

# Wilhelmina Jansen's houses: peripheral architectures in Dutch modernity

*Las casas de Wilhelmina Jansen: arquitecturas periféricas en la modernidad holandesa*

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## Abstract

This article presents for the first time a series of houses built by the pioneering Dutch architect Wilhelmina Jansen, the only one of the first female graduates to have her own architectural office. Her architectural practice was nurtured by her active participation in numerous women's networks and her work in the Women's Advisory Committee VAC, a voluntary women's organization that advised the Municipality of Rotterdam on housing and the environment.

Jansen's houses represent a concept of modernity where forms were thought and experienced from a precursory feminist perspective. Despite these values, her work is absent from the historiography of modern Dutch architecture narrated on the basis of male figures and iconic objects. Her discovery is the result of intensive research in her personal archives, interviews and the survey of the works. Paradoxically, from the margins of modernity, Jansen's works have innovated in discussions that today are central, such as architecture with a gender perspective.

*Key words:* Wilhelmina Jansen; women architects; houses; Dutch modernity; feminist perspective.

## Resumen

Este artículo presenta por primera vez una serie de viviendas construidas por la pionera arquitecta holandesa Wilhelmina Jansen, la única de las primeras egresadas en tener su propio estudio de arquitectura. Su práctica arquitectónica se nutrió de su participación activa en numerosas redes de mujeres y su labor en el Comité Asesor de Mujeres VAC, una organización de mujeres voluntarias que asesoró al Municipio de Rotterdam sobre la vivienda y el medio ambiente.

Las casas de Jansen representan un concepto de modernidad donde las formas eran pensadas y experimentadas desde una precursora perspectiva feminista. No obstante, estos valores, su obra está ausente de la historiografía de la arquitectura moderna holandesa narrada en base a figuras masculinas y objetos icónicos. Su descubrimiento es resultado de una intensa investigación en sus archivos personales, entrevistas y el relevamiento de las obras. Paradójicamente, desde los márgenes de la modernidad las obras de Jansen han innovado en discusiones que hoy son centrales como la arquitectura con perspectiva de género.

*Palabras clave* Wilhelmina Jansen; mujeres arquitectas; casas; modernidad holandesa; modernidad holandesa.

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## Architecture and women's organizations

The pioneering Dutch architect Wilhelmina Catharina Maria Jansen (1904-1889) ran her studio for 40 years (1931-1971) in her own home in the city of Schiedam. She was the author of more than 80 works and projects<sup>1</sup> that addressed the themes of housing, the adaptive re-use of existing buildings, landscape architecture, interior design and, especially, a series of valuable houses. (Fig.1)



- 1 Carolina Quiroga, "Wilhelmina Jansen y sus conceptos pioneros en arquitectura feminista" in *Actas XXXV Jornadas de Investigación. XVII Encuentro Regional SI+ Palabras clave* (Buenos Aires: FADU UBA, 2021)

Figure 1. Wilhelmina Jansen at her holiday home in Altea, Spain, 1972. Source: Jansen Family Archive.

Her career was sustained by her active participation in several women's organizations where she promoted access to education and employment for women, as well as contributing the knowledge of her disciplinary field to the construction of a fairer habitat. As a student she was president of the board of DVSV<sup>2</sup> the Women's Student Association of Delft University. She was a founder of the VVAO<sup>3</sup> Academic Women's Association and of the VAC Rotterdam Women's Advisory Committee, a pioneering women's organization that advised the municipality on housing and the environment.

Jansen is hardly mentioned in the official historiography of modern Dutch architecture. Firstly, because it has been constructed on the basis of a *canon*,<sup>4</sup> i.e. an exclusive/exclusionary mechanism that constitutes authority and power by creating an intentionally selective version of the past around male figures or masters of architecture, suppressing the work of women. Secondly, because it has revolved around the production of iconic objects, relegating to the margins issues such as everyday architectures or heritage conservation, which were precisely Jansen's interest. Last but not least, this androcentric and elitist vision underpinned which architectural practices were successful.

- 2 DVSV (*Delftsche Vrouwelijke Studenten Vereniging*) was created in 1904 after several failed attempts. Several of the pioneering women architects were presidents of the association: Elisabeth Zeeman (1916-1917), Suzanna Heyting (1920-1921), Wilhelmina Jansen (1927-28) and Jakoba Mulder (1924-1925).

- 3 VVAO (*Vereniging voor Vrouwen met Academische Opleiding*) was created in 1905. Jansen was a founder of the Rotterdam chapter, a member of the board (1945-1946) and a leading member of the national VVAO board (1947-53).

- 4 Laura Malosseti Costa, "Canon, estilo y modernidad en la historiografía artística argentina. De Eduardo Schiaffino a Romero Brest", in *Anais do XXII Colóquio Brasileiro de Historia del Arte* (Porto Alegre: Comité Brasileiro de Historia del Arte, 2012), 1-12.

In this context, the gender perspective constitutes a strategic research approach to revise history by recovering and revaluing those trajectories of women who have been silenced. In this field, the pioneering research on women in architecture by Ellen van Kessel and Marga Kuperus that began in the 1980s and the recent emergence of several initiatives and projects<sup>5</sup> on the subject are worth mentioning.

