experimenting with furniture design using three-dimensional plywood moulds, aiming to create comfortable, affordable chairs. Later, with the outbreak of war, they turned to making plywood splints. All these creations were exhibited in 1946 at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).

In 1945, the couple were selected to take part in the Case Study Houses programme, designing modern, affordable homes. Between 1945 and 1949, they designed thirty-six projects and built two: number 8 (which became their home) and number 9.

In 1979, the couple received the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture from the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), and Ray Eames became the first woman to receive this honour.

Despite their well-known partnership, Ray Eames lived in the shadow of her charismatic partner throughout her life and was often overlooked in their collaborations. A notable example is her appearance on the television programme *Home* in 1956. She was introduced as a mere assistant to her “brilliant and intelligent” husband and portrayed as “the woman behind every great man”. Despite Charles’s objections and Ray’s best efforts to correct the presenter, she dismissed Ray in order to continue the programme with him alone.

# Matilde UCELAY

**First qualified woman architect in Spain // 1912-2008**

Matilde Ucelay was born in Madrid, the daughter of a bourgeois, professional and enlightened family. In June 1936 she graduated, a year earlier than expected, becoming the first woman to obtain the professional qualification of architect in Spain.

Because of her affiliation with the Popular Front and her brief involvement in the governing board of the College of Architects of Madrid, the Franco dictatorship accused her of the offence of aiding the rebellion and, under the Military Code of Justice, sentenced her to a five-year ban on private professional practice and a lifelong prohibition on holding public office, as well as a fine of 30,000 pesetas. Her sentence was harsher than those handed to other male architects: while the authorities eased punishments for men for fear of being left without qualified professionals, in Ucelay's case they chose to make the penalty more severe.

During the Franco regime, women were denied many legal and economic rights, with explicit prohibitions such as signing contracts or managing their own assets. Despite these restrictions, Ucelay continued to practise independently, at first discreetly, having her projects signed through male colleagues. In the end, she produced a prolific body of high-quality work, with more than 120 projects.

She worked mainly on single-family homes, but also designed shops, warehouses and laboratories. Initially, most of her clients were foreigners, more accustomed to seeing women architects. In Ucelay's own view, her style responded less to the dominant architectural trends of the time than to her desire to adapt to each client's taste. Even so, her projects show a rationalist, functional approach and meticulous control over every detail.

Her legacy, rendered invisible for years, was finally recognised in 2004 with the National Architecture Prize, making her the first woman to receive the award.

Matilde Ucelay was an architect who managed to overcome the barriers of a patriarchal system that shaped much of twentieth-century Spain, as well as the political impositions of Francoism, which were catastrophic for the culture and architecture of the period.

# Anne TYNG

**American architect and professor // 1920-2011**

Anne Tyng was an architect and professor, a member of the American Institute of Architects and an academic of the National Academy of Design. She was the first woman to practise architecture in the state of Pennsylvania. She was also passionate about mathematics, which she regularly used in her architectural design.

Anne Tyng graduated in Fine Arts in 1942 from Radcliffe University and two years later became one of the first women to graduate from Harvard's School of Architecture, where she studied under professors such as Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer.

In 1949, she was the only woman to sit the architectural licensing exam. During the exam, she was subjected to sexist treatment by an invigilator, who turned his back on her and refused to acknowledge her.

In 1945, she joined the office of the architect Louis Kahn, with whom she began a relationship. Her fascination with geometry influenced several of Kahn's projects, such as the Trenton Bath House and the ceiling of the Yale Art Gallery. She claimed that the concept for Kahn's "City Tower" was her invention; however, when the model was exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, Kahn chose not to credit her.

When she became pregnant by the famous architect in 1953, she left the office to avoid scandal and moved to Italy, where she continued her career as an architect.

In 1965, Anne Tyng became the first woman to receive a fellowship from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts. In a letter recommending her to the Graham Foundation, Buckminster Fuller described her as "Kahn's geometrical strategist".

