Proposal to Society of Architectural Historians

To create an Award for Distinction in Scholarship on the History of Women in Architecture

This Proposal has been developed and peer reviewed by the SAH Women in Architecture Affiliate Group leadership team: the SAH WiA AG Council and the SAH WiA AG Legacy Committee, in collaboration with SAH Executive Director Pauline Saliga.

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1. Background

The SAH Women in Architecture Affiliate Group (SAH WiA AG) is a Board-approved SAH affiliate group of members of the Society of Architectural Historians who share a common, scholarly, or other, interest aligned with the SAH mission.

The mission of the Group is to support the breadth of interests of SAH members, to advocate the international, national, and regional contributions of women in architecture, to foster a sustainable professional community, and champion the cause of gender equity and the diversity of professional engagements in the integral field of the built environment. The objectives of the Group are to provide a
platform for collaborative scholarship and a forum for discussion; to document, support, and advance research, publication, education, and exhibition initiatives; and to integrate professional standing of women in architecture with broader studies across cultures and geographies.

The purpose of the Group is to promote research, provide a forum for ongoing conversations on areas of mutual interest and support contacts and collaboration among scholars. Determined by an urgency to fill the void in resources about women’s contribution to the built environment and new trajectories of global transitions, the guidelines are established to address current work and empower next generations, to acknowledge the latent legacies, contexts, and perspectives, to invite questions and debates, stimulate studies and discussions in emerging and bordering areas, and to record the largely unwritten women’s professional histories.

2. Award Overview

SAH currently has several categories of awards that recognize accomplishments in the field of architectural history, they include (1) SAH publication awards for outstanding dissertations, articles, books and films and (2) SAH Fellows awards which recognize individuals who have distinguished themselves by a lifetime of significant contributions to the field of architectural history. These contributions may include scholarship, service to the Society, teaching, and stewardship of the built environment. A third type of award, the SAH | Places Prize supports the production of innovative public scholarship on race and the history of the built environment.

The award proposed by the SAH Women in Architecture Affiliate Group will recognize outstanding scholarly accomplishments by one or more SAH members who, individually or jointly, have enhanced understanding of the built environment and architectural history through the knowledge of women’s contribution to the field and interdisciplinary inquiry to broadening networks and building bridges across continents and cultures by advocating women’s work.

For purposes of this award, the merits of outstanding scholarly accomplishments are defined by the scale and a wide-ranging significance of a book, authored or edited by a SAH member/members, published on the subject by a scholar or, if in a collaboration, by a collective of scholars. The date of publication, either recent or over previous decades, should not determine the merit of the achievement.

The goal of the proposed award is to recognize SAH members for their long-standing contributions to the SAH community by documenting, supporting, and advancing research, publication, education, and
exhibition initiatives advocating leadership of women in architecture, changing the culture of architecture, shaping pedagogy to include women in the architecture canon, and championing the cause of gender equity and professional engagements in the integral field of the built environment. Women's contribution to architectural history has tangential effects in many other fields, such as preservation, urban, interior, landscape, and other areas of design, climate studies, city planning and management, engineering, social sciences, anthropology, philosophy, psychology, pedagogy, other. This recognition becomes a motivation that would have a progressive professional impact within and beyond the discipline, and encourage more scholarship related to the history of women in architecture.

The award is conceived by the SAH Women in Architecture Affiliate Group and is focusing on a significant book publication on the subject, recent or accomplished during previous decades, with the purpose to honor and celebrate trailblazers in the SAH community and advocate the cause of women in architecture.

3. Award Criteria

This SAH new award will be presented annually to recognize SAH member(s) whose published scholarship contribute to the profession as a whole by broadening the field through knowledge of women’s pioneering leadership. By honoring an outstanding book publication, SAH would encourage the highest standards of scholarship in the field.

Criteria that may be applied in evaluating nominees are:

- Outstanding contribution to the advancement of knowledge of women’s broader role in architecture across continents;
- The award is presented to a SAH member/members who, among other distinctions, has/have demonstrated commitment to substantial and prolonged research work on the subject;
- The award includes integration of knowledge of women’s role in architecture and architectural history and theory with other disciplines;
- The award is aimed to recognize innovation, commitment to the cause, excellence and rigorous intellectual standards, the quality of the contribution, resulting in a large-scale response and a national and international impact on the field;
- Inspiration to a broad range of scholars, and encouragement to students in the pursuit of studies with focus on women in architecture, empowering students in the development of their careers.
3.1. Evaluation Criteria/Award Criteria

This award would recognize a scholar (scholars) for a book publication related to the history of women in architecture from any period of history and any part of the world.

