Ricker Notes was originally a periodical for the School of Architecture, edited and published by Architecture students including feature articles, news, poetry, drawings, book reviews and beneficial quotes. The title “Ricker”, refers to Nathan Clifford Ricker, the first graduate of an architecture program in the United States in March of 1873.

This academic year, the School of Architecture is bringing back Ricker Notes in the form of a monthly magazine called Ricker Report. Moving forward, the magazine aims to create a unifying platform to present students with information about the school, upcoming events, architectural clubs and organizations, and articles on different studios, professors, and professionals.

Ricker Report Team

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Karolina Chojnowska | Editor + Graphic Design

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“An animating and life-affirming coral hue with a golden undertone that energizes and enlivens with a softer edge” - Pantone

Pantone Color Institute’s vibrant color of the year is Coral. In an era of technology and social media, the color Coral allows us to think more about human interaction and the beauty of nature. Naturally, Pantone’s Color of the Year has an influence on the world of design. Thus, the Ricker Report team has decided to incorporate power and emotion through Coral colored accents in 2019 Ricker Report Issues.

To give identity to the times we live in, Ricker Report will adopt a new color each year. In addition, with each new month, we will seek to tackle a new topic that is at the current forefront of Architectural discourse. 2019’s January/February theme is Women in Architecture: Urban Fabrics & Design.

As this is Ricker Report’s first year, I would like to say it has been a pleasure to start this new legacy for the students at the University of Illinois School of Architecture. We are lucky to have incredible faculty members in our college. Even more so, we are fortunate to bring in professionals, some of which alumni, that can offer insight and guide aspiring young architects and engineers like ourselves. On behalf of all the staff at Ricker Report, it has been an honor to interview, speak with, and learn from the women featured in this issue who have added tremendous value to the Illinois School of Architecture and the profession.

Matthew D. Ehlers
Editor in Chief | M.Arch + M.S.C.E.E. Candidate 2021

EDITOR’S NOTE
Elizabeth Diller of Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R)

Elizabeth Diller of Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R) has been awarded the 2019 Jane Drew Prize for raising the profile of women in the profession with her commitment and excellent work in Architecture. The award is jointly founded by the Architectural Review and the Architects Journal (AJ). Elizabeth’s projects include: The Shed and the Highline in New York City, and the Broad Art Museum in Los Angeles. The award was given to Amanda Levete of AL_A last year, and Denise Scott Brown in 2017.

World’s First Underwater Hotel to Open in the Maldives

Nestled 16 feet below the Indian Ocean in the Maldives, the Muraka, the first underwater hotel, opens this January. Each “Villa” itself is made up of two levels and includes butler’s quarters, a private bar, and a gym. If the ocean itself is not enough, the space also includes an infinity pool. The hotel is surprisingly modular, the pieces were constructed in Singapore and sailed across the ocean to the Maldives. Afterwards each element was nailed to concrete pylons ensuring stability within the shifting tides. “The completion of The Muraka is a personal lifetime achievement,” said Ahmed Saleem, chief architect and designer of the residence, in a statement.

Canada’s Largest Net Zero Energy Building Opens

In Hamilton, Ontario, the Joyce Center for Partnership and Innovation at Mohawk College has officially opened. Designed by B + H and McCallum Sather Architects, the building is one of sixteen pilot projects selected by the Canada Green Building Council’s new Zero Carbon Building Standard. At 96,000 square feet and $54 million, the building is entirely powered by solar energy. The building will eventually house the Center for Climate Change Management, and contains workshops, lecture theaters, state of the art labs, and industry training centers centered around a central light filled atrium. Locally sourced materials in a double wall help regulate heat, the interior climate and natural light. 2000 solar panels are divided into two wings, and also contain a rain water harvesting system.

8 Buildings by Frank Lloyd Wright Nominated for UNESCO World Heritage Status

Taken from a previous 2015 application by the Frank Lloyd Conservancy, eight buildings have been nominated for the UNESCO World Heritage List. The buildings include Fallingwater, Taliesin West, the Unity Temple, the Robie House, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, among other standouts throughout the country. The application will now be reviewed by the International Council of Monuments and Sites, and will be considered at the 2019 World Heritage Meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan. If successful, these eight buildings will join 1,092 other famous sites. The buildings would also be on a shortlist of American World heritage sites that number less than 25 at the moment.

Architecture Becomes a STEM Subject in the United States

The United States Congress has passed a bill that would officially recognize Architecture as a STEM subject, which was signed into law on July 31st, 2018. The recognition will grant the same 1 billion dollars in grants that other STEM subjects are recognized for. Lobbying for the bill, the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) Act was spearheaded by the American Institute of Architects.

2019 Career Expo
February 28 - March 1, 2019

During these two days, employers from across the country representing the fields of Architecture and Urban and Regional Planning will come to the University of Illinois campus to showcase their firms, build relationships with the university, and interview potential candidates for both summer and full-time employment. Career XPO is hosted by the Illinois School of Architecture and organized through the Undergraduate Office.
Opening eyes to the influence of design in our day-to-day life, Defined by Design, by our own professor Kathryn Anthony, helps readers recognize hidden biases in the products we use and how to work towards more inclusive design.

Controversial for its time, Learning from Las Vegas, written by Denise Scott Brown, Robert Venturi and Steven Izenour, challenges us to look at the way architects had changed their design processes and the influence of symbolism in architectural design.

TAD (The Journal of Technology Architecture + Design), founded in part by our own professor Uihlein, explores technology in relationship to architecture and design through research, interviews, articles, and reviews in a rigorously academic journal. Find the journal on TAD’s website, tadjournal.org
In celebration of her would-be 100th birthday, *Lina Bo Bardi 100*, follows Lina Bo Bardi’s path through design, showcasing her work in the industries of architecture, stage sets, fashion, and furniture.

*Intelligent Infrastructures: Zip Cars, Invisible Networks, and Urban Transformations*, edited by our own professor T.F. Tierney, takes a look into the transformations urban fabrics are undergoing under the influence of emerging information and communication technologies.

In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 1960s journalist and activist Jane Jacobs explores the characteristics of successful and failing cities and how they work. Going against the modernist dogma of the era, her words are still relevant today on how to create thriving urban conditions.
WOMEN IN ARCHITECTURE & design
Renee Chow
Founding Principal | Studio URBIS

Renee is Professor of Architecture and Urban Design at University of California Berkeley as well as Founding Principal of Studio URBIS. She is currently serving as Chair of the Department of Architecture at the College of Environmental Design. Both her practice and her research focus on the intersection between architecture and its locale. Urban challenges of the 21st century -- increasing density, reducing resource consumption, and intensifying urban legibility -- require solutions that are locally rooted.

To encode local conditions, Renee has developed analytic and generative tools for integrating urban and architectural systems across sites and individual buildings. To re-shape the discourse about the forms of urbanism both in suburbs and cities, Renee has written Suburban Space: The Fabric of Dwelling and Changing Chinese Cities: The Potentials of Field Urbanism.

Lynne Dearborn is an Associate Professor and Program Chair in Health & Wellbeing at the Illinois School of Architecture. Her people-focused courses, workshops, and studios begin with the relationship between wellbeing and the multiple environmental scales experienced each day. Professor Dearborn engages questions of heritage and identity, power and equitable resource distribution, and the influence of designed environments on everyday life and activity.

