

WE INTERNATIONAL

23 YEARS OF WOMEN & ENVIRONMENTS

Winter 1999 • Issue No. 46/47 • Special Double Issue

Agents of Change

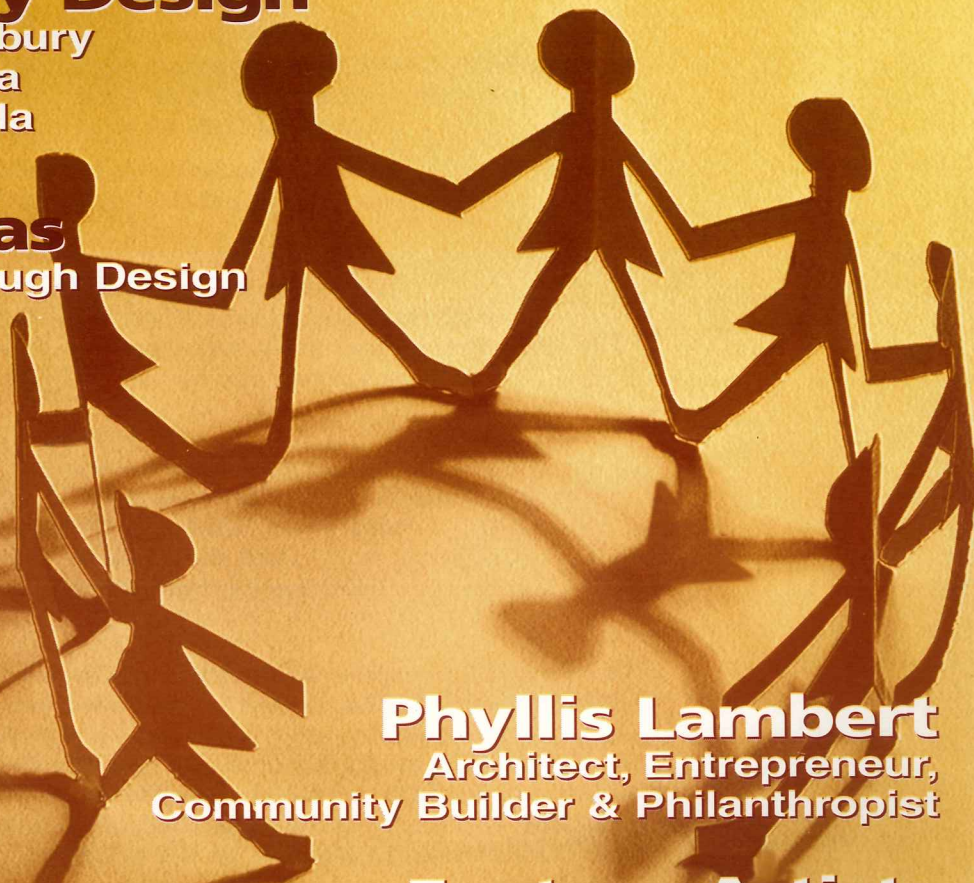
Phyllis Lambert
Pam Cluff
Lorraine McRae

Communities by Design

Better Beginnings in Sudbury
Masese Women in Uganda
Papermaking in Guatemala

Concepts & Ideas

Community Building through Design
Home-Work Centres
Art in Public Spaces



Phyllis Lambert

Architect, Entrepreneur,
Community Builder & Philanthropist

Feature Artists

Joyce Wieland
Eshrat Erfanian

Winter 1999 • Issue No. 46/47
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Community by Design

WE INTERNATIONAL

23 YEARS OF WOMEN & ENVIRONMENTS

Co-ordinating Editors for this issue **SUZANNE FARKAS, REGGIE MODLICH**
Editorial Committee for this issue **CHERYL GIRAUDY, ALLISON MEISTRICH, HEIDI OVERHILL**
Business Manager **LISA DALE**
Book Editor **ELAINE BATCHER**
Design **SERINA MORRIS**
Cover Design **SERINA MORRIS**

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Address all correspondence to:
736 Bathurst Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 2R4
Phone: (416) 516-2600 Fax: (416) 531-6214
e-mail: weed@web.net
Homepage: <http://www.web.net/~weed>

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WEspeak

Better communities, better designs and better decisions result when those affected by a decision, participate in it. It's the basic notion of democracy. Around the globe everyone pays lip-service to this principle. Yet, when it comes to applying it to building community, stubborn traditions need to be confronted. Housing and city designs still must address the issues posed by power, the tension created by the dominance of men over the public sphere and women's traditional domain in the private sphere. There is the notion of the "expert versus community knowledge and community participation." Then there is the question of meeting the needs of all, not just the most powerful groups in our increasingly diverse communities. The responsibility of nurturing and care giving which most societies have relegated to women and the needs of vulnerable people, such as children, elderly, persons with disabilities are typically not addressed. We are therefore focussing this issue of WE (Women & Environments) International on how women individually or as groups have grappled with these traditions and come up with alternatives to build better communities.

We have chosen three outstanding women: Phyllis Lambert, architect, entrepreneur and community and partnership builder; Pam Cluff, architect and champion of accessibility by design and Lorraine McRae, chief and revitalizer of the Mnjikaning Nation. Each woman has embraced the concept of participation in community building in a very special way.

We also illustrate the achievements of women collectively in building community. The Masese women have turned a slum into a community. The Q'eqchi women produce paper to achieve economic sustainability through their cooperative. The Sudbury Better Beginnings and Futures Project is

applying feminist and native concepts of leadership and structuring to put strength and self-sufficiency into the hands of two neighbourhoods.

Three articles contribute concepts for building community by design. Earn offers design as a tool to capture the public's ideas which are often sloughed over and for avoiding and resolving conflicts. Johnson and Hare showcase a prototype centre to support the ever increasing number of home workers who also shoulder domestic responsibilities. Farkas points out the difference women artists are making in public art by changing the traditional notion of monuments.

The multi-disciplinary editorial team of this issue reflects the principle of inclusion, participation and women's needs. An architect, industrial designer, environmental health specialist and two urban planners spent two years raising the funds, developing and ultimately editing the material in order to meet the budget, while all along juggling jobs and families. We hope the content of this issue will stimulate our readers around the globe to generate more positive changes in their own communities. **WE**

Thank You

The WEED Foundation gratefully acknowledges the grant from the Bronfman Foundation, the Corporate Sponsorship of Urban Strategies and the donation of Bertha Modlich, which helped make possible the publication of this issue of WE (Women & Environments) International.

books and soul

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Confessions of an Unrepentant Canadian
 Maude Barlow
 Phyllis Brue Book
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THE COURAGE OF CHILDREN
My Life with the World's Poorest Kids
 Peter Dalglish
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THE GARDEN OF EDEN
 Sharon Butala
 Phyllis Brue Book
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THE WHITE BONE
 Barbara Gowdy
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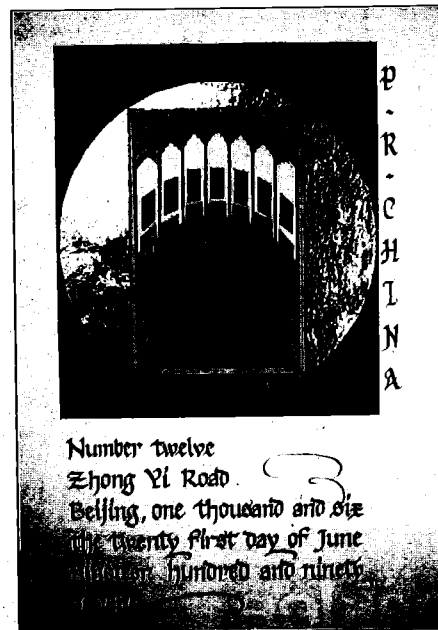
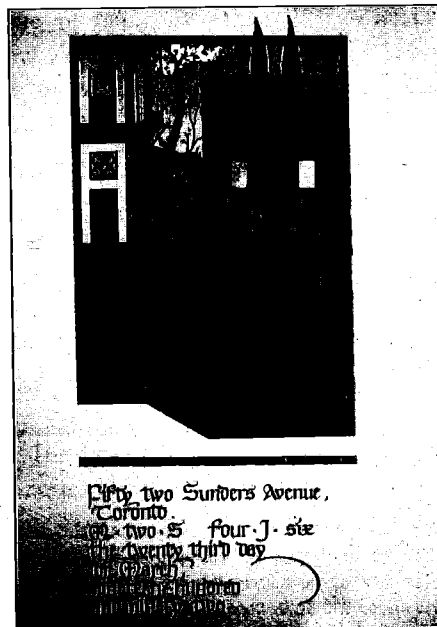
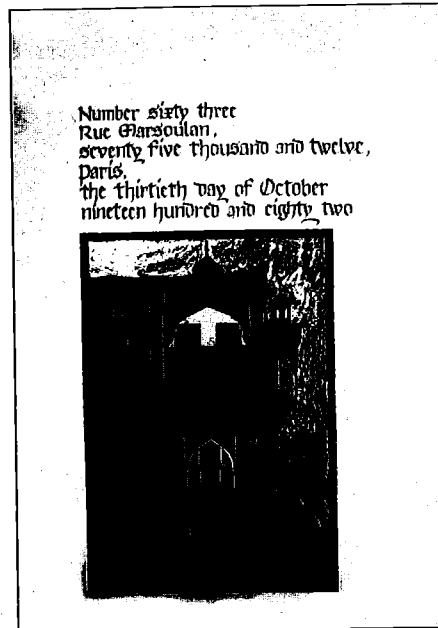
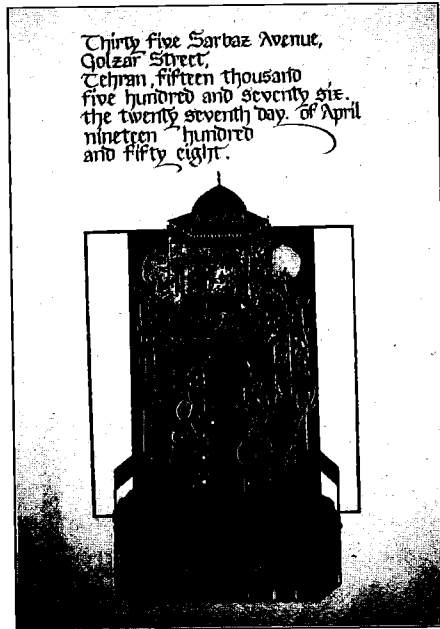
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The Title: VESTIGUM
Materials: Watercolour, Goldleaf and Ink
Size: 5"x 3" and 6"x 4"
Date: 1998

Agents of Change

Phyllis Lambert

Profile - Phyllis Lambert: Advocate for Dialogue

Phyllis Lambert, OC, CQ, OAL, FRAIC, Architect,
Entrepreneur, Philanthropist and Community builder.

by Cheryl Giraudy

Phyllis Lambert cr. Gabor Szilasi



The Centre for Canadian Architecture (CCA) has so far been the passion and work of a remarkable person. For those who have heard of Phyllis Lambert, she needs no introduction because she is without equal - la grande dame d'architecture. For those who have not, they may not realize what impact she has had on their lives. Ms. Lambert is an architect, a preservationist, an academic lecturer and a major facilitator of dialogue on design issues. Her credentials are extensive,

founded in 1979, and the building itself opened in 1989. It was the collaboration of Peter Rose, a well known Montreal architect, and Ms. Lambert as the consulting architect and client.

The CCA in Montreal, Canada is a building all at once serene and intriguing. It sits like a grand manoir in a manicured landscape. The detailing is subdued, with grey stone rustication, striking steel details, and rigorous proportions. The building meets the ground with purpose.

House encompasses the meeting facilities and administration offices for the CCA.

Once inside the CCA, considered by some to be one of the 'gems of modern museums,' the serenity of the exterior gives way to a play of light and dark, to the axial flow of exhibition spaces, and to the richness of materials coming together with a clarity of detailing. The Centre is foremost a museum, it is a cultural institution for the ideas and concepts about how architecture and humankind interact.

Ms. Lambert has won numerous international and national awards for her work in promoting responsive architecture and contributing to cultural and community life.

ranging from her professional affiliations to her entrepreneurial pursuits. More recently, Ms. Lambert has been known as the creator and until January 1999, as the director of the CCA. The Centre was

The architectural gestures of the CCA are in contrast to the Shaughnessy House, the 19th Century mansion exquisitely restored and to which the CCA is attached. The historic Shaughnessy

It is both a repository for historical artifact, and an experimental laboratory for new design ideas.

The CCA provides ongoing public and traveling exhibitions, publications, ▶

**Cheryl Giraudy & Suzanne Farkas of
WE International spoke with Ms. Lambert at the
CCA in the spring of 1997**

forums and library services. As a renowned study centre for the advancement of research in architectural history and thought, it has become a fixture in the minds of architects the world over.

A member of the prestigious Bronfman family, Ms. Lambert commenced her early career as Director of Planning and Building for the Seagram corporation, a family owned company. Her concern and interest for the role of architecture in the public realm and the preservation of the built environment as a record of cultural and social life, lead her to found Heritage Montreal in the 1970's.

Ms. Lambert has won numerous international and national awards for her work in promoting responsive architecture and contributing to cultural and community life. These awards include the prestigious Twenty-Five Year Award from the American Institute of Architects; the Massey Medal and Gold Medal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, and the Lescarbot Awards by the Government of Canada.

Ms. Lambert continues to use her abilities and influence to pursue needs in the built world. She is sought after as an esteemed member of the design community for assignments in judging international competitions; lecturing about the CCA and its special projects, and teaching as an adjunct professor for various schools of architecture.

Ms. Lambert has created an entity in the CCA which is enduring like it's stone massing - a milestone in museum culture, an important resource for not only those in the design field but for all citizens wanting to better understand the relationship of community to the design process and the built environment.

WE Of your various roles from patron of architecture to champion of local preservation, which fulfilled you most?

PL I was reading my own misinformation in the literature, regarding the word "patron" and I think I really have been an entrepreneur rather than a patron. Right from the beginning, my interest and my access to everything started from the city. Not so much the preservation of historical buildings but the importance of buildings in the sense of community and quality of the city.

I get enormous pleasure from being here at the CCA; but the most important thing now that I am working on is the project for F.I.M. (Fond d'Investissement de Montreal) which is to create 50,000 units of social housing over the next 10 years, because Government has pulled out of social housing. It is a community project. It will be non-profit, co-operative housing, the only way to make it economically accessible, but at the same time let people invest in their own communities.

WE Which communities do you serve?