- 5 Highlights include the projects *Collecting Otherwise* by Het Nieuwe Instituut, *Cherchez La Femme* by Lidewij Tuumers and María Novas Ferradás, and Merel Pit's work in publications and lectures.
- 6 Archive number 608 ir. W.C.M. Jansen, ca. 1930-1980, Gemeentearchief Schiedam.
- 7 Doctoral thesis in progress at the University of Buenos Aires in Argentina.

The main aim of this article is to make Wilhelmina Jansen's work visible by focusing on her production of individual dwellings. It is based on the research initiated in 2009 for the book on the RVS Flat building for which I was invited by Anita Heijkoop, author of the publication and resident of the building. In 2018, also Anita informed me about the donation of Jansen's personal archive,<sup>6</sup> to the municipality of Schiedam. Since then, Jansen, the pioneering Dutch women architects and VAC are the case study of my ongoing doctoral thesis.<sup>7</sup> For this, I have worked on the declassification of her archive, the oral records of her family through interviews and the re-mapping of her buildings. For this particular article I present the first house designed by Jansen as an architect and a series of built houses, which have not yet been published.

### *Architectenbureau Wilhelmina Jansen*

In 1931 Wilhelmina Jansen graduated as an architectural engineer at the Technische Hogeschool Delft. She was the eighth child of Hermanus Johannes Jansen (1859-1935) and Jacoba Maria Catharina Beukers (1815-1895), a traditional Schiedam family linked to the gin trade. And she was the only one of her siblings to attend university with the support of her parents when few women were encouraged to pursue higher education.

As shortly after graduating, she started her studio *ir W.C.M. Jansen architecte*, later renamed *Architectenbureau ir W.C.M. Jansen*, which operated out of her home at 17 Rubenslaan in Schiedam. Her passion for architecture, belonging to a privileged social class and building up a portfolio of clients through her family and social ties were probably decisive factors in her intense professional practice. Nor was the fact that she was unmarried a minor factor, since in the Netherlands married women from 1924 to 1956 were legally incapacitated, i.e. they could not dispose of their property, take out mortgages, travel without their husband's consent, and had no legal say over their children. Also, women working in government service were automatically dismissed upon marriage.

Jansen had a particular interest in housing<sup>8</sup> issues. She gave several lectures on the subject in the cycles of the Academic Women's Association: "Apartment Housing" (23 September 1946) and "Modern Interiors" (23 October 1947) at VVAO Rotterdam and "Interior Architecture" at VVAO Utrecht (December 1952). Among her specializations, in 1957 she attended the Danish Housing congress in Copenhagen organized by the Danish Institute in Amsterdam in cooperation with Good Wonen.

- 8 Data extracted from VVAO and VAC documents in the Jansen Archive in Schiedam.

The house and the community, the home and urban planning, and the economics of facilities were among the themes of the congress. During the excursions, Jansen photographed works by fellow Danish women architects: the row houses in Park Søllerød (1956) and the Gladsaxe Gymnasium secondary school (1956) by Eva Ditlevsen (1916-2006) and Nils Koppel (1914-2009).

In terms of design, VAC<sup>9</sup> was a fundamental contribution to her work because it allowed her to acquire training in housing design from a women's perspective. She advised on dozens of housing complexes in the new post-war urbanizations, observing shortcomings and proposing changes to improve conditions for women: Zuijdwijk, Pendrecht, IJsselmonde, Pernis, Hoogvliet, Schiebroek, Lombardijn, Hoek van Holland, Prins Alexanderpolder, Ommord. For these consultancies, VAC studied literature, visited buildings and especially listened to women's opinions, collected through surveys and interviews.

VAC also allowed her to think about domestic architecture from a collective and interdisciplinary approach. The committee members were women housewives, feminist writers, politicians, housing professionals, interior designers and medicine doctors. In the same discipline, the committee included Ada Kuiper-Struyk (1908-1985), architect, politician and member of numerous women's networks and housing organizations.

Her career can be periodised in three distinctive stages, in which she designed houses:

-1932-1937. Modern Essays or the gradual detachment from the historicist language learned at the school of architecture: competition for a House for an architect (1932).

-1937-1946. Landscapes and gardens or the integration of her interest in gardening into architecture: 12 houses in Heerlen (1938) and 7 houses in Eindhoven (1939).

-1946-1972. Architecture, Feminism and Modernity articulating her experience at VAC: project houses in Schiedam (1953), Nieuwkoop (1954), Ossendrecht (1963), Bergen (1960), Venlo (1963), Meer (1971) and built houses in Meerssen (1955-1957), Reeuwijk (1965) and Altea (1971).

She was the author of the RVS Flat housing block for working women (1947-1955) in Rotterdam, built in collaboration with the architectural firm Kuiper, Gouwetor, De Ranitz and Bleeker. Since 1938, the building was promoted by the Rotterdam Women's Centre Foundation —consisting of seven departments of women's institutions— only succeeded in seeing it built in 1956. It was built on the initiative of the Foundation for the Promotion of Working Women's Housing and financed by the insurance company RVS with the help of the government.

