



Edited by
Sonja Dümpelmann and John Beardsley

WOMEN, MODERNITY, AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



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Modernity was critically important to the formation and evolution of landscape architecture, yet its histories in the discipline are still being written. This book looks closely at the work and influences of some of the least studied figures of the era: established and less well-known female landscape architects who pursued modernist ideals in their designs.

The women discussed in this volume belong to the pioneering first two generations of professional landscape architects and were outstanding in the field. They not only developed notable practices but some also became leaders in landscape architectural education as the first professors in the discipline, or prolific lecturers and authors. As early professionals who navigated the world of a male-dominated intellectual and menial work force they were exponents of modernity. In addition, many personalities discussed in this volume were either figures of transition between tradition and modernism (like Silvia Crowe and Maria Teresa Parpagliolo), or they fully embraced and furthered the modernist agenda (like Rosa Grena Kliass and Cornelia Hahn Oberlander).

The chapters offer new perspectives and contribute to the development of a more balanced and integrated landscape architectural historiography of the twentieth century. Contributions come from practitioners and academics who discuss women based in USA, Canada, Brazil, New Zealand, South Africa, the former USSR, Sweden, Britain, Germany, Austria, France, and Italy. The book is ideal reading for those studying landscape history, women's studies and cultural geography.

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Catharina Nolin holds a PhD in art history and is associate professor at Stockholm University, Sweden. She has received research grants from The Swedish Research Council and The Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences. Her publications include a book on nineteenth-century urban parks in Sweden (1999); a book on Millesgården, home of sculptor Carl Milles (2004); a book on the landscape architecture of Lars Israel Wahlman (2008); and articles on Ester Claesson in *Die Gartenkunst* (2009) and on urban parks and national identity in *Public Nature: Scenery, History, and Park Design* (UVA Press, 2013). She is currently working on a book on Swedish female landscape architects, 1900–1950.

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We owe abundant thanks to all of the conference speakers and to the scholars who agreed to contribute essays to this volume. During its production, we incurred many debts. Louise Fox and Sadé Lee at Routledge facilitated a smooth publication process, and Dalal Musaed Alsayer provided assistance in the last stages of compiling the entire manuscript. We are grateful to all of them.

INTRODUCTION

Women, modernity, and landscape architecture

Sonja Dümpelmann and John Beardsley

June 1942 saw our last male contingent graduate . . . , someone had the bright idea of admitting women and by September 1942 in they came scrambling like the oysters who walked up the beach with the Walrus and the Carpenter in *Alice in Wonderland*. . . The aegis under which they entered bore the words, “for the duration.” They may end as the oysters did, or, they may be v-e-r-y difficult to dislodge.¹

Bremer Pond, 1944

The first women who entered the landscape architecture program at Harvard University in 1942 – as reported by Bremer Pond, Chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture at the time – followed earlier generations who had been trained in the architecture and landscape architecture programs at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; the Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture for Women, founded in 1901 in Groton, Massachusetts, by Judith Motley Low; the Pennsylvania School of Horticulture for Women begun by Jane Haines in Ambler, Pennsylvania, in 1910; and the Cambridge School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture founded in 1915 by Henry Atherton Frost in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Once admitted to the landscape architecture degree program at Harvard in 1942, women were indeed “difficult to dislodge.” Like the first generations of professional female landscape architects in the United States and abroad – many of whom were self-taught or merely attended horticultural training schools for women – the first female Harvard graduates went on to shape the landscapes we inhabit today, and to form a profession that has by the twenty-first century achieved significant acclaim.

However, the histories of twentieth-century landscape architecture, and especially of women’s contributions to the field, are still being written. In the last decades, increasing attention has been paid to what might be described as underreported narratives: those based on regional or period differences, for instance, or attentive to environmentalist ambitions.² The pace of research on women in landscape architecture has also accelerated, after some first initiatives in the 1980s.³ Several monographs, anthologies, and scholarly books on their contributions to the field have appeared, such that we now have the beginnings of a detailed picture of the role of women in landscape design at both the start and the conclusion of the twentieth century.⁴



FIGURE 0.1 Herta Hammerbacher designing in the office. Courtesy Architekturmuseum TU Berlin.

Yet, amongst the aspects of this story that are still largely unexamined, is the place of women in the emergence of modernist landscape architecture in the decades just before and just after World War Two, and, conversely, the role of modernist ideals and aesthetics in the work of female landscape architects at this time. For example, in 1964, the Museum of Modern Art published Elizabeth Kessler's book *Modern Gardens and the Landscape*; although prepared by a woman, the book included no women beyond a glancing reference to Gertrude Jekyll. The expanded 1984 version of the book still included no women. The anthology *Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review*, which appeared in 1993, featured the work of only one female designer and of a decidedly later generation: the contemporary landscape architect Martha Schwartz. Even the more recent publication, *Women in Landscape Architecture* (2012), concentrates on the founding generations, and not on those associated with modernism in the pre- or, in particular, the postwar years. Moreover, none of these publications in English looks outside of North America and Western Europe.



FIGURE 0.2 Sylvia Crowe at Swanley Horticultural College, Kent (from: Geoffrey Collins and Wendy Powell, eds., *Sylvia Crowe* [Reigate, Surrey: Landscape Design Trust, 1999], 12. Courtesy of Simon Crowe).

