

A Female Futures Lexicon on Space, in: 50 Jahre nach 50 Jahre Bauhaus, Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart, 2018

(Asli Serbest, Mona Mahall)

Open collection of feminist statements on utopian spatial imagination (>> **utopias**) and the production of possible (domestic) spaces. It aggregates spatial works, ideas, propositions, and provocations to reassemble modern architecture's history and future, authors, inhabitants, and discourses—with feminist tools. In terms of structure, the lexicon is an open and growing archive that can go from a word to a phrase, from a drawing to a floor plan, from an argument to an entire text.

Airless Spaces

(Shulamith Firestone, 1970)

Ambient units similar to refrigerators, but rather warming than cooling, belowdeck on an (sinking) ocean liner. They replace the airless space of the female womb (>> **Bauchhaus**) to provide reproduction outside the biological female body.

Airless Spaces are places where the basic social organization of the biological family is uprooted—“*the vinculum through which the psychology of power can always be smuggled.*” As they provide alternatives to pregnancy and childbirth, they not only help eliminate the sex distinction: “*genital differences between human beings no longer matter culturally.*”

- Airless Spaces include the idea to understand ocean liners in emancipatory not just in aesthetic terms, as modernist architects would recognize them—*the Bauhaus has actually failed* because it has not recognized the intrinsic emancipatory meaning of science, but just included it as subject matter into the traditional aesthetic system; also, Le Corbusier, who actually recognizes the ocean liner as an organizational model for reimagining a city or society, does not question the smallest unit of the nuclear family's cell.
- Airless Spaces help to undo the major failure of a politics of citizenship that is at the core of global contentions over cultural, legal, social, and political exclusion and inclusion. To end the inequality continuously reproduced by institutionalized substantive membership, legal status, rights, and participation within a nation-state, Airless Spaces travel international waters, introducing not so much a possibility to choose between nationalities, but an idea of general statelessness (>> **Jinwar**).

Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (1970)

Shulamith Firestone, *Airless Spaces* (1998)

Alpha 7

(Jean-Claude Forest, 1962)

Spaceship used by Barbarella to travel the universe of 4000 AD, mostly in the vicinity of an uncharted planet in the Tau Ceti system. It imagines a female place in outer space that mocks gender clichés, masculinized space travel, and techno-utopian narratives. The walls of the cockpit are covered in (fake) fur, where the pilot sits in the sunken bed behind the controls. It contains a keyboard in front of the large exterior window that opens the view onto SoGo (the future's abbreviated version of Sodom and Gomorrah), a modernist city of glass and steel. The Alpha 7 is equipped with an onboard computer, Alphy, who navigates the ship, as well as a terra-screw that the ship can use to drill into a planet. It also includes a female statue communicator and a walk-in wardrobe behind a hidden door in the wall of the cockpit.

In the space capsule is hanged the famous painting *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* by painter Georges Seurat from 1884 (>> **Capsules**).

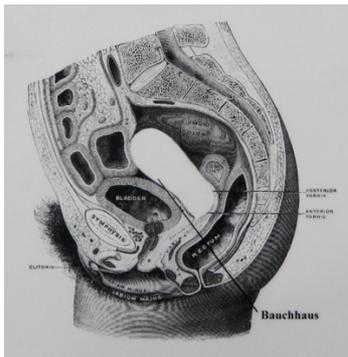
Barbarella (1968), science fiction film directed by Roger Vadim



Barbarella ve Sunita, still from video by Asli Serbest (2018)

Bauchhaus

(Lorraine Liedert, 2018) (>> **Airless Spaces**)



Bauchhaus. Collage by Lorraine Liedert. Result of the collective workshop led by Asli Serbest and Mona Mahall at the Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart (2018)

Black Box (>> Bauchhaus)

Capsules

(Galina Balashova, 1957–1980)

Interior designs for the Soviet space program to make the outer space a habitable, post-domestic place for the cosmonauts. They are primarily designed as living spaces, not as metal carcasses stuffed with technical equipment. They imagine the role of space travelers beyond their mystification as techno-positivist super machos.

