

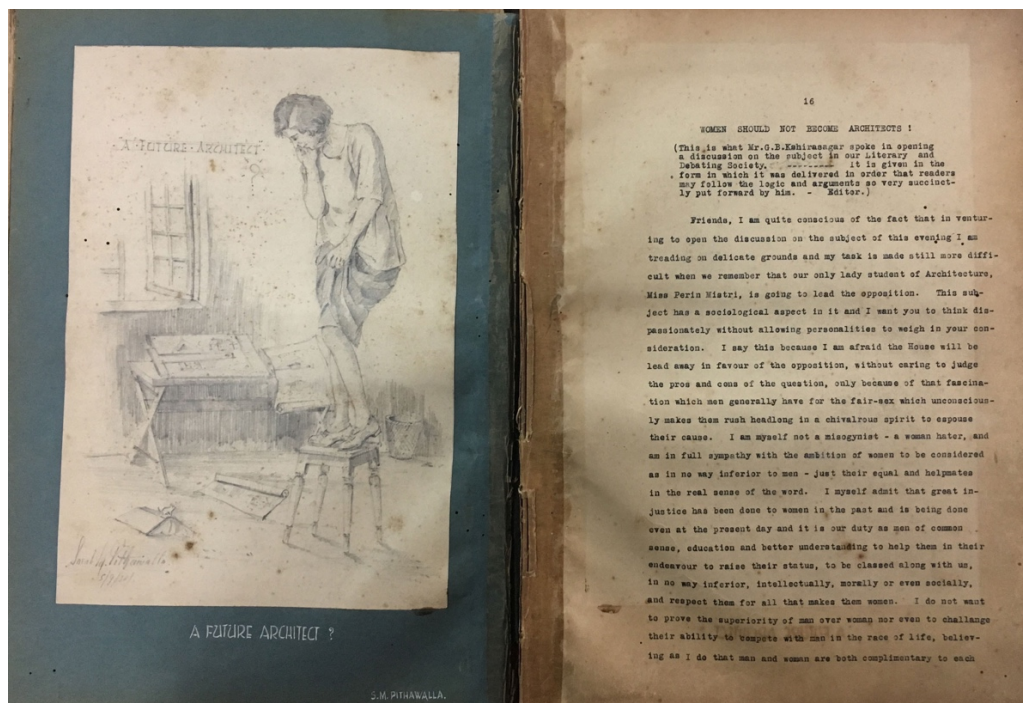
Histories of Architecture and Feminism

ARCH UN3901 Spring 2020 Th 10:10-12:00 asiddiqi@barnard.edu

Professor Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi



Minnette de Silva in the studio at St. George's, Kandy, Sri Lanka, photograph by Dominic Sansoni given to Helga de Silva Blow Perera (photograph by the Author of the image in its frame in Perera's home, Helga's Folly, Kandy, 2014).



"A Future Architect?" pencil on paper drawing by S.M. Pithawalla, and "Women Should Not Become Architects!" remarks by G.B. Kahirasagar to the Sir J.J. College of Art School of Architecture Literary and Debating Society. From Shilpa Sagar, Sir J.J. College of Architecture Literary & Debating Society journal, 1932.

Course Description

What does it mean to write histories of architecture and feminism? Which stories are included and which excluded? What are the objects of these histories? Must we focus on biographies of women? Must we reject them? How do scale and positionality appear in feminist histories of architecture, and how does gender imbue the politics of location? How are race, sexuality, class, colonialism, nation, and ethnicity bound up with architecture and territory? How are questions of domesticity linked with those of power? What is an architect?

This seminar will use such questions to think through historiographical practice and theory. Building upon studies in the history of architecture, art, urbanism, territory, ecology, technology, and material culture, we will examine how histories have been narrated and shaped around feminist questions or practices. We will examine the objects and methods of histories that concern themselves with architecture—defined broadly as well as narrowly—and study how scholars using feminist approaches have attempted to write those histories.

