



Delft University of Technology

Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration

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**"The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the
Master's House." - AUDRE LORDE**

**Contemporary
Feminist Spatial Practices**

Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration

TEXT
Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi,
Rachel Lee

“Since 2015, there has been an upsurge in scholarly interventions that engage with migration and exile. The ‘crisis’ perceived in Europe has impacted European traditions of architectural history, architecture culture, and discourse. Thus, the writing on architecture and the built environment resulting from this turn has tended to focus on contemporary displacement related to cities, landscapes, and social fabric in Europe. These have broadly drawn from a Eurocentric perspective of border transgression, rather than taken migration as an ontological condition, to be understood from the migrant’s perspective.”

Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi and Rachel Lee, “On Margins: Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration,” 2019⁰¹

Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration is a multi-sited, ongoing project with a collection of works that takes migration as its core concept and historical event to better understand feminist thought, work, and narrative in a spatial, material, and aesthetic field. The project labors in concert with a growing body of initiatives to write feminist histories of modern architecture through collaborative and intersectional historiographic practices. These redistribute power, co-produce solidarity, and reassess objects and methods that have been turned to with regularity in architectural history.

The contributions in *Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration* build on two arguments: first, that the dynamic of a situated and re-situated perspective⁰² is foundational to feminist histories of architecture, and second, that feminist approaches destabilize presumptions of historical fixity. Narratives, perspectives, and practices based on these arguments have emerged from acts and experiences of migration performed individually or collectively, moving into and out of geographies of control and subjugation, beyond gender or gender framings, across lifeworlds.

Writing feminist architectural histories of migration demands the recovery of hidden figures and clandestine spaces. It calls for seeing the bodies of laborers within the grid of authorship, acknowledging the spatial practices of occupation by activists or prisoners, engaging the obscured work of teachers, researchers, and writers, studying material environments built by migrants, and naming homemakers and others whose designated use of architecture endowed it.

Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration is hosted on three open-access platforms: *Architecture Beyond Europe*, *Canadian Centre for Architecture*, and *Aggregate*, where we examine migration, respectively, through “margins,” “diffractions,” and

“collaborations.”⁰³ We have placed texts within three platforms as a gesture to the conceptual multiplicities of migration; this scaffold is intended to establish instabilities and shifting frameworks as the base theoretical principle, which, perhaps paradoxically, offers a different kind of anchoring.

Migration and mobility, as well as their converse conditions of restriction and confinement, call for collaborations. *Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration* asks how such collaborations created, unsettled, and enacted forms of power through enclosure, solidarity, labor, exile, embodiment, and care. The authors in these collections engage in collaborative methods, following migrants and engaging in physical and conceptual migrations. These movements acknowledge architecture only as a work by many hands, and its historical recovery only as a process of collaboration, material and theoretical.

01 Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi and Rachel Lee, “On Margins: Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration,” *ABE Journal: Architecture beyond Europe* 16 (2019), accessed September 1, 2022, journals.openedition.org/abe/7126.
02 The “situated perspective” refers to Donna Haraway’s concept of “situated knowledge,” which challenges assumptions of objectivity, universality, and the neutrality of knowledge and promotes an understanding of knowledge as historically and culturally specific, tied to context and location. It follows that

there is also no universal knowledge, but only partial, diverse forms of knowledge (“knowledges”). See also Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledge: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of a Partial Perspective,” in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1991), 183–201.
03 See *Architecture Beyond Europe* 16 (2019), accessed September 1, 2022, journals.openedition.org/abe/7126; Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA), accessed September 1, 2022, www.cca.qc.ca/en/articles/issues/30/of-migration/81045/on-diffractions-feminist-architectural-histories-of-migration; *Aggregate*, accessed September 1, 2022, we-aggregate.org/project/on-collaborations-feminist-architectural-histories-of-migration.