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Editorial

Feminism is an *episteme*: a theoretical model that explains reality or a line of thought that allows for other possibilities of interpretation of the world in which we live in. It emerges from the indisputable base that we live within a heteronormative patriarchy ingrained in culture and that all human beings constantly perpetuate through our everyday behavior. In this issue of *Bitácora*, we have tried to show different ways of understanding architecture and the city from the gender perspective that includes other approaches besides that of feminism.

To address gender perspective in relationship to our disciplines is not only with in the struggle for the rights of under-represented groups; but this is its best known facet. There is still a long road ahead to ensure that women and other sexual identities (in other words, the sum of gender identity, sexual orientation, and political identity) have the same legal rights while, at the same time their differences are acknowledged. We have come a very long way, yet whoever says men, women and homosexuals are equally recognized has not stopped to think about it. The subject will always have some political aspects therefore it is always relevant to speak of the various societies and organizations that have been created and of the steps that have been taken to recognize these problems.

There are different ways of understanding gender in relationship to architecture and design but the most common one is that which tries to repair the damage and give the necessary acknowledgement to the historical contributions of women. Independently of our sexual identity, it is shocking that many important women of our disciplines go unmentioned; simply omitted or overshadowed by the figure of an important architect or designer. In a collaboration between a man and a woman, the credit for the work has almost always been given to the man as Denise Scott Brown denounced. The intent on fixing these errors has resulted in a reading intended to give justice to these women yet sometimes has ended victimizing these individuals instead of seeing them as who they really were: significant characters who played a role in the development of modern architectural culture. As part of a social group, in many cases it was the women who welcomed the changes brought on by modernity in a more permanent and transforming way. Specific individuals, like Lilly Reich or Eileen Gray are frequently cited as examples of the women behind the great men or who are omitted from historical accounts. In fact, they were important by themselves and their work was recognized at the time, outside of their relationship with other architects. Neither the official history nor attempts to prove their importance have done justice to their historical situation.

The historical interpretation from a gender perspective has led to the inclusion of issues such as sexuality, control, and

the relationship between body and space as part of the designers' intentions. These current interpretations have given us better opportunities to get closer to our object of study, to reveal new angles ignored before in other interpretations that only consider technical, programmatic or scientific approaches have done and for this reason do not accomplish to provide the necessary explanations or open possibilities to deepen and expanding the analysis. Many histories await for a more inclusive study and, as a result, we have to safeguard the archival material for future research.

To take into account gender during the design process presents its difficulties: how to design an architecture that addresses gender perspective or what are the differences in the use of space as based on designated roles. Explorations in this regard are in danger –in a new way– of perpetuating cultural norms that the built environment makes us continuously repeat through our behavior (such as going to the bathroom in a public space that forces you to decide whether to use the one designated for men or women, again and again). Associations about what should be feminine and what should be masculine, or for example, which of the two genders is responsible for caring for the family, are particular to an understanding of a particular moment which may not be valid in the future and that would have to be constantly put into crisis. In addition, there is a risk of not addressing other sexual identities.

It should be clear that this is not about perpetuating the binary male/female social construction; the plurality of sexual identities, which fortunately everyday has greater public involvement, must be considered. In this sense, a world of possibilities opens up thanks to queer theory and the concept of performativity.

Queer theory understands gender or sexual identities as fictitious and limiting social constructions; that homosexuality or heterosexuality are our performative acts and not what we are. Therefore, a flexible architecture that dismantles naturalized relations between what is considered feminine/masculine and that allows for different uses and acts when interacting with the built environment can allow a reality to emerge in which –in the same way that our personality is defined by how we act; and there are many possible personalities– our gender identity be that which we perform in the everyday use of our built environments and that, as a result, can constantly change. Architecture and design continuously and decisively play a role in the naturalization of all these definitions, making it an issue of utmost importance to current theory.

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FE DE ERRATAS: *Portada. Faltó crédito de la imagen:* Propuesta de Enrique Yáñez para el concurso del Muestrario de la Construcción Moderna: Casa obrera mínima, 1932. **Página 026.** "Juan Legarreta: vivienda obrera mexicana posrevolucionaria" *Dice:* "A principios de los veinte". *Debe decir:* "A principio de los años veinte". **Página 074.** "Los grandes desarrollos habitacionales en la Ciudad de México: ¿proyectos habitacionales o proyectos políticos y económicos?" *Dice:* "ciudad de México". *Debe decir:* "Ciudad de México". **Página 0108.** "¿Qué le damos güera? Los mercados están vivos y habitamos en ellos" *Dice:* "De ahí que no preguntemos". *Debe decir:* "De ahí que nos preguntemos".