New Acquisitions

Union of Mongolian Architects Laureate Prizes

Architect Sigrid Rupp, who donated her complete archive to the IAWA, recently returned from a trip to Mongolia where she collected work by D Tsevelmaa and O Sarantsatsral, winners of the 1999 Laureate Prize of the Union of Mongolian Architects. These two women generously donated to the IAWA drawings and images of their award winning projects: the Mongolian National Wrestling Palace (2,3) and the Margad Shopping Center (4,5), respectively. The IAWA is grateful for their donations and greatly appreciates Rupp’s personal effort to facilitate these gifts.

Excerpts from Sigrid Rupp’s travel writing and descriptions of the work follow:

A Brief History of Mongolia

“Somewhere in outer Mongolia...” connotes a place as far away from “here” as possible. Outer Mongolia – now the Republic of Mongolia – tucked between Siberia and China, is hardly a small place. It spans, in the east-west direction, a distance from Seattle to Minneapolis and, north south, it encompasses the land from Calgary to Denver. Mongolia is probably best known for having spawned Genghis Khan, the greatest of the Middle Age conquerors who, with his sons and nephews, established the largest empire the world has ever seen. At its height in the 13th century, the greater Mongol empire encompassed all of China and stretched as far west as Finland, Poland and Hungary. The history of modern day Mongolia is less familiar. After the demise of the Mongol empire in the 14th century, the region fell under Chinese rule. In the first part of the 20th century, with China racked by unrest and revolution, Mongolia asserted its independence and declared itself a theocratic state under the leadership of the Boghda Khan, the last Grand Lama of Mongolia. Aided by a number of foreign “freebooters”, the provisional Mongolian government forced out the last of the Manchu viceroyos. When China became a republic in 1912, it refused to acknowledge Mongolian independence. A fight for self-determination ensued between the two, culminating in the split of Mongolia into two parts: Inner Mongolia and Outer Mongolia with the impassable Gobi desert becoming the real and political border between the two. Inner Mongolia is an autonomous region within China. Outer Mongolia is an independent state that sided with the Bolshevik revolution and declared itself a Socialist republic in 1924. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, the Mongols democratically elected a new government for the first time in their history.

Traditional Mongol Housing

The Mongols, from time immemorial, have been nomads. Their housing is well adapted to being folded up and carted away, only to be rebuilt again in a matter of hours in a new location. These homes, called “gers” (1), are of necessity simple structures since Mongol herders traditionally move as often as four to six times a year following the grazing needs of their animals. Historically, only temples and government centers were built of solid construction and even these often mimicked the “ger” form.

A “ger” is a felt-covered, wood-framed building roughly fourteen feet in diameter. Records from early days show

(1) Traditional Mongolian “ger”. Photo: Sigrid Rupp.


“gers” set on top of enormous carts hauled by as many as 22 bulls. Today, they are still used by the nomadic population as well as by many suburbanites who, despite the lack of amenities, seem to prefer them to contemporary high-rise apartments.

Originally, “gers” were set directly on the ground, which was then covered with animal skins and carpets. Currently, they are often built on pre-poured concrete slabs or wooden decks. The walls are made of collapsible latticework joined with rawhide. Two center posts support a compression ring at the top and struts connect this compression ring to the perimeter wall. A cast iron wood stove, used for heating and cooking, sits in the center, and the stovepipe vents through the opening of the compression ring.

The inside of a “ger” is a collage of color. Carpets or colorful cotton wall hangings drape over the framework, and brilliantly colored chests and beds line the interior walls. The primary color for Mongolian furniture is a deep red-orange, which is overlaid with elaborate, interlocking designs painted in turquoise, green, blue, yellow and every shade in between. The posts, the compression ring and the struts are carved with elaborate detail and/or painted. The colors and the intricacy of the patterns stand in direct contrast to the unending sameness of the steppe directly outside the door.

**Mongolian Urbanization**

In the early 20th century, Mongolia’s population of 640,000 was spread fairly evenly across the rural countryside. There were a few urban centers, which existed primarily around the major Buddhist religious centers. The population did not expand until 1950, but since then it has more than tripled. A nomadic nation suddenly urbanized and the cities, particularly the capital Ulan Bataar, required housing, schools, governmental offices, retail stores and recreational facilities.