She is a licensed architect with nearly 30 years experience working with government entities, housing developers, communities, and low-income homeowners, promoting policy and design that lead to healthy housing and healthy communities. With Professor Matt Browning (AHS), Dearborn co-lead the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s multidisciplinary membership in the AIA’s Consortium of Design and Health Research. Professor Dearborn has also authored numerous publications.
Patricia Saldaña Natke FAIA is President and Design Principal of UrbanWorks Ltd, an award winning architecture, planning, and interior design firm in Chicago. Patricia is responsible for the visionary design direction of the firm. She has a passion for cities, neighborhoods, and especially the most vulnerable sections of cities and their population. Patricia is a firm believer that well designed spaces and places which allow cultural exchange underpins urban transformation.

Patricia has served as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago Graduate School of Architecture, Facilitator at Archeworks, Part Time Professor at the Illinois Institute of Technology School of Architecture for the Advanced Design Studios, and Lecturer for the School of the Art Institute of Chicago Master in Architecture program. She is currently a Part Time Professor at the Illinois Institute of Technology School of Architecture for the Advanced Design Studios.

Patricia is a graduate of UIUC’s School of Architecture.

M.Arch. and M.L.A. by ETSAB-UPC. Prof. Bartumeus has been a researcher for the LUB Barcelona Urbanism Lab and a member of the Barcelona City’s Architecture Committee, the Catalan Architects Association Advisory Committee in Urban Planning and Landscape, and the International Biennial of Landscape Architecture’s Scientific Committee.

As principal of Renau Bartumeus Arquitectes, her professional activity, recognized by public competitions and awards, has involved planning, landscape architecture and architecture projects -- especially social housing and facilities and public space -- as well as exhibition designs. Her current multidisciplinary research, published in specialized books and magazines, explores public and collective spaces that enhance cities’ livability, foster community and benefit environmental and social cohesion.
Currently in her 35th year here, Kathryn H. Anthony is the longest serving female faculty member in the history of the UIUC School of Architecture, the first woman to have served as Chair of the Design Program Faculty and as Chair of the Building Research Council. She holds a Ph.D. in architecture and a bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of California at Berkeley.

She has received national awards from the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA), including the lifetime title of ACSA Distinguished Professor; and the ACSA Creative Achievement Award for her first book, *Design Juries on Trial: The Renaissance of the Design Studio*. She has also received the Achievement Award from the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) and the Collaborative Achievement Award from the American Institute of Architects (AIA). She has authored 5 books and over 100 publications and served as an advocate and media spokesperson about diversity issues in design.

Nubras Samayeen is an architect, urban designer and Ph.D. candidate in the joint program of Landscape Architecture and Architecture with a minor in Heritage. Her research focuses on modernist architect Louis Kahn’s design works. She explores the relationship between architecture and landscape and investigates the construction of national identity through built-forms. Her interdisciplinary study probes into Western colonialism and modernism’s instrumentality in homogenizing history, tradition, and culture across the globe.

In addition to her publications, she received numerous national-international design-awards including runners-up in *Future Legacies Design Competition* (2017), Canada and first prize in *Designing Conflict* (2010) in Zurich, Switzerland. Through her interlocutory research, she aims to create a nexus between design and history/theory to catalyze a transboundary approach to design education that affects the built-environment.
Srushti Nehete is a second-year graduate student at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign. She is from Mumbai, India and got her Bachelors in Architecture from the Academy of Architecture, University of Mumbai. Before starting graduate school at Illinois School of Architecture, she worked as an architect in Mumbai for two years.

She has a special interest in building performance and technology. She wants to work on projects that allow her to pursue research in the area of design technology. She is a trained Indian classical dancer and her favorite author is Jane Austen.

Look up her academic work on her website: www.srushtinehete.com

Shannon Fitzgerald is a second year graduate student who earned her bachelor’s degree at the University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign with a certificate in Leadership.

Her recent achievements include winning first place for the Archon Prize (Fall 2018), second place in the Chicago Women in Architecture Scholarship (Fall 2018), and first place in the Graduate Studio Design Excellence Awards (Spring 2018). She was selected to be a student for the 2019 Plym studio with Professor Dong Gong and traveled with the studio to China.

Her interest in traveling is rooted in her experience with the Barcelona Study Abroad program. This past summer, she spent time as a teaching assistant for Discover Architecture and currently works with Professor Brakke as a teaching assistant for ARCH 172: Drawing and Modeling, helping undergraduates understand the basics of perceiving and documenting space.
Q: Where are some of the places you have travelled for work or other professional related activities?

A: Travel gives opportunities to understand what is global and what is local – whenever I travel, I delight in looking and observing. Sometimes I see things that I have seen before, and I ask how. Other times I find something completely unexpected, and I ask why. Wherever I travel, I ask what are the relations between cultural practices and architectural form. While I feel fortunate to have traveled to many places, there are still so many more places that I would like to go. The United States alone is fascinating in its regional differences and simultaneous familiarity; Canada – the Canadian Rockies are beautiful, and then you have Nova Scotia, Quebec City, Toronto and Montreal. South of the border is fabulous as well, I’ve fallen in love with Mexico City again after a hiatus of a few decades. I’ve lectured in Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Switzerland and Italy, been a tourist in France, Spain, and Germany – being a tourist means having so much more time to draw in every stop. In Asia, I’ve been to South Korea, Japan, China, Hong Kong, Viet Nam and Singapore to lecture. As you can see, I’ve not had a chance to travel south of the equator, and I hope to soon!

Q: What architect most influences your work and/or your work habits?

A: Over time, I’ve had many great teachers. I first learned to look and observe with a professor named Jan Wampler when I was an undergrad at MIT. I stayed for grad school there because of N. John Habraken who influenced my understanding of urban systems and how to imbed them into urban fabrics. More recently, there have been several
artists whose practices have been most inspiring – their daily investigations into continuing themes with incredible variations. Several weeks ago, I saw the Rauschenberg exhibit, The ¼ Mile, at LACMA. This piece contains 190 painted panels completed over the span on 17 years – a true inspiration.

Q: Where do you see yourself five years from now? 20 years from now?

A: I feel fortunate to have had the opportunities to practice, to teach and to research. Each is an incredibly rewarding learning experience. I’ve just signed up for four years as department chair that takes me away from these things that I love, but I hope I can give back to the department and architectural education through my service in administration. Five years from now, I hope to return to all three. Twenty years now, I hope to be a tourist, still learning about people and places – and having more time to draw in each place.

Q: What is your opinion on the present-day urban fabric?

A: I’ll quickly reference either of my books which will give a long answer to your short question. Most urban fabrics constructed in the last forty years are greatly lacking. They do not recognize the need to build a place, they do not recognize the landscape that they are part of, they are wasteful, isolating and homogenous.

Q: How have you been able to contribute to the connection from the individual pieces to the larger elements of a city?

A: In additional to research and teaching, I have a small design practice with my partner, Tom Chastain. Together, we continually strive to bring the agenda of connection to place to the forefront of designers’ minds. When we present to planning commissions, design review commissions, and/or city councils for any project entitlement, we always remind these agencies about what is unique about each of their cities and how each project should help to intensify or make more of the best of each place. If you can get the agencies to see their own place, this contributes beyond your single project and to a larger community. You’ve got to be an educator all the time!

Pictured (right): Washington Manor Branch Library
“It is a great time to be an architect - for women and for men. There is a shift in paradigm that those of you currently entering the field will need to address - climate change.”

Q: What past professional work have you worked on/completed relative to urban design?

A: My office has done some of its largest urban design projects in China – in the cities of Tianjin and Shenyang. It is very difficult to keep control of the architectural quality there if you do not have a local office, so in the last decade we have returned to work in the U.S. Our urban design work is predominantly residential fabrics located throughout the Bay area.

Q: What is your experience as a woman in the field of architecture? How has this shaped your view of the future of the field? Has this also shaped your design and aspirations for professional work?

