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On Collaborations: Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration

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On Collaborations: Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration

AUTHORS

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Delhi-based puppet theater company Katkatha, in a workshop with university students from Jamia Millia Islamia and children from the community. These collaborations shaped spaces of protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) in India. Photo taken with the consent of those pictured and the caregivers of the children, provided courtesy of Anurupa Roy and Katkatha, www.katkatha.org.

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“Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration” is a collection marking collaborations. It takes migration as the central concept and historical event behind a set of feminist narratives of constructed environments and spatial and material practices. It tests the concept of migration as a method of writing antipatriarchal, antiracist, anticasteist,

**“On Collaborations:
Feminist Architectural
Histories of Migration” is
the third installment of a
multisited collection of**

and antiformalist architectural histories. Our extensive individual research into architectures of migration and architectures by migrants and displaced people reinforced our principle of historiographical solidarity with those in the past and present who had been deterritorialized and dispossessed of land and home. Together, we aimed to build on the foundation of a pedagogy of the oppressed, narrating experiences of architecture and forms of power underwritten by built environments that we found in the social, cultural, and historical constructions and discursive and epistemic traditions created and maintained through processes of migration.¹ We found that this approach intersected with a variety of feminist strategies of countering power through the undertaking of history writing. We sought a space for a feminist practice of history writing and for migrant narratives of built environments. Both, by necessity, are based in collaboration.

Our multisited discussions with each other and with many authors over the course of the years preceding and spanning the COVID-19 pandemic have brought into sharp relief the stakes of *migration as a method* underpinning architectural histories and the urgency of radical border-crossing collaboration in the writing of architectural history.² We undertake collaborations across divides, which forward narratives that do not look to fixity in buildings or archives as a basis for authority.³ Perhaps due to the temporal endurance of certain buildings and the edifices of epistemology supporting them, the notion of *fixity* has long been a stronghold of architectural historiography. We resist this illusion and foreground the flux that constitutes the making and remaking of space across spans of time and geographies. Migration unsettles and resettles. It implies the spatial reconstruction of lives and domesticities at different locations, across borders, and within unfamiliar cultural contexts. Migration exposes vulnerabilities and uncertainties. It lays bare power imbalances and social and spatial injustices. It draws the contours of margins, which, as we write in *ABE Journal: Architecture beyond Europe*, are not merely supplementary spaces whose constitution is subjugated to some other formal regime but are themselves whole.⁴ It was our aim to gather and build narratives that figure them as such in this group of articles and the two others that form the entirety of the “Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration” collection. These narratives do not presume stabilities nor seek stability as a framework.

This understanding of migration as a method builds on a feminist principle and discipline, just as it evidences interdependency and collaboration. A growing body of

articles and essays that takes migration as the central concept and historical event behind a set of feminist histories.

PROJECT

On Collaborations:
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Histories of Migration

projects foreground feminist approaches to writing histories of architecture, many of which interpret architecture from feminist perspectives and interrogate the stability of gender as a category; some turn to migration as the means to unsettle historiographical hegemonies and contest ingrained premises about what constitutes architecture.⁵ The literature on the spatiality or materiality of migration tends to focus on borders, thus reifying the nation-state referent that most architectural histories rely upon (for example, to understand a figure such as a licensed architect).⁶ Even as we draw from work we admire, such as Suvendrini Perera's studies of maritime detention or Harsha Walia's advocacy against borders, we aim to think conceptually with migration as moving beyond privileging the underlying schematic of the border.⁷ We see this as a feminist practice of questioning underlying assumptions around subjecthood, in line with the work of Esra Akcan or Mabel Wilson, or an embrace of nomadic subjecthood, such as that encouraged by Rosi Braidotti—all interventions that have inflected academic architectural practice by destabilizing notions of fixity and forwarding the recognition of difference.⁸ Feminism without difference is not feminism; we favor a feminism that demands intersectionality and the unplanned entanglements that migration stirs up and binds together, which the authors of "Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration" recuperate and reconstitute in wholes and fragments.⁹ We imagine the partial perspectives proposed by Donna Haraway being resituated and diffracted through the concept of migration, overlapping through cross-border conversations and recalling Gloria Anzaldúa's theorization of borderlands as shapers of their inhabitants' tangled and hybrid identities.¹⁰ We aim to enfold the intricacies of evolving material and conceptual "borderlands" into feminist historical analyses, illuminating the convergence of mobilities and territorialized life-worlds by centering migration in historical inquiry and by oscillating between nomadic subjects and objects.