PL In this case I'm talking about people who don't normally have access to the tools, to the way people work in society. People who just because they haven't been trained or because they have become infused in their own culture don't have the tools for [decision-making]. It's the communities that need the most help. Middle and upper class people can take care of themselves. But one sees the deterioration of housing, it is because of the land owners who are only interested in the bottom line and not interested in what kind of communities that they make. I think that has to be changed.

WE How do you feel architecture influences that?

PL If I were not an architect, I wouldn't be doing this. I wouldn't understand the sense of community, the whole process. My project in California when I became a developer architect, gave me the tools. When I came back to Montreal, and began working on Milton Park, I was able to project. I was able to say, if we do this, the next thing will be that, and this will be the result which will be quantified in economic terms. I think that was one of the most invaluable parts of my education.

WE How does the CCA fit into that?

PL Well, the CCA is an environment for people to understand that there are things that you can do about problems of the city over time. You can look at the problems from so many points of view, for example take landscape. We did an exhibition on the building of the CCA on it's site. We did an exhibition on British landscape, another on Burlington's Gardens, on industrial towns of Quebec, and we are doing an exhibition on American lawns and a few others I've left out. So that these are issues of how the natural world is transformed into an artifact.

At the CCA, an exhibition takes us 4 - 5 years, sometimes more to prepare, because they are very thoroughly researched. If you don't do that then you are doing superficial populist work. I see that what we do comes very close to and also discusses, although never directly, what or how a design works and what is 'good design', although people reject that term now.

WE Is the concept of preservation more accepted here in Montreal than elsewhere?

PL It is not a community issue, it's a function of North American colonialism that you did what you had to without concern for your environment. It is a vast continent, the idea of protecting the environment, they didn't have to, there was so much of it. It is not Montrealers, Vancouverites, Torontonians or Chicagoans, it is a North American mind-set.

WE Do you think that preservation is relevant to developing countries that are going through expansion?

PL I was working in Cairo from 1980-1990. You start to see so much that is important, all these new projects are very heavy handed. The bottom line is more important than the quality. I think one has to look at things from reverse, other than top-down, from how people can form their own communities.

I think women play an enormous role in looking at things more broadly; they ask the real questions, not just follow fashion. I think if you are a Canadian and a Woman, you can feel really good about yourself in this field, being able to respond to social issues. Women have always been very social, making people get along, ameliorate (their environments) in some way, in a way men have never really been obliged to do. Secondly, I think it's nice to be an outsider, not having all these attitudes. Women are outside questioning, thinking through things. You see that in design now, there are some very bright women in the field.

WE On the subject of women, do you think women in the field need to follow up the ladder?

PL I think that people who are motivated by an idea will always manage to find a route.

WE Do you feel a loss with respect to an artistic life?

PL Well, I don't feel a 'loss' as such. Certainly the act of designing for yourself is a very exciting role and I can rest knowing that I have created the CCA, and F.I.M. - I have created effective vehicles, so that I can do so much more than just designing. Every so often, I think it would be nice just to design; but I've made my choice.

WE You have said that the partnership between the private and public sector has potential. What is the hook for private funding in social housing?

PL Some say to make a buck. The Private sector has to see the value added, and the business community is beginning to see that more and more. It is a very tough time and very difficult questions are arising; but I think it is possible. Banks for example are beginning to realize - like the women's bank in Chicago - that funding can be given for housing communities. I am talking about self-reliance, and enabling communities. This is the basis of civilization, working together.

WE How satisfying are your public achievements to date?

PL Well, Milton Park is a project that was incredibly interesting and satisfying for me. I've built the Saidie Bronfman Centre. Working with the community opened up an enormous amount of things to me. So, how do you follow that up - because you don't want to do something less. For many years, a couple of us sat around and thought how can we do more? Then the City looked to the Society for Development and Planning at about the time I came on board with them and we started to get the private sector involved.

Because of the Quebec Economic Summit, it was possible to bring social housing to the table, to get funding from the co-operative movements and create one of the largest entities in the banking program in Canada. Then came the Solidarity fund of the worker's unions and the Royal Bank, a few more banks, and then another major Quebec corporation got interested. It was wonderful because with these kind of partners, you can see the project grow and happen. Our first project was a demo project of 800 units and was very complex and difficult; but it finally got under way in the fall of 1997.

WE Our magazine has a predominant audience of women, have you any experiences you can pass on to young women.

PL I was asked to talk about womanhood at a high school in Montreal. My goodness, what was I going to say? I started to talk about Foucault. I don't know why, but I did. I told them don't let anyone tell you how to think. Thinking involves questioning ... one needs to think about things and figure them out for yourself. I think people get nervous about working things out, but it's terribly important not to take another's analysis. The whole word 'educate' comes from the person's knowledge of themselves.

WE What happens with the CCA as we move to the year 2000?

PL My focus is here, consolidating my work. I'm doing a book, trying to make sure that the values and ideas of the CCA continue. The work at the CCA is consolidating, but we are also taking on new directions. **WE**

Pam Cluff

by Suzanne Farkas

Pam Cluff, Architect
cr. S. Farkas



Access by Design

Interview with Pam Cluff, FRAIC, FRIBA, OAA
pioneer in the movement for accessibility by design

Pam Cluff, an architect and a pioneer of barrier-free design in Canada, shows how women's participation in design can make a difference. Pam Cluff, a refined woman with a comfortable smile and calming voice, came to greet and show me to her boardroom for our interview. Although we were complete strangers, she responded without hesitation, clearly happy to support our women's magazine. Pam has been interested in the field of architecture since she was a young girl. She thanked her father, a general contractor, for that. "I learned early on from his point of view. Being a nurse, teacher, or secretary didn't seem that much fun to me at all. Learning what buildings were all about seemed much more interesting than other female opportunities."

Cities are not designed to function for their minorities, the elderly, the disabled, pregnant women or women with young children. Women are disproportionately affected by this failure. Statistically, women outlive men and therefore a higher proportion of the elderly are widowed or single women. Women continue to be the family's primary care giver, responsible for its infants, elderly, and infirmed.

As the western population begins to age, this burden and disparity will become more evident.

To date, women are a minority in the design professions. Women still represent less than 50% of the professional membership in such fields as architecture, engineering, industrial design. They are even less visible as senior partners or managers in the public domain in such positions as City Managers and senior planners.

Pam's interest in "barrier free" design began with her involvement with the elderly. In the 1970's, North America had many returning war veterans from Korea and Vietnam. Community organizing and human rights issues were gaining momentum. Pam had been working as an architect for close to 20 years by that time. It was clear to Pam that in Canada too, there were elderly, young people born with disabilities and accident survivors who needed the same recognition and shared the same disability issues.

"I quickly found that amongst the seniors and infirm there were pockets of disabled young people stashed away in environments that were entirely inappropriate. They were neither physically nor socially appropriate. Wherever you looked, there was an issue of accessibility: public transportation, recreation facilities, parks, housing and even social housing. We thought it (design) could make a difference."

There were and still are many stumbling blocks to ensuring that the design professions accept and consistently address the issue of disability. Being visible is clearly important to effecting change.

"Attitudinal barriers prevented our success. People didn't think about it as being important. Unless they had a personal experience with a member of their family. We had to hit them over the head. People were defensive and seemed almost embarrassed that this was an issue, almost a denial of this as a problem. There was a certain amount of

"I quickly found that amongst the seniors and infirm there were pockets of disabled young people stashed away in environments that were entirely inappropriate."

resentment. Why did they have to spend this time and money? No one was out there. Who were they talking about?"

"The statistics showed however, that 'if you build it they would come,'" Cluff continued, "in public transit, the Transit Commission was not the least bit interested. Neither were the planners or the designers, even though they were just starting to develop the subway extensions. We lobbied to have it included in the design but were told that there were not the numbers of potential users in the population to warrant it. Now of course, there are so many subscribers [for the public disabled transit program] that they can not handle it."

Committed individuals, supported by receptive communities with shared interests or experiences, are key to championing the cause. Pam believes that women are more open to these human disability issues than men. "Not in all cases, but if I had to select a group that would be more receptive I would start with women. If you want to make changes that affect children, educational systems or resources, senior citizens, and people less fortunate, women have proven to be the larger proportion of the innovators and motivators. The committed, who are playing the (political) game, and pursuing the issue in the community - not

to exclude men - but the majority have been women."

Cluff believes that design begins fundamentally with Human Rights principles and legislation, the fundamental right of human beings to fully participate in life. When asked if she saw herself as a pioneer, she replied:

"I'm not a name architect but I have laid down the ground work for the architectural and social climate. Trying to understand how peoples' lives are lived and what is necessary for them to feel comfortable and autonomous in their lives; that's where I feel I've made a contribution."

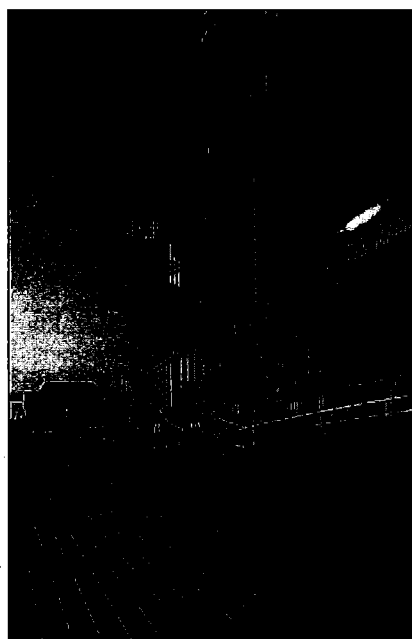
Cluff sees designing for accessibility also is a question of building expertise through community consultation. In the 1970's many groups were formed because they thought the more established groups were moving too slowly, not addressing their needs nor battling

hard enough. "I am an executive member of one such group (Cheshire Homes), organized to create a series of group homes for the disabled." The questions, goals and structure have changed significantly from when she first began.

"The disabled have become more assured - and less assured of us. They wanted to be in charge - which is appropriate. So the most vital organizations today are, for the most part, organized by the disabled communities themselves. The concept of Universal Design implies that everyone regardless of age or ability can enter and use a building or site including persons with poor mobility, lack of sensory acuity, lack of strength, endurance, co-ordination or even comprehension."

"While most designers can achieve full accessibility in new buildings, the cost of retrofit to universal design standards can

►



Accessibility project Pam Cluff, National Trade Building, CNE
 cr: Suzanne Farkas

be costly. Cost is often cited as another barrier to success. Studies in the United States show that accessibility design increases capital costs by less than 5% and operational costs by zero." Pam has found no additional design costs for senior's group homes.

But retrofitting is expensive. "People get all up in arms - but what they don't want

out there, reacting against any changes. For example, the housing industry is reluctant to adopt the notion of universal housing. It is perceived as expensive. Yet if the competition recognized the need for technology and production rates were up slightly, we would probably get products that were cost effective. For example residential elevators for single houses are expensive and have every few suppliers.

nothing. Unfortunately very little co-ordinated or community planning is occurring. Its been particularly slow for the public transit and urban transportation links."

Speaking about her work at the Ontario Architectural Association, on "Women in Architecture" Cluff comments: "What we found (in our survey) was that issues affecting women today in the profession

"People get all up in arms - but what they don't want to accept if you had designed for it initially before building you wouldn't be paying for it now!"

to accept is that if you had designed for it initially before building you wouldn't be paying for it now! I'd say that 75% of the profession is designing for at least the basics - principally dealing with the building codes and people in wheelchairs. Issues such as hearing or visual impairment, for example using textural surfaces and visual cues, understanding the nuances of the codes are not generally addressed. They are just not as visible as a group as are wheelchairs.

"There are some very powerful lobbies

If there were a government mechanism that encouraged this demand, by requiring 20% of houses be built to be accessible by design, we could offset the costs. So it's the cost of technology, the building codes, the lobby efforts, all those things [that act as barriers]. Further we did a study for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation which showed there is no point to having accessible housing in an inaccessible community. You need the full range of accessible services from sidewalks to doctor's offices and banks. Without this you have

were also affecting men and other cultural sub-groups with language and ethnic differences. Women, at this point in time, because of the recession, are underemployed and many are receiving less than adequate wages. It was beneficial for women to learn that they were not alone in having family issues and wanting to ask for such things as flexible work hours, ability to work at home and alternative working strategies."

Of course women had additional problems such as opportunities to move

One of the things I've noticed about young women architects is that they're inclined to listen to the male model rather than listening to their inner selves.

out of the traditional stream of interior design - or whatever was thought to be appropriate for them in the profession - into more field and site responsibilities. They needed mentoring and experiences which would allow for more senior opportunities and partnerships.

One of the things I've noticed about young women architects is that they haven't developed enough self confidence, a sense of themselves as participants in the process. They're inclined to listen to the male model rather than listening to their inner selves. Once they gain the confidence they do incredibly well. They must overcome this hurdle. Once they consider that things they feel are important, are in fact important, they shouldn't allow themselves to be dissuaded.

"I would like to see more training for young architects. I feel they are being short changed. There is such a concentration on building facades, not in how buildings are used. There is such a concentration on instant delight, without understanding that buildings will be

around for 25-50 years and that they should be equally appropriate half way through their mortgage. It is a concern to me that we are not understanding buildings as contributing to society, and human well being. We are not using them that way today. We should." **WE**

PAM CLUFF, has practiced architecture for over 40 years as President of Associated Planning Consultants (1969) and Principal Design Partner in A.W. CLUFF & P.J. CLUFF Architects (1957). She has been an innovator and advocate for disabled persons and issues of accessibility by design for over 25 years. In 1972 she helped launch the Cheshire Homes movement as founding member and honorary architect. In preparation for the International Olympiad for the Disabled and as Canadian delegate to the UN Conference on the disabled, she conducted the first accessibility review of the City of Toronto's public buildings, and produced adaption guidelines for the Canadian Federal Human Rights Commission. She is an advocate for women in architecture and Co-chair of the OAA Status of Women committee.

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Suzanne Farkas, MES, consults in occupational health, safety and the environment and lectures at Ryerson Polytechnic University, Toronto, and is on the WE (Women & Environments) International, Editorial Board and the Board of Directors of the WEED Foundation.

Lorraine McRae

by Reggie Modlich and Suzanne Farkas

Lorraine McRae, Chief, Mnjikaning First Nations
cr: James Pauk



Chief Mnjikaning First Nation

Reggie Modlich and Suzanne Farkas recount their visit with Chief McRae and her close advisors

50 years ago in Canada, the narrow passage linking Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching, was where the original Nations built fish fences to harvest fish and celebrate winter reunion. Today, Chief Lorraine McRae and her Band Council help their Mnjikaning First Nations community reawaken their impressive heritage and reconcile with the pressures of mainstream North American society.