A: To continue from previous questions, I’m not sure that the condition of our urban fabrics is tied to the number of women in the field, but who knows? I’ll need to reflect on that more. I have been fortunate, especially when I read many other narratives about women’s experiences in the profession. For me, the field has been open, welcoming and generally supportive – the role of gender has not been of issue. Being a minority may be more of an issue -- while there have been a few uncomfortable moments, being Asian has generally been positive in my particular career. Neither my gender nor my race shapes my view about design or its future in a singular way. I care about diversity in the environment and in opportunities, but many others do this, of all different cultural backgrounds. This makes me optimistic.

Q: As an architect why is it important to be a tourist, and how does it affect our perspective on the spaces we visit and design?

A: Being a tourist allows a designer to see the relationship between use and form (culture). When patterns and differences begin to recur, it leads to design theory. This theory allows a designer to work with more confidence about decisions -- that a space will be used as planned (and still allow for the unanticipated.)

Q: Is there any advice that you would give to women who are currently entering the field of Architecture?

A: It is a great time to be an architect -- for women and for men. There is a necessary shift in paradigm that those of you currently entering the field will need to address -- climate change. You will be the critics of what previous generations have done well as well as done poorly, and you will need to be the ones to propose transformations and innovations. Transport, water and energy systems all need to be disrupted -- what does this mean for the field of architecture? The profession is evolving, and there is more openness. Don’t be shy about calling out inequities, and not just about gender. The discipline is transforming more quickly, and the more we can speculate about how to make the built environment more accepting of diversity, the more we will help all our communities.

Pictured (right): Washington Manor Branch Library
Q: What is the reason you chose to pursue architecture/urban design?

A: As a teenager, I was interested in architecture. I enjoyed math, science – particularly physics and chemistry, also drawing and making things. The results of the occupational interest tests I took in high school indicated I should explore either architecture or occupational therapy. I shadowed an architect for a week when I was a high school sophomore and I was quickly convinced about architecture. My architectural pursuits began with my interest in combining right-brain and left-brain activities, but experiences early in my career made me see that architects have the opportunity and ability to profoundly and positively influence people’s lives if we carefully listen and respectfully collaborate with other professionals and non-architects.

Q: Where are some of the places you have travelled for work or other professional related activities?

A: One early career travel experience that changed my professional path included two-and-a-half years as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer living and working in the Fiji Islands. I was half of the department of architecture at the Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT) from November 1984-February 1987. Besides teaching all of FIT’s architectural design and technology courses in the capital Suva on the main island of Viti Levu, I had the opportunity
to visit numerous remote islands and work on rural development projects as an environmental designer. Since then, I have traveled to many places around the world. Over the past decade, I have spent significant time in Thailand and Laos while conducting research and studying how development policies influence the daily lives of low-income minority people and their relationship to the environments they inhabit. I’ve presented my work in Thailand, Malaysia, China, Taiwan, Portugal, Spain. I’ve traveled to Sao Tome and Haiti with students for community-based studio work.

Q: What architect most influences your work and/or your work habits?

A: It is difficult to pinpoint a single architect. A simple answer is Michael Pyatok, particularly with respect to the way his firm employs community process and stakeholder inclusion in developing their projects and the design innovations that seek to improve daily life in low-income and minority communities. The work of regionalist/context-responsive firms like Lake Flato and Miller Hull also influenced my work, design process and teaching.

Q: What is your opinion on the present-day urban fabric?

A: Much urban fabric in the US and in other places around the world has failed the people who must
live in and navigate that fabric. There are far too many unhealthy and uninspiring urban environments. Designers, developers, planners, and politicians have neglected the very important spaces between buildings and spaces of the street. Commodity-driven thinking, the focus on iconic buildings and moving cars quickly and efficiently (then letting the cars sit in a great sea of parking) has caused the destruction of quality urban space and limited consideration of what the environment can provide to support a healthy fulfilling life. There are some encouraging efforts to make more livable urban places. For example, in the advocacy work of organizations like the Gehl Institute and the Project for Public Spaces. One of the most disheartening aspects of contemporary urban fabric is the way it embodies inequity, reducing life-expectancy and making life more difficult for vulnerable populations and those in marginalized groups and communities.

Q: How have you been able to contribute to the connection from the individual pieces to the larger elements of a city?

A: I tend to frame my contributions to urban places through design, as community design. My contributions have been less formalistic and more about rebuilding neighborhoods unraveled by disinvestment. These projects, often undertaken in studios with graduate students, seek to stitch neighborhoods back together physically, socially, and economically. The process involves understanding the residents’ strengths as well as their daily lives and resource needs. Design responds to these inputs and to basic strategies of good urban physical morphology, but also to what research tells us what makes stronger communities and healthier residents.

Q: What past professional work have you worked on/ completed relative to urban design?

A: In 2016-17, I worked as a participatory design consultant for ORP, an organization headquartered in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. The project, a therapeutic residential school for adolescent and young adult males with a range of cognitive and developmental disabilities and disorders, sought a conditional use exception from the Milwaukee Board of Zoning Appeals. While much of the work involved working with neighborhood residents to address their concerns about the design and appearance of the project, it was in-part an urban design project about civil rights in the city for young men whose disabilities, misunderstood by the neighbors, made them a target for discriminatory practices.

Q: What is your experience as a woman in the field of architecture? How has this shaped your view of the future of the field? Has this also shaped your design and aspirations for professional work?

A: My professional experience in the field of architecture includes 10 years of relatively traditional practice in small firms of 6-25 people and nearly 20 years of non-traditional practice, working as a consultant for government agencies, having my own firm with a partner for a very short period, and working with low-income and
minority community and neighborhood groups to help them realize environmental and social change.

My different experiences in the field of architecture influence my outlook on the future of the field which, in turn, effects where I focus my classes and how I teach them. If architecture is to remain a credible endeavor, practitioners of the future must understand the bigger picture environmentally, socially, and economically and be prepared to critically reflect on each decision they make regardless of scale. They must carefully consider how each decision reverberates across physical and non-physical contexts. They must recognize where those with design skills fit with other decision-makers and how to work effectively as within team of diverse professionals and different perspectives while advocating for the primacy of the environment. Each architectural intervention moving forward will have important outcomes for resilience and dignity, human health, resource availability, and most importantly how we survive as a species as our climate changes and our relationship to water changes.
Q: What is the reason you chose to pursue architecture/urban design?

I pursued Architecture because I am passionate about improving cities, communities and neighborhoods. Recognizing that underserved areas in major cities lack equitable vocal representation, I serve people of all socio-economic strata. All deserve good design.

Q: Where are the places you have travelled for work or other professional related activities?

I began exploring Architecture through travel while on the University of Illinois School of Architecture Versailles Study Abroad Program. This life changing experience opened my eyes to diverse cultural experiences, historical architecture, and modern design.

I was awarded a United States Department of State Arts and Cultural Grant through Partners of the Americas in 2007 in order to analyze, compare, and contrast American public housing and Brazilian favelas. Provoking discussions on innovative social housing solutions took me back to Sao Paulo, Brazil in 2010 with a group of volunteer architects and landscape architects. We led a week-long Sustainable Masterplan workshop for the historic railway town of Paranapiacaba, Brazil.

I’ve lectured throughout the United States and South America and have visited 24 countries, including my ancestral country, Mexico.

My firm’s designs celebrate the sensitive integration of local and global influences.
Q: What architect most influences your work and/or your work habits?

There are many architects who have influenced my work. Of particular importance are the energetic work of international Master Antonio Gaudi and the dynamic color and light-filled spaces of Luis Barragan. Closer to home, I’ve been inspired by mentors and colleagues in Chicago’s high wattage architectural community. These include the bold urban work of Carol Ross Barney, the rigor and sensitively scaled work of Dan Wheeler, the striking clean modernism of Brad Lynch, the powerful interiors of Eva Maddox, and the lifelong commitment to Chicago architecture of Stanley Tigerman.

