

cohorts of assistants over his seventy-two years in practice, as they worked through phases of developing and documenting his projects. In the book's final essay, "Visualizing the Archives," Carole Ann Fabian discusses recent data visualization techniques that aim to clarify the distribution and chronology of archival holdings relative to Wright's work in different regions of the United States and around the world.

These two important books leave us with large questions: What is the future of historical studies of Wright, and how might future exhibitions assess his importance for contemporary architecture? We do not know the answers to such questions, but we can be confident that the curation of Wright's archive will enable continuing examination and appreciation of his life's unparalleled scope of achievement.

JOSEPH M. SIRY
Wesleyan University

Katia Frey and Eliana Perotti, eds.

**Frauen blicken auf die Stadt:
Architektinnen, Planerinnen,
Reformerinnen**

Berlin: Reimer, 2019, 360 pp., 45 b/w illus.
€49 (paper), ISBN 9783496015673

This book, the main title of which translates roughly as *Women Looking at the City*, is the second volume of the series *Theoretikerinnen des Städtebaus* (Female Theorists of Urban Planning), begun in 2015. Both of the first two volumes in the series are results of the wish to "cartograph," as coeditors Katia Frey and Eliana Perotti write in the new book's foreword, and "enhance" the historiography of cities (7). Both editors have long been engaged in research and publishing projects in urban theory and are former senior researchers and lecturers at ETH Zurich (a connection one feels in the selection of the other participating authors). They are known for precise and detailed archival research and a commitment to feminist architectural history.

The ten chapters in this volume are organized around individual women, not movements, and they appear roughly in chronological order, beginning in the nineteenth century and extending up to today. Straightforward biography is mostly avoided, as the authors focus primarily on

the historical and theoretical contributions of their urbanist subjects, and nearly all of them present new archival research. If, from the Anglophone point of view, the monographic selection by gender—rather than by the subjects' overt commitment to feminism—might seem problematically binary, one could argue that in the German-speaking world of architecture, and Switzerland in particular, such an "additive" approach is still much needed. As Mary McLeod writes in her introductory reflection, "The focus on new or unconventional themes might be one of the reasons that many of these women are unknown—at least beyond their own national context" (13). Following each of the essays, which are in German, another layer of earnest commitment to the research is evidenced by a range of skillfully excerpted and introduced English-, Italian-, German-, and French-language primary materials that contribute greatly to the book's value as a teaching tool.

Even if not all the theorists discussed here may be described as feminists, the impact of gender on their professional and personal experiences is a common point of emphasis. For example, Frey and Perotti's essay focuses on reform movements in Europe during the nineteenth century that aimed to improve the living conditions of the poor and demanded education for all. The essay pays particular attention to the charity work of noblewoman Adelheid Poninska (1804–81), which resulted in one of the first German-language publications (in 1874) advocating for concrete housing plans for social reform, including dwellings for unmarried working-class women. Poninska was also an early European campaigner for public green space, a topic that connects this essay to the one that follows, by Katrin Albrecht, which is devoted to the aristocratic Italian garden planner Maria Pasolini (1856–1938).

Essays on Polish CIAM member Helena Syrkus (1900–1982), Sibyl Moholy-Nagy (1903–71), and the Bauhaus-trained Wera Meyer-Waldeck (1906–64) highlight a range of implicit, as well as explicit, barriers faced by women working at the height of modernism. Moholy-Nagy, for example, received no formal education and worked as an assistant to her husband, László, in Chicago. Following his death in 1946, she gradually established

herself as an important voice in postwar discussions of high modernism, in part by taking controversial stands, such as situating herself against celebrated examples of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's urbanist work, in particular his Lafayette Park project in Detroit, which he planned together with Ludwig Hilberseimer. Moholy-Nagy attacked this project in an essay titled "Villas in the Slums," published in 1960. At the same time, and as Hilde Heynen discusses in her contribution, Moholy-Nagy effectively positioned herself against what she perceived to be hostile attitudes toward architects and architecture in Jane Jacobs's 1961 book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. In 1962, in an essay titled "In Defense of Architecture," Moholy-Nagy wrote that Jacobs showed a "primitive ignorance of the profound concern of architects for the city" (154). Following Heynen's text, Moholy-Nagy's 1962 essay, originally published in *Architectural Forum*, is reprinted, along with a new introduction; this inclusion, a coup of thoughtful editing, is an example of this book's great potential for architectural education.

The situation of women in European society also played a major role in the professional practice of Myra Warhaftig (1930–2008). Trained as an architect at the Technion in Haifa before beginning her career in Paris, Warhaftig subsequently moved to Berlin and pursued a PhD during the 1970s, investigating the emancipation of women through the design of dwellings. Warhaftig was a vigorous critic of the normative ideal of the nuclear family—a controversial stance at the time. According to author Gerald Adler, that made "her theoretical oeuvre . . . an indicator for the changing attitude regarding the city in the second half of the twentieth century" (200). The shift in Warhaftig's perspective on housing, from a radical position to a more pragmatic one, can be traced through her decades of teaching, research, and code-signing, including the planning of an apartment block in Berlin completed in 1993. She is one of the few women presented in this book who inhabited the entire spectrum of urbanistic practices it addresses, from architectural design to theory to teaching and practice—an accumulation of experiences that remains fairly rare even today.

Most of the volume's authors provide extensive texture and depth in their essays.

