



Completing the History of Spanish Architecture: The Female Contribution

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A review of MuWo: Mujeres en la cultura arquitectónica (pos)moderna española, 1965–2000. The review traces the genesis of this research project, highlighting its main results so far and how they have been disseminated and emphasising the need for an inclusive reexamination of the history of Spanish architecture.

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Different voices that have long been silenced and have not received the recognition they deserve for their contributions to the theory and practice of architecture are finally being heard today. Among these voices are those of women. Today all architectural historians acknowledge the place of Lilly Reich, Charlotte Perriand, and Eileen Gray in modernism. However, just as modernity developed late in Spain due to social and political circumstances that befell the country in the 1930s, so women's participation in the modernist movement there, and, above all, recognition of their contributions to the practice of architecture happened later than in other countries in the West.

In recent years, scholarship on women's contributions to modern architecture has included works that seek to highlight the role that working teams rather than just the chief architect played in building construction. Among these works published in Spain are Zaida Muxí's *Mujeres, casas y ciudades* and María Novas's *Arquitectura y género: Una posible introducción*, which received an award at the 16th Bienal española de arquitectura y urbanismo. Other initiatives are the Lilly Reich Grant for Equality in Architecture, financed by the Fundació Mies van der Rohe, and the ambitious MuWo: *Mujeres en la cultura arquitectónica (pos)moderna española, 1965–2000*, funded by Spain's ministry of science and innovation and directed by Lucía C. Pérez Moreno, senior lecturer at the Universidad de Zaragoza.

The main objective of the MuWo project, which was launched in 2019, is to study women's incorporation into the professional practice of architecture in Spain. It provides a list of works created by women, notes whether they were produced individually or collectively, offers a critical analysis of them, and explores how Spanish women architects fared in comparison to Spanish women in other traditionally male disciplines. Among the project's five objectives is mapping out research work that has been carried out in Spanish cities, which is one of the most valuable aspects of the project not only because the dissemination of information about the research work itself is important but also because the fundraising campaign for the project has prioritized reaching new architects by recording the project's progress on the Instagram profile @muwoarch, periodically posting images with information about the works and inviting subscribers to visit the project's website.

A second phase of public funding was obtained in 2021 following a campaign supported by citizens on social media and Spain's equality ministry to create an interactive digital map of architecture designed by women in Spain between 1965 and 2000. As of 2024, this interactive map charts 196 projects by 137 women architects, including Milagros Rey Hombre, the first female architect from Galicia, and Pascuala Campos de Michelena, the country's first female professor of project design, photographed by 30 women photographers, providing an indispensable source of information for new

lines of research lines (Figure 1). The map is not meant to supply a general overview of all projects designed by women but rather to establish selection criteria to ensure the quality of the projects that are included.



Figure 1: Image of the first call for women photographers indicating a number of participants, women architects photographed, and number of photographs. Image courtesy of Lucía C. Moreno.

At the same that she oversees the research work and the building of the map, Moreno also organises meetings at which the results of the MuWo project and the work of professionals interested and currently working in this field are disseminated. Since 2017, five conferences on the subject of gender perspectives in architecture have been held both face-to-face and online featuring historical overviews, accounts of urban planning and institutional policies, and discussions of editorial practices and critical pedagogies, among others. In addition, in October 2021, under the auspices of the MuWo project and with the collaboration of the Fundación Arquia, the first Congreso nacional mujeres y arquitecturas called 'Hacia una profesión igualitaria', which more than 80 national and international professionals in the field of architecture took part in, was held in the digital space of the foundation, [EspacioFQ.com](https://www.espaciofq.com). The virtual nature of the congress reflects the project's objective of using digital platforms to disseminate its results as widely as possible. The subjects covered and the presentations delivered at this congress are visually captured in an infographic that appears on the project's website (Figure 2).

In the coming months, the project will move into its second phase, adding 224 projects including both heritage and interior design interventions and award-winning projects of mixed authorship. This new phase gives the curators the chance to further highlight that they are not merely gathering works by women architects but using

specific qualitative criteria to select the projects that are featured. The dissemination through both images and videos of the work serves as a starting point for new and creative forms of research that this new field of study demands.



Figure 2: Infographic, primer Congreso nacional sobre mujeres y arquitecturas, 2021. © Itziar González Virós.

The MuWo project is conceived as a fresh and novel way of undertaking research related to the profession of architecture that is a necessary social action. The work that has already been carried out is only a first step that must serve as to advance the profession and serve as the basis of a new pedagogy of architecture, whose primary goal is to write a history of inclusive and egalitarian architecture that moves beyond the big names that, until now, have monopolised attention and that acknowledges the merit of teamwork. The questions now are how to manage the information thus far obtained and the best way to highlight the main contributions made of Spanish women architects to facilitate their definitive inclusion in the history of architecture (**Figure 3**).



Figure 3: MuWo map of works by Spanish architects, 1965–2000. Image courtesy of Lucía C. Moreno.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