In 1975 she earned her doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania with a thesis entitled *Simultaneous Randomness and Order: the Fibonacci–Divine Proportion as a Universal Principle of Form*, combining her love of mathematics and architecture.

In 1989, she published an essay entitled *From Muse to Heroine, Toward a Visible Creative Identity*, exploring the evolution of women's roles in architecture. She wrote: "Few women achieve the transition from muse to heroine. Most study architecture and then marry architects. It is no longer that a woman hides behind every great man; rather, the woman architect, even if she works jointly with her partner, will barely be visible beside (or slightly behind) the hero."

# Norma MERRICK SKLAREK

**American architect // 1926-2012**

Norma Merrick Sklarek was one of the first African-American women to qualify as an architect in the state of New York, in 1954, and in California, in 1962, and she became known as the “Rosa Parks of architecture”. Despite discrimination and the difficulty of finding work, she had an extraordinarily productive career.

As a child, her father, a progressive doctor, encouraged her to explore professions usually reserved for men.

After graduating from university in 1950, Norma applied for nineteen jobs without success. She eventually found one as a draughtswoman in the New York City Department of Public Works and, at the same time, prepared for the architectural licensing exam, hoping it would help her secure work in a practice.

She passed with distinction and began her career at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in New York, where she worked between 1955 and 1960.

She then moved to California and joined Gruen Associates, where she remained from 1960 to 1980. There she worked extensively with the Argentine architect César Pelli and took part in

major projects such as the United States Embassy in Tokyo and Fox Plaza in San Francisco. Even so, her name was rarely mentioned within the firm and, in fact, throughout the twenty years she worked there she was never promoted to principal architect, as her superiors feared conservative clients’ reactions to an African-American woman. That said, in 1966 she joined the firm’s leadership.

In 1980, she also became the first African-American woman to receive the honorary title of Fellow of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). On receiving it, she declared: “It’s a sexist title, but I’ll accept it!”

In 1985, she co-founded the first women-led architecture practice together with Margot Siegel and Katherine Diamond, but retired in 1992.

Shortly afterwards, she was appointed by the governor to serve on the California Architects Board and on the national ethics committee of the American Institute of Architects.

# Denise SCOTT BROWN

**American urban planner and architect // 1931-**

Denise Scott Brown, born in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia, Southern Africa) to a mother trained in architecture, always believed the profession was a women's domain. However, she discovered a very different reality during her studies at the University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg), where there were only five women among sixty students in the discipline. It was there that Denise Scott Brown met Robert Scott Brown, a fellow student who became her first husband.

The couple studied and worked in London between 1952 and 1955, and in the United States from 1958 onwards, where Denise Scott Brown pursued studies in architecture and urban planning at the University of Pennsylvania. A year later, in 1959, Robert Scott Brown died in a tragic car accident. Despite this painful experience, Denise Scott Brown continued her studies and in 1960 obtained a master's degree in urban planning and was offered a post as a lecturer in architecture and urban planning at the same university.

It was then that she met Robert Venturi. They shared interests, complemented one another, and quickly began collaborating.

In 1967 they married and she joined Robert Venturi's practice. Two years later, she became a partner and the firm was renamed Venturi Rauch & Scott Brown Associates (VRSB). Together, with the collaboration of their colleague Steven Izenour and students from Yale University, they wrote the famous book *Learning from Las Vegas*, a study of the architecture and techniques of symbolic communication in this surprising city in the Nevada desert (USA).

Unfortunately, only Robert Venturi reaped the glory of this joint work when, in 1991, he alone was awarded the prestigious Pritzker Prize. Despite Venturi's request to include the name of his partner and collaborator in this prize—one that consecrates an architect's career—the committee refused, arguing that only one person could receive it. In this way, Denise Scott Brown became, unwillingly, a symbol of the place afforded to women in architecture.