TOWARDS SELF-GOVERNMENT

Continuing their ancient tradition of sharing and hospitality, Mark Douglas, the Mnjikaning Council advisor and historian took us into their world of wisdom, traditions and struggles, to allow us and our readers to benefit. Before government treaties and Indian Affairs departments, decision making centered around seven family clans, each associated with an animal spirit and its distinct strengths; the bear was a protector and hunter; the raven gave a bird's eye view. Each clan contributed these special strengths as their community discussed, decided and organized for action. "The Indian Act (1876) forced us to use [the English

model of] majority rule. If 51 were in favour, forget the remaining 49. And we have been at war with one another ever since," comments Douglas.

About three years ago Chief McRae reintroduced consensus decision making within the Mnjikaning Band Council. Five councillors, an elder and the Chief govern the community of about 1,000 people. As in any municipality, Council decisions guide the Band manager and staff who are responsible for services such as roads, garbage and the school. "It's a tremendous process to watch how we solve any problem," explains Mark. "We break into four equal groups, each responsible for a piece of the problem. At the end, you tie all the pieces into a whole. Everybody understands... A hundred percent ownership of the problem and the solution." McRae added: "It's been a long process to move the commu-

nity to this way of thinking and working, considering what the ravages that time and forced memory loss can do to a person and a people." She hopes to expand the elected body and go "by families" names, with a spokesperson from each family much like the clan system. You would always have one person speak and act for you. So self-government is something we are working towards. And it is starting to happen."

The experiment of consensus building was put to a hard test when the Province of Ontario offered the Band a chance to develop a casino with a private partner, as operator. The casino could bring much needed income to the impoverished reserve. The decision was difficult. "We turned this over to the community and let the community make that decision. There were both men and women for and against the casino," comments Douglas.

"In the end it was decided to develop the casino but only if there were firm provisions in the contract to ensure our elders are taken care of, our youth are taken care of and no one becomes addicted to gaming." Her role in the casino makes McRae one of Canada's top women executives. In 1996, the nearby town of Orillia Business Women's Association awarded McRae with the "Woman of the Year" award. She describes her roles as "kind of a roller coaster ride, from the big business across the road [the casino executive suite] to the nice comfortable compound [Band office] here."

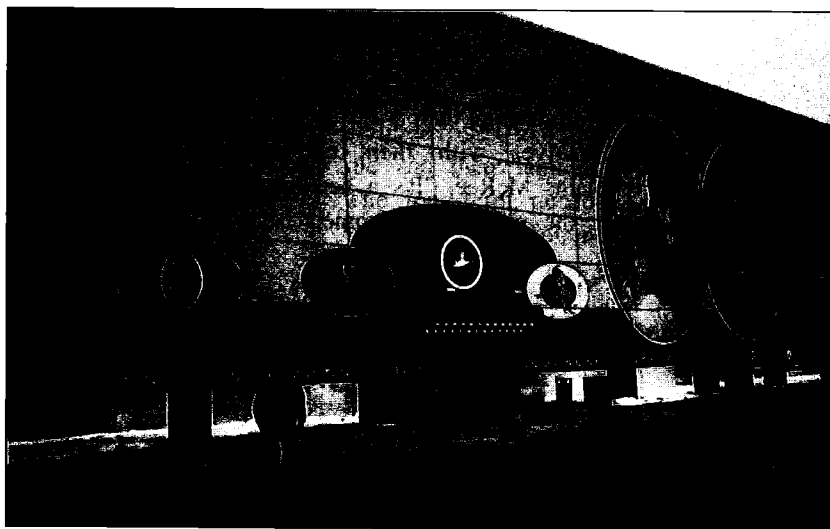
WOMEN'S RESPONSE TO TRANSITION

Being the Band's first female Chief has not been easy for McRae. Like many women she had lost her status when she married a non-Indian under a discriminatory part of the

Indian Act, which was only revoked in 1985. "I wasn't allowed to vote, live or own land in the community. The responsibilities of the job have also been difficult. In the past, it was very stressful for many women who tried to work on Council. Meetings are long, making it difficult to reconcile with the needs of mothers. But, there are now more women than men who own land in the community. Prior to that very few women owned land. Women are moving back and taking more of an interest in self-determination."

McRae has clearly gained the respect of her people. Re-elected for a third term, not once, but twice she has been awarded the eagle feather, the highest symbol of esteem given to an elder. "I give a lot of

credit to the strong women who have carried us through the past five generations. What these women have had to endure and continue to do so, as mothers, as grandmothers, as nurturers, and keepers of our culture and language is just incredible. There used to be a place for women to talk, and a place for men to talk; and then there was a place to come



Detail from the Casino Rama Art Wall, created by the Mnjikaning Art Studio

cr: S. Farkas

together. My two sisters would be with my grandmother and mother in the kitchen talking. They would send out all the boys to be with the men, and they kept talking. Then grandmother would go and chat with grandfather for some time. It [gender segregation] may not be accepted today, but I think it's just not understood. Women have been meeting in this community since we first came here." Today, the Rama Native Women's Association a chapter of the Ontario Native Women's Association helps meet this need.

The United Church women's group also supports the community. A community youth worker assists teenaged girls. Community meetings and feasts keep the community continually involved.

Children are welcome at these events. "Latchkey," a community babysitting service helps with child care, at events, in the evenings, during school terms and over summers.

ENVIRONMENT, HEALING

"We at the United Anishnabeg Council, are the only Seven First Nations in Canada who don't have hunting and fishing rights," McRae continues. "Community powwows and feasts are important to us. Not to be able to have traditional food has been really hard on our health and well-being. Even if we do manage to catch a fish we often can't eat it because the environment has harmed the animal. We have to understand how to clean up the environment in our traditional

territory to have the food that is so good for us. It [these rights, powers and responsibilities] is what I am aiming for in our negotiations on the William's Treaty (1923)"

"About a year ago, I was going through a really hard struggle. Everything was Casino. Yet, there were a lot of issues to deal with, healing ourselves and working together and being sharp. I couldn't work on my own healing for two years."

"There has been a long history of alcohol abuse in our community. A lot of that is a blocking response to great pain. I never had a drinking problem myself; but I have always had a problem with people around me that drink. Since 1980, I have been a part of a small group of women who have been working on healing ►

initiatives and a healing lodge. About a year ago, our doctor took me out behind the Health Centre where they had cleared away a mountain of wine bottles, from under the earth. When I saw all those bottles which had been buried there for years and years, come out of the earth, to make way for a sweat lodge, all that stuff I had inside of me came right out just like those wine bottles. That experience really helped me a lot to heal. So when the earth is healthy we are healthy and when the earth is not healthy we are not healthy either.

BIIDAABIN CIRCLE - NATIVE JUSTICE - McRAE'S PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT

"In my first term," recalls McRae, "I could slide in the Bidaabin Circle program and Council agreed to it." The program is a traditional first nations and Inuit justice system. True healing and justice can only occur in the context of community and personal resolution between the victim and the perpetrator according to supporters of Biidaabin. The community is invited to take part in the process." It is for

people who are genuinely sorry, who want to change their ways and reconcile themselves with their community," explains McRae. "It's a healing model that the community women here put



The Medicine Wheel cr. Mnjikaning Art Studio

together. We worked very closely with the Crown Attorneys and the lawyers and the court system."

This approach is particularly useful for cases of sexual abuse. In a recent case 20 people attended, as the perpetrator admitted his guilt to the community and apologized to the victim. Each person had the opportunity to tell how they were affect-

ed and how they felt, because the whole community is affected by such crimes. "A lot of this abuse stems back to the history of residential schools," McRae elaborates. "It's not because the abuser has been a real bad person; but it was clear that he did not even feel like a human being. Getting to understand all that, means there is real healing and reconciliation taking place with the result that our next generation of children won't be sexually abused."

Lorraine McRae is a deeply spiritual person who senses a close relationship with the Creator. "Sometimes we think we are just one person. What can we do? But some little thing that a person might do can make a whole difference for many people. I think of society as a fence with all these chains in there. Once I have the big picture I just have one thing to worry about: taking my place in that chain, and making my contribution in the best way possible. Then my children are going to come and take their place in the chain. We are only here for such a short time." **WE**

Regula Modlich, an Urban Planner, is a long standing member of the WE (Women & Environments) International Editorial Board and activist in Women Plan Toronto.

Suzanne Farkas MES, is a environmental health consultant and lectures at Ryerson Polytechnic University, and also is a member of the Boards of both WE International and WEED Foundation

Building Community by Design

Sudbury

Better Beginnings And Futures

Feminist and Native ways of organizing return two diverse Sudbury neighbourhoods to their residents

by Reggie Modlich

In this era of globalization and restructuring, increasing diversity - economic, racial, cultural and ethnic, to name just a few - pose major challenges to building healthy communities. Better Beginnings Better Futures Association (Better Beginnings), in the Donovan/Flour Mill neighbourhoods of Sudbury, Canada, is one project which has come up with creative and effective solutions which could help many of us build better communities.

Better Beginnings, Better Futures Logo (quilt centerpiece) cr: R. Modlich



projects were to "address behavioural, physical and emotional problems in children from 0 to 8 years old and their families". The long-term purpose was to make the communities self-reliant so as to wean them from public funding. Two determined women, Pat Rogerson, Assistant Executive Director of the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre, and Heather Smith, a prevention worker with the Sudbury Children and Family Services Centre,

tend to distrust agencies which impose programs and often fail to respond to the area's needs. The project started therefore with an intensive community participation, to define a vision for a healthy environment and to guide the Better Beginnings Project. The goals were to:

- ensure Native, Francophone and multi-cultural participation in structure and programming,
- practice and promote consensus decision making,
- foster community development processes which will continue after Better Beginnings has ended,
- build a strong partnership among those who live, play, work and serve in the Donovan/Flour Mill neighbourhoods.

The plants, children's drawings and the relaxed dignity of staff allude to a special human environment inside this plain concrete block building on the grounds of St. Gabriel School. While overcoming gender issues is not a mandate, the initiators, the coordinator, most staff and members of the association are women. The project's operation and management philosophy are firmly anchored in feminist and Native Canadian heritage.

In 1988, the Province of Ontario and Federal government of Canada sponsored action research projects in 11 disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Ontario. The

Neighbourhood Profile

15,000	residents
38%	Francophones
10%	Native Canadians
11% (over 1700)	children under 9 years of age
majority of residents	tenants, mostly in social housing
1/3 of families	depend on social assistance

laid the groundwork, while Joan Kuyek, the coordinator has effectively allowed their ideas to grow and strengthen the neighbourhoods.

Residents of such neighbourhoods rarely have the chance to participate in decisions affecting their community. They

Implementing such goals requires an appropriate organization. Marge Reitsma-Street, Associate Professor at Laurentian University, Sudbury, and Project Consultant and Pat

Rogerson borrowed from Canadian First Nations, feminist and union traditions to recommend the following six interrelated principles:

Promoting forums for participation

The community had to participate and learn to take control of Better Beginnings ▶

if the project was to continue without government funding. Organizers and members developed a structure that includes the community at all levels of staff, management and administration as well as the monthly Council meetings. At least three full membership meetings guide the elected Council through the year. About 150 members attend the annual general meeting. Members have to live in the neighbourhood or be sponsored by someone who does. As one member describes it:

"At the last one (membership meeting) we wanted to know which direction to go. We did mapping of the community to see in what area we should concentrate more to delivering programs. That general direction came from the community."

The caucuses represent another significant way to increase participation. The project has a First Nations, Francophone, Immigrant and Visible Minorities caucus, one representing the English speaking majority and one for staff who are full members of the association. Each caucus elects two representatives to the Better Beginnings Council and the AGM elects three members at large. Each person determines to which caucus s/he wishes to belong. The equal rights of the caucuses are so well accepted that no one has ever requested proportionate representation. L. Diallo, of Better Beginnings writes:

"Even with all the challenges this mode of representation has created, it has helped from the beginning to give to each cultural group autonomy, space and internal strength in reaching their specific goals."

"Our community leaders have developed a sense of self worth and political analysis that will ensure their access to the system and its decision-making processes. This project has helped people control and direct their own futures, set their own visions. They have learned to change themselves and their children; small neighbourhood systems are now working on the schools."

Creating Egalitarian Work Relationships

The heritage of the Native Friendship Centre, committed Better Beginnings to consensus decision making from the start. The process required a lot of

This project has helped people control and direct their own futures, set their own visions. They have learned to change themselves and their children;

clarification and training. Now, everyone feels strongly that such decision making ensures everyone's voice is considered and that it is part of an egalitarian work environment. A detailed policy spells out the process, including responsibilities for members during disagreements, mediation and arbitration.

Community workers, child care workers and family visitors, each form Management Teams, another element of an egalitarian work environment. The

teams set program goals and objectives and negotiate the program budget with the project coordinator, subject to approval by Council. They then administer, implement and evaluate all aspects of their programs.

"There is a lot of freedom. Our decisions are our decisions. They are not carried down from higher positions. This gives each [program] site ways to adapt to their individual communities. The budget is regulated through the Board [Council]. We are responsible for our own spending."

A relatively flat wage and status structure reinforce this self management style. The project coordinator's salary is only 15% higher than that of a community worker

and 40% higher than that of a child care worker. Yet, the project coordinator, office administrator and bookkeeper administer close to \$1 million budget and 38 staff members. All this reflects a critique of traditional hierarchical power.

Nourishing Dailiness

Nourishing Dailiness is a concept deeply rooted in women's experience and awareness. It attaches relevance and value to every moment and to the small details of daily living. It strives for beauty and

“There is a lot of freedom. Our decisions are our decisions. They are not carried down from higher positions.”

liberation in the face of everyday contradictions and compromises. The Better Beginnings Constitution expresses this in a special clause: "to respect the social, emotional, physical and intellectual well-being of Association members (which includes staff, ed.)"

Sharing food at meetings, programs and celebrations brings importance to daily routine. "Circling in" at the beginning or end of gatherings invites every participant to comment, introduce themselves, ask questions, share experiences or pass in silence. The project's "open door" policy, gives no one an enclosed office and never turns anyone away for coming at the "wrong time." The use of colours, textures, natural materials, functional decor, logo and stationary, all reflect this respect for everyday life.

Caring for the Caregivers

Everyone accepts staff as persons with family commitments. Staff exercise their own judgement when to work from their office or home. Intensive training for all staff develops skills and strengths. In the beginning, bi-weekly training for both staff and community focused on cultural sensitivity, team management, anger and stress management, parenting mediation and conflict resolution. Now monthly meetings, occasional retreats and shared

experiences from out-of-town conferences ensure ongoing learning by the whole community.