Mary Pepchinski, for example, contributes to our understanding of the Bauhaus phase of Wera Meyer-Waldeck's training (1927–32) and her subsequent efforts to produce affordable living space in the postwar era. Some of the contributions, such as the essay on Françoise Choay by Thierry Paquot, are most interesting for their selection of primary sources. Chen Ting's fascinating closing essay, on contemporary Chinese urbanist Wenyuan Wu (b. 1966) and her fight for sustainable planning in China, is notable for its engagement with existing social and cultural conditions. However, this essay also points to gaps in the larger book, in particular its selective engagement with certain geographies of today's global design world.

Perhaps a third volume in the series could address that issue. Future authors may want to consider whether upcoming books in the series (if any are planned) should continue to focus on individual female figures. Broader discussions concerning gender and urban planning could potentially lead to a different model, one that is not organized around individuals but rather centers on concepts overlooked by the male-dominated history of urban planning. In any case, further installments in what is clearly a larger story will certainly be welcome, as would an English translation of this book.

MECHTILD WIDRICH
School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Martin Kohlrausch

Brokers of Modernity: East Central Europe and the Rise of Modernist Architects, 1910–1950

Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2019,
400 pp., 16 color and 77 b/w illus. \$65 (paper),
ISBN 9789462701724

Helena Syrkus is looking at you. The glossy white, painted-steel wall behind Syrkus and her company—Sigfried Giedion on the left, Le Corbusier on the right—render the setting immediately recognizable to scholars of interwar modernism: she is on the SS *Patris II*, the Mediterranean cruise ship chartered to serve as the mobile site for the fourth meeting of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne in 1933 (Figure 1).¹ Helena and her husband, Szymon Syrkus, were among five architects in

the Polish delegation who presented their collaborative planning for Warsaw in light of the congress's Functional City theme. The Syrkuses, who both held prominent positions in CIAM and on its executive committee, CIRPAC, are likely unknown even to those who recognize the *Patris II* at a glance. Helena Syrkus's steady gaze, and her centrality in the photographic frame, offers a direct challenge to the peripheral position of East Central Europe in modernist architectural historiography.

In his truly interdisciplinary book *Brokers of Modernity* (which features the unflappable Helena on its cover), Martin Kohlrausch seeks to rectify this geographical asymmetry in architectural scholarship by placing the new, or significantly reshaped, post-1918 nation-states of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary at the heart of his narrative. Kohlrausch has a larger goal, however: to investigate modernist architecture's group formation. It is worth stressing that Kohlrausch is a political historian who has chosen early twentieth-century architectural groups like CIAM as protagonists because their establishment and rise neatly encapsulate the installation and expansion of modernist technocratic expertise as a whole. After the two world wars, architectural groups shrewdly capitalized on urgent state-building and city-rebuilding needs to expand the profession's role in politics and society at the municipal, national, and international levels. Architects became critical brokers at the interface between the state and society, Kohlrausch argues. They made themselves into experts and seized the right to negotiate on behalf of both constituencies, promising to craft a mutually beneficial modern condition for all.

Because *Brokers of Modernity* crosses disciplinary boundaries to engage politics, economics, architecture, and planning in a region sorely underrepresented in English-language scholarship, it requires a lot of scene setting. The book opens with an overview of East Central European history in the first half of the twentieth century and highlights why historians of modernism should be interested in this region: for the extraordinarily fertile architectural ground that repeated acts of wartime destruction wrought. Herbert Hoover noted as much when he lamented, in 1919, that “as a result of seven invasions by different armies the

country [of Poland] has largely been denuded of buildings” (38).² Tomáš Masaryk, inaugural head of newly founded Czechoslovakia, called post-1918 Europe a “laboratory built over the great graveyard of the World War” (34). The theme of destruction as a precondition for radical innovation is a through line in this book. Later, in the sixth chapter, we learn that during World War II, East Central European cities like Warsaw, Lviv, and Minsk experienced uricide to a much greater extent than did most Western European cities; thus renewal by radical planning was rendered all but inescapable in the region. The second through fourth chapters pull back from a strict geographical focus on East Central Europe to consider, respectively, the rise of social concerns among architects in the wake of World War I; the establishment of international groups such as the League of Nations' Committee of Architectural Experts and CIAM, which sought to address these concerns; and the communication and transfer of architectural ideas across national boundaries during the interwar period, via journals, books, and congresses. These three middle chapters will be illuminating for readers outside the field of architectural history but will likely be skimmed by experts, with the exception of passages situating East Central European architects' activities against this broader story.

Brokers of Modernity breaks ground in its final two chapters, which focus on the Polish case in the 1930s and 1940s. The fifth chapter provides close analysis of the planning effort called Warszawa Funkcjonalna (Functional Warsaw), completed and published in 1934. Helena and Szymon Syrkus, two of the plan's main authors, were active participants in the Functional City-themed CIAM IV the year before, when two clear categories of modernist urban practice—analysis and synthesis—emerged. The analytical group advocated close reading of existing urban conditions before projective work was undertaken. The synthetic group, to which the Polish delegates belonged, advocated visionary planning aimed explicitly at the future. Warszawa Funkcjonalna was thus a synthetic plan that presented future Warsaw as an urban, national, and continental center—the European crossroads of transportation, communication, and cultural infrastructures. Kohlrausch paints this plan as “an attempt to overcome the process