

DIVAN

PUBLICATION OF
AIA BROOKLYN

MAR / APR 2020



PYLON

MAR / APR 2020

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COVER

Photo of Cleft Ridge Span Archway in Prospect Park by Joseph Koelbel. Joseph Koelbel is a licensed Architect and Landscape Architect with his own Brooklyn-based practice.

Silhouette provided by Fitgi Saint Louis. Check out her musings and style at @givethemhair on Instagram.

DESIGN

KUDOS Design Collaboratory™

For future issues, we welcome submissions from our members that further our goal of supporting and guiding our community. Articles and notices may be submitted to the editor at secretary@aiabrooklyn.org. Material printed in the Pylon is for informational purposes only and should not be relied upon as legal opinion or advice.

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SARAH KAVANAGH is a Brooklyn-based Architectural Designer, a graduate of Lehigh University and she holds a Masters in Architecture from the Rhode Island School of Design. She has worked at a number of notable Architecture firms in New York City including Robert A.M. Stern Architects, Bright Architecture and David Cunningham Architecture Planning. Sarah is currently a Project Manager at Kushner Studios in NYC; A Writer for PYLON; A Logistics Coordinator for the AIA Brooklyn Exhibition Committee (AIABKx) and in pursuit of love, life and her license.



JANE MCGROARTY has had over thirty years of experience in architecture and historic preservation. She is the Treasurer & Chair of the Urban Design Committee of AIA Brooklyn and Principal of Jane McGroarty Architect. Jane has also taught design at NY Institute of Technology and the NJ School of Architecture; researched and created various walking tours of Brooklyn and is an avid writer.

AIA Brooklyn
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NOTES

- 1 Letter from the Editor
- 2 Getting to Know You
- 7 Discussion Panel Summary
- 7 Upcoming Events
- 10 AIA National Announcements
- 11 Say Anything
- 12 Community Notes

COMMITTEES

- 13 Communications: AIA Brooklyn Is Still Changing Its Look
- 14 CRAN: Trash Talk
- 18 Urban Design: W.I.M.B.Y.
- 22 Membership

FEATURES

- 24 AIA Brooklyn Feature: Ladies First
- 30 Special Feature: In Formation
- 51 Just One More Thing



Lady Parts



“A woman in harmony with her spirit is like a river flowing. She goes where she will without pretense and arrives at her destination prepared to be herself and only herself.”

– MAYA ANGELOU

Authenticity has long been a buzzword used to describe a person (women especially) who is genuine, real, acts in a consistent manner with what they believe. While being a genuine person is a good way to go through life, being your authentic self is not always easy when you’ve been trained to be everything *but* who you were meant to be. Most little girls learn that they should be nice, keep a smile on their face and are very often made to feel like their worth and value in society is tied to what they can offer others. The idea is that ‘good girls’, made up of sugar and spice and everything nice, grow up to be good wives and mothers, excellent homemakers, caring friends all while being ‘perfect’. There are many *Lady Parts* that women learn to play and even though these roles can often emphasize the importance of women in the world, I wonder if women can ever truly be their authentic selves if they’re always playing the part?

I recently read a book that speaks about the correlation between likeability and the level of success a woman can achieve. Who would you be if you had permission to be yourself? was a question that was asked by the author. I contemplated this question for a while and finally landed on my answer: I would be *ME*. I think I’ve always marched to beat of my own drum – I’m an opinionated woman with grand ideas, I speak my mind even though I have a soft voice, I have an incredible work ethic which means I always show up and I have lots of heart which means I always give my all. But, because I’m also a black woman, I’m oftentimes underestimated, discounted, considered angry and mean or even worse – made to feel invisible. According to this same book, these stereotypes can tend to overshadow all the good parts about me, which can also affect both the levels of success that I achieve and how likable I’m perceived. Rather than seeing this as a negative, it affirms my choice to be authentically myself because: real success to me is understanding that being authentic doesn’t require permission from anyone but myself, it frees me up from playing roles that I wasn’t meant to play, it creates the possibility that I can live a life that fulfills me and ultimately, it allows me to be a woman that leaves a legacy by simply being.

In this issue, PYLON interviewed AIA Brooklyn women who are creating their own legacies, making themselves seen, heard and redefining what authentic *Lady Parts* really are.

We also have a very special interview with the only 3 Women (so far) to fill the role of AIA Brooklyn President in the chapter’s 125 year history. You can also read a lovely tribute to the life of Norma Sklarek, FAIA – the First Black Woman to obtain her Architects License in both New York State and California. Lastly, I hope you don’t miss the opportunity to read about the motivating journeys of some of the women who make up the AIA Brooklyn Community in the Special Feature: In♀Formation.

Spring has sprung and although the world has recently changed putting most of us on PAUSE, I hope this issue brings you a bit of joy and allows the feminine energy of springtime to rejuvenate you.

TALISHA L. SAINVIL, AIA
EDITOR IN CHIEF

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

February – March 2020

AIA

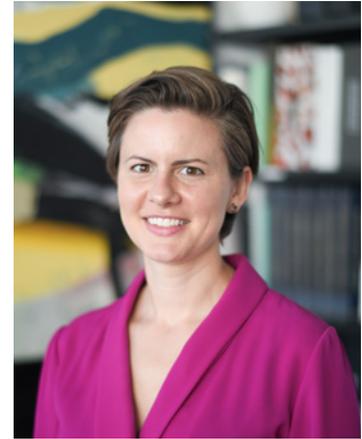
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GETTING TO KNOW YOU

The Membership Committee asked AIA Brooklyn members to answer 10 questions in order to Get to Know Them Better. Here's what they had to say!



WHAT'S YOUR NAME, WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?

Rachael Stollar

Virgo

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF THE ARCHITECTURE PROFESSION?

Community engagement

WHAT IS YOUR LEAST FAVORITE PART?

Unrealistic expectations

WHAT TURNS YOU ON CREATIVELY, SPIRITUALLY OR EMOTIONALLY?

As someone involved in marketing – capturing finished projects, meeting new prospective clients.



I am also a musician in my (very limited) spare time, performing locally and in upstate NY with @theavalanchesbk.

WHAT PROFESSION OTHER THAN YOUR OWN WOULD YOU LIKE TO ATTEMPT?

All of them.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE OR SPACE?

This is really hard, I live super close to [Brooklyn Bridge Park](#) and have watched it transform over the years into an incredible public space. It provides so many things to the surrounding community and beyond. I feel really lucky to have access to something like that – without needing a car or train to get there.

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE ARCHITECT, DESIGNER OR ARTIST?

A. I had the chance to visit the office and several works by Peter Zumthor while on a grand tour of Switzerland and really respect what his firm is producing. I recently fell in love with the work of photographer Sam Contis and went to hear her speak at the Aperture foundation. I think my 'favorite' fluctuates based on my state of mind at a particular moment and the influences I am seeking relative to my creative process.

WHAT SOUND OR NOISE DO YOU LOVE?

Well that depends on the context... sounds in nature or sounds of certain kinds of music but I wouldn't want to have to choose.

WHAT NATURAL GIFT OR MAGIC POWER WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO POSSESS?

The ability to control time.

IF YOU COULD MEET ANY ARCHITECT, DESIGNER, OR ARTIST (LIVING OR NOT), WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHAT WOULD YOU TALK ABOUT?

What is that saying, "Never meet your idols..." I cherish the opportunity to meet with other women designers and talk to them about their personal experiences in the field.

→ **DID YOU KNOW?** Jane's Carousel was built in 1922 and originally installed in Youngstown, Ohio. The carousel is named after Jane Walentas who, along with her husband David Walents, restored the carousel and donated it to Brooklyn Bridge Park.



WHAT'S YOUR NAME, WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?

**Maria del Mar
Granados Santiago**

Virgo

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF THE ARCHITECTURE PROFESSION?

Building

WHAT IS YOUR LEAST FAVORITE PART?

Financing

WHAT TURNS YOU ON CREATIVELY, SPIRITUALLY OR EMOTIONALLY?

Everything around me

WHAT PROFESSION OTHER THAN YOUR OWN WOULD YOU LIKE TO ATTEMPT?

Construction/ Development, or Politics

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE OR SPACE?

In New York, Central Park and Red Hook.
In the world, Madrid and Rome

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE ARCHITECT, DESIGNER OR ARTIST?

Le Corbusier

WHAT SOUND OR NOISE DO YOU LOVE?

Talk radio in the distance in the mornings,
at my parents' house

WHAT NATURAL GIFT OR MAGIC POWER WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO POSSESS?

Healing

IF YOU COULD MEET ANY ARCHITECT, DESIGNER, OR ARTIST (LIVING OR NOT), WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHAT WOULD YOU TALK ABOUT?

Billy Wilder, film director and screenwriter.
I want to know everything

↑ **DID YOU KNOW?** Kate Smith was the first woman to have her own talk radio show, 'The Kate Smith Hour', back in 1931. She remained on the radio until her final show aired in 1958.



WHAT'S YOUR NAME, WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?

Andrea Fisk

Taurus

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF THE ARCHITECTURE PROFESSION?

It's a profession where a curious person can continue learning for the rest of their life. There is no limit!

WHAT IS YOUR LEAST FAVORITE PART?

Neverending emails and interruptions! Sometimes it can be hard to focus and make enough mental space to be creative.

WHAT TURNS YOU ON CREATIVELY, SPIRITUALLY OR EMOTIONALLY?

Creating spaces where it is easy for people to feel calm and happy.

WHAT PROFESSION OTHER THAN YOUR OWN WOULD YOU LIKE TO ATTEMPT?

I feel like I'm already attempting many professions! I started my own firm two and a half years ago, and since then, I've been learning to be a bookkeeper, a contract attorney, a marketing person, a headhunter, a mediator...

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE OR SPACE?

Perhaps this is boring, but I would say my home is my favorite place. I love to travel and experience new things, but home is where I am the most emotionally centered, and happiest; it is the world I have created for myself.

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE ARCHITECT, DESIGNER OR ARTIST?

I've found the most inspiration in Louis Kahn's large buildings, interiors of Axel Vervoordt, and Peter Zumthor's writings. I also recently saw a lecture by RCR Arquitectes and have become obsessed with their work.

QUESTIONS INSPIRED BY

Brooklyn's own Notorious B.I.G.; James Lipton, Bernard Pivot and Marcel Proust

WANT US TO GET TO KNOW YOU A LITTLE BETTER?

Send an email to secretary@aiabrooklyn.org to be featured in an upcoming issue of PYLON.

WHAT SOUND OR NOISE DO YOU LOVE?

I love when I can hear a quiet sound from far away. Possibly because I live in NYC and that doesn't happen unless I get out of the city and stand still.

WHAT NATURAL GIFT OR MAGIC POWER WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO POSSESS?

The power to freeze time for everyone else

IF YOU COULD MEET ANY ARCHITECT, DESIGNER, OR ARTIST (LIVING OR NOT), WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHAT WOULD YOU TALK ABOUT?

Hands down, I would like to meet [Julia Morgan](#). I've read everything I can find about her, and I think she was absolutely brilliant; it's an absolute shame that her story was mostly ignored and forgotten. I think she would have a unique perspective on what it means to be female and an Architect.

↑ **DID YOU KNOW?** Julia Morgan was the first woman to be admitted to the L'Ecole Des Beaux-Arts in Paris and was the First woman to become licensed in the State of California. Although Morgan worked on over 700 projects during her career, she is probably best known for being the Architect of the Hearst Castle located in San Simeon, California.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU CONTINUED



WHAT'S YOUR NAME, WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?

Jessica Barnhouse

Leo

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF THE ARCHITECTURE PROFESSION?

The intersection of Art and Science

WHAT IS YOUR LEAST FAVORITE PART?

Coordinating with disengaged Engineers/Consultants

WHAT TURNS YOU ON CREATIVELY, SPIRITUALLY OR EMOTIONALLY?

Reading. Ideas. Myth. The stories we make and how/why we make them.

WHAT PROFESSION OTHER THAN YOUR OWN WOULD YOU LIKE TO ATTEMPT?

Materials Geographer/Scientist, Environmental Engineer, Children's Book Illustrator

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE OR SPACE?

I love [libraries](#).

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE ARCHITECT, DESIGNER OR ARTIST?

I don't have just one... Rachel Whiteread, Robert Smithson, Adam Goldsworthy, David Foster Wallace, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Thomas Wolfe... I am reading an excellent novel by Richard Powers...

WHAT SOUND OR NOISE DO YOU LOVE?

Genuine and sincere mirth

WHAT NATURAL GIFT OR MAGIC POWER WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO POSSESS?

Persuasion

IF YOU COULD MEET ANY ARCHITECT, DESIGNER, OR ARTIST (LIVING OR NOT), WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHAT WOULD YOU TALK ABOUT?

Carlos Scarpa, Geometry



WHAT'S YOUR NAME, WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?

Maya Madison

Sagittarius

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF THE ARCHITECTURE PROFESSION?

Being able to see my designs become spaces that people occupy and live in. Also, knowing that something I conceived with my creative mind, and usually a group of creative minds, is able to shape the way people see and experience the built world is pretty powerful. Creating spaces that uplift or enhance a person's day to day life is the best thing ever.

WHAT IS YOUR LEAST FAVORITE PART?