Volunteers, and there is rarely a shortage, jointly donate about 160 hours daily or almost 20,000 hours a year. This is how the community shows its sense of ownership. In turn the project frequently acknowledges its volunteers and helps pay for child care and transportation. Over 50 neighbours enjoy the annual pot luck dinner on Christmas Day and over 500 attend the **W i n t e r** Carnival. Both events are organized solely by volunteers. The celebrations and reciprocity strengthen the community.

Many women in the neighbourhood have left violent relationships and live now on very low incomes. Many of the men and women with children in the area had felt vulnerable, desperate and isolated. This principle of care translates into a greater sense of belonging and community safety.

"Today crime is way down in the area as well as in the city," Kuyek comments. "The neighbourhood is a very mixed bag of people and is not very stable. The more people know each other, and connect with each other, the safer it becomes and the more somebody who moves in is going to be welcomed instead of just left feeling isolated. This makes people behave and become responsible because they feel connected, and responsible for who they are and how they work with people."

Expanding the Capacity to Act Powerfully

Better Beginnings gives hiring priority to community residents and aims to spread work as much as possible. Over the past five years the project has hired only 8 full-time staff, but 120 contract, part-time or student placements. Thus 90% of the staff live in the area, and benefit from employment, training and income. Even the initial action-research needs assessment was developed, conducted and analyzed by community members. The growing economic well-being at grassroots level, results in greater confidence.

"I don't know if it was accident or on purpose. ►



400 handprints symbolize the inclusive community, its children and the hope for positive change.
cr: R.Modlitch



Winter Carnival starts in one of the parks reclaimed by residents Sudbury Better Beginnings and Futures

“Today crime is way down in the area as well as in the city,” Kuyek comments.

We were pushed to take charge of our own services and responsibilities in small groups, and we learned how to develop our own power.”

Nurturing Partners and Network

A Community Advisory Committee, which meets once or twice a year, helps key staff relate to agencies, and leaders outside Donovan/Flour Mill community to obtain support, funding, space and donations in kind for the many programs and activities. Through its Education Fund, Better Beginnings raised over \$100,000. A major contribution from the Bronfman Foundation, a flea market, raffles, food, space and equipment donations have helped Better Beginnings to stay afloat. Close links with Laurentian University and its student placements have greatly furthered the project's work and training efforts. Community economic development staff at GEODE

spend approximately one day per week with agencies and businesses to help with job creation.

Activities Carried out with these Organizational Principles

All Better Beginnings activities have aimed at tangible goals set in the context of community building. In the winter of 1992, two after-school programs and a breakfast program in one of the local schools marked the project's first activities which soon spread to other locations and schools. Toy drives, peaceful playgrounds, holiday programs and moms and tots alternative schools have since sprouted. Family support programs range from community kitchens and gardens to support groups for English and French teen moms.

Funded by the Bronfman foundation, Myths and Mirrors, provides art therapy, native crafts, street theater and other arts

programs. At the recent sixth anniversary celebration, 400 Handprints, mounted on a park fence expressed the inclusive community, its children and the hope for positive change. Giant puppets help the community look at its myths and reflect on reality. Once a week the troupe organizes a "Travelling Road Show" a participatory exercise to raise consciousness amongst the area's public housing tenants.

Before the project had started, the city had closed two local parks because of vandalism. Through Better Beginnings the residents gained control over the closed parks, redeveloped and filled them with activities and turned them into vital and attractive parts of their community. Buoyed with the confidence gained from reclaiming their local parks the community launched the "Save the Mountain Coalition" to prevent the blasting, and removal of a major rock formation in the heart of the neighbourhood, where a developer wanted to build an apartment building. An urban issues grant from the Bronfman Foundation sustained the campaign and saved the mountain for parkland. The Better Beginnings' naturalist is

now busy rallying the community around re-greening the Mountain. Over the past four years, this specialist has guided a group of community youths to raise 5000 seedlings. He also assisted community gardens in schools and parks, reestablished wetlands and encouraged environmental and energy conservation.

Community economic development activities are carried out by Grassroots Economic Opportunity, Development and Evaluation (GEODE). Initiated by Better Beginnings, GEODE is now contracted out. It includes SETS (Sudbury Exchange Trading System) a 180 member "green dollar" barter trading exchange run by three young women who are also setting up a special youth barter



Giant puppets help raise consciousness

R.Modlich

network. Better Beginnings publishes a directory and maintains the members' accounts. SETS also operates a Green Credit Farming and Home Green Ups, an environmental home retrofitting program and a small business support which so far resulted in 95 businesses

staying alive over a year.

The Better Beginnings vision, activities, and ways of operating have greatly strengthened and enriched these diverse and low-income neighbourhoods. The project yields concrete examples and inspires hope for many communities

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Regula Modlich, an Urban Planner, is a long standing member of the WE (Women & Environments) International Editorial Board and activist in Women Plan Toronto.

After British colonialism ended in 1962, Uganda has gone through periods of political upheaval. As a result of the civil strife, during the Idi Amin rule, 1971-1978, refugees had begun to squat in the "Masese" slum area. By 1989, about 2,000 destitute people or over 600 families, many of them single mothers, widows and orphans, lived there in appalling conditions, without skills, training or access to jobs. Prostitution, liquor/spirit brewing and trading were wide spread.

Housing consisted of mostly one-room mud huts with grass, or rusty corrugated iron roofs, without electricity or clean water supply. Absentee landlords rented out the dilapidated houses to people without options. An average of six persons occupied the one-room dwellings. A housing project to improve living conditions was essential. The goal of the Women's Self Help Project was therefore to: "upgrade the settlement, improve security, develop social and economic infrastructure and guarantee sustainable incomes."

A woman with an eleven-member family in a one room, grass thatched hut: "The room also doubled as a kitchen. There were no toilets. When it rained, water did not just leak through the roof, it streamed in through the doors and flooded the house. Roads were deplorable."

The Masese Women's Self Help Project was a partnership between non-governmental and government agencies. The Masese Women's Association (MWA), assumed responsibility for all major deci-

sion making. The African Housing Fund (AHF), coordinated the project's on site activities. The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Physical Planning (MLHPP) planned, designed and supervised the project. The Jinja Municipal Council (JMC) supplied land and electricity, and opened up the area with a network of roads. The Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) provided most of the seed capital (over 6.5 million Danish Kroners) for equipment, materials and training. Three committees were organized: the Project Coordination Committee (meeting annually), the Project Organizing Committee (meeting quarterly) and the Project Implementation Team (meeting monthly). All committees had 10 elected community or MWA representatives and municipal, national, administrative or technical delegates.

To make the project happen, national legislation, policies, strategies and local by-laws were adapted. The Masese slum was on municipal land for which the tenants had temporary occupancy permits. The area had originally been designated for middle income residents and part of the land had already been surveyed for larger lots. To make the land affordable, plots were reduced to 250 m² and divided into 700 parcels. Private development on the land was stopped and those who did not want to be a part of the project, mostly absentee landlords, were compensated. The council also donated a large piece of land. The land then was transferred to the

project so that it could in turn be assigned to community members. Revised building regulations allowed the project to use local building materials and reduce construction costs. This made houses affordable and gave disadvantaged groups, especially women, access to decent shelter.

Compacted earth roads with storm water drainage were installed to be upgraded as the community accumulates more resources. Initial high standard roads and services would have greatly increased the market value of the lots and encouraged low income owners to sell these only to soon return to another slum. Adopting this incremental service upgrading allows women and the poor to secure long term access to land and property.

While the project has been successful, it had to overcome major obstacles, each serious enough to jeopardize the entire project. Motivating the community and explaining the project's objectives helped deal with these problems. Illiteracy had slowed the learning process and hampered project management, accounting and marketing. Improper financial management created problems for the project. Close supervision of financial transactions and continued on-the-job training have increased worker accountability. The 66 % employment rate achieved so far is still insufficient because people are having more children. The 8-year project funding, created dependencies and a "wait and see" attitude which delayed many project activities. Financial restraints undermined sustainability and ►

Masese Women's Self Help Project *Building Blocks*



Illustration:: Suzanne Farkas

kept the carpentry factory from performing at full capacity. Business management training for the community is gradually changing these attitudes and building the confidence of the community.

Traditional thinking and practice in Uganda have placed women into the private sphere. The head of the household owned land and property and was assumed to be a man. Beliefs that women are inferior to men and should not inherit property, were the norm rather than the exception. Meetings were regarded as men's domain and it was difficult to attract women to project meetings. Even when women attended they lacked the confidence and skills to participate. Illiteracy had forced them to depend on men for their survival. When the project was introduced as a women's project, the men were skeptical. To change these attitudes, the national government had adopted a housing policy and strategy which addresses the issues of women, shelter and discrimination against women in land ownership, construction jobs and other respects. It proposes a combined strategy of legislation, education and awareness programs to protect a woman's rights. In spite of tremendous hurdles

Achievements of the Masese Women's Association

- 80% of the community members who participated in the Masese Women's Self Help Project were women. Various women's committees managed the project and made all major decisions.
- The Masese women constructed and still operate a concrete building products factory which also supplies concrete building products to the commercial markets. They opened carpentry workshops to produce doors, windows and furniture. The building material production and the carpentry workshops are a valuable source of income and have already generated more than 200 million Uganda shillings (200,000 U.S. dollars). Construction firms have hired some of the women.
- Another 150 community members, 130 of them women, have found steady employment through the project, important steps towards achieving sustainability.
- Training programs enabled women to construct 370 low-income, permanent houses with proper sanitation, roads and drainage. A nine year loan plan at 8 percent interest recovers the land and housing costs. Some members rent out their houses, or parts of them, to repay their loans. Land title deeds for 274 women-headed households and 96 in joint titles are being prepared.
- Jinja Council contracted women to build a twenty-classroom primary school in Masese. In 1991, a day care centre for 100 children opened. It shares its building with a health unit for simple ailments, immunizations and family planning services.
- An open-air market has spawned small-scale businesses and jobs for fifty-six women and men.
- Installing water wells in Masese has created jobs for eight women, who sell water for \$2 USD per 20 litres. The project was initially managed by the MWA, but privatization seems more successful.
- Since the project began, incomes have increased four-fold to an average of \$70 USD per month. The employment rate is 66%.
- A \$70,000 USD revolving loan fund, a small-scale credit scheme and other savings and credit opportunities benefit the community.
- Families are more stable; husbands - rarely permanent members of their households - are now becoming an important part of the community. Prostitution and drunkenness declined.
- Masese women have trained women in the Mbale and Arua districts of Uganda in Kenya and Rwanda, where similar projects have been initiated.

What happens now depends on the women themselves.

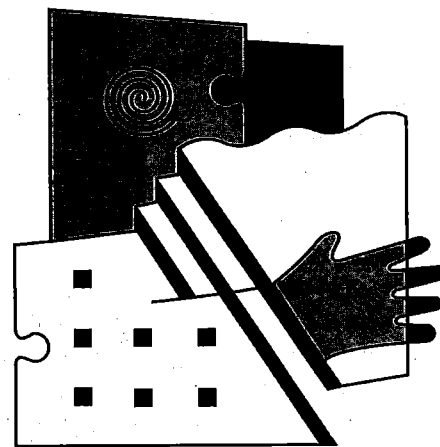
such as illiteracy and lack of training, these very women found the strength and determination to see the Masese Women's Self Help Project through to its final outcome. The Masese Women's Self Help Project effectively addressed these issues.

What happens now depends on the women themselves. Whether the democratic structures, which the women have built through their involvement in management and administrative groups can survive when they are independently operated, is still a concern. Until now, the Masese women have been engaged in fulfilling their own immediate needs. Hopefully, the women will have the strength and energy to become involved in their society as a whole. For permanent and lasting changes to their social status, they will have to become politically involved and begin to influence the legislation and traditions that have, until now, locked women into subordinate roles.

The project could be described as a "drop in an ocean of poverty." But this drop has the potential of making waves and affecting the status quo. The biggest impact of the project has been its effect on public awareness, perceptions and acceptance of what women are capable of doing. The project granted women the right to own property individually or jointly with their spouses. Women gained access to credit, they assumed responsibilities and repaid creditors. Women illustrated that they are

good decision-makers and managers. Most of all, women have come to realize that they can do anything they wish, provided they are equipped with skills and resources. Through the media at local,

national and international levels, in newspapers articles, radio shows, television reports, and documentaries, the Masese women have shared these successes with their sisters around the world. **WE**



URBAN STRATEGIES INC.

257 Adelaide Street West, Suite 500, Toronto, ON M5H 1X9
T 416.340.9004 F 416.340.8400 E urbanstrat@aol.com

Marcello Ochwo has worked full-time and as consultant in several organizations in East Africa, incl. the Eastern and Southern African Management Institute in Tanzania and the Uganda Ministry of Women.

Ak'Tenamit-

Guatemalan Women's Paper Making Co-op

Q'eqchi' women work towards economic sustainability through paper making

by Bethania M. Stewart



Proyecto **AK' TENAMIT** Pueblo Nuevo

Located on the banks of the Rio Dulce, in the Eastern rainforest of Guatemala, there is a remarkably proud and self-reliant small community. Women artisans resurrected the ancient art of paper making and created a path out of 100% unemployment and abject poverty.

Guatemala is a land of dramatic contrasts. It is home to some of Central America's highest peaks, where the land is unyielding and the cold unforgiving while the fertile Pacific coast produces coffee. There are 21 different indigenous groups, each with its own language, culture and traditions. Indigenous, mountainous Mayans in colourful, hand-woven clothes struggle with weather, non-monetary exchange, and days of walking to trade their vegetables. The Eastern rainforest is rich with medicinal plants, exotic animals and insects.

The Q'eqchi' make up the fourth largest indigenous group. During the 36 year civil war, which ended with the 1996 Peace Accords, the Q'eqchi' suffered greatly. Displaced by political violence and land reform policies, thousands of Q'eqchi' sought refuge in the Eastern jungle where



Q'eqchi' community on shores of Rio Dulce in Guatemalan rainforest
cr: Project Ak'Tenamit, Pueblo Nuevo

no one would find them. Here, whole communities still struggle to survive in spite of their dispersment and isolation.