Q: What skill (or set of skills) has served you best in your architectural career?

Empathy, consensus building skills, abstract thinking, and optimism are skills that have been critical in my architectural career.

Q: What is your opinion on the present-day urban fabric?

Today’s cities, particularly American cities, suffer from torn and frayed urban fabrics. Physically, this includes many areas that display clear signs of disinvestment—areas of vacancy that have been subjected to clear economic disadvantages. These outward, physical signs are reflective of the stratified society in which we find ourselves. Too many communities have been marginalized, literally and figuratively. But these troubling signs provide us—as architects and urban designers—with great opportunities. We are trained, and we practice to make the world a better place. And by using our professional skills to promote more a more cohesive, more equitable, and more beautiful urban condition, we actively participate in achieving a fuller vision of society.

Q: How have you been able to contribute to the connection from the individual pieces to the larger elements of a city?

UrbanWorks has designed many projects that have broad impact beyond their physical boundaries. An example is our La Casa project in Chicago’s Pilsen, which helps local Latino students succeed in their education.
Empathy, consensus building skills, abstract thinking, and optimism are skills that have been critical in my architectural career."
college studies by providing a supportive residential environment that allows them to participate in traditional college dormitory life without leaving their own neighborhood to live. These students are studying, and succeeding, at numerous colleges throughout Chicago, helping to bridge the gap between their community and the larger city.

Another example is our work at Cabrini-Green, which was previously one of Chicago’s more infamous public housing projects. UrbanWorks has been involved the development of large-scale urban plans to create a successful, mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhood that can thrive for decades to come. We’re about to break ground on a block of affordable housing that’s part of the larger plan, an example of how we work at multiple scales to accomplish our design and societal goals.

**Q: What past professional work have you worked on/completed relative to urban design?**

UrbanWorks’ urban design projects include the master plan of Chicago’s Pilsen neighborhood; Chicago’s bid for the 2016 Olympics; the Gary Green Link in Gary, Indiana; the 67-acre Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) Cabrini Masterplan, the sustainable master plan of Paranapiacaba, Brazil; various proposals for the South Branch of the Chicago River; and the downtown master plan for housing in Goldsboro, North Carolina.

**Q: What is your experience as a woman in the field of architecture? How has this shaped your view of the future of the field? Has this also shaped your design and aspirations for professional work?**

As a woman practicing in architecture, I understand the changes needed to bring parity and equity for the advancement of women architects. Architecture reflects society at a specific time and place; designs should be created by those who reflect society as a whole, not just the wealthy or politically well connected.

**Q: Is there any advice that you would give to women who are currently entering the field of Architecture?**

I highly encourage women entering the field of architecture to remain confident and vigilant for opportunities to maximize their talents and leadership skills. They should join architecture organizations where women can find advocates and mentors. Women who become leaders while in college will be the future leaders in the field.

In addition, explore various creative pursuits which may not be necessarily seem architectural. Expand your circle of friends to include those who can inspire your curiosity about topics critical to achieving a better and more equitable society. These include climate change, environmental issues, economic, and social initiatives. Architect spend many hours in the studio, but good design is the outcome of deep informed knowledge in a wide variety of pursuits.

**Q: In the US, the NAAB reported 41% of architecture graduates that were women. However, out of all AIA members, only 21.7% are female. Could you please offer your opinion on why there is a drop-off in number of female architects becoming license, from those who have completed college?**

We have extensive knowledge from documented studies on the reasons for the unfortunate drop off of licensed female architects. AIA’s EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Commission has cited “pinchpoints” in women’s careers – ranging from a lack of mentors, few female professors as role models, long work hours, child rearing, and a lack of flexible work hours as some of the reasons women leave the profession.
Q: What is the reason you chose to pursue architecture/urban design?

A: It was not a straightforward decision. I have always loved drawing, as well as writing. In fact, I first enrolled in Journalism. Escola Garbi, the school I attended from preschool to high school, had a pedagogical emphasis on the visual arts and on stimulating creativity and beauty in general. At an unconscious level, living the School’s architecture--Escola Garbí is a masterpiece by the firm MBM arquitectes--helped determine my choice, my way of understanding and making architecture.

The spatial organization of the building as a city, and at the same time as a home, was the architectural translation of the School’s goal to educate future citizens of a better society. Looking back, I realize now how the soft transition and visual connection between the individual rooms (homes), the collective hallways (streets), public dining/living room (plaza), which acted as a multi-functional central agora, together with the human scale and warmth of materials and color palette, impacted my future education and research interests. In my early education, the architecture and the pedagogy not only went hand in hand, but were mutually reinforcing. This is indeed a very vivid and revealing lesson of the transformative capacity spaces can have over individuals and in building a sense of community.

Q: Where are the places you have travelled for work or other professional related activities?

A: In Europe: Barcelona, Copenhagen, Birmingham, Nijmegen, Pistoia, Venice and Sarajevo (Lisbon and Crete
are on my calendar for summer conferences). In the US: Boston, New Orleans and LA. I am also very excited for an upcoming conference presentation this March in La Havana, Cuba.

**Q: What architect most influences your work and/or your work habits?**

**A:** My most direct influences come from Catalan architects, professors of mine, who might not be as well-known abroad, such as Elias Torres or Enric Miralles (EMBT). They themselves were influenced by a previous generation of Catalan and European architects: Coderch, Sert or Van Eyck, or by contemporary ones such as Alvaro Siza. And, of course, I’ve been influenced by my mentors, teachers and bosses: Manuel de Solà-Morales and Rosa Barba. I’m inspired by their innovative viewpoints developed through observing architecture (Solà-Morales) and landscape architecture (Rosa Barba) from an urbanism perspective.

I’ve developed an inclusive understanding of design that integrates visions and tools across all these professional fields. I believe that this understanding and my own interpretation of their intellectual heritage have given me a fertile field of multidisciplinary research interests and a unique, hybrid, pedagogical approach, between the abstraction of the plan and the detail of the project, which I bring to my design studios.

**Q: What skill (or set of skills) has served you best in your architectural career?**

**A:** I’d go with curiosity and creativity, together with perseverance and discipline.

Being able to balance leadership and teamwork is also crucial in a choral job like architecture, which calls for multi-disciplinary dialogue.

I would also add communication skills to share ideas and opinions, which are needed in any profession, but are key in a professional and academic career in architecture. Solidarity and empathy have led me to some activism and active participation in professional, cultural and educational associations, and have driven the social focus of my architecture, teaching and research.

**Q: What is your opinion on the present-day urban fabric?**

**A:** We are currently facing so many challenges resulting from multiple economic, humanitarian, political and environmental crises. There is so much to address and fight for and against:

*Pictured (right): Social Housing, Barcelona, Spain*
Being able to balance leadership and teamwork is also crucial in a choral job like architecture, which calls for multi-disciplinary dialogue.

- The growing privatization of public ground in hyper-commercialized spaces negating democratic public access, and the private residential ground bundling up in gated communities, which are fencing cities, turning them into archipelagos of exclusive and inaccessible islands.

- The unsustainable urban sprawl and careless consumption of resources and land, which, besides shrinking downtowns and expanding suburbia, carry a hyper-mineralized surface and create fierce climate catastrophes.

We should definitely find an alternative to this polarized social and urban scenario and explore other forms of urbanity that are more cohesive, inclusive, livable, and—do not forget—beautiful!

