

ARCHITECTURE AS...

By Maggy Baccinelli, Tulane Development Communications

... Artifact and Daily Agent



Megan Miller, AIA
Senior Associate,
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As an undergraduate at Tulane, Megan Miller (TSA '91) says her professors imparted in her a lasting and deep respect for "architecture as highly resonant cultural artifact, as well as a significant agent in the daily lives of others." This sense of importance continues to spur her efforts today as a senior associate at Ennead Architects. Miller adds that Professor John Klingman's lessons on how lighting, mechanical and structural systems are fundamental to whole building design "were influential to my view of the design process and are directly tied to the work that I do now."

At Ennead, Miller facilitates the implementation of design intent and stays on projects through construction administration whenever possible. "I love

seeing the buildings go up, and being a part of the ongoing decisions that affect the quality of the final building," she says. "Ideally in my role, I get to see the whole arc of the design and construction process, which is an amazing experience." Miller is most proud when she can stand in a building that took years to design and build and "see it take on a life of its own." Looking forward, she says, "I don't anticipate that it will ever get to be run of the mill. I do hope to be a little better at it each time I begin a new building design."

While on a traditional track in an established firm, Miller says architecture is a broad and deep field with room for many types of interests and talents. Today's students should be "self-directed" in identifying and pursuing their passions and always scanning the horizon for opportunity. "I recommend that during the first 5-10 years out of school, architects try different types and sizes of practices before settling into one for the longer term, going to work for themselves, or deciding to teach," Miller states. "It's good to acquire as much information as you can before making long-term professional choices."

Career options for architecture school graduates are only as limited as grads' imaginations—which is to say, unlimited! Five Tulane School of Architecture alumni share stories of their own professional trajectories and explain how they have translated the education and experience they gained in architecture school into a variety of creative careers.

... Art



Elizabeth Davis
Project Manager, Public Art
and Placemaking, FORM,
Perth, Australia

Elizabeth Davis (TSA '12) attended Tulane because its efforts to rebuild New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina inspired her. "The potential for involvement in the city outside of Richardson Memorial Hall was a real selling point for me," she says. After graduating, Davis moved overseas to Perth, Australia, where she took her current position at the arts nonprofit FORM; she was likewise drawn to FORM because of its involvement in the city of Perth.

"FORM is interested in work that promotes creativity," Davis explains. "It may seem like a broad mission, but this breadth of work has allowed me to be part of many key developments throughout the city, and to work with a range of creatives and architects." Davis says study abroad and indepen-

dent study opportunities at TSA empowered her pursuit of varied interests by broadening her understanding of "what architecture is." Her professors, especially Jonathan Tate and Irene Keil, also encouraged her to follow her passions, she says.

At FORM, Davis manages the Public Art team. This May, the team produced a street festival called PUBLIC, which featured more than 45 international artists painting large-scale pieces on the streets of Perth. Davis often oversees Space Activation projects like PUBLIC, but she also works on bringing public art to single buildings, collaborating with clients to "identify where artwork might become embedded into architectural strategy."

Recently, Davis took part in workshops that helped indigenous painters translate their work into large-scale public art sculptures through FORM's Land.Mark.Art. program. FORM is also working on a café and providore for an isolated community in the Pilbara, a northern region of Western Australia. The organization will manage the space for the next three years and use it as a hub for artist workshops, food festivals, and local markets. Not surprisingly, projects that delve deep into community are Davis' favorite. "I hope that we can continue to find projects like this one that overlap design, artist development and community," she says.

... Environment



Rebecca Dunn Bryant, AIA, Co-founder
and owner, WATERSHED,
Fairhope, AL

Rebecca Dunn Bryant (TSA '00) enrolled at Tulane to expand on her undergraduate studies in Social Ecology at the University of Colorado, where she experimented with alternative building techniques like passive solar, adobe, and straw bale. "I realized those 'off the grid' alternative buildings were not going to appeal to mainstream building and home owners, and I wanted to make a larger positive impact on the environment," she says. "I came to Tulane to learn how to do that with spaces people wanted to live in."

Bryant's professors worked with her interest in how buildings interact with nature, she says. Professor John Klingman, in particular, introduced her to phenomenology and the ways in which people have evolved to respond to certain characteristics of light, shelter, prospect, and refuge. "I had never thought about architecture in those terms before, and I found it much more interesting than 'style,'" Bryant says.

She went on to realize her dream by taking a risk. In 2008, at the height of the recession, Bryant co-founded WATERSHED with another Tulane graduate, Mac Walcott, in Fairhope, Ala. The firm strives to create affordable, sustainable building solutions for hot, humid climates, and design environments that inspire a greater connection to the natural world. "We hoped the recession would be a 'watershed' moment and an opportunity to reboot the 'more is more' development model that characterized the previous 20 years of boom," Bryant explains.

It was. Six years later, Bryant has full ownership of the growing firm and recently moved into a new office. WATERSHED provides green building consulting services on large commercial projects across the southeast, while their design practice focuses on smaller projects interested in "pushing the envelope of environmental design" she says.

"I feel like I've spiraled back around and am finally able to incorporate the permaculture principles that I pursued pre-architecture into more mainstream architectural projects," she says. Always seeking out new learning opportunities, Bryant recently became a Living Building Ambassador and a Passive House consultant. "This allows us to take projects further towards a goal of regenerative architecture."

CAREER OFFICE UPDATE

During the fall semester, Career Development teamed up with the Professional Concerns course to coordinate presentations and panels that would appeal to the student body as a whole as well as to students enrolled in the class. This strategy re-

The School of Architecture and the Career Development Program teamed with a sub-committee of the American Institute of Architects, Women in Architecture, to host a daylong symposium titled *Design Forward: Innovation in Practice*. The symposium included Tulane School of Architecture faculty and staff as well as local and national practitioners. Career Development worked with Women

In spring 2014, the Career Development program launched a one hour credit lab course offered to all students for the first seven weeks of the spring semester. Topics expanded on issues addressed briefly in the Professional Concerns course and presented them in an interactive setting. The curriculum included subjects on office cultures and structures, salary negotiations, future positioning

the Career Development department based on the firm's given criteria. The strategy of hosting individual firms in place of large career days gives more attention to both the firm and the student and allows a focus and specificity in matching during the interview process. Multiple firms from different locations around the country participated in this process, and several students were selected to follow-up interviews and positions. The Career

to be contacted and updated with the status of the program and any upcoming events. The spring course will also be offered in the fall in conjunction with the Professional Concerns course.

Key Accomplishments

The School website's Career Development page is a beneficial and extremely useful resource for students to reference internships, fellowships,

The School of Architecture has also paired with the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) to be a part of their pilot survey program for schools around the country that will launch this summer. The survey will gather post-graduate comments on the current market and job placement.

The Career Development program continues to partner with the AIA Louisiana and will support