The work of this senior seminar will result in research to contribute to the first ever exhibition on the work of the architect Minnette De Silva (1918-1998), for the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Sri Lanka, slated for 2022. Few careers capture intersections of gender, war, and architecture as does that of Minnette de Silva, for whom modern design embodied conflicting pasts, responding to ethnicized, racialized, and casteist landscapes. A scholar-practitioner of mixed race and caste, a feminist and environmental activist in Sri Lanka, India, England, and Hong Kong, among the first women ever to establish an architectural practice (*The Studio of Modern Architecture, Ceylon, 1947*), and a rare Asian (Sri Lankan) Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects, she was active in two storied institutions: the arts journal *MARG* (where she was a founding editor) and the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM). Her work was a map of remarkable intersections, with interlocutors such as Indira Gandhi, Mrinalini Sarabhai, Le Corbusier, and Henri Cartier-Bresson, as well as laborers and craftspeople who collaborated with her to fabricate buildings. It was also a crossroads of historical forces: decolonization on the subcontinent, militarized conflict in Sri Lanka, and, in her words, an “Asian” modern movement, organized around the political economic and technological dissidence of handicraft. She is best known for a body of built work, handicraft design, research, writings, pedagogy, and theorization of an Asian modern, and she engaged in holistic practices and processes, which treated architecture as a lived experience and a contemporary expression of the heterogeneous pasts of its makers.

The seminar follows the iterative pedagogical structure of an architectural studio, but emphasizes inquiry through shared readings, primary research, and zine production. The seminar has two aspects. First, we work closely with De Silva’s pictorial autobiography, which she referred to as “my archives,” within the context of an institutional archive, the Barnard Archives and Special Collections, in order to think about how primary evidence is mobilized in the construction of narratives. This self-published work not only reveals an alternate history of the Asian modern, but sets out radical stakes for historiography and the narrative authority of the auto-curated collection. Second, we develop a database of contextual research, including a collective bibliography and interviews with scholars and practitioners whose approaches help to think about De Silva’s work and historical context or histories and theories of architecture and feminism. We will publish this research in the form of zines, in collaboration with the Barnard Zine Library. No prerequisites are required for this course.

Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Synthesize and respond to shared readings.
2. Conduct self-initiated research, using primary and secondary source material.
3. Present research in a zine format through synthesis of primary and secondary research, contextualizing Minnette de Silva's work and social world, setting them into broader histories of architecture and feminism.
4. Collaboratively prepare and conduct interviews with experts.
5. Produce a bequest to an institutional archive.

Course Requirements, Evaluation, and Grading

For explanation, see "ASSIGNMENTS" section below.

Academic Contribution	10%
Reading Responses	10%
Interviews (6 total)	20%
Assignment 1	20%
Assignment 2	20%
Final	20%

Course Structure and Schedule

<u>01</u>	Th Jan 14	<u>Introduction</u>	
		Discussion.	
<u>02</u>	Th Jan 21	<u>Architecture and Feminism</u>	
		Discussion.	
<u>03</u>	Th Jan 28	<u>Research methods</u>	
		Discussion and demo.	
<u>04</u>	Th Feb 4	<u>Minnette de Silva's work in context</u>	
		Discussion.	
<u>05</u>	Th Feb 11	<u>Zine Presentation and Interview</u>	
		Discussion. Guest: Hirante Welandawe.	
<u>06</u>	Th Feb 18	<u>Zine Presentation and Interview</u>	
		Discussion. Guest: Anuradha Mathur.	
<u>07</u>	Th Feb 25	<u>Zine Presentation and Interview</u>	
		Discussion. Guest: Selva Sandrapragas.	
<hr/> SPRING RECESS			
<u>08</u>	Th Mar 11	<u>Assignment 1 Review</u>	<i>Assignment 1 DUE</i>
		Review.	
<u>09</u>	Th Mar 18	<u>Minnette de Silva's work in context</u>	<i>Interview on F Mar 19 4-5PM</i>
		Discussion. Guest: Anoma Pieris.	
<u>10</u>	Th Mar 25	<u>Interview</u>	
		Discussion. Guest: Tariq Jazeel.	
<u>11</u>	Th Apr 1	<u>Interview</u>	
		Discussion. Guest: Ijlal Muzaffar.	
<u>12</u>	Th Apr 8	<u>Assignment 2 Review</u>	<i>Assignment 2 DUE</i>
		Review.	
<u>13</u>	Th Apr 15	<u>Final Prep</u>	
		Discussion.	
	Th Apr 22	<u>Final Review</u>	<i>Final DUE</i>
		Final Review.	