Broadened horizons and new perspectives

In contrast, *Women, Modernity, and Landscape Architecture* seeks to begin broadening the view, offering material for a comparative perspective. It assembles essays that deal with the lives and work of female landscape architects in Germany, Britain, Italy, Sweden, Russia, Austria, France, South Africa, New Zealand, the United States, Canada, and Brazil. This comparative perspective shows that landscape modernism emerged at different times in different cultures: earlier in Europe than in the Americas and other colonial societies. Women were a strong force in modernist landscape design in Russia, Scandinavia, and Western Europe by the late 1920s and 1930s, while, in the United States, women were not generally engaged with modernist ideas until the years after World War Two. Yet, landscape modernism can also be read as a transnational project.

As a variety of contributions in this volume show, female landscape architects were part of the early and subsequently more established professional international networks that spanned continents and generations; many traveled extensively as part of their own educational and professional development; and some even practiced in different countries. The female landscape architects presented here were both part of a larger international community that included their male colleagues and a group of individuals who shared similar experiences because of their professional affiliation and gender, but who, nevertheless, cannot be reduced to this common identifier because they came to the profession in different ways and contexts. As this volume shows, despite significant attempts at self-help in terms of career advancement (for example, some female practitioners only hired other women), most women followed their own individual paths into the profession, leaving us with many different and very personal stories. Although this volume has assembled these stories, both to highlight the female presence in the profession and to further a more nuanced understanding of recent landscape architectural history, female practitioners cannot be considered as a group with a shared agency. The grouping presented here is constructed and, while many personal and professional relationships and networks are uncovered in the following chapters, more research on these as well as shared and differing experiences is required.

Women were engaged in cross-cultural training and work, from England to South Africa and from Europe to America; they were also prominent in building the modern educational and professional institutions of landscape architecture. Some contributed to landscape architectural education through lecturing and studio teaching at universities, like Miranda Magnoli in Brazil, Isabelle Auricoste in France, and Geraldine Knight Scott in the United States; or they even assumed positions as university professors as in the cases of Herta Hammerbacher in Germany and Elizabeth May McAdams and Florence B. Robinson in the United States. Many women established their own firms, including Rosa Kliass in Brazil, Cornelia Oberlander in Canada, Carol Johnson in the United States, Sylvia Crowe in Britain, and Maria Teresa Parpagliolo in both Italy and England. Others assumed leadership positions in the public realm. In France, Marguerite Mercier worked for the planning authority of the new town of Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines near Versailles before joining the regional development agency for the coast of Aquitaine and then working for the regional public works department in Gironde. Two of the most prominent first-generation Soviet landscape architects – Militsa Prokhorova and Liubov’ Zaleskaia – were women; they worked in the 1930s at the Office of Planning of the Moscow Park of Culture and Leisure, a showcase public park directed by another woman, Betty Glan. Other women found corporate clients. In South Africa, Joane Pim worked with big mining conglomerates remediating mining compounds, designing planting strategies for the spoils piles that dominated mining communities in South Africa’s bleak interior and a master plan for the new mining city of Welkom in the Northern Free State (see [Plate 0.1](#)). In California, Ruth Shellhorn became the go-to person for Disneyland and Bullock’s Department Stores.

Women, Modernity, and Landscape Architecture, therefore, seeks to revise current gendered and national readings of modernism and modernity, and to contribute to the development of a more nuanced, balanced, and integrated landscape architectural historiography of the twentieth century.⁵ Although this book assembles essays on female practitioners, the aim is not to substitute a feminine view for a masculine one. Instead, by uncovering the hidden careers of some neglected female landscape architects in various regions of the world and by highlighting how they both collaborated with their male colleagues and stood their own ground, the essays in this volume also shed new light on heretofore little or entirely unknown parts of recent landscape architectural history. Thus, as shown in Sonja Dümpelmann’s chapter,

landscape historian Jeong-Hi Go's work on Herta Hammerbacher and the study of Maria Theresa Parpagliolo's career have uncovered new insights into German and Italian landscape architects' involvement in Nazi and fascist planning projects. These studies have also shown how landscape architecture offered women – whose role the chauvinist regimes sought to confine to homemaking, childbearing and child-rearing – a professional opportunity, despite the discrimination they faced. Besides the politicization of design, the politics of design are also revealed in Zeuler R. M. de A. Lima's essay in this volume. He shows that wealthy female activists played an important role in the design process of some of Brazil's signature landscape architecture projects like Roberto Burle Marx's Flamengo Landfill Project. Alla G. Vronskey's chapter on pioneering female landscape architects in Soviet Russia and the Soviet Union brings to the fore the connection between kinesthetics, modernist functionalism, and public park planning in communist Russia, as well as professional landscape architecture's early twentieth-century association with urbanism and public urban landscapes in this country. By focusing on three female practitioners who reached maturity in the postwar years, Bernadette Blanchon uncovers landscape architecture's role in postwar modernist housing developments in France, also shedding light on the opening of landscape architecture to the social sciences that occurred in this period and that, for some, was based on the Marxist teachings of Henri Lefebvre. The postwar career of landscape pioneer Joane Pim, presented by Jeremy Foster, further expands this discussion by drawing attention to the often-overlooked relationship between labor relations and landscape architecture in the distinct geographical and political context of South Africa. While Foster shows how Pim considered landscape a means to improve not only devastated mining sites but also social relations in a country characterized by apartheid, Thaisa Way's essay on female practitioners in the United States contributes to today's rising interest in the critical assessment of environmental ethics in landscape architecture.

