

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

HERITAGE CITIES

AND GENDER DOMAIN

(...) women play almost no part in making decisions about or in creating the environment. It is a man-made environment.

(Matrix Architects, *Making space. Women and the man-made environment*. London, Pluto Press, 1984, p. 3)

More than four decades after this statement, the gendered nature of the cities and, in general, of the built environment, remains a central concern in architectural discourse. Historiography, heritage practices, and spatial governance continue to be deeply structured by asymmetries of visibility, authorship, and power. Significant progress has been made in acknowledging women's contributions to architecture, design and urbanism from the early 20th century to the present day (*Donne e progetto*, 2025; *Women Writing Architecture, 1700-1900*, 2025; *Al femminile. L'architettura, le arti e la storia*, 2023; *Women in Architecture*, 2023; *Thrive: A field guide for women in architecture*, 2023; *The Women Who Changed Architecture*, 2022; *Women in Architecture: Past, Present, and Future*, 2021; *Raising the Roof*, 2021; *Breaking ground. Architecture by women*, 2019).

Nevertheless, fewer publications (*Crossed Histories*, 2025; *Suffragette City*, 2020; *Feminist City*, 2019), together with the documentary *City Dreamers* (2018), instead, have addressed the role of female architects in shaping the city as a complex, lived, and contested environment. These contributions open up new perspectives on urban heritage, interpreting it not merely as a field of preservation but as a site of negotiation, contestation, and re-inscription of social values.

The gender dynamics that have shaped the urban landscape influence the ways in which public spaces are used and experienced, both in the past and in present times. Revisiting heritage through a gendered lens thus becomes both an epistemological and political project: one that calls into question who is remembered, who is excluded, and how urban narratives are constructed and transmitted.

Within the layered and stratified development of the built city, women have influenced and continue to impact on the urban heritage and spatial practices. For this reason, we welcome contributions that address how gender affects the representation, design, production, preservation, and everyday experience of historic urban environments. Submissions may also explore whether a shared or recurring sensibility can be identified in women's approach to history, as well as the instrumental role of the designers in the debate over building conservation.

By foregrounding the idea that heritage cities are not neutral containers of the past but vivid terrains where gendered power relations are continuously challenged, the contributions should also depict the female architects' strong belief in the need for public engagement in the creation of the city and their commitment to more inclusive processes of city-making.

Possible thematic areas include, but are not limited to:

- Contributions of women innovators to urban renewal and the role of gender in shaping urban resilience
- Projects and forgotten urban interventions by female architects (both built and unbuilt) that have contributed to urban transformations worldwide
- Historical case studies in which gender has played a decisive role in the design, use or perception of architectural spaces
- Unpublished or lesser-known writings on cities and urban spaces written by female architects
- Feminist politics and poetics of space
- Archival, iconographic and textual research aimed at uncovering sidelined figures, experiences and design approaches
- Studies on marginalised or little-known women who have dedicated themselves to promoting architectural culture and enhancing historical and vernacular heritage
- Female architects who have worked as consultants for UNESCO
- Mapping of spatial practices and observation of how historical and contemporary spaces have been or are being used by different individuals according to their gender identities and roles
- Visions of future cities proposed by women architects challenging prejudices and dominant paradigms
- Women's design experiences in the context of colonial, post-colonial state, or current conflicts.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

- The participation to the call is open to national and international structured and independent scholars (PhD students, postdoctoral fellows, research fellows, researchers).
- The issue will host essays and articles selected through a double-blind peer review process.
- To apply, please visit the journal page (<https://www.adh.journal.mantova.polimi.it/>) and submit your abstract through the platform no later than June 26th, 2026.
- The outcome of the selection and the judgments of the peer review will be communicated by e-mail to the author of the article.
- Proposals selected for publication must be developed into unpublished texts, complete with bibliography and images.

For inquiries, please contact: adh-journal@polimi.it

TIMETABLE

- Launch of the Call: May 22nd, 2026
- Abstract submission deadline: June 26th, 2026
- Notification of acceptance: by July 15th, 2026
- Text delivery for peer review: October 15th, 2026
- Notification of full-text peer review outcome: November 15th, 2026
- Final text delivery: December 15th, 2026