ASSIGNMENTS

Submit assignments as instructed. All assignments are due before class on the date noted in the Course Structure and Schedule. No late submissions accepted except for students registered to receive academic accommodations or in cases of emergency.

Academic Contribution 10%

Participation requirements include consistent and punctual attendance, attentiveness in class, thoughtful and respectful interaction, and engaging our shared readings and producing assignments in a timely manner. Overall academic contribution refers to diverse forms of demonstrating intellectual curiosity and dedication to the classroom, peers, and learning.

Reading Responses 20%

Reading Response (200 words) due 24 hours before the start of class.

Interviews (6 total) 20%

Compiled Reading Responses and Guide Questions to be sent to interviewee. (Filename format: Year_MonthDate_Interviewee Last Name_First Name)

Correspondence with interviewee before and after meeting.

Organization materials for bequest, including all releases.

Grading Rubric

- A Reading response included well-informed reading of the author's work. Interview demonstrated deep engagement with author, understanding of diverse background research, produced insights about guest's work, and broadly investigated methods. Active participation in preparation and interview, contributing to an environment conducive to deeper discussion.
- B Reading response raised the level of discussion and thought in the interview. Interview was well organized, active participation in preparation and interview.
- C Reading response demonstrated critical engagement. Collaborated in interview.
- D All materials submitted. Participated in interview.

Assignments 1 and 2 and Final 20% each

Zine production. Synthesis of subject-specific primary and secondary research into clear narrative (1000 words of text / 4 pages). Must include images/excerpts of primary material and bibliography.

Organize materials for bequest.

Format: TBD (Filename format: Last Name_First Name_Assignment number)

Grading Rubric

- A Visual thesis demonstrates excellent synthesis and contextualization of diverse primary and secondary source material. Narrative is insightful, weaving together strong, cohesive arguments with relevant text and images. Extensive bibliography and image research.
- B Strong visual thrust draws from a depth of research and diverse source material. Narrative is produced around coherent arguments. Bibliography is thorough.
- C Thesis builds on primary and secondary research.
- D Assignment submitted.

Zine production. Synthesis of subject-specific primary and secondary research into clear narrative (2500 words of text / 10 pages). Must include images/excerpts of primary material and bibliography. Organize materials for bequest.

Format: TBD (Filename format: Last Name_First Name_Final)

Grading Rubric

- A Visual thesis demonstrates excellent synthesis and contextualization of diverse primary and secondary source material. Narrative is insightful, weaving together strong, cohesive arguments with relevant text and images. Extensive bibliography and image research.
- B Strong visual thrust draws from a depth of research and diverse source material. Narrative is produced around coherent arguments. Bibliography is thorough.
- C Thesis builds on primary and secondary research.
- D Assignment submitted.

Course Activities

01 Th Jan 14 Introduction
Discussion.

02 Th Jan 21 Architecture and Feminism
Discussion.

Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi and Rachel Lee, "[On Margins: Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration.](#)" Dossier in *Architecture Beyond Europe* 16 (2020).
Jane Rendell, "Tendencies and Trajectories: Feminist Approaches in Architecture." In *The Sage Handbook of Architectural Theory* (London: SAGE, 2014).