I believe that by rethinking the role of shared space, the spaces we collectively inhabit, we might find creative ways of articulating things, spaces and people and design a ‘smarter’ density which is more porous, livable and green, a ‘quality’ density that makes living collectively more attractive.

On the contrary, today’s aggravated climate(s) urge us to make people and places more secluded, to fortify spaces in the name of safety. I am, instead, more convinced than ever that we should break walls instead of building them. We must design for (and with) openness, and educate for happiness and trust instead of fear.

At this moment of uncertainty—even regression—we architects, all environmental designers, have a critical role to play in shaping our future habitats. We have to become activists!

If we learn to design together, in a collective effort, with shared and new tools, across fields and with people, we might then be able to orchestrate spatial change with environmental and social impact.

Q: How have you been able to contribute to the connection from the individual pieces to the larger elements of a city?

A: I’d like to think that the urban and landscape plans I have developed, by being more hybrid in nature (redefining borders between the urban and the natural) and by articulating activities instead of segregating and zoning, have contributed to environmental improvements. By being porous and attentive to the contextual scale and sense of place, I have also aimed my built public works (social facilities and public spaces) to better articulate and knit built and open spaces together.

By doing so, they must help activate the common ground and improve people’s individual and communal life.

I also hope that I can make an indirect contribution towards more inclusive, livable and sustainable cities and environments through my multidisciplinary research (architecture, urbanism and landscape architecture) and with my teaching on collective and public space, on urban
thresholds. My architecture and landscape architecture studios, both in Barcelona and here at Illinois, have always tackled issues of the contemporary city through the design of new mixed-use urban centralities; residential density for a ‘smarter’ compactness that mixes housing and collective spaces with other uses; incremental micro-urban and landscape strategies to spark activity and revitalize declining city cores; engaging public spaces and human-centered cityscapes to improve neighborhoods’ livability; places and landscapes reimagined to reveal and enhance collective identity and memory; and fertile ground in the urban fabric with ecology and commons as design tools.

All the studios and designs are site-specific, and include community engagement as a central part of the learning experience. For me, it is crucial to get future architects exposed to people’s wishes, dreams, memories and rights as part of their design process and education.

By understanding architecture beyond the boundaries of the building, of the object, and by reconsidering the boundaries of the designer’s role (designing for and with people), our projects can better engage with the context, have the capacity to re-connect people with places, and weave individuals into communities, becoming part of a larger physical--and social--fabric.

Q: What past professional work have you worked on/completed relative to urban design?

A: I have been super fortunate to design and build architecture and public space, pieces of city, of neighborhoods, in my hometown, Barcelona. In addition, I have also done applied design research there, for in Barcelona, there has always been a fertile relationship between Town and Gown.

At a larger scale I have worked at two main post-industrial neighborhoods in the city: at Marina del Prat-Vermell-Zona Franca with the Esclat residence for residents with physical and psychological disabilities; and at the 22@ innovation district, with a sequence of projects that range from planning and urban design to public space and social housing built projects. Projects include the 22@ Plan for Cristobal de Moura area, 22@ urbanisation criteria for Cristobal de Moura Street, 22@ plaza and the Social housing for the young and the elderly at Camí Antic de València.

I have also designed urban edges in the city and in the Barcelona metropolitan Area. With Tibidabo Gate to Collserola; Viladecans seafront Landscape plan (Vdk) and Can Xarau: Spatial Planning for new Park with Cultural and
Sports Facilities my work consisted of reconnecting the towns with their forgotten landscapes, turning natural fractures into ecological infrastructures, and building leftover areas into new city façades and active public spaces.

Recently, I have developed for the City of Barcelona a methodology to analyze the identity of cityscapes and urban landscapes, with the intention of identifying, preserving and enhancing the multifaceted urban fabric and sense of community identity in the city’s different neighborhoods. This work has been followed by the commission of two urban landscape studies on the neighborhoods of Font d’en Fargues and La Sagrera.

I have also been able to contribute to the reflection and making of the city from a variety of constituencies and levels. I was a member and organizer of the City’s Quality in Architecture Committee for three years, a consistory panel of architects, planners, and cultural agents, which reviewed and advised the City on relevant private and public projects and plans. Its goal was to ensure the design quality of the projects--beyond meeting the basic requirements of codes and regulations--and to foster the integration of the projects into their contexts.

At an international level, I have served for fourteen years on the executive committee of the International Biennial of Landscape Architecture and the Rosa Barba European Landscape Award, which has kept me involved with worldwide landscape design trends and at the center of a broader reflection on environmental design disciplines and practice.

I do believe we architects and environmental designers must make an effort to sit at these tables and be more politically and culturally involved.

Q: What is your experience as a woman in the field of architecture? How has this shaped your view of the future of the field? Has this also shaped your design and aspirations for professional work?

A: Now that you ask me this question, I would like to add two more skills to the set mentioned earlier, special ones for women in the field: stubbornness and resilience. As a female architect and professor in architecture, I could not have achieved success in my career without them.

I might not had even started architecture if I had followed the advice that a professor gave to me and to the only other three young women attending a packed Open House at the School of Architecture in the mid-eighties. He said that women were welcome (of course!) at the School, but that experience had demonstrated that even though we were excellent students and did well in all the classes, we were not so good at design…

At the end of my education another anecdote made me realize practicing was not going to be smooth, either. I won a prize for my Final Graduate Project and was selected to represent the School of Barcelona in a competition (sponsored by a well-known insulation construction company) with the rest of the architecture schools in the nation. I was delighted to win the second prize, but I was also totally shocked when everybody shook hands and congratulated my male companion,
today my husband, who had travelled with me to the event in Madrid. They assumed that he, not me, was the award-winning architect.

Not much later in my career, my partner Anna Renau and myself started up our professional firm. We were not aware then how tough it was to pursue our own practice, nor how unusual it was—and still is—to be two women, and mothers, running your own firm. At that time, 25 years ago, the few female who were principals of firms were often partnered with men, who happened to be their personal partners, too, which helped to balance family and career.

I am not going to lie. It has been, and still is, tough to be a female architect in a male-dominated field and have to deal with gender bias in different workplaces, from the construction site to academia. Pursuing a career in architecture as a mother has meant some sacrifices in my professional and personal life.

I remember what my colleague from ETSAB Maria Rubert de Ventós (the first female Professor in Urbanism in Spain) answered when asked about major differences in gender in architecture: ‘we, women, are more tired because of the extra effort we have to do to demonstrate our professional and academic value and to balance family and career.’ She advised other women in the field (from her own exhaustion) to improve upon her strategy and not to fight in solitude, but to support each other and search for other ways to move forward, besides confrontation.

Today, twenty years later, the scenario is slightly
THE CONTINUITY OF NATURAL TRACES CONVEYING IN THE SITE

THE TOPOGRAPHICAL: the river and its terrace and the continuity of green

GOALS

CONNECTIVITY: territorial scale. A node of natural systems

PERMEABILITY: a void to be preserved

STRATEGIES

Fratello

Potentials

Generation of intermediate terraces

Articulation of facilities
different. We’ve learned our lesson. We seem to advance as women speak up and team up to raise awareness of equity issues in the profession. As we keep sharing and advocating for change, I am optimistic about the future of women in architecture.

In terms of gender shaping my design, I used to state that my architecture was not influenced by my gender, but I suppose it somehow is. To me it is difficult to discern how much of the ‘off-centered gaze’ I use to approach architecture—not looking to a fixed center but to the boundaries and their dynamics, not looking at the object itself but at the relationships between objects and their effects on people’s environments—is determined by gender or by my multidisciplinary education.

I look at thresholds instead of at physical and disciplinary borders, and I do so through a social lens. I became interested in designing the city and what is collective—housing and public facilities and spaces—because it belongs to everybody. One may say that caring for others and the social aspect that informs my design and teaching comes from a gendered perspective.

