

# Press Release

Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation

For Immediate Release

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## The Architecture of Writing: Wright, Women & Narrative Premiering “A Girl is a Fellow Here” ~

### *100 Women Architects in the Studio of Frank Lloyd Wright*

New York, June 4, 2009. Following the premiere of “A Girl is a Fellow Here”~ *100 Women Architects in the Studio of Frank Lloyd Wright*, a short documentary film produced by the Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation, author **Suzannah Lessard** moderates an evening discussion titled “Architecture of Writing: Women, Wright & Narrative” that will explore how architectural writing – whether fact, fiction or faction— influences and perpetuates architecture’s historical narrative, with noted psychologist, writer **Carol Gilligan**, and PBS History Detective Host, historian **Gwendolyn Wright**, at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum on Wednesday, June 10 at 6:30 pm. This public program is offered in conjunction with *Frank Lloyd Wright: From Within Outward*, an exhibition co-organized by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation on view at the Guggenheim through August 23.

According to Wanda Bubriski, Director of the Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation, “the film is the catalyst for a discussion about definitions of architectural genius with an eye to broadening these definitions and dispelling the familiar myth of the designer’s autonomy. How, for example, have existing narratives shaped our perceptions of Wright and his work? How have women architects fared within that narrative? More generally, how does the narrative language itself represent women architects? Does the persistent tradition among writers to construct the idea of a “master” in architecture actually do a disservice to the practice’s inherently collaborative nature? The evening’s discussion will illuminate as well as critique the methods and criteria that writers have used to define Wright and other architects, with the goal of offering an expanded framework in which collaboration in general, and the roles of women in particular, can assume a greater significance in the remarkable history of Frank Lloyd Wright’s work and the rich history of American architecture.”

Bubriski points out that the 15-minute documentary film “A Girl is a Fellow Here” ~ *100 Women Architects in the Studio of Frank Lloyd Wright* discusses the time when few architectural firms would hire women, and that Frank Lloyd Wright unhesitatingly employed women, giving them both training and the opportunity to practice. Ultimately, over 100 women architects and designers worked with Wright, many of them going on to remarkable careers of their own. “They are,” according to **Beverly Willis**, the film’s director, “Frank Lloyd Wright’s unknown legacy, and their practice forms a legacy for all women working in architecture today.”

**Lois Davidson Gottlieb**, FAIA, the evening’s Guest of Honor, participated in the Taliesin Fellowship in 1947-48. The Taliesin Fellowship is featured in the Sackler Center for Arts Education exhibition *Learning By Doing* that includes models, drawings, and photographs of shelters designed, built, and lived in by students of Taliesin, also on view through August 23.

This event is co-organized by the Sackler Center for Arts Education and the Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation. Tickets are \$10, and \$7 for members and students. For more information, visit [www.guggenheim.org/publicprograms](http://www.guggenheim.org/publicprograms) and <http://www.bwaf.org/index.html>, and for tickets, contact the Box Office at 212 423-3587

### **Participant BIOS**

**Carol Gilligan** is a psychologist, novelist, and currently University Professor at New York University. Her 1982 book, *In a Different Voice*, is credited as “the little book that started a revolution.” Her first novel *Kyra*, published in January 2008, introduces into a fictional narrative—perhaps for the first time—a female architect as the protagonist. The San Francisco Chronicle reviewer called it “a rare thing: an engrossing, deeply emotional, thinking person’s love story.” Her 1992 co-authored book, *Meeting at the Crossroads*, was a New York Times Notable book of the year. In 2002, *The Birth of Pleasure* was praised by the Times Literary Supplement as a “thrilling new paradigm” and characterized by National Public Radio as the work of a psychologist who writes like a novelist. Time Magazine named her as one of the 25 most influential Americans.

**Lois Davidson Gottlieb**, FAIA, studied at the Taliesin Fellowship in 1947-48, before graduating with a Masters of Architecture in 1950 from Harvard’s Graduate School of Design. Gottlieb in her own practice provided design or construction services for a total of 100 projects. A recipient of Fulbright scholarships, Gottlieb has written two books, including *A Way of Life: An Apprenticeship with Frank Lloyd Wright* (2001) using her own photographs from Taliesin.

**Suzannah Lessard** is a writer of literary non-fiction, currently working on a book about the American landscape under the working title *Mapping the New World: Place in the Twenty-first Century*. She is the author of the critically acclaimed memoir, *The Architect of Desire: Beauty and Danger in the Stanford White Family* for which she won the 1996 Whiting Award. From 1975 to 1995 she was a staff writer for *The New Yorker*.

**Beverly Willis, FAIA**, is president of the Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation, which she founded in 2002, following a 50-year in career in architectural and design practice, beginning as a multi-media artist. Among the award-winning architecture projects in her extensive portfolio are the Union Street Stores (1965), the Margaret Hayward Park Building (1978), and the San Francisco Ballet Building (1983). Her art has been exhibited at the Cooper Hewitt Museum and Honolulu Academy of Art. She authored *Invisible Images—The Silent Language of Architecture*, published in 1997 by the National Building Museum.

**Gwendolyn Wright** is professor of Architecture at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation and a host of the PBS television series, “History Detectives.” Her recent book, *USA* (2008), is part of a series on Modern Architectures in History published by Reaktion Press and the University of Chicago Press. Her previous books include *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (1991); *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (1981); and, *Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873-1913* (1980).

**Film Credits:** in-D Multi-media Company Film; Produced by The Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation; Written and directed by Beverly Willis; Script by Meg Pinto; Art Direction by Tim Sakamoto; Music by Josh Sklair; Narration by Shiromi Arserio; Edited by Francois Maurin.