Examining architecture through the lens of migrations clarifies the relations and interdependencies undergirding spatial production, built form, use, and understandings of the constructed environment. This method illuminates the diffracting trajectories of people and things in migration, revealing histories that may otherwise have remained inscrutable, and illuminating the diversity of agencies, processes, and practices that do not fit obediently into received categories of thought. Thinking with migration unravels neatly packaged narratives of individually authored buildings, exposing more complex arcs of vibrant co-

production. Perhaps most trenchantly, migration as a concept draws a bold circle around masculinist forms and practices of history writing that do not depend upon love and camaraderie for their sheer existence.

The enthusiasm, warmth, and empathy we received in response to our original call for papers caused us to conceive of an expanded collection of articles that would house a set of architectural, feminist, and spatial histories in a way that would structure and narrate them in a different mode, one that gestured to a principle of instability conceptually fundamental to migration, rather than a claim of stability, upon which architectural histories are generally predicated. We aimed to emphasize multiplicities of perspective and to develop a polyphonic narrative by publishing on multiple platforms produced in multiple editorial contexts.

Ultimately, we had the opportunity to work with three journals whose distinct and sometimes divergent editorial approaches could be constructive, even as they shared certain hegemonic positions in the scholarly and cultural North (*ABE Journal: Architecture beyond Europe*, *Canadian Centre for Architecture*, and *Aggregate*). To our initial surprise, the editors of each wholeheartedly took up this challenge. As custodians of a project originally developed without the support of institutions and recognized archives, we note the epistemic relations and belonging that authorized publication contexts generate. We note, conversely, the forms of epistemic loss core to the migrant experience. On that, while we recognize that the positions of these journals within hierarchies of academic and cultural production may speak of structural power and evidence a *structure*, we maintain that each alone does not evince the *stability* that such a structure purports.

To underscore instability as a core structural principle for this collection and further test existing limits of authority, we approached three journals with open access digital platforms in order to call into question the edifices produced by the paper publication. We constructed a multisited scaffold, a triangulation between three editorial spaces, in order to build structural integrity and extend durability that would house and nurture a plurality of narratives, each grounded in different places across the world or straddling more than one. Within the landscape of publication of architectural scholarship, the three selected platforms offer distinct vantage points, priorities, and theoretical frameworks for engaging and producing architectural histories. We saw potential in working through them in collaboration with the three editorial teams in order to understand how shifting locations inflect processes of

writing and reading, as well as underscore difference within the collection. Rather than constructing autonomous entities, we seek to encourage movement between the websites, forging links between the platforms through shared argumentation if not literal cross-referencing. The platforms offer a diversity of publication formats, and we approached them with the intention of experimenting with a range of media, embracing aural and visual communication along with the textual. For example, we embed a documentary film, image galleries, and audio recordings of the authors' readings of their pieces in the CCA website; on the Aggregate website, we include a video of guests reading excerpts from the entire "Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration" collection. We hope this not only increases accessibility and inclusion but also gestures toward the orality of migrancy. Beyond the different viewpoints and diffractions offered in each of these three settings, the frequency and duration of publication, with articles appearing online over the course of several months during the first two years of the pandemic, enabled us to gesture to instability and multiplicity as base theoretical principles. Rather than acting as a destabilizing force, the principle of instability provides anchoring and foundations for this project.

If this project is predicated on instability, its durability is found in the articulations by the authors. In this, again, we learn from migration and migrants, write through migratory spatial practices, and in other ways foreground migration as a theoretical precept. These methods demand collaborations.

Method

The articles that follow outline fundamental methodological orientations toward architectural studies of migration.¹¹ The authors whose work appears here imagine a variety of collaborations. In part, we believe this is because migration as method necessarily invokes gender. Feminist architectural histories of migration produce a critical view of how gender structures the built world through collaborative production and narration. The texts presented here view gender as a social structure for historiographies predicated on migration, as well as a social construct that drives cultural change through migration. To that end, the articles that bookend the articles here, by Eunice Seng and by Ross Exo Adams, use migration and gender as key analytics in a revisionist approach that builds theory around the intersection of the two. Between them, S. E. Eisterer, Juan

Du, and Lori Brown present analyses of how architecture, migration, and gender cohere around practices of resistance and solidarity.