Critical global and regional histories of landscape modernism

In comparison to many other professional women of their generation, pioneering female landscape architects tended to be comparatively mobile, thus defying the association of women with the local and women's history with localized histories.⁶ Not only did they travel for educational purposes to study, explore sites and historic landscapes, and attend conferences (Figures 0.3 and 0.4), but also, like their male colleagues, they designed landscapes in various places, often traveling hundreds of miles for site visits. Because of the lack of training and education in their home countries, women, more often than men, were forced to live in other countries already known for their design and horticultural education. The stories of female landscape architects, therefore, require a global or transnational outlook that not only enables comparison but also an integration of individual stories into larger, international contexts. At the same time, histories of landscape architecture cannot be told without the study of the respective local contexts and environments. They are locally situated, or grounded. As elaborated on by Catharina Nolin in this volume, the lack of training facilities in Sweden led some young women from this country to train in horticultural training schools in Britain and in offices in Germany. When they returned to Sweden, the knowledge gained in these countries was adapted to their respective Swedish contexts (see Plate 0.2).

Thus, women actively contributed to the development of landscape architecture as a product of modernity and modernization characterized by a tension between the local and the global. We follow a by-now familiar practice of distinguishing modernization, revolutions in production, transportation, and communication characteristic of the modern world, from



FIGURE 0.3 Sylvia Crowe in front of the caravan that she and her colleague Brenda Colvin used to tour in Britain. Brenda Colvin Collection. Courtesy Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading.



FIGURE 0.4 A program session of the 1956 IFLA Congress at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich. (Photograph by A. Jansen, published in Merel S. Sager, “International Landscape: The Formal Meetings of the Fifth IFLA Congress,” *Landscape Architecture* 47, no. 1 [1957]: 232–325 [232].) Reprinted with permission from the American Society of Landscape Architects.

modernity, the cultural conditions that resulted from modernization, notably transformations in labor and social relations. And we distinguish both of these from modernism, the set of styles or cultural codes that came to be regarded as expressive of modernity.⁷ We have been careful in the title of this volume to refer to modernity rather than modernism, for while all of the women presented in this anthology participated in some measure in modernity – especially in those

aspects related to individual emancipation and growing professional opportunities for women – not all participated equally in modernism; not all, that is, worked in a style characterized by new formal expression and material innovation that might be described as modernist. Indeed, many employed what could be termed transitional or modernizing styles. For example, the *Wohngarten* paradigm was advanced by many pioneering European women in the early decades of their careers, especially in Germany and Austria; as Ulrike Krippner and Iris Meder show in this volume, the *Wohngarten* provided several Jewish women in Vienna the opportunity to grow their design practices. It might be described as an expression of vernacular modernism, or “naturalist modern.” That is, it was a style that, in part, sought to imitate nature and was, therefore, little interested in the exploration of new, especially geometric formal expression, but which, nevertheless, addressed the modern human needs for active outdoor life and the continuity of indoor and outdoor space.⁸ Yet, almost all the women presented in this book addressed the challenges of the modern world – notably, on the one hand, landscapes of infrastructure and industrial production and, on the other, public landscapes of an expansive urbanization. Many of them, like Miranda Magnoli and Rosa Kliass in Brazil, worked for, or were commissioned by, local park departments, thereby strengthening the commitments of urban governments to the public environment. Female landscape architects were also involved as consultants in large-scale land management projects and in the landscape planning and design of entire new urban neighborhoods. They did not stand behind their male colleagues when it came to broadening the professional field in the postwar years, and entering the urban realm, or public sphere.

This is not to say, however, that some of these women were not avowedly modernist. In postwar California, suburban house gardens modeled on the “Southern California Look” became pervasive, not least as a result of Ruth Shellhorn’s design practice, which Kelly Comras presents in her chapter in this book. Other landscape modernisms developed, for instance, by Mina Klabin and Rosa Kliass in Brazil, testify to women’s interest in the combination of the aesthetics and social purpose of design characteristic of the modern era. Modern designs that could, at the same time, fulfill their social purpose also lay at the heart of German-born Cornelia Oberlander’s work in Canada. As presented by Susan Herrington in this book, Oberlander used design methodologies learnt during her studies at the Harvard Graduate School of Design in the 1940s. Applying and elaborating on these methodologies, which included abstraction and syncopation – i.e. spatial design that created moments of suspense and surprise – Oberlander developed a successful practice providing designs for private and public clients alike. Although many women began their careers firmly grounded in the history and horticultural knowledge of the profession, many quickly broadened their design vocabulary to respond to the changing tasks of the profession, or even became a “model modern,” as Susan Herrington argues in the case of Oberlander.