My least favorite part about the architecture profession is the lack of ethnic and socioeconomic diversity. I think the diversity is improving but there is still a lot of work that needs to be done. One could argue that there is a lack of diversity in every profession, but architecture seems to suffer the most from this. #400forward

WHAT TURNS YOU ON CREATIVELY, SPIRITUALLY OR EMOTIONALLY?

Art, music, and fashion turn me on creatively, spiritually, and emotionally. Art is and always has been, my first love and I am thrilled that I am in a profession that reminds me of that every day. Music is emotionally and spiritually therapeutic and helps me get through the day, while activating my productivity and creativity. Fashion and shoes are just a guilty pleasure.

WHAT PROFESSION OTHER THAN YOUR OWN WOULD YOU LIKE TO ATTEMPT?

I would love to try being a fashion designer or a financial advisor. I excelled in math in grade school and I still love numbers and making clothes during my high school and college years was always a hobby of mine.

← **DID YOU KNOW?** Jane Wadden Turner was hired as a library clerk by the Smithsonian in 1857. She was the first woman to secure a paid position at the institution and, with the help of her brother, created the first catalog of the National Museum's library.

↓ **DID YOU KNOW?** Zaha Hadid was the first woman (and woman of color no less) to receive the Pritzker Architecture Prize, the Architecture profession's highest prize and, so far, is the only woman to receive the Royal Gold Medal from the Royal Institute of British Architects.

A writer for the Guardian said about Hadid: 'She was not keen to be characterized as a woman architect, or an Arab architect. She was simply an architect.'

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE OR SPACE?

My answer feels cliché, but I would say the Brooklyn Bridge. I live in Brooklyn and no matter how many times I walk the Brooklyn Bridge I still get goosebumps. Even though it's usually crowded with tourists there's something so serene about the cables and the heavy limestone of the bridge. Also the history behind it is pretty amazing.

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE ARCHITECT, DESIGNER OR ARTIST?

My favorite artist is Kehinde Wiley. He is the first person that I've seen juxtapose contemporary Black culture with classical Renaissance paintings. I think him and his paintings are brilliant.

WHAT SOUND OR NOISE DO YOU LOVE?

I don't think I have a favorite sound, but if I had to choose, I'd say the birds chirping in the morning.

WHAT NATURAL GIFT OR MAGIC POWER WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO POSSESS?

I want to be able to teleport myself to anywhere in the world. I love to travel, and I love efficiency so it just makes sense that I should have that power.

IF YOU COULD MEET ANY ARCHITECT, DESIGNER, OR ARTIST (LIVING OR NOT), WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHAT WOULD YOU TALK ABOUT?

I would've loved to meet and have a conversation with [Zaha Hadid](#). She seemed like such a boss lady and she was one of the most innovative designers of our time all while being fashionable and fabulous. I would want to talk to her about her experiences as a designer, innovator, businesswoman, and woman of color and how all of those identities came together.



WHAT'S YOUR NAME, WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?

Jane Carroll McGroarty

Cancer

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF THE ARCHITECTURE PROFESSION?

Walking onto a job site and finding fifty men working to create what I designed

WHAT IS YOUR LEAST FAVORITE PART?

The bureaucrats of the NYC DOB

WHAT TURNS YOU ON CREATIVELY, SPIRITUALLY OR EMOTIONALLY?

A great book and the ocean

WHAT PROFESSION OTHER THAN YOUR OWN WOULD YOU LIKE TO ATTEMPT?

Writer or forensic pathologist

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE OR SPACE?

Kyoto, Japan

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE ARCHITECT, DESIGNER OR ARTIST?

Louis Kahn

WHAT SOUND OR NOISE DO YOU LOVE?

Anything from Sun Studio/Memphis Recording Company

WHAT NATURAL GIFT OR MAGIC POWER WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO POSSESS?

Time travel

IF YOU COULD MEET ANY ARCHITECT, DESIGNER, OR ARTIST (LIVING OR NOT), WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHAT WOULD YOU TALK ABOUT?

Eileen Gray. I would love to hear her stories of being an ambulance driver in France during WWI, her years as a designer in Paris after WWI, her imaginative furniture design, her love life (with both men and women), the house she designed on the Riviera and her friendship with Le Corbusier (and why he trashed her Riviera house)



WHAT'S YOUR NAME, WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?

Jueying (Joy) Liu

Sagittarius

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF THE ARCHITECTURE PROFESSION?

Having design realized

WHAT IS YOUR LEAST FAVORITE PART?

Culturally too traditional. Dominated by old white men.

WHAT TURNS YOU ON CREATIVELY, SPIRITUALLY OR EMOTIONALLY?

Freedom

WHAT PROFESSION OTHER THAN YOUR OWN WOULD YOU LIKE TO ATTEMPT?

Travel blogger lol

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE OR SPACE?

Brooklyn piers

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE ARCHITECT, DESIGNER OR ARTIST?

Tadao Ando

WHAT SOUND OR NOISE DO YOU LOVE?

Water boiling

WHAT NATURAL GIFT OR MAGIC POWER WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO POSSESS?

Fly

IF YOU COULD MEET ANY ARCHITECT, DESIGNER, OR ARTIST (LIVING OR NOT), WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHAT WOULD YOU TALK ABOUT?

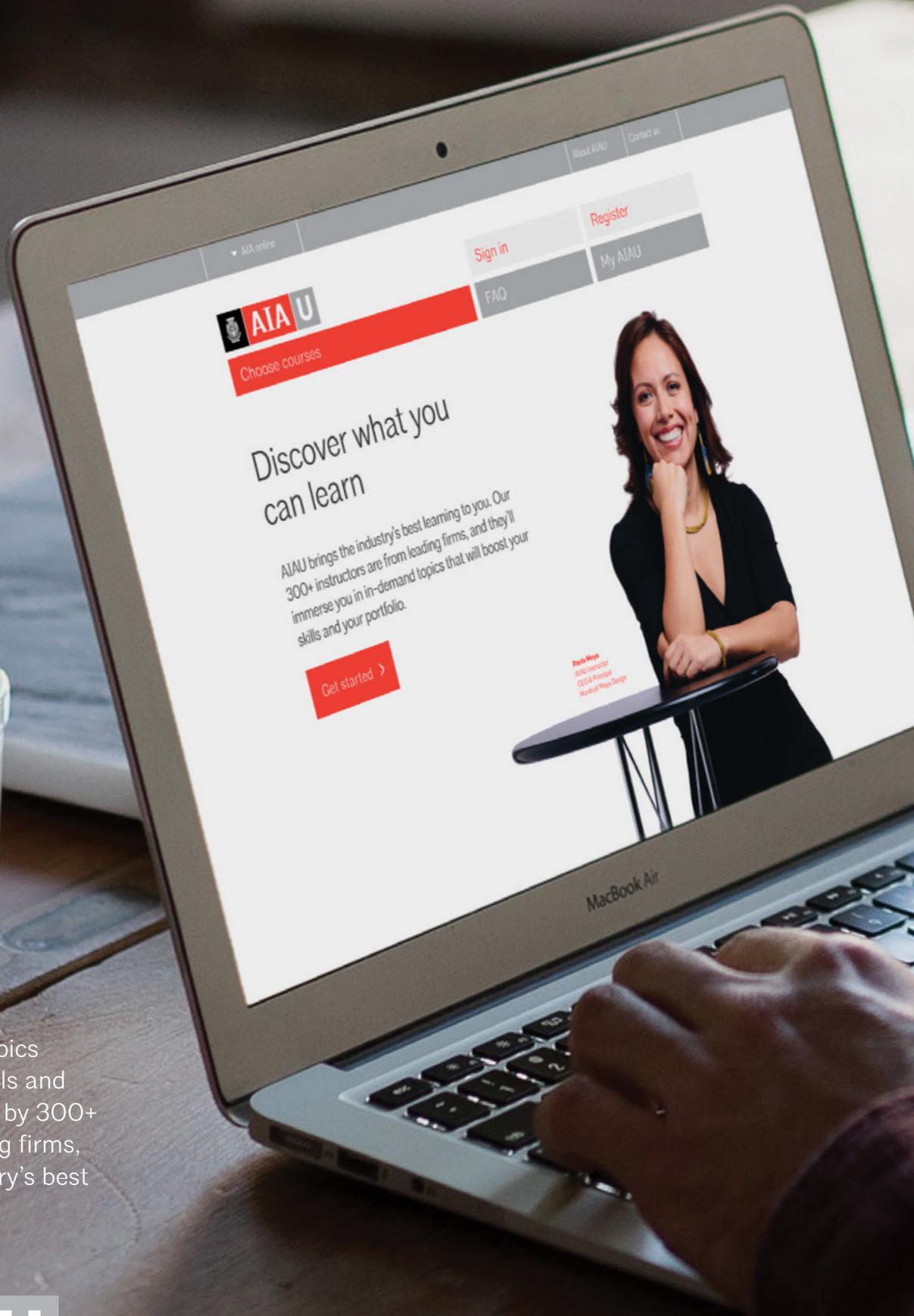
Zaha. The future of Architecture ■

← DID YOU KNOW? On the popular TV series, *Crossing Jordan*, Jordan Cavanaugh, M.D. (played by Actress Jill Hennessy) was a Forensic Pathologist.

← DID YOU KNOW? Although the DC Comic superhero, Wonder Woman, possessed the ability to fly, she used her invisible plane when she wanted to take trips into outer space. Wonder Woman, who is known as Princess Diana of Themyscira in her home world of Amazon, made her first appearance during WWII, October 21st is Wonder Woman Day and amongst her many skills and attributes Wonder Woman was: "Beautiful as Aphrodite, wise as Athena, swifter than Hermes, and stronger than Hercules" —making her the strongest of the Amazons.

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Taking Care Of Your (Building) Skin

AIA Brooklyn February 19th Discussion Panel

BROOKLYN BOROUGH HALL, COMMUNITY ROOM, 1 LU



C. Jaye Berger, Esq. is an NYC attorney who specializes in real estate, construction law and litigation. Her presentation focused on access agreements, legal documents between adjacent building owners where one owner is undertaking work that requires access from adjacent properties or will

have an impact on these properties. The type of work that may need access includes: Local Law 11 work involving facades, cornices, roof work and the need to erect scaffolding that extends beyond the worksite.

Ms. Berger suggests that clients obtain their own pre-construction survey, even if the contractor already has one. Access Agreements often involve payments for the right of access and owners should provide financial incentives so that projects don't linger.

Ms. Berger advises and assists clients in negotiating agreements that spell out the full scope of the work and executes agreements that cover all the bases when it comes to protecting the adjacent property owner and the building.



Stephanie Nussbaum, AIA is a Vice-President at Thornton Tomasetti who explained that one of the more common problems she has encountered involves solid masonry exterior walls. These walls are basically sponges that absorb moisture and then dry out. Traditionally, these

types of façades did not have insulation and the cycle of absorption and drying functioned well. Over time, since insulation has become standard in renovations, exterior walls are subject to deterioration because they trap moisture, and because of the variety of approaches to building traditional masonry walls, each decaying wall demands a unique solution that responds to the circumstances of the original construction.



Vincent Ortiz, PE is the Director of Professional Services at CANY (Consulting Associates of New York). He has extensive experience in building enclosures and restoration projects on older buildings. The firm pioneered IRA (industrial rope access), where building professionals perform close observations

of building facades by way of rope, allowing better access to all facades. Mr. Ortiz discussed the difficulty of assessing terra cotta from ground observation and telescopes and the close-up inspections have proved superior.

Present at the display tables:

Windsor Mill, Corbin Rinehart (trimboards, moldings, and casings)
Porcelanosa, Samuel Taberner (luxury tile and hardwood)
BluWorld, Joshua Efron (water feature design and fabrication)

UPCOMING AND RECURRING EVENTS

See www.aiabrooklyn.org for full calendar of events and future announcements.

EVERY 3RD WEDNESDAY, 6:30PM
BROOKLYN BOROUGH HALL
UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE

AIA Brooklyn General Chapter Meetings + Discussion Panels

UPCOMING DATES

April 15 – Location: Virtual
May 20
June 17
September 16
October 21
November 18

See Virtual Meeting info on calendar at aiabrooklyn.org.

EVERY TUESDAY, 7:00-8:30PM
ZOOM INFO AT AIABROOKLYN.ORG

Emerging Professionals Committee A.R.E. Study Session

Contact: Nicole Gangidino at ngangidino.arch@gmail.com

EVERY 2ND THURSDAY, 2:30PM
BOROUGH COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

Brooklyn DOB Industry Meeting

Ask the Borough Commissioner questions about NYC Code, DOB procedures, etc..

Email Ida Galea at galea.arch@gmail.com and have your questions discussed and answered by the Commissioner. 1 CEU.

6:00-8:00PM, MULTIPLE LOCATIONS
RSVP TO CRAN@AIABROOKLYN.ORG

CRAN Meeting

UPCOMING DATES

April 7, CWB Architect
May 12, Jordan Parnass Digital Architecture
June 8, Ben Herzog Architect

Since the current COVID-19 situation is changing day-by-day, please check website calendar for up to date information on all upcoming meetings.

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Sketches from a figure
drawing class by Cara Welch

Residential trends survey for firm leaders

JESSICA MENTZ | (202) 626 7487

The AIA's Home Design Trends Survey is a recognized resource for emerging trends in residential design. We need firm leaders to respond to the survey to help us better track trends. Through HDTs you can use data to track trends and plan for future business conditions.



