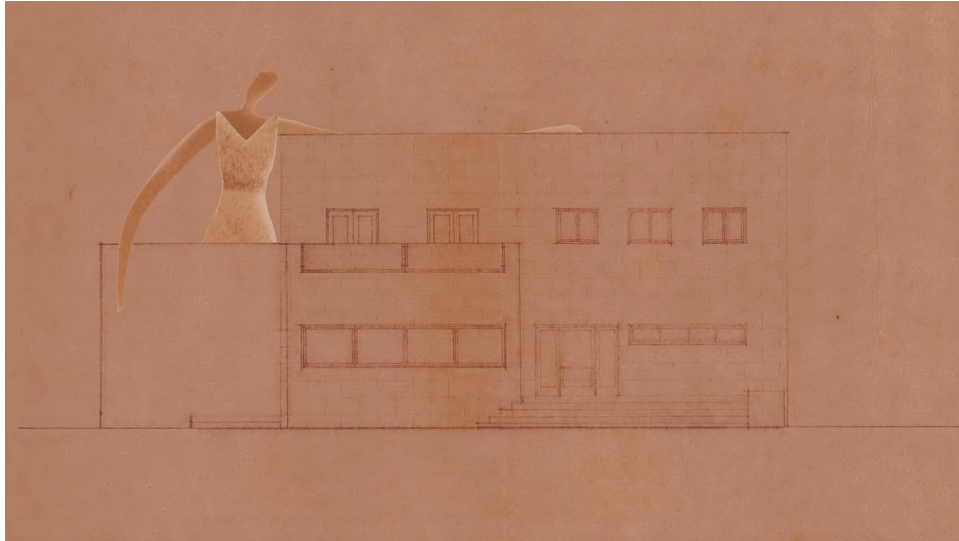


La Flâneuse



Nelly Agassi and Maya Raviv

Curator: Architect Sabrina Cegla

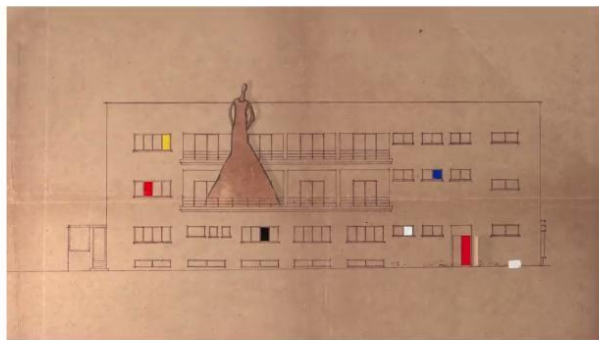
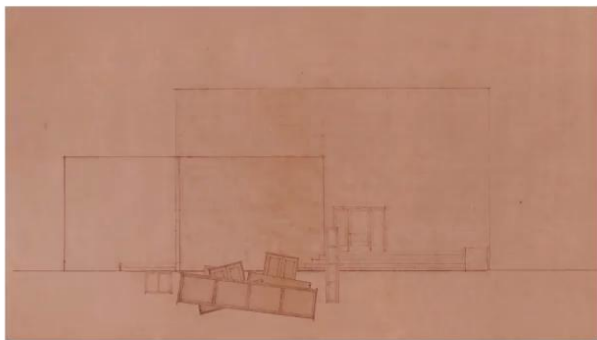
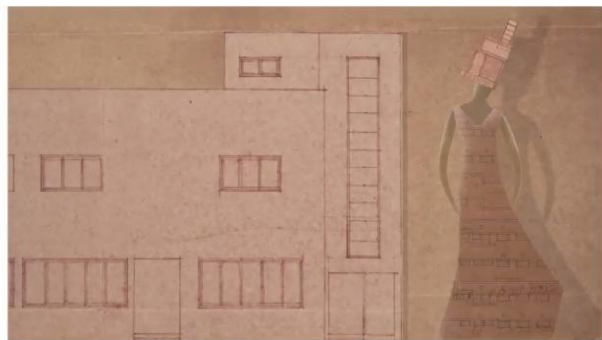
Liebling Haus Tel Aviv 2021