After World War II, in which the Mongolians fought on the side of the Allies, full-scale urbanization began. Professional education for both boys and girls was encouraged in order to prepare society for the modern world. Women were given equal opportunities as men to compete in all fields. Today, of the 400 practicing architects in Mongolia, 70 are women.

Between 1960 and 1990, long sinuous housing blocks, towers and high-rise rows of apartments were built in the manner of the “Ville Radieuse” so beloved by Le Corbusier. Shopping centers tied down street intersections; landscaped inner courts struggled to grow against the fierce Mongolian winds; and wide park-like boulevards crisscrossed the cities. Roadways were built with broad sidewalks and edged with trees, which, ultimately, succumbed to the harsh climate. Once the Russians withdrew their support, the parks, greenbelts and gardens returned to the bleakness of the untended steppe. Many of these areas are now covered with sheds used, privately, for selling cigarettes, sodas and snacks. Ancient shipping containers, often containing antiquated cars, are scattered in the windblown courtyards. Suburbs of “gers”, each in their own fenced-in enclosure—precariously tied to the power grid, but without running water or sewage disposal—line the outskirts of the city.

With the privatization of professional services in 1990, many Mongolian architects entered into private practice. Today women are involved in all levels of architecture. Their firms may have as few as two or three architects designing modest shopping centers, individual retail stores, and small hotels and restaurants or they may be mid-sized, designing cultural centers, offices, and governmental buildings. Women who work in larger offices are often working on urban and regional planning problems. As in the west, individual buildings are usually designed by an individual name architect rather than by an anonymous collective. Today, however, little construction goes on in Mongolia as the country is fighting its way out of a deep recession.

**1999 Laureate Prize Winners**

The winners of the 1999 Laureate Prize of the Union of Mongolian Architects, both women, are: D Tsevelmaa and O Sarantsatsral. Tsevelmaa received the award for her Mongolian National Wrestling Palace (2,3) and Sarantsatsral was honored for her Margad Shopping Center (4,5).
Acquisitions from Bulgaria

Since the change of the political and economic climate in Bulgaria in 1990, many architects established their private practices. (Private practice was banned in 1949 and women architects of the post-war generation worked in large state-controlled organizations.) In the 1990’s, many found creative outlet in their new access to the private sector with possibilities for asserting themselves as individuals. The IAWA is fortunate to add examples of the work by three Bulgarians to its collection.

Radka Pavlova (b. 1933) graduated in architecture (1956) from Sofia Polytechnic and was appointed regional architect in the provincial town Blagoevgrad. Years later, (1985-86) she participated in the new master plan for the center of this town and designed (1986) its unique commercial center (7), which she is now retrofitting for private sector use. This project received a silver medal at the 1991 World Biennale of Architecture. In 1958, Pavlova moved to Sofia to work in the state design organization “Glavproekt.” She prepared the master plan for the mountain town Melnik and designed the local school (1965-68). Her most demanding project of this period was the master plan for the ancient Bulgarian capital Preslav (6th to 11th centuries) and the surrounding historic sites: Patleina, Beli Briag, Tuzlaluka and others (1970). She designed a restaurant and wine cellar in the forest near Patleina (1971). While the contemporary restaurant opens out to beautiful views of the mountain covered by old trees, the design of the wine cellar captures the area’s traditional, local spirit. During the mid-1970s, Pavlova worked in Tunisia designing housing (including housing for the elderly) and a youth center, among others. Upon returning to Bulgaria, she joined “Sofproekt”, the design organization of Sofia (1981-88). There she developed a master plan and urban design of the center of Gotse Delchev, a mountain town in southwest Bulgaria (8), where she had already designed and built a large hotel with restaurant and bar (1968-76)(9, 10). Pavlova’s projects for the reconstruction of the Town
Hall (1984) and for the Communist Party headquarters (1985-86) were never executed, but her reconstruction of, and additions to, the Post Office were completed in 1987. In 1985, Pavlova was recognized for her sensitive renovation of this town’s center at a national review called “Historical Themes in Art”. During the last decade, she has enjoyed her private practice of designing commercial facilities.