Although at the time of its inauguration the housing was also for the elderly and single-parent families, RVS is an example of architecture designed for women. The design of the housing units relieved domestic chores by improving life at home: optimization of equipment —kitchen, storage space— flexibility through an adaptable bedroom and a large balcony for leisure and enjoyment of the landscape. In the same way, the wide space of the halls was to allow the women residents of the building to meet each other.

### 1932. House for an architect

At the time of her graduation, Jansen participated in the competition House for an Architect (1932) organised by *Architectura et Amicitia*<sup>10</sup> (Architecture and Friendship), being the only female architect among the ten winning entries<sup>11</sup> out of 147 submitted. (Fig.2)

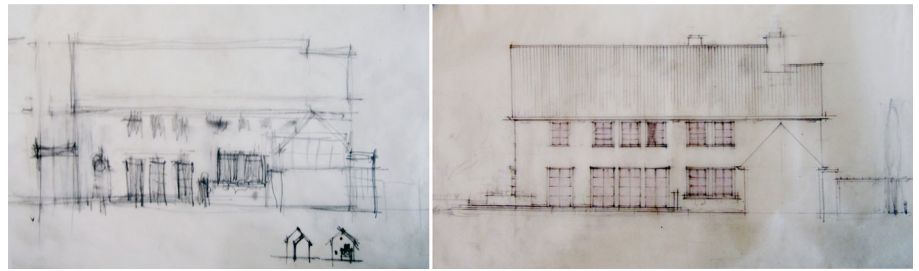
- 9 See: Carolina Quiroga, "Lotte Stam-Besse, Wilhelmina Jansen y Ada Kuiper-Struyk en Pendrecht: Obra pública, vivienda y mujeres", *Vivienda Y Ciudad (Instituto de Investigación de Vivienda y Hábitat, Facultad de Arquitectura, Urbanismo y Diseño, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba)* n° 8 (2021): 185-209; Lidewij Tummers and María Novas Ferradas. "Pioneers in Dutch architecture. The rol of women in post-war housing innovations in the Netherlands", *VAD. veredes, Arquitectura y divulgación*, n° 6 (2021): 20-32; Carolina Quiroga. "Wilhelmina Jansen y VAC -Comité Asesor de Mujeres- Rotterdam: vigencia de un diseño feminista en vivienda colectiva", *Hábitat Inclusivo (CHI IEH FADU UBA)*, n° 17 (2021): 1-20.

- 10 *Architectura et Amicitia* (Architecture and Friendship) is an Amsterdam architectural society founded in 1855.

- 11 The ten selected were in order: Marius Duintjer, A. Nieuwpoort, J. Pot, H.B. van Broekhuizen, W.J. Brunnik, Arthur Staal, W.A. van Gogh, Wilhelmina Jansen, H. Stegeman, Karel Lodewijk Sijmons Dzn.

Figure 2. House for an architect, Wilhelmina Jansen, 1932, façade design process.

Source: Gemeentearchief Schiedam, Archive number 608 ir. W.C.M. Jansen.



12 Wieger Bruin, A.P. Smits, and H.T. Zwiers. "Rapport betreffende de eerste korte studieprijsvraag, uitgeschreven door het genootschap Architectura et Amicitia", *Bouwkundig Weekblad Architectura* (1927-1945), 1932: 193-204.

13 See: Arlette Strijland, *Vrouwelijke tuin- en landschapsarchitecten in Nederland 1898-1998* (Amsterdam: Hogeschool van Amsterdam, 1999); Anne Mieke Backer, *Er stond een vrouw in de tuin: Over de rol van vrouwen in het Nederlandse landschap* (Rotterdam: de HEF, 2016).

14 Renske Titia Boon (1900-1985) was characterised by her austere designs in agricultural orchards in Hoogezand from 1930 and the renovation of Verhildersum (1968) and Domies Toen (1961).

15 Catharina Polak Daniels (1904-1989) introduced innovative projects such as the gardens for the blind in Wolfheze (1965) and the roof gardens at the Ministry of Finance (1973-1977), the Ministry of Justice (1975) and the Ministry of General Affairs (1977-1981) in The Hague.

16 Mien Ruys (1904-1999) attended architecture courses with Granpré Molière in Delft in 1931-1932. Works include the collective gardens at Geuzenhof (Amsterdam, 1932) and Frankendaal (1948), the urban plan for Nagele (1955) and its cemetery (1957), the Van Nelle (Rotterdam, 1942) and De Ploeg (Bergeik, 1956) factories, the Esperlerlaan cemetery (Emmeloord, 1956) and the Ockenburg crematorium (The Hague, 1964).

The aim of the competition was to design an architect's studio house, and the results provide an overview of the architectural searches of the time: traditionalism (Nieuwpoort, Van Gogh, Bunnik, van Broekhuizen, Brunnik), rationalism (Staal, Lodewijk Sijmons Dzn) and another set of hybrids between tradition and modernity (Stegerman, Pot, Jansen).

