

Space as Matrix Constellation

Geraldine Tedder

The exhibition 'Space as Matrix' brought together artists and architects who stand against a hierarchisation of space and the relations within it. Their fields of action range from challenging the motivations of building specifications to working together with stakeholders on design processes to – more fundamentally – breaking with generic representations of space and collapsing divisions between architect and user, artist and viewer, academia and lived experience.

This glossator collects together the texts that inspired and in some cases were enacted during the exhibition (and which were acquired for Madame ETH's book kiosk). Accompanying notes (the glosses in the margins) both give insight into the curating and hanging of the exhibition while reflecting on five relationships: creative alliances or textual connections, within the constellation of artists, architects and writers taking part.

Dates	Texts and Annotations from 1976 to 2019	
Themes	Capitalocene, Critique, Domesticity, Feminism, Monography, Shared space, Ways of feeling, Writing	
Publication Types	Article, Book, Fiction, Magazine, Online resource	
Authors	Chris Kraus Doina Petrescu Dolores Hayden Everyone Agrees Lucy R. Lippard Maria Fusco	Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative Susan Hiller Susana Torre Ursula Mayer muf architecture/art

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These marginal glosses make connections between different authors and actors, their texts and practices, within this Space as Matrix bibliographic collection that accompanied the exhibition and which can be found on womenwritingarchitecture.org

Readings by Maria Fusco from Legend of the Necessary Dreamer took place on 6th December 2022. Over the course of one day, she read intertwined extracts, some repeated some read only once, from her book Legend of the Necessary Dreamer. This event was organised together with Women Writing Architecture.

The first relationship in this glossator is between Maria Fusco and Ursula Mayer:

(Maria Fusco) Legend of the Necessary Dreamer / The Happy Hypocrite (Ursula Mayer) But we Loved Her

Although not explicitly connected in the events or in the exhibition, Ursula Mayer and Maria Fusco have worked together on several occasions – a reason to invite Fusco, in addition to her experimental writing on Architecture, to contribute to an event alongside Mayer's work in the exhibition. Publications that they have produced together include 'Gonda' – a book and cine roman published in 2013 by 'les presses du réel' and part of a trilogy, including Medea and Cinesexual by Mayer: Gonda is informed by Ayn Rand's 1934 play 'Ideal'.

Legend of the Necessary Dreamer

AUTHOR(S)	Maria Fusco	PUBLISHED	2017
PUBLISHER	Vanguard Press	LANGUAGES	English
TOPICS	Critique		

In the play's script, controversial Russian American writer and philosopher Rand lays out her philosophical system of "Objectivism" with its stubbornly anti-altruistic and individualistic position.

Altering Practices: Feminist Politics and the Poetics of Space

AUTHOR(S)	Doina Petrescu	PUBLISHED	2007
PUBLISHER	Taylor & Francis	LANGUAGES	English
TOPICS	Feminism		

As a critical counter to Rand, Gonda creates kaleidoscopic printed spaces in which image and text shift roles to affect presupposed ideals of identity and existence. Noting how the cinematic image actually gazes back at us, the book uses highly stylised and precisely composed full colour imagery, and features Dutch transgender model Valentin de Hingh, who also played in Cinesexual – the third film of the trilogy, exhibited in Space as Matrix.

more that one (fragile) thing at a time

AUTHOR(S)	muf architecture/art	PUBLISHED	2016
PUBLISHER	Tabletwo Productions	LANGUAGES	English
TOPICS	Shared space		

Social Practices

AUTHOR(S)	Chris Kraus	PUBLISHED	2019
PUBLISHER	Automedia	LANGUAGES	English
TOPICS	Monography		

The screenplay, printed in full in this book, comes from a series of interdisciplinary workshops where academics, curators, critics, and writers considered the possibilities of writing through rather than about Rand's play.

But we Loved Her

AUTHOR(S)	Ursula Mayer	PUBLISHED	2013
PUBLISHER	Verlag für moderne Kunst	LANGUAGES	English
TOPICS	Capitalocene		

The screenplay's key textual reference is the production structure of Félix Guattari's unrealized 1986 Project for a Film by Kafka, in which Guattari proposed a made-for-television mini-series inspired by episodes in Kafka's writings and life. Gonda cannibalises original writing and transcribed workshop material together with five letter-based passages from Ideal, nudging them into alternative personal pronouns, to make Gonda a book of voices.