Video installation

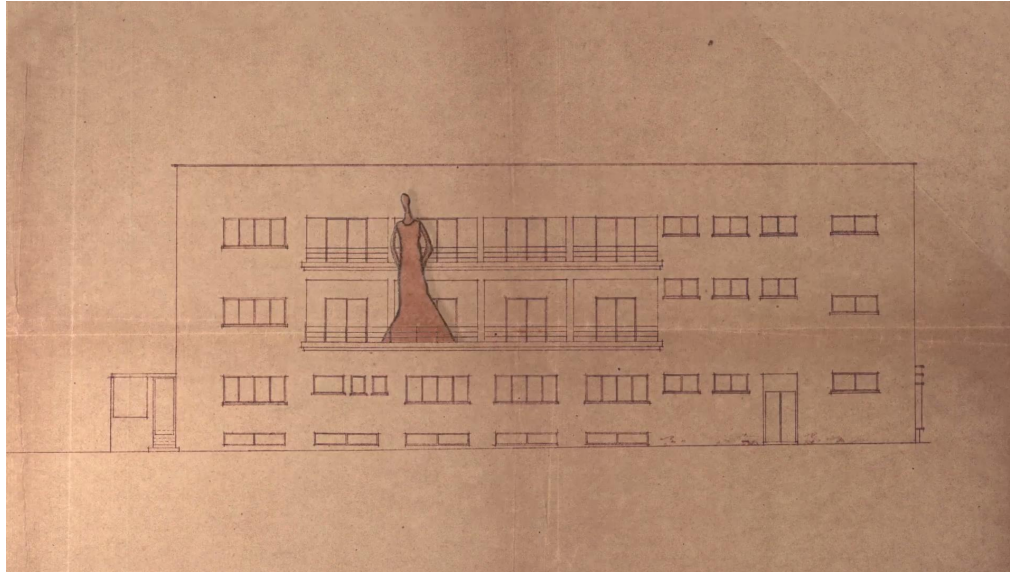


Nelly Agassi, Maya Raviv
La flâneuse, 2021

Animation: Maya Raviv
Collages: Nelly Agassi
Sound design: Nati Zeidenstadt



screen 1



Women Pioneers' House

Architects: Elsa Gidoni Mandelstamm, Genia Averbuch (Extension)

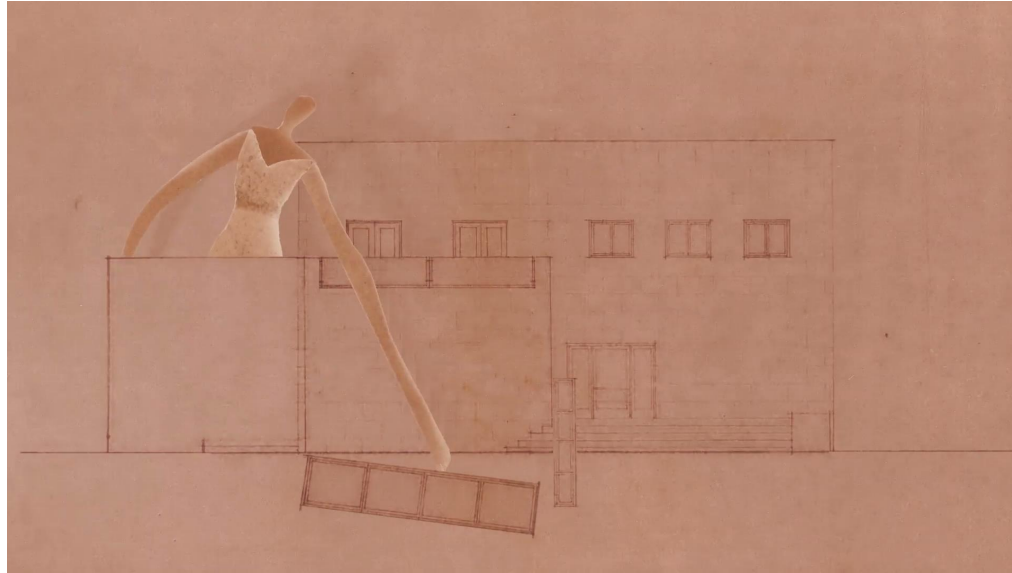
Engineers: Al Zeisler, Zalman Baron (Extension)

