1. Introduction

In November 1982, twenty seven male architects gathered to criticize their practices at the University of Virginia. Great personalities such as Arata Isozaki, Rem Koolhaas, Frank Gehry and Tadao Ando among others, were part of this closed-door conference. Without press, the participants spoke freely, provoking controversial debates that were transcribed into The Charlottesville Tapes.\textsuperscript{1} This publication, that was produced three years after holding the event, has become a historical landmark in the architectural discourse, representing a snapshot of the main subjects at that time.

The Gallery IHA Autumn Lectures 2018 celebrated the diversity of the practice under the title “exploring the architect's social ecosystem”\textsuperscript{2}. Promoted by Itsako Hasegawa and curated by Yuri Naruse, all an all-female panel. Reiko Tomita, Yuko Nagayama, Astrid Klein and Mikiko Endo (all of whom mothers), presented their projects to an audience of mainly young practitioners. Much like the Charlottesville conferences, this environment triggered bold commentaries about the practice. The lively discussions tackled a variety of topics: from bottom-up workshops, to the division of roles inside the office, to the intersection of motherhood and architecture.

This paper aims to reveal how gender influences the architectural profession by taking the Autumn 2018 lectures at Gallery IHA as a case study. By comparing the discourse of six women architects working in Japan is possible to show how they have overcome gender constructs. This report presents different profiles that contribute in the reshaping of the architect’s image, moving from normative assumptions towards a gender-free practice.

1.1. Gender and Architecture in Japan

Gender roles, that is, behaviors that are assumed to a particular sex, are not universal or immutable values. Gender is a social construct that depends on each culture and historical time.\textsuperscript{3} In the 1990s Japanese scientific social research coined the term “gender” in order to understand asymmetric power relations between men and women and overcome its dichotomy.\textsuperscript{4} The Japanese-English neologism *jendā furī* (gender-free) refers to the liberation from gender norms, opening up a wide array of alternative lifestyles regardless of gender distinctions.\textsuperscript{4} The relation between gender and architecture has been already tackled by several scholars in the American and European academia.\textsuperscript{5} However, in Japan, this study has been limited, with few publications commenting on this intersection.

In the 1970s the western literature saw the first wave of architectural feminism that presented the scarce representation of women throughout history, calling for the creation of “herstory”. These scholars criticized the man-made environment and emphasized how the difference of the feminine (social, symbolic and biological) affected the architectural practice. In the same fashion of dual oppositions, Takashi Hasegawa published in 1973 *Architecture from a female perspective*\textsuperscript{6} categorizing two types of architecture: masculine type, related with the outer dynamic form; and feminine type, referring to an interior space that fits the woman’s body. This theoretical framework is inherited from previous publications where Hasegawa criticized Tange as heroic architecture; and praised Togo Murano as space of the interior, better for the human body.

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In the 1980s the intersection with other disciplines such as sociology, geography, and anthropology, extended the possibilities of what could be studied in relation to architecture. The 1990s architectural scholars influenced by Derrida and Lacan theories, built on deconstructivism to make an anthropocentric critic of architecture and end its binary oppositions. This decade is the most prolific in the production of gender theory and space, looking at how power relations are also embedded in the built form. The object of the study shifts towards vernacular architecture, domestic space, and daily life typologies. In *Sexuality and Space*, Beatriz Colomina declares the impossibility to separate the architect as a subject from the architecture as object, as they are intrinsically connected by the discourse. This fundamental change that includes gender and sexuality as constitutive elements of the architectural practice, gained attention from the Japanese academia. Even though this background led to the greatest number of publications in Japanese journals, they were few compared to western literature. This report contributes to filling this gap of a gender perspective in the Japanese context.

1.2. Hypothesis

In addition, more recent studies are also based on sociology to define the barrier women face in the architectural field. According to Sánchez de Madariaga, in professional relationships with colleagues, supervisors or clients, this barrier manifests itself in three main ways: through “patronizing attitudes”, “stereotype threats” and “double binds”. These relationships that surround the profession constitute the architect's social ecosystem. The hypothesis that this report raises is that it is possible to reveal the tactics by which gender constructs are overcome in the process of the discourse of female architects. Three main ways to deal with the gender construct are expected: A) Negotiating the gender construct, when the gender barrier is recognized and exploited. B) Opposing the gender construct, when the barrier is acknowledged and confronted. C) Evading the gender construct, when the barrier is not addressed, but omitted.