After the Night

AUTHOR(S)	Everyone Agrees	PUBLISHED	2013
PUBLISHER	Book Works	LANGUAGES	English
TOPICS	Shared space		

The Dream and the Word

AUTHOR(S)	Susan Hiller	PUBLISHED	2012
PUBLISHER	Black Dog Press	LANGUAGES	English
TOPICS	Ways of feeling		

The Happy Hypocrite

AUTHOR(S)	Maria Fusco (editor)	PUBLISHED	2008
PUBLISHER	Book Works	LANGUAGES	English
TOPICS	Writing		

The Power of Place

AUTHOR(S)	Dolores Hayden	PUBLISHED	1997
PUBLISHER	MIT Press	LANGUAGES	English
TOPICS	Shared space		

Space as Matrix

AUTHOR(S)	Susana Torre	PUBLISHED	1981
PUBLISHER	Heresies	VOLUME	#11 no. 3 Making Room, Women and Architecture
LANGUAGES	English	PAGES	51 – 52
TOPICS	Domesticity		

This Is What We Do: A Muf Manual

AUTHOR(S)	muf architecture/art	PUBLISHED	2001
PUBLISHER	Ellipsis London Pr Ltd	LANGUAGES	English
TOPICS	Feminism		

The second relationship in this glossator is between Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative and muf, architecture/art:

(Matrix) Making Space: Women and the Man-made Environment (muf) more than one (fragile) thing at a time / This Is What We Do: A Muf Manual

muf architecture/art began practicing in 1995, shortly after the work of Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative ended. Pursuing similar convictions to Matrix, muf worked under very different economic conditions – those defined by competition in the architectural services market. The practice of Matrix was a reference for muf, and both worked in London's East End, and consequently with related social histories.

As Annamaria Prandi notes in her article on the exhibition Space as Matrix: Born out of the initiative of group of Bangladeshi women from the East End London to create a place for the knowledge and research of female identity, Jagonari Women's Educational Resource Centre (literally Rise Women), completed in 1987 had been conceived by Matrix together with its founders as a hybrid, secular space, in which women of different Asian faiths and cultures could meet. The center marks a historically politized period for London's South Asian community after the racially motivated murder of Altab Ali Baig in 1978.

Making Space: Women and the Manmade Environment

AUTHOR(S) Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative PUBLISHED 1987
PUBLISHER Pluto Press LANGUAGES English

ANNOTATION

Elizabeth Darling on Making Space: Women and the Manmade Environment

28 May, 2021

I read this while studying for my Master's in Architectural History in 1990-91. It was key for me in seeing how one might challenge the unthinkingness in the discipline (still regrettably present) about who is thought to be worthy of study. I loved all the chapters but especially that by Barbara McFarlane, on the women's housing sub-committee established in Britain during the First World War to investigate women's needs in housing. This opened up a whole new world to me of women's voices in history and spurred me on to listen and look for those who had come to be 'not seen' in our pasts.



From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art

AUTHOR(S) Lucy R. Lippard PUBLISHED 1976
PUBLISHER Dutton LANGUAGES English
TOPICS Feminism

In 2011, muf renovated the park that commemorates the tragic event – Altab Ali Park in Whitechapel London. Having become an important meeting place for Bangladeshi communities, muf made several subtle interventions that highlighted the park's multiple social histories.

The third relationship in this glossator is between Susana Torre, Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative and Lucy Lippard:

(Susana Torre) Space as Matrix (Matrix) Making Space: Women and the Manmade Environment (Lucy Lippard) From the Center

Susana Torre's essay Space as Matrix was the founding text for the exhibition. In the text, Torre challenges normative spatial theory based on binaries such as inside / outside, public / private, building / nature. In her 1981 text Space as Matrix, after which the exhibition is named, Torre lays out her ideas to dissolve such divisions, proposing a "House of Meanings" that is able to combine, in her words, "the formal integrity and completeness of an architectural object with the changing and temporary patterns that arise in the process of dwelling." Torre's written and drawn sketch for The House of Meanings represents a space as matrix, in which transitions between the natural and constructed, the enclosed and the open, one relation and another are given space – both metaphorically as a structural idea and actually in how Torre builds.

Glossary

The following themes have been noted as being present in the citations in your collection.

Capitalocene

1. by [Christian Crevels](#), [Eric Crevels](#)

The term “Capitalocene” represents a critical attempt to advance from the notion of “Anthropocene”. Popularized by climate change debates, the term Anthropocene describes a geological epoch in which human activity is currently the main driving force behind the global environmental transformation. Its use faces criticism, however, as the term fails to address the discrepancy in the relationships between different human cultures and the biosphere, attributing the phenomenon to a vague, undifferentiated notion of humanity. On the other hand, the idea of capitalocene recognizes that the environmental state of affairs is not a general consequence of human activity, but a specific result of a material culture fostered by the capitalist mode of production, globalized through the mould of Western industrial society. Therefore, it highlights the geopolitical origins of the crisis, as well as its economic nature, demonstrating the asymmetrical powers and the class struggles behind and within environmental conflicts.