The capsules show Bauhaus colors and other elements, but also a green modernist sofa out of a special fabric so that the cosmonauts would not lose their jersey pants on them. Obviously, a red sofa might be preferable, but, for reason of film and photo aesthetics, the green version is favored. As green is known for its calming and stress-relieving effects, it helps matching a temperamental psycho-physiologic human (e.g., a man under the effects of adrenaline) and the complicated machine.

The space habitation modules are moreover equipped with watercolor drawings by Balashova, among others, scenes of a winter landscape and a summertime beach depicting a Black Sea city. One of the capsule spaces includes three books by three different Soviet poets, packed in primary Bauhaus colors: red, yellow, blue.

Philipp Meuser, *Galina Balashova: Architect of the Soviet Space Programme* (2015)

Cookbook

(Alice B. Toklas, 1954)

Collection of recipes and a reportage on the events of the Second World War and its effects on modern metropolitan space. As the narrative leaves and returns to the topos (place) of the kitchen—for space- and mind-expanding operations—it discovers free space between the lines of the text genre (the cookbook) and the domestic sphere of cooking. Two examples:

- A short paragraph reports from Paris when a policeman enters the restaurant where Alice B. Toklas and Gertrude Stein are dining after parking their big car to tell them that trucks are not allowed in the Bois. “They had been tolerated during the war, but an Armistice had been signed. So would Madame see that her truck did not appear there again.” When Toklas gets back to the table, she writes, an excellent dish is being served.
- A recipe to prepare “*Hashish fudge (which anyone could whip up on a rainy day): Take 1 teaspoon black peppercorns, 1 whole nutmeg, 4 average sticks of cinnamon, 1 teaspoon coriander. These should all be pulverised in a mortar. About a handful each of stoned dates, dried figs, shelled almonds and peanuts: chop these and mix them together. A bunch of canibus sativa can be pulverised. This along with the spices should be dusted over the mixed fruit and nuts, kneaded together. About a cup of sugar dissolved in a big pat of butter. Rolled into a cake and cut into pieces or made into balls about the size of a walnut, it should be eaten with care. Two pieces are quite sufficient.*”

Alice B. Toklas, *The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book* (1954)

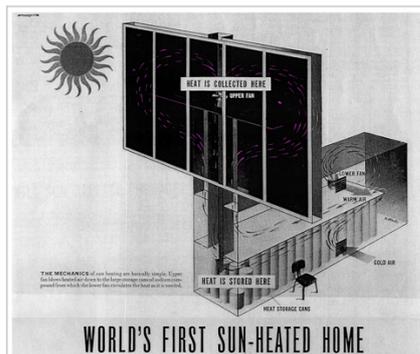


Alice B. Toklas, collage by Mona Mahall (2018)

Dover Sun House

(Maria Telkes, Eleanor Raymond, 1948)

Solar-powered house (demolished), with a wedge-shaped roof to help it collect sufficient light. Though being the first building based on the concept of passive solar heating, it attracts only short attention, not because of its innovative invention, but because of its authors being female. A line of eighteen windows is installed on the second story of its south-facing wall. Behind these windows panels of glass and metal are placed to store the sun's heat, warming the air that travels between the glass and metal layers. The warmed air is blown through across enclosed, insulated storage bins included in the walls of the house. These bins are equipped with twenty-one tons of Glauber's salt. On sunny days, the salt will melt and absorb heat, cooling the air in hot weather. When the temperature falls, the salt will cool and recrystallize, giving off its stored heat.



Advertisement for the Dover Sun House, 1948, coloration by Asli Serbest (2018)

Frankfurter Küche

(Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, 1926)

Kitchen designed for the minimization of kitchen work embodying the prototype of the modern built-in kitchen. It makes its architect claim: *I am not a kitchen (Ich bin keine Küche)*.

Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, *Erinnerungen aus dem Widerstand, 1938–1945* (1985)

Haus 20

(Marlene Moeschke-Poelzig, 1926)

Residential building located at Rathenaustraße 7 in Stuttgart as a part of the modernist Weißenhof-Siedlung (Weißenhof Estate), destroyed during the Second World War. The building is structured by a clear floor plan with a veranda and a rooftop terrace with a curtain. Although Hans Poelzig has been commissioned to design the building, it is his sculptor wife who is responsible for the design.

House of the Future

(Alison Smithson, 1956)

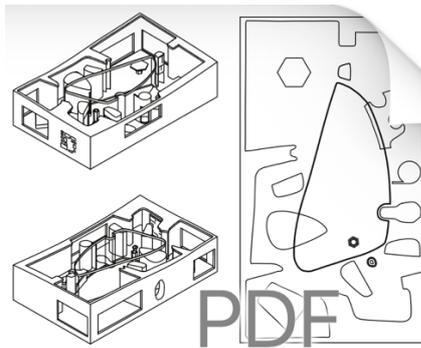
Ideal home project designed to anticipate the lifestyle of the future by representing the housing prototype of a plastic composite (>> **Tupperbox**). It is a fusion of a modernist utopian version of the ancient atrium house and an interiorized atomic bunker, showing inhabitants surrounded by hi-tech devices that make life easier. It includes spatial units and gadgets to minimize housework and turn it into a “push-button game” (>> **Self-Cleaning House**).

Alison and Peter Smithson contradict the male Bauhaus visions in their manifesto from the same year: “Gropius wrote a book on grain silos, Le Corbusier one on aeroplanes, . . . But today we collect ads.”

The newest technologies of the time are included in the House of the Future. The temperature, the lights, the front door, the dining room table are controlled by panels on the walls. The table and the bed can sink into the floor when not in use. There are no blankets as the bed regulates the temperature with a single heated nylon sheet for the comfort of its inhabitants—including the cat. A short-wave transmitter (proto remote control) runs everything, also the TV and the radio. A sunken plastic tub is thermostatically controlled, and the cylindrical shower includes air jets for drying.

In the newspaper article on the House of the Future, “Housewife’s Dream—It May Be 1984,” one can read: “*The year is 1984. If Big Brother is watching he will see that TIGHTS are definitely The Thing to wear,*” referring to the outfit of the male actor-inhabitants designed by Alison Smithson. When it comes to the preparation of food, the article reads: “*Raw meat, milk, butter and even fresh fish are stored in quantities in a cupboard . . . packed in airtight plastics containers. . . . All the food is bombarded with gamma rays—an atomic byproduct to kill all bacteria. You don’t grill a steak here. You bombard it with gamma rays*” (>>

Tupperbox).



Plans for a house of the future. Asli Serbest, Mona Mahall (2018)

Jinwar

Jinwar Free Women’s Village (Kurdish women’s movement, since 2017)

Free communal settlement, bound to Jineoloji, the science of women and free life. The ecological village is currently under construction in the center of Rojava (western Kurdistan / northern Syria).

Jineoloji goes back to Abdullah Öcalan and his reading of socialist Murray Bookchin and develops a theory along three basic principles: democracy, ecology, and women’s liberation. As a new science, it criticizes the modern connection between male hegemony, oppression, and science and aims at reinterpreting mythology, religion, philosophy, and science. As an anti-modernist political ideology, it advocates “democracy without the state,” an ideal based on local self-governance, gender equality, communal economy, and cultural and religious diversity.

In the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria, Jineoloji has become an official part of the education system, being taught in schools and at Rojava University.

jinwar.org

Llano del Rio

(Alice Constance Austin, 1915)

Cooperative community near Palmdale, California, with a socialist communal government advocating economy of labor, materials, and space against land privatization and speculation. The city is structured around the kitchenless house (>> **One Manifesto Less**) that is connected to a communal kitchen through underground tunnels. Railway cars from the center of the city bring cooked food and laundry to the basement of each house, realizing the idea to professionalize otherwise invisible and unpaid housework. The house is equipped with built-in furniture and rollaway beds to make dusting and sweeping easier. Heated tile floors replace carpets, and there are windows with decorated frames (all produced by the community) to eliminate curtains.

