

# FCA NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM 2022

## WOMEN *in* ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE: Everyday Experiences and Exercising Agency

26th-27th March 2022  
Ahmedabad



Feminist Collective in Architecture

For details, please visit [www.fca-india.org](http://www.fca-india.org)  
Email: [feministcollective.archi@gmail.com](mailto:feministcollective.archi@gmail.com)  
Instagram & Facebook: [@archi.feministcollective](https://www.instagram.com/archi.feministcollective)



## **Women in Architectural Practice in India: *Everyday Experiences and Exercising Agency***

### **The Context**

All over the world; but especially in South Asia, women have been ignored in the canonical histories of architecture. Architectural production has mostly remained the prerogative of men (as consultants, contractors, developers, vendors) due to the patriarchal nature of Indian society. It has created a dominant masculine culture that is reinforced by the academic curricula and pedagogy in architecture schools. The contribution of women architects, including persons of gender minority, has been considered as rather vague and marginal, though they have been active participants in architectural practice for more than seventy years in India. The discipline is also affected by its fascination with the celebrated master architects, predominantly male, resulting in subtle discrimination and marginalization of women within the profession.

In the 1930s and 1940s, as modern thought began to pervade Indian Society, few women, mostly from privileged backgrounds, were able to break the traditional confines of the era, in which their identities were defined by domesticity: children, family and home. Architects like Perin Mistri, Gira Sarabhai, Eulie Chowdhury and Pravina Mehta contributed to the spirit of nation building as independent practitioners and partners. Innovative concepts such as New Bombay by Pravina Mehta (along with Charles Correa and Shirish Patel) and buildings like the Calico Museum, Ahmedabad by Gira Sarabhai and the Government Home Science Building by Eulie Chowdhury, Chandigarh are legacies of early women architects.

From the 1990s onwards, enrolment of women students in architecture has been steadily increasing and they now represent nearly half of the graduating students from around 450 academic institutions in the country. However, their presence in practice continues to be marginal, with high attrition rates. Women's status in architecture has been long dismissed as a non-issue and until recently, has hardly been part of any agenda or discourse despite a stubbornly persistent gender gap. Except for a few successful women, a large number of active women practitioners still remain invisible in the industry and in the perceptions of society at large. Why is this so? Why are there so few women leading large and successful practices? What stops women from setting up and sustaining their own practices?

It has to be accepted that architecture is a difficult business for an average practitioner, especially in terms of getting projects and sustaining finances. It is a struggle for most new entrants of all genders (women, men and others) to survive due to complex reasons, not the least being the hegemony of developers and large, established firms. It is also true that changes in societal and professional structures have facilitated a better work environment for women, providing newer prospects and opportunities in the field of architecture. Some men have begun recognizing their responsibilities on social and domestic fronts, stepping in for child-care and elderly-care when the women are unable to do so. This has made it possible for women to have fulfilling careers as employees and employers, in academia, in government jobs and through a myriad of innovative initiatives.

However, these changes in attitudes and practices are as yet sporadic and largely stemming from individual circumstance and initiative. Majority of women still face great challenges and barriers for progress, not only due to their gender, but also other intersectional disadvantages such as class, caste, religion and even body type and language. Women architects face relentless challenges of balancing their work and life, with a major share of domestic labour and parenting duties, lack of trust of clients, push towards interior projects and many other issues if they are leading their practice. Women employees, on the other hand, have to deal with long working hours, relatively low pay scales, a stereo-typical role playing in the workplace, fewer site facilities, absence of flexibility, and even subtle intimidation.

In a 'modern' world, education and other developmental progress may give a sense that women are now 'equal' to men in all spheres and spaces; however, it may also be true that the discrimination is now more subtle and insidious. These experiences lead women architects to respond in different ways, owing to their dispositions and capacities. While some women take to over-compensation, moving into other design disciplines or academics, some others take on masculine qualities like being aggressive, competitive and authoritative aspiring for power and control. In either case, women tend to delay marriage and children as they strive to advance in the field. As a result, they are made to accept the situation instead of exercising agency.

