



***Authorship, Architecture, Anonymity: The Impossible  
Career of Petra Andrejova-Molnàr***

*A project by Katarina Burin, curated by Farhad Mirza '12 and Anne Thompson*

**September 10-October 13, 2019**

Opening reception | Tuesday, September 10, 6:00 pm

Artist's talk | Tuesday, September 10, 7:30 pm

In 2008, Katarina Burin felt the urge to design a monogram—but not for herself. An artist whose practice had long explored the social instincts of European twentieth-century modernist design, Burin imagined a female Czech architect from the interwar years and conjured the fictional Petra Andrejova-Molnàr, also known as P.A. Burin spent a decade developing an entire career for P.A., conducting meticulous historical research to aid her production of models and drawings; décor such as furniture, ceramics, textiles, and wallpaper; and ephemera such as photographs, letters, and catalogs that anchor P.A. within design circles that rarely included women despite their utopian goals. In this way, P.A. is both real and unreal, an amalgam of the marginalized or anonymous women who contributed to the modernist program and, at the same time, a personification of creative longing and ghostly absence.

Usdan Gallery is delighted to survey the full P.A. project, a complex, feminist enterprise that foregrounds the collectivist zeal of modernism and critiques the erasure of women designers from the modernist canon. *Authorship, Architecture, Anonymity* marks the conclusion of Burin's production as P.A. and forms a timely addition to this year's wave of international exhibitions on the centennial of the founding of the Bauhaus, the legendary German design school that welcomed women but barred them from studying architecture. Prior considerations of Burin's work have leaned toward presenting P.A. as a forgotten or recently discovered architectural gem, confounding audiences into questioning assumptions about gender and history. By straightforwardly acknowledging Burin as the author of P.A., the Usdan exhibit positions her at the forefront of current efforts to recognize the pivotal role of women in architecture and the fundamental condition of architecture as collaborative, contesting the enduring stereotype of the "genius" male architect. Among critiques that are usually textual, Burin's project is all the more intriguing for being visual: having allowed herself to be possessed by the spirit of a past moment, the artist has made manifest the archive that would have been.

Farhad Mirza is a technical instructor at Bennington. Anne Thompson is the Director and Curator of Usdan Gallery.

#### **About the Artist**

[Katarina Burin](#) is a lecturer in the Department of Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard University. Recent exhibitions include the Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society (University of Chicago); Kunstverein Langenhagen; the Aspen Art Museum; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; and shows at Ratio 3 (San Francisco), M29 Richter & Brückner (Cologne), and Lucile Corty (Paris). Her awards include fellowships from the Radcliffe Institute and the Graham Foundation; the 2013 James and Audrey Foster prize from the ICA Boston; and residencies at MuseumsQuartier Vienna, Skowhegan, Yaddo, and the MacDowell Colony.

#### **About Usdan Gallery**

With exhibitions of contemporary artists and ideas, Usdan Gallery engages and advances the College's history of innovation in the arts while addressing the wider community. The 3,200-square-foot space is located on the main level of the Helen Frankenthaler Visual Arts Center. Director and curator: Anne Thompson