1.3 Gallery IHA

Opened in 2016, Gallery IHA is a cultural space that contributes to the production of architectural discourse by holding a series of lectures and exhibitions. The venue where it is located, BHouse, is the former office of Itsuko Hasegawa, one of the most relevant figures of Japanese contemporary architecture. Hasegawa’s intention is to create a platform where young architects and students could think about architecture in its relation with society at large, beyond the limits of institutionalized education. This showcase of critical practices helps in the creation of new epistemologies in the architectural field. The lecture series "Exploring the architect's social ecosystem", is the object of this report. With an all-female panel and organization, it presented alternative realities to the mainstream of the profession.

2. Method and materials

In order to analyze the intersection between gender and the architectural practice in Japan, the Autumn 2018 lecture series at Gallery IHA is selected as a case study. This event is relevant for three reasons: 1) The six architects, subjects of the study, are all women. This is significant, since gender biases affect women more than men in the practice of architecture. 2) The architects are from different generations, have diverse backgrounds and work in Japan. As previously mentioned, gender as analytical category depends on the geographical and temporal context. Besides this, five out of six architects had children. This is relevant, since motherhood strongly affects the conciliation between work and care activities. 3) All of them have their own architecture offices. Being principals of their design practice gives them high responsibility, being in the front line of the decision-making process. This is relevant in terms of how gender roles are performed, since other forms of practice, such as working as staff for a large company, have more room to avoid confrontation. (Fig. 1)

![Figure. 1 Relationship between the architects and their mentors](image)

After transcribing, translating and analyzing the content of the event, different topics of interest were extracted from the discourse of the architects. These themes were not covered homogeneously in all cases. Then, individual interviews were conducted, developing each of the categories by adding information to the one already acquired. In the interviews, gender was addressed directly to each topic. In addition, this format was used to question the organizer and the curator about their views on architecture, since they did not give a lecture but did participate in the subsequent discussion.

In this manner, the architects' discourse is registered in three different formats: lectures, discussions, and interviews. (Table 1) Different types of qualitative material allow observing in which format the architects speak more freely about gender issues. This enables the identification of different degrees of control according to the agency of the authors when encouraging the discussion of gender-related topics. In the lectures, the architects independently selected the theme, without external interference. In the discussion section, the authors intervened with a question framed in gender terms, encouraging the collective debate among the attendees. The interviews were a closed and semi-structured conversation that posed the questions addressing gender.

| Name                | Japanese Name | Abbr | Lectures | Discussions | Interviews |
|---------------------|---------------|------|----------|-------------|------------|
| Itsuko Hasegawa     | 長沢恵子       | IH   | 1st      | 2nd         | 3rd        |
| Yui Naruse          | 成瀬由里       | WN   | 0        | 0           | 0          |
| Yuko Nagayama       | 永山雅子       | NA   | 0 - 0    | 0 - 0       | 0 - 0      |
| Mikiko Endo         | 遠藤洋子       | ME   | 0 - 22    | 0 - 0       | 0 - 30     |
| Astrid Klein        | アストリット クライン | AK | 0 - 29 | 0 - 0 | 0 - 15 |
| Reiko Tominaga      | 富田玲子       | RT   | 0 - 13    | 0 - 0       | 0 - 30     |

*The name abbreviations (Abbr.) indicated in this table, are going to be used in chapter 5, when comparing the discourse and position of each architect.*
3. The event: Exploring the architect's social ecosystem.

The event was held between September and October 2018, consisting of four separate days dedicated to each architect. The whole session each day lasted approximately two hours. All the lectures were followed by a discussion open to the public. Despite having an all-female panel and organization, this event has not been framed in a context of feminist criticism by the curators, nor have the words "women" or "female" been included in the official description. Instead, Naruse decided to invite the audience using only "architect" in the title, without gender distinctions.