Designing across spheres

Landscape design provided women with both a chance and a challenge, offering them opportunities to enter the male-dominated professional world. For many women, landscape design appeared as a logical choice, as it originated in garden design and horticulture, which, by the nineteenth century, were often seen as domestic pursuits coded female because of their association with the home and homemaking. Working with nature and creating place added an additional legitimization to women’s work as landscape designers, as, of course, the female body has throughout history been identified with nature and the home.⁹ This general coding, however, did not prevent their male colleagues from responding to the female entry into the

professional work force with reactions that ranged from hesitation to disbelief and downright exasperation – even aggressive disapproval. In 1892, the director of the Arnold Arboretum in Boston, Charles Sprague Sargent, questioned women’s abilities outside the small flower garden. He contended that landscape gardening on a large scale was “a masculine art” requiring “a certain manly vigor of treatment, an unhesitating despotism, that the gentler sex deprecate as cruel and unnecessary.”¹⁰ Two years later, his landscape architecture colleague Charles Eliot endorsed Marianna Schuyler Van Rensselaer’s book *Art-Out-of-Doors* (1893), yet criticized its representation of the young profession. With its focus on gardens, shrubberies, and parks, he found the book neglected “the village, the factory, and the railroad yard” and ignored “the essentially virile and practical nature of the art and profession,” which, as he explained, had to “be founded in rationality, purpose, fitness.”¹¹ Around the same time in Germany, the garden journal *Möller’s Deutsche Gärtner-Zeitung* launched attacks against the first horticultural schools for women and the women’s movement more largely in the form of cartoons that illustrated what was considered by many an innate female unpreparedness for professional life in general and gardening in particular (Figures 0.5 and 0.6). Some decades later, opposition had softened somewhat; in 1930, the German arborist and garden architect Camillo Karl Schneider, in reference to the women-led American Garden Clubs, welcomed women’s engagement in house garden design. Perceiving a lack of quality in many garden designs, Schneider argued that gardens had, until then, been designed “based upon male psychology.”¹²

Yet, in the founding years of the profession, male colleagues and commentators at best relegated women’s professional roles to house garden design and planting, enforcing the separation of male and female spheres that were associated with public life, production, and culture, on the one hand, and privacy, home, reproduction, and nature, on the other. However, it was this initial separation of spheres and the relegation of women to house garden design that provided some of them not only with an entry into the professional workforce in the first place, but also gave them a springboard into the expanded field of landscape architecture. Landscape design was a means for them to actively bridge the spheres.

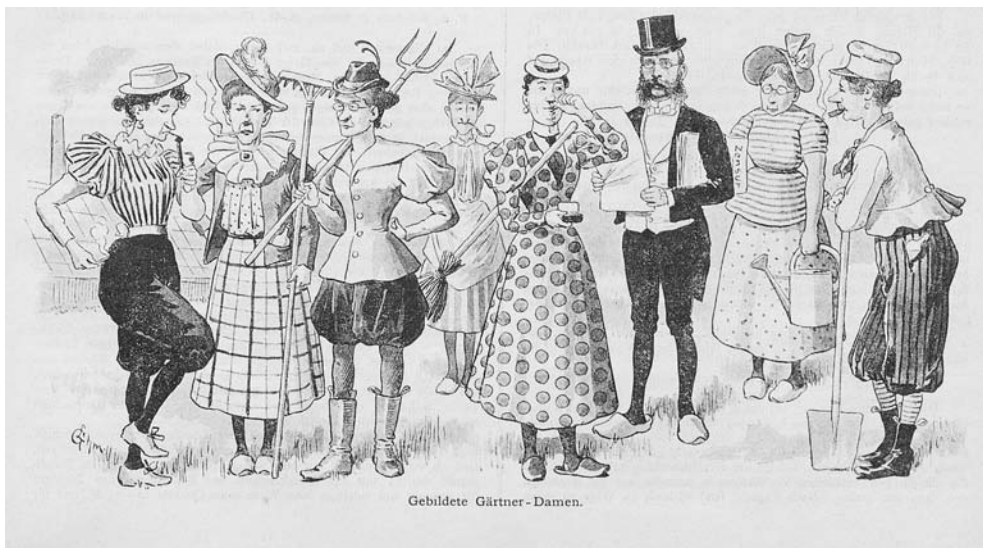


FIGURE 0.5 Cartoon published in *Möller’s Deutsche Gärtner-Zeitung*, titled “Educated female garden ladies.” (*Möller’s Deutsche Gärtner-Zeitung* 11 [1896]: 440–441.)



FIGURE 0.6 Cartoon published in Möller's *Deutsche Gärtner-Zeitung*, titled "Training of educated ladies in carrying liquid fertilizer." (Möller's *Deutsche Gärtner-Zeitung* 11 [1896]: 123.)