Take the survey at surveymonkey.com/r/RYH7WYK

AIA National: COVID-19 resources for architects

As we navigate this unprecedented crisis in our global community, AIA is committed to equipping our members with the information they need to help navigate these uncertain times. This page is intended to provide guidelines, policies, and tools for our members and will be updated frequently as new resources become available.



Learn more at aia.org/pages/6280670-covid-19-resources-for-architects

Best Practice: Employee Benefits

AMANDA JENNINGS | (202) 626 7372

Employee benefits are often defined as compensation paid by an employer to an employee over and above regular salary and wages. Employee benefits come in many shapes and sizes and are an integral part of an overall compensation package offered to employees. Employee benefits are essential in keeping current employees happy and have become an important ingredient to attracting new and highly skilled employees to a firm.



Learn more at aia.org/best-practices/6270740-employee-benefits

AIA NY State: COVID-19 resources for architects

During these challenging times, AIANY is actively collecting useful information to share with our members. With information changing daily, many of the links below will take you directly to the source page so you may access the most current information. Let's use this time to demonstrate the strength of our community in helping one another along with our greater communities throughout New York State.



Learn more at aianys.org/covid-19

SAY ANYTHING



The Pritzker Architecture Prize goes to Grafton Architects this year – a woman led Architecture firm! pritzkerprize.com/laureates/2020

What people are saying about PYLON

Great Job! Love it!. Keep up the good work.

—
Sebastian M. D'Alessandro, RA, AIA
Tel. (718) 259-2644
Fax (718) 259-1812
smdarchitects@yahoo.com

Nice work, Talisha, congrats!
Pylon has been beautifully revamped.
Keep it up.

—
Dmitriy Shenker, AIA

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Congratulations Alexandra Barker, FAIA and Brendan Coburn, FAIA on your elevation to the College of Fellows

Read more about Alexandra Barker, FAIA on page 40, and learn even more at aia.org/college-of-fellows

Send a letter (about anything!) to the editor at secretary@aiabrooklyn.org to be included in the next issue of PYLON.

COMMUNITY NOTES

We encourage you to get involved in your local Community Boards and that's why we've listed all 18 Community Boards that serve Brooklyn right here.

Visit their websites, office locations, send them an email or give them a call to find out when the next meeting is or to learn more about how you can serve your Community. Don't forget to let us know if there is something we'd be interested in going on in your neighborhood!

SARAH DRAKE, AIA

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www.nyc.gov/brooklyncl

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 **AIA Brooklyn**

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Brooklyn Borough Hall, 6:30 P
209 Joralemon Street, Courtr

Panel Discussion
6:30 PM – Panel Name
Speaker Name 1 of Company N
Speaker Name 2 of Company N
Speaker Name 3 of Company N

General Meeting
3:30 PM – Members’ Round
7:00 PM – President’s Word
Quorum
Accept minutes of previous m
3. **Industry Meeting:** June 20, 2
Commissioner’s office, Brookl
Department, 210 Joralemon S
or email questions to Ida Gale
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Trash Talk



The first CRAN meeting of 2020 was held on January 14, 2020 at the office of TOLA Architecture, pllc. The guest speaker of the night was **Clare Milfin, AIA** who discussed the Design Strategies and Case Studies for a Zero-Waste City.

The Zero Waste Design Guidelines address the

crucial role that design plays in achieving NYC’s ambitious goal, outlined in OneNYC, to send zero waste to landfills by 2030. The Guidelines were developed through a collaborative process starting in November 2016. More than 100 collaborators—including architects, planners, developers, city officials, waste haulers, recycling experts and building managers—engaged in multidisciplinary workshops at New York’s Center for Architecture.

The guidelines team visited more than 40 buildings and held discussions with porters and supers to fully understand waste collection issues across building types.

As a resource to help designers, building operators, and planners, the Guidelines will encourage the collaboration needed to dramatically reduce waste and work toward greater adoption of circular material flows. Treating waste as a resource rather than trash depends on our ability to easily separate and manage our waste. Applying design to improve the city’s current system of material flows will improve sidewalks and buildings as it lessens the environmental and human impacts of the current system in the city and beyond.

To learn more, visit zerowastedesign.org

WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN



1. Plan for tenant disposal and separation

- Waste stream types and quantities
- Location of waste stations
- Types of bins
- Signage

2. Plan for movement of recyclables and waste to central storage

- Responsibility
- Frequency
- Transport containers
- Route

3. Plan for waste storage

- Calculate area required
- Volume reduction equipment
- Location
- Layout of storage space
- Accessibility
- Time restrictions

4. Plan for collection

If bags on curb:

- Designated area, size and location

If set out containers:

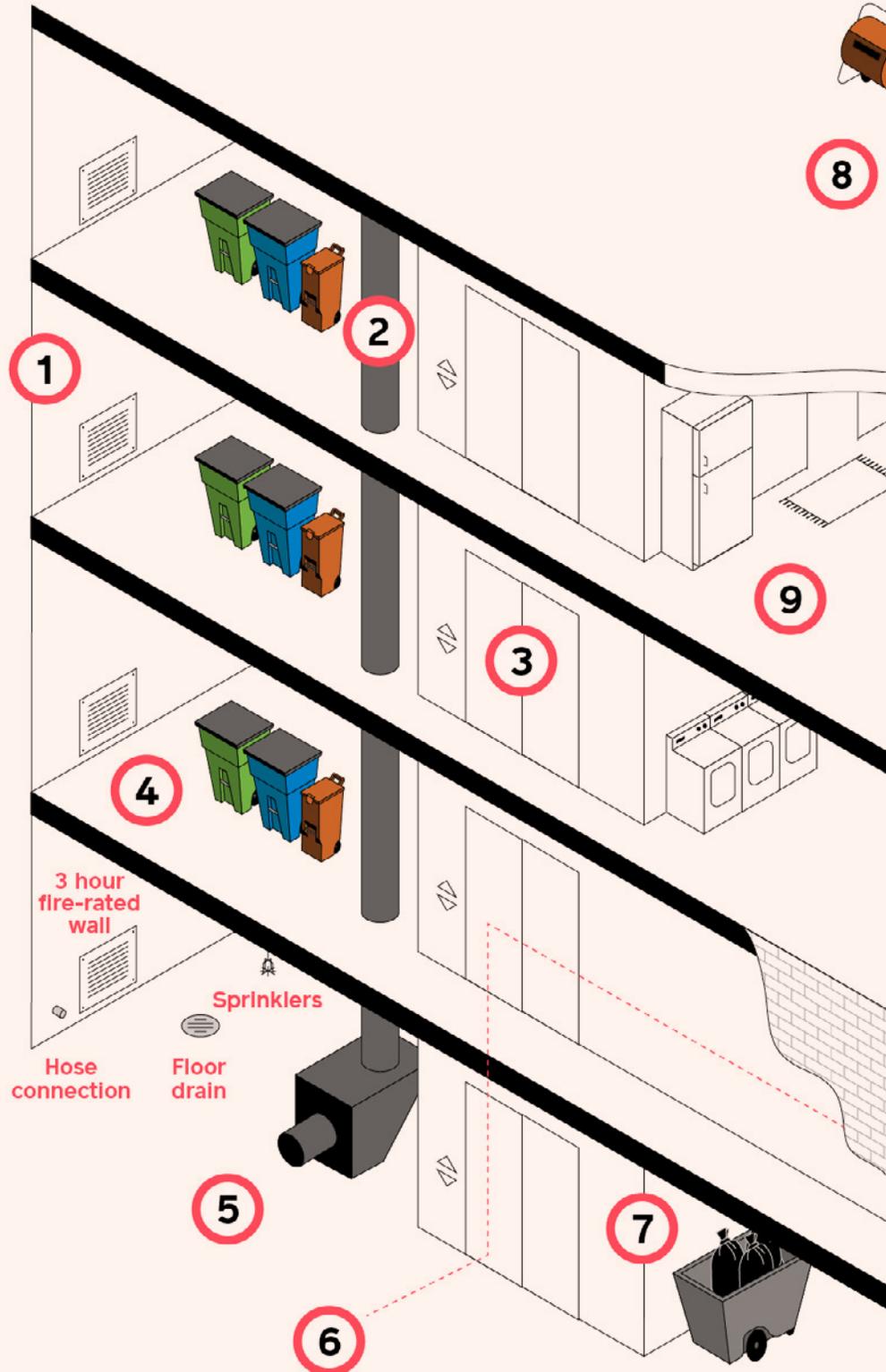
- Designated area, size and location
- Staffing to return containers
- Area to wash containers

If compactor containers:

- Collection vehicle access
- Ceiling height

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

1. Waste room: consider area, ventilation, lighting, signage. 2.03, 2.10
2. Chute and disposal of recycling on every floor required by BC 1213.3 ≥ 5 stories and ≥ 9 units)
3. Consider how waste travels vertically (by chute, by residents or by building staff in regular/service elevator). 2.02
4. Provide co-location disposal for all waste streams including organics. Consider other waste streams that may block chutes, e.g., cardboard, textiles, hangers. 2.08
5. Trash compactor required by BC 1213.2 for ≥ 4 stories and ≥ 12 units
6. Consider path of waste to curb and staff time required. 2.02, 2.05
7. Waste storage room per BC 1213.1 or BC 707.13.4. Use containers unless room is ratproof and fireproof room per HMC 27-2021. Consider area required, ventilation, and washing of containers. 2.01, 2.03
8. Compost can be made and used on-site in gardens. 2.23





9. Shallow refrigerators and shelves to reduce “lost food,” or smart refrigerators. 2.17
10. Pull-out cabinet with bins (all waste streams) and counterop organics bin. 2.08
11. Consider impacts of building materials selection and construction process. Optimize material usage, consider end of life. 2.27-2.35
12. Consider amenities that reduce material consumption (e.g., children’s play areas with toys, shared goods library, cleaning service with vacuums). 2.15
13. Provide textile recycling and plastics recycling in laundry room. 2.13
14. Consider possibilities for reuse such as online bulletin boards and donation refrigerators. 2.18
15. Provide feedback on waste generation to residents and staff to change behavior. Consider how to incorporate SAYT back to resident. 2.11
16. Provide paper recycling in mail room and cardboard collection in parcel room. 2.13
17. Provide set out area, coordinate with street, trees, furniture, curb cuts and entrance. See NYC Rules for setout. 2.04

What's In My Back Yard (W.I.M.B.Y.)

ARTICLE BY JANE MCGROARTY, AIA

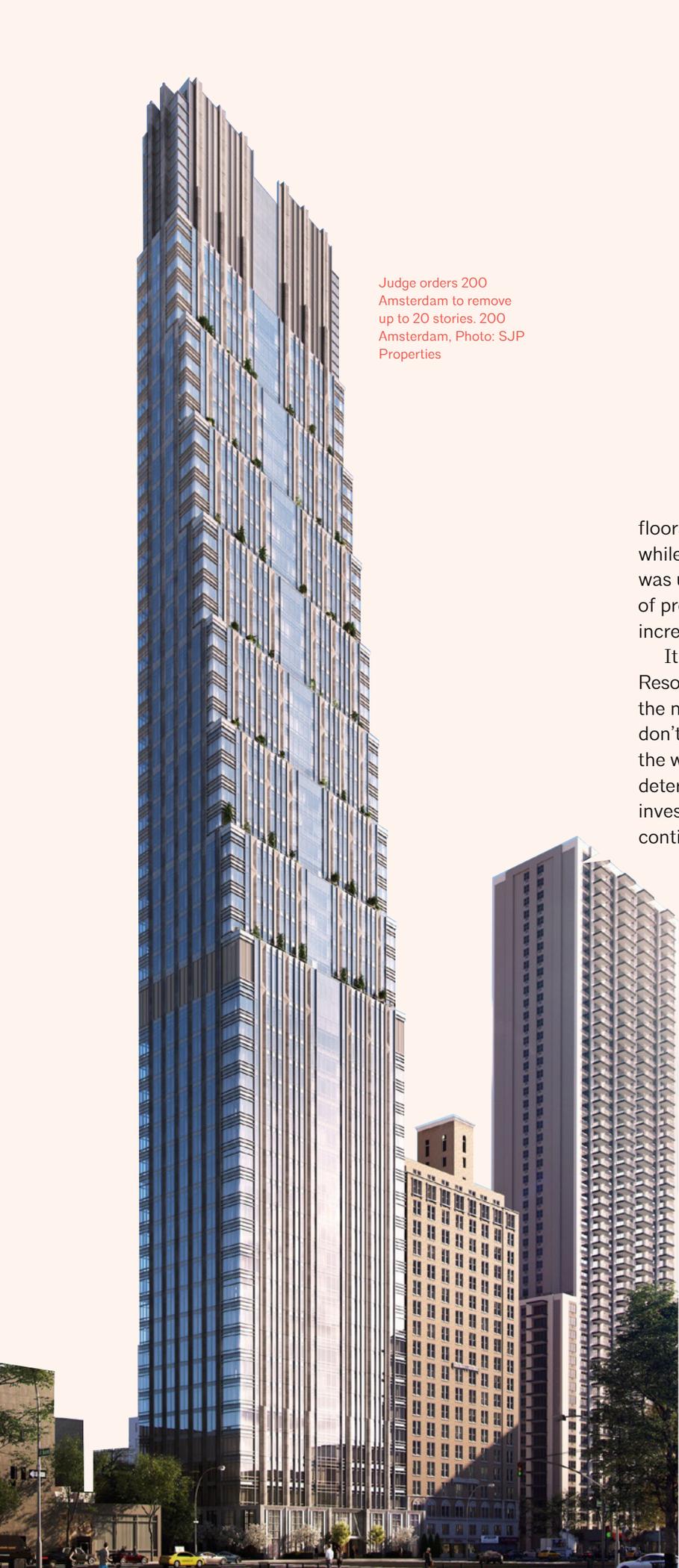
The latest striking news in not in Brooklyn's backyard but it may have a ripple effect in the outer boroughs.