Jansen's house was very well received by the jury:

*The general situation, design and layout of the site are correct. The garage cannot be used in this position. Especially on the first floor, the plan is quite generous. By the way, the whole layout is clear and logical. The façades are sober, but worthy.*<sup>12</sup>

In a mixed approach, the house combined some traditional forms such as the gable roof with a modern design in the composition of the facades. Located in Amsterdam, the site was on the border between the city center and the suburb. The house was built in an L-shape creating a garden overlooking the water. A tall volume parallel to the street had the public area on the ground floor and bedrooms on the first floor. Perpendicular to this, another one-level block contained the studio and separated the garden from the neighbouring municipal services building.

### 1938. Twelve houses in Heerlen

In 1938 Jansen built a series of 12 houses in the city of Heerlen, which can be considered the first work of its kind built by a Dutch woman architect where architecture and landscaping were thought of in an integral way.

The main training of the women landscape designers of the time<sup>13</sup> was in gardening, horticulture or art. Renske Titia Boon<sup>14</sup> studied at the Horticultural School for Girls in Rijswijk and Catharina Polak Daniels<sup>15</sup> at the Agricultural School in Groningen. Or Mien Ruys<sup>16</sup> whose experience was acquired in the family nursery, with the landscape gardener Gertrude Jekyll and supplemented with some architectural courses in Delft. In the case of Jansen, her training as an architect was linked to her extensive knowledge of gardening, probably not acquired at the school of architecture, since the postgraduate courses in Delft on landscape architecture taught by Granpré Molière from 1926 onwards were oriented towards urban design and planning.

Her sister Ida Jansen (1891-1976) and brother-in-law Gerardus Edixhoven (1893-1980) lived in Heerlen to be close to Edixhoven's work. He was a mining engineer and director of the company Laura & Vereeniging which managed the Julia and Laura coal mines in Eygelshoven. Through them she received several commissions for the mine, established a portfolio of local clients and most likely got this work.

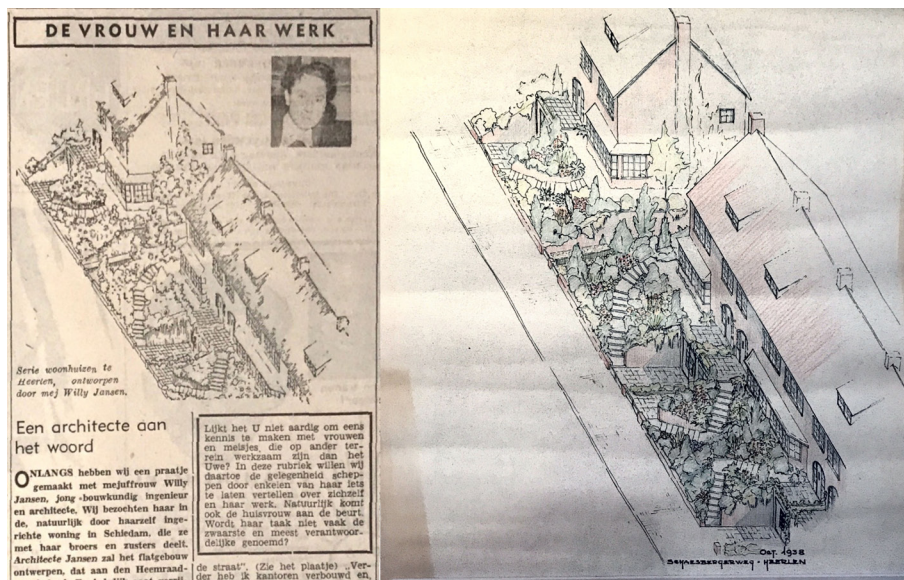


Figure 3. Twelve houses in Heerlen, Wilhelmina Jansen, 1938, publication and aerial perspective. Source: Gemeentearchief Schiedam, Archive number 608 ir. W.C.M. Jansen.

Jansen chose the drawing of the 12 dwellings to illustrate the interview “Women and their work. A woman architect gives her opinion” in the newspaper *Het Rotterdamsch Parool/De Schiedammer*, in which she commented on the project and the work of her studio (Fig.3):

*I have designed residential buildings. Here you see drawings of a series of houses, which I built in Heerlen. They are about 2.5 m above street level and the garages at the same height as the street. (See the picture) I also renovated offices and especially in the war years I did landscape architecture. The latter is a hobby of mine. Just before the war, young unemployed people in South Limburg carried out some of my projects.*

Located on the Schaesbergerweg, the complex was organised in two groups of houses —four in the centre and two on the corners— set back from the street frontage. The steep slope of the site was used to advantage in the organization of the programme in the section: the garage at street level, the public areas on the first floor and the private areas on the second. In terms of form, it was planned as a regular volume with a continuous sloping roof and brick walls from which a series of bow-windows overhang. Contrasting this austere expression, the access gardens were designed with a system of diagonal staircases and an irregular pattern of vegetation. These decisions resulted in a great spatial richness both for each house and the urban landscape. (Fig.4)



Figure 4. Twelve houses in Heerlen, Wilhelmina Jansen, 1937, image of the construction and current state. Source: Jansen Family Archive, Carolina Quiroga 2022

The design logic of Jansen's gardens navigated between the historical memory of the Dutch domestic garden and the new modern ideas. She appealed to the use of simple rectilinear or broken forms, the material and expressive rationality of modernity. At the same time, the small-scale operations and the use of varied species combined with different colours recaptured the spatial warmth of traditional Dutch gardens. The rigorously drawn plans of the project show her precise handling of the formal and chromatic characteristics and the flowering times of the species of plants, shrubs and trees.

