



Building the purple

*"Your feminist premise should be: I matter. I matter equally. Not "if only".
Not "as long as". I matter equally. Full stop.
Chimamanda Ngozi*

Building the Purple¹

The era we have been experiencing and living through during the last year has made us reconsider, and see our surroundings from a new point of view. To slow down the rhythm of life, to sit down, look - inwards and outwards-, breathe slowly, observe every wall of our house and make decisions, change and experiment.

We have become aware of the importance of our home, our refuge.

our shelter.

It is very important to make our homes habitable, to feel comfortable and sheltered. To recover the simple sensation of warmth and protection that a bonfire provides. To stop time, hear the fire crackle, return to our basic needs and feel our home like our third skin.

Fight our fears, overcome them, be fire and shelter, be life and creativity,

be home.

Let's recover the memory of the knowledge about how to make a house habitable, to create a shelter in the most natural and healthiest way possible.

Let's recover the importance of our leaving the world in a better condition than we received it, and being aware of the fight that is to come.

Let's recover the forgotten role of women.

The moment has come to sit down and talk, to visibilize and value women who have built their own homes- those who have taken care of dwellings, worked on them, and made them habitable.

Women have been, are, and will be the builders of shelter and home.

Let's recover the memory of all women that worked their fingers to the bone doing this. Let's talk about their hands, dirty with mud, dried out by lime and full of wooden splinters. Let's talk about their summer days, when while whitewashing the house with lime, their sweat becomes part of the mix. And let's talk, not only about our mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers, but also about all the women of today, that are working in the field of construcción, and are fighting day by day to visibilize their know-how, experience and expertise.

The moment has come to transform and deconstruct the perspective of gender in the world of building, so it can become inclusive and egalitarian.

We see women work on building sides every day, screwing in wooden pillars, plastering facades, calculating the ideal proportion of lime and sand and filling their hands with clay. Women designing healthy and sustainable spaces, calculating complex structures and directing building sites.

¹ In Spanish we use the word “morada” here- which means both “home/abode/dwelling” and is also the word for “purple.”

Fellow female builder,

To you, who gets up every day, drawing strength to make this world a better place.

To you, who is committed to building with natural materials and reducing the carbon footprint we all leave behind.

To you, who is excited to see the results of a well-done plaster or a well executed building.

To you, who recovers fragments of lived history and is restoring the buildings around us.

To you, who dreams about every space designed for your client as if it were your own.

To you, who trails your hand over every finish, letting the texture talk to you, and listening for what the material needs in every moment.

To you, who thinks, and rethinks a thousand times, how to fit the wooden structure into the allotted space.

To you, who has learned to look at straw as a building material instead of waste, who knows its properties and controls its quality.

To you, who spends hours with paper, and in front of the computer, transforming dreams into reality.

And also

To you, who has to put up with the comments of those who don't believe in your abilities, the silence of those who underestimate you and the jokes of those who don't take you seriously.

To you, whose tools aren't made for your body type, who can't find working clothes in your size.

To you, who has been pushed aside from something you were working on, and has had something taken out of your hands so you wouldn't have to carry it.

To all of us, the many women who work in building.

It is our profession and our joy. Our energy is present in all buildings, houses and spaces that we have created with our own hands.

Together we are water and air, we are stone and earth. Together we are the water that binds and the bark which protects the tree.

Together we claim our role as female architects, masons, restorers and builders of a better world. Because it is time to break the tradition and preconception that we don't belong to this kind of work, because women's roles in building have always been hidden and the time has come to undo this stigma.

Together we will have more of a presence. Together we will make the world see what we are, and it is finally time -well into the 21st century- to stop being surprised at being a female mason.

Together we will raise our voices louder.

Let's fight for inclusive building practices. Let's revive and reassess the historical memory of our mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers that have built homes with their hands, and sweat on their foreheads, and whose work, once again, has been silenced. For the forgotten. To achieve acceptable changes, in which women's knowledge and abilities are appreciated.

Fellow female builder,

if these words ring true forests you,

YOU ARE IN GOOD COMPANY.

Many of us are in the same situation, feeling lonely and insecure about our abilities. Take your trowel, your hammer, your drill, your ruler or your brush and together we will build united.

WE ARE ALL CONNECTED, WE ARE ALL SHELTER, WE ARE UNITED.

We are building a network of professional women who work in the field of natural building and restoration. If you identify with this, and would like to join us- contributing with your expertise-, you can do so [here](#).

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