In February 2020 a Manhattan Supreme Court Justice, W. Franc Perry, ruled that the NYC DOB must revoke a building permit for a new building at 200 Amsterdam Avenue and that the developers, SJP Properties and Mitsui Fudosan America, must remove floors of their nearly completed building because it exceeds the allowed floor area for the site.

The project designed by Elkus Manfredi and CetraRuddy will be, if allowed to remain as is, the tallest building on the Upper West Side. The developers created an “oddly shaped gerrymandered lot” by adding air rights and properties that connect back to the main building site via thin ribbons of land. This provided the developers with an additional 100,000 square feet of floor area and a 668-foot-tall building.

Local activists and elected officials opposed the height and in 2019, the Committee for Environmentally Sound Development and the Municipal Art Society brought an Article 78 proceeding against the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA), challenging its decision to approve a 39-sided lot that enabled developers to build the tower. In March 2019, the court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs; whereupon the BSA issued an amended resolution, affirming its original decision. Despite the continuing legal challenge and a warning by the court, the developer opted to continue construction and the building topped out last August. It should come as no surprise that the developers are planning to appeal the February decision.

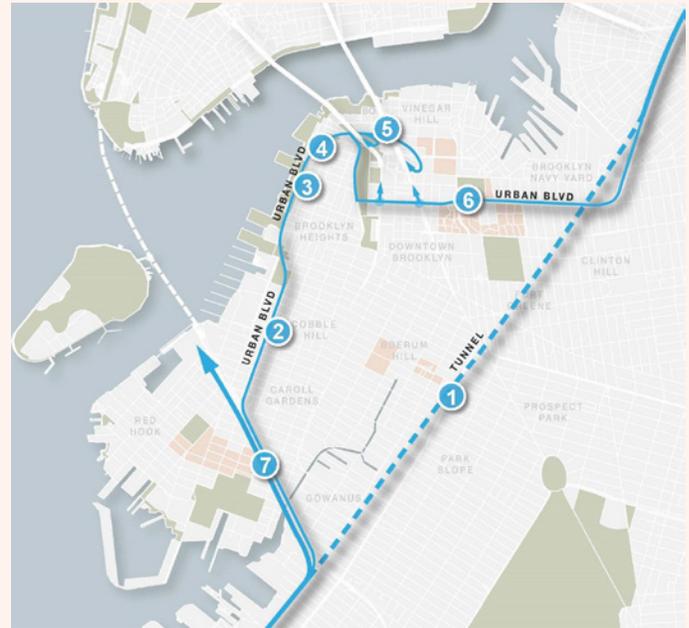
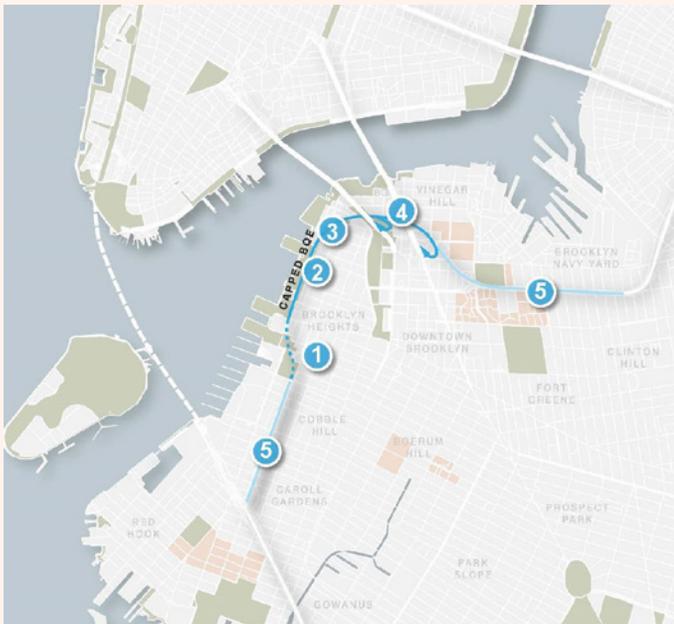
The appellate court could decide that ‘technically’ the zoning lot created by the developers is ‘lawful but awful’. This case should be a sober signal to the public, elected officials and the Department of City Planning that the Zoning Resolution, as amended in the last twenty years, is an imperfect document that did not anticipate much of the development that has unfolded. Prior to this, floor area, height and bulk were the determinants of a new building. No one in the year 2000 could have imagined that developers would be inserting mechanical voids on upper



Judge orders 200
Amsterdam to remove
up to 20 stories. 200
Amsterdam, Photo: SJP
Properties

floors in order to increase the height of a building. And while air rights transfers have been around for a while, it was unthinkable that it would be possible to connect pieces of property to one another by thin threads in order to increase the size of a building lot and required open space.

It's time for a new City Plan and updated Zoning Resolution. And while we are at it, the plan must incorporate the necessary infrastructure that will be needed so we don't become a city of safety-deposit boxes in the sky for the well-to-do while the rest of the residents endure deteriorating subways, over-crowded schools and lack of investment in open space, all while density and height continue to increase.



BQE Rap

Andy Cuomo took the money for the BQE
And he used for the Tappan Zee
Which he named for his dead Popee
And Brooklyn got a crumbling BQE

After New York City nearly went bankrupt in 1975, the NY State Department of Transportation stepped in to take charge of Interstate Highway 278 in Brooklyn and Queens, comprising the Gowanus Expressway and the Brooklyn Queens Expressway. Over the next 40 years, the State rebuilt the highway in stages. The last remaining piece was the triple cantilever in Brooklyn Heights. The State began the initial process for the repair/reconstruction of the cantilever in 2006 and in 2011, it released a draft memo with two possible alignments. Later that year the State walked away from the repair project, claiming it did not have the funds for the BQE cantilever project, leaving the City holding the bag since that portion of the highway is still ‘owned’ by the city.

When the New York City Department of Transportation announced its “Innovative Plan” in 2018 to repair the

BQE, Brooklyn Heights residents, transportation geeks, environmentalists and urbanists reacted negatively to a plan that would build a temporary six lane highway at the level of the Brooklyn Heights Promenade while the triple cantilever structure below would be overhauled. It was, to many citizens, a potential 10-year nightmare only to have a new 1940’s era highway. Feeling the collective heat, Mayor de Blasio appointed a panel of experts to study the problem and produce a report.

The report, **Fixing the BQE**, was released in January 2020 and the major takeaway is that the cantilever structure is in bad shape and repairs need to begin soon. In addition, it recommended reducing the traffic lanes for the cantilever portion of the highway from three to two in each direction and beginning reconstruction immediately. The report further advised that another working group be formed to come up with a final plan. It is disturbing that this proposed working group would have no planners, architects or engineers but only elected officials and community stakeholders. One of the culprits causing deterioration

of the highway are the overweight trucks. After the report was released the Mayor promised to increase enforcement of heavy trucks (exactly how?) and pledged to begin repairs in the spring.

In what has been described as an effort to distance itself from the Mayor, New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson (a 2021 mayoral candidate) hired the engineering firm Arup, to assess the various plans that have been floated for the project. The City Council’s report, **The Future of the BQE**, contains a comprehensive history of this portion of the BQE and a preliminary spreadsheet comparing the advantages and disadvantages of all seven schematic alternatives. Arup selected two alternatives that merited further study. One is the ‘capped highway’, a composite of schemes by Mark Baker/B.I.G (Bjarke Ingels Group). The other is called the ‘Bypass Tunnel’ with a Surface Boulevard by BHA (Brooklyn Heights Association)/Marc Wouters.

The ‘capped highway’, according to Arup, would cost the same as DOT’s Innovative Plan and would create an ‘above’ grade tunnel beginning south

960 Franklin Avenue

of Atlantic Avenue and emerging as an unstacked highway just beyond the Columbia Heights Bridge. It will allow expansion of Brooklyn Bridge Park and improve safety on the highway. The report does not make clear who will pay for the design and construction of the new parkland. Essentially the capped plan simply covers up the highway. It does allow for more connections between the park and Brooklyn Heights by removing the Robert Moses barrier to the waterfront.

The second scheme is more ambitious and proposes a direct deep tunnel from Gowanus at the Prospect Expressway to the South Williamsburg trench. This tunnel would serve through traffic heading to the Williamsburg Bridge, Queens and Long Island. The existing BQE would become a surface boulevard serving local traffic as well as traffic to and from the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges. The Cobble Hill Trench would be filled and brought to grade and the triple cantilever and the Park Avenue viaduct would be removed. The obvious appeal of this scheme is that it separates through traffic from local traffic and it benefits a larger segment of the neighborhoods adjacent to the highway. It removes more of the unsightly infrastructure and reconnects neighborhoods that were bisected by the BQE. The \$11 billion price tag is just a rough estimate.

And maybe, just maybe, this will be an incentive to bury the highway from Hamilton Avenue to Bay Ridge. However, before we get our hopes up, we need to keep in mind that infrastructure money from the federal government has pretty much dried up in recent years. Traffic and transit infrastructure in the NYC region are controlled by many agencies (and a few large egos) thus getting everyone on the same page to manage a major project like this is no small task.

LEFT
Capped Highway,
Mark Peters/B.I.G.,
Fixing the BOE,
p.38

RIGHT
By Pass Tunnel/
Urban Boulevard,
Fixing the BOE,
p.45

FIXING THE BOE
can be found at



THE FUTURE OF THE BQE
can be found at



There were some developments in the 960 Franklin Avenue proposed large scale development that, with two tall towers, will affect the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens plantings. In early February, Mayor Bill de Blasio remarked on the Brian Lehrer Show that he didn't think the project at 960 Franklin would ruin the garden forever. He went on to say, "I would love it if we could have a city that could be a city for everyone and affordable and we could keep some of the exact scale and aesthetics we had previously." He added: "I would love it if we could achieve those things but we're in this new world."

As it turned out, a December 20, 2019 Memorandum prepared by the New York City Department of Parks reviewed the Natural Resources, Shadows and Open Space chapters of the 960 Franklin Avenue Rezoning EIS. David Cuff, a Planner and Director of Environmental Review, concluded that the project would result in significant adverse impacts to the Garden's greenhouse and propagation facilities.

The Mayor later admitted that he had confused the 960 Franklin project with another nearby Crown Heights project where local activists have gone to court claiming that the developer, Cornell Realty, failed to conduct an adequate environmental review. The mayor also said he had not been briefed about the Parks Department memorandum before his radio interview.

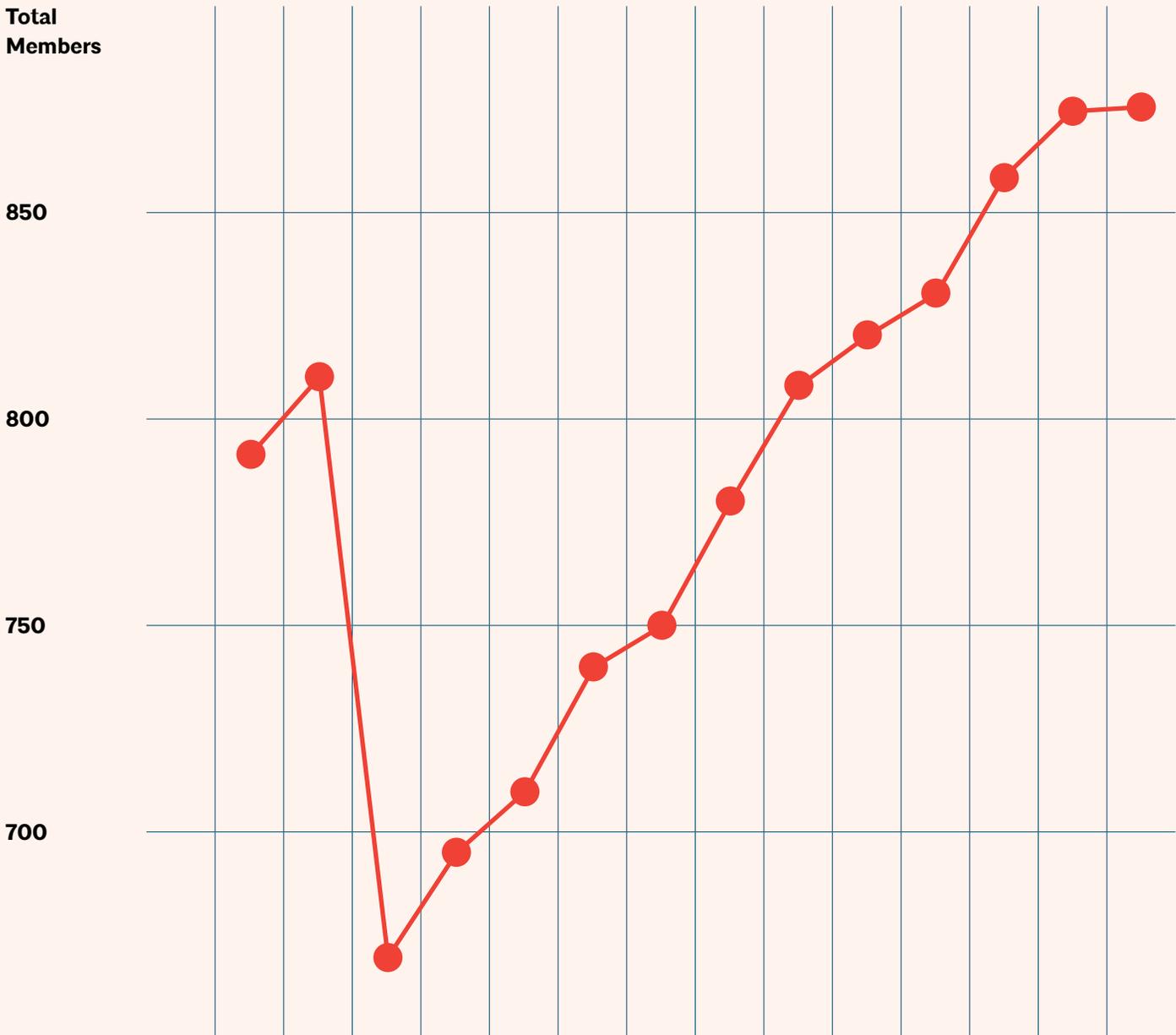
The Parks Department memorandum became public, thanks to a successful FOIL request by Alicia Boyd, one of the litigants in the Cornell Realty lawsuit. With the cat out of the bag, Ian Bruce Eichner (the 960 Franklin Avenue developer) told the NY Post that he was open to negotiations and possible concessions, saying "Nobody's asked us what, if any, mitigation we can bring."