Client: Women Workers' Council and the Women's League for Israel (WLI)

Year: 1936, 1947 (Extension)

Address: 37 King George St.

screen 2



WIZO House

Architects: Elsa Gidoni Mandelstamm, Lotte Cohn (Extension)

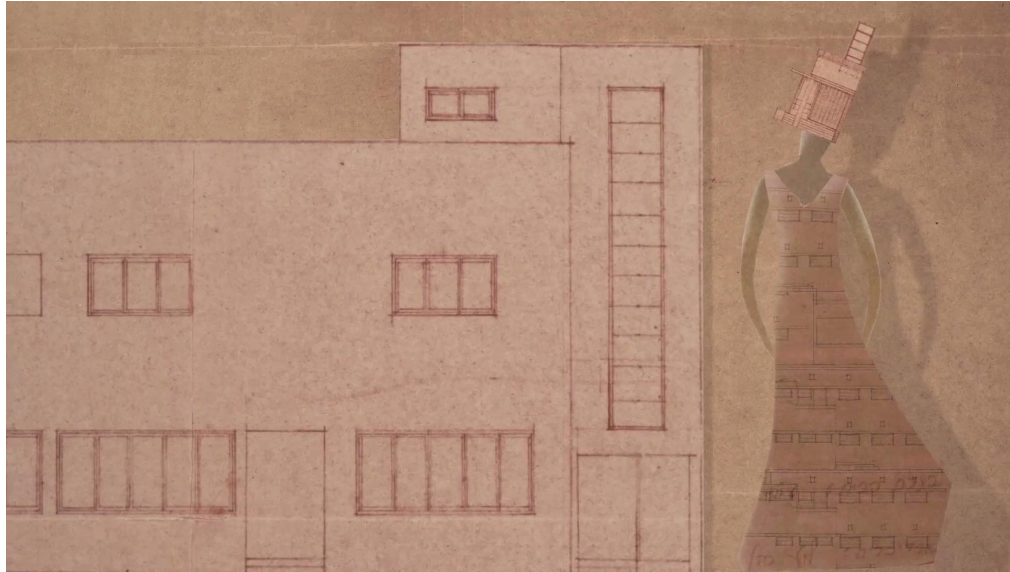
Engineers: Al Zeisler

Client: WIZO Women

Year: 1936, 1945 (Extension)

Address: 8 Simtat Beit Hashoeva St.

screen 3



WIZO House

Architects: Elsa Gidoni Mandelstamm, Lotte Cohn (Extension)

Engineers: Al Zeisler

Client: WIZO Women

Year: 1936, 1945 (Extension)

Address: 8 Simtat Beit Hashoeva St.

Women Pioneers' House

Architects: Mandelstamm, Genia Averbuch (Extension)

Engineers: Al Zeisler Zalman Baron (Extension)

Client: Women Workers' Council and the Women's League for Israel (WLI)

Year: 1936, 1947 (Extension)

Address: 37 King George St.

Collage



Nelly Agassi
Ms. Architect, 2021

Women Pioneers' House

Architects: Elsa Gidoni Mandelstamm, Genia Averbuch (Extension)

Engineers: Al Zeisler, Zalman Baron (Extension)

Client: Women Workers' Council and the Women's League for Israel (WLI)

Year: 1936, 1947 (Extension)

Address: 37 King George St.