In “Working Women and Architectural Work: Hong Kong, 1945–1985,” Eunice Seng undertakes the formidable task of constructing a post–World War II archive of women in architecture in Hong Kong. As well as recuperating lost, obscured, and erased histories of women’s labor, the archive documents the impact of migration on the development of postwar Hong Kong. Highly dependent on the engagement of workers from elsewhere, particularly neighboring areas of Asia, modern Hong Kong, as Seng demonstrates, depended on mass migration, thus indicating that labor is inherent to displacement. To construct this archive, Seng turns to a wide variety of sources, ranging from government records and architectural drawings to women’s magazines, advertisements, and oral histories, carefully parsing them to learn more about the representation and gendering of women within the architecture field, as well as the work they conducted. Organized chronologically, Seng’s article takes us on a journey through the archive, bringing our attention to distinct periods that relate to different aspects of women’s architectural labor. Using gender as a lens, Seng explores what it meant to be a woman in architecture in Hong Kong in the mid- and late twentieth century. She carefully interprets textual sources, illustrating how language is used to reinforce gender stereotypes and to diminish the work of women architects; Seng points out that architectural authorship and naming practices frequently exclude women’s contributions. Visual sources portray women as passive users of architecture rather than its creators, while office snapshots simultaneously provide evidence of their presence within architectural practices. Seng finds histories of migration within architectural education as she scours student magazines and university records for documentation of women’s participation at Hong Kong University’s architecture school. Her archive also chronicles the slow integration of women in architectural firms and municipal offices, documenting their successful struggles for equal pay and fair representation while situating their work within the parameters of a globalizing economy and shifting approaches to family, care, and domestic labor. By foregrounding the biographies of women in architecture, Seng not only renders them visible, acknowledging their contributions and struggles, but also underscores the embodied nature of architectural production. Her archive is an act of solidarity with the women who shaped Hong Kong as a migrant society; it is built in the spirit of collaboration with them.

In “Spatial Practices of Dissidence: Identity, Fragmentary Archives, and the Austrian Resistance in Exile, 1938–1945,” S. E. Eisterer traces the spatial experiences of two exiled Austrian women dissidents during the Third Reich. Working from a close reading of their autobiographies, Eisterer reconstructs the environments within which the architect Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky and the playwright and journalist Elisabeth Freundlich labored in resistance. Rather than focusing tightly on their individual lives, however, Eisterer’s article underscores the profoundly collaborative essence of migration. Central to her narrative are multiple spaces of encounter and exchange in which Schütte-Lihotzky, Freundlich, and other resistance members interacted. These spaces range in scale: from rooms in intimate, domestic settings, to offices and coffeehouses, to hotels and a theater, to a farm, prisons, and a public park. They are documented very rarely: through photographs in which the placement of objects and the arrangement of furniture allow for textured interpretations of their use. More frequently, the spaces are logged as addresses in correspondence or briefly described in texts. Eisterer reads with and into them, uncovering their affective power not only as spaces of subversive politics but also as sites of solidarity and care. These everyday and often interior spaces kindled communality, bringing migrants together and holding them through shared grief and loss, as well as providing buoyancy and direction as they reoriented their lives and activism in often unknown surroundings. Beyond these familiar architectural typologies, Eisterer delineates other exilic spaces in which women’s bodies are central. Her description of Schütte-Lihotzky’s ear canal as a vessel for carrying secret documents joins the choir of voices that fill a prison courtyard as a comrade is granted freedom, figuring a hall of sound. Expansive networks of exiled bodies and minds convene through the space of a postcard, a letter, or a magazine article, while memory (populated by familiar but lost urban landscapes) becomes a site of refuge, comfort, and retreat. Memory is the ultimate interiority, as well as a place of recollection. With her analyses of these embodied and constructed spaces, Eisterer carefully assembles a spatial cartography of dissidence. She draws on memoirs, photographs, correspondence, and sketches—archival fragments that document unstable lives. Driven by necessity, her method exposes the limits of construing architectural histories from typical sources, such as technical drawings or architectural writings. Much like Seng’s archive, Eisterer’s highlights the urgency of working with a wider range of more eclectic, ephemeral material. Resonating with her diverse sources and her multisited, embodied, and situated

approach, she pushes against conventions of academic writing through the form of her text. Exploring verse and prose as means for analyzing and conveying migrant narratives, Eisterer seeks to shape a poetics of exile.