The goal of the award is to highlight consistent and excellent quality scholarship, uncovering the vital connections between women and architecture; innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to the role and place of women in architecture, resulted in consistently readable, fascinating, and eye-opening revisions to broader understanding of the discipline as a whole. The goal is beyond “expanding the canon.” The award’s scope shall be enhanced by the recognition of research that contributes to revisiting/rewriting architectural histories through informed inclusion of studies on women’s leadership in broader perspective. The award shall consider and emphasize the need for new approaches, methods, and frameworks in studying women’s contributions to the built environment across continents.

3.2. Evaluation criteria

In evaluating the submissions to determine the significance of the work, the Award Committee should focus on the following criteria:

- The work has made a powerful and lasting impact on scholarship on the subject and on the discipline as a whole;
- The innovation, a work beyond singular achievements with a rigid focus on architectural “objects,” but fostering new approaches to women’s contributions to building global environments;
- If pedagogies are considered: an exemplary deeply intertwined pedagogical approach to architectural and women's history;
- The work has contributed to changing the culture of architecture and has advanced the cause of equity for women in architecture;
- Creative research methodology, compelling theoretical framework, original findings, clarity of discussion defining the place of the scholarship in the field of architectural history;
- Work may be historical, analytical, documentary, interpretive, critical, experimental, interdisciplinary, theoretical explorations of women in architecture, or integrate all of the above.
3.3. Selection criteria to be considered

- Innovation
- New methods
- Significant contribution
- Excellency

3.4. Additional criteria to be considered

- Scholarship that helps broaden our understanding of women in architecture through transnational studies;
- Border studies peripheral to architecture and women’s studies that expand histories and complement the discipline;
- Application of intersectional frameworks that take into consideration gender in relation to race, class, disability, legal status, among others, is encouraged

4. Award Process

4.1. Award committee appointment and logistics

To be consistent with SAH’s other awards, the President of SAH will appoint a three-person Award Committee of current SAH members that will include an SAH member who also serves in the SAH Women in Architecture Affiliate Group leadership. The logistics of the award process including the annual call for nominations will be managed by the SAH office in collaboration with an appointee from the SAH Women in Architecture Affiliate Group.

4.2. Submission

The nomination process will open in June with the other SAH awards. Considering the inclusive type of this award, nominations shall be made by members of the SAH who focus their research on the history and theory of the built environment, women’s history, broader histories, and border disciplines. Due to the exceptional and innovative nature of this award, nominations shall be submitted by SAH members in broader diversity to magnify global and cross-disciplinary narratives.
4.3. Nomination Documents/Requirements

- The nominator(s) must submit a compelling nomination statement of no more than 1000 words.
- The documents needed for a nomination must be submitted in writing through the SAH website portal. The SAH Award Selection Committee is asked to determine, how many letters of support should go with the nomination letter.

4.4. Nomination Deadline

TBA

4.5. Selection Process

Nominations will be reviewed by the Award Selection Committee which is appointed by the President of SAH and will be composed of three current SAH members, one of whom also serves in the leadership of the Women in Architecture Affiliate Group. Members of the Award Committee will be expected to review all of the submitted materials. Each Committee member will submit independently their scores 1.0–5.0 (5 being the highest grade) for each nomination via the SAH website portal. Detailed instructions for scoring and access will be sent via the SAH office. When all scores have been input, a spreadsheet of the top five scoring nominations will be returned to the Committee members for group deliberations and selection of the recipient. The Chair of the Award Selection Committee will make the arrangements for the committee to meet via virtual meeting, conference call, or email exchange. It is expected that only one awardee (or one team of awardees, if the volume has been produced in equal collaboration) will be chosen each year.

The Chair of the Award Selection Committee will draft a citation of no more than 250 words, and the awardee will be announced, along with the other SAH Awards, at the SAH Annual International Conference Awards Program in April.