Soft Plan (Roof), 2021



Maya Raviv
Soft Plan (Roof), 2021

WIZO House

Architects: Elsa Gidoni Mandelstamm, Lotte Cohn (Extension)

Engineers: Al Zeisler

Client: WIZO Women

Year: 1936, 1945 (Extension)

Address: 8 Simtat Beit Hashoeva St.

Installation



Nelly Agassi
Neither Velvet nor Silk, 2021

Women Planners and Builders in the White City

Sigal Davidi

In the 1920s Zionist women organizations in Eretz Israel began building institutions in Tel Aviv to improve the wellbeing and status of women in the city. These institutions responded to the material needs and mental difficulties of Tel Aviv women. Beit HaHalutzut (Women Pioneers' House, 1936, extension 1947) built by the Women Workers' Council (Moetzet HaPoalot), together with the Women's League for Israel (WLI), offered adequate housing for single women and work in cooperative workshops. WIZO established a women's club and training kitchen (WIZO House, 1936, extension 1945) and a Mothercraft Training Center in the Nordia neighborhood (New Zealand House, 1929, extension 1937) which provided support and guidance for young mothers in addition to medical care for infants. Most importantly, these institutions provided the city's women a physical space for meeting, collaborating and socializing, which they could identify with and take pride in. These institutions, and the myriad roles they performed, manifested the power of the organizations that built them, the autonomy of the city's women and the activities of women in the public sphere.

Three women architects – Lotte Cohn, Elsa Gidoni Mandelstamm, and Genia Averbuch – were chosen to plan the women's institutions after winning planning competitions held by the organizations. Winning a competition afforded these women architects financial independence, the possibility of developing their own practices and a consolidation of their professional status in the Yishuv. The close collaboration between the women architects and the women's organizations and this female solidarity bore a product of wholly female creation in which women initiated, funded, planned, supervised and managed social institutions for the promotion of women.

Cohn and Gidoni Mandelstamm both graduated from the Berlin Technical University and immigrated on their own to Eretz Israel. Cohn was the first woman architect in Eretz Israel (1921) and the first woman to establish an architecture practice in Tel Aviv. Many of her projects are milestones in the history of local architecture and the Yishuv: for example, the women's agricultural school in Nahalal, the first in the Yishuv for agricultural training for women (1926) and The WIZO Kitchen, the first electricity-run public kitchen in Eretz Israel (Tel Aviv, 1931). Gidoni Mandelstamm only worked in the country for five years (1933-1938) during which she was the main planner for WIZO institutions. Averbuch, who grew up in Tel Aviv and studied architecture at the Royal Academy for Fine Arts in Brussels, planned many apartment buildings in the city. In 1934 she won the competition for planning the Zina Dizengoff Square, for which she gained widespread recognition and admiration and an opportunity to make a prominent contribution to Tel Aviv's urban landscape. These women architects represented in their private and professional lives the model of the modern woman which was developing and flourishing in Europe: educated, professional, financially independent and working in a profession formerly occupied exclusively by men – at a time in which both in the world and in Eretz Israel, women architects were virtually unheard of. Cohn, Gidoni Mandelstamm and Averbuch contributed significantly to the development of the Yishuv and particularly to the development of Tel Aviv and its evolution into a city associated with Modern Architecture.

The women's institutions stood at the forefront of modernist planning at that time in Eretz Israel and the world; planning that offered a new formal style, yet above all expressed the ideology that created a new lifestyle and shaped the image of the new woman and her role in the new society forming in Eretz Israel. The plans feature sun balconies for resting, roofs meant for sports activities and many openings that emphasize the importance of natural ventilation and light. The training kitchens were planned according to the principles of domestic rationalization which favored professional techniques for housework and modernization of the domestic sphere.