In “The Nail-House of the Sent-Down Girl: Exile and Migration in China’s Modern City,” Juan Du examines urban-rural-urban migration in China in the second half of the twentieth century. Like Eisterer, Du engages the intersection of exile and space by recuperating the history of a woman and her resistance. Contextualizing Zhang Lianhao’s story within the broader context of radically shifting state development policies, Du picks up the narrative when Zhang, as a seventeen-year-old, is forced to migrate from the city where she grew up. We follow Zhang into rural exile, where she establishes herself, and later a family, within a hostile farming community. Du focuses on the domestic environments Zhang constructed and reconstructed, connecting them to her lonely struggle to support herself and her children. When the village is encircled by a new zone that delineates the urban limits of the city of Shenzhen, Zhang is able to stabilize her economic situation by building a small village house. Du demonstrates how this house, and its subsequent extensions, demolitions, and reiterations, became a source of financial security as Zhang rents rooms to migrant workers, thereby bolstering her income. As the village is converted into a city, with farm houses replaced by apartment blocks, Zhang’s exile is no longer rural. Instead, her village home constitutes infrastructure crucial to Shenzhen’s rapid urban development. Within her urbanizing village home, which is quickly being dwarfed by industrial units, office buildings, and taller residential complexes that surround it, Zhang has essentially migrated to the city without moving. She is an outsider-insider, othered by her reverse migration experience and her continued presence as an urban person living in a village. She is a migrant reliant on rental income from rural migrants from villages similar to the one she had been forced to move to two decades earlier. In loosening the tightly knotted strands of migration and space through her depiction of Zhang’s life, Du illustrates that while Zhang’s homemaking is both a means of self-preservation and a way to support other migrant lives, it is also an act of tenacious resistance and collaboration. Zhang and the buildings she creates are co-constitutive. She and her two-, four-, or six-story house collaborate through penury, isolation, and alienation to afford agency, dignity, kinship, and, as she says, “a happy life.” In a patriarchal society, her house provides the support that her husband failed to impart.¹² Zhang’s

biography also demonstrates the embodied violence of urbanization and architecture. As Shenzhen further encroaches on village lands and villagers' rights are ceded to the urban authority, officials target Zhang's house as part of an "urban renewal" scheme aimed at further monetizing the site. Zhang's steadfastness in resisting the development and demanding adequate compensation while her neighborhood is being razed provides evidence of her resilience. More pointedly, perhaps, it speaks to the deep significance of her relationship with her home and the potential power of architectural kinship in resistance efforts.

Lori Brown is also concerned with the spatial impact of state-driven territorialization and control of the movement of bodies, as shown in her article "Birthing, Borders, and Bodies: American Crossings." Drawing attention to the permeability of borders, as well as to borderland spaces as zones in which cultures meet, Brown figures a borderland imaginary, drawing precise contours around transnational spaces of care. Her work focuses on the Rio Grande Valley borderland region, examining spaces formed to provide care to pregnant women and unaccompanied minors, as well as parents and their children, in Texas. Here, migrant bodies are battlegrounds, held in tension by U.S. government measures of legitimacy and legality. Brown examines the materiality of birthing clinics and refuge centers, grounding her analyses in her own embodied experiences of the environments and in reflections on conversations she had with the staff who run these facilities. The centers are often supported by nongovernmental organizations, frequently those with religious affiliations. At a birthing clinic, Brown finds spaces that have been designed and built incrementally, with an awareness that they may have a limited lifespan. Materials have been chosen to prioritize circular practices of dismantling and reuse. The religious sisters who designed and built the structures also manage the facility, which provides culturally inclusive perinatal care to many women who cross the border to give birth. Often living lives that dynamically straddle the borderlands, embodying them, the pregnant women wish to give their children the option to subvert the border in the future. Their intention is not to create permanent anchors but to increase the permeability of the borderlands, opening the imaginary. Run by an antiabortion organization, this purpose-built facility paradoxically enables radical border transgression, as well as perhaps future dissolution. At the clinic, Brown finds shady courtyards and breezeways that supplement lightweight timber structures. The building offers well-equipped, comfortable, and safe spaces for vulnerable women

with acute needs. It is a site of subtle collaboration and resistance. The two refuge centers Brown examined also show evidence of incrementality and improvisation. Repurposed buildings combine with temporary, makeshift structures to provide short-term accommodation and care to migrants released from detention centers. As changing government policies impact the number of people attempting to cross the border, they also demand flexibility and quick responses from the care centers, which have to expand or contract the services and spaces they provide in accord with prevailing need. In some cases the centers collaborate with partner organizations across the border, providing goods and supplies where they are most urgently required. These provisions also shape the borderlands, unsettling them with their transactions and crossings.