Jana (Zhana) Pencheva-Vulchanova (b. 1947), a graduate (1970) of Sofia Polytechnic, began her professional career as a designer for the Sofia administration for road construction. Her work included roadside motels, and housing and schools for construction workers. Since 1978, she has been involved in the planning and design of the neighborhood surrounding the National Palace of Culture in Sofia. Most of her projects are underground pedestrian passageways with commercial facilities (11). An example is the underground shopping center at the beginning of a new tramway line (12). Located close to Sofia’s center under a large park, the commercial space (120,000 sq.ft.) includes coffee shops, nightclubs, video clubs and a variety of shops. Construction began in 1985 while the design team was working out the details, but the project remains incomplete due to lack of funds.

Economic problems and political changes during the 1990’s have delayed the completion of many projects, among them Vulchanova’s underground commercial center south of the Palace of Culture. She began to design this 75,000 sq. ft. center in 1980. Construction proceeded slowly due to the heavy traffic at the crossing of the major boulevards. Most of the stores began operations only during the late 1990’s, as this state property was converted to private ownership. The redesign of these spaces kept Vulchanova busy with interior design. In recent years, her private practice expanded to include the renovation and reconstruction of movie houses and video clubs, as well as other commercial facilities.

Nadya Stamatova (b. 1957), an imaginative architect with broad interests, established her private practice (1990) in her native town Varna. As a student at Varna High School for Mathematics, she demonstrated an interest in archeology and participated in archeological expeditions. While at Sofia Polytechnic (1976-1981) she worked on two film productions as a scenographer and studied theater (1978) in Prague, Czechoslovakia as well. After graduation, she was employed as an architect in Varna (1982-84) and in Radnevo (1985-89), but continued her education, taking courses in urban design and energy efficiency. Stamatova participated in numerous national and interna-
tional competitions using film and computer generated 3-D images to communicate complex spatial configurations. Her project (1990) for an international design center is inserted into an old stone quarry near Pusino, Italy (13,14). “Geotectonics and architectonics are the key words symbolizing this project,” Stamatova stated, as she presented her work at the International Union of Women Architects (UIWA) Congress (1990) in Tokyo, Japan. She participated in two competitions in Japan: the Kansai-Kan Branch of the National Diet Library (1996) and for an Atrium Space (1985). During the 1990’s, Stamatova designed several apartment buildings, individual houses, and hotels in and around Varna. Her hotel “Ivanov-Lukanov” (1991) integrates hotel rooms (on the ground floor and in the attic), two apartments (on the middle floor) and a tavern (in the basement) (15). All rooms face south with a view of the Black Sea.

Stamatova is also an educator, who, through television programs and newspaper articles, discusses the use of color in interiors and furniture, the proper use of artificial light, public urban spaces, and the specific design needs of children and adults. Her understanding of color harmony is evident in her interiors, as well as in the renovation of old buildings such as the bilingual schools in Varna (in partnership with architect Katya Angelova).

Dina Stancheva and Lilia Gramatikova deposited additional materials into their archives consisting of photographs, newspaper articles and correspondence related to their work. The IAWA is grateful to these women and looks forward to their continued donations in the future.

Marcia Feuerstein and Milka Bliznakov

Exhibition
Women in Architecture 2000+

An important new exhibition recently became a part of the IAWA. We are most appreciative to receive the exhibition and book from the “Women in Architecture 2000 Plus - Focus South Asia Conference." The work represents an effort to identify women in architecture who have made significant achievements in their respective countries, and yet are largely unknown. As chairperson of this effort, IAWA Advisor Brinda Somaya wrote of the situation in South Asia in the forward of the book:

After working in the 70’s and 80’s, when one felt that there had been no earthshaking changes in the gender composition of our profession, it seemed the 90’s was the decade when women came into their own in the field of architecture in our country. If this change had made an impact in India, it would logically have done so in our neighboring countries to some extents. I found that after two decades of practically no interaction with other women architects in India, and even less contact with women architects in South Asia generally, suddenly great changes were taking place.

The exhibition and book bring impressive focus to the breadth of South Asian architecture—contemporary, regional and contextual—and to the urban efforts and conservation work of these creative architectural practices. Each exhibition panel focuses on the body of work produced by one architect; collectively, the panels show the density of architectural achievement in the focus countries. The context of the developing country, as Somaya indicated, often seems to bring about some of the most creative solutions. The complexity and variety of architectural practices comes forward throughout the exhibition. Reflecting on the project as a whole, “Women in Architecture 2000 Plus - Focus South Asia” opens universally vital questions about the role of the architect in society.

