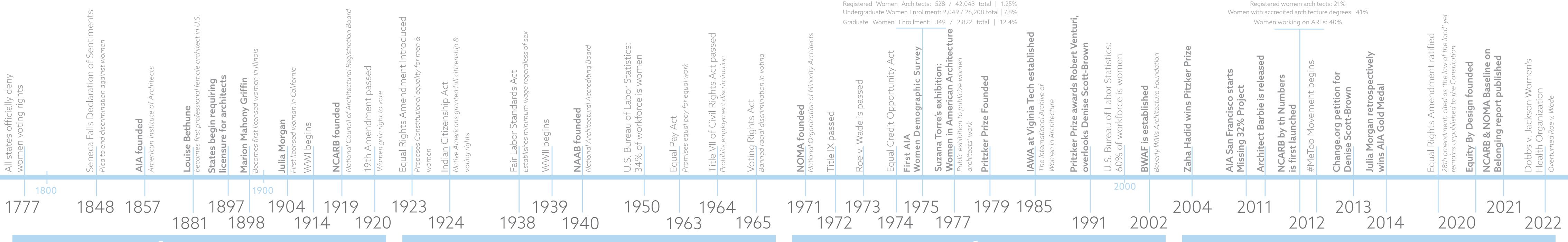


# Women's Place in Space | A Reconciliation The Apparent Recent Emergence of Women in Architecture

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# Abstract

The number of accredited architecture degrees awarded to women now surpasses that of men in the United States (NAAB, 2023). Thus, women's presence and participation in the architectural discipline is poised to redefine the futures of both the profession and the built environment. Various social justice initiatives have advocated for decades the need to formally acknowledge women's presence in and contributions to the profession throughout its history. The research examines past and current opportunities for departure from this historic inequity and from the fear such a transition incites. Women's ongoing fight for professional recognition has brings to focus the fact that architecture as a practice is fundamentally an ecosystem operating at and in its highest capacity when contributions from diverse communities are honored through its process of realisation. In the 21st century, as advocacy for equitable and inclusive legislation, professional frameworks, and decision-making have become an ever more obvious necessity, and increasingly more prevalent, the imperative for female designers and their leadership is greater than ever.

# Background

- As of 2023, 53% of accredited architecture degrees in the United States were awarded to women (NAAB, 2023).
- Title IX legislation provides women with a perception of equality during their academic experiences, yet they matriculate into a profession where just 27% of all licensed architects are women (NCARB, 2024).
- The Equal Rights Amendment, which would guarantee U.S. women Constitutional equality, has not yet been published to the constitution, despite its introduction to Congress in 1923, and being ratified as the 28th amendment to the Constitution in 2020.
- The glass ceiling, defined first and foremost by a lack of recognition for, and adanvcement from women's contributions to architectural work, exists as a result of and has been perpetuated first and foremost by faulty legislation.
- Feminist revolutions have normalized women's autonomy in many professional fields. However, the architectural profession has been slower and more resistant to women gaining professional autonomy and enjoying individual visibility (Deamer, P., Dunn K., et al.).
- Each wave of feminism responds to events corresponding with issues that women have faced and opportunities they have recognized during their struggle for recognition. Architecture is a microcosm of the issues faced across all professions and in society at large.

## Data

## Where are you in your professional journey? Student | Graduate

Not yet

IDP program, but I am no longer

Black or African American

Middle Eastern or North African

Total Entities Mentioned Individual People Firms / Similar Entities

Where did you (or where are you currently enrolled to) earn

your FIRST university-level architecture/design degree?

Are you a registered/licensed architect?

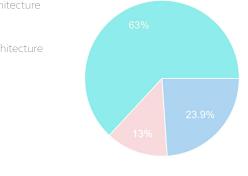
Which of the following best describes you?

# First dearee currently in progres

### Where did you (or where are you currently enrolled to) earn your SECOND university-level architecture/design degree?

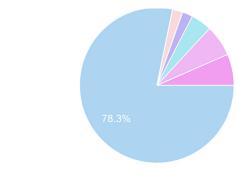
When did you recieve your most recent (last)

university-level degree?



(I do not have and am

### If you are a licensed/registered architect, how long have you had that credential?



Less than 1 year 10 - 15 years 15 - 20 years 20 - 25 years

Response Distribution

# Non-binary

# Which of the following best represents your gender identity?

Survey, with a current sample of 46 respondents. Respondents were prompted to provide names of up to (5) individuals as role models who have been influential in their architecture journey. The term role model is intentionally open-ended and open to interpretation. Some respondents noted this meant mentor for them, while others indicated they held their design skillset in high esteem.

- Apparent correlation between legislation increasing women's indeprendence in society with their presence, visibility, and women's acknowledged contributions to architectural practice and discourse
- Apparent correlation between education and consistently improving professional demographic balance
- Professional representation changes are not keeping pace with current college demographics
- Concern for future correlation with proposed legislation limiting women's independence
- The Pritzker Prize for Architecture (the profession's Nobel equivalent & awarded annually) has been awarded to 54 architects; 48 men & 6 women
- Zaha Hadid: First woman to be awarded Pritzker Prize
  - She is celebrated in architecture curriculum and discourse now
  - Coverage and comments during the time of her win was mixed
- 5 more women have won since

Women

■ Architects ■ UF Architecture Faculty

### Top Mentioned Role Models\* \* 99 Individuals with 1 - 4 mentions Renzo Piano Jeanne Gang Tadao Ando Carlo Scarpa Peter Zumthor

Number of mentions from respondents

10 12 14 16

# Future Directions

The issues women experience, and their time-delayed equal participation and representation in architecture today continues to be frustrated by struggles of the recent and distant past

This could easily perpetuate, or stall, if left unaddressed in architectural education, the profession, and on a greater scale, in future legislation

- In hopes of identifying patterns, ongoing research will continue to gather more survey data & evaluate responses tied to generational factors and shifts in the profession
- Further steps point to the value of a similar survey spanning further across academic institutions
- Expanding the survey to ask further into:
  - professionals' ongoing struggle with financial valuation of services they provide
  - perceived perception of 'prestige' of the architecture profession as more women enter the industry
  - how women students and professionals experience and navigate their working environments

# Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible, nor crossed this critical checkpoint without the support of Dr. Don Moore of the UF Writing Department and our survey respondents.

We are grateful to the School of Architecture, the College of Design, Construction, and Planning, and the Center for Undergraduate Research at the University of Florida for the opportunity to explore these issues and to develop a baseline of understanding and momentum towards ongoing and future research.

# Research Objectives

- · Understand the progression of women's experiences in the architecture profession, placing them within the broader context of historical events and legislation changes
- Evaluate historic trends of civil and social rights reformation within the architecture profession, and surrounding general politics & education
- Consider lasting effects & future impacts of larger scale legislation & education changes on women's outlook on their careers in architecture

# Methodology

- Qualitative research, broad literature and data review across topics including U.S. history, legislation, sociology, behavioral science, business, architecture, design, and planning; interviews, and quantitative data collection and analysis
- Conversations with broadly experienced practicing professionals
- Survey soliciting broad sample set from individuals educated as architects decades ago to those at the beginning of their academic journey
- Preliminary quantitative & qualitative reviews of survey data

## References