Wait a minute, if a draft EIS reveals significant adverse impacts, isn't it up to the developers to address those impacts beforehand? Or is the game such that the developer can just wait to see how much push back they get from the problematic aspects of a proposal? Then, when it becomes a negotiation with the community and the developer agrees to eliminate an egregious aspect of a project, they get to characterize it as "giving up" something that they shouldn't have even asked for.

To be fair, Eichner hadn't done any real shadow studies beforehand but once the information from the Parks Department existed, the developer should have voluntarily reduced the heights of the taller towers and perhaps, gained some credibility in the community. ■

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

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	2/19	3/19	4/19	5/19	6/19	7/19	8/19	9/19	10/19	11/19	12/19	1/20	2/20	3/20
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Total AIA	503	510	457	467	479	490	496	512	523	529	539	559	564	566
Total Assoc. AIA	279	287	204	219	223	238	245	262	276	280	285	290	300	300
Total Fellow	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total International	10	11	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	9	9
Total Unassigned	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Newly Licensed	0	0	2	1	2	2	2	0	3	0	3	0	0	0
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Ladies First

A Conversation with the
First Three Madame
Presidents of AIA Brooklyn

ARTICLE BY
SARAH KAVANAGH

The Brooklyn Chapter of the AIA has a long legacy that stretches back to the founding year in 1894, all of which you can read about on the (new and improved) Chapter website.

What's not so apparent in this storied history is that throughout the entire 125-year history of the Chapter, only three women have taken on the traditionally male role of AIA Brooklyn President.

During a recent conversation with **Ann Falutico, AIA** (1998–1999), **Barbara Smith Mishara, AIA** (2000–2001) and **Ida Galea, AIA** (2014–2015), the three Madame Presidents discussed their lives, their careers and the path that ultimately led them to make quiet yet powerful history as the first women to become Presidents of AIA Brooklyn.

Ann Falutico was born and raised in Brooklyn by Italian immigrants and had what she would consider a traditional education that led her to attend a Liberal Arts College. She spent two years there before transferring to Syracuse University. I was curious to know how Ann came to learn about what architecture was, considering she focused on several other areas of study prior to settling on architecture.

AF: I had no time to figure out if this was something that I was liking. All of my energy just went into trying to finish my assignments. [My relationship to the profession] was one of those love stories that was not love at first sight. I dated the subject matter for a while and gradually found out that I was right: [architecture] is very well-suited to a generalist. I lucked out.



Barbara Smith Mishara was raised in East New York and was the first in her extended family to attend college. She had arguably the most circuitous route prior to settling on architecture as her 'forever' career. Barbara first worked at St. Vincent's hospital and then for a state agency that paid for her to get a master's degree in social work. It wasn't until years later, after she'd given birth to her son, that she realized she wasn't using all of her skills and resources. After attending an art program out on Long Island, she applied to NYIT in Manhattan,

BSM: You didn't need a portfolio [to apply to NYIT] they just took you in and I loved it! I absolutely loved it! The beginning classes were very large and we were still drawing by hand. The first time that I saw the sun rise was after working all night on a project and I said, "Oh, this is architecture school," but I still really enjoyed it.



Ida Galea was born in Bensonhurst to Italian immigrants and was similar to Barbara in that she was the first in her family to attend college. Her father was a brick mason, so she grew up familiar with construction but gives credit to an art teacher that she had during her third year in high school who suggested that she consider studying architecture. Ida went on to be accepted to Pratt where she graduated with a Bachelor of Architecture degree.

IG: It was probably about 10 to 15 percent women in my graduating class at Pratt and I did have a professor tell me that I wouldn't make it because I was a woman. But I really enjoyed architecture school and ended up doing well.



Each woman also had an equally different start to their careers. Ann graduated from Syracuse University in the late 1970s when there was a lack of work due to a recession. Despite this downturn in the economy, she was able to land a position at the office of Anthony Salvati, who also took a chance by hiring a recent graduate. Ann spent several years at Salvati's office before accepting a position at the office of Giorgio Cavaglieri in Manhattan. Cavaglieri's office was small but highly professional and specialized in historic preservation. She went on to spend five years there before starting her own firm. After just eight years working in the profession after graduating from college, I was curious to know how Ann knew she was ready to start her own office.

“THE FIRST TIME THAT I SAW THE SUN RISE WAS AFTER WORKING ALL NIGHT ON A PROJECT AND I SAID, ‘OH, THIS IS ARCHITECTURE SCHOOL.’”

BARBARA SMITH MISHARA



1998-1999 'class photo'. Ann Falutico, then president (center) pictured with Barbara Smith Mishara, then VP (right).

AF: My children were small and I opted to work a shorter day so I could get home. After a while, I was spending more time commuting to Manhattan and it wasn't productive. But even after my children grew, I came to realize very clearly that being my own boss and having the benefits of calling your own shots was extremely attractive with or without the family [aspect].

Barbara met her first employer, Ralph Albanese, while attending NYIT and would go on to work for him for several years prior to starting her own firm and eventually transitioning to teaching full-time.

BSM: What was so wonderful about Ralph was that he had a multilevel office and got involved with a lot of projects. I was challenged, I was growing and I felt I was always learning. He was also very generous with letting me take off time so that I could be with my son afterschool. I had reduced hours and it worked out very beautifully.

For Ida, landing a job came quickly after a neighbor, who was practicing architecture and was looking to change careers, asked her if she wanted to interview at the firm he was working at. That's when Ida was introduced to D'Alessandro & Associates in Brooklyn.

IG: When I was a fourth year student at Pratt, my neighbor said to me, "I work for an architect here in Brooklyn....I don't want to leave him with no one working there." So he set up an interview for me and it happened to be the office of Sebastian D'Alessandro, who is also a former President of AIA Brooklyn. He hired me and I worked for Sebastian for ten years.

Despite the differing roads that led them to the field of architecture, all three women had strikingly similar reasons for initially getting involved with the AIA Brooklyn Chapter. Ann joined with the specific intention of meeting other professionals after starting her own firm.

AF: I was looking to branch out and meet other professionals in similar situations and hear what

they were experiencing so I could learn from others. The Chapter really was very embracing; there were a lot of people from all different age groups and stages of the profession and there were many who were [more] senior and so excited to see the new blood come in. These were people who sometimes recommended projects to me...it was a lot of support. It was very giving. No one asked for anything in return and it was something that I think we are once again establishing.

As far as her rise to becoming the first woman President of AIA Brooklyn, Ann explained that it happened gradually.

AF: I guess I just kind of raised my hand. There were a lot of years before you had to fully carry the flag, [first] being Treasurer, Secretary and President-elect. I thought, "Well I don't feel well equipped now but I'll learn from my fellow officers" and that was how it happened. There was a very long and helpful training period before the Presidency occurred and I was really thrilled to be the first woman.

“[MY RELATIONSHIP TO THE PROFESSION] WAS ONE OF THOSE LOVE STORIES THAT WAS NOT LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.”

ANN FALUTICO

It was because of the connection that Ralph Albanese's office had with the Department of Buildings that Barbara was first invited to attend an AIA Brooklyn Chapter Meeting and eventually took on the role of President.

BSM: I enjoyed it. I felt that I had people to reach out to if I had a problem or a question, particularly if it was a question about the Department of Buildings. Just like Ann, they [the Committee] said, "You'll be a Director" and then you go up the ladder from there.

Ida first got exposure to AIA Brooklyn due to Sebastian D'Alessandro's roles within AIA Brooklyn throughout the ten years that she worked for him.

IG: I worked with him [Sebastian] when he was Secretary, Treasurer, President-elect and then President of AIA Brooklyn. Sebastian brought me to my first AIA Brooklyn Meeting and I was in my fifth year [at Pratt] at the time. I was working on my Thesis project and he said "You should bring your Thesis project to an AIA Meeting!" — so I did. I was really nervous and a majority of the members at the time were older but everyone was so nice, really welcoming, took interest in my project, asked questions and made me feel at home. That's when I decided I would be a member of AIA Brooklyn.

When it came to eventually serving as President, Ida fell into the role in a similar way that both Ann and Barbara had before her — by being actively involved with the Chapter and climbing the ranks.



Ida Galea in action as AIA Brooklyn President (2015)

IG: My main goal when I was President was to try to bring in more of the younger architects who were just coming out of school, or who were just starting their practices, or who were just licensed recently because our Chapter had a lot of benefits for those members who were really trying to start out but really didn't know how to start out. I moved our meetings, which used to be held in the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn, to downtown Brooklyn so it was more centrally located and easier for everyone to get to via transportation and I got a lot of criticism for that. I persevered and kept the meeting downtown and that is still where we hold the meetings to this day. I'm happy to say that when I was President the membership grew substantially.

A universal sentiment that all three women agreed upon regarding their stints serving as Presidents of AIA

Brooklyn that resonated with me was this.

AF: We worked even harder to be good Presidents...to have it be thought that a woman could do a better job. There was high incentive to take the job seriously and deliver a product that you could be proud of.

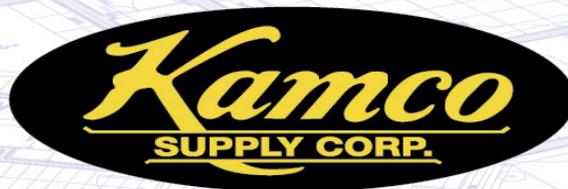
In honor of Women's History Month, let's celebrate not only these three women, who were strong enough to take on the role of AIA Brooklyn President, but let's also show appreciation and support tenacious women all over the world who are working twice as hard to make sure they leave a robust legacy for the next generation. To Ann, Barbara, and Ida: Thank you for your dedication to the field of architecture, to the AIA, to your families and friends and for creating so many possibilities for all the women who come next. ■

“I WAS IN MY FIFTH YEAR [AT PRATT] AT THE TIME. I WAS WORKING ON MY THESIS PROJECT AND [SEBASTIAN] SAID ‘YOU SHOULD BRING YOUR THESIS PROJECT TO AN AIA MEETING!’ — SO I DID.”

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**In Celebration of Women's History Month,
present and future of Women in Architecture –
through the waters of Architecture, and who
as we move into the future of Architecture.**



PYLON is bringing you stories from the past, who charted their own course, are navigating are ensuring that women remain in formation

ARTICLE BY SARAH KAVANAGH

PAST

A Tribute to Norma Merrick Sklarek, FAIA



Norma Merrick Sklarek,
1926 – 2012

In 1926 when Norma Merrick was born in Harlem — her parents, Dr. Walter E. Merrick and Amy Willoughby, could hardly have imagined their tiny daughter’s future.

Walter Merrick was a physician who emigrated from Trinidad and his wife, Amy, was a seamstress from Trinidad via Venezuela. An only child, Norma (who grew up in Crown Heights, Brooklyn) was very intelligent and attended Hunter College High School, a selective public high school for girls. Norma excelled in math and, science and art. She attended Barnard College for one year as a pre-requisite for entrance into the School of Architecture at Columbia. During Architecture school, she married, had a son and divorced her husband. It wasn’t easy but she persevered and received her Bachelor of Architecture in 1950, one of two women and the only African American in her class.

Finding a job proved more challenging than school, since Norma faced the double problem of being a woman and African American. She recalled that she never knew if it was her color or gender that was working against her but, in the end, she was turned down by nineteen firms. She remarried in 1950 and had a second son. Eventually she secured a civil service position in the NYC Department of Public Works. After several years seeing no future in civil service, she took the Architectural

licensing exam in 1954 and passed on her first try, thus becoming the first African American female Architect to be licensed in New York State.