Later, she declared: "I married a working partner and we merged our professional lives at the moment when fame (but not fortune) came to him. I watched him become an architecture guru before my eyes, thanks to our shared work and that of our office."

In an essay written in 1974 but not published until 1989, entitled *Room at the Top? Sexism and the star system in architecture*, Denise Scott Brown denounced the elitist star system in architecture, sexism, the discrimination she suffered throughout her career, and her difficulties in receiving the same recognition as Robert Venturi.

# Lella VIGNELLI

Italian architect and designer // 1934-2016

Lella Vignelli, born Elena Valle, was not initially destined for design or architecture. As a young woman, she intended to study journalism.

However, in 1951 she met Massimo Vignelli, a young technical draughtsman, who persuaded her to study architecture with him at the Venice School. They married in 1957 and later moved to the United States, where Lella was hired by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in Chicago.

In 1960, the Vignellis founded the design and architecture studio Massimo and Lella Vignelli in Milan, where she specialised in interiors, furniture, exhibitions and product design. They later founded Unimark International Corporation in 1965, followed by Vignelli Associates in 1971 and finally Vignelli Designs in 1978. These companies contributed to their international recognition.

Despite their strong presence in the United States, the Vignellis' creations were inspired above all by European design, more inclined towards simplicity and modernity.

Lella Vignelli worked alongside Massimo throughout her life. They complemented one another and together burst onto the international design scene. Despite their shared authorship, she was often seen as little more than support for him—an issue they had to fight against, but never fully resolved.

One of their employees, Michael Bierut, said: “Massimo taught me to be a good designer. Lella taught me to be a successful designer [...] Talent and passion matter [...], but you also need to think, be smart, have confidence, and never lose motivation.”

In 2013, when Lella was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, Massimo published a book in her honour entitled *Design by: Lella Vignelli*, describing her as “an inspiration to all women designers who proudly rely only on their merits”.

# Wendy CHEESMAN

**British architect // 1937-1989**

In 1963, Wendy Cheesman founded Team 4 with her partner, Norman Foster, and three other partners (her sister Georgie Wolton, Su Rogers and her husband Richard Rogers). At the time, Georgie Wolton was the only registered architect; the other members were recent graduates of Yale School of Architecture.

After a few years, Team 4 dissolved and Wendy Cheesman and Norman Foster founded Foster + Partners, where she worked as a partner and director until her death in 1989.

Nevertheless, in 1999 the prestigious Pritzker Prize was awarded solely to Norman Foster. The prize celebrated the architect's career and highlighted buildings such as the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, the Willis Faber and Dumas offices, and the HSBC bank building in Hong Kong, designed in collaboration with his wife.

In an interview in 1975 with the magazine Architectural Design (AD), Wendy Cheesman was asked about the Sainsbury Centre. She emphasised the collaborative nature of creating an architectural project and rejected the notion of the “star architect”: “Parachutists join hands to form a circle. Each link is just as important; each action is a chain reaction. We cooperate in the same way with a team of clients, architects, engineers, quantity surveyors, model makers and photographers.”

# Letizia GELLI MAZZUCATO

**Italian architect // 1937-2019**

After studying in Florence, Letizia Gelli Mazzucato settled in Bologna and registered with the city's Order of Architects in 1960.

In 1961, she took part in founding and promoting the activity of "Città Nuova", a group that brought together the aspirations of young urbanist architects. They chose to pool their skills and place them in the service of a new idea of the city, centred on dialogue between individuals and improving social conditions for everyone. Key figures in this experience included Gian Paolo Mazzucato (who later became her partner), Umberto Maccaferri, Giancarlo Mattioli and Pierluigi Cervellati.

At the same time, Letizia Gelli Mazzucato also worked as a lecturer in Landscape Architecture at the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Bologna and at the Faculty of Architecture in Cesena.

