

Dimensions Twenty-One

092
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112
114
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3.0112

Eric Olsen⁰⁹⁴

3.7638

Despina Stratigakos¹⁰⁴

4.3839

Kathy Velikov¹⁰⁸

```
width: $width  
01  for ($p=01) {  
02  text: width: 128  
03  for ($p=02) {  
04  image: full: 01end  
05  $p: 1row  
06  $p: 1col  
07  for ($p=03) {  
08  include: page: number  
09  for ($p=04) {  
10  get: page: number  
11  for ($comment1) {  
12  if ($-1) then: mid: placement  
13  if ($-1) use: +  
14  always: align: 4: 3: gutter  
15  always: justify: comment: to: line  
16  for ($p=05) {  
17  column: 2: assigned: in  
18  if ($image): p: top: then: use: top: line  
19  else: use: bottom: line
```

Architecture Fellows

Fellows spend one academic year at the University of Michigan. Appointed as lecturers in architecture, they are given teaching responsibilities and time to devote to other creative activities, scholarship and design work. Fellows present the result of their activities to the College at the end of their tenure.

Eric Olsen

The William A. Muschenheim Design Fellowship offers design instructors early in their career the opportunity to develop a body of work in the context of, or in relation to teaching. Design fellows play a significant role in the definition of studio culture while pursuing their own creative endeavors to be presented and exhibited in the school gallery at the end of the year. Proposals for the Design Fellowship may focus either upon the development of a specific project either individually or with students outside of teaching, or center upon a particular set of pedagogical themes to be engaged in the studio context.

Despina Stratigakos

The Walter B. Sanders Research Fellowship supports individuals with significant, compelling and timely research agendas dealing with architectural issues. Research agendas could be based in such fields as architectural, urban, landscape or cultural history or theory; architectural or environmental technology; or design studies.

These agendas could emerge from recently-completed doctoral dissertations or any other intense and rigorous research format. The fellowship will support both the continuation of research and the development of research-related curriculum.

Kathy Velikov

The William A. Oberdick Project Fellowship facilitates the development and realization of a significant exploration into some aspect of architectural speculation and production. Fellows are provided with resources for the execution of a project that may take the form of an exhibit, publication, installation or any other material construction. Projects may range from the exploration of emergent building, fabrication and environmental technologies to the realization of architectural works and endeavors typically unsupported within conventional models of practice.

Barbies rarely appear amidst the models, drawings and other props of an architectural studio. Teaching architecture is a serious business, and although we may “toy” with buildings, we generally do not play with dolls. Hoping to spark discussion about the role of gender in the formation of professional self-identities Architect Barbie was chosen as the theme for the Sanders Fellowship exhibition. Students and faculty of Taubman College’s T-Square Society developed prototypes of Architect Barbie based on their own experiences, fantasies and perhaps frustrations. Making and displaying the dolls created a space within the college (both conceptually and spatially) to address the crucial issue of diversity from an unexpected and playful angle. “I am grateful to the students and faculty of Taubman College for helping to create new blueprints for Barbie.”¹

Mattel, Inc. first introduced the “I Can Be” career series in 2001, in which Barbie® went to work for the first time as “Baby Doctor,” subsequently followed by “Baby Photographer.”



Given the dolls power to nurture professional self-images, the announcement in 2002 of a voting competition to determine Barbie's next career move aroused enormous public interest. Parents and children were encouraged to visit barbie.com and vote on one of three possible career choices for Barbie: architect, librarian and policewoman. After weeks of a fierce electronic voting war, Architect Barbie won with an overwhelming majority of the vote. However, much to the disappointment of women architects who had voted for "their" Barbie, Mattel announced that it would not produce an architect in the "I Can Be" series.

Mattel spokesperson Julia Jensen, interviewed by *construction.com* editor Judy Schriener, claimed that Barbie's target audience (girls aged three to eleven) could not understand the complexities of an architect's career. When they imagine Mommy going to work, they think "she drinks coffee; she wears a dress to work; she is on the phone all day." A professional architect "is not in their lexicon," which is also the reason why Mattel's first "I Can Be" Barbie was a Baby Doctor, not a pediatrician.

As a scholar and educator deeply concerned with making architecture not only relevant to little girls, but also relevant to women in architecture, I hope to persuade Mattel to reconsider the viability of Architect Barbie. Perhaps the limitations here lie more with the company's marketing strategies than with the imaginative capacities of their clientele. Would Mattel sell more Barbie doll houses, for example, if it encouraged little girls to build them?

There are no stereotypical images of the woman architect to build upon, despite Hollywood movies having provided a stable of male "archetypes."² But the absence of a female Howard Roark may prove to be advantageous in imagining new professional identities.

When women began to enter the field of architecture a hundred years ago, the profession responded by articulating an image of the architect defined by traits culturally coded as masculine. The ideal architect possessed a will and body of steel, a heroic sense of individuality and a creative genius that shunned cooperation. So strong was this insistence on masculinity that cultural authorities warned women who aspired to become architects that their minds and bodies would mutate if they pursued their dreams, transforming them into hermaphrodites.³

Today, we cannot comfortably claim that a professional history of exclusion lies behind us. Although the number of female students averages about 40 percent in Bachelor of Architecture and Master of Architecture programs, these women have not found their way into licensed practice, which remains about 87 percent male, according to recent statistics from the AIA.⁴ A 2003 report issued by the Royal Institute of British Architects on the difficulty of retaining women in the field cited the continuing "macho" culture of the profession as one of the factors contributing to job dissatisfaction.⁵ As we confront these complex issues, we might well begin by examining our own stereotypes about the people who we think make "good" architects.

Notes

1. I would like to thank Tom Buresh, Caroline Constant, Paige Hammerschmidt and Caryn Schadeegg for their help with the exhibition, as well as the Architect Barbie makers.

2. Nancy Levinson, *Tall Buildings, Tall Tales: On Architects in the Movies, Architecture and Film*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000), p. 11–48.

3. Despina Stratigakos, *The Uncanny Architect: Fears of Lesbian Builders and Deviant Homes in Modern Germany*, in *Negotiating Domesticity: Spatial Productions of Gender in Modern Architecture*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2005).

4. Suzanne Stephens, *Not Only Zaha; What Is It Like to Be a Female Architect with a Solely Owned Firm in the U.S. Today?*, (New York: Architectural Record 194.12, 2006), p. 58.

5. Ann de Graft-Johnson, Sandra Manley, and Clara Greed, *Why Do Women Leave Architecture* (Bristol: University of the West of England, Bristol; London: Royal Institute of British Architects, 2003), p. 20–21.



Previous spread
Barbie by:
Mashawnta Armstrong



Barbies by:
Gera Feigon
Enesh Eastlick
Kristen Murphy
Carrie Gualdi
and Winnie Lam



Barbies also by: +
Jen Hermesen,
Lauren Rock,
Mallory Scholl,
Taylor Stein and
Anca Trandafirescu.

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