The theme of the controlled circulation of bodies is also central to the concluding article, “Enclosed Bodies: Locating Cerdà’s *Urbanización* within Federici’s History of Capitalism,” by Ross Exo Adams. In his contribution, Adams navigates Ildefonso Cerdà’s mid-nineteenth-century concept of *urbanización* with Silvia Federici’s *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* as a guide. Federici’s analysis of capitalism enables Adams to situate Cerdà’s *urbanización* within the much longer project of the socio-spatial gendering of the human body. With his contribution, Adams demonstrates how interrogating the familiar work of a much-studied figure like Cerdà from a fresh perspective can unsettle previous perceptions of architectural histories and contribute to unfixing the canon. In Cerdà’s work, Adams finds an implicit correspondence between sex and (im)mobility. The gendered division of productive and reproductive labor is inscribed into the spatial segregation of Cerdà’s hypermobile, interconnected, and male-dominated *urbe* and the static domestic realm, or *casa-urbe*, within which female bodies are immobilized and enclosed. Home to heteronormative family living, the *casa-urbe* is subdivided into spaces of leisure and recuperation for the productive man, while the “good housewife” animates servant spaces, technologies, and infrastructures connected with the unwaged labor of childcare and housework. Cerdà’s spatialized designations of sexual difference restrict the capacity of bodies to move in the world, rendering them as exposed or confined vessels of labor-power. The accumulation of capital is available only to those with the freedom to circulate, and the arrangement of space and the policing of those who inhabit it are inextricable. In his reading, Adams finds nonmale bodies to be the ground zero of capital, the static foundation upon which state economies

are built: capitalism is undergirded by gender. Contoured explicitly by the impacts of (im)mobilities, this proposed biologically and spatially codified separation of beings prompts Adams to question architecture's complicity in oppression, dispossession, and other forms of violence. As with the other contributors here, Adams finds collaborative agency within architecture that can be channeled to both create environments and to write broader, intersectional histories that reveal injustices and abuses, as well as invite resistance.

Collaboration

"Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration" traces forms and careers predicated upon displacement and the instabilities that accompany it. To study this subject matter, we asked authors to develop specific theoretical frameworks for an imagination of migration and to discuss embodied, immersive migratory methods. Our conceptualization of a feminist practice of writing architectural histories of migration began with articulations of the spaces and textures of margins.¹³ Building on this, we acknowledged practices and fields that came into view only through a process of diffraction: a metaphor that, as we note elsewhere, captures the experience of a change in energy or orientation.¹⁴ Yet, in our attempted figuration of historiographical margins, we find shifting conditions in which dispersed or diffracted objects and narratives reappear as centered and structured. Thinking with an essay by Stuart Hall on identity, we find the finality of migration eventually matched by a centering of marginality—a process that, in this collection, takes place through authors' articulations of the terrain of the migrant experience and the relationships engendered by it. "Migration is a one-way trip," Hall writes, at a historical conjuncture that was different from, if related to, ours. "There is no 'home' to go back to. There never was."¹⁵ With this halting reality, we can understand the migrant world through the collaborations and relationality that must constitute it (collaboration being, incidentally, a scholarly method to which Hall adhered rigorously and in many configurations). We see feminist architectural histories of migration calling for collaborations of all sorts, for writing with people at a physical or temporal distance, for working together and negotiating scholarship across radical forms of difference and sometimes profound asymmetries. Migrants collaborate, as the many historical examples in our collection have taught us. Moreover, collaborations offer methodological discipline—especially

feminist discipline—in the recuperation and narration of architectural histories. At the conclusion of our dialogues with each other and twenty authors, we find ourselves inhabiting an embodied collaborative method in which ideas, materials, and histories migrate and collaborations structurally fortify migratory perspectives. These collaborations produce for migrant subjects an intellectual and discursive scaffold that might otherwise be destabilized, to the extent that they inhabit worlds whose structural foundations have been weakened.