In 1955 she accepted a position at Skidmore Owings & Merrill where she flourished and was given more responsibility on large scale projects. As she was divorced from her second husband, her mother became the caretaker for her two boys. She left New York City in 1960 for Los Angeles and was hired by Gruen Associates, where she was the only black woman at the firm. Initially she had no car and carpooled to work with a young male colleague who was always late. After a week, her boss brought up her tardiness. Norma recalls “that the boss never noticed that the man had been arriving later for two years.” She quickly bought a car since, as a highly visible employee, she needed to be on time.

She got her California Architectural license in 1962, becoming the first African American woman to be licensed in the state. She rose to Director of Architecture at Gruen. In California, many Architectural firms are organized into a two division — Design and Architecture. At Gruen, Cesar Pelli was the Director of

Design, which meant he oversaw a project through design development and design, whereupon the Architecture department would take over the production of construction documents and the coordination of all the technical aspects of a project. She and Pelli were an outstanding team and together produced such major projects as the California Mart, **Pacific Design Center, the San Bernardino City Hall** and **the US Embassy in Tokyo**. According to her son, David Merrick Fairweather, his mother considered the design of a building the easy part and she would make the design real. What kind of concrete? What kind of nuts and bolts? What kind of glass? This distinction between Design and Architecture meant that Cesar Pelli received the credit for projects since Norma was 'only' the project manager. She was, however, credited, together with Pelli, as the design Architect for the US Embassy in Tokyo.

In 1967 Norma married a colleague at Gruen, Rolf Sklarek, who had studied at the Bauhaus. With Rolf, who was twenty years her senior, Norma found her soulmate. In an interview for the book, *No Mountain High Enough: Secrets of Successful African American Women* by Dorothy Ehrhart-Morrison, Norma asserted that a professional woman needs a partner who is understanding of her needs. She felt that many men have fragile egos and cannot deal with a wife who is more successful than he. She described Rolf as wonderful and understanding and they lived happily together until his death in 1984. He designed a beautiful home in Pacific Palisades where they both lived until their deaths.

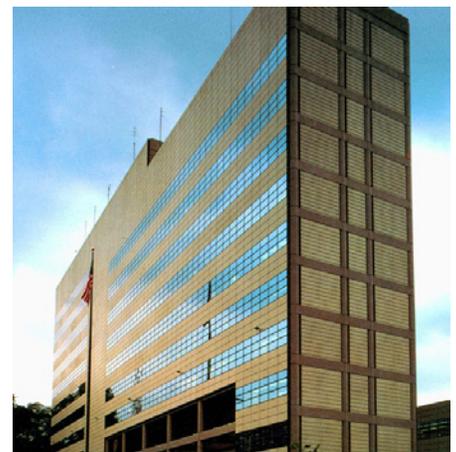
In 1977, Cesar Pelli left Gruen to Become the Dean of Architecture at Yale. Several years later, in 1980, Norma left Gruen and joined Welton Becket as a Vice-President. There,

she was responsible for Terminal One at the Los Angeles International Airport, which was completed for the 1984 Olympics. The same year, she became the first African American female Fellow of the American Institute of Architects. And in 1985 she co-founded the woman-owned firm Siegel Sklarek and Diamond. The firm did many projects together but Sklarek was disappointed that she was, sadly but not surprisingly, not able to get commissions for large scale projects. Her last position was at the Jerde Partnership where she was principal of project management and worked on the Mall of America in Minnesota. In 1992, Norma Sklarek retired from practice and spent time lecturing and mentoring young minority and women Architects. In 2008, she was honored with the AIA's Whitney M. Young Jr. Award for Social Responsibility. She died in 2012 at the age of 85.

If there is anything to be learned from this remarkable woman's life and career, it is that tenacity can get you everywhere. There were too many times when people made assumptions about Norma or took advantage of her talent. Her NYC Public Works supervisor gave her a poor recommendation when she applied for her next job. Norma chalked it off to jealousy. Her boss was not a licensed Architect and resented this young, smart black woman. She accepted the fact of race and gender discrimination but never allowed it to stop her. In addition to her Intelligence and talent, she possessed the ability to work hard and never be discouraged by other people's ignorance or judgments. This was the extraordinary character that Norma Merrick Sklarek brought to her life and career.



San Bernadino City Hall, 1969.
Photo: © Gruen Associates



United State Embassy, Tokyo 1976.
Photo: © Gruen Associates





**“I WAS FORTUNATE TO
HAVE NORMA SKLAREK
AS A PROFESSOR AT
UCLA SCHOOL OF
ARCHITECTURE WHERE
SHE DID ADJUNCT
TEACHING. SHE WAS
STRAIGHTFORWARD,
WARM AND
THOUGHTFUL AS WELL
AS A FINE TEACHER.”**

JANE MCGROARTY, AIA

A Woman's Work PRESENT

Stories of Women creating their own paths through the field of Architecture

Alethea Cheng Fitzpatrick, AIA

Alethea Cheng Fitzpatrick was born in London and grew up in the south of England. She moved to NYC right out of high school during her 'gap year' between high school and college and ended up staying here to attend Pratt. Having already moved to a different continent, Alethea stayed in Brooklyn after graduating from Pratt and still lives in the same neighborhood of Clinton Hill, which she adores.

In addition to architecture, Alethea has had several other interests along the way. After working in the field for over 15 years, she left to become a mom and subsequently started a family photography business, which then morphed into teaching online photography workshops and coaching parents on finding joy and connection through photographing their kids. She went back to architecture for several years after having her second child but left the field a second time to pursue women's leadership coaching. She is now Principal & Founder of "Co-Creating Inclusion", a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) consulting firm. She is still passionate about and committed to the profession and has been actively speaking on panels and at conferences. A recent highlight was giving a keynote speech on Counteracting Bias and Creating Inclusion at the NCARB Licensing Advisor's Summit last year. Another highlight was being able to facilitate a difficult but healing conversation about race for a non-profit client. Black people and other

People of Color (POC) were able to speak up about the racism and harm they had experienced within and outside of the organization and were heard by their colleagues in a way that they had never been heard before.

When asked if she could recount a challenging situation faced due to being a woman in a male-dominated field, Alethea admitted, "it can be intimidating to be the only woman and/or non-white person in the room or on a construction site, but I got used to it. Harder to pinpoint," she went on to say, "are the more subtle ways that I found myself hitting invisible barriers, some of which I have only been identify in retrospect." She wishes there had been more of the sponsorship, mentoring and guidance that often occur more naturally for those with privilege and that's a major reason why she now advises women, and especially women of color, to actively seek that out.

Although Alethea generally steers away from giving advice, saying that she doesn't believe there's "one size that fits all" and the fact that what worked for her may not work for others, one thing she often shares that resonates with most women across various stages of their careers is that we are all inherently worthy. "We don't need to defend or prove our worth, even though that is often how we are socialized by our culture to feel." She feels that "we do, however, need to be able to articulate our worth because articulating rather than defending or proving can come from a place of strength. One of the

"I WANT MY WORK TO STAND FOR THE CO-CREATION OF INCLUSION SO THAT WE ALL HAVE WHAT WE NEED TO DO OUR BEST WORK AND LIVE OUR BEST LIVES."

ways Alethea practices this is by keeping a daily log of her wins and lessons learned. She does this in a grid so that at the end of the week, she can look back and be reminded of everything she achieved. Without taking notes like this it's difficult to remember by Friday what one accomplished on Monday! She explains that for women, and especially for women of color and Black women, their contributions are often invisible. Still, at least we can make sure our work is not invisible to ourselves as well." She believes that when women practice articulating their value for themselves on a daily basis, they can become better versed at articulating their value to others. "I've found that it comes much more naturally and authentically as a result."

If she could design anything, Alethea's current sweet spot is working

Alethea Cheng Fitzpatrick

Principal & Founder, Co-Creating Inclusion:
Shifting Culture, Driving Equity
pronouns: she/her/hers



with well-meaning and predominantly white leaders in companies and organizations in support of the most marginalized, devalued and exhausted people of color in the organization, usually Black people. She finds that there is often a cost to speaking up, but that her team can reduce that cost by amplifying voices and challenging and supporting leadership. The goal is for people to not only hear but also respond to those voices by taking steps to acknowledge the hurt and in turn, this can shift the culture, processes, and behaviors that are causing harm that impacts all. Leadership is usually nervous about engaging in such a process but when they are willing to go along with it and let us take the conversation where it needs to go—the results are astounding, sometimes in the face of decades of inaction or ineffective action. She finds that change can happen, so her ‘ideal’ project is for DEI consulting, workshop facilitation, strategic planning and coaching for companies and organizations that may not feel ready but know that they need help. Her organization shows them how they can translate good intentions into tangible actions and results so that all people have what they need to do their best work. She is beginning to work with architecture firms and loves it, as it gives her a chance to leverage almost 20 years of experience in architecture as well as her DEI expertise.

When asked about what she wants her work to stand for, Alethea says “I want my work to stand for the co-creation of inclusion so that we all have what we need to do our best work and live our best lives.” She believes that this will require the dismantling our current systems of oppression and the co-creating of new systems and ways of relating to one another, so that we can better function as a community and culture. If Alethea had to do it all again,

she’s not sure she would do anything differently since she believes that the journey she took through architecture has gotten her to where she is today. “In an alternate universe however, I would have loved to have Pete Souza’s job as Obama’s White House photographer.”

In regard to finding opportunities to motivate other women who are aspiring architects, Alethea points to a recent experience where she spoke on Equity in Architecture at Pratt to third-year undergraduate architecture students as part of their professional practice course. Afterwards there was a group of women gathered at the door who thanked her as she left the auditorium. She feels that she would love more opportunities to work with high school and college students if given the chance.

While Alethea feels that women still absolutely face adversity, she also thinks it varies greatly depending on what firm you work for or what team or project you’re on. She also believes that it varies depending on your identity. In her work, when going into organizations and talking with staff in focus groups, interviews or through surveys and workshops, there is often a very palpable difference between how senior leadership (mostly white men) feel in comparison with white women or people of color, especially black women. “If you add in other layers of marginalization such as class, role,

education, LGBTQIA+, physical or mental ability, your experience within a firm can vary greatly.”

How this changes, Alethea believes, is when we can all speak for our own healing while centering on those most pushed to the margins. When we solve problems for the most systemically marginalized amongst us, we improve things for everyone. To do that, she feels that we need to build trust and create safe and collaborative relationships across lines of privilege so that those who require the most assistance can articulate their needs and be supported in getting those needs met. As a community, we can hold those responsible for harm accountable while taking responsibility collectively in shifting culture. Alethea envisions a future for Women in Architecture where women of all backgrounds, (including Black women, currently representing only 0.3% of all licensed architects, a truly abysmal representation) have a significant presence at the firm leadership level and also in design roles. “Women should truly be the architects and designers of a considerable proportion of our built environment, which is just not the case today, to the devastating detriment of all of us.”

For more info on Co-Creating Inclusion, visit cocreatinginclusion.com



Ruth Mandl, AIA

Principal, CO Adaptive Architecture
Winner, 2019 NYCX Design Award, Kitchen and Bath
Certified Passive House Designer Firm

Ruth Mandl, AIA

Ruth Mandl was born in Vienna, Austria and lived there until she was 18. After completing her undergraduate degree in London, England, she came to NYC for an internship and stayed to complete a Masters Degree at Columbia GSAPP. When she first moved to New York she lived in the East Village, but she still remembers the first time she crossed the Williamsburg Bridge into Brooklyn (circa 2005), “I realized that it had everything I loved about Manhattan with a slower pace and more chill vibe. I moved to Brooklyn a year later.”

Ruth cites the opportunity to be Principal of her own practice, with a fantastic partner and a wonderful, growing team as the highlight of her career thus far. “The ability to give direction and voice to the type of architecture I want to put into this world is an honor and a privilege.” When asked about a challenge she’s faced due to being a woman in a male-dominated field, she does recall certain contractors consistently addressing her male partner on site visits in the early days. As of late, however, she hasn’t had this experience. She believes that the expression of emotion in a woman is perceived very differently to the expression of emotion by a man and is therefore still learning to find her own balance; occasionally she errs too far in one direction and doesn’t voice her opinions as strongly as she should, particularly if she finds herself as the only female present.

A piece of advice that she would give to women just beginning their careers is that they should “make sure you are asking your employers hard questions and to select a practice that values you, wants to support your strengths, and challenges you without working you exorbitant hours.” She is

a strong believer that we can elevate the value of the entire profession by the respect we extend to the next generation of architects.

She also feels lucky to have worked on some ideal projects already – Ruth’s passion lies in the rehabilitation and reinvention of existing building stock, be it an old manufacturing building or a historic single-family brownstone. An ideal project for her creates optimistic momentum through the collaborative process between client and architect resulting in discovery and positive change. Her wish for our practice would be to broaden our impact and work with and for communities that would benefit from green and clean measures but cannot advocate for them themselves.

As for our work as architects, Ruth would like it to “disrupt token values entrenched in our society and to re-shape user relationships to the resources which surround them.” She wants to exemplify the beauty that can be found all around us in the existing fabric of our city and the materials we discard every day. Given the strides the city needs to make to meet the carbon reduction goals it has set for itself, architects carry a large portion of the responsibility to get us there. Rather than seeing this as a burden, COA sees it as an opportunity to redefine what architecture can be and what it can contribute.