The kitchenless house creates a flowing space as it opens up to the neighborhood through a patio. This organization of space resets the relation between interior and exterior, private and collective spheres, creating the possibility of more fluid relations than the private core family structure.

Mostulab

(Lillian and Frank Gilbreth, 1920s)

Domestic Motion Studio Laboratory that, in contrast to other modernist aspirations to machines for living, is not conceived in aesthetic but in operational terms. It integrates all of the Gilbreth family's twelve children into a rigorous system of housework, with the aim of turning the large household into a machine that runs itself. Girls and boys alike have to participate and are evaluated on standing order forms, output charts, pay charts, telephone charts, bath charts, and charts recording chest expansion on inhalation.

Thus Frank Jr.'s morning routine does not allow for a minute of waste: Martha wakes him up on the hour, and he is in the bathroom by 7:01. By 7:02 he is playing German records (to practice the language) as he brushes his teeth and bathes. He weighs himself and records any change on his weight chart at 7:07, combs his hair, washes the ring out of the tub, starts the bath for Bill, and winds up the Graphophone at 7:08. By 7:10 he wakes up Bill and turns on the French records to listen as he dresses. At 7:16 he shines his shoes, and he makes his bed two minutes later, straightening his room three minutes after that. If he keeps the pace, he is down to breakfast at 7:31. Any later, and every sibling after him is thrown off of his or her routine.

With Mostulab, the operations research approach is realized in a household environment. While it applies the processes of optimization to all spheres of life, it also shifts hierarchies, roles, and distribution of work within a family.

Julie Des Jardins, *Lillian Gilbreth: Redefining Domesticity* (2013)

Model

(Michael Hoffmann, 1996)

Scaled representation of a phallic high-rise carried and crushed by architect Michelle Pfeiffer, who trips over her own handbag.

Museum for Annie Albers



Satellite view of Bottrop with a museum for Anni and one for Josef Albers. Mona Mahall (2018)

n-1 (>> One Manifesto Less)

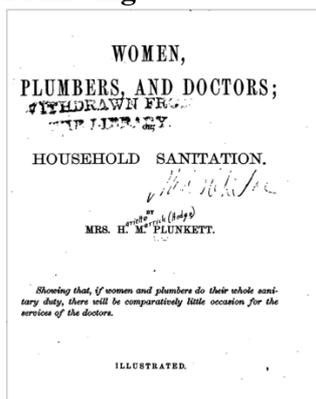
One Manifesto Less

(Un manifeste de moins, Gilles Deleuze, 1979)

Text discussing the subtraction of the male authority figures from Shakespeare's play *Richard III* by Carmelo Bene (who also cuts off Romeo from *Romeo and Juliet*). The amputation that leaves Richard and the female characters on the stage is regarded as an activity directed against the original text and the power that resides within it. In Bene's version, the female becomes a creature who does not cease to appear as child, mother, wife, seductress victim, and warrior in an endless series of transformations.

Gilles Deleuze, "One Manifesto Less," trans. Alan Orenstein (1993)

Plumbing



Cover of *Women, Plumbers, and Doctors: Household Sanitation* by Harriette Merrick Hodge Plunkett (1885)

Self-Cleaning House

(Frances Gabe, 1984)

Patented invention (patent number: 4428085) that consists of sixty-eight appliances to make the house clean and dry itself. By pressing a button, sprinklers in the ceiling of each room are

activated to clean the room with detergent and water followed by hot-air drying. The building construction cleans not only the house, but also clothes, dishes, and even the doghouse. The “giant dishwasher” eliminates (mainly) women’s reproductive labor and unpaid housework, in completing the Frankfurt kitchen concept.