In Heerlen, she also designed the garden of the J. Meyers House on the Akerstraat - Molenberglaan (1939) and was the landscape architect for two works by the architects Th. P. Van der Boomen and F.W.M. van der Berg: The Dr. F.A. Hötte villa on the Molenberglaan (1939) and the residence of H. Anten, two paired houses on Franciscusweg 37 (1943).

### 1955-57. Bungalow in Meerssen

Edixhoven retires from the Laura & Vereeniging company in 1958. Three years earlier, Jansen began designing a new house for he and her sister Ida in Meerssen. With access from the Korte Raerberg, the site chosen was an irregular, sloping polygon that spilled out onto exceptional views, which Jansen described in the drawings as farmland, meadows and orchards. (Fig.5)

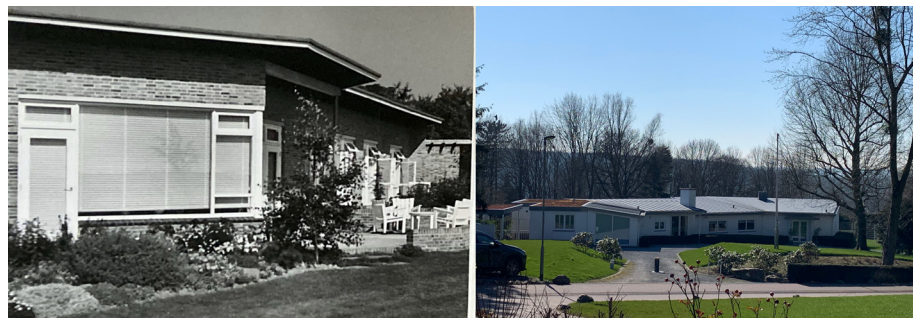


Figure 5. Bungalow in Meerssen, Wilhelmina Jansen, original condition and current state.

Source: Jansen Family Archive; Carolina Quiroga 2022

The concept, form and relationship of the building to this landscape changed from the first sketches. This was expressed in the way Jansen called the drawings. She defined the first two proposals as "house" (*woonhuis*), one with a compact plan and the other with a bipartite plan (13 July 1955). The next was a "country house" (*landhuis*) with a more open V-shaped floor plan (28 August 1955). Finally, the "bungalow" (2 December 1955) was a plan split into three parts in order to get the best views of the surrounding countryside.

17 See: Walter Beeting and J.J. VRIEND, *Bungalows* (Amsterdam: Moussault, 1958).

18 Interviews with Cato Christine Lammers-Koeleman and Jannetje Kammer-Kret at Ellen Van Kessel and Marga Kuperus, *Vrouwen in de (stede)bouw wat doen jullie nou? over werk en werkervaringen van vrouwelijke bouwkundig ingenieurs in Nederland*, (Amsterdam: Doktoraalscriptie kunstgeschiedenis VU Amsterdam., 1982).

The bungalow<sup>17</sup> was a type of suburban house that expanded during the post-war period among the middle classes who sought contact with nature away from the big cities. In general, they were one-storey pavilions whose formal treatment sought to strengthen the relationship between the interior and the exterior. The North American domestic architecture of Richard Neutra and Marcel Breuer was influential. In addition to Jansen, other pioneering Dutch women architects built or lived in bungalows. Cato Christine Lammers-Koeleman (1911-2000) designed her residence in Arnhem (1954) in this type. Jannetje Kammer-Kret (1906-1984) built her house in Berkerwoude (1960) and a bungalow for the architect Catharina Strumphler (1911-1981) and her mother in Arnhem.<sup>18</sup>

The final strategy of fragmenting the plan into three parts also defined the location of the architectural programme: a volume with the garage and storage rooms, another central one for the bedrooms and kitchen, and a third one with the access, living room and the studio. These movements in the plan allowed for both functional independence and spatial richness through the different rooms that were articulated with each other and with the surroundings. (Fig.6)