If Ruth had not pursued architecture she would be a painter. “I imagine working in a sun drenched, plant-filled studio painting abstract canvases of my vision of the city of the future. I think art is society’s mirror and that we have to visualize where we want to go in order to manifest it.”

Ruth has had rewarding experiences motivating other women

who are aspiring architects; the CO Adaptive team is currently comprised of more than 50% women and she’s thrilled. “I have the opportunity every day to work with young designers who are on a path to being architects themselves. Having worked in a few practices in my time – prior to founding CO Adaptive – in which a single man’s ego defined strategy; my desire was to create an environment in which collaboration eclipses top down organization.” It is important to both her and her partner that everyone’s voice is heard and individual passions within the profession are fostered.

Mandl feels lucky to be running her own practice and defining her own hours, meaning she has been able to spend more time with her daughter and put her to bed every night. She often muses on whether that would be the case if she happened to be working elsewhere in the city, as the common work load within this profession generally does not leave time and space for a healthy work/life balance. As a result, Ruth believes that the desire for a family and getting to higher positions within this profession are at odds. “To get to true equality, we need to stand together as a profession and place more value on our time – regardless of gender. More reasonable expectations for ‘normal’ work hours will mean mothers, and also fathers, can find better balance since equality at work and within the home go hand-in-hand. I truly believe this balance only improves our engagement and productivity.” CO Adaptive aims to practice what they preach and, as a practice, they are hopeful that the upcoming generation will make this more of a demand.

For more information on CO Adaptive Architecture, visit coadaptive.co

**“TO GET TO TRUE
EQUALITY, WE NEED TO
STAND TOGETHER AS A
PROFESSION AND PLACE
MORE VALUE ON OUR
TIME —REGARDLESS OF
GENDER.”**

Alexandra Barker, FAIA

Alexandra is originally from Bethesda, Maryland, a suburb of Washington, DC. She received her AB in Visual and Environmental Studies from Harvard College, where she graduated magna cum laude and completed a design thesis on co-housing. She received her Master of Architecture degree from the Graduate School of Design, where she also received the thesis prize and the housing prize for her thesis on mixed-use housing.

After spending a summer working in New York while she was a graduate student, Alexandra knew that she wanted to return to the city after graduation. She worked at Architecture Research Office, the firm of her studio professors Adam Yarinsky and Stephen Cassell; met her husband while working there and left, after spending a year at ARO, to work for Toshiko Mori. Alexandra and her husband moved to Brooklyn in 2001 and she opened her own office, BAAO, in 2006, during which time she had one child and another on the way. Her first projects were in Manhattan, but once her children were in preschool she began to meet young families in Brooklyn. Around that same time, the housing market started taking off, so her projects gradually became more frequently in Brooklyn.

**“YOU HAVE TO KNOW
WHEN TO COMPROMISE
AND WHEN TO STICK TO
YOUR GUNS.”**

When asked about the highlight of her career so far, Alexandra says that she’s excited about some recent work she’s been doing involving early childhood education. “The most recent project we are working on now incorporates childcare and after school into on 11,000 square foot facility in Williamsburg. I’m also excited about the work we have been doing in sensitive waterfront sites like Breezy Point, Queens, which need to address how to build in flood-prone areas.”

Alexandra has faced challenging situations due to being a woman in a male dominated field, for example potential clients and contractors who have been dismissive of the amount of experience she has; for the most part, however, she has found great partners in the projects she has completed who treat her with respect.

If asked to give advice to women just beginning a career in architecture, Alexandra says “you need a lot of energy, and focus and project authority to make yourself and your ideas heard and to work through challenges that come up in the process of designing and constructing buildings. You have to know when to compromise and when to stick to your guns.”

Alexandra would love to work on a public project that would make a difference in a community. She’s not daunted by challenging constraints and would love the opportunity to bring design ingenuity to projects that would have an impact on people who do not have the luxury of living in a space designed for them.

When she was a college student, Alexandra was “on the fence as a college student between pursuing architecture and entering the field of medicine. I am also an educator. I am a professor and founding administrator at Pratt Institute’s Graduate Architecture and Urban



Alexandra Barker, FAIA

Principal, Barker Associates Architecture Office
Assistant Chairperson + Associate Professor
with CCE, Graduate Architecture & Urban Design,
Pratt Institute

Photo: Dimitri Mais

Design program. I think that the design skills that are taught in architecture programs have the potential to be useful in a broad range of fields and I would love to invent a profession that brings that knowledge and skill set to other disciplines.” She has also been fortunate enough to know great mentors throughout her practice and academic career and believe that “mentors can open many doors for younger generations.”

As for the future of women in the field of architecture, Alexandra says “I think that women are still thought of as not as technically oriented as men, which leads them to have to work harder to prove their competence to do a job. I think things are much better than when I was starting out, however, so I am optimistic that we will see more and more women leading the field.”

For more information on BAAO, visit baaostudio.com

Catherine R Joseph, AIA

Catherine Joseph grew up in Marblehead, MA; Olney, IL; and Auburn, ME. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Structural Engineering from Duke University and a Master of Architecture from Cornell University, during which she came to New York City for a semester of graduate school and unexpectedly fell in love with it. Originally feeling that she would be overwhelmed by the scale and density, by the time the semester ended she knew she would be back. “I ended up in Brooklyn by chance and it has truly become my home.”

Catherine would say that all women face challenging circumstances in their careers and that one of the most difficult aspects is the fact that speaking up requires an extraordinary amount of personal risk. “There isn’t a truly safe protocol for discussing bias or discrimination. Speaking up and having our voices and opinions valued is still a great challenge, a great risk. Resolving that – normalizing discussions of and acknowledgment of bias, fostering respect for and support of women’s voices and creating security and safety in speaking up – will be a watershed for creating truly equitable opportunity and support.”

For women who are beginning their careers, she would encourage them to decide that, starting today, you won’t doubt your abilities. “Decide that you believe in yourself fully – that is a very good place to start.” Catherine found that once she committed to that and decided that she was enough just as she was, her self-confidence helped her find more significant opportunities for growth. She also believes that in order for young women to have faith in their abilities or to learn to take on challenging projects and problems, others within the profession have to define failure as a necessity for



growth. “Young architects, especially young women, must be afforded the opportunity to take on challenging work and fail and in their failure, must be supported by their peers, mentors, and supervisors.” The most profound moments of her career have been when a mentor or supervisor has told her that she would most likely fail the first time she tried to solve a problem, but that failure is okay and she should take on the challenge anyway. Significantly, those same people were always there to help her fix her mistakes.

Catherine’s ideal projects are those that “foster a close relationship between the architecture and the occupant. A daycare environment in which the architecture itself is a means for exploration, adventure, and intellectual growth. A whiskey distillery taproom that creates an aromatic, experiential environment. My ideal design is that which puts the human front and center.”

“I want the work I do to be forward-looking, to have meaning beyond the immediate and to anticipate the future.” Moreover, Catherine wants her work to “further an idea or belief in a value, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem at the time. Whether it is ensuring that a space feels welcoming to all those who enter it or refining how a building relates to

**“DECIDE THAT YOU
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Catherine R Joseph
Architect, 3XN Architects
Forefront Fellow, Urban Design Forum

or supports the human body, the work of an architect affects how people live and thrive.” And while she hopes that her work acknowledges and lives up to that standard, if she hadn’t pursued architecture she could picture herself as either a marine biologist or a writer, “using words instead of architecture to explore ideas.”

Catherine also had valuable experience teaching Interior Architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design for several semesters. Her students asked her often what the profession was like and asked for insight about what their future held. She said that having those conversations was one of her “favorite aspects of teaching.” Hearing about what the students looked forward to gave her hope that “the profession we are making is worthy of their hopefulness.” When asked about adversity in the field of architecture and what she envisioned for the future of women in architecture, she responded that for her, “optimism has been and always will be the way forward. Understanding that adversity will continue to exist and must be overcome together, that any success that I have should also make a way for the women around me and the generation of women behind us has been and will be a foundation of my career.”

For more information on 3XN Architects, visit 3xn.com



Sarah Jacoby, AIA, LEED AP
Principal, Sarah Jacoby Architect

Photo: Ty Cole

Sarah Jacoby, AIA

Sarah Jacoby was born and raised in Venice, California, but has always had family in the tri-state area so she was often in and around New York. She studied History and Science at Harvard as an undergraduate and later got her Master of Architecture degree from Harvard Graduate School of Design.

She had lived in Brooklyn for several years before graduate school and it seemed to be where many recent college graduates were landing, plus she knew very few people in Manhattan. When she graduated from the GSD, Sarah landed a job with David Adjaye. At the time, Adjaye was in the process of launching his New York studio, so Sarah took the opportunity and moved from Cambridge right back to Brooklyn. “Brooklyn always felt like the right fit. As much as I love the bustle of Manhattan, the (slightly) more low-key vibe of Brooklyn suits me better.”

Sarah says that starting her own business has certainly been a big highlight of her career. “One of my first projects was a new house in Bridgehampton, which I built from the ground up. Those types of opportunities can be hard to find in New York, so that was another big milestone. Each project, though, is its own highlight since each presents an opportunity to learn and work through new design challenges and that is really important for me.”

Although Sarah finds it difficult to pinpoint a specific moment in her own career, she thinks that in some ways the biggest challenge that women face in a male-dominated field is the impression that the opportunities for advancement are much more limited in some of the firms where she worked. “People tend to promote people who remind them of themselves and I have certainly worked places where it seemed like

the hierarchy was a series of Russian dolls (but in this case, the dolls were white men in skinny suits). There seemed like there would be no pathway for me, or someone who looked like me. There are many, many minor moments, of course, beginning with endless phone conversations when I get told, “well, when you talk to the architect, he’ll tell you ‘X, Y, or Z’ and me having to respond: ‘I am he – I am that architect.’”

Overall, Sarah thinks that it’s a “great profession for women because it’s a field where you really can create your own practice and be the boss.” She also believes that there’s an advantage to not having to engage in the machismo on a project site; you can be completely honest about what you know and what you don’t know because there’s so much to learn. You can then go on to be “respected for that ability to learn and adapt to new information.” She thinks it’s important to surround yourself with people who will support you, challenge you, and help you grow, which is easier said than done but worth the effort. There are so many aspects of being an architect that are not covered in school, so it’s wise to be prepared for all sorts of unexpected challenges and opportunities and to problem solve along the journey.

Sarah focused her thesis on affordable housing because it’s something that she is very passionate about and she would love to continue this work in a professional setting. “Oftentimes people think of ‘affordability’ and ‘design’ as incompatible, but affordable housing is such an urgent challenge and architects have so much to bring to that conversation. Architects can assist in making housing better, healthier, more sustainable, and more affordable.” She also feels that it is

humbling to remember that each of these projects represents the environment where people will spend so much of their time over the course of many years, even multiple generations. “Ultimately, I want my clients to be pleased and feel like the spaces are very much theirs, to know that our design process created the type of space that will allow them to live in the way they want to live.”

**“[I ENVISION A BETTER
FUTURE FOR WOMEN,
ONE WHERE NO WOMEN
WILL HAVE TO SAY
‘I AM HE; I AM THE
ARCHITECT...’”**

Sarah had a long, evolving list as to what she wanted to be when she grew up: a ballerina, movie director, Supreme Court Justice, geneticist, the list goes on. But she feels very fortunate that she landed in architecture and can’t actually think of a better fit. There’s a real variety to what is demanded of me that I really value. She’s also had the opportunity to work with many amazing women and see how they made it work for themselves by designing beautiful and successful spaces while simultaneously managing teams and handling coordination at any scale of architecture.

When asked if she feels that women still face adversity in the field,

Sarah definitively answered: “Yes! Women still make up a fraction of licensed architects and at the larger firms they make up a fraction of the partners (if any at all).” She believes that there are still “persistent and systemic challenges that women face in the field of architecture. Schools seem to have caught up with gender balance, but the way in which many firms build teams and promote employees can disadvantage women. This creates a shortage of mentors and role models, which is such an important part of building women leaders.” Of course she envisions a better future for women – “one where no women will have to say ‘I am he; I am the architect,’ A future where everyone will already know that women are architects and a women will never have to tell people that she is in fact the architect.”

For more information on Sarah Jacoby Architect, visit sarahjacobyarchitect.com

Vanessa Despot Rippere, AIA

Vanessa Despot Rippere is originally from Trinidad. Her family emigrated to New York City when she was going on five years old. Like for most immigrant families, America provided more education and work opportunities that her parents wanted her and her siblings to have. Having graduated from what she describes as a 'great architecture school' (The City College of New York); Vanessa moved to Brooklyn in her early 20s because of its diverse and interesting neighborhoods, all of which were easy to get to. Although she recently left Brooklyn, after 15 years of living here, for the opportunity to live in a beautiful house just North of the city; Vanessa still gets her 'Brooklyn fix' since all of her active projects are here. "It was a sad moment [leaving Brooklyn] but my husband and I are looking forward to the next chapter together with the birth of our baby girl."

When asked about a highlight of her career, Vanessa says that it was the first time she used her Architect seal. At the time, she was an employee and had prepared her first report to resolve a building violation for the client. When she finished the report, she signed and sealed it. "It was such a small task but it shifted my way of thinking. It was a highlight in my career because I quickly realized the privilege, responsibility and liability on the horizon from having earned the seal."