### **Symposium Brief**

The symposium aims to highlight how women and gender minority architects have overcome their day-to-day challenges, professional or personal, to make a career in architectural practice. They have exercised agency in actively dismantling gender stereotypes at home, bringing qualities of care and empathy in the workplace and infusing architectural production processes with gender sensitivity, among others. In short, they have brought in humane qualities into practice without compromising on professionalism.

We hope to go beyond the idea of success as being 'famous' or being 'starchitects' by recognising the valuable contribution of lesser-known women architects to the built environment. We aspire to give voices and visibility to women who have been working at various levels in the industry as employees, owners/partners and collaborators. The symposium especially wants to stress on empathy, co-operation and social justice by bringing out ways in which they have dealt with their everyday challenges. We acknowledge and appreciate the diversity and the broad scope of professional engagements that they have brought into architecture.

In the symposium, we hope to develop a collective, positive knowledge through sharing of experiences, policies and strategies and to build on one another's success trajectories while also learning from failures. In order to re-define the discipline and practice of architecture from a feminist perspective, the discussions will range from personal struggles to larger changes that need to be made as a fraternity. It will address current work as well as the empowerment of the next generations.

We also want to recognise changing thought processes among men who are playing their part in the spirit of equality. We call upon women and gender minority architects who are fighting the tide every day, breaking the glass ceiling of the discipline and making their mark in a 'man's world'.

### **Symposium Concerns:**

- **Interaction with and respect from people:** For example, clients, consultants, executing agencies, fellow architects, employers.
- **Dismantling gender roles:** For example, socio-cultural biases at the workplace, at home, and at the construction site.
- **Evaluating the workplace:** For example, work roles & responsibilities, pay equity, mental health, job security, mentoring, career development and leadership, facilities
- **Challenges to work/life balance:** For example, childcare support, flexibility in schedules, maternity leave and availability of site facilities, role of men/family.
- **Working towards gender sensitivity:** For example, influencing policies and increasing representation of women in decision-making bodies, changing the way the profession and/or professionalism are defined, making the workplace gender sensitive.

### **Symposium Components**

The keynote lecture for the symposium will be delivered by Shimul Javeri Kadri, founder and principal of SJK Architects, Mumbai, one of the leading architectural practices in India. Since the 1990s, SJK Architects has contributed considerably to the architectural profession and has won several awards and accolades under Shimul's leadership.

The symposium will address the key concerns through Panel Sessions, Poster Presentations, a Student Photography Competition and Workshops. There will be 3 moderated panel sessions based on diverse modes of practice, in which practitioners will share their personal and professional experiences through a presentation. In the poster presentations, students and architects will share their research, experiences and suggestions on the symposium concerns through academic or professional work. The photography competition aims to encourage students to become observant and sensitive towards the gendered nature of everyday spaces and ways in which women and gender minorities claim their place in society. Selected posters and photographs will be exhibited alongside the panel discussions and workshops. Access details on the above components under ***Call for Entries***.

On the first day of the symposium, there will also be opportunities for informal/interactive discussions and knowledge exchange on related themes through a series of workshops. These workshops will be conducted by FCA Members and will include activities like debates, quiz and role play. Participation in the workshops is optional; enrollment can be done at the time of online registration. Registration will be on a first come first serve basis with a maximum of 20 seats per workshop.

One of the following workshops can be selected during registration:

- Workshop 1: Representation and role of women in decision-making bodies
- Workshop 2: Women architects in other design practices
- Workshop 3: Women in allied building and construction professions

## Location

The symposium will be conducted in person in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Details of the venue will be announced soon. All arrangements will be made as per COVID-19 protocols following safety precautions and social distancing norms.