I can tell that women have a different, more cooperative—more horizontal, transversal—way of working, which might be interesting to explore now that architects are called to work with other disciplines and that we have to adjust to different working cultures. I am convinced that we bring to the table other perspectives, complementary to the prevailing ones, that are as beneficial to the field as they are to a better future.

**Q:** In the US, the NAAB reported 41% of architecture graduates that were women. However, out of all AIA members, only 21.7% are female. Could you please offer your opinion on why there is a drop-off in number of female architects becoming license, from those who have completed college?

**A:** This phenomenon is known in the profession as the ‘missing 32%’ (slight difference in numbers), as Rosa T. Sheng coined it. Such a loss for us and for our field, this fantastic potential of educated women dissipated between college and practice! We could all guess some factors that cause this gender gap: demanding and inflexible schedules that make it difficult to balance work and family, lack of mentorship, lack of women in leadership roles (glass ceiling), salary discrepancies between male and female, and the invisibility of female architects’ work...

We need to know more about these causes to combat them, to eradicate the implicit and explicit gender biases, still deeply rooted in our field.

My colleague Marci Uihlein and I are currently organizing the Illinois School of Architecture Women’s Reunion & Symposium for next Fall (September 26-28, 2019), precisely to elevate and celebrate the work of our alumnae and to track their paths, to get to know what they are doing, if they are practicing or not, what are their successes, and what are the challenges they face.
Q: What is the reason you chose to pursue architecture/urban design?

A: I was exposed to architecture and urban design at a young age and always found it fascinating. My first visit to the Acropolis was at age 3. Architecture ran in my genes.

My father, Harry Antoniades Anthony (1922-2018), was a major influence on my life both personally and professionally. Born on an island, the youngest of five children, he lost his father at age 6 and grew up in poverty in war-torn Greece. He studied architecture and urbanism in Athens and received a life-changing fellowship for graduate study abroad in Paris, where he received his masters at L'Ecole Nationale Superieure des Beaux Arts and his Ph.D. at the Sorbonne. After graduating he worked in Paris as an architect and planner with the world-renown architect, Le Corbusier.

My Dad later earned a second Ph.D. at Columbia University, where he served as professor and chair of the division of urban planning at Columbia University for many years. My family spent lots of time at his office at Avery Hall. As a little girl, I remember seeing architectural drawings and models posted throughout the corridors and exhibition spaces, along with the smell of fresh cork board. I was reminded of Avery Hall when I first visited our beautiful Architecture Building here during my job interview. Some of the brick paving patterns in and around our quad reminded me of the Columbia University campus.

Our family traveled to many architectural and urban design landmarks around the world, often accompanying
my Dad with his students on their study abroad courses. I remember visiting the then-new towns of Milton Keynes in the UK, and Vallingby and Farsta in Sweden, along with La Defense in Paris.

I was always fascinated by spaces and places and especially how everyday people experienced them—for better or for worse.

**Q: Where are the places you have travelled for work or other professional related activities?**

**A:** I’ve been fortunate to travel widely both for work and for pleasure. So far I’ve been to 25 countries, including 10 trips to Greece, 6 trips to Italy, including 5 visits to Venice, and 2 trips to China. I’ve also visited just about all of our 50 states, except for Alaska and South Dakota.

Here’s the full list to date: Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Russia, Scotland, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine.

I visited Russia when it was still the USSR. That trip inspired one of my very first publications, “Public and Private Space in Soviet Cities” in Landscape (23:2, 1979), which I wrote while a Berkeley graduate student 40 years ago!

My most recent overseas travels were to Germany in 2018 to attend the wedding of our German exchange students (2016-17) Nora Hilpert and Lars Huhnken, in Nuremberg. It was a fairy-tale wedding in a beautiful centuries-old historic church, a magical experience. I loved meeting all their family and friends who hosted us there. I also had the pleasure to get together with Max Zorn, another of our German exchange students (2017-18), and Scott Rongbo Hu, UIUC M. Arch. (2015). All 4 are now students at The Technical University in Munich, which I also had a chance to visit. It was very special to meet them all the way across the globe.

In 2017 I traveled to China where I was an invited keynote speaker at the Environment-Behavior Research Association (EBRA) at Chongqing University in Chongqing, and an invited lecturer at Shanghai Jiguang Polytechnic College and Tongji University in Shanghai.

I’ve still never been to Barcelona but have taught several of our Spanish exchange students so I do hope to visit there someday soon.

**Q: What skill (or set of skills) has served you best in your architectural career?**

**A:** Carving out a special niche for myself with an expertise in environment and behavior, social and behavioral factors in design, and gender issues in design. I love to write and have honed my skills as an author, researcher, design critic, and advocate providing a unique voice for those who voices would otherwise remain unheard.

Over the years I’ve spent a good deal of energy developing new seminars here at Illinois that we had...
not offered before, covering topics such as Gender and Race in Contemporary Architecture; Entrepreneurship in Design; and Architecture, Cinema, Environment and Behavior. Teaching each of these seminars has prompted me to research and write more about these issues.

I also enjoy architectural photography and have had my work exhibited at venues in Chicago and Champaign-Urbana.

Q: What is your opinion on the present-day urban fabric?

A: I love places where you can walk easily from point A to point B, with lots to see and do in between. I’d much rather spend my time on foot than in a car. And it’s one reason why I love Chicago.

I enjoy dense urban environments where you can walk for hours and hours and not even realize how far you’ve gone. I love bike paths completely separated from vehicular traffic that provide a safe way to navigate cities. I’ve biked the Chicago Lakefront Trail many times and find it one of the city’s greatest amenities. Some of my other favorite bike trails are along the Seawall at Stanley Park in Vancouver BC, and along Mission Bay and Coronado in San Diego. Biking provides a unique sensory experience in the urban environment, plus you get to feel the breeze.

I wish that our American cities and towns were safer places for women and children, and that we could circulate alone freely at any hour of the day or night as is the case in many cities abroad. In Tokyo I was amazed to see young children in their school uniforms riding the subway by themselves. I could never imagine that happening here.

Public transit envy is something I often sense when traveling abroad, especially after riding the high-speed trains of China, Japan, and Europe, and the sleek, safe subway systems of cities such as Seoul, South Korea. I can’t help but compare these with our antiquated Amtrak trains that take us to Chicago and spend a good part of the trip traveling backwards rather than forwards, and with Chicago’s El where so many CTA stations aren’t even accessible for people with disabilities or parents with strollers.

Q: How have you been able to contribute to the connection from the individual pieces to the larger elements of a city?

A: My writings address issues at different environmental scales – from the micro to the macro, from the design of children’s toys and product packaging, the design of...
toilets and public restrooms, to the design of buildings, neighborhoods, and cities. In Defined by Design, I analyze how the design of products, places and spaces either helps or hinders our health. The power of design is immense, but most people don’t realize it.

As a member of our Health and Well-Being faculty, I believe these are important concerns—sometimes life and death issues—that merit special attention.

**Q: What past professional work have you worked on/completed relative to urban design?**

A: Most of my career has been devoted to teaching, researching, and writing, so while I am not a practicing architect, that is the career path that most of my former students have chosen. So I like to believe that my teaching has had an impact on the designs that they create, no matter what scale, and that they remember to take the needs of many different types of people into account in every project that they do.

My design for the recent addition to my 1924 vintage Dutch Colonial home in Urbana took several years to create because I took great pains to both relate to and enhance the surrounding historic residential neighborhood. I collaborated with Rob Natke of UrbanWorks Ltd. in Chicago on its architectural design and with Tom Loew on its construction. Our 21st century octagon is reminiscent of our local round barns and glows like a lantern by night. It received an award from our local Preservation and Conservation Association (PACA).