It is difficult to reconstruct precisely how the idea we seeded in 2014 became the project that we present here. We do not have a Gantt chart replete with deliverables and milestones to look back on. Emails, online chats, Google docs, social media photo exchanges, and at least one abandoned Excel table would likely be the most reliable archival sources. We grew the project organically and in collaboration. It has been shaped by conversations, events, and encounters, at conferences in Goa and Scandinavia, over meals in South London and on Coco Beach in Dar es Salaam, and in untold WhatsApp and Zoom rooms. This collaboration has accompanied us since our early postdoctoral years in waged academia, through periods of professional uncertainty and personal crises. It has been a place of practiced care and emergent feminist practice. As we assess those feminist historiographic practices that have evolved in the architectural historical fields we engage since we initiated work on this collection, we find great sympathy with certain projects, which ours integrates: recuperating the histories of women architects who have been excluded from mainstream narratives, thinking intersectionally with our comrades around the world across multiple forms of difference and oppression, underscoring and elevating global Black and Brown feminist approaches to the built environment, expanding the notion of architecture to include a wide range of constructive spatial and material practices, and emphasizing the processual and shifting nature of environments rather than a purported state of stasis and fixity. Our trajectory has been punctuated by notable activist and historiographical collaborations that changed the terms of feminist writing on histories of modern and contemporary architecture: from the pedagogies of the Feminist Art and Architecture Collaborative (FAAC), to the multiplatform interventions behind the volume *Architecture and Feminisms*, to the profound analysis of gender and leadership in India at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, to the interpretation of architectural historiography through fourth-wave feminism.¹⁶ Throughout, finding a method for

the recuperation and narration of migration has remained our most pressing theoretical problem, one whose urgency has emerged in force, we note, as we find ourselves predicting that future architectural historians may be writing *de facto* architectural histories of migration. We strive to gather methods of negotiating collaborative constructions and providing radical mutual support, on the one hand, in order to counter the dearth of structural connections and foundations for historiographies of migration and displacement, and, on the other, because foregrounding migration is fundamental to understanding architectural histories in general. As we consider migration as a method, we note that, etymologically, the word *method* is rooted in the words *meta* (in pursuit or quest of) and *hodos*, which means way or route. They meld together to communicate the pursuit of knowledge.¹⁷ We argue further for knowledges gained through histories and concepts of migration. These tend to be knowledges gained through collaboration.

Collaborations imposed by migration act to structure both architectural form and spatial practice, as well as the way we comprehend and cogitate them. Such an understanding speaks of worlds outside of the realm of thought, inhabiting the “structures of feeling” proposed by Hall’s colleague Raymond Williams, that is, “the meanings and values which are lived in works and relationships.”¹⁸ Many potential historical trajectories may lie within such relationality: diffractions vying to emerge. In concert with this formulation, we propose that feminist architectural histories of migration demand sensibility as much as theory. We argue that Seng’s laboring and professional migrants, Eisterer’s solidarities and subterfuges, Du’s exiles and urbanisms, Brown’s embodiments and absences, and Adams’s immobilities and enclosures may be understood as much through affect and emotion as through formal concepts or ideologies.¹⁹ Migration as a method lays bare the work of emotions in structuring architecture, a process clarified by Sara Ahmed’s articulation of emotion as a way of reasoning, in that “emotions work by working through signs and on bodies to materialise the surfaces and boundaries that are lived as worlds.”²⁰ Menna Agha’s invocation of emotional capital at the heart of placemaking provides vibrant examples of this signification, embodiment, materiality, and bordering, showing how architectural knowledge may operate, for example, in a house built by women eschewing a steel trowel and instead plastering walls with their bare hands because “a house must be touched.”²¹ At its core, to collaborate is to touch.

This sense of touch may be the ultimate proffering of this collection. We thank our immediate collaborators, beginning with each other, the editors of *ABE*, *CCA*, and *Aggregate*, and the authors who have laid the rails for this journey: S. E. Eisterer ([here](#) and [here](#)), [Armaghan Ziaee](#), [Assia Samaï-Bouadjadja](#), [Mary Pepchinski](#), [Kathleen James-Chakraborty](#), [Huda Tayob](#), [Irene Brisson](#), [Will Davis](#) ([here](#) and [here](#)), [Warebi Gabriel Brisibe](#), [Samprati Pani](#) ([here](#) and [here](#)), [Irina Davidovici](#), [Katrin Albrecht](#), [Ana María León](#), [Tânia Fontenele Mourão](#), [Sarover Zaidi](#), [Claire Zimmerman](#), [Eunice Seng](#), [Juan Du](#), [Lori A. Brown](#), and [Ross Exo Adams](#). As you read the articles in the full collection, we ask you to indulge their emotional intelligence, the hand they offer—not the least among their feminist contributions. We invite you, in your reading, to migrate—to collaborate.

Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration

ABE Journal: Architecture Beyond Europe

Dossier: Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration

[On Margins: Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration](#) • Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi and Rachel Lee

[“Dear Comrade,” or Exile in a Communist World: Resistance, Feminism, and Urbanism in Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky’s Work in China \(1934/1956\)](#) • S. E. Eisterer, with editing by Lenore Hietkamp and Maria Diavolova, and translation by Qiran Shang, Irina Chernyakova, Kevin Berry, Sang Pil Lee, and Zhengyang Hua

[On Contradictions: The Architecture of Women’s Resistance and Emancipation in Early Twentieth-Century Iran](#) • Armaghan Ziaee

Documents/Sources

[Le fonds d’archives Georgette Cottin-Euziol: Archive de toute une vie](#) • Assia Samaï-Bouadjadja

Reviews

[Simone de Beauvoir, *America Day by Day*](#) • Mary Pepchinski

Canadian Centre for Architecture

Of Migration

On Diffractions: Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration • Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi and Rachel Lee

Architectures of Care • Huda Tayob

Tracing a Plan in Kreyòl • Irene Brisson

Foreign Arms and the Economic Body • Will Davis

Bathing on the Canoe Jetty • Warebi Gabriel Brisibe

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Many Stories to Tell: Women in the Construction of Brasília • Tânia Fontenele Mourão

Dust and Lipstick (film) • Tânia Fontenele Mourão

If on a winter's night, azadi... • Sarover Zaidi and Samprati Pani

Migration, Briefly Arrested: Revisiting Atelier 66 • Claire Zimmerman

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Introduction

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Articles

Working Women and Architectural Work: Hong Kong, 1945–1985 • Eunice Seng

Spatial Practices of Dissidence: Identity, Fragmentary Archives, and the Austrian Resistance in Exile, 1938–1945 •

S. E. Eisterer

The Nail-House of the Sent-Down Girl: Exile and Migration in China's Modern City • Juan Du

Birthing, Borders, and Bodies: American Crossings • Lori A. Brown

Enclosed Bodies: Locating Cerdá's *Urbanización* within Federici's History of Capitalism • Ross Exo Adams

Video

Margins, Diffractions, Collaborations: Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration

With readings of excerpts of "Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration" by Nora Akawi, Esra Akcan, Lilian Chee, Namita Vijay Dharma, Annapurna Garimella, Rupali Gupte, Tania Gutiérrez-Monroy, Hollyamber Kennedy, Torsten Lange, Rachel Lee, Diana Lee-Smith, Joy Mboya, Elis Mendoza, Patricia Morton, Aya Musmar, María Novas Ferradás, Itohan Osayimwese, Ana Gisele Ozaki, Nida Rehman, Zoé Samudzi, Ishita Shah, Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, Olga Touloumi, and Ipek Türeli. Directed and edited by Will Davis.

✓ Transparent Peer Reviewed

Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi and Rachel Lee, "On Collaborations: Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration," *Aggregate* 10 (November 2022), <https://doi.org/10.53965/MDCB1441>.

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1 We build on the conceptualization initiated by Paolo Freire, and our usage is political and conceptual rather than empirical. Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970; New York: Continuum, 1993). ↑

2 Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, *Architecture of Migration: The Dadaab Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Settlement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, forthcoming 2023). ↑

3 Rachel Lee et al., eds., *Things Don't Really Exist until You Give Them a Name: Unpacking Urban Heritage* (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota, 2017). ↑

4 Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi and Rachel Lee, eds., "On Margins: Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration," *ABE Journal: Architecture beyond Europe* 16 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.4000/abe.6932>. ↑

5 Siddiqi and Lee, "On Margins." Since then, a number of other initiatives have been published, including Torsten Lange, Charlotte Malterre-Barthes, Daniela Ortiz dos Santos, and Gabrielle Schaad, eds., "Zeitgenössische Feministische Raumpraxis," *ARCH+*, no. 246 (February 2022); María Novas, *Arquitectura y género: Una introducción posible* (Luxembourg: Melusina, 2021). See also *Insurgent Domesticities* (forthcoming, 2023), the edited collection of essays by the Insurgent Domesticities working group of the Columbia University Center for the Study of Social Difference, <https://www.socialdifference.columbia.edu/projects-/insurgent-domesticities>. ↑