This body of work of social modernism has to this day been excluded from historical discourse. It now takes its place of honor in the historiography of Modern Architecture and of the Yishuv.

Sigal Davidi (PhD) is an architect and architectural historian. Her research focuses on the relations between nationality, immigration, gender and old age, and the modern architecture of Mandatory Palestine and Israel. Her book *Building a New Land: Women Architects and Women's Organizations in Mandatory Palestine*, appeared in Hebrew in 2020.

La Flâneuse

Curator: Architect Sabrina Cegla

In the third Project Room exhibition artist Nelly Agassi and animator Maya Raviv address the question “What is the White City?” via la Flâneuse – a female figure who wanders around the White City, assuming and abstracting its buildings as if they were dresses. La Flâneuse seeks to decipher the changing city as if it were a fabric, wishing to reappropriate it through means considered feminine. Agassi and Raviv offer a new relationship between la Flâneuse and the city by evoking forgotten visions, activities and the female presence in Tel Aviv’s urban space.

La Flâneuse is also an architect who shapes and dismantles her environs. Her figure comes forth in a series of collages made from the historical architecture plans of three public buildings designed in the 1930s and 40s by women, for the women of the city, buildings whose construction was initiated by women’s organizations. La Flâneuse is therefore strolling in a very familiar Tel Aviv urbanity.

Her calm demeanor is in stark contrast to the constant rhythm of the city, then as now, from the 1930s with the construction of the physical space now known as the White City, and our current times, which are characterized by high towers, building renewal plans, conservation and rapid urban development. La Flâneuse bears witness to these processes of change, growth, decay; the emptying and neglect of the vision from which the city emerged.

Fabric becomes the soft building material that bridges between the traditional female role in the domestic sphere to the urban, public role, as can be seen in Agassi’s work Neither Velvet nor Silk. Here the fabric breaks through the exhibition space, formerly an apartment living room, floods the apartment balcony before joining the historical exhibition on the White City displayed in the adjacent rooms. In so doing it represents the move of women architects from planning the domestic space, traditionally perceived as feminine, into the public space and the manifestation of these domestic skills on an urban scale.

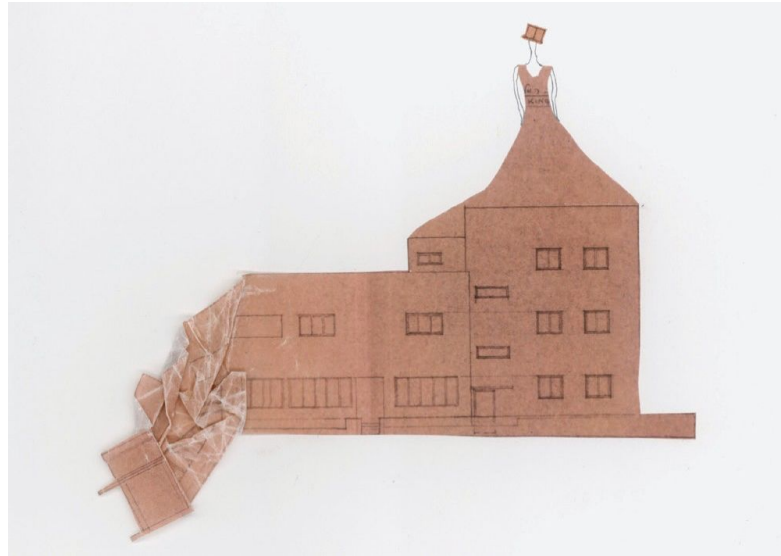
In other works the architectural plans and elements become patterns of dresses in Agassi’s collages or are translated back into fabric as can be seen in Raviv’s work Soft Plan (Roof), in which the paper plans and the hard structure have become a soft felt object recalling traditional female craft.