As shown by the professionals featured in this volume, female landscape designers have often avoided expressing feminist views openly, or they have not been interested in actively engaging in feminist agendas and politics. Some women, however, were implicit, or even more or less explicit, in voicing feminist positions. Perhaps because of the inherent nature of the profession that quite literally deals with natural features like plants and has its origins in the domestic sphere, many practitioners presented in this volume embraced both of the two prevalent feminist positions:¹³ they turned their "otherness" into a strength on the one hand, and sought maximum equality on the other hand. However, a number either sided with the one or the other attitude more explicitly. Thus, some women actively embraced their "otherness" and women's values to push for physical transformations in design, and, in some cases, even societal change. They used their plant knowledge to good effect, like Mae Arbegast; they designed for women as users, like Marjorie Sewell Cautley (Figure 0.7); and they helped spread new design paradigms like the *Wohngarten*, as in the case of Anna Plischke and Helene Wolf. Others, like Herta Hammerbacher, Sylvia Crowe, and Isabelle Auricoste, worked against the historically constructed separation of spheres seeking to achieve total equality in a shared arena with men.

Yet, in 1944, even as the first female students were matriculating at Harvard and as the first generation of female landscape architects in Europe and the United States were reaching maturity in their careers, the Harvard women were seen as domesticating the studio environment. Thus, the landscape architecture department secretary Marion Kohlrausch reported in a letter to alumnus Charles Burns on "the feminine influence" remarking that, "They don't



FIGURE 0.7 Interior garden courtyard with playgrounds for small children at Sunnyside Gardens, Queens, NYC, designed by Marjorie Sewell Cautley. (Photograph published in Albert G. Hinman and G. Coleman Woodbury, “Landscape Architecture’s Role in Modern Housing Projects,” *American Landscape Architect* 1 [October 1929]: 9–15, 40 [11].)

seem to be too great a nuisance.” The female presence was, however, sensed quite literally through the smell of bacon as a result of the women’s initiative to cook breakfast in the basement drafting room:

When they [the female students] first arrived they had what might be called a luncheon club – a coeducational one, where the male was broken gently to the mysteries of cooking soup, washing dishes all in collaboration, you understand with the alluring female, you know Jack and Jill did it one day and Mike and Mary the next, in groups, of course. It was great sport when the odors began to waft up to the first floor – it all took place in the basement drafting room. Sometimes they had breakfasts too. Perhaps you never realized it but there are times when the odor of bacon just doesn’t fit – at least not with marble corridors, etc. Also, when they plugged in their electric apparatus, it usually blew out the lights in one of the professor’s office – he was that type of snapping goldfish professor and he used to furnish a bit of excitement as he would come out on the roar – he didn’t like to smell bacon at 10:45 in the morning either.¹⁴

Whereas female students were seen as domesticating the studio environment by “infesting” it with the smell of bacon, in the world of landscape architectural practice, women like Ruth Shellhorn built their careers by working on designs for the domestic sphere, actively fostering a group of female middle-class clients.

On the other hand, women were also among the first practitioners who embraced large public commissions and the design of public urban or even regional landscapes. In the 1920s and 1930s, Militsa Prokhorova and Liubov' Zalesskaia helped design the Moscow Park of Culture and Leisure. During World War Two, the German landscape architect Herta Hammerbacher produced landscape plans for towns in the annexed Eastern territories. Maria Teresa Parpagliolo was in charge of the planning team for the parks and gardens of the Roman World's Exhibition site planned for 1942.

These women actively began to shape the public sphere, space that had, until the early twentieth century, largely been considered a male domain. By the mid-twentieth century, in fact, the activity of female landscape architects in the public realm had led to a new situation: for the first time, women could inhabit urban space designed by and, in some cases, for women. *Women, Modernity, and Landscape Architecture* seeks to complement studies that have appeared in the last decades on women and urban history.¹⁵ These publications have focused on women's institutions and their relationships to the city, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century, and they have only marginally, or not until recently, offered further insights into how women have literally shaped the city through their own architecture.¹⁶ *Women, Modernity, and Landscape Architecture* contributes individual stories that direct attention instead to the design and shaping of the open spaces and infrastructure networks of the city, to their actual making and materialization, and to the lives of their female creators. Focusing on the period of the inter- and postwar years, and on selected parts of the world, this book shows how women have contributed to urban modernization in very concrete ways.

Many of the pioneering female landscape architects were also vocal advocates and representatives of their profession, assuming leadership roles in national and international organizations like the International Federation of Landscape Architects (Figure 0.8). Although many were operating across national borders, attending conferences, going on study tours, and accepting commissions in different countries, the strategies and methodologies the women employed to reach their positions and hold their ground depended very much on distinct local contexts and their individual characters and interests. In some cases, women partnered with their husbands who worked as architects, or who, in rare cases, even supported their female partner's practice through other types of work. Other women built a female client base, or they supported each other by training younger generations and sharing workspaces and projects. Teaching and writing figured high in female landscape architects' chosen tasks. While these were activities traditionally associated with the female sphere they were also a necessary means for shaping and building a more robust foundation for a young profession. Using social conventions to achieve professional goals could be another way to circumvent more explicit discrimination, get the job done, and turn a challenge into an opportunity, as some of the chapters in this book show.