**Q: What is your experience as a woman in the field of architecture? How has this shaped your view of the future of the field? Has this also shaped your design and aspirations for professional work?**

A: When I first arrived at our School of Architecture, I was the only woman on our faculty. Everyone knew who I was because I stood out in the crowd. It wasn’t always easy being the sole ambassador of the female species, but I tried my best to turn it to my advantage. I’m pleased to have more women colleagues join our faculty today, and I’d still like to see even more.

Some of my own experiences and those of other female colleagues—both in academic and in the profession—in a field dominated by men prompted some of my scholarly research and advocacy work. I wanted to see how widespread, if at all, were some of the challenges we faced. I’ve been a longtime member of Chicago Women in Architecture, an organization
that has proven extremely valuable both personally and professionally, and inspired my research on Designing for Diversity.

I was invited to serve on campus in leadership positions on gender issues, where I always tried to achieve some tangible, visible results. I served as Chair of the Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of Women (2002-04), and as Co-Chair of the Provost’s Gender Equity Council (2009-11). Under my administration, along with my committee members, I spearheaded a movement to incorporate gender equity issues into the design review process for new buildings and major renovations on campus. I also led an effort to analyze the campus building stock and create more gender-friendly public restrooms across campus.

During my term co-chairing the Provost’s Gender Equity Council I led a team to design, develop, construct, and implement a Universal Design Podium that provides a gender-friendly, accessible experience allowing speakers ranging from 4’2” to 7’0” to change its height with the press of a button. Ten such podiums were constructed and are on campus today. You can see one of them in Foellinger Auditorium at our School of Architecture Commencement ceremony.

Q: In the US, the NAAB reported 41% of architecture graduates that were women. However, out of all AIA members, only 21.7% are female. Could you please offer your opinion on why there is a drop-off in number of female architects becoming license, from those who have completed college?

A: My second book, Designing for Diversity: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Architectural Profession, was one of the first publications to address that issue. It goes into lots of detail so I’ll simply refer you to it here. Others have written about these issues in the meantime, and although the situation has improved somewhat, many challenges faced decades ago by women architects that I describe in my book are still true today.

Q: Have you experienced professional programs that push for more equality for women in the profession? If so, what has been done?

A: In my seminar, Architecture/Gender & Women’s Studies 424, we routinely visit the Chicago offices of underrepresented architects – both women architects and architects of color. Last fall we all participated in the National Organization for Minority Architects (NOMA) Convention in Chicago – a fantastic experience! Colleagues who own and manage these offices are proactive in creating fair and welcoming environments for all. Others can learn a great deal to learn from them.

In Designing for Diversity, I describe specific proactive strategies that architectural schools, offices, and professional organizations can use to promote fairness for all employees.

Q: What was one of the highlights of the past year?

A: Last fall I celebrated a professional milestone – “33.3 – A Third of a Century Teaching Illinois Architects.” Through my old course rosters, Facebook, LinkedIn, and other networks, I tracked down many of my former students and hosted a reunion for them at the beautiful new headquarters of the Chicago Architecture Center right along the Chicago River.

Six of my former students, UIUC alumni Aparna Bapu, Marina Panos Berrones, James McKay, Sharon Samuels, Annie Sit, and Joshua Welch, each representing different eras from the 1980’s to the present, spoke about their experiences in my courses at the UIUC and how they influenced their careers. Several Chicago friends, retired faculty, and current students joined us as well – altogether about 100 people in attendance, a special opportunity for new and old friends to meet and greet each other.
MAKING A DIFFERENCE
OVER ONE THIRD OF A CENTURY TEACHING ILLINOIS ARCHITECTS

PLEASE JOIN ME IN CELEBRATING MY UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXPERIENCE
HELP US REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS LIKE FOR YOU TO BE PART OF MY CLASS!

33 years of teaching

ACSA DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR
KATHRYN ANTHONY

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN
Q: Would you care to elaborate on your architectural background? Where did you do your undergraduate studies?

A: I did my undergraduate studies in Bangladesh. I was born and raised and studied there. However, I was very eager to come west, and study in the US. So, while I was a student, I applied before the end of my fifth year and was admitted to Ann Harbor (Michigan) and MIT. However, after getting some scholarship support, I went to Ann Harbor to do my masters. Shortly after I participated in a study abroad program in Prague.

When I went to Prague, I was quite intrigued. I discovered I was very interested in urban design. I also participated in an exhibition on Prague and urban spaces. Then I was admitted into the urban design program at University of Michigan. I was a teaching assistant and graduated with my two graduate degrees from Michigan.

I briefly struggled after graduating to find a job because I wanted to work in either New York or Washington D.C. I was able to get a job as an intern at HOK and worked there for some time and changed jobs in New York. After that, I worked in Washington D.C. and was working on large scale master plans. My responsibilities were all encompassing as I was one of the only urban designers on the projects under my supervisor.

It was work on the micro scale and the macro scale. I was looking at broader D.C. master plans but also using my architecture knowledge to aid in my design and integration.
“Obviously as a woman, now that I have a family, it is very difficult because - by default - I have to take care of my children. I have more responsibilities, more attachment, towards my kids, which can count as an obstacle to others.”

While in D.C., I would go to public meetings and study with the street carts and study construction about what the developmental possibilities were for mixed use developments in Washington D.C. We looked into libraries and other institutions such as that because D.C. has so much that needs to be upgraded.

Q: Having worked for a few years, both in Bangladesh and the states, what was your experience as a woman in Architecture in Bangladesh versus the states?

A: They were very different. Even though you feel you are a woman in the field. Particularly in Bangladesh, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, I faced a lot of problems with classmates. I was not exposed to many senior level student architects, and the men were getting much more work. In cases, I had to become friends with my male colleagues to get work from an architectural perspective.

There were much less problems in the states. I did not face that many problems directly. But I did face in Bangladesh, I was told I should make models with only pink foam. I know I faced more problems in Bangladesh, but I can’t always pinpoint one thing that happened. Obviously as a woman, now that I have a family, it is very difficult because by default I have to take care of my children. I have more responsibilities, more attachment, towards my kids, which can count as an obstacle to others. Something always seems to hold [women] back. Even if I put myself as a hiring professional, I would think how much productivity would I get from a woman versus a man? I’m sure those thoughts are in the back of people’s heads. Whether it be good or bad, it is still a stigma that is created to some form about men and women and their similarities or lack thereof.

Q: Regards to urban design, where do you see yourself in five years? What goals have you set for yourself?

A: I want a hybrid profession as well as a hybrid location. I definitely want to contribute to my country (Bangladesh), depending on the situation. The more and more I stay here, the more I detach myself from my home. I am already affiliated with a firm in Bangladesh as a project partner. So, if I have time, I will give my time and contribute what I can. Otherwise I study, and also aspire to teach. Since I am abroad, the aspect is different because people don’t know me. I don’t necessarily have a root here, because I have most of my connections back home.
Q: What is the CWA Scholarship and how did the team know about it?

A: The Chicago Women in Architecture Scholarship is awarded to a female architecture student who creates an exceptional project in her last year of design studio. It is a scholarship made possible by funding from the late Gertrude Lempp Kerbis and the efforts of the CWA board. Winners are awarded a monetary prize along with a year long CWA membership. We knew of the CWA organization and the events they hold for women architects in Chicago, but we were initially made aware of the scholarship program through graduating seniors Boyuan Dong, Ashwini Rangaraju, Sowmya Singh and Wang Yingja, who also won second place in 2017. Professor Scott Murray, who was our professor for the winning studio project in Spring 2018, encouraged us to apply for various competitions. We were happy to take the extra step of applying our hard work to other opportunities, and clearly, it was worth it!