Among her most important works are the Monument to the Fallen of Sabbiuno, commemorating the mass round-ups that followed the Battle of Porta Lama; the Memorial to Women Fallen for Freedom, bearing the names—engraved in bricks—of 128 women in the resistance of the province of Bologna; and the building that now houses the Ustica Museum, with the permanent installation by Christian Boltanski in memory of the air disaster of 27 June 1980, whose original sketch bears her name.

This significant body of commemorative monuments earned her the nickname "Architect of Memory".

Despite this recognition, her partner's name is the only one that appears today on the plaque on the façade of the Ustica Museum, concealing her contribution from the wider public.

# Patty HOPKINS

British architect // 1942-

After considering a scientific career, Patty Hopkins ultimately chose architecture and became one of only five women among sixty students at London's Architectural Association in 1959.

In 1976, she founded a practice with her partner, Michael Hopkins. Their house, with a steel structure and glass façades, is one of her most notable projects.

Together, they received the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture from the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in 1994. Patty Hopkins thus became the second woman to receive this recognition, fifteen years after Ray Eames.

Patty is sadly known for having been erased from a photograph in which she originally appeared with five fellow professionals: Norman Foster, Richard Rogers, Nicolas Grimshaw, Terry Farrell and her husband Michael Hopkins. When the photograph was used in 2014 to illustrate a BBC series entitled *The Brits Who Built the Modern World*, she was removed from the image.

That same year, in a speech delivered at the Women in Architecture Luncheon at the Langham Hotel, she recounted another anecdote:

"[...] in a conversation about Glyndebourne, I was asked what my role in the practice had been. It's the kind of question one dreads: how to sum up thirty-eight years in a sentence. I can't remember everything. So I barely managed to answer something like: Michael thought up a concept and I organised the details. To this, our friend Humphrey Burton, who was asking the questions, replied: 'Ah, you mean choosing the door knobs?' and Michael exploded: 'No!' So the other day, when I was preparing this speech, I asked Michael what he thought my role in the practice had been. And he said: 'The practice wouldn't have grown without you. You were the glue and the oil.' I wasn't sure how to interpret this contradiction. But it seemed an apt description of the complex reality."

# Carme PINÓS

**Catalan architect // 1954-**

Carme Pinós began studying architecture alongside two hundred male students and four other women. She graduated in 1979 from the Barcelona Higher Technical School of Architecture (ETSAB), where she met her partner in life and work, Enric Miralles (1955–2000). They shared a studio between 1982 and 1991, a period in which they built emblematic works such as the Igualada Cemetery, the archery facilities in Barcelona and the Escola-Llar of Morella, for which they received the National Architecture Prize in 1995.

In 1991, after separating from Enric Miralles, Pinós decided to continue on her own and founded her own practice. Although the work and responsibility for earlier projects had been shared, recognition tended to fall to Miralles. Pinós was pushed to the margins of the architectural elite for almost a decade, even though she was invited to teach at internationally prestigious universities such as Illinois, Düsseldorf and Columbia.

The situation changed when she was approached to design Cube I, the Guadalajara tower (Mexico), which won several awards. From that point on, she regained confidence, commissions and recognition, and went on to author projects such as CaixaForum Zaragoza, the campus of the Vienna University of Economics, and the new Escola Massana in Barcelona.

This spirit of freedom and resistance defines her later work, in which she prioritises an architecture that is not only aesthetic but also creates connections between people and place. Alongside her professional practice, Pinós has continued to play an important role in academia, teaching at universities such as Harvard, Berkeley, the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne and the Università di Venezia, offering a perspective that combines sensitivity, commitment and a constant determination to break with structures of power.

Carme Pinós is one of the most innovative and influential architects of her generation, a pioneer in establishing and sustaining her own practice, and the recipient of the National Architecture Prize in 2021, an award received by only two other women architects. Even so, three decades after separating from Enric Miralles, in almost every interview she is still asked about their relationship and subsequent break-up. By contrast, although Enric died far too early and there are therefore fewer interviews with him, none of them include questions about his private life or his relationship with Carme Pinós. Indeed, they focus strictly on his work, and she is often not even mentioned when the projects they made together are discussed.