Model of a self-cleaning house by Asli Serbest and Mona Mahall (2018)

Theater Hall

(Marlene Moeschke-Poelzig, 1919)

Installation for the Großes Schauspielhaus in Berlin, a former market, and conceived as a utopian space for the mystic education of people in Berlin and the Weimar Republic who call it the *Tropfsteinhöhle* (dripstone cave). Its dome and the pillars are decorated with muqarnas that resemble stalactites. The ceiling turns into a night sky when illuminated, as it is equipped with light bulbs that form a meaningful pattern of celestial constellation.

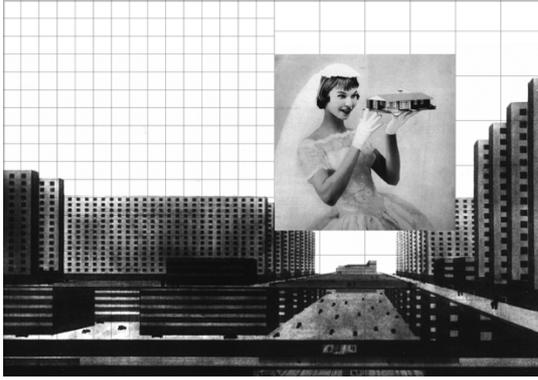
The same pattern is said to be used in the city-like film set for *Golem*, a 1914 movie by Paul Wegener. The streets, buildings, and interiors are sculpted as three-dimensional forms (not as two-dimensional backdrops as typical for this time). They embody the astrological ideas that underlie the film set in medieval times.

Tupperbox

(Earl Tupper, 1938)

Product resulting from (plastic) innovations of the Second World War (such as bikinis, drive-in cinemas, window conditioners, satellites, etc.). It is a neutral white box that can be refilled easily.

- The Tupperware party is a direct marketing strategy that blurs the borders between domesticity and commerce (similar to Airbnb), work and leisure, consumer and employee, commodity and gift. It includes games, like the invitation to its (female) guests to write hypothetical newspaper advertisements to sell their (male) partners. The texts are then read out to the party set: “One husband for sale. Balding, often cranky, stomach requiring considerable attention!”



hilberseimer, grid, bride, 2018. Collage: Hochhausstadt von Hilberseimer (1924) / Photograph of the post-war bride from 1956 in: House Beautiful / Drawing. Courtesy: Asli Serbest, Mona Mahall (2018)

Unisex Uniform

(Varvara Stepanova, 1923)

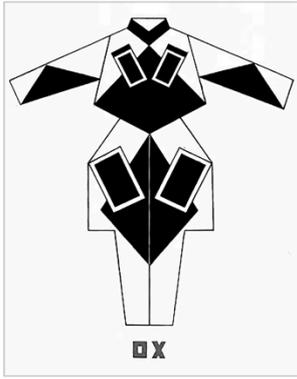
Designs for white shirts and dark striped pants, with a *central core* (Judy Chicago, 1977), producing a female image of the vaginal form. The androgynous uniform minimizes natural differences between bodies and envisions a hybrid classless and genderless body. It is created as a space and organ of activity that adjusts to actions, expands with them, and constantly renews its own shape and function. Regarded as a counterpart, a coworker, a comrade (Boris Aratov, 1925) of the subject, it is a doubling of the human body without constructing a female / male difference.

The unisex uniform worked simultaneously as a thing and a utopian space, not just celebrating movement, but also mobilizing solidarity in a struggle for recognition in the public sphere.

Designed for a mass industrial production process, where a typically feminine practice of applied arts deviates into scientific constructivist and industrial technology, it is a product of an avant-garde movement that unsettles some of the gendered attributions of modernist art in general and the Bauhaus specifically.



Varvara Stepanova and Janelle Monáe in uniform, collage by Mona Mahall (2018)



Varvara Stepanova, drawing for a unisex uniform (1923)

Utopias

Alternative propositions to those modernist utopian aspirations attributed to men and usually seen as bound up with paternalistic, colonial, and totalitarian attitudes. Reacting to the ideological implications and effects of these grand projections of modernism, the alternative utopias produce minor concepts and a potentiality where new connections and communalities become possible and where economic, gender, and racial equality, as well as ecological justice, can evolve.

White Cube (>> Tupperbox)