Vanessa would say that she's experienced many challenges throughout her 15 years in the industry but, she just experienced the most challenging situation recently as a pregnant woman working in the field. Vanessa has her own firm that provides architectural services to various clients, with a specialty in Façade Restoration/LLI work. She

also manages the jobs throughout construction and deals with contractors, building board members, management companies and various vendors. After announcing her pregnancy to all of her clients and assuring them that their jobs would be under control by a qualified individual, who would take over as the main point of contact after the birth of her child, one difficult board member started sending harassing emails saying things like she should have announced her pregnancy when she first found out and forcefully expressing his 'concerns' about not knowing what to expect towards then end of the pregnancy. During a phone call where Vanessa tried to discuss the emails with the board member, he went as far as to call her 'aggressive'.

The reason why Vanessa thought it was the most challenging situation is because "he temporarily made me feel something I've never felt before – defeated. Primarily, I felt incredibly sad, angry and helpless because it wasn't just about me, it was about the precious life growing inside of me and how I was using more effort and energy than I normally would to show that I was fully capable of juggling pregnancy and my career as an Architect in this male-dominated field." After reassuring herself of the kind of woman she is, Vanessa realized "I am strong and fierce and I can persevere in a world that is challenging to navigate. These are the moments where I've learned so much about myself as a wife, a daughter, a sister, a friend, an Architect and soon, under the title of Mother."

Vanessa also believes that "it's okay to be confident and assertive and still be a lady in every way. If you respectfully hold your own, it's seen as admirable and inspires other

“I AM STRONG AND FIERCE AND I CAN PERSEVERE IN A WORLD THAT IS CHALLENGING TO NAVIGATE. THESE ARE THE MOMENTS WHERE I’VE LEARNED SO MUCH ABOUT MYSELF AS A WIFE, A DAUGHTER, A SISTER, A FRIEND, AN ARCHITECT AND SOON, UNDER THE TITLE OF MOTHER.”

women to do the same. Rock the pumps and feminine threads and don't be afraid to wear colors too! Women are beautiful and shouldn't have to downplay it down to fit in with others. We are each unique and have so much to bring to the table."

An ideal project for Vanessa is one where the client has trouble envisioning the end result but is willing to do what it takes to repair, restore, or correct the work and learn about the process along the way in order to gain as much appreciation for the building as she has. Much of Vanessa's work is façade restoration and as she explains, there's something about that particular line of work that makes her feel like she's

contributing to society in a big way. “It’s about the whole process from start to finish. I want the work I do to be about achieving great things by creatively, effectively, and efficiently working with others as a team. As an Architect, this is an art in itself and is easier said than done. I have learned a great deal about myself through this process and I love and appreciate the work I do even more because of what goes into it.” If she hadn’t gone into architecture, Vanessa could see herself as a Construction Manager because she already enjoys overseeing the construction phases of all of her projects.

Through working for many years, Vanessa had the chance to motivate other women in the field by sharing her own lessons learned and things she wished she knew as a way of encouraging and inspiring them. One of her friends is currently studying for the AREs and she also tries to encourage her by reassuring her that the path to licensure is a difficult one and not for everyone, but when completed, is priceless.

When it comes to whether women still face adversity in the field of architecture, Vanessa feels that women have come a long way but that there are still some who are afraid to speak up and defend themselves or their work. She believes that a “proper mentoring or support system can greatly help. Joining organizations like the AIA and committees like Women in Architecture is a great way to begin combating adversity.” She also envisions an increasing number of women Architects as leaders who will continue to inspire other women in architecture to also become leaders in the field.

To contact High Maintenance NY, visit highmaintenancenyc.com



Vanessa Despot Rippere,
RA, AIA, LEED AP (BD+C)
President, High Maintenance NY, Inc.

Ariane Harrison, AIA

Ariane Harrison was born in New York City to a bilingual family and spent time in France living and working in Paris for 5 years. She has a PhD from New York University in the History of Modern Architecture, a Master of Architecture from the GSAPP at Columbia University and an AB from Princeton University. Ariane wound up in Brooklyn after she set up an office in Greenpoint in 2011–12. The building was a warren of art studios, framers and furniture upholsterers and her and her partner found a great small sunny studio there. They have since moved several times within the building to bigger offices and still love it.

When asked about a highlight of her career thus far, Ariane says she has one and that it's related to the AIA! "I was thrilled that our Pollinators Pavilion was selected for the AIA Conference on Architecture/ACSA Intersections conference this coming May 2020. It's an honor to present experimental work to our community of professionals and I was proud that our project was selected. Combining architecture, art, and science, the Pollinators Pavilion provides an analogous habitat and field station for solitary bees. Custom-designed panels on the Pavilion contain bee nesting tubes and a monitoring system (solar-powered motion-sensors, cameras and microprocessors) that sends photographs to a database that trains a machine-learning system to automate insect identification. The pavilion was built at the entrance of Old Mud Creek Farm, a model of regenerative agriculture in the Hudson Valley. The innovative panel system was awarded a two-year AI for Earth grant from Microsoft (2019) to develop our machine learning model to identify these elusive yet critically important pollinators."



Ariane Lourie Harrison, AIA, LEED AP

Principal, RA New York State, Harrison Atelier
Coordinator, MS Programs (Architecture and Urban Design), Pratt Institute

When faced with a challenging situation due to being a woman in a male-dominated field, Ariane would say that she grew up in an environment in which she likely internalized certain double standards for women, to her detriment, in terms of pay and hours. The work that women architects must do now is claim credit and recognition for the work they have achieved. "A good example of this would be the initiatives launched by Pratt's School of Architecture Dean, Harriet Harriess, which build on her writings such as *A Gendered Profession* (RIBA 2016), to advance the position of women architects. One of these writings is a broad archive of the amazing female designers at the Pratt Institute, whose work was not as well documented as their male peers. Others involve events

such as a celebratory dinner to celebrate the legacy of women architects, planners, educators and artists at Pratt Institute. In addition, the school president Frances Bronet (also a female architect) puts much energy into efforts of diversity, inclusion, climate change and social equity through the school's new strategic plan."

Ariane would recommend that women who are just beginning their architecture careers dive into challenges: enter competitions with friends, spend time working at offices whose work you admire, mount exhibitions, assist and teach studio, submit writing and projects to journals, build ephemeral structures and build anything you can. The list goes on but it boils down to diving into all of the formats that comprise the practice of architecture.

“DIVE INTO CHALLENGES — ENTER COMPETITIONS WITH FRIENDS, SPEND TIME WORKING AT OFFICES WHOSE WORK YOU ADMIRE, MOUNT EXHIBITIONS, ASSIST AND TEACH STUDIO, SUBMIT WRITING AND PROJECTS TO JOURNALS, BUILD EPHEMERAL STRUCTURES AND BUILD ANYTHING YOU CAN.”

She has found that she’s passionate about making architecture that “conveys the shattering magnitude of climate-change within the delicate encounter with the tiny species on whose ecological services we rely. Our recent built work focuses on pollinators: from early pavilions, “The Birds and the Bees” for endangered songbirds and bumblebees to current work, such as our Pollinators’ Pavilion.

I stand for engaging climate change from the perspective of the tiny: a story of building for solitary bees. Unlike honeybees, whose

collapse is well documented, solitary bees lack stingers, do not live in hives and do not make honey. These native pollinators are poorly studied: they are elusive, living in holes and reeds, and yet they pollinate over 75% of all non-agricultural environments with one mason bee doing the work of 100 honeybees. They are above all elusive and hard to factor into a climate-change equation of environmental degradation and food security, despite their critical ecological services. My firm’s (Harrison Atelier) recent work creates artificial habitat for solitary bees. We ask can architecture, as a highly visible public medium, bring other species into our ethical regard? This is what I build, what I write about in my books such as *Architectural Theories of the Environment: Posthuman Territory*, what I teach in the advanced degree architecture and urban design programs at Pratt’s GAUD and what I taught for over a decade at the Yale School of Architecture.”

Ariane thinks of herself as an “architect and educator invested in the idea of building for multiple species.” She feels that a successful alternate career for her would have been as a landscape architect or a conservation biologist. She also has great admiration for the biologists whom they are working with on their Pollinators Pavilion and thinks she would have loved to study pollinating insects as a scientist.

As an educator and Principal of a small practice, Ariane has the ability to guide graduating students towards firms that can nurture their interests. During spring term at Pratt, where she coordinates the MS programs in architecture and urban design, she is involved in redlining many student CVs, job recommendations and work samples in an effort to assist the

students” in reaching the next step in their careers. While she does know that this isn’t necessarily specific to female students, during a recent studio review she also realized that many of the women she invited to show as representation of the most interesting and passionate emerging practitioners also happened to be her former students from Yale, MIT and Pratt. Her daughters, ages two and four, also play a large role in her conception of architecture. “They come to sites, they redline (sort-of) drawings and they have seen structures go up quickly and slowly. It’s a joy to discuss architecture and the built environment with them and goes to show that architecture is a rich and thoughtful profession that can accommodate being a mother and having families.”

Ariane does feel that women still face salary and career discrimination, and not just in architecture. “There are many new organizations, the Architecture Lobby for example, that give voice to underrepresented parties in architecture. There are also ways of rewriting the Eurocentric history of architecture that reveal the deep and sustained contributions that women have made to architecture. There is also work to archive the work of women architects and there is need to find representation and equality for women in every facet of the building profession.”

For more information on Harrison Atelier, visit harrisonatelier.com

The next generation of Women in Architecture speak up and let us know why the future is female.

Molly Izatt, AIA

Originally from Long Valley, NJ, Molly Izatt went to school at Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston, MA. She started working at her current firm in Manhattan about 3 years ago and decided that the commute every day from New Jersey was more than she wanted to take on every day, plus she loved the Brooklyn vibe, so she eagerly made the move to official. After spending a couple of years studying and preparing, the highlight of her career thus far was getting licensed.

Molly has found that she can be a bit more emotional than some men and even some women, she's been able to channel this in a positive way into the passion she has for her work and her interactions with the people around her. She also believes in being open to all opportunities, even if you don't believe you're ready or prepared for it.

An ideal project for her would be something challenging: a problem that allows me to come up with creative solutions. As Ginni Rometty,



CEO of IBM, said: “growth and comfort never coexist.”

Her work can be very detail-oriented just as she is and she wants people to see that and appreciate the details. If she wasn't pursuing architecture she likely would have opened a bakery and plant shop, which is what she intends to do when she eventually retires.

If giving advice to women who are aspiring to become architects, Molly suggests women become comfortable with who they are. “Yes, architecture is a male-dominated field, but we are a force.” When she first started her career and wanted to go on field surveys, Molly encountered

individuals who said things like “you can't go into the field because it's dirty and you wouldn't like it” or “you can't wear heels in the field.” This was obviously a shock to hear and upsetting but she's found that in life, everyone is going to encounter various situations that are exactly that – shocking and upsetting. She had to be comfortable with herself in order to keep moving forward and not let other people's ideas of what she could or could not do derail her. Molly believes that people are who they are and that if women can let the non-constructive criticism roll off their backs, they can accomplish whatever they set their minds to.

Katerina Balgurina, Assoc. AIA

Katerina and her family arrived in New York from the Republic of Belarus six years ago. At that time, her son was only two years old and she describes herself and her family as 'lucky' to get Permanent Resident Status.

From childhood, Katerina has always considered herself as a creative person. When she was seven, Katerina began drawing and developing her talents. For many years she attended classes in academic drawing, painting

and composition which she believes enhanced her drawing skills, artistic eye and sense of composition. This expertise [in drawing] allowed Katerina to easily enter University in Vitebsk, Belarus, within the design department, where she got an education in Interior Design.

Two months after receiving her diploma, Katerina and her family moved to the United States and immediately ended up in New York.

"Learning the language was extremely difficult, however, I was very determined to succeed and embraced the challenge." While Katerina was honing in on her English skills, she worked as a drafter and estimator but never giving up on her bigger dream: to study architecture in New York. "I needed all of this to be worth it," Katerina explains about her journey up until the moment when she received her acceptance letter from the Spitzer school of architecture allowing her to pursue my ambitions and fulfill her dream. After graduating in 2019 with a Masters in Architecture (M. Arch) from City College, Katerina very quickly started working at RKTB Architects where she currently work on educational institution projects.

On the future of Women in Architecture, Katerina believes "as a recent graduate, I truly wish that academic work and work experience in the architectural field were better connected and that architects practicing today would not disregard the amount of achievements and failures of professionals who have come before them. As a mother, I know how important it is to build a platform for the future generations through designing a better urban experience and the thoughtful shaping of spaces. I believe we can design a tomorrow that connects physical and social aspects in a great harmony." ■





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Just One More Thing

Later in April, Earth Day will be celebrating its 50th anniversary and we all recognize that even though Spring is finally here it has brought with it a spirit of surreality that makes most of us feel like the world is spiraling.

PYLON wanted to bring you our own moment that allows you to pause and admire the beauty that is Mother Earth.

Photo: Wesley & Brandon Rosenblum via Flickr

Every tear is answered by a blossom,
Every high with songs and laughter blent,
Apple-blooms upon the breezes toss them.
April knows her own and is content.

— Excerpt from the poem 'April' by Susan Coolidge (Sarah Chauncey Woolsey)

The Announcement of the Decade

Revised AIA core documents are now available

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AIA Contract Documents