Donna Dunay

News of Our Advisors

Gottlieb Photography Exhibition: Architect Lois D. Gottlieb’s photographic exhibition titled “A Way of Life: An Apprenticeship with Frank Lloyd Wright, 1948-49” was on display in Cowgill Hall, College of Architecture and Urban Studies, Virginia Tech, between April 2-6, 2001 as part of a special program celebrating the 50th anniversary of the visit of Frank Lloyd Wright to Virginia Tech. The exhibition, consisting of more than 50 color photographs, tells the story of the unprecedented architectural education Wright offered his students and the environments he created to foster his philosophy of life and architecture. Gottlieb’s images, commentary, and first-hand observations offer a priceless glimpse into the world inhabited by one of the giants of American design. A companion book by Gottlieb bearing the same title, recently released by the Images Publishing Group, also features a chapter profiling her own professional career written by IAWA treasurer, Dr. Humberto Rodríguez-Camilloni. The exhibition will next travel to Stanford University in California; it will eventually return to Blacksburg to be housed in the IAWA together with the permanent collection of Gottlieb’s papers.

Humberto Rodríguez-Camilloni

Order of Canada for Lemco van Ginkel: Blanche Lemco van Ginkel, founding member of the Board of Advisors of the IAWA, received the Order of Canada for being "a model for women in architecture." One of the first women in her profession in Québec, she was also the first woman to be elected an Officer of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and later became its first female Fellow.

Lemco van Ginkel (b. 1923) was born in London, grew up in Montréal, studied architecture at McGill University, city planning at Harvard University, and established her private practice in Canada (1957). After teaching at McGill, the University of Montreal, Harvard, and the University of Pennsylvania in the United States, she was appointed Dean of the Faculty (1977-82) of the school of Architecture at the University of Toronto in Ontario, Canada. Lemco van Ginkel was the first woman to serve on the Board of Directors as Vice-President and President of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (1981-87) and on the Board of Directors of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (since 1992). She has received the Massey medal for architecture (1962), the Queen’s Silver Jubilee medal (1977), the Distinguished Professor...
The Growing IAWA Collection

Since the last Advisory Board meeting, Special Collections staff have inventoried 13 collections, including six significant additions to existing archive holdings. The library also purchased a number of titles worth nearly $2000 that will support scholars coming to Virginia Tech to research women in architecture. Several more titles were donated.

Gail McMillan

New Inventories

Maria Auböck (Ms96-007) Architectural papers, including articles, publications, sketches, and drawings for gardens she designed, 1985-1995.

Noel Phyllis Birkby (Ms94-026) Biographical material, 1994.

Monica Bodmer (Ms2001-007) Videotape, 2000.


UIFA: Union Internationale des Femmes Architectes (Ms2001-007) Posters, newspaper articles, and brochures.

Maria von der Weppen (Ms2001-017) Architectural drawings from diploma project, 1978.


Ute Weström (Ms96-023) Architectural papers, drawings, photographs, and publications, 1972-1996.

Beverly Willis (Ms92-019) Additional business records spanning her career, including computer tapes, architectural drawings, publications, slides, 1954-1995.

Women’s School of Planning and Architecture (Ms2001-036), 1974-1992.

Second Milka Bliznakov Prize

This biannual prize of $1000 is conferred in recognition of research that advances knowledge of women’s contributions to architecture and related design fields. It was created to encourage the use and growth of the IAWA.

Stage One: Review of Proposals

A 250-500 word proposal is due (deadline extended) 19 October 2001. Proposals for original projects should include study, research, or scholarly work, relative to the IAWA collections.

The Board of Advisors of the IAWA may select up to five (5) Stage One proposals. Authors of selected proposals will be invited to continue their projects to compete in Stage Two for the Bliznakov Prize.

Send Stage One proposals to: IAWA Executive Committee c/o Marcia F. Feuerstein, Chair 202 Cowgill Hall (0205) Virginia Tech Blacksburg, Virginia 24061 mfeuerst@vt.edu

Stage Two: Jury of Final Projects

Final projects must be postmarked no later than 01 April 2002. The recipient of the Milka Bliznakov Prize will be notified mid-May 2002. Final projects may include exhibition boards, video/digital or photographic presentations of illustrated essays, and papers.

