



WOMEN PROWESS IN ARCHITECTURE

Having been conferred with many prestigious awards and with over a decade in design leadership positions and 25 years as an architect, she is a graduate from Dartmouth College and a MArch from Harvard's Graduate School of Design.

*After receiving an MBA from Boston University in 2010, she looked for an opportunity to re-focus the business of design and joined former classmates, Nader Tehrani and Dan Gallagher, to launch NADAAA and since then **Katherine Faulkner, AIA, OAA, LEED** the Founding Principal is overseeing firm operations, fabrication and design on candid projects...*



WOMENTECTURE

PERSONAL FILE

- Full Name : Katherine Faulkner
- Designation : AIA, OAA, LEED, President
- Company Name : NADAAA, USA
- College Name : Harvard Graduate School of Design
- Years in Profession : 24 years
- My Best Work So Far : Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design, University of Toronto

Why I chose Architecture...

Architecture is a rich pursuit. There is always more to learn, and it is a profession and a passion with both young and mature designers making important contributions. My own education was eclectic, with a focus on art and the humanities. During college I was most inspired by modern art and architecture, and fascinated by architects and architectural historians. The story of humanity is told through our buildings.

My Expedition...

While architecture can be a generous profession in that it encourages personal growth, architecture is a difficult field to succeed in. I graduated into the slow US economy of the early 1990s. Like many of my peers, I had several low-paying jobs, sometimes simultaneously. As a result, many of my classmates went on to other fields. Fortunately, I enjoyed the journey. I was not confident in how to practice so working for different firms afforded me an understanding of varied models. Larger corporate firms were focusing on healthcare, science, and education projects, while smaller offices were able to maintain a higher quality of design.

Several years ago, I joined former classmates, Nader Tehrani and Dan Gallagher, to launch NADAAA. We are a firm of 25 designers, working in several countries. The scale of projects varies, and the work is grounded in programmatic, formal, and material inventiveness. Ultimately, we are driven to push the limits of conventional construction.

My take on Architecture...

A singular 'take' on architecture is not possible. The field is too varied. I will say that our profession could be more relevant. The avant-garde is valued above all, yet there are real problems of environment, global economy, and conflict that most of us are ill-equipped to solve. Furthermore, conventional practice is tied to the construction industry, a field that has seen no significant innovation in decades. The best quality buildings are often the oldest ones, while newer developer-funded projects are designed for a relatively short lifespan.

There is reason to be optimistic. Young architects are fanning out into other

fields, graduating with an increasingly muscular understanding of technology and production. I suspect this will result in firms and practitioners that are able to tackle the full supply chain, so that the design and delivery of buildings is streamlined.

My first affair with steel...

The elegance of steel is introduced early in the education of an architect, as that mysterious element that made towers and bridges possible. I suspect many of us fall in love with the Crystal Palace first.

Steel as design Material...

Steel has great potential as both a recycled material and one that can be robotically assembled - even 3D printed at the appropriate scale. Working with steel continues to be attractive as an exoskeleton, although issues of thermal transfer, condensation, and fire protection must be addressed.

Steel Project close to my heart...

Thinner steel is often more attractive to use than chunkier profiles. For NADAAA's Ramien Model Home Gallery, the mild climate of Seoul allowed us to use an exposed steel curtainwall system that was both highly functional and elegant. The exterior envelope is comprised of horizontal steel "fins," undulating to both define the form as well as allow for windows and ventilation, giving the building a softness in profile that echoed the mountain range of Seoul's skyline.

Architect I admire...

There are so many wonderful examples of steel in architecture. Many years ago I visited Pierre Chareau's Maison de Verre. It's singular elegance moved me, particularly the glass and steel exterior front wall. Not used as

extensively in the US as other places, Cor-Ten steel exteriors bring a warmth and depth of color. SHoP's Barclay's Center cuts a striking profile with its rust-brown scales.

My favorite steel building of all time however is probably the John Deere Headquarters by Eero Saarinen in Moline, Illinois. Admittedly my admiration comes from photographs of the 1965 opening, which showed a commitment to showcasing steel as a material ideal for a state-of-the-art corporate headquarters.

My Best Work So Far...

The Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design at the University of Toronto has a sculpted ceiling that has already been nicknamed the "origami," the form of which is nothing more than a series of ruled surfaces comprised of light-gauge steel members. The exterior roof profile has a complementary form, as the inverse of the ceiling. Its profile is supported by scissor trusses that both permit clear spans and form triangular skylights.

My Dream Project...

My dream project would merge the design and construction processes; whether an industrial object or small building. Parametric modeling and computational production (e.g. CNC routers, 3D printers, laser cutters) have empowered our designers to produce increasingly sophisticated forms, mock-ups, and prototypes. NADAAA has used our fabrication space to test a variety of materials and configurations. At a small scale - retail and residential interiors - we are already able to move quickly from design to production. It remains an unrealized ambition to deploy our process in the construction of a building, but I believe we are getting close.



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