- 6 Siddiqi, *Architecture of Migration*. ↑
- 7 Suvendrini Perera, *Australia and the Insular Imagination: Beaches, Borders, Boats, and Bodies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Harsha Walia, *Border and Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of the Racist Nationalism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2021). ↑
- 8 Esra Akcan, *Open Architecture: Migration, Citizenship and the Urban Renewal of Berlin-Kreuzberg by IBA 1984/87* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2018); Mabel O. Wilson, "Notes on the Virginia Capitol: Nation, Race, and Slavery in Jefferson's America," in *Race and Modern Architecture: A Critical History from the Enlightenment to the Present*, ed. Irene Cheng et al. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020), 23–42; Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994). ↑
- 9 Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference" (paper presented at Amherst College, 1980) in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 1984); Kimberlé Crenshaw, *On Intersectionality: The Essential Writings of Kimberlé Crenshaw* (New York: New Press, 2019). ↑
- 10 Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575–99, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>; Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999). ↑
- 11 The present text owes a debt to the authors whose work appears in the collection of articles and essays in *ABE*, *CCA*, and *Aggregate* (full table of contents listed below), as well as organizers, speakers, and audience members in conference and symposium sessions we chaired, developed, or participated in together: "Entangled Histories, Multiple Geographies" (participants), EAHN 2015; "Neither Model nor Muse: Women Builders Beyond the Western World" (participants), SAH 2016; "Women on the Edge: Mobility and Regionalism from the Margins" (co-chairs), EAUH 2016; Simulizi Mijini/Urban Narratives 2016–17 (organizer and participant); AA XX 100: AA Women and Architecture in Context 1917–2017 (participants); "A Woman's Situation: Transnational Mobility and Gendered Practice" (co-chairs), Gender Working Group (co-chairs), EAHN 2018. In addition, we acknowledge interlocutors in accompanying discussions: those reading excerpts in the video "Margins, Diffractions, Collaborations: Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration," [insert link], and the following (listed alphabetically by surname): Doreen Adengo, Anat Falbel, Anne-Katrin Fenk, Sabine von Fischer, Luca Greco, Huma Gupta, Samia Henni, Anna Kats, Garnette Oluoch-Olunya, Barbara Penner, Mrinalini Rajagopalan, Peg Rawes, Silvana Rubino, Dubravka Sekulić, Brinda Somaya, Delia Duong Ba Wendel, and Shundana Yusuf. *ABE* editors Ricardo Agarez, Johan Lagae, and Tania Sengupta, *CCA* editors Kate Chiu, Albert Ferré, and Alexandra Pereira-Edwards, and the *Aggregate* board of directors represented by editor Meredith TenHoor and board chair Pamela Karimi have been intellectual custodians of this work. ↑
- 12 We draw from a parallel conceptualization in Diana Lee-Smith, "My House Is My Husband: A Kenyan Study of Women's Access to Land and Housing," PhD diss. (Lund University, 1997), <https://lup.lub.lu.se/record/18219>. ↑
- 13 Siddiqi and Lee, "On Margins." ↑
- 14 Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi and Rachel Lee, "On Diffractions: Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration," Canadian Centre for Architecture (2021–22), <https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/articles/issues/30/of-migration/81045/on-diffractions-feminist-architectural-histories-of-migration>. ↑
- 15 Stuart Hall, "Minimal Selves," in *The Real Me: Postmodernism and the Question of Identity*, ed. Lisa Appignanesi (London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1987), 44. ↑

- 16 FAAC, "Counterplanning from the Classroom," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 76, no. 3 (2017): 277–80, <https://doi.org/10.1525/jsah.2017.76.3.277>; Ana María León, Tessa Paneth-Pollak, Olga Touloumi, and Martina Tanga, "Contested Spaces: Colony, Plantation, School, Prison, Kitchen, Closet," Global Architectural History Teaching Collaborative lecture module, <https://gahtc.org/modules/28>; Hélène Frichot, Catharina Gabrielsson, and Helen Runting, eds., *Architecture and Feminisms: Ecologies, Economies, Technologies* (London: Routledge, 2017); Kush Patel and Soumini Raja, eds., *Gender and Academic Leadership in Architecture in India: Research Symposium Proceedings* (Calicut: Avani Institute of Design, 2021); Torsten Lange and L. C. Pérez-Moreno, eds., "Architectural Historiography and Fourth Wave Feminism," *Architectural Histories* 8, no. 1 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.5334/ah.563>. ↑
- 17 Yasmin Gunaratnam and Carrie Hamilton, "Introduction: The Wherewithal of Feminist Methods," *Feminist Review* 115, no. 1 (March 1, 2017): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41305-017-0023-5>. See also Emma Cheatle, "Writing Walking: Ficto-Critical Routes through Eighteenth-Century London," in *Writing Architectures: Ficto-Critical Approaches*, ed. Hélène Frichot and Naomi Stead (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020), 112. ↑
- 18 Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961), 319. ↑
- 19 Raymond Williams, "Structures of Feeling," in *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 132. ↑
- 20 Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 191. ↑
- 21 Menna Agha, "Emotional Capital and Other Ontologies of the Architect," *Architectural Histories* 8, no. 1 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.5334/ah.381>. ↑