Q: How can other female students in the school apply for the CWA Scholarship?

A: The Scholarship program is open to all female architecture students, who are pursuing their M.Arch or a five-year B.Arch Degree from a NAAB Accredited Architecture Program in Illinois. There is no limit on student submissions per school. Every year, the Scholarship is announced in the month of September/October and usually, the submission is in the first week on November. Here is a link with more information: https://cwarch.org/cwa-scholarship-2/
Q: Tell us about the project. Which studio was it and what is the concept?

A: The project is called The Showcase Building, developed in our Spring 2018 studio with Professor Scott Murray. We were prompted to design a mid-rise infill building on a long and incredibly narrow site. The Showcase Building belongs The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and will, for the first time, unite technical and expressive studios under one roof. The building form will primarily address the specific challenges of the site, such as light and verticality, then inform a sense of interconnectivity between patrons through physical and visual means.

Situated across from the Art Institute of Chicago and located in close proximity to several art and architectural beacons of the world, the Showcase Building will display the works and processes of up and coming artists. The building program and functions focus on the holistic growth of the students in the school. The intent is to encourage a cross-disciplinary dialogue, between students and curious passers-by. This goal can be achieved by means of increasing visibility and connectivity between public spaces and exhibition spaces; technical and expressive studios; and studios of different class levels.

The deep and slender building calls for floor plan flexibility, visual relief and thoroughly designed daylighting devices. The Showcase Building is designed with each of these aspects in mind, using the assistance of quantitative simulation tools such as Grasshopper, Sefaira and Diva. This data has been interpreted to enhance the qualitative experience hundreds of patrons will have on a regular basis at any time of day. The interior has been organized to maximize visual accessibility.

Q: What was the most difficult design challenge for the project?

A: The first challenge was preparing our own program. Neither of us had a studio in the past where we needed to decide the project program, the types of spaces and square footages that would be needed. Much of this was determined by looking at the existing information of SAIC’s available classrooms and studios and we compared these stats with other existing schools. The next challenge, and easily the most difficult challenge, was dealing with the slenderness of the site. With a 40’ x 170’ footprint and at approximately 20 stories tall, providing access to natural light was a huge challenge and therefore became a major design priority. We were introduced to Sefaira for daylighting analyses and created several massing iterations to test and determine the form and glazed surfaces that, we believe, would best fit the given site.

Q: How does the CWA help and promote women in architecture?

A: Chicago Women in Architecture is a not-for-profit organization that exists as a forum for women in architecture and related professions. The CWA works toward increasing the visibility of women in the profession by organizing a lecture series, extending career opportunities through social networking events, being an advocate for issues of concern to women within the profession, organizing the annual scholarship to encourage young women in architecture, among other activities and events.

Q: How does the award help your architectural education and career?

A: The award is a great step toward recognition in the professional world. The Holiday party where we were awarded the scholarship was an event that introduced us to prominent architects in Chicago. It opened a gateway to all future events with the organization, which will help increase opportunities for both of us. The award came with prize money, which helps offset other costs that architecture students bear. All in all, winning an award from a prestigious group like this is encouragement to continue striving to produce quality work.
In the heat of finals last semester, the New York Times published an op-ed by Allison Arieff. The title read, “Where Are All the Female Architects?”

As students, looking for women in Architecture in our own environment it is a no brainer. There is a good gender mix in both the undergraduate and graduate student body, and there are both female and male professors that teach us the nuances of architectural theory and practice. This is at least the case for UIUC. So why is it so important that one pays attention to these kinds of articles, especially when the current environment of Illinois can sometimes feel like it is already moving in the right direction?

Simply put, it is indicative of the world that we are entering. It is a world where women still in 2019 are working towards equal pay and trying to smash the ever-elusive glass ceiling. And while Architecture as a profession is always interested in pushing the boundaries and creating things that are new there is sometimes a disconnect between how far Architects are willing to push the limits of design verses how far they are willing to push the social culture that has been fostered in the field.

So, the next question is, what is the responsibility that students have when entering the field? As young professionals it is our job to not only know about the
issues we face ahead, but also strive to change the outdated societal cultures that are at play in the field of architecture. This is especially needed when looking at a survey study done by AIA in 2015, not only where there less women registered as AIA associates, which points to less women in the field overall, but when it came to even recognizing the issue of gender inequality, women were in agreement that there was a problem in the field, whereas men where more split on the topic. As Arief pointed out in her piece, "The Pipeline is Not the Problem"! Even though the field is training more and more women, we still see the problem of not enough of them climbing as far up the career ladder as they should, if at all. This is clear in the discoveries made by AIA stating that women where often encouraged to apply their architectural education to other forms of design other than architecture.

For women in school it can be hard to see this data and not be concerned about what the future might bring. But the important thing is that there is hope for a new day, movements like VOW (Voices of Women) are helping to raise awareness of the issues of women in the field, while other designers like Dorte Mandrup are helping to change the way we think of the term "Architect" by refusing to allow for gender stereotypes to drive the name of the game. Just like these women who are trying to change the cultural rules that we live by, it is important that students also start to work on changing the rules too. For example, making sure to educate ourselves on the topic. It is important that as students who hope to be architects someday that there is a push towards furthering our knowledge on the social issues we have inherited. Second, if the only architects we know and learn about are men, then how is that a well-rounded knowledge of the world we are living in today? In her interview with DeZeene, Dorte Mandrup stated, "Are we not long overdue a mind shift allowing men and women to work – and compete – within the same parameters, known simply as good architecture?" This is completely correct, if we cannot as a profession make the jump to not only think of everyone when talking about design, but also judge architecture based on its merit then we will never get anywhere.

This does not mean that the only solution is to change the way that the term “Architect” is understood and include more women in our daily knowledge, there also needs to be a shift to fixing the inequitable treatment of not only women but all minorities in the field. VOW’s manifesto, written for the 2018 Venice Biennial Architecture Conference pledged to help combat the treatment of women and all minorities in architecture and change the perpetual attitudes that promote the discrimination of women and other minorities in the workplace. As the next generation of Architects, we have the unique situation of being not only apart of the change that needs to happen, but, hopefully within our lifetimes this kind of pervasive culture will be only taught about in history. In her op-ed, Arief describes this transformative time that we are living in “some semblance of a #MeToo movement.” This kind of political activism in the field of Architecture is inspiring as it means that there is a momentum towards changing the discipline. In the end, as students it is important to remember that we all are responsible collectively for the future of the discipline and that we have the power to change the culture of our field in the way that we imagine the world should be.

- “VOW - Voices of Women Architects.” VOW! Voices of Women Manifesto, 25 May 2018, 11:00 am, vowarchitects.com/manifesto/.
Name: Malavika Mallik
Year: Graduate Student
My artwork is inspired by the beauty of nature and the medium never fails to capture the beauty on paper. I hope to stay inspired and I hope to continue to paint.”
These two drawings are inspired by Tibetan opera and the ghost culture in Tibet. Though there are just sketches but it helped me a lot during the time of nostalgias.”
Name: Peter Schumacher
Year: Graduate Student

Pictured: Product Display Building
Name: Peter Schumacher  
Year: Graduate Student  

Pictured: Bridge Connection  
(left) and Shading Louvre Detail  
(right)
Name: Matt Ehlers
Year: Graduate Student

Pictured: Cliffs of Moher, Ireland
Name: Matt Ehlers
Year: Graduate Student

Pictured: Edinburgh Castle, in Edinburgh, Scotland