Optional

Doucet, Isabelle, and Hélène Frichot, eds. "Resist, Reclaim, Speculate: Situated Perspectives on Architecture and the City," *Architectural Theory Review* 22:1 (2018).
Frichot, Hélène, Catharina Gabrielsson and Helen Runting, eds. *Architecture and Feminisms: Ecologies, Economies, Technologies*. London: Routledge, 2017.
Heynen, Hilde, and Gülsüm Baydar, eds. *Negotiating Domesticity: Spatial Productions of Gender in Modern Architecture*. London: Routledge, 2005.
Lambert, Léopold, ed. "Queers, Feminists & Interiors," *The Funambulist* 13.
Lange, T and Pérez-Moreno, LC. "Architectural Historiography and Fourth Wave Feminism." *Architectural Histories*, 8:1 (2020).
Phadke, Shilpa. "[Transnational Feminisms: Pedagogies and Syllabi.](#)"
Rendell, Jane, Barbara Penner, and Iain Borden, eds. *Gender Space Architecture*. London: Routledge, 2007.
Reisinger, Karin, and Meike Schalk, eds. "[Becoming a Feminist Architect.](#)" *Field Journal* 7 (2017).
Reisinger, Karin, and Meike Schalk, eds., "Styles of Queer Feminist Practices and Objects," *Architecture and Culture* Vol. 5 Issue 3 (2017).

03 Th Jan 28 Research methods
Discussion and demo.

Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, "[Histories of Architecture and Feminism.](#)" *Platform* (August 29, 2019).
Jarrett Drake, "[Graveyards of Exclusion: Archives, Prisons, and the Bounds of Belonging.](#)" keynote lecture, Scholar and Feminist Conference, "The Politics and Ethics of the Archive," February 8-9, 2019. Edited text [here](#).

[Disorientation: Barnard & Columbia 2020](#)

[Why Is the Government Like This: A Zine About Fighting for Abortion Access and Reproductive Justice in the Age of COVID19](#)

[Evolution of a race riot / edited by Mimi Nguyen](#)

[Requiem: A Mass for the Repose of the Souls of the Dead / by Nontsikelelo Mutiti](#)

Optional

- _____, [“RadTech Meets RadArch: Towards A New Principle for Archives and Archival Description,”](#) *Medium*.
On Archivy: occasional writings about the archive.
- Emily Drabinski, [“Teaching the Radical Catalog.”](#) in *Radical Cataloging: Essays at the Front*, ed. K.R. Roberto. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, April 2008.
- Freedra Brook, Dave Ellenwood, and Althea Eannace Lazzaro. “In Pursuit of Antiracist Social Justice: Denaturalizing Whiteness in the Academic Library.” *Library Trends* 64, no. 2 (2015): 246-284. <https://muse.jhu.edu/> (accessed July 19, 2019).
- Booth, Wayne C., et. al., *The Craft of Research*, 3rd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). Chapter 1 “Thinking in Print: The Uses of Research, Public and Private,” Chapter 4 “From Questions to a Problem,” and Chapter 5 “From Problems to Sources.”
- Roberts, Jennifer, “The Power of Patience,” *Harvard Magazine* (November-December 2013): 40-43.
- Janina Gosseye, “Introduction. A Short History of Silence: the epistemological politics of architectural historiography,” in *Speaking of Buildings: Oral History in Architectural Research*, ed. Janina Gosseye, Naomi Stead, and Deborah van der Plaats, 9-23 (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2019).
- International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art, *Guide to Good Practice: Artists’ Interviews*. Final projects (3 minimum, to be selected by student), Histories of Architecture and Feminism, Fall 2018, Barnard Archives and Special Collections.
- Interview and Bequest forms (Courseworks/Files)
- Research Resources (Courseworks/Files)

04 Th Feb 4 Minnette de Silva’s work in context
Discussion.

- Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, “Crafting the archive: Minnette De Silva, Architecture, and History.” *The Journal of Architecture* 22:8 (2017): 1299-1336.
- Tariq Jazeel, “Tropical Modernism/Environmental Nationalism: The Politics of Built Space in Postcolonial Sri Lanka.” *Fabrications* 27:2 (2017): 134-152.
- Neloufer de Mel, “Framing the Nation’s Respectability: Anil Marcia de Silva’s Rite of Passage.” In *Women and the Nation’s Narrative: Gender and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century Sri Lanka* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001): 101-161.