These transitions echo discourse about the entry of women into the architecture profession in Europe in the early 20th century, which included men deliberating over women’s capacity the physical attributes required of the woman architect as also her moral decency. For example, women desiring to study architecture at the Bauhaus school, active in Germany in 1919-1933, were encouraged instead to study at the school’s departments of weaving, pottery and book binding, all considered typically feminine pursuits.

Raviv and Agassi reflect on the connection between the female body, architecture and the city, between cultural conventions and dreams, and how the framework for the activities of these early 20th century women – the domestic space – was extended and became manifested in institutions meant to support women in performing their traditional roles – and the materiality associated with them. The artists act from within this context and expand it, adding their biographies to the story of the city and its inhabitants.

Through this personal examination and interpretation of three public buildings from the 1930s and 40s, Raviv and Agassi bring forth the stories and actions of women in the urban space of the White City, shed light on the passage of women planners from the private “soft” realm into the “masculine” public space, and the transformation of the domestic women-associated everyday sphere into a key object of modern planning.

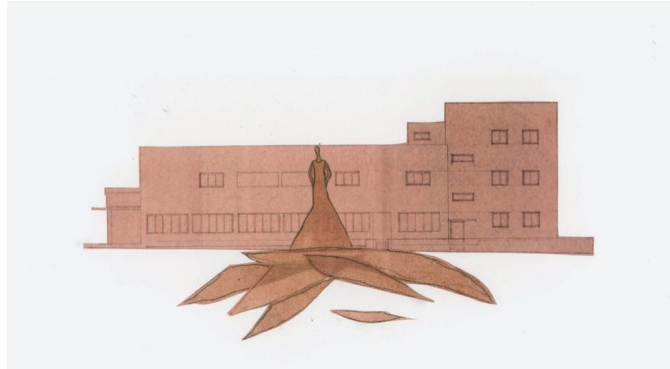
Agassi and Raviv were both inspired by the publication of *Building a New Land: Women Architects and Women’s Organizations in Mandatory Palestine* (2020, Hebrew) by the architectural historian Sigal Davidi.



La Flâneuse

The exhibition La Flâneuse is presented in the Liebling Haus Project Room, a space in which artists from various disciplines are invited to actively participate in a critical reflection on the question “What is the White City?” as part of an alternative, collaborative and ongoing investigation of the White City as a platform for discourse regarding conservation, urbanism, identity and culture in Tel Aviv. The Project Room is the open end of the permanent exhibition at Liebling Haus, which tells the story of the White City as the point of departure for a story in the making.

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Nelly Agassi

Chicago-based artist Nelly Agassi (b.1973, Israel) is a multi-disciplinary artist who works with performance, installation, video, textile, sound and works on paper. Her work explores the relationship between the human body and architecture, through investigating sites and their histories, traumas and hopes. She weaves personal and collective stories to a universal fabric of new history.

She received her MFA from Chelsea College and her BFA from Central St. Martins, both in London. Her work has been shown internationally at institutions and galleries such as The Arts Club of Chicago, Aspect Ratio, Hyde Park Art Center, The Israel Museum, Poor Farm, Tate Modern, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, La Triennale di Milano, and Zacheta Warsaw. Foksal Gallery Warsaw. Agassi is a cofounder of the nonprofit organization Fieldwork Collaborative Projects and a 2019 Graham Foundation Fellow, Pola Magnetyczne, Warsaw. She is represented by Dvir Gallery and Pola Magnetyczne, Warsaw.

Maya Raviv

London based Maya Raviv (b. 1972, Israel) is a motion designer and animator.

Raviv creates works in the field of culture and art and works for the commercial market where she collaborates with artists, musicians and choreographers.

She also creates works in needle felt and other handcrafts. Raviv has an MA from Central Saint Martins, and BA (with honors) from LCC, both in London.

Her works have been shown at Haifa Film Festival, Tel Aviv Cinematheque International Video Dance Festival, ICA London, Milan Design Exhibition and various exhibitions in the US.

Thank You

