



Vanessa Grossman

Lecturer

Vanessa Grossman is an architect and architectural historian pursuing a doctoral degree at Princeton University. Her work centers on the entanglements between architecture, politics and public policies in the 20th century. Grossman has curated exhibitions and organized symposia on a variety of topics. She was the assistant curator of the French Pavilion at the 14th Venice Architecture Biennale, which has received a Special Mention from the Jury. She is the co-editor of the collected volumes *Une architecture de l'engagement: l'AUA (1960-1985)* (2015) and *Modernity, promise or menace?* (2014).



The French Pavilion of the 14th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, curated by Jean-Louis Cohen with Vanessa Grossman. A V-shaped wall invited visitors to enter the building, where a double narrative unfolded.



"Modernity, Promise or Menace?" offered a critical interpretation of the path of French architecture up to modern times, in response to "Fundamentals," the overall theme of the 14th Biennale, directed by Rem Koolhaas.



The Pavilion presented four cases dealing with the ambivalence of architectural responses to the modern condition. The first was the Villa Arpel, the protagonist of Jacques Tati's 1958 film *Mon Oncle*, whose 1:10 model was featured in the pavilion's main gallery. As a parody of the modernist home, the Villa Arpel was the butt of Tati's many jokes about idealized dwelling, automation and consumerism.



Jean Prouvé was the subject of the pavilion's second room. Defining himself as "constructor" rather than architect, Prouvé innovated prefabrication methods and excelled in metal walling, yet many of his ideas failed to make it past the development stage.



Member of the Exhibition Team, coordinated by Beatriz Colomina, for the exhibition *Playboy Architecture, 1953-1979*, first presented at the NAIM/Bureau-Europa, in Maastricht, The Netherlands (2012), at the Deutsches Architekturmuseum in Frankfurt, Germany (2014), and at the Elmhurst Art Museum, Elmhurst, Illinois, USA (2016).



Co-curator, with Jean-Louis Cohen, of the exhibition "Une architecture de l'engagement 1960-1985," presented at the Cité de l'Architecture et du patrimoine in Paris (October 2015-February 2016), the first retrospective focusing on the work of the Atelier d'urbanisme et d'architecture (AUA).



Grossman has published worldwide a number of books and articles on related themes, including: "Oscar Niemeyer's Headquarters for the French Communist Party" (*Face-à-Face: Studies on Cultural Exchanges between Brazil and France*, 2015), "Sakrale Architektur in der Zeitschrift *L'Art Sacré*" (*Interferenzen. Interferenzen: Architektur. Deutschland - Frankreich 1800-2000*, 2013), "Chrysalis's Pseudome, a Bubble-Pad-Survival-Kit, or London meets LA" (*Volume 33 - Fall 2012*).



The AUA was a unique cooperative of professionals that was highly influential on the French architectural scene of the 1960s and 1970s, from the inception of the Fifth Republic to François Mitterrand's presidential election in 1981.



Tracing both a diachronic and thematic accounts of the Atelier's multifaceted work, the exhibition presented models, drawings, photographs, publications, films, objects, furniture, prototypes and building elements.