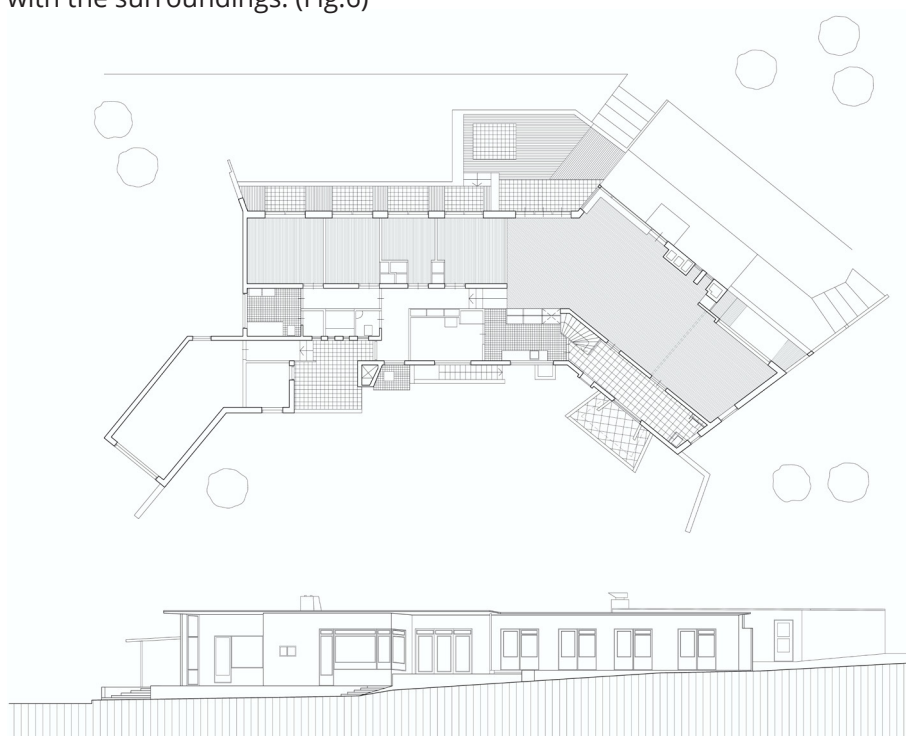


Figure 6. Bungalow in Meerssen, Wilhelmina Jansen, plan and façade. Source: drawing Giuliana Sabelli

The bungalow integrated ten years of Jansen's experience at VAC by developing design standards from the women's perspective: functional kitchen, appropriate lighting, clear circulation and wardrobes in all rooms with 55 cm measurements, among others. She designed all the furniture and elements of the house looking for maximum functionality and minimum material. The fireplace space in two corner walls surrounded by glass stands out. Confronting this regularity, she designed a decorative element for the wall consisting of a continuous line that curled around itself.

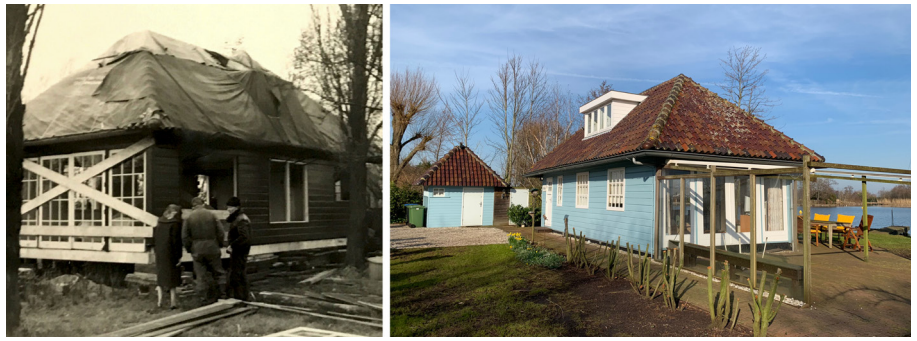
After Meerssen, Jansen took up the bungalow type for two unbuilt houses in Bergen (1960) and Venlo (1963). The latter was commissioned by the Van Grinten family for whom she extended their house. In both projects, she used a stripped-down, synthetic language through a system of opaque and transparent planes that organized the different uses.

### 1965. Summer house at Reeuwijk

Wilhelmina Jansen had a strong commitment to environmental care and was passionate about Dutch waterscapes. She was a member of the Dutch Association for the Protection of the Air and the Foundation for the Protection of Nature. She was a sailor, where she discovered and experienced the beauty of the Dutch lakes. This was probably the reason for building a holiday home for her and her sister Anna on the Kleinelshoeven lake in the Reeuwijk lakeside area. Since the 18th and 19th centuries, this land has been transformed from marshes and forests into a system of 13 lakes linked by narrow roads. (Fig.7)



Figure 7. Summerhouse in Reeuwijk, Wilhelmina Jansen, image during construction and current state. Source: Jansen Family Archive, Carolina Quiroga, 2022.



Like a pictorial composition, the building consisted of two volumes offset from each other and articulated by a void. One of square plan with a hipped roof was used as a barn from which a boathouse was detached. The second rectangular volume housed the dwelling, also with a hipped roof. This was distributed with a kitchen area and services —bathroom, washbasin, wardrobes— open to a living room where there was furniture that transformed from sofas into beds. From the kitchen, a staircase led to the attic, which was lit by two windows in the ceiling.

19 The pavilion was on the corner of Stadhouderslaan and Ary Prinslaan in Schiedam and was demolished in 2008.

20 The house is located at 28 Julianalaan Street.

The use of wood was one of the significant themes of the house. Jansen had already experimented with this material in the pavilion for the GAME<sup>19</sup> tennis club, her first project built in 1932, and the garden house for the house of her brother<sup>20</sup> Theodoor Jansen and Therése ten Doeschate in Schiedam. In Reeuwijk, she used wood for the structure, facades and walls. The roofs were covered with curved ceramic tiles, another traditional material. Except for the boathouse where the natural wood was left, all the facades were painted in a deep blue colour. (Fig.8)

Figure 8. Summerhouse in Reeuwijk, Wilhelmina Jansen, general view. Source: Carolina Quiroga 2022.