# Lu WENYU

Chinese architect // 1967-

Lu Wenyu is co-founder of the Amateur Architecture Studio in Hangzhou, China, known for its use of traditional techniques and materials, as well as for its interest in Chinese vernacular architecture.

She founded the practice in 1998 in collaboration with her partner, the architect Wang Shu, whom she met during her studies in architecture and engineering at the Nanjing Institute of Technology.

The studio gained prominence in China and later throughout the world. Going against the grain of the rapid development approach promoted by the People's Republic, they adopted a line of reinterpretation of local traditional architecture, especially through the use of ancestral craft techniques and materials.

In 2012, Wang Shu received the Pritzker Prize and regretted not being able to share it with his wife, comparing his situation to that of Denise Scott Brown. Even so, unlike the American architect, Lu Wenyu decided to reject the prestigious prize and avoid fame—overwhelming in the Chinese context—in order to devote herself to her son. In an interview with the newspaper *El País*, she explained: “In China, you lose control of your life when you become famous. I want a life, and I’d rather spend it with my son. I don’t accept interviews there. Nor in English-speaking countries [...] I’m happy to design an architecture that I believe helps our towns and cities become better. I’m convinced that talking about it sparks other people’s interest, not being famous.”

# Itziar GONZÁLEZ VIRÓS

**Catalan architect and urban planner // 1967-**

An architect, urban planner and social activist from Barcelona, and the daughter of a family closely connected to academic and political circles. She studied architecture at ETSAB, graduating in 1995 with a final project on the self-managed district of Christiania in Copenhagen. From the outset she made a personal “vow” not to build new construction and committed herself to architectural rehabilitation and the social, participatory management of public space. Until 2005 she worked as an associate lecturer at ETSAB and became known through participatory processes such as the redesign of Lesseps Square in Barcelona.

In 2007, following a proposal by Barcelona’s mayor Jordi Hereu, she entered municipal politics as an independent councillor for the Ciutat Vella district. During her term she firmly defended residents’ interests and fought speculation and urban-planning corruption, especially linked to licences for tourist apartments, which placed her in direct conflict with deeply entrenched economic and political interests. In this context she was labelled an “enlightened” and troublesome woman; her home was broken into and she received death threats, as did two other municipal workers. Meanwhile, internally she was challenged and even overruled. The silence and lack of institutional support from a heavily male-dominated political power structure contrasted sharply with the harassment and threats faced by three women who dared to confront mafia-like networks of collusion between civil servants and private interests. In 2009 she resigned from office due to a mix of principle, protest, feelings of insecurity and psychological exhaustion. Her decision drew attention to the corruption network,

the opacity of the political system and the invisibility of her work, often played down or questioned whenever she applied her professional and ethical judgement as an architect. The court ruling in the corruption case came thirteen years later: seventeen people were convicted, mainly public officials, including the then head of technical services in Ciutat Vella, owners of tourist apartments and their representatives.

After stepping down, Itziar González continued her career as an architect and activist, promoting initiatives such as the Parlament Ciutadà, which aims to foster a more participatory democracy, and the Institut Cartogràfic de la ReVolta, devoted to identifying and mapping the structural cases of corruption. At the same time, she developed projects in urban consultancy, heritage rehabilitation and mediation in conflicts between residents and the authorities, consolidating a practice of “social architecture” centred on community value. One example is the project to renew La Rambla in Barcelona. She also became a leading voice in debates on the city, feminism and democracy, despite having gone through periods of difficulty and rejection in the sector as a result of her critical stance. Today, her trajectory positions her as a professional who combines craft, ethical commitment and a capacity for collective transformation, opening the way for other women in the fields of architecture and politics.

# exhibition credits

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Aurélie Vanhove and Solène Pasztor (architects and members of the MéMo association), with the support of Anne Labroille (co-founder of MéMo) and El globus vermell

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