Project Ak'Tenamit, founded in 1992, is an independent grassroots organization. Its goal is to assist community development, health, education, clean water and income generation. Today, Ak'Tenamit serves the needs of 9,000 Q'eqchi' Maya Indians living in 45 remote villages. Q'eqchi' men cultivate corn as a primary source of subsistence income. Yet women have no viable source of income. While indigenous women from other regions of Guatemala produce elaborate textiles and crafts, the Q'eqchi' of the Rio Dulce have lost this tradition because no one can wear traditional Mayan cloths in rainforests.

In its search for self-sustainable income sources, Project Ak'Tenamit went back to the history books. Paper making is an ancient Mayan art which did not survive the Spanish conquest. The Pop Wuj, the Mayan book of time, similar to the Bible, was written on large sheets of handmade paper which resemble a modern room divider. Using vegetable fibres to make paper, the Maya were one of the earliest civilizations to record their history in writing rather than relying on oral tradition to educate future generations. Since materials used by the ancient Maya, corn husk and banana stalk, are still abundant today, it was decided that this art could be successfully re-introduced. With the paper, women could produce unique products for a capitalist market economy where goods

are not exchanged, but rather bought and sold at competitive prices. This would create a viable source of income, and also revive a traditional art using renewable and locally available materials.

With few exceptions, Q'eqchi' women do not participate in community decision making. Their lives are in their homes where their responsibilities are limited to preparing food and caring for children.

many never go to school and never learn a word of Spanish. This puts them at a distinct disadvantage in the world outside the dark green canopy of their village.

There are now six paper making groups with three to eight members in each. They are quite isolated from one another. Monthly meetings at the project site for group representative provides the only contact with each other. As most women

One of the group members usually sacrifices her home for making the paper which takes three days. On the first day the women chop the corn husks and banana stalks into small pieces with the same tool the men use in the fields, a machete. The vegetable fibres are then cooked in a large pot over an open fire. Caustic soda is added to speed the process of breaking down the fibres. It takes four to five hours to cook the fibres into pulp. This allows the women to return home to look after their families. On the second day, the pulp is removed from the pot in handfuls, chopped finer with the machete and cooked again for several hours. This is the pulp that will become paper. On the third day, the women press the pulp through a screen and form whichever products the group makes. The paper products are then left in the sun to dry for the day, much slower during rainy season. Each group makes a different product, one makes bowls in two different styles; another makes post-cards and bookmarks. Together they produce fifteen products which helps control production and quality of each product.

The division of labour within each of the six groups is the same. The responsibility of chopping the fibres, the most physically demanding task in paper making, can take several hours each day and is shared equally among the women. Each woman is responsible for forming her own products from the pulp; the products she ►



Ak'Tenamit women paper producers cr: Project Ak'Tenamit, Pueblo Nuevo

The majority are married young and often pregnant by the age of thirteen or fourteen. It is not uncommon for a woman to have eight to ten children by the age of 25. Most do not live beyond the age of 45. Because many child-raising responsibilities fall on young girls in the family,

still need their husband's permission to leave the village, and someone to accompany her wherever she is going, attendance is never 100%. Still, Ak'Tenamit hopes that one day members of the monthly meetings will function as a Board of Directors.

"We are a group of women that work together to benefit our families... We are the women that work together with our children... Although we cannot read or write, we want our children to study to see progress in the future."

makes determine her income. All the women share one goal to earn money to benefit their families. The average income for a paper maker during a month of average rainfall (approximately fifteen days of work) is \$35 US. Some women give their money directly to their husbands; others provide for their families, buying food, school books or medicine. Rarely has a Q'eqchi' woman the opportunity to spend money on herself.

Ak'Tenamit acts as a wholesaler, buying the products from the women to guarantee their income. The project then distributes the products in stores throughout Guatemala at a 30% markup. Of that 20% cover transportation and administrative costs of distribution while 10% are saved. In Guatemala, stores take products on consignment rather than buying and paying up front. The savings help pay women who have produced more than has been sold in the stores.

The cooperatives ensure an equitable distribution of income to their members based on the price of the materials and

what has been collectively decided upon as a "fair wage" for the number of hours worked. The producers decide how much they earn. This is the most important difference between cooperatively and factory produced products. The slightly higher retail price of "fairly traded" or cooperatively produced products helps break the cycle of poverty. This cycle keeps producers in developing nations enslaved to the capitalist economic system which depends on a large, cheap labour pool to survive.

The Q'eqchi women of the Rio Dulce still have many obstacles to overcome: shortage of jobs, lack of education, isolation of communities, and women's traditional roles. The paper making cooperatives of Project Ak'Tenamit provide an employment opportunity for these women where there was none. Women do not have to leave their communities in search of seasonal jobs and can still fulfill their traditional family roles. As interest in the Fair Trade market and consumer solidarity grow, more income from

cooperatively produced and fairly traded products flows directly to Third World producers. This leads to better control of their own destinies.

"We are a group of women that work together to benefit our families... We did everything possible to organize a committee in order to form the group... We are the women that work together with our children... We work so that our children will be in school in order to further advance our country of Guatemala. Although we cannot read or write, we want our children to study to see progress in the future." (Cooperative Paper Producer, Magdalena Coc, Creek Calix) WE

For more information, please contact Project Ak'Tenamit, Apartado Postal 2675, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala. Telephone/fax: 011-502-254-1560.

Bethania M. Stewart has a B.F.A. from New York University. She currently lives at Project Ak'Tenamit, Barra de Lampara, Izabal, Guatemala and is the director of the Department of Income Generation.

COMMUNITY BUILDING THROUGH DESIGN

Design workshops bring stakeholders together to find solutions.

by Sharon Earn

"IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO MEET the growing housing needs of the town" claims the developer. He bought that vacant lot in your quiet residential neighbourhood, and proposes a high-rise apartment building with surface parking. The community is angry. The town calls the traditional, legally required, public meeting to let off steam.

As an environmental planner and designer, I have attended many such meetings. I have seen people complain that decisions had already been made before the meetings and that politicians and planners are not hearing their ideas, let alone seriously considering them. Ordinary people feel they lack the time or skill to define their needs within the framework of the "professional" presentations. I have seen issues, relevant to specific groups, getting lost in the complexity of the procedures: women living downtown request more green space for their children; teenagers complain they have no place to "hang out"; elderly people want community facilities and rest areas; and everyone dislikes increasing traffic.

Planners are often sympathetic to these requests and some meetings do result in

shifts in policy. But even in these cases, people often find it difficult to visualize the implications of these changes and doubt that their ideas will be reflected in the final plan. In most cases there are no mechanisms to adapt, track or safeguard the citizens' proposals through the project's implementation.

The idea of using design as a participatory tool developed out of these perceptions. The design process is a problem-solving tool. Designers define problems, develop alternative solutions and visualize ideas through drawings, models and computer imaging. They work with constraints, such as budgets and needs of stakeholders to help set priorities, make choices and facilitate goals.

All of these steps are particularly suited to community design and planning issues. Using design as a tool can help the public to articulate goals and search for solutions. Actual drawings and models of ideas can help people understand the potential impact of a proposal on their neighbourhood. The public can work with design professionals, engineers, planners, architects and politicians to explore alternatives and to see and understand why certain trade-offs and

decisions were made. Design offers a way to encourage inclusive participation and draw on a wider range of voices.

I first developed the concept of using the design process for community planning through a series of pilot workshops for 12 to 18 year old students in Toronto, Kitchener and Guelph, Canada. To encourage a sense of ownership, workshops were organized around themes related to students' experiences. Their first task was to design and construct a scale model of a personal backyard retreat. They then moved on to larger neighbourhood and urban assignments. Eventually, they would be able to work on an actual project within their community.

The process proved its value immediately. Students working on a backyard music studio proposed an idyllic, non-invasive building with sound-proofing to protect neighbours. One finished design, however, called for a spiraling, black tower, a futuristic "dark" monument that dominated its surroundings. Evaluating the impact of this structure on the neighbourhood, became a productive learning experience for students as they visualized the impact of the tower and debated alternatives. ►

Through this process, students developed skills useful to a community participation setting. They learned to make choices, set priorities and gained practice in presenting their ideas visually. They developed skills in analyzing options and in applying these alternatives to other buildings and spaces within their communities. Students also gained aesthetic awareness. At the beginning they were often surprised to discover they had pre-set ideas about the built environment. They began to notice influences of television and current fads, and to voice preferences. The growing range and complexity of styles and details expressed in their models showed the development of creative thinking.

In a subsequent workshop, students created a community by positioning their models of the retreat on to an urban site plan. I asked them to design community spaces, including streets, public meeting places and recreational areas. The students quickly began an intense debate over space, discussing density, height and the impact of each other's designs. They argued over the kind of community they wanted, the relative value of private or public spaces and the quality of life they expected in their new community.

It was clear that the students had invested a lot of energy in their designs and had developed a strong commitment to the final product. The project provided a context for exploring goals and values, as well as simulating conflicts and trade-offs very similar to those faced by professionals in "real-life" community planning. The participatory design process lent itself well to discussing the



Grade 6,7,8 students develop community concepts in design workshop

cr: Sharon Earn

needs of specific user groups as these relate to safety, privacy, child-care, windows, entrances, lighting, circulation, parking, work, culture and mixed uses. They were identified as design issues that significantly affect the function of buildings and quality of community life.

Confronted with issues like looming highrises with invasive outdoor parking, an interactive design workshop can develop alternative design solutions such as layered low-rise structures, hidden parking and creative landscaping. At the same time issues of circulation, community identity, environment, needs of children, elderly and other subgroups will emerge. A design workshop can come up with complementary uses, including cafes, stores, services and play areas. The Province of Ontario has recently included mediation as a required step in resolving cases before the Ontario

Municipal Board, the highest "court" for resolving planning disputes. Interactive design workshops can assist mediation and diffuse confrontations which have often eroded public good will and escalated into long and costly legal battles.

Physical models that people can "see" address the problem of "hearing" the public. When all decision-makers including politicians, civil servants, planners and other professionals and citizens work together, they can clarify the rationales for different solutions and establish a sense of cooperation. Making this an on-going process within a community will permit priorities and goals to be re-examined periodically. Pooling available skills, data and ideas, the participatory design workshop focuses on solutions and physical designs that reflect conscious, informed and shared community decision-making. **WE**

Sharon Earn MES, ACOA, is an environmental designer. Her company, Sharon Earn Associates, develops and facilitates hands-on workshops that explore design solutions to community issues. The Design A Studio Workshops were developed together with Marina Fensham.

ALTERNATIVES TO WORKING FROM HOME

Residentially Based Common Work Centres to Provide Support for Women and Families

by **Melanie Hare & Laura C. Johnson**

WORKING FROM HOME CAN BE

both liberating and restricting, as the growing number of home-based workers have discovered. Women Plan Toronto (Canada), volunteers have been working with home-based working women to develop an alternative to the current home-work environment. Supported by a public agency grant, the project developed a model and constituency for a future residentially-based common work centre for women and families.

Home-based workers fall into three general categories: professional consultants, many of whom have long been home workers; electronic piece workers, the high-tech version of sweatshop workers; and those seeking an entrepreneurial alternative to conventional employment. Home-based work promises greater independence and options for combining family and work, advantages particularly relevant to women.

Home-based workers have increased dramatically and most significantly amongst women. Between 1981 and 1991, in Canada, women working at home grew by 69% compared to 39% for men. Home-based, self employed workers gen-

erally earn less than those working outside the home. Statistics also indicate that women are more likely to accept part-time jobs, perhaps because women still shoulder most primary care and are therefore forced to balance care giving with their paid work.

Home office arrangements range from a corner in a bedroom to a "Cadillac" suite specially equipped with separate entrance, phone, facsimile and other facilities. While separation of personal from work space can avoid some security and safety problems - most home-based workers prefer this - it is too costly for most. To use the social scientists' jargon, the risks of "role overload" and "work-family interference" are minimized when employment and family obligations are kept apart, a skill women appear to excel in.

The Women Plan Toronto team explored a "Common Work Centre for Women and Families" which was convenient to, but not inside, the home. This innovative concept would combine a shared work facility with supports such as training, child care, shared office services and infrastructure. Operated on a not-for-profit basis, the space could function like

a business incubator. Integrated into a residential development it combines all of the advantages of home-based work with the benefits of a well-equipped, well-resourced, corporate office facility. The concept is particularly appropriate for computer-mediated telecommunication or telework.

Extensive consultation guided the feasibility study for this residentially-based common work centre. The process consisted of a volunteer Working Committee, an Expert Advisory Committee, focus groups with women working from their home, ongoing community meetings and a public meeting. Focus groups included a diversity of home-based workers, such as garment workers, professional consultants, women who only worked from home, some who combined home-based with traditional jobs and a group of mostly self-employed women from Riverdale, a downtown Toronto neighborhood. The focus groups helped the Working Group understand the advantages, issues, opportunities and constraints of home-based work and explored the residentially-based common work centre concept.

The women were enthusiastic. Most felt that such a centre would facilitate a workplace "synergy," promote creativity and increase productivity, all lacking in an independent home work environment. The wish-list of features included on-site child care, training, board room/meeting room, receptionist/voice mail system, food service facilities, office equipment, photocopier, printers, bulk rates on telephone, group insurance and other business services. Proximity to home was paramount, however, as participants would not travel significant distances to access such a facility. The Working Group concluded that an effective work centre would include some of the following criteria: accessibility (transit, automobile parking, barrier-free), security of the neighbourhood, feasibility of scale, sponsorship or partnership potential, revenue-generating potential, proximity of services, potential ▶

Concepts & Ideas

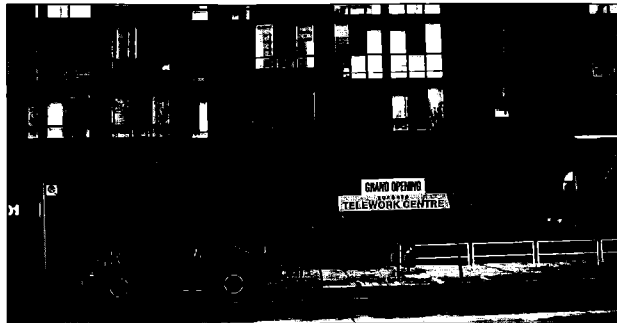
for use by various constituencies, and opportunity for social synergy.

The Working Group developed and evaluated six scenarios based on the above criteria. Locations ranged from new suburbs and urban high rises to retrofitted, underutilized industrial spaces. Organizational models included co-operative, not-for-profit, and a privately run structures. Design and programming alternatives accommodated individual work spaces, common facilities such as meeting rooms, kitchen and child care facilities as well as service to the surrounding community. The following three scenarios ranked highest:

The first scenario located the Common Work Centre on the ground level of a high-rise residential development facing a downtown main street. Close to transit, parking, child care and social housing, the centre would serve both tenants and the general public on a pay-per-use basis. The lay-out proposed large and small meeting rooms, individual work stations, business infrastructure and a café.