05 Th Feb 11 Zine Presentation and Interview
Discussion. Guest: Hirante Welandawe.

- Minnette de Silva, *The Life and Work of an Asian Woman Architect* (Colombo: Smart Media Productions, 1998): 1-115.

06 Th Feb 18 Zine Presentation and Interview
Discussion. Guest: Anuradha Mathur.

- Minnette de Silva, *The Life and Work of an Asian Woman Architect* (Colombo: Smart Media Productions, 1998): 116-248.

07 Th Feb 25 Zine Presentation and Interview
Discussion. Guest: Selva Sandrapragas.

- Minnette de Silva, *The Life and Work of an Asian Woman Architect* (Colombo: Smart Media Productions, 1998): 249-345.

SPRING RECESS

08 Th Mar 11 Assignment 1 Review Assignment 1 DUE

Review.

09 Th Mar 18 Minnette de Silva's work in context Interview on F Mar 19 4-5PM
Discussion. Guest: Anoma Pieris.

Anoma Pieris, slideshow.

Minnette De Silva, "Kandyan Art Association." *Mimar: Architecture in Development* 23, edited by Hasan-Uddin Khan (Singapore: Concept Media Ltd., 1987).

Robin Jones, "Memory, Modernity and History: The Landscapes of Geoffrey Bawa in Sri Lanka, 1948-1998." *Contemporary South Asia* 19, no. 1 (March 2011): 9–24.

Anoma Pieris, "Modernism at the Margins of the Vernacular: Considering Valentine Gunasekara." *Grey Room* 28 (July 2007): 56–85.

10 Th Mar 25 Interview
Discussion. Guest: Tariq Jazeel.

Tariq Jazeel, "Built Space, Environment, Modernism: (Re)reading 'Tropical Modern' Architecture" and "Architecting One-ness: Fluid Spaces / Sacred Modernity." In *Sacred Modernity: Nature, Environment, and the Postcolonial Geographies of Sri Lankan Nationhood* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013).

11 Th Apr 1 Interview
Discussion. Guest: Ijlal Muzaffar.

Ijlal Muzaffar, "Boundary Games: Ecochard, Doxiadis, and the Refugee Housing Projects under Military Rule in Pakistan, 1953–1959." In *Governing By Design: Architecture, Economy, and Politics in the Twentieth Century* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

Rachel Lee, "[Constructing a Shared Vision: Otto Koenigsberger and Tata & Sons.](#)" *ABE Journal* 2 (2012).

12 Th Apr 8 Assignment 2 Review Assignment 2 DUE
Review.

13 Th Apr 15 Final Prep
Discussion.

Th Apr 22 Final Review Final DUE
Final Review.

POLICIES AND STATEMENTS

Honor Code:

The Barnard Honor Code applies to all students in this class regardless of academic affiliation. Approved by the student body in 1912 and updated in 2016, the Code states:

We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the College by engaging with integrity in all of our academic pursuits. We affirm that academic integrity is the honorable creation and presentation of our own work. We acknowledge that it is our responsibility to seek clarification of proper forms of collaboration and use of academic resources in all assignments or exams. We consider academic integrity to include the proper use

and care for all print, electronic, or other academic resources. We will respect the rights of others to engage in pursuit of learning in order to uphold our commitment to honor. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor for its own sake.

The Columbia College Honor Code and the Columbia College Faculty Statement on Academic Integrity can be viewed here:

<https://www.college.columbia.edu/honorcode>

<https://www.college.columbia.edu/faculty/resourcesforinstructors/academicintegrity/statement>

Class Attendance, Late Arrivals, and Absences Policy:

Attendance is mandatory at all scheduled classes, field trips, and reviews. Any student arriving later than 5 minutes after the start of class will be considered late and anyone arriving later than 15 minutes after the start of class or leaving more than 15 minutes early will be marked absent.

