
Marion Mahony Reconsidered is a compilation of four essays analyzing different aspects of the architect Marion Mahony’s professional and personal life. These essays were originally presented at the 2005 symposium, “Marion Mahony Griffin Reconsidered,” held at Northwestern University in conjunction with the exhibit Marion Mahony Griffin: Drawing the Form of Nature. While Mahony is known for her original renderings, with distinctive perspective views and inclusion of lush landscapes, her role as a designer and architect in her own right is less clear.

To construct a portrait of Mahony, these combined essays look at her individual work as a registered architect, her contribution to the practices she worked in, her biography of her husband, The Magic of America, as well as first person testimony from her coworkers. Mahony’s career is inexorably intertwined with the lives and careers of the architects that she worked for and collaborated with including Frank Lloyd Wright and her husband Walter Burley Griffin. Through analysis of projects that were executed while Mahony worked in these practices, each author postulates about her contribution to these partnerships and to individual projects. This process is made difficult for scholars because of Mahony’s lack of documentation of her own independent projects or contributions to partnerships and is compounded by the fact that Mahony was largely forgotten for the last half of the 20th century. While each essayist looks at Mahony’s life through a different lens, taken together a portrait of Mahony as a progressive thinker, community builder, collaborative designer, and an environmentalist, emerges.

Marion Mahony Reconsidered opens the door for further study and presents an insightful portrait of a pioneering designer whose contribution to American architecture deserves recognition and further study. This book is recommended to libraries with American architectural collections. It provides scholarly analysis of a significant woman architect and insight into American architecture at a watershed moment. The text is complemented by mostly black and white reproductions, large enough to be useful to those seeking visual documentation of her work, as well as extensive citations and an index.

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