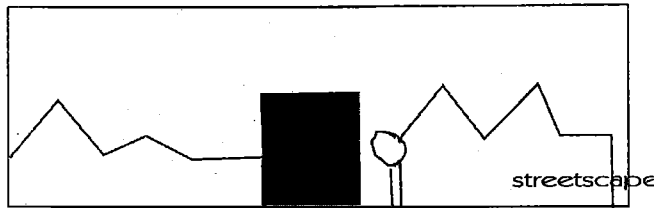
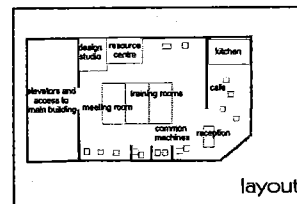
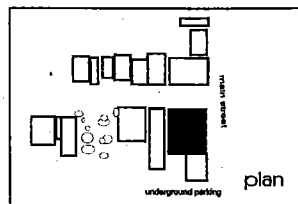
The second scenario converted an attractive heritage bank building, on a busy main street into a wired workplace with internet access, educational resources and training programs which could be developed in partnership with a nearby college or university. With limited parking, though accessible by transit, the centre's individual work stations, large and small meeting rooms would serve mainly the neighbourhood.

The third scenario is a true live/work centre in a three storey house on a main street in an older neighbourhood. Transit and ample parking and other business services are in walking distance. The ground floor contains the work centre while the second and third storeys are dwellings. Tenants would be the primary users of the workplace facilities. Outside residents could have occasional access as needed.



Potential telework centre on ground floor of high-rise apartment building
cr: Laura Johnson, WPT

scenario # 3 high rise with business centre



cr: Melanie Hare, WPT

The residential high rise with an at-grade non-profit common work centre emerged as the optimal scenario after a final round of evaluations into design, finance, organizational structure and planning regulations. The project has addressed quality of life and work environments, security, safety, opportunities for economic enhancement

for women, potential markets, balanced family and work commitments and evaluated processes and organizations. Now, Women Plan Toronto plans to involve its members and other interested women in implementing the first residentially-based common work centre. **WE**

Further Reading:

- 1 Nedwodny, Richard. "Canadians Working at Home", Canadian Social Trends, Spring 1996
- 2 Duxburg, L "Taking the Canadian Pulse". The National Work and Family Challenge, Issues and Options Conference, The Conference Board of Canada, Vancouver BC, 1994

Note: An Affordability and Choice Today grant from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, Canadian Home Builders Association and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation supported the above project. The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of the funders or sponsors of this research.

Melanie Hare, an urban planner, works for Urban Strategies, a Toronto consulting firm, and volunteers with Women Plan Toronto. Laura Johnson, a sociologist, teaches social planning at the University of Waterloo's School of Urban and Regional Planning.

ART IN PUBLIC SPACES

Women, Memory and Community

by Suzanne Farkas

"MONUMENTS ARE HUMAN landmarks which men have created as symbols for their ideals, their aims and for their actions. Monuments have to satisfy the eternal demand of the people for translation of their collective force into symbols," Sert, Leger, Giedron.¹

Cities around the world are grappling with the complex challenge of remaining viable places to live and work. Part of their challenge is this struggle to redefine and preserve the quality of their public spaces. Community is a state of mind but it is intimately tied to public place. Sustainability of public spaces, particularly green spaces against vandalism or degeneration, depends on how or what kinds of connection people have to it. The more people see the relevance in the place they live, the better the connection, community and space.

Public Art is often seen as an alienating presence in urban neighbourhoods. Traditionally, public art is a tool deliberately designed to preserve the image, and thereby extend the power of the ruling authority, class and patriarchal order. This fact is not lost on the subjects of this authority. From violent disfigurement to

the marks of graffiti, monuments have long been targets of revolutions and other expressions of resistance.

Recently however, alternative visions of public art are emerging and women artists throughout the world appear to be leading in their development. What would women want to remember? How might a woman's monument differ from the patriarchal monolithic form?

One aspect of monument and public art has never really been challenged. Monuments by definition are permanent lasting structures, with a unifying authority: one truth, one history, one memory! The enshrining of public heroes and mythology defines the communal authority while it obscures the personal experience.

The artists who challenge this concept of permanence open themselves up to professional derision. Why, the very definition of a "true" masterpiece is its ability to withstand the test of

time and idiosyncrasy.

Veronica Verkley is part of a growing movement of installation artists working with found materials. Veronica, however, has gone one step further. Her work does not instill a sense of permanency. In her recent work "Dream Figures" she has bravely set aside personal ego, to explore the true essence of Nature, the dynamic of ecosystem and the human's place in it.

"Dream Figures" currently on display in Toronto's Don River Valley, exemplifies the challenge to monumental authority. Veronica created this work in answer to a call by the City of Toronto's Environmental Art project "Ecolage" ▶

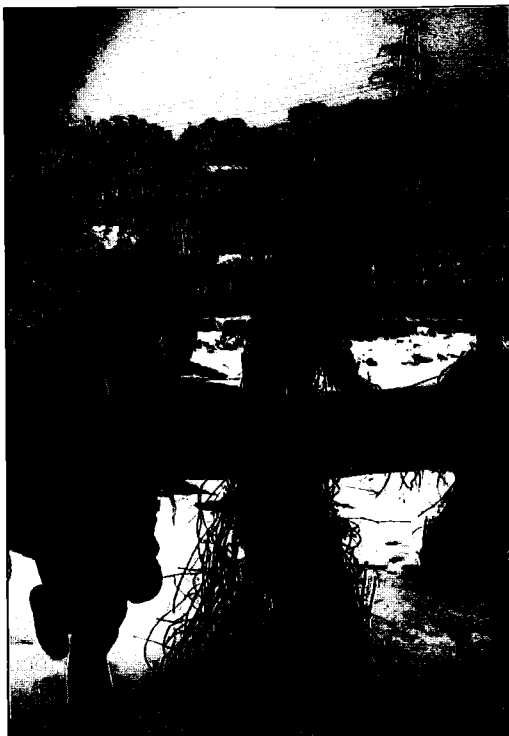


Verkley's mythical twig sculptures along the Don River, Toronto, illustrate a woman's approach to public art. cr:J. Sutherland

under the City's ongoing Public Art program. Ecolage was created to assist a community group gain public support for the revitalization of the Don River watershed. The Don, once an important historical and industrial corridor, was a unique natural system, is now badly polluted and forgotten. Linking open or wild public spaces with an urban art event encourages active participation and might change the public's opinion of the value of this area.

As if awakened from the mists of Avalon, the "Dream Figures" sweep over me with their presence. Oddly I feel a vague memory of an absence long forgotten. At once I am aware of their ancient looming power almost equal to the pain of their great loss. Once these woods were alive with spirits, and Mother Earth was our succor.

Verkley blurs the line between species and uses the symbols of "anima" to explore our concepts of humanness, instinct, gesture, and emotion. The figures are creatures larger than life, reminiscent of the once common bird, bear, and elk. The sculptures bear expressive tilts of the head or leg, cocked in a familiar seemingly human gesture. Evoking memories of a time when urban was rural, the figures watch the City's commuters. Half hidden by the natural undergrowth, they sadly peer out to the six lane highway that now severs this valley from the busy residential district beyond. These figures are our markers. They sit on the edge of a once mighty watershed marking time, place and relationships, our potential and



Veronica walks with her "Dream Figures" cr: J.Sutherland

our destruction, our past and our future, our urban and our hinterland.

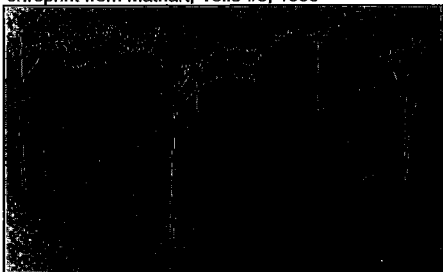
Veronica sculpts with found organic materials and underbrush, cast off urban debris of trash, car parts and industrial objects. Her structures are designed to change with the seasons and eventually become one with the surrounding vegetation. Thus, Verkley plays with the temporal nature of life and edifice. With these elements she expresses the imperfect, impermanent and fleeting power of memory and authority of public place. Her vision of public monument in this organic form defies traditional rules of formal sculpture, art and public expression of civic pride. It is in her choice to subjugate her ego and open her forest beings up to the elements that bring the work its power. Our need to be connected to our physical spaces is clear. It confronts us with our own ephemeral life force. Our

patriarchal psyche has set its conquest as our perpetual goal, yet Nature is still our master.

Her works are deceptive and disarmingly simple. This encourages familiarity and the viewer becomes part of the re-creation of memory. Viewers begin to reflect on their role in creating this urban community, once rooted in nature and place. As such her work reflects the inner as well as the external landscape, the personal as well as the monumental.

Beth Alber's Marker of Change 1996 is another radically open, anti monumental monument. Alber, a Canadian artist, was commissioned by a local community college women's center. The college is situated in an inner city neighborhood of Vancouver. The purpose of the monument was to commemorate the women victims of violence. In particular, it was dedicated to the 14 young women

"The Women's Monument Project Vancouver 1995"
reprint from *Matriart*, Vol.5 #3, 1995



engineering students who were massacred in 1987 by a disgruntled and disturbed male student in the City of Montreal, Canada.

The monument is placed in a grassy opening in the woods of a park adjacent to the college and the downtown core. In its choice of subject matter and design concept, it challenges traditions of public art. Simply, it consists of 14 benches set in a circle, enclosed by a low brick curb. The monument provides a resting place among the woods, encouraging contemplation; it is open to regeneration and play, and a range of individual emotions. It is a space to gather, a healing circle. Alber's use of site, materials and form, like Verkley's subtly implies change. Growth not permanence is its goal. Its power lies in its call to remember, while also remaining open to possibility, community and future.

Public art does not need to be rarified, larger than life. It can be a tool to actively create links. Suzanne Lacey, renowned American artist and critic, describes a model of public art which differs from traditional art in that it is defined by its

relationship to its audience.² The goal of public art should be to engage its audience in issues directly related to their lives. In her recent work, *Underground*, she works collaboratively with battered women's centers to make a public act, art as an occasion for community building. Simultaneously she deliberately seizes the opportunity to create a place for women to make the private choice to get away from the violence. The art connects the viewers with the resources and describes underground networks that can sustain an escape.³

In "Too Close to Home," women artists Merry Conway and Noni Pratt explore father - daughter relationships by publicly displaying objects and memorabilia donated by residents living in the community. The installation was displayed in an abandoned bank site, intended for renovation into a new museum in the American City of New Bedford. People instinctively recognized the empowerment that comes with making what is private, public, and art's unique ability to communicate and engage. More than 100 people donated personal effects and any wild variety of objects that might evoke a memory. In an article describing their project, Conway stated: "It's an amazing thing to have it [their items] put into a public forum. You take something personal, have it publicly displayed as art, and when you get it back after people have looked at it, your sense of it has changed. It's about what we value." The article goes on to say: "One woman who had contributed items,

brought her father who (sic) she hadn't seen in 30 years. The salty retired sailor said to the artists: 'Girls, I've spent my whole life running away and leaving my girls behind. This is important for men to see,' He returned every day with friends."⁴ This project, by its engagement with its community, was able to physically manifest the inner life and the commonality that linked the people, their homes and their lives in the community.

Memory is crucial to our sense of identity and worthiness. Altering history or collective memory is a crucial tool in cultural conquest. Its effect is to erase the clues that may prompt us to challenge the authority that rules us. As Kelley states: "We forget what is not possible, pare down instead to what is necessary, what is required, what can just barely, after all be dreamed of."⁵ Without verifiable public cues to awaken our memories and legitimize our personal experiences as women and as an active part of the body politic, we remain alienated, our actions trivialized, our contributions forgotten and thus our dreams of the possible are reduced to only that which is acceptable.

The common element in these women's alternative views of public art, is in the ability to evoke a new sense and definition of community, one which acknowledges the alienated and encourages open dialogue and inclusion. These elements are vital for the development and growth of art in public places and in its potential to contribute to the struggle for viable cities. **WE**

1 Sert, Leger, Giedron "Nine Points of Monumentality," 1943, reprinted in *Introspections*, Feb. 1997, MACBA, Barcelona.

2 Suzanne Lacey, "Mapping the Terrain," Bay Press, San Francisco, 1995.

3 C. Kelley, "Creating Memory, Contesting History," *Matriart*, vol. 5, #3, 1995, Toronto.

4 D. Cospes, "Action," *Metropolis*, (Community) Nov. 1996, New York.

5 Op cited, Kelley.

Suzanne Farkas, MES, consults in occupational health, safety and the environment and lectures at Ryerson Polytechnic University.

The Huairou Commission ●

WOMEN'S VOICE ON HOUSING AND SETTLEMENT ISSUES AT THE UN

by Sheryl Feldman

Wally N'Dow, Assistant Secretary General for the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements (UNCHS or Habitat) set up the Huairou Commission at the end of the 1995 Beijing Conference in response to the statement from the Super Coalition for Women, Homes and Community. The commission aims to highlight women's issues in the development of sustainable settlements and communities, ensure that women are in example-setting and decision making roles, advising the partners, and build the overall capacity of women. With an open membership, Huairou has a partnership concept at its core, encouraging exchange and multi-sectoral work among grassroots representatives, the private sector, local government, UNCHS and other UN agencies. Implementing the Habitat Agenda virtually hangs from this partnership concept.

The 1996 Habitat Conference in Istanbul made history by including non-governmental agencies in its deliberations. The Super Coalition, a NGO and main actor in Huairou, includes such women's groups as GROOTS (Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood), IWC (International Council of Women), HIC-WAS (Habitat International Coalition

Women & Shelter Network) and WEDO (Women's Environment and Development Organization). The Coalition achieved the inclusion of virtually all of its demands in the final Habitat Agenda. The women were consulted, referenced, enlisted, invited to speak and bargained with. N'Dow commented "I will add my name to any initiative you are prepared to launch," crediting women for "supplying the road maps", creating a "spiritual dimension", and for having "energized everyone who is here." Participation in the Huairou Commission gives women access to partners. One WEDO member declared unequivocally: "Women won at Istanbul."