3.1 The lectures

According to Itsuko Hasegawa, when starting her career it was extremely difficult to simultaneously work in architecture while getting married and raising children. This meant adapting to a hyperproductive and masculinized system of labor and values, that drove female practitioners to “become men” in order to compete at the same level. Hasegawa’s intention is to reveal new ways of practicing the profession while engaging in other life activities with joy. Thus, the questions that arose from her are: What does imply to be a woman architect in contemporary Japan? How has the profession changed for women in the last fifty years? Consequently, a set of conditions emerges from this goal. There were three recommendations on the part of Hasegawa, the producer, and to the curator, Yuri Naruse: 1) All the architects would be women with children. 2) Few projects would be explained to reveal in depth the way of practicing the profession that underlies the architectural object. 3) Reiko Tomita would be among the speakers as she is a female pioneer with a groundbreaking career while being a mother. Following Hasegawa’s suggestion, Naruse aims to show the diversity of the profession by selecting three other women. (Tab. 2) Yuko Nagayama’s experimentation with materiality and her notable trajectory was the reason for her selection. While Astrid Klein was chosen for her “fresh” vision towards the practice, bringing a new perspective as a foreigner working in Japan. Finally, Mikiko Endo’s different approach comes from her bottom-up methodologies that empower communities while working with NGOs. These well-known architects are also part of Naruse’s network, not only in architecture but also as neighbors and mothers, as in the case of Nagayama.

3.2 The discussions

In the discussion session, questions were initiated by the organizers with a lively exchange between the main female architects attending the event. After their intervention, the discussion was opened to the public with active participation. The authors included a question related to gender, inviting to answer: How is to be a female architect in the Japanese context? This

| Session | Time | Title | Projects Discussed | Topics | Time | Participants | Participants | Discussion |
|---------|------|-------|--------------------|--------|------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Yuko Nagayama | 8.15min | The Trigger for Architecture | Teshima Yukio House | Renovation project | 44min | Itsuko Hasegawa | Yuri Naruse | Artist as client |
| | | | Goddess Forest Central Garden | Art glass | | Reiko Tomita | Report Authors | Material research |
| | | | Shizu High-rise Building | Relation with forest | | Student Tokyo University | Material experimentation and reuse |
| Mikiko Endo | 7.4min | Empowering the Community | Playground “Pinkeetboom” | Background in Netherlands | 54min | Itsuko Hasegawa | Tomoko Taguchi (former Hasegawa Staff) | Participation in design |
| | | | Art Loop, Helsinki | Democratization of the art | | Report Authors | Architecture Student | Empowerment through architecture |
| | | | Ini Ini Safari Studio set | Workshops with children | | Workshop and local community | Workshop planner |
| | | | Maternity House, Zambia | Working in Zambia | | On site experimental process | |
| | | | Architect as process designer | | | | |
| | | | Empowerment by participation | | | | |
| | | | Empowerment by knowledge | | | | |
| | | | Independence from architect | | | | |
| | | | Spreading the knowledge | | | | |
| Astrid Klein | 7.2min | Living Retail | Open House, Bangkok | Commission from client | 74min | Itsuko Hasegawa | Yuri Naruse | Design process |
| | | | | Relation with collaborators | | Reiko Tomita | Report Authors | Women specific design skills |
| | | | | Materials, patterns | | Student Tokyo University | Architecture as art |
| | | | | Human scale | | Design office Worker | Workshops with students |
| | | | | Democratization of the space | | Young Architect | Women in architecture |
| | | | | Craftsmanship | | # Foreign architect in Japan | Foreign architect in Japan |
| | | | | Student workshop | | Scale and circulation | |
| | | | | Space curator | | | |
| Reiko Tomita | 7.3min | Architecture that loves people | Yoga Promenade, Setagaya | Diversity of scale | 55min | Itsuko Hasegawa | Yuri Naruse | Design density |
| | | | Kasadera Elementary School | Textures and Behaviours | | Mio Tsuyuiyama | Miyuki Osamura | Rethinking school typology |
| | | | Mino Nursery school, Gifu | Environmental conditions | | Kenchiku Bunka Editor | Universal design |
| | | | Main hall in Tokachi | Inside and Outside | | | Nature in architecture |
| | | | Kannabe Yu no Mori Onsen, Higashi | Learning from Landscape | | | Education and mentorship |
| | | | Com.Center in Nankin, Okayama | Colour | | | Working in a group |
| | | | Dorroro, Senrikanto, Karakura | Local History | | | Insecurity and body scale |
| | | | Minami Yano School, Hiroshima | | | | Childhood memories |
| | | | Shinbokun, Miyazumi, Shizuya | | | | |
| | | | Nago City Office, Okinawa | | | | |

