Mission

The Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation for Women is leading a cultural revolution in the building industry that will acknowledge, cultivate, and value women’s contributions and achievements—past, present, and future.

BWAF advocates for gender equity in leadership and recognition in the architecture, design, landscape, engineering, technology, real estate and construction industries. BWAF achieves its mission by researching and documenting women’s contributions and achievements in the built realm, educating the public, and transforming industry practices.

Through exhibitions, websites, media, public and invitation-only programs, the Foundation collaborates with museums, universities, professional organizations, and other groups to advance women. We cultivate leaders at all levels. Through our work, we seek to build global change.

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Cultivating gender equity in design and construction
In 2002, I founded the Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation for Women (BWAF) to fight to ensure that women in architecture have the same opportunities as men to realize their dreams and to be remembered. The creation of BWAF meshed with my broader lobbying efforts for change, including the 1978 resolution, passed by the American Institute of Architects, to support the Equal Rights Amendment. Nearly forty years later, the profession has yet to live up to the promise of equality. Whether women will finally be able to achieve democratic equality with men depends on our collective will to forge a new professional culture of inclusion. Working together, with the financial support of all who are committed to this mission, and with BWAF’s innovative programs, research, and leadership, we will create a more equitable future for women in the building industry.

–Beverly Willis, FAIA

Programs

Built by Women

Built by Women is an ongoing exhibition and program that celebrates women’s contributions to the built environment. First launched in New York City in 2014 at the Center for Architecture, then expanded to Washington, D.C. in 2016 at the National Building Museum, Built by Women is a juried selection of sites, buildings, landscapes, and projects submitted by women who designed, delivered, built, and managed them. With entries as diverse as subway stations and historic town plans, Built by Women can be launched in any area where women are practicing and having an impact on the built environment. BWAF is looking the forward to expanding this program throughout the United States.

Dynamic National Archive

The Dynamic National Archive is a wiki-style archive with more than 1,300 American women architects, engineers and others who have helped shape the built environment. BWAF.com/dna

Pioneering Women of American Architecture

The upcoming website Pioneering Women of American Architecture, funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, will present fifty profiles of women designers, critics, and social visionaries selected and written by renowned architectural historians. BWAF.com/pioneers

Films

BWAF supports and produces documentary films on women designers, including “A Girl is a Fellow Here: 100 Women Architects in the Studio of Frank Lloyd Wright” and the upcoming film: “Unknown New York: The City that Women Built.”

Pioneers

“Pioneers” is a new quarterly public lecture series that brings new research from historians on early women in architecture, design, engineering, and construction to a public audience.

Industry Leaders Roundtable

BWAF commissions research and invites large firms in the design and construction industries to share the latest business concepts to prepare high potential women for key decision making roles where they can change the culture of the industry. The aggregated professional staff of global architecture and engineering firms is roughly 100,000 of which approximately 15,000–20,000 are women. BWAF reaches across the country to share best practices and has hosted the program in New York, San Francisco, and Chicago. This program includes experts in human resources planning, corporate governance, law, and organizational psychology. Sponsors include: SOM, Perkins + Will, Langan, Stantec, Thornton Tomasetti, HOK, among others.

Emerging Leaders Program

Twenty invited and sponsored participants engage with significant senior women in architecture, real estate, law, and financial services to advance their own career goals. This program in its pilot year has explored Risk, Rain-Making and Resilience.

To request an invitation or nominate a participant for future seminars, please contact info@bwaf.org.

Leadership Awards

To acknowledge those firms who are leading the way by changing their cultures to be more inclusive, promoting talent, and retaining women throughout the span of their careers, BWAF celebrates firms, individuals and other industry organizations at an annual awards gala. Held each March in New York City during Women’s History Month, the prestigious awards program brings together a diverse group of sponsors and participants dedicated to advancing women in the professions.

Support BWAF

Transform the building industry by expanding knowledge about women’s contributions to the built environment by sponsoring BWAF research, events, and outreach. BWAF is a 501(c)3 educational organization.

For information regarding sponsorship opportunities please contact: Cynthia Kracauer, AIA, Executive Director, ckracauer@bwaf.org