## Dates and Procedures

31st December 2021	Online Registration Opens
30th January 2022	Submission of Abstracts for Panel Sessions
11th February 2022	Announcement of Selected Abstracts for Panel Sessions
13th February 2022	Submission of entries for Poster Presentations
18th February 2022	Announcement of Final Schedule
20th February 2022	Submission of entries for Photography Competition
25th February 2022	Announcement of Selected Entries for Poster Presentations & Photography Competition
27th February 2022	Early Bird Registration Ends
20th March 2022	Online Registration Ends
26th & 27th March 2022	Symposium

## Contact Details:

In case of any queries, reach us at:

Email: [feministcollective.archi@gmail.com](mailto:feministcollective.archi@gmail.com)

Instagram & Facebook: @archi.feministcollective

## Registration

You will be required to fill an online form to register for the symposium. Registration is required for submitting an entry as well as for attendance. Registration fees are as below. Please note that the registration fees for participation and for attendance are separate and independent. All participants must additionally pay the registration fee in order to attend the symposium. Registration fees include lunch and tea for both days, workshop material and symposium kit. Travel and accommodation are not included.

	Particulars	Deadline	Fees
1	Participation fees for submitting entries for Panel Sessions, Posters or Photography Competition	Refer website	INR 500/- per entry
2	Registration fees for attending the Symposium		
	Early bird Registration fee for students	27th February, 2022	INR 1500/- per person
	Early bird Registration fee for non-students	27th February, 2022	INR 2500/- per person
	Registration fee for students	19th March, 2022	INR 2000/- per person
	Registration fee for non-students	19th March, 2022	INR 3500/- per person

## Payment Details

To complete the registration, you will be required to upload the payment receipt as a JPEG or PDF file in the registration form.

1. Mobile Number for GPay, PayTM and other UPI apps:  
+91 99252 83838

2. Bank details for Net Banking:  
Name: Himani Vinodrai Shingala  
Account No.: 33362580303  
Type of Account: Savings  
IFSC Code: SBIN0016034



UPI ID: himaniforwork@oksbi >

Scan this code to pay me

Register for the symposium [here](#).

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### Call For Entries



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## **Call for Entries**

### **A. Panel Sessions**

The Symposium will have three Panel Sessions, each one conceptualised as a site of Everyday Experiences with potentialities of Exercising Agency. These panel sessions are organised around the themes of:

- Panel Session 1: Practising as a Principal/Partner
- Panel Session 2: Practising as an Employee
- Panel Session 3: Practising through Collaboration

Each panel session will have one invited and three peer-reviewed presentations, followed by a moderated panel discussion that will focus on the Symposium concerns.

Interested participants are invited to send a 300-word abstract and a 200-word profile for their talk. **The abstract should focus on sharing personal and professional experiences that correspond to one or more of the symposium concerns.** Please clearly state the Panel Session for which you are submitting the abstract.

Submitted abstracts will undergo a blind-review process. Based on the evaluation of the Review Committee, three abstracts will be selected for each Panel Session. Selected applicants will be requested to prepare a 20-minute presentation for the symposium. Presentations will be transcribed and published in the symposium proceedings with the author's consent.

The Abstract submission deadline is **30th January, 2022**.  
Access the Abstract Submission Guidelines in the next section.

### **B. Poster presentations**

We invite all students, young graduates and architects to share their thoughts, research, experiences and suggestions on the **symposium concerns** through a poster. The poster can be either A1 size (Portrait) or A2 size (Landscape).

The poster presentations are aimed at putting together ideas & experiences of people associated with architecture, whether by qualification or practice. This includes people who have shifted disciplines or taken a break from architecture. The posters can also showcase studio, thesis or other academic work.

The posters will go through a selection process, subject to space availability. Selected posters will be published in the symposium proceedings.

The poster submission deadline is **13th February, 2022**.  
Access the Poster Submission Guidelines in the next section.