Note: Thirteen additional publications, which have not been included in this list, are on order.
Message from the Chair

The Board of Advisors has elected five Advisors for the 2000/2003 term: Brinda Somaya maintains a distinguished, award-winning practice as a partner in Somaya & Kalappa Architects in Mumbai (Bombay), India. As Chair of “Women in Architecture - 2000 Plus”, she led a conference and exhibition of South Asian Women Architects. She is a Fellow of the Indian Institute of Architects and the India Society of Engineers; founding trustee of the Hecan Foundation; trustee of the Spastic Society of India; and member of Mumbai’s committee for streets and public spaces and the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, among others. Professor Wenche Findal, Ph.D. is an architectural historian on the faculty at the University of Trondheim in Norway and has taught at University of Oslo. Her work focuses on women architects (international, Nordic, Norwegian). She has extensive knowledge of the women’s architectural community in Scandinavia and has published numerous books and articles on gender and architecture as well as in the area of 20th-century architecture. Professor Brian Katen, ASLA, newly elected Secretary of the IAWA, teaches Landscape Architecture at Virginia Tech and is President of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) Virginia Chapter. Professor Katen’s practice includes historic and cultural landscape preservation, urban projects throughout Virginia, Maryland, and the D.C. area, parks, master plans, and design guidelines. His current research is on Gillette Gardens and Dumbarton Oaks. Inge Horton, a very active and dedicated advisor, was re-elected to the Board, as was Nobuko Nakahara, our representative from Japan.

Three past (or soon to be past) advisors were granted Emeritus status for their dedication to the IAWA: Blanche Lecomte van Ginkel, Charles Steger and Annette Burr were cited for their support and devotion to the IAWA since its inception through to the present. Milka Bliznakov initiated a successful matching funds drive during the 2000 Annual Meeting, reaching our goal of $25,000 to fund the biannual Milka Bliznakov Prize.

Marcia Feuerstein, newly elected Chair of the IAWA, led a workshop on women in architecture at the Barnard Feminist Art and Art Historian’s Conference, 2000, and represented the IAWA at the Environmental Design Research Association 2000 Annual Meeting.

Putting Knowledge to Work

The IAWA is a notable and unique Collection whose contents are a significant resource for scholars, students, and designers throughout the world. Its growth is measured in size as well as in stature. As the holdings of the archive have grown, so has recognition of its value. Researchers have interviewed IAWA advisors and archivists on the Collection and its history; it has been cited in numerous publications and books on architecture and gender studies of design; and it was identified as one of the most accessed websites in the field of architecture.

The Collection, with all its preservation needs, is at odds with the spatial and preservation conventions of traditional manuscript collections. As other architectural archives demonstrate, the spatial demands of the work must be recognized if this form of collection is to flourish. Most of the Collection consists of original documents created before the invention of digital technologies. These irreplaceable documents – models, sketches, drawings, clippings, correspondence, etc – have lasting historical, artistic, and cultural significance and are essential for anyone engaging in critical research on the art and practice of design.

We are grateful to past, present, and Ex-Officio Advisors whose positions provide them with the resources to promote the IAWA. Charles Steger, President of Virginia Tech, has lent unswerving support since his tenure as Dean of the College of Architecture and Urban Studies at the inception of the IAWA. Professor Paul Knox, Dean of the College of Architecture and Urban Studies, Professor Eileen Hitchingham, Dean of University Libraries, as well as Professor Frank Weiner, Chairman of the Department of Architecture, remain friends who are effective and cogent advocates for the IAWA. We are grateful to the University, which accepts this material and, with it, the responsibility for its stewardship. As Tony Wrenn noted, the University’s promise to maintain their stewardship is the most powerful argument in defense of the collection and in attracting additional gifts. The current holdings of the IAWA are paramount to its future holdings and the guardianship of the University is fundamental to its strength and growth. We continue to expand the collection. We are also planning for additional facilities and personnel to create a fully supported teaching and research center on the architecture of women. We continue to search for grants and donors to assist in reaching our goals. Thank you for your continued support.

Marcia F. Feuerstein
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