### 1971. Bungalow in Altea

“Paradise is called Altea (...) heart of the white coast” was the text with which Jaime Cortés Llinares publicised the sale of land in the municipality of Altea on the Mediterranean coast of the Iberian Peninsula, from whom Wilhelmina and Anna Jansen bought a plot to build a holiday home. With a pleasant climate and surrounded by nature, the house was located in the area of La Olla, three kilometers from the historic centre of Altea, and close to the beach. According to the drawings, Jansen was the author together with the architect R. Schaatsbergen.

She used in this house the bungalow type but adapted to the cultural and climatic conditions and the materials of the place. Unlike the minimalist bungalows of Bergen and Venlo, the house recovered the essence of the white Mediterranean houses of Altea. Its morphology consists of a series of solid white shapes covered by a Spanish tile roof. On reaching the ground, the walls were clad in stone, creating the image of a plinth. This compact form is gradually perforated with windows and undermined to create galleries. These operations activate a controlled and framed dialogue with the landscape. (Fig.9)



Figure 9. Holiday house in Altea, Spain, 1971, exterior view.

Source: Jansen Family Archive

Located on Carrer el Lloveret, the house was built on the opposite side of the street in order to have the best orientation towards the south. It was built with a reinforced concrete structure, brick walls and wooden windows and shutters. As in the house in Reeuwijk, the articulation between parts was one of the project's axes. Next to the entrance, a first independent construction contained the garage and was joined to the house by a wooden pergola. The house consisted of two main blocks with hipped roofs and perpendicular to each other. The first block housed a bedroom, the service areas —bathroom, kitchen— to the north and the living room open to the south. The second had two bedrooms including a bathroom. Between them, under a gabled roof, was the entrance and the dining room, designed as a transparent space. To the north, all these different areas opened onto a large terrace supported by the stone basement. (Fig.10)

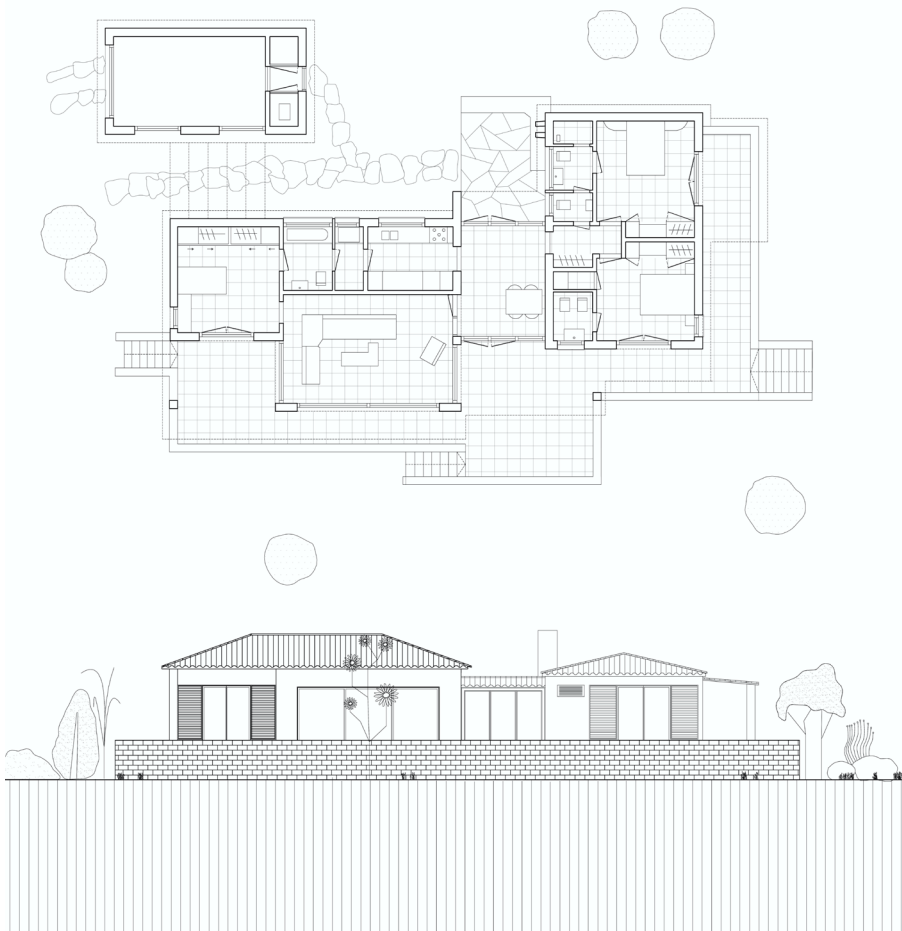


Figure 10. Holiday house in Altea, Spain, 1971, plan and façade.

Source: drawing Giuliana Sabelli

The interior design was a combination of white walls, wooden furniture and elements —curtains, sofa upholstery, rugs, lamps— in tones of dry green and ochre. As some archive images capture, Jansen also decorated the interior with plants and vases of flowers. Far from minimalist modernity, the space had a great warmth and a sense of the domestic anchored in the cultural traditions of the place. (Fig.11)



Figure 11. Holiday house in Altea, Spain, 1971, interior.  
Source: Jansen Family Archive.