Absences due to acute illness, a personal crisis (e.g. a death in the family), religious observance, or for other reasons of comparable gravity may be excused. In all such cases, students must promptly notify instructor by email to communicate the reason for their absence and to arrange to review any important information they may have missed. Students who know they will miss one or more scheduled classes should meet with their instructor during the first two weeks of the semester to discuss anticipated absences.

Unexcused absences, late arrivals, or early departures from class will reduce your course grade. Three absences will result in a grade reduction by one-third ($1/3$) of one letter grade (e.g., A- to B+). Each absence thereafter will result in a grade reduction by one-third ($1/3$) of one letter grade.

Academic Accommodations Statement:

If you are a student with a documented disability and require academic accommodations in this course, you must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) for assistance. Students requesting accommodations will need to first meet with an ODS staff member. Once registered, students are required to request accommodation letters each semester to notify faculty.

Accommodations are not retroactive, so it is best to contact ODS early each semester to access your accommodations. If you are registered with ODS, please see me to schedule a meeting outside of class in which you can bring me your faculty notification letter and we can discuss your accommodations for this course. Students are not eligible to use their accommodations in this course until they have met with me. ODS is located in Milbank Hall, Room 009/008. Columbia ODS is located in Wien Hall, Suite 108A.

Affordable Access to Course Texts Statement:

All students deserve to be able to access course texts. The high costs of textbooks and other course materials prohibit access and perpetuate inequity, and Barnard librarians are partnering with students, faculty, and staff to increase access. By the first day of advance registration for each term, you should be able to view on Canvas information provided by your faculty about required texts (including ISBN or author, title, publisher and copyright date) and their prices. Once you have selected your classes, here are some cost-free methods for accessing course texts, recommended by the Barnard Library: find out if your faculty has placed the texts on reserve at Barnard Library or another Columbia library, and look for course texts using CLIO (library catalog), Borrow Direct (request books from partner libraries), Interlibrary Loan (request book chapters from any library), and NYPL. Students with financial need or insecurity can check items out from the FLIP

lending libraries in the Barnard Library and Butler Library and can consult with the Dean of Studies and the Financial Aid Office about additional affordable alternatives for getting access to course texts. Talk with your librarian and visit the Barnard Library Textbook Affordability guide (library.barnard.edu/textbook-affordability) for more details.

Wellness Statement:

It is important for undergraduates to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stressors you may be facing, whether personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. We as a community urge you to make yourself—your own health, sanity, and wellness—your priority throughout this term and your career here. Sleep, exercise, and eating well can all be a part of a healthy regimen to cope with stress. Resources exist to support you in several sectors of your life, and we encourage you to make use of them. Should you have any questions about navigating these resources, please visit these sites:

- Barnard Students: <https://barnard.edu/wellwoman/about>
- Columbia Students: <http://www.college.columbia.edu/resources> (click Health-Wellness)
- Columbia GS Students: <https://gs.columbia.edu/health-and-wellness>
- Columbia SEAS Students: <https://gradengineering.columbia.edu/campus-resources>

Classroom and Communications Policies:

Cellphones and other devices must be switched off upon entering the classroom.
No use of laptops except with permission of professor as an accommodation.
No audio or video recording allowed except with permission of professor as an accommodation.
No food allowed. Drinks allowed.
Allow 24 hours for response to emails.
Emails are for brief communications. [Office hours](#) are for discussions.

Acknowledgments:

I am grateful to Shannon O'Neill, Martha Tenney, Meredith Wisner, Madiha Choksi, and Jenna Freedman for contributions to this course, as well as to the following interlocutors:

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Rupali Gupte (School of Environment and Architecture. Mumbai)
Lilian Chee (NUS. Singapore)

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Sarah Lopez (UTexas. Austin)
Nandinee Bagchee (CUNY. New York)