We hope that this book will add complexity and depth to understandings of the histories of women, modernity, and landscape architecture, and that these understandings might be valuable to the present. As more and more women enter the profession, it is essential for them and their male colleagues to know something of the women who went before them – the personal and professional challenges they faced, and the accomplishments they managed nevertheless. As younger practitioners claim authorship of innovative ideas in design, whether urbanist, infrastructural, social, or stylistic, it is important for them to know how these ideas were anticipated and articulated in the work of earlier generations. As sustaining and restoring biodiversity have increasingly emerged as crucial tasks for contemporary practice, and as knowledge of the relationships between human and nonhuman nature become ever more



FIGURE 0.8 Ulla Bodorff from Sweden (IFLA Honorary Treasurer), flanked by the American landscape architect Hubert B. Owens (left; IFLA Honorary Secretary), and the IFLA President René Pechère from Belgium (right), at the 1956 IFLA conference in Switzerland. (Photograph by Reinhart Besserer, published in Stuart M. Mertz, “An IFLA Exhibition at Zurich,” *Landscape Architecture* 47, no. 1 [1957]: 326–327 [326].) Reprinted with permission from the American Society of Landscape Architects.

central to the discipline, there is much to be learned – by men and women alike – from the horticultural, ecological, and social aspects of women’s practice in the modern era. We also hope that the book will inspire other comparable efforts at research. There is much still to be said, not only about the women in this volume, but also about others like them whose stories have yet to be told. And there are narratives from other parts of the globe that await recovery. What of those places in the world where the democratizing and emancipatory effects of modernization, especially with respect to women, have been slower to take hold? Who are the women working in landscape architecture or comparable professions and activities in these societies, and is design culture the richer for it?

Although we focus on women, our ambition here is to further a larger goal: to aid in uncovering neglected histories of landscape architecture altogether. The essays assembled here show that it remains an open question how far landscape architecture was an emancipatory occupation. Was landscape architecture in the modern era as beneficial socially and as progressive ideologically as its proponents sometimes claimed? Who did it serve, and to what ends? Within its modernizing agenda, did men and women play similar roles, or did women design differently from men? Under which circumstances did women take into account human needs that may have been neglected by men? By focusing on the inter- and postwar period, the contributions to this volume also shed light on the still relatively young history

of landscape architecture itself, and on the emergent qualities and challenges of professional practice. Serving public and private interests of varying characters (some of which we might still embrace, while repudiating others), reacting to global developments, yet creating – and firmly grounding – humans in specific localities and places, the careers of the women presented here illustrate a developing practice that operated on a variety of scales and addressed a growing range of social and environmental challenges. We offer this anthology as a tribute to the women whom we know to have blazed trails in modern landscape architecture, to those whose histories are yet to be recovered, and to those women – and men – who today are still following in their footsteps. But it is also our hope that this volume might encourage further critical engagement with, and analysis and interpretation of, the larger histories of landscape architecture – still one of the least well known and arguably most underappreciated of the arts.

NOTES

- 1 Newsletter from Department of Landscape Architecture, December 5, 1944, signed by Bremer Pond. Correspondence with students and alumni, 1942–1946. UAV 322.442, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University Archives.
- 2 See, for example, Therese O'Malley and Marc Treib, eds., *Regional Garden Design in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1995); Michel Conan, ed., *Environmentalism in Landscape Architecture* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2000).
- 3 See, for example, Catherine R. Brown and Celia Newton Maddox, "Women and the Land: 'A Suitable Profession'," *Landscape Architecture* 72, no. 3 (1982): 64–69; Catherine M. Howett, "Careers in Landscape Architecture: Recovering for Women What the 'Ladies' Won and Lost," in *Feminist Visions*, ed. by Diane L. Fowlkes and Charlotte S. McClure (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1984), 139–148; Deborah Nevins, "The Triumph of Flora: Women and the American Landscape, 1890–1935," *Magazine Antiques* CXXVII (April 1985): 904–922; for the first symposium on women in landscape architecture, see the issue of *Landscape Journal*, introduced by Karen Madsen and John F. Furlong, "Introduction: Women Land Design: Considering Connections," *Landscape Journal* 13, no. 2 (1994): 88–101; Diane Kostial McGuire and Lois Fern, eds., *Beatrice Jones Farrand (1872–1959): Fifty Years of American Landscape Architecture* (Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture, VIII: Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, 1982).
- 4 See, for example, Susan Herrington, *Cornelia Hahn Oberlander: Making the Modern Landscape* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014); Judith K. Major, *Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer: A Landscape Critic in the Gilded Age* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013); Kristine F. Miller, *Almost Home: The Public Landscapes of Gertrude Jekyll* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press; Amsterdam: [published] by arrangement with Architectura & Natura, 2013); Trish Gibson, *Brenda Colvin: A Career in Landscape* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2011); Thaisa Way, *Unbounded Practice* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2009); Cynthia Zaitzevsky, *Long Island Landscapes and the Women Who Designed Them* (New York: Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities: in association with W. W. Norton & Co., 2009); Eran Ben-Joseph, *Against All Odds: MIT's Pioneering Women of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, School of Architecture and Planning, 2006); Marta Isnenghi, ed., *Donne di fiori: paesaggi al femminile* (Milano: Mondadori Electa, 2005); Sonja Dümpelmann, *Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard (1903–1974): Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Gartenkultur in Italien im 20. Jahrhundert* (Weimar: VDG, 2004); Anke Schekahn, *Spurensuche. 1700–1933, Frauen in der Disziplingeschichte der Freiraum- und Landschaftsplanung*, Arbeitsberichte des Fachbereichs Stadtplanung/Landschaftsplanung no. 144 (Kassel: Universität Gesamthochschule Kassel, 2000); Geoffrey Collens and Wendy Powell, eds., *Sylvia Crowe* (Reigate, Surrey, England: Landscape Design Trust, 1999); Judith B. Tankard, *The Gardens of Ellen Biddle Shipman* (Sagaponack, NY: Sagapress, 1996).
- 5 For a first call for a revisionist landscape architectural history and pointing out the role that attention to women in the profession can play in this history, see Heath Schenker, "Feminist Interventions in the Histories of Landscape Architecture," *Landscape Journal* 13, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 107–112.
- 6 For a discussion of female and male gendering and the local and the global, see Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 9.

