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Pioneers and Organisations

Introduction

To ask the question of women's involvement in the professions of architecture or designer raises the much more general question of the place given in professional activities to this part of the population defined from its social position rather than from its physiological reality. In what way would the very nature of the professions of architect or designer really differ from all other activities for which the career of women has been hindered or concealed? And according to what historical modalities has the access of women to these professions gradually been made possible and visible?

The following four studies in this chapter relate to the slow emergence and difficult recognition of women in the professions related to the construction of buildings and the organisation of spaces from different points of view. By observing the beginnings of this history at the end of the nineteenth century and during the first decades of the twentieth century, and by analyzing the objective conditions of access to the exercise of these professions, either through educational institutions or through professional associations, these studies retrace a history that is often misunderstood or forgotten. The history of the pioneers of architecture in Italy or France in the early 20th century, the life of a German artist who was active in the Dada movement, the forgotten role of women who participated in the collective adventure of the CIAM – all these stories expose the difficult paths of women in search of professional recognition, and the trace that they have left in the evolution of these professions.