* topics triggered by the Authors
triggered a variety of topics that intersected gender and architecture, such as: practice and motherhood, female aesthetics in architecture and independence as woman architect. Still, other topics such as "role-playing with clients" and "women-specific design skills" were discussed without any interference from the authors. (Table 2). Some gender issues had already appeared in the conferences due to its format. Having explained a project in more detail, prompted more questions related to the design process and the ecosystem of daily life. But it was during the discussion session when there were more references to personal stories and human networks. This format was the closest in its kind to the Charlottesville tapes previously mentioned. The talk in a small committee with no more than thirty people allowed a climate of free speech. (Fig. 2)

4. The interviews

After detecting gender-related topics in a heterogenous but constant way in all the sessions held, it was decided to complete the information with interviews to obtain a comparative framework. The interviews were live and semi-structured, conducted during January 2019. The six interviewees were the architects that participated in the event: lecturers, producer, and curator. The time varied from fifty minutes to nearly three hours. All the information already obtained in the previous chapters, the questions were adapted to each architect. In Tab. 3, the answers are gathered in groups: 1) Background, 2) Education, 3) Mentorship, 4) Practice, 5) Motherhood, 6) Legacy, 7) Women in architecture, 8) Clients, 9) Design process, 10) Architecture aesthetics.

5. Comparison of the materials

The comparison process is as follows: First, the descriptive material from different formats previously reported is cross-checked and analysed. Second, commonalities and oppositions between the architects were identified. Third, the architects are positioned confronting each other in dialogue, in order to understand the diversity in their discourse. This comparison, will be carried out by observing when gender affects: 1) the creation of thought at the moment of designing, 2) the human relationships that surround the profession, 3) the considerations about the built environment.

Table 3. Interviews summary

| Interview | Q1 Background | Q2 Education | Q3 Mentorship | Q4 Practice | Q5 Motherhood | Q6 Legacy | Q7 Women in Architecture | Q8 Relation with Clients | Q9 Design Process | Q10 Position in Aesthetics |
|-----------|---------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Yuko Nagayama (19 minutes) | 54 min | Female | Architect | in her family | Education, influences,? | Practice | Architecture, interaction with clients | Legacy | Architecture + Gender | Architecture, Women in Architecture, Clients, Design process, Aesthetics |
| Mieko Endo (1 hour 50 minutes) | 50 min | Female | Architect | in her family | Architecture, interaction with clients | Practice | Architecture, Women in Architecture, Clients, Design process, Aesthetics |
| Astrid Klein (1 hour 50 minutes) | 50 min | Female | Architect | in her family | Education, interaction with clients | Practice | Architecture, Women in Architecture, Clients, Design process, Aesthetics |
| Reiko Tomita (1 hour 50 minutes) | 50 min | Female | Architect | in her family | Education, interaction with clients | Practice | Architecture, Women in Architecture, Clients, Design process, Aesthetics |
| Yuri Naruse (2 hours 40 minutes) | 2 hours 40 minutes | Female | Architect | in her family | Education, interaction with clients | Practice | Architecture, Women in Architecture, Clients, Design process, Aesthetics |
| Riku Hasegawa (2 hours 40 minutes) | 2 hours 40 minutes | Female | Architect | in her family | Education, interaction with clients | Practice | Architecture, Women in Architecture, Clients, Design process, Aesthetics |
5.1 Creation of thought at the moment of designing

This first thematic block tackles those aspects that contribute to the creation of architectural thought. The elements that have helped to shape a specific vision of the architectural profession. Including the method that they follow, factors they investigate, and format by which the information is communicated.

The social background of the architects is heterogeneous. Not only due to the differences between the generations in which they grew, but also their origin within Japan and the world (AK). Almost every one of them references role models within their family, those being relatives in architecture (ME, YNg) or powerful women (RT). While others had experienced opposition within their family to pursue architectural studies (IH).

