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The Big Question

What advice would you give your younger self? Four leading architects and designers offer the career advice they wish they'd told themselves.



Raquel Machado

*Associate, Design
M Moser Associates*

My younger self would probably not pause long enough to read this, so I would start by saying that, although it's important to work hard and get experience, it's equally as important to find time for yourself and inspiration outside of work. It does wonders for both creativity and wellbeing. Giving all doesn't mean giving your best. Every time I take a holiday, I come back recharged. I don't stress as much because I've gained some clarity, which usually helps me work smarter.

Don't be afraid to take risks and ask for more responsibility. If you are proactive about taking ownership, people will see your potential to grow with the bigger picture in mind. On the way to growth, you will inevitably make mistakes, and that's okay. I certainly learnt faster that way, alongside taking some measured risks! Find a mentor and/or a group of like-minded professionals that you can talk to, collaborate with, learn from and bounce ideas. When setting up the office in Amsterdam, connecting with my London colleagues was very important.

Look beyond the brief, listen and engage with your clients. Think about the needs of the people using a space. Be strategic and create solutions that answer problems for both the client and user. You don't need to apply everything you know about design – think about what makes sense for each project and what will provide real impact. Have fun along the way and always celebrate your achievements!



Collin Burry

*Principal
Gensler*

Seven points to live by: 1, Great projects don't get given to you; you make them happen. 2, Find the opportunity to do something exceptional no matter how small or large the ask is of you. 3, Clients are the best source of inspiration. Without clients you won't have a career. 4, Be an exceptional listener. 5, Live a life of continuous learning – you will never know everything you need to know, learning will keep you current. 6, Change is constant – embrace it. 7, There will always be someone prettier, skinnier, richer, etc. than you – don't compare yourself to others. Be your best you. You have some wonderful attributes to share with the world.



Marie Leyland

*Associate Partner
ID:SR Sheppard Robson*

After the turbulent year we've had and more time to reflect than usual, my advice to my younger self would be 'be grateful for opportunities.' Looking back, I've had fantastic opportunities not only to work on varied projects, but to visit key trade exhibitions such as the Salone del Mobile, Stockholm Furniture Fair and various manufacturing facilities across Europe, and meet some wonderful inspiring people along the way. All this provided great enthusiasm and inspiration for design, but perhaps now with recent times and a few years to consider, you realise how lucky you are to have these opportunities.

As a young designer I'd make the most of industry events no matter how far flung, not only to knowledge share, but the added benefit of meeting other designers, and industry professionals that enables you to build your network and ultimately exposure.

It's amazing how many great people I met at the start of my career on early projects or events that I still have connections with today. Two of my current team I actually met at design events and they later joined the team, as well as meeting a future client; so you never know what these opportunities will bring you in the future.



Tim Gledstone

*Partner
Squire & Partners*

Push on open doors. Explore as far as you can. Link your evenings, weekends and holidays to your current interests and studies. Live it and experience it to design for it. Do what you like to do. Surround yourself with people you like. Share and engage. Give as much as you can. Be generous. Compliment excellence. Appreciate everyone. Understand all processes of making. Always research and develop. Design for all senses. Design for all moments. Learn new skills. Travel wide. Study nature. ♦



George Papadopoulos
Intermediate Architectural Assistant
Perkins&Will

George joined the Interiors team at Perkins&Will in 2018 and quickly found his love for theoretical background research. He uses multi-media techniques when approaching a project, such as sketching, photography and model making, alongside design tools like 3D software. His background in architectural regeneration led to a desire to bring buildings back to life and give back to the community. He brought this thinking into his latest project, in which he was the P&W sustainability champion. George's experience began in residential developments and, more recently, he's focused on interiors for clients like Pfizer, Smith and Williamson, HPE and Uber. George's most recent project is an HQ for a global technology company, located in an iconic business park originally designed by Aldo van Eyck. His architectural background impacts his design process: first understand the building and what it gives you, then understand the client and how they'll use and interact with the space. Humancentric design is his passion, and through the design process he brings himself into the story. His skillset lends itself to all aspects of a project, as he is proficient in concept stages through to technical detailing. George is a highly valued member of the studio, with an incredibly strong work ethic. He takes everything in his stride with a smile, is continuously growing and takes the time to mentor junior members of the team.



Phoebe Wood
Interior Designer
Scott Brownrigg

Since joining Scott Brownrigg in 2016, Phoebe has been working in the hospitality, commercial and high-end residential sectors of the company, developing not only her skills in creative thinking but also gaining a strong technical understanding of design, and has risen as a creative leader eager to deliver outstanding projects. Phoebe has significant experience in the UK market, recently delivering a prestigious residential development in Chelsea, and has been a vital design lead on Expedia's new headquarters in London. She has been able to work internationally, predominantly in Moscow, on projects that range from private clinics to high end residential. After a turbulent year of lockdowns, Phoebe cannot wait to continue learning and creating sustainable designs that adapt to our changing world and environment and is also passionate to experience new designs and spaces created by others. Phoebe has blossomed into a multi-sector designer capable of leading and supporting on any ID project in the studio. Throughout lockdown, Phoebe has remained a valuable and positive member of the team and embraced the opportunity to mentor and support her fellow team members, whilst also stepping up to support her seniors and move forward in her capability and career.



Beth Gibson
Interior Designer
SpaceInvader Design

Beth started with SpaceInvader in 2018, straight from university where she graduated with a first-class degree in Interior Design. SpaceInvader were immediately impressed with her creativity and drive – and soon with her tenacity too. Beth has now been with the studio for over two and half years and has become an integral part of their close-knit team, always willing to go above and beyond to help her colleagues and clients – and always with an infectious smile! During the craziness of the last year, she has proved resilient, quick to adapt to new ways of working and always supportive of her team and the company's clients in a time period that has been complex and demanding. She has shown great maturity. SpaceInvader have chosen Beth for all of the above reasons. She really is a rising star who is a pleasure to work alongside and to mentor. In the studio, she has recently started leading her own projects, revealing even more of her design flair and enabling her to continue flourishing. Beth has also had an integral role in an important up-and-coming project, where she has completed an intense briefing period with the client. She rose to the challenge on this and the feedback has been outstanding. The project is now ready to take into completion with a firm grounding.



Francesca Mutch
Interior Designer
Squire & Partners

Francesca (Chess) has worked for Squire & Partners for over five years, working on projects across the world, including her first projects, which included Lancer Square, a residential-led mixed-use development in Kensington, London. More recently, Chess has completed a workspace project for Derwent in Westminster, which gave her the opportunity to work with great furniture and materials brands to produce a complete office fit-out ready for the post-lockdown work environment. Chess and the team have also recently designed the interiors of a 49-storey mixed-use development in Toronto – providing an opportunity to study different building standards and consider the difference in climate and how it affects design. Over the five years that Chess has worked with Squire & Partners, she has grown in experience and confidence, working on a wide range of projects, from concept design to site and installation. Chess is an excellent team player and a vital member of the Squire & Partners studio. She is generous with her time, not only within the team – offering guidance and assistance to other team members – she has also mentored many work experience students over the years. Chess is hardworking and unafraid to take on new challenges; she has a great positive attitude, which is a joy and essential in the busy studio.