### Final reflections

The houses presented by the architect Wilhelmina Jansen have first of all shown that the gender perspective is a fundamental approach to archive research, the selection and classification of buildings and the historical review. As with Jansen's houses, which have always been there but we have never paid attention to them, a large part of the cities and the places where we habitually pass through have been designed, promoted and/or built by women. This calls for a feminist heritage perspective to illuminate these cultural assets and give them back their place not only in history but also in the current identity of communities.

Constructing a new cartography of these houses also highlights the fact that there was a modernity that did not subscribe to the official narratives that feminism interpellates: the great masters, the monofunctional city, abstraction distanced from the user, among others. Jansen was a modern architect in the deepest connotation of the term, which refers to belonging to a time and circumstances. Her way of expressing the era was not through forms, which varied as much as technology, but through how architecture could improve people's lives and especially that of a social group that was not the focus of theoretical debates or praxis: women.

From the edges of legitimized professional practices, she was able to innovate by thinking of a precursor feminist architecture that was sensitive to everyday life. Moreover, this knowledge was the result of collective and interdisciplinary work with the women of VAC. It is in this same peripheral condition that the value and validity of Wilhelmina Jansen lies.

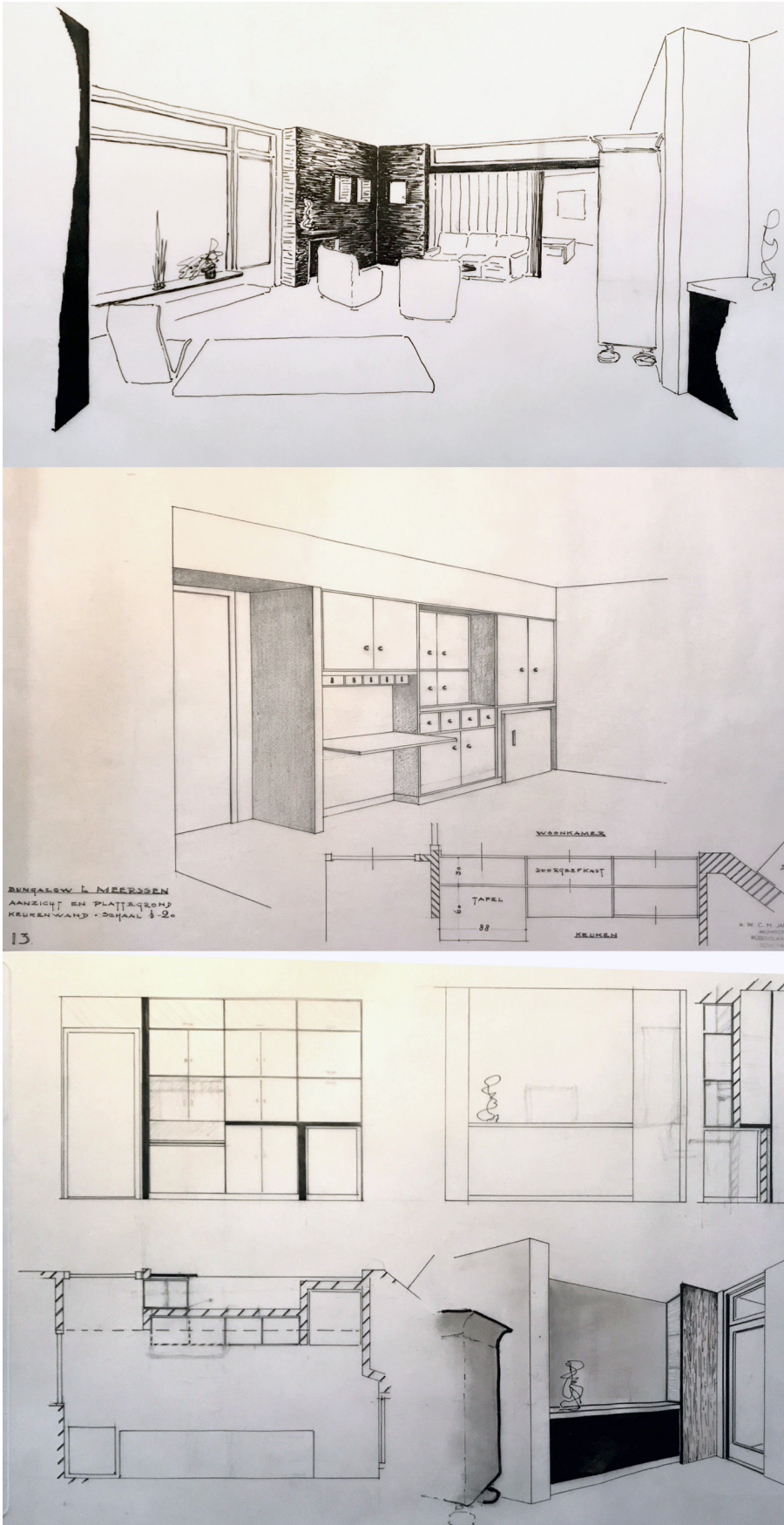


Figure 12. Wilhelmina Jansen's drawing for the interior design of the Bungalow in Meerssen.  
Source: Gemeentearchief Schiedam, Archive number 608 ir. W.C.M. Jansen.

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