Kenya, the host for the 1997 follow up UNCH conference, provided a platform to discuss the challenges before Huairou. Women from war-torn Africa, reported their heroic efforts to rebuilt homes, create jobs, establish micro-credit, dig sanitation trenches and teach forgiveness. Struggles against prohibitions against women's right to property, mass school drop-out for girls, rounding up of street kids and forced labour camps were brought forward. Widows, members of the Sudanese Voice for Peace described how they buried their dead and found strength in doing this "man's job" because

it showed that they could assume other men's responsibilities as well.

Huairou, now has to establish workplans that will be complementary. There are questions about co-operation and co-optation and about complexities of communication. There are issues around making the most effective distribution of leadership and resources; not to mention the immediate problem of raising enough money. UNCHS also asked women to submit articles for the Habitat Debate and make the Huairou Commission an official "thematic center" of the UN's Best Practices project, based on women's experiences and issues.

Jan Peterson, at the Secretariat of the Super Coalition sums up women's progress around these critical issues before the U.N. and Huairou: "We bring a new spirit. We're looking at the larger picture and lobbying for active relationships. We're working with the entire set of Habitat programs and we're strengthening partnerships. We're creating a new way." **WE**

Sheryl Feldman, a writer and educator, living in Seattle, Washington, is currently establishing an information system for the Huairou Commission and can be reached by e-mail at sfeldman@halcyon.com.

GROOTS●

EXCHANGES LINK GRASSROOTS WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

by Joyce Brown and Marni Tamaki

Imagine women from Northern Social Housing projects and Southern Squatter Settlements boarding planes to meet each other in Kenya, Papua New Guinea (PNG), China or Turkey. GROOTS Exchanges do just that. GROOTS (Grassroots Organizations Together in Sisterhood) is an international network to get women who have first hand experience of poverty and oppression to work together to make positive changes in their lives.

At the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing, women from Kenya and Papua New Guinea met in the GROOTS tent and shared traditions, practices and interests in the environment, housing and community economic development. Such exchanges bring the groups closer and develop a peer exchange model. They share knowledge and community development strategies. The women started planning for grassroots representation at the 1996 Habitat II Conference in Istanbul where they became an influential part of the Super Coalition and Huairou Commission (see also the previous article on the Huairou Commission).

In April 1997, women in Kenya hosted a GROOTS Exchange for women from Papua New Guinea (PNG), Uganda,



GROOTS women listening to presentation in tin shed Mathare Valley, Kenya cr: Joyce Brown

Canada, and the US. The women gathered in Mathare Valley, in a tin shed in one of the largest squatter settlements. Songs, dancing and introductions bridged languages and cultures. The women toured infrastructure, drainage, lighting, public latrines, housing and tree planting projects.

The Exchange even reached traditional Maasai lands where privatization is forcing the semi-nomadic cattle herders into permanent settlements. Maasai women cook over open fires in traditional houses made of sticks, mud

and dung. The smoke and especially its inhalation create severe health problems for women. An Intermediate Technology Upgrading Program has introduced more efficient stoves, better ventilation and new roofing.

Back in Nairobi, the women participated through the Super-Coalition and Huairou commission in the UNCS follow up conference. Pilita Kaiwari of PNG addressed the General Assembly about her experience of the exchanges, illustrating the value of links between grassroots ►



Women's caucus Briefing at UNCHS conference in Nairobi, Kenya cr: Joyce Brown

women and the international power structure. March 1998 found GROOTS women travel to Papua New Guinea. What the women of PNG learned in Kenya was rapidly incorporated in their own rural development activities. Ruth from Kikori was impressed by the Kenyans' use of local materials for house construction. Back home, she began building a spacious wooden house on stilts (to catch the rain forest breezes) with local materials and a portable saw-mill. The

first people to sleep in her house were the women from Kenya and North America. PNG women are also very concerned to find means to control logging and oil companies which are exploiting the natural resources of rural areas. They were eager to hear from their Kenyan counterparts about their experiences in trying to stop deforestation and sustain the environment. At every stop more women joined, until at the end two extra buses had to be hired to transport

everyone. Thus, the local women experienced a national as well as an international exchange.

The experience in Papua New Guinea demonstrated to all the effectiveness of this type of exchange. Plans for a Summer 1999 Exchange in Canada and the US are underway. There is great excitement at the prospect of deepening the shared connections and knowledge over the next few years. **WE**

GROOTS Canada has recently completed "Keeping Canada's Commitment Alive: A community Guide to Habitat II" funded by Canada Mortgage and Housing. For further information on GROOTS Canada, the Exchange or the Habitat Guide, contact Joyce Brown, researcher and consultant on housing issues, particularly homelessness, at 164 Munroe St., Toronto, ON M4M 2B9; e-mail: 104177.3101@compuserve.com or at 12 Hampton Court, 34 Baines Ave., Harare Zimbabwe; e-mail: cats@icon.co.zw
GROOTS PNG, can be reached through Marnie Tamaki, architect working for the Department of Public Works in Port Moresby, PNG.

PARTICIPATING PROJECTS AND GROUPS:

Kenya

- Mathare - A Squatter Upgrading Project, Nairobi
- Green Towns Project, Kenya
- Homa Bay Weavers Project
- Homa Bay Potters Project
- Maasai Housing Project, Intermediate Technology, Kenya

Canada

- Savard's Street Survivor Project, Toronto

PNG

- Kairi Goaribari Pipeline Women's Association, PNG
- GROOTS International

Uganda

- Irish Foundation for Cooperative Development

U.S.

- Williamsberg Neighbourhood Women, New York
- Camden Neighbourhood Women, New Jersey
- National Congress of Neighbourhood Women



European women get ready for action
 cr: Veli-Matti Pitkanen, EuroFEM

EuroFEM

EUROPEAN WOMEN TAKE ACTION

by Christine Booth, Rose Gilroy and Liisa Horelli

In 1994, European women set up EuroFEM. This network responded to three recent international conferences (OECD, Habitat II, Beijing) on urban issues which also addressed gender issues. The network's vision is for a "just, harmonious and equal society" by demonstrating the different, often "fine grained" impact policy can have on the lives of women, children and men.

EuroFEM has established a registry of some 60 women's projects with a gender-sensitive approach to housing, planning, governance, mobility, job creation, decision-making, technology and information exchange. 400 delegates attended the international conference in Hameenlinna, Finland in June 1998 to challenge policy makers and politicians to find new forms of governance, processes and discourse to reflect EuroFEM's vision. Funded by the European Union, EuroFEM also set out to evaluate 16 "women's" projects which:

1. provided gender-sensitive environments through planning and development,
2. reorganized everyday life,
3. included gender-sensitive models of involvement, and
4. created jobs for women at the local level.

The top four projects included the suburban Frauen-Werkstadt (work city and workshop) in Vienna, Austria, (see Summer

Three Common Features found in Successful Projects:

An Organization which:

- linked to the wider community, local politicians, experts and local groups,
- kept project participants involved in the flow of ideas,
- made evaluation part of the organizational fabric through ongoing feedback,
- mandated a facilitator to work with the team to avoid burn-out, and
- built new decision-making structures to hear more voices.

Main Streaming of Ideas and Practices by:

- including gender dimensions in the current agendas,
- focusing on practical and realizable projects,
- lobbying and other political tactics to get attention and
- nurturing strong local support.

Bridging the Gap between Professional and Grassroots Women by:

- acknowledging and valuing differences esp. in language, experiences and ways of knowing (also among women),
- speaking the appropriate language in different arenas,
- keeping "friends" (i.e. politicians, policy makers, funders as unofficial facilitators)

1996 WE Int. Habitat II Issue, p. 35). Ultimately, the neighbourhood will include a doctor's office, a child care centre, shops and a police station. Similar objectives are set by those Swedish co-housing projects with a communal kitchen and dining room, guest rooms, workshops, a common laundry room and a sauna. Tenants take turns in preparing supper. This allows for bulk purchasing, less packaging, fewer car journeys while encouraging sustainable development and social interaction. A British safety audit program modeled women's involvement trained ethnic minority women to take account of their and their children's personal safety. They also followed up on pollutants and learned the

power of their opinions in challenging local planning decisions. These women in turn taught these skills to other women. The fourth project was the Resource Centre at Kokkola in Finland. This women's cooperative promotes businesses run by women including health services, an ecological bank and rural tourism. The project increases women's economic power and gender-sensitive job creation.

EuroFEM, in this way, held up a mirror of alternative ways of working, living and building powerful communities. EuroFEM continues to develop new projects as women discover they can realize their ideas and vision of a society where the capacities of all are used. **WE**

Booth, Gilroy and Horelli, are all involved in EuroFEM. Liisa Horelli, PhD, is a researcher with the Helsinki Institute of Technology, consultant on issues of participatory planning and evaluation methodology. She coordinates EuroFEM and can be contacted by e-mail: lisa.horelli@hut.fi. Christine Booth BSc, DipTP, MRTPI is a principal lecturer in the School of Urban and Regional Studies, Sheffield Hallam University, UK. Rose Gilroy BA, MA, FCIH is a senior lecturer in the Department of Town and Country Planning, University of Newcastle, UK.

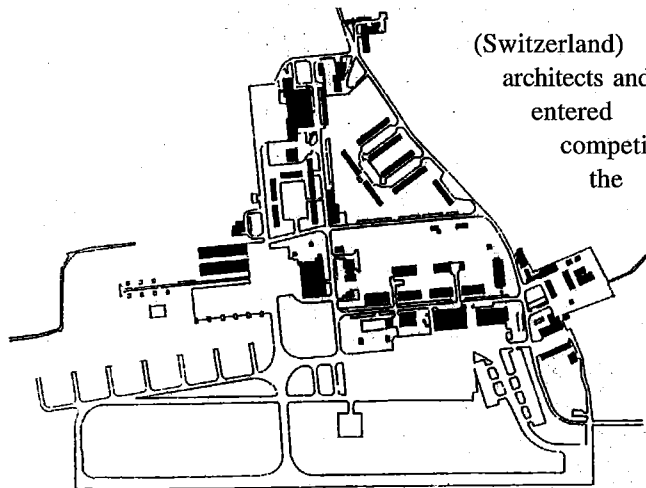
European Women & Environment Network ●

WE International Bureau Chief, in England, Clara Greed, attended the Women and the Environment Network Conference, held Nov. 30 - Dec. 2 1998 in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Women from eastern and western Europe focused on implementing the Rio, Beijing and Istanbul UN conference recommendations. Papers addressed land use, transportation, sustainability and health. The women were concerned that departmentalization prevented a holistic perspective on both issues and solutions, and submerged all gender considerations. The organizer, Ulrike Roehr, wishes to reach out to kindred women's groups and networks ulrike.roehr@rhein-main.de

From Air Base to Women's Community ●

SUMMARY OF AN ARTICLE BY BEATRICE LEUENBERGER IN OLYMPE

issue 6, 1996, Zurich, Switzerland



Existing airport and structure of Mainz-Layenhof US Army base cr: B. Leuenberger

"This plan is a challenge to the City and the future inhabitants; it should be accepted. The structures of the previous air base grow into central features of the community, a very economical use of existing resources. The basic structure allows flexibility for future development which is to be determined by the needs of the inhabitants - a top priority of the plan. The transportation concept is viable and convincing." With these comments, a jury awarded a special price to a Zurich

(Switzerland) team of women architects and planners who had entered the design competition to redevelop the US air base in Mainz-Layenhof.

"We are planning a town for women, all women," stated architects M u e n g e r, Staehelin, and Leuenberger.

The team then listened to the voices of women, to identify a community plan which was comfortable, full of life, colour, nature and fragrances, and where all daily functions would be within easy walking distance. The concept also includes:

- a quota that women make up 70% of the population, political bodies, occupants and owners of buildings and businesses,
- a women's university as catalyst for the cultural, social and economic growth including museums, theatres, restaurants

and hotels; these would prevent the town from turning into a dormitory town for Mainz,

- a council of existing and future women residents to take responsibility for implementing the plan with a woman planner/moderator committed to cooperation and team work,
- reuse of runways, hangars and barracks to safeguard history,
- 3 storey mixed use buildings with front yards and sidewalks for commercial and public activities,
- land to remain in public ownership to prevent speculation,
- effective public transit to reduce cars; except on major arterials, pedestrians, cyclists and cars share public streets equally, yielding to those coming from the right; social services and communal parking is located at public transit transfer points, 200 - 400 metres apart.

Sadly, it was a conventional plan which finally got the go ahead and all the great ideas have to wait for another turn.

PAF, Planung und Architektur von und für Frauen ●

(PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE BY AND FOR WOMEN)

PAF is the national association for the advancement of women and their interests in architecture, planning and implementation in Switzerland

Local women's groups concerned with gender, planning and architecture, founded PAF in 1994. Membership is open to both professional and non-professional women. PAF shares information and experiences, provides advice, references, role models and organizes meetings, workshops, lectures and research. At a recent PAF workshop participants brainstormed and developed solutions to turn the river flowing through a small town into a more positive component of the community, especially for women. Currently PAF focuses on incorporating gender in the proposed national land use guidelines and in the 2001 national exhibition. PAF publishes a bulletin (in German) with illustrated articles, updates and network information. Contact PAF, by phone/fax: (country code 41) 031-331 0181, Anita Schnyder, Beundenfeldstr. 12, 3013 Bern, Switzerland; by mail: PAF, P. O. Box 527, 3000 Bern 25, PC 80-61022-1, Switzerland.

Women's Design Service (WDS) ●



For almost 20 years, WDS has given women a voice in the design and planning of the environments they live in. WDS offers its own publications, a publicly accessible library, a phone information service, workshops, seminars and consultancies. By working with women, WDS ensures that the information given to professionals, and planning and social agencies reflects women's needs. To obtain a list of publications or reach the WDS write to 52/5 Featherstone St. London EC1Y8RT, UK, phone: (0171) 709-7910; fax: (0171) 481-1302

Her House ●

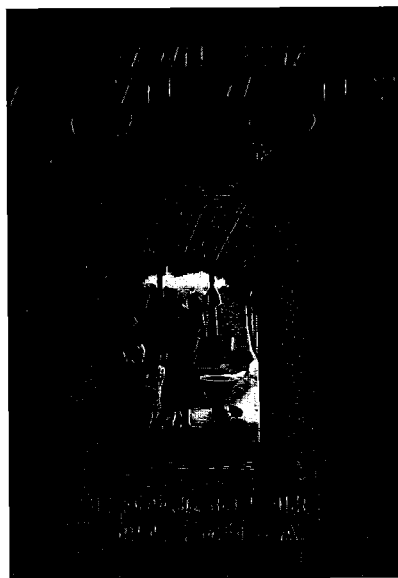


Her House is a Washington DC-based, coalition of organizations, individuals and corporations that work to help women attain the safety and economic freedom of home ownership. A project of DC Habitat for Humanity, Her House designs, funds and constructs Habitat homes. Her House also coordinates educational and fundraising events to raise consciousness about issues on women and housing. For further info about Her House, call (202) 628-9171 or e-mail: Dara.S.Lenhof@habitat.org

Textspace

There is a small but excellent array of reading material about women in the design field. The books that are available are all gems and well worth a read. They range from collective essays by women academics to biographies and monographs of well known design practitioners. There are also some interesting personal accounts of professional life as well as a few coffee table books with lush photos of details and built ideas. The following selection represents a range of international books available in the last decade.