The educational environment of the subjects is very diverse. The first generation of pioneers (IH, RT) studied in male-dominated institutions. On the contrary, there are architects from the recent generations educated in only-women universities (YNg). Others obtained their degree from fine art colleges, including cases that have carried their studies abroad (AK, ME). After the University almost all worked for a particular architecture office. Always that office was directed by a man. Frequently, it was the place where the architects started to work with their future partners (AK, RT) and where they establish a lifelong network among peers (IH, RT, AK, YNg).

The mentorship figure was crucial in some cases for starting their own practice (YNg). The time spent with their mentor varies from one to twelve years depending on the individual. All of them have taught at the university as a guest lecturer, being in Japan or abroad. But none of them have pursued the possibility of having their own university laboratory. All of them have former staff members who have established their own office, and therefore spreading their design philosophy.

There is a broad range of positions within the group studied about the final purpose of architecture. Some elaborate on the idea that architecture is art (AK, IH, YNg) and therefore it is the creation of meaningful experiences that enrich the daily life, emphasizing the relationship with natural elements and different kinds of people (RT). While others are more interested in the design of architectural processes that empower different actors (ME). Several ask themselves how to change the role of the profession in order to be more present in the social decision making (IH, YNr).

It should be noted how these discrepancies have widened the spectrum of architecture products adopting non-traditional formats. Ranging from documentaries, to children workshops and even songs about construction process. The multiplicity of approaches also manifests itself looking at the research targets and the processes that they carry. Oscillating between intensive testing of new materials (IH, YNg) the registration of daily life behaviors of the local contexts (RT, AK, ME) and research conducted on a particular typologies (RT). A common characteristic between these architects is the participation of users into the design process, being part of the method of the pioneer architects to incorporate such actors, while opposing high criticism from well-known male architects at that time (IH, RT). Since then it has been assimilated in all facets of the project, from conception to construction (ME). At the same time all of them credit other professionals as collaborators in different fields.

5.2 Human relationships that surround the profession

This second block represents the social relations that architects have in the professional realm. Spanning from the type of clients and commissions they receive to the role that they perform interacting with them. As well as the composition of their own office and the strategies of conciliation with their family.

Even though the architects agree that usually, they are the only woman at the business meetings (AK, IH), they work with a wide variety of clients. From dealing with complex networks of NGOs and governmental bodies of different countries (ME), through a single visual artist (YNg), to a full female board of directors of a powerful retail company (AK). Above all, they value the relationship they establish, which will determine the freedom when designing and the possibility of long-lasting collaborations. When starting their practices the architects mainly received commissions for designing houses or stores. Therefore, anonymous competitions became a tool to access other kinds of projects such as bigger scale public buildings (IH). Today we find a wider variety in the projects undertaken by the female architects. However, associations of women with a certain commission continue to exist. Assuming that a female profile is better suited to design a certain program (YNg). That is why projects related to care activities (ME, RT), and retail (AK) are recurring commissions.

The role of the female architect in her interaction with clients depends on the composition of the office in which she works (YNr). When operating in groups (RT) or in couples (YNr, AK) gender roles will be shared. While in the case of independent architects (IH, YNg) they will have to play the male and female roles themselves. Sometimes facing backlash from the client side, being asked for a male partner (IH). Resulting in the need to lean on a savior male figure during the early years of practice (YNg). Also, they recognize that female sensitivity can be beneficial when negotiating a project. (AK, ME). Until the appearance of the pioneer female architects, the figure of the architect was strictly male. Some established themselves as a solo architect (IH), while others opted to form the first architect groups in Japan (RT).

Nowadays the diversity in the composition of the offices has expanded. Finding independent architects (YNg), unit formats (YNr), foreigners (AK) or freelance workers (ME). The size of the offices does not exceed 15-20 members (AK). And even though there is gender balance among the staff (AK, YNr, YNg), it has been unplanned.