Critique

no definitions yet

Domesticity

1. by [Helen Thomas](#)

This important word is laden with implications, since it is often associated with the cult of domesticity developed in the U.S. and Britain during the nineteenth century that embodies a still widely-influential value system built around ideas of femininity, a woman’s role in the home, and the relationship between work and family that this sets up. When conventional boundaries of what and who constitutes a family are questioned, so too is this fixed definition of domesticity. Within writings about architecture, this extends to the physical and spatial qualities of the domestic interior, and their socio-political meanings as they change over time and geography.

Feminism

1. by [Women Writing Architecture](#)

Transparent panels distributed throughout the exhibition were a further, spatial manifestation of Torre’s earlier drawing, acting formally as a connecting medium between the other works, and conceptually as a lens through which to read them.

The text, together with the drawing ‘House of Meanings’ as illustration, were first published in 1981 in the issue Making Room: Women and Architecture in the journal Heresies, which, incidentally, connects to the title of Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative’s 1984 publication Making Space: Women and the Man-made Environment and included a text by Matrix member Susan Francis. For Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative, Susana Torre’s writings, amongst them her text Space as Matrix, were, alongside other historians such as Dolores Hayden, an important reference. Both their feminist approaches were structural and aimed at changing the foundations of architectural practice and thinking, rather than inclusion in their currently architectural systems.

The central tenet of this powerful word is a belief in the social, economic, and political equality of women, and it is in this general sense that it has been applied as a thematic term in this annotated bibliography. While this is a clear statement, many complexities are embodied with the ambiguity of its terms, as well as the history of its struggle. As a descriptive term, it has been broken down into various categories which vary with the ideological, geographical and social status of the categoriser. For example, feminism is sometimes assigned chronological waves or stages: from the 1830s into the twentieth century – women’s fight for suffrage, equal contract and property rights; between 1960 and 1990 – a widening of the fight to embrace the workplace, domesticity, sexuality and reproductive rights; between 1990 and 2010 – the development of micropolitical groups concerned with specific issues; and the current wave of feminism that draws power from the me-too movement, and recognises the fluidity of biological womanhood.

Monography

1. by Women Writing Architecture

An architectural monograph usually describes the work of an individual architect or designer, sometimes that of a partnership or collective, which is often interpreted through the life experiences – also recounted – of the subject. Sometimes the subject is a single building or project. Usually written by one author, a monograph presents a single point of view on the subject, often with scholarly credentials through which it assumes authority. The monograph is a familiar tool for defining the importance of the individual creative figure and establishing a place for them within the canon. Until recently, the lives and works of women architects and designers have not often been the subjects of monographs, but important work in redefining the canon of architectural history has led to a series of books addressing this discrepancy.

Shared space

no definitions yet

Ways of feeling

no definitions yet

Writing

no definitions yet

The journal Heresies was collectively edited by artists, writers and architects, amongst them Miriam Shapiro, Lucy Lippard, and Torre herself. Lippard and Torre also collaborated on several occasions outside of Heresies: Torre designed the book cover for Lippard’s From the Centre: Feminist Essays on Women’s Art (1976) and wrote an Afterword in I See / You Mean (1970). The documentary The Heretics (2009) directed by Joan Braderman was screened as part of the event programme accompanying the exhibition Space as Matrix.

Additional note: Thoughts on the text Space as Matrix continued after the exhibition: The Indiana collective – a collective exploring the relationship between gender and space – organised a reading and discussion of Space as Matrix after visiting the exhibition.

The fourth relationship in this glossator, not reflected fully in the reading list, is between muf architecture/art (prolific creators of alliances) and The Alternative School of Economics, who ran a workshop - Feminist Economies in Architecture - together during the exhibition.

The fifth relationship in this glossator is between muf architecture/art and Helen Thomas of Women Writing Architecture in the production of the experimental publication, morethanonefragile.co.uk.

GLOSSATOR

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womenwritingarchitecture.org

A list of the artists and architects exhibited in 'Space as Matrix'

curated by Geraldine Tedder, gta exhibitions, DArch ETH Zurich
(28th September 9th December 2022):

Morgan Quaintance
Ursula Mayer
muf architecture/art
Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative
Susana Torre

and those who contributed to the programme:

Maria Fusco
Women Writing Architecture
The Alternative School of Economics
Sol Pérez Martínez
Jos Boys
Morgan Quaintance
muf architecture/art
The Heretics by Joan Braderma