They are available at Ballenford Books, Toronto, ON Canada (416) 588-0800,
e-mail: sdlean@idirect.com, prices are in Canadian dollars.



DRAWN FROM AFRICAN DWELLINGS

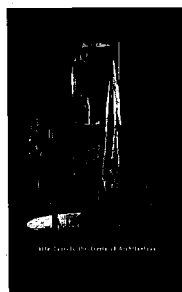
Jean-Paul Bourdier and Trinh T. Minh-Ha

Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990, 308 pp, \$89.95

Reviewed by Elaine Batcher,

African peoples in their traditional home settings, is the subject of this wonderful collaboration between two professors from Berkeley, Bourdier in architecture and Minh-ha in women's studies and film. Though we see no colour, we feel the heat of sun in the patterns of light and shade, the spaces in filigreed walls and doors. It is space that magically draws readers into the lives of the women, men and children whose homes are described. This authoritative text gives us a sense of terrain and boundary in drawings and black and white photos. The authors attempt to portray an ethnographic and participatory description of the traditional culture. We are told these traditional structures are changing. Once, Tokolor habitations, which were named for the family, showed family social structure, stratification, occupation and rank. Once the galle was the only dwelling, "the sacred familial space, the very roof under which one is born and wishes to die." But, because of modernization and economic necessity, children have moved away to the cities. Now there is tension between old and new dwelling as collective endeavour versus dwelling as individual property.

If it is possible to experience the lives of people through their structures, we have in this volume the basis for understanding the history and social organization of several African societies. This is a book rich in detail as an academic text and evocative as the best of coffee table books. Truly, a fabulous find!



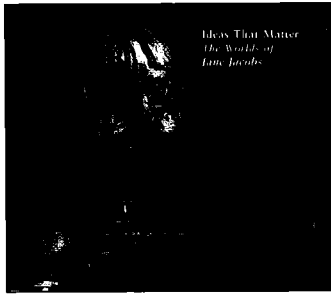
A HUT OF ONE'S OWN

Life Outside the Circle of Architecture

Ann Cline

Cline blends autobiography, historical research and cultural criticism to consider the place that such structures as shacks, teahouses, follies, casitas and diners - simple, "undesignated" places valued for their timeliness and authenticity - occupy from both a historical and a contemporary perspective. This book is an original and imaginative attempt to rethink architecture by studying its boundary conditions and formative structures.

Ann Cline is Associate Professor of Architecture at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.
1998, 154 pages, \$25.50, paperback

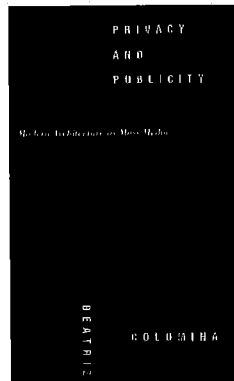


IDEAS THAT MATTER

The Worlds of Jane Jacobs
Max Allen, Editor

The first book about the influential Jane Jacobs - the world famous apostle of livable cities, who almost single-handedly reshaped the way urban planners think about their profession. It contains sections of her books: *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, *The Economy of Cities*, *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*, and *Systems of Survival*, as well as previously unpublished essays and letters.

1997, 228 pages, \$24.95 paperback



PRIVACY AND PUBLICITY

Modern Architecture as Mass Media
Beatriz Colomina

Through a series of close readings of two major figures of the modern movement, Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier, Beatriz Colomina argues that architecture only becomes modern in its engagement with the mass media. Where conventional criticism portrays modern architecture as a high artistic practice in opposition to mass culture, Colomina sees the emerging system of communication that has come to define twentieth century culture - the mass media - as the true site within which modern architecture was produced.

1996, 390 pages, \$33.75 paperback

Other titles by Beatriz Colomina - *Sexuality and Space*

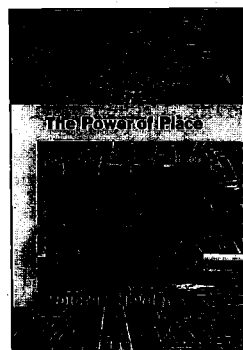


ZAHA HADID - THE COMPLETE BUILDINGS & PROJECTS,

Essay by Aaron Betsky

For over 20 years, this Iraqi-born, English educated architect has symbolized cutting-edge contemporary architecture. Although only a handful of Hadid's projects have been built - all to great critical success - each new project astonishes the world of design with its commitment to revolutionary forms and ideas. This volume - a collection of her entire oeuvre of over 80 built and unbuilt projects - showcases her striking drawings, paintings as well as sketches, plans, and models of her work.

1998, 176 pages, profuse colour illustrations, \$53.95 paperback, Rizzoli, International Publications Inc., New York



THE POWER OF PLACE

Urban Landscapes as Public History
Dolores Hayden

Based on her extensive experience in the urban communities of Los Angeles, history and architecture, Dolores Hayden proposes new perspectives on gender, race, and ethnicity to broaden the practice of public history and public art, enlarge urban preservation, and reorient the writing of urban history.

1997, 298 pages, \$21.00 paperback

Other titles by Dolores Hayden - *The Grand Domestic Revolution, A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighbourhoods and Cities*, and *Redesigning the American Dream: The Future of Housing, Work and Family Life*.



THE SEX OF ARCHITECTURE

Diana Agrest, Patricia Conway, Leslie Kanes Weisman, Editors

The Sex of Architecture brings together twenty-four provocative texts that collectively express the power and diversity of women's views on architecture today. This volume presents a dialogue among women historians, practitioners, theorists, and educators concerned with critical issues in architecture and urbanism; more specifically, history, public space and the city, housing, consumerism, and discourse itself. They reexamine some long-suspect "truths" - that man builds and women inhabits; that man is outside and woman is inside; that man is public and woman is private; that culture is male and nature if female.

1996, 320 pages \$24.95 paperback



WOMEN AND THE MAKING OF THE MODERN HOUSE

A Social and Architectural History

Alice T. Friedman

Friedman begins her enquiry with a question: In the past one hundred years, why were independent women clients such powerful catalysts for innovation in domestic architectural design? Her study focuses on six houses. She explores the challenges that unconventional attitudes and ways of life have presented to architectural thinking and to the architects themselves. If one looks at the careers of Wright, Lo Corbusier, Mies, and the others, it becomes clear that the houses they created for these women are among their most significant works. As clients, the women commissioned avant-garde architects to provide them with houses in which to live out their visions of a new life - visions that rested on a redefinition of domesticity that was fundamentally spatial and physical, but also had profound social and political implications about the value of their lives as independent people.

1998, 240 pages, \$55.00 hardcover

Barriers to Equal Access in the Housing Market: The Role of Discrimination Based on Race and Gender

by J. David Hulchanski

The paper argues that people in Metropolitan Toronto's rental housing market do not have equal access. Discrimination in the rental market takes the form of denying access to housing units, thereby limiting the number, type and location of options available to certain groups. This includes extraction of financial premiums in the form of higher rent or key money.

Research Paper 187, November 1993, 23 pp. \$5.00 (CAD); Centre for Urban and Community Studies, U of T, 455 Spadina Ave., Suite 426, Toronto, ON, Canada M5S 2G8, phone: (416) 978-2072, fax: (416) 978-7162; e-mail: cucs@chass.utoronto.ca

Seeing the Invisible: Women, Gender and Urban Development

by Caroline O. N. Moser with Linda Peake

This is a review of research on Third World women, gender and urban development since the 1960s. It examines the extent and reasons these issues form a separate agenda or are incorporated into mainstream research. It explains the marginalization of urban gender issues, and the critical importance of integrating them into research agendas.

Major Report 31, Sept. 1994, 50 pp. \$8.00 (CAD), Centre for Urban and Community Studies, U of T, 455 Spadina Ave., Suite 426, Toronto, ON, Canada M5S 2G8, phone: (416) 978-2072, fax: (416) 978-7162; e-mail: cucs@chass.utoronto.ca

No Room of Her Own: A Literature Review on Women and Homelessness

by Sylvia Novac, Joyce Brown and Carmen Bourbonnais

Homelessness has been viewed as a male experience and problem. Gender has not been a factor in much of the literature on this topic. However, the growing number of homeless women has changed this view. This document provides a comprehensive overview of the recent relevant literature on homelessness experienced by women in Canada. Underlying factors such as homeless women's characteristics, violence, health, shelters, and racism are examined.

No Room of Her Own, was published November 1996, is free of charge, and can be obtained from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp., 700 Montreal Rd., Ottawa, ON K1A 0P7, phone: (613) 748-2367, fax: (613) 748-4069; website: www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca

Women and Urban Environments Feminist Analysis of Urban Spaces

ed. Mary Ann Beavis

Feminist analysis is applied to such environments as a suburban neighbourhood, an urban street, an urban park and a shopping centre.

Women and Urban Environments was published 1997, is free of charge, and can be obtained from the Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg, 346 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg Man. R3C 0C3, phone: (204) 982-1140; fax: (204) 943-4696; e-mail: ius@coned.uwinnipeg.ca

Environments For Girls and Women, A Built Environment Education Program for Intermediate Grades

by Dr. Harrietta Avery, illustrated by Greta Guzek

This curriculum guide helps students become aware of gender and diversity in the planning and design of buildings, communities and infrastructure. Excellent lesson outlines, suggestions for activities, teachers' introductions, resources and bibliographies are included.

For enquiries contact Dr. Avery at Okanagan University College, 3333 College Way, Kelowna BC, Canada, V1V 1V7, phone: (604) 762-5445

Sidestreets: Humane Scale Housing for Urban Toronto

by Cheryl Giraudy, architect and Heidi Overhill, industrial designer

Sidestreets is an innovative yet affordable proposal for urban infill. The design concept accommodates housing needs of diverse and even changing households. Space for a small elevator in each unit allows for wheel chairs and "aging in place." Convenient parking, storage and emphasis on semi-private space make the design safe and bicycle friendly. The women designers have included many unique features to ease household chores. The four storey, courtyard building concept is cost-efficient by including flexible designs and by not requiring additional public roads. The concept can adapt to many locations including under-used transition areas or commercial streets with storefronts. The designers can be reached via e-mail: giraudy@interlog.com



Conceptual frontview of prototype of Sidestreet project cr: C.Giraudy

Women in Construction

CLR News (European Institute for Construction Labour Research)

#3/1997, edited by Linda Clarke and Christine Wall, University of Westminster

This issue provides a Europe-wide overview of policies and conditions regarding women in construction. The field operates on inconsistent, often outdated concepts, attitudes and regulations. Contributions focus on several initiatives to bring about more equal opportunities in Britain, Denmark, Sweden and Germany. A world wide perspective concludes the issue.

For copies contact CLR, Rue Royale 45; B-1000 Bruxelles; phone: (32) 2-2-27 10 40; fax: (32) 2-219 82 28

Calendar & Announcements



URBAN 21

This international conference on Urban Development in the 21st Century, in Berlin, July 4 - 6, 2000, is part of the German follow-up process of Habitat II. The Feminist Organization of Planners and Architects (FOPA) is coordinating efforts to bring international expertise of women into both the follow-up process and the Urban 21 conference.

For further info on the FOPA conference, contact Kerstin Zillman, FOPA Hamburg, Schulterblatt 84, D-20357, Hamburg, Germany, phone: 49-40-439 5568; fax: (49) 40-771 82472; e-mail: fopa@w4w.net

For further information on Urban 21 contact Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning, Urban 21, Am Michaelshof 8, 53177 Bonn, Germany, fax: (49) 228-826315; e-mail: info@urban21.de; website: www.urban21.de

GLOBAL JUSTICE/WOMEN'S RIGHTS, INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE,

Oct 1 - 2, 1999 Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven CT, USA; Deadline for Proposals for Session and Submissions: June 4, 1999. Contact: Vara Neverow, Women's Studies Program, MOB10, 501 Crescent St., New Haven, CT 06515-1355, USA, phone: (203) 392-6133, fax: (203) 392-6723; e-mail: womenstudies@scsu.ctstateu.edu; <http://scsu.ctstateu.edu/~wmst.html>

IN MEMORY - SUZANNE MACKENZIE

A feminist kindred spirit in exploring the links between women and their environments has left us. Suzanne Mackenzie completed her PhD at the University of Sussex, England. She went on to teach at Carlton University, Ottawa. She pioneered courses relating, in her words, "geographic theory/practice and contemporary socio-environmental changes at both local and global scales." In our early days, WE (Women & Environments) International carried several articles by her. Suzanne died of lung cancer Oct. 24, 1998 at the age of 48. We will all miss our socialist-feminist-environmentalist sister.

Order your back issues and/or subscribe; check the appropriate boxes and fill out mailing information below

WE INTERNATIONAL

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Tribute to Joyce Wieland

Excerpted from tributes, written by Linda Abrahams, co-director of the Women's Art Resource Centre and editor of Matriart magazine

Wieland articulated her bold vision, self-identification and courage of conviction through her art. She reflected this century's major leap of consciousness: the emerging awareness of human rights, the environment, spirituality and cultural self-determination. Joyce rose above barriers of convention and status quo to create her life's work in an astonishing variety of media which encompassed film making, painting, sculpting, mixed media installation, print making and fibre arts. She is widely credited with elevating the status of quilt making to a "fine" art.

Wieland was the first woman honoured with a solo exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada, (*True Patriot Love*, 1971), yet women still only represent 7% of all artists exhibited in that gallery. She inspired a generation of women artists to believe in their own ways of knowing and in their art even if it doesn't follow the status quo. Joyce realized that the closer women artists stand together the closer they will get to their rightful place in museums and galleries. To this end she supported a wide circle of women artists and created the Alma Gallery on Markham St. to exhibit women artists. It was some of these women who supported her in her struggle with Alzheimer's disease to which she succumbed in June of 1998 just before her 67th birthday. Amongst her many honours, Joyce Wieland was named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1983 and most recently awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Toronto Arts Foundation.