- 7 See, for instance, Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), especially the Introduction; and David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge, MA, and Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1990), especially [chapter 2](#), “Modernity and Modernism,” and [chapter 5](#), “Modernization.”
- 8 For a definition of “naturalist modern” and other terms to describe twentieth-century designed landscapes, see Marc Treib, “Landscapes Transitional, Modern, Modernistic, Modernist,” *Journal of Landscape Architecture* 8, no. 1 (2013): 6–15. Treib’s essay is a good overview of the different levels of engagement with modernist ideas.
- 9 See, for example, Carolyn Merchant, *Reinventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Carolyn Merchant, *Earthcare* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989); Annette Kolodney, *Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975). For the nature–culture/female–male binary in relation to landscape architecture, see Elizabeth Meyer, “The Expanded Field of Landscape Architecture,” in *Ecological Design and Planning*, ed. by George F. Thompson and Frederick R. Steiner, 45–79 (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.); and the overview by Karen Madsen and John F. Furlong, “Women, Land, Design: Considering Connections,” *Landscape Journal* 13, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 89–101.
- 10 Charles Sprague Sargent, “Taste Indoors and Out,” *Garden and Forest* 5, no. 233 (1892): 373–374.
- 11 Charles W. Eliot, ed., *Charles Eliot Landscape Architect* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1902), 546–547. See also Judith Tankard, “Women Take the Lead in Landscape Art,” in *Women in Landscape Architecture*, ed. by Louise Mozingo and Linda Jewell (Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland & Company, 2012), 84.
- 12 C[amillo]. S[chneider], “Um den kommenden Garten,” *Die Gartenschönheit/Gartenwerk* 11, no. 1 (1930): 3–5 (5).
- 13 For the two prevalent positions see, for example, Carolyn Merchant, *Earthcare* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 183–184.
- 14 Miss K[ohlrausch], letter to Charles Burns, July 11, 1944. UAV 322.442, Graduate School of Design, correspondence with students and alumni, 1942–1946, Harvard University Archives.
- 15 See Daphne Spain, *How Women Saved the City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001); Daphne Spain, *Gendered Spaces* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Sarah Deutsch, *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870–1940* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Elizabeth York Enstam, *Women and the Creation of Urban Life: Dallas, Texas, 1843–1920* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1998).
- 16 See Despina Stratigakos, *A Women’s Berlin: Building the Modern City* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1981).

1

CREATING NEW LANDSCAPES FOR OLD EUROPE

Herta Hammerbacher, Sylvia Crowe,
Maria Teresa Parpagliolo

Sonja Dümpelmann

At the opening of the first International Conference of Landscape Architecture in London in 1948, which led to the foundation of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), eight landscape architects sat on the podium: four men and four women ([Figure 1.1](#)).¹ This gender equality did not, however, reflect the true percentage of women and men in the profession at the time – women were and still are in the minority. Neither did it influence subsequent historiographies in which women have been largely neglected. However, it does attest to the fact that the still relatively young discipline of landscape architecture provided women with an opportunity to enter the professional world, despite discrimination and doubts on the part of many of their male colleagues. As Thaïsa Way has shown, women can be portrayed as “a force in landscape architecture” playing an active role in the profession’s development rather than as passive professionals “helplessly subject to men.”² In fact, as Karen Madsen and John Furlong pointed out in 1994, “garden and landscape architecture has also been a tool for women’s emancipation.”³ The three women discussed in this essay were pioneers of the profession in Europe, and they both created and seized the opportunities of this young profession. The German landscape architect Herta Hammerbacher (1900–1985), and her British and Italian colleagues Sylvia Crowe (1901–1997) and Maria Teresa Parpagliolo (1903–1974), perceived landscape architecture as a chance to lead independent professional lives at a time when most women’s activities were still limited to housekeeping and child-rearing in the shadow of their husbands’ businesses and professional lives.

