Tarkovsky himself.
The World Health Organization says a millionth of a gram can cause lung cancer. Extrapolating from that, emissions, but it can’t be allowed to enter the body. Through nuclear power plants, and other secondary variegated spaces and machines of the nuclear industry.

“Uwe?” says one, contemplating an espresso machine). This smooth shift away from a hierarchical type undermines the conventions of residential construction and space planning toward a realizable dream image of (un) domestication.

“Inventing Feminist Practices,” are assembled to the other categories. This is a very important resource. This smooth drift throughout the anthology. One meaning of domesticate is to tame, and the plane of taming is the home. The complex, ambivalent relationship enacting domesticity provides productive territory for feminist practices in architecture. There are many territories, institutions, and subjects problematized vividly in the works of Feminist Practices, but for the purpose of this brief review, domesticity stands in for the whole.

The final section, “Feminist Practices in Communities,” features projects engaged within specific and varied communities.

Janet McGaw, in “Urban Threads,” works with homeless women (the undomesticated) to make private realms in public spaces. This empowering work is the definition of community, in practice and execution. Lisa Fior and Katharine Clark of the design practice mul, equate civic work with citizen input, through the design process as much as built work. These projects are architectural examples of relational aesthetics, where the work lies in the acts that are co-constructed; the change moments that arise belong to the citizens who bring them about.

This is a very important book; the bibliography at the end of Jane Rendell’s opening chapter, “Critical Spatial Practices,” alone is worth the cost of the book. It provides a survey of feminist practices and literature from the last decade of the 20th century and the first of the 21st, a survey that is unavailable anywhere else. Students of any gender and designers of all genders cannot claim to be adept at working in this contemporary territory without acknowledging themselves of this resource. I worry that because it is ‘feminist’ men wouldn’t dream of picking it up, and that women will pause before buying it: so I appreciate the definitions of feminism that Lori Brown provides. They have nothing to do with gender. First, she writes, “feminist practices are political acts that seek to challenge the status quo and identified relationships of power.” A second, that “there are those who work to improve and better the lives and spaces of others, concerned with larger social and justice efforts, but may never call themselves feminists.” This follows with a quote from bell hooks, who writes, “feminist is not a label but acts and act in feminist resistance without way using the language of feminism.” Maybe we don’t have to say it if we find the word limiting. Lori Brown challenges us to re-define the term for ourselves.

Feminist Practices: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Women in Architecture

Feminist Practices is assembled into four thematic groupings: design, pedagogy, design research, and communities. Apart from these sections are editor Lori Brown’s introduction, conclusion, and editorial preface providing coherence to an increasingly diverse and productive field. Two chapters, however, slip away from the structure of a book: Jane Rendell’s chapter “Critical Spatial Practices” and Deepa Sarathy’s chapter “Inventing Feminist Practices,” are placed outside of the four themes. The decision not to force-fit these two chapters into one of the four broad categories of the book allows them to open up content that doesn’t necessarily conform to the other categories. This is a feminist editorial decision. Not one of content, not one of form, but one that smooths the structures of form to receive and hold content without forcing it to follow a rigid structure. This permission is an elegant means to accept and embrace work that would otherwise fall outside, or worse, be forced in.

Domesticity is a theme throughout the anthology. One meaning of domesticate is to tame, and the plane of taming is the home. The complex, ambivalent relationship enacting domesticity provides productive territory for feminist practices in architecture. There are many territories, institutions, and subjects problematized vividly in the works of Feminist Practices, but for the purpose of this brief review, domesticity stands in for the whole.

The first section, “Feminist Practices of Dwelling,” features five designers whose work engages the sophisticated and subtle interrelationship of the body and surroundings. Lori Brown asks several questions of this group in the introduction, among them: “Is sex privacy understood within the domestic sphere and how is this idea materially reinforced? [...] How can the furniture with which we occupy space be reconsidered and redesigned so as to neutralize any gendered associations?” Domesticity has historically been seen to be feminine—a woman’s place, her domain. In these practices, processes are shown in the processes of being reinforced and undermined, genders neutralized and intensified, while all are multiplied. In Kyma Leisik’s “Sister” chapter, the vision of a dream home transformed into a project for a Shadow House makes a virtue of that delicious morning moment of falling back asleep after just the alarm goes off. For two sisters, one who might be a hermaphrodite, the other perhaps heron, the shadow house nods off, “no longer recognizable, having been dramatically transformed and re-constituted [...] we no longer understand public and private, shade and shadow in the same way again.” This smooth shift away from a hierarchical type undermines the conventions of residential construction and space planning toward a realizable dream image of (un) domestication.

The “Pedagogy” section provides examples of full-scale design-build studio practices that challenge “normative student-teacher relationships, the classroom’s hierarchical structure, and the professor’s role in this class.” It is easy to teach a class full of alpha types: praise the strong ones and watch the rest run to catch the leader. It is harder and more rewarding to engage and collaborate, to discover each student’s personal separations, and to walk that path together. In this, Marguerite McGloughlin’s 2006 Taipei studio is exemplary, investigating the mundane and the world there. There’s a generational divide that she points to when she writes in her piece “Fishing for Ghosts”: “I’m in my 40s. It is really to reveal one’s age, but in this discourse I think it is critical.” She writes of the “wave of feminism” in architecture schools that straddled the late 1980s and early 1990s, a time when academic institutions were struggling with the new gender parity of the student body.

Feminist Practices proposes a definition of feminism as relational and constantly shifting. Dilem Erdogdu Erkaslan and Meghan Arp research the domestic realities of detached housing and apartments in Turkey, and courtyards in Indian domesic spaces, respectively. The move-ment among individuals and communities through territoies can also be traced to institutions. For example, the same dearth of support can be seen in the atrophy of women’s studies in academic as well. While this line of thought is beyond the scope of this review, it points to an institutional crisis at hand.

The final section, “Feminist Practices in Communities,” features projects engaged within specific and varied communities.

Notes
2. Ibid., 6.
4. Ibid., 108.

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