The majority of them do not identify themselves as women architects, but simply as architects. (YNr, YNg, AK, ME, RT). And they feel that the role of female architects in Japan has evolved substantially. However, all of them agree on the low representation of women in university faculty, and the imbalance in terms of caring activities carried at the household. Additionally, they point out that being a licensed first-class architect in Japan is a skill that validates them as professionals and empowers them in order to convince clients and colleagues (YNg, ME). Also, the participants recognize the impact of motherhood in their practice. Sometimes placing their architectural discourse around the critical moments of pregnancy (YNg) and child rearing (ME). Acknowledging the conditions that made it possible (AK, YNr), and how did it shape their view towards design (YNg).
5.3 Considerations about the built environment

This last group contains the fragments of discourse concerning the comments on the constructed object. Its physical aspects and how those influence spatial perception and user relations.

All these architects give value to the external form in diverse ways but always departing from the context. Adapting the volume of their building to fit the environmental constraints in which it is located (AK), integrating elements of vernacular architecture, as well as symbolic decoration (RT). Or abstracting natural forms from the surrounding scenery (IH, YNg, RT). Materiality discourse was widely discussed. From the point of view of its inherent qualities and how it can be used in patterns and decoration towards a greater design density (AK, ME, RT). Arguing through the perspective of material innovation and its ecological network (IH, YNg). And also examining the different processes of working with them, and the value of craftsmanship (AK). The theme of spatial sensorial experience is relevant in all these architects, molding environmental characteristics such as light, humidity, and temperature in order to shape our experience through the five senses while engaging with nature (YNg), as well as registering gradations of intimacy through spaces adapted to non-normative bodies of different scales (RT). A common purpose to all is the democratization of space through the universalization of access (AK), the dissemination of knowledge necessary for the creation of architecture (ME), the incorporation of all possible actors by creating spaces tailored to each group of agents (RT), or by using design as a tool to enable participation and appropriation of space, as well as contemplating non-human and non-animated agents in the design (RT).

6. Conclusion

The hidden dimensions related to gender that affect the architectural practice were revealed through the comparative analysis of the discourse of six women architects working in Japan. Taking the Autumn 2018 Lecture series at Gallery IHA as a case study, it was possible to show different profiles of architects that go beyond normative gender assumptions. After transcribing, translating, analyzing and grouping by themes the discourse of each architect, the information was complemented with individual interviews. Then, the discourse of the women architects was compared observing when gender affects: 1) the creation of thought at the moment of designing; 2) the human relationships that surround the profession; 3) the considerations about the built environment.

After establishing this critical framework it is possible to assess the initial hypothesis by observing the ways in which female architects overcome gender barriers that exists in the profession. Negotiating was observed when the architect creates a new condition by adapting and benefiting from the gendered premise. For example, receiving commissions from clients who request a feminine design or who associate certain programs with a woman's profile. Opposing was achieved when there was a direct confrontation or challenge towards the gender assumption. For example, deciding to study architecture when it was an only-male department. Evading position manifested when a new condition was created by disregarding the gender assumption taking an alternative path. For example, diluting the authorship by establishing themselves within a group of architects. It is worthy to notice that these different approaches when dealing with gender bias are not exclusive, since the architects intertwine them depending on the area in which they operate.

This paper concludes that gender is not a stable and fixed notion, it changes over time and affects the power dynamics embedded in the social ecosystem of architectural design. Therefore, the conditions of the pioneers are different from those that are being faced by more recent generations. Thanks to the first ones, new possibilities were created for the following architects. All of them have helped to ease gender barriers by reimagining and multiplying the ways of doing architecture. The inclusion of different subjects in the architectural production contributes in the creation of alternative value systems, expanding the boundaries of the profession. Their views on the practice reframe the concept of what it means to be an architect by incorporating new agents in the design process and aiming for the democratization of space. Dissolving gender constructions and giving visibility to women architects, makes it possible to advance the transformation of the architectural profession into a diverse practice.

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Notes

*1) The original title of the lecture is Kenchikka no seitai o saguru.
*2) Mark Wigley, in "Untitled: The Housing of Gender", declares that: "the active production of gender distinctions can be found at every level of architectural discourse".
*3) Thomas Daniell on Itsuko Hasegawa in AA files 72, London, 2016: "In an ideal world, her gender would not be an issue, but in the real world it greatly compounds the importance of her achievements. Throughout her career, Hasegawa has been a pioneer in many ways, one of the few female architects to attain a substantial position in the international avant-garde, and the first from Japan."