The international conference had been proposed in 1946 by another woman: Lady Allen of Hurtwood.⁴ As Marjorie Allen, she had received some informal gardeners’ training during the World War One years. After a diploma course in horticulture at University College, Reading, she had designed and promoted the establishment of roof gardens in the 1920s and 1930s and she was elected the first fellow of the British Institute of Landscape Architects in 1930. In the 1940s and 1950s, she campaigned for the implementation of adventure playgrounds in Britain, following the example of C. Th. Sørensen’s first adventure playground in Emdrup, Denmark, in the early 1940s.⁵ On the occasion of the 1948 conference, Allen shared the podium with the female landscape architects Brenda Colvin,⁶ Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard and Sylvia Crowe. Crowe had chaired the organizing committee, and her Italian-born colleague Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard participated in the meeting in a variety of functions, including that of



FIGURE 1.1 Four female and four male landscape architects were on the podium at the inauguration of the first International Conference of Landscape Architects, in London in 1948. The Duke of Wellington, standing on the left, is opening the conference and exhibition. To his right are Walter Owen from the London County Council, the landscape architects Geoffrey A. Jellicoe, E. Prentice Mawson, Edward Wink and Sylvia Crowe. Seated in the front row from left to right are landscape architects Lady Allen of Hurtwood, Richard Sudell, the secretary of the Institute of Landscape Architects Mrs. Douglas Browne and the landscape architects Brenda Colvin and Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard. (Russell H. Butler and Loutrel W. Briggs, "The International Conference with the Institute of Landscape Architects as Hosts," *Landscape Architecture* 39 (1949): 72–75 [72].)

translating, organizing the accompanying exhibition and leading some of the conference tours. Not present at the venue was the German landscape designer Herta Hammerbacher, whose work was influential in Maria Teresa Parpagliolo's early years as a professional. Like all her German colleagues, Hammerbacher was excluded from participation at the conference, due to Germany's role in World War Two. This chapter foregrounds relevant similarities in these women's careers, in their working methods and in their roles in furthering the profession. Concentrating on the years when these women's careers reached maturity in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, it also draws attention to specific events that led the lives of these women to converge directly or indirectly, even if only for short periods.

Hammerbacher, Crowe and Parpagliolo had many things in common.⁷ They were of the same generation, born at the beginning of the twentieth century into liberal middle-class families. While their mothers had provided them with independent progressive female role models they found male mentors to introduce them to their prospective careers as landscape architects. Hammerbacher's first position was among male colleagues in the design studio of the tree nursery Ludwig Späth. With a degree from the horticultural school in Berlin-Dahlem, she

prepared drawings and construction documents for designs by Otto Valentien (1897–1987) and Carl Kemkes (1881–1964), a position she soon considered unsatisfying.⁸ Crowe trained for a while under the landscape architect Edward White (1872–1953) in London. Due to a lack of opportunities in her own country, Parpagliolo spent several months of training in the office of the British garden designer Percy Stephen Cane (1881–1976). The women began their professional education at horticultural colleges in the cases of Hammerbacher (Lehr- und Forschungsanstalt für Gartenbau Berlin-Dahlem) and Crowe (Swanley Horticultural College). Due to a lack of such colleges in Italy, Parpagliolo learned about botany and plants on her own. Their first works as landscape architects were closely related to the domestic sphere, focusing on planting and private house garden designs. However, this was the major area of occupation for European landscape designers in general at the time and, in many cases, women tended to acquire skills while working on house garden designs for members of their social networks. Although it was a woman – the German Countess Ursula Dohna – who, as early as 1874 under the pseudonym Arminius, drew attention to the necessity of “green rings” and other public open spaces in European cities, including kindergartens and playgrounds, the first garden designers to embark on the design of public urban parks and other public landscapes in Europe were men. Many of them had been trained on the job during their journeymen’s years or had been educated in the first horticultural schools founded in the early nineteenth century, such as the royal gardener’s training school near Berlin.⁹

Hammerbacher, Crowe and Parpagliolo were also prolific writers on a variety of subjects that included planting and garden design, and later urban design and broader environmental issues. Besides several commonalities in their biographies and careers, there were also points of direct contact among the three women. In fact, their paths crossed on a number of occasions, and they influenced each other in their work. For example, Parpagliolo’s writings and designs in the 1930s show diverse references to Hammerbacher’s house gardens and design philosophy. It appears that in 1933 she even copied the general layout of Hammerbacher’s design for the 1931 garden of the Poelzig House in Berlin-Grünwald and adopted some of its design elements.¹⁰ When the Italian visited Germany in 1936 and 1938, Hammerbacher very likely belonged to the group of German colleagues with whom she met. Furthermore, after Parpagliolo had married the Englishman Ronald Shephard in 1946, she moved to England and worked on projects in Sylvia Crowe’s newly established London office. In the same year, she collaborated on the design and planting recommendations for dune gardens in Mablethorpe on the Lincolnshire coast, a project for the reconstruction of a shoreline that had been largely transformed during World War Two, due to the construction of fortifications. An event that all three women attended and that was to influence their work was the 1964 IFLA conference in Japan, on which both Hammerbacher and Parpagliolo subsequently reported.

Hammerbacher, Crowe and Parpagliolo represent a group of independent professional women who, by the postwar years, had established themselves and had gained a high profile in their respective countries, if not internationally. They actively seized the new opportunities the profession offered in the postwar years. This meant they became involved in a variety of large-scale projects as landscape architects and consultants. Hammerbacher and Crowe embarked on projects that involved them as landscape consultants and architects for the new towns, Harlow and Basildon (Crowe), and the International Building Exhibition Interbau in Berlin (Hammerbacher). In 1954, Parpagliolo was one of the first Italian landscape architects to work for an Italian development company. Although Catherine Howett and Thaïsa Way have observed for the United States that “feminine visibility in the profession declined radically” in the war and postwar years,¹¹ the women discussed here seized the new possibilities