### **C. Photography Competition**

We invite college students to participate in a photography competition based on the following themes:

- Gender & The Domestic Space
- Gender & The Construction Site
- Gender & The City
- Gender & Public Transport
- Gender & The Academic Space
- Gender & Leisure

All photographs must have a caption. Selected photographs under each theme will be exhibited during the symposium and published in the proceedings. Three entries will be selected as winners from all received submissions, across all themes. Winners will be awarded a cash prize of INR 5000/- each.

The deadline for the photography competition is **20th February, 2022**.

Access the Submission Guidelines in the next section.

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Submission Guidelines



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## **Submission Guidelines**

You can submit an entry for any of the symposium components as relevant: Panel Sessions, Poster Presentations and/or Photography Competition. Please use your unique code generated during registration in every entry.

### **1. Abstract Submission for Panel Sessions:**

- Please register on the following [link](#) to submit an entry. Abstracts will not be accepted without registration and payment of participation fees (one payment per entry).
- The abstract submission is required to be made as per the given [template](#) as a single MS Word file. Please download the template before opening them.
  - i. Part 1 must comprise the participant's personal and practice profile in not more than 200 words. The file must be named as: **"Abstract Part 1\_Unique Code"**
  - ii. Part 2 must give a brief idea of the symposium concerns through participants' personal and professional experiences in not more than 300 words. The file must be named as: **"Abstract Part 2\_Unique Code"**
- There may be only one individual who presents ideas on behalf of their colleagues/ co-authors.
- Abstracts will be acceptable in the English language only.
- Abstracts must indicate the name of the panel session under which the submissions are being made.
- The Internal Committee holds the right to decide on the final selection.
- Participants will receive an email notification about receipt of submission within a week after the submission deadline.
- Submission, once uploaded, will be final.
- Please Upload your submission [here](#).

#### **Key dates to remember:**

- Registration deadline for participation\*: 30th January, 2022
- Abstract Submission Deadline\*: 30th January, 2022
- Notification of Acceptance/Rejection\*: 11th February, 2022
- Symposium Date: 26th & 27th March, 2022

(\* ) By midnight - 23:59 IST

### **2. Poster Submission:**

- Please refer to the website for details of the poster content.
- Please register on the following [link](#) to submit an entry. Posters will not be accepted without registration and payment of participation fees (one payment per entry).
- Please submit the poster as per one of the given [templates](#). Please download the templates before opening them.
- Only 1 poster can be submitted per participant.
- The resolution of images must be 300 dpi.
- Submission must be in PDF format only. File size should not exceed 5MB for both A1 and A2 format.
- The file must be named as: **"Poster\_Size\_Unique Code"**.
- Please Upload your submission [here](#).

**Key dates to remember:**

- Registration deadline for participation\*: 13th February, 2022
- Poster Submission Deadline\*: 13th February, 2022
- Notification of Acceptance/Rejection\*: 25th February, 2022
- Symposium Date: 26th & 27th March, 2022

(\*) By midnight - 23:59 IST

**3. Photography Competition:**

- The photography competition is open to students only. Please refer to the website for details of the competition themes.
- Please register on the following [link](#) to submit an entry. Photographs will not be accepted without registration and payment of participation fees (one payment per entry).
- Maximum 2 photographs can be submitted per participant as one entry.
- Please submit the photograph(s) as per one of the given [templates](#). Please download the templates before opening them.
- The resolution of images must be 300 dpi.
- Please do not use any other font than those specified in the templates. You can also download the fonts along with the template.
- Submission must be in PDF format only. Each photograph should be submitted as a separate file. File size should not exceed 5MB.
- The file must be named as: *"Photo\_Unique Code\_Photo No."*
- Please Upload your submission [here](#).

**Key dates to remember:**

- Registration deadline for participation\*: 20th February, 2022
- Photograph Submission Deadline\*: 20th February, 2022
- Notification of Acceptance/Rejection\*: 25th February, 2022
- Symposium Date: 26th & 27th March, 2022

(\*) By midnight - 23:59 IST