



PRESS RELEASE

“Mind the Gap”: Diversity in Architecture e.V. Hosts Conference in Berlin to Promote Women in Architecture

Diversity in Architecture e.V. (DIVIA) is excited to announce the upcoming “Mind the Gap” conference, set to take place on **1 November 2024** at the **AEDES/ANCB architecture forum in Berlin**. The event introduces a fresh format for both the DIVIA members and the interested public. It will be held in English during the interim years of the biennial DIVIA Award, which honors outstanding women in architecture.

The conference brings together international experts, researchers, practicing women architects, and students to explore and to discuss the current challenges and opportunities for women in architecture.

The program includes three sessions:

- **Session 1: Research the Gap** – The opening session analyzes existing gaps in architectural theory and presents current research addressing these gaps.
- **Session 2: Bridging the Gap** – This session highlights the importance of collaboration among disciplines. It shows how interdisciplinary projects contribute to creating a sustainable and inclusive future in architecture.
- **Session 3: Building without the Gap** – Practicing women architects present innovative projects that have overcome barriers through creative solutions and forward-thinking approaches.

The event will conclude with a panel discussion featuring distinguished speakers.

Dr. Ursula Schwitalla, founder and chair of DIVIA, speaks on the significance of this new format: “This conference marks an important step towards building an inclusive and collaborative architecture and design community. It shows that women play a crucial role in shaping a sustainable future for the built environment and serves as a call to address the challenges ahead.”

The event will open with a keynote by **Pascale Sablan**, an award-winning American architect and CEO of the New York office of Adjaye Associates. Sablan, who is also president of the [National Organization of Minority Architects](#) (NOMA), expressed her enthusiasm for participating: “I’m really excited about coming to Berlin and participating in the conference because the discourse about [diversity and equity] is starting to be quieted and muted here in



the States. To be able to continue to have those discussions and talk about those practices in Europe is going to be very powerful.”

The event will begin at 9:30 AM at Christinenstraße 18-19, 10119 Berlin, and is expected to conclude at around 4:45 PM. The full program and speaker lineup are available on the [Diversity in Architecture website](#). To secure your place, please register via this [link](#). For those unable to attend in person, a streaming link will be provided closer to the event date.

About Diversity in Architecture e.V.

Diversity in Architecture e.V. (DIVIA) was founded in 2021 by architecture expert Dr. Ursula Schwitalla and is co-led by Dr. Julia Roever and Dipl.-Ing. Christiane Stahnke. The organization aims to significantly enhance the visibility of women in architecture and urban planning through the international DIVIA Award.

Globally, the recognition of women in architecture remains disproportionate, with a ratio of 20% women to 80% men. Despite the growing number of women receiving awards since the 1980s, gender parity in the field is not expected until 2080. “This needs to change, which is why we created the DIVIA Award—to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of women in architecture,” says Schwitalla, who is also the curator of the *Architecture Today* lecture series at the University of Tübingen and the editor of *Women in Architecture*, published by Hatje Cantz in 2021. She adds: “A total of 60% of architecture students in Germany are women, but only 34% are practicing professionals, and a mere 10% run their own firms. We want to inspire young female architects by providing role models and recognizing their work.”

DIVIA Award 2023

The inaugural DIVIA Award 2023, which included €20,000 in prize money, was presented to Marta Maccaglia. The Italian-born architect is the founder of [Asociación Semillas](#), an NGO dedicated to educational projects in the Peruvian Amazon and the construction of schools in settlements near Lima.

Maccaglia was chosen from five finalists, which included May al-Ibrashy (Egypt), Noella Nibakuze (Rwanda), Tosin Oshinowo (Nigeria), and Liza Fior & Katherine Clarke (England). All finalists were featured in DIVIA’s traveling exhibition, which was showcased, among other venues, during the pre-opening of the 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale, and in a [catalogue](#) published by Hatje Cantz.



The prestigious DIVIA jury was appointed for two award cycles and consists of prominent figures in architecture such as Sol Camacho, Rahul Mehrotra, Odile Decq, and former Pritzker Prize director Martha Thorne. For the 2025 cycle, architecture historian Itohan Osayimwese has also joined the team.

“It’s a pleasure to be a part of the jury for the first [two] Diversity in Architecture Awards,” says Thorne. “I am passionate about architecture and about opening up the field to new talent, especially women and minorities. They have so much to contribute to the field [but] have been neglected in the past. We need to bring diversity into everything we do to create the most rich, interesting, and positive developments in architecture.”

Martha Thorne will deliver a welcome speech at the “Mind the Gap” conference on 1 November 2024.

The nomination process for the 2025 DIVIA Award is currently in progress. As in 2023, up to 30 women architects from all six continents are being nominated by international experts. The five finalists will be announced in January 2025. In the future, DIVIA intends to extend its support to other underrepresented groups in architecture.

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