



ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN COMMUNITY WITH ASTRID



ANDERSEN

CELEBRATING WOMEN IN ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

by **Astrid Andersen** August 20, 2013

Award winning architectural designers Diana Blake and Tushka Glintmeyer talk of their experiences practicing architectural design.



ASTRID ANDERSEN

Astrid is General Manager of ADNZ, the professional body for architectural designers.

According to Architecture + Women NZ, while over 50% of architecture students are now women, far fewer continue in practice. A low percentage of women reach high-level roles within the industry, there is a significant pay disparity between women and men, and the work created by women architects is largely unseen.

As a woman in the architecture industry, these statistics cause me great concern and motivate me to further get behind the work of our talented female architectural designers.

I spoke to two of ADNZ's women architectural designers about their views on the role of women in architecture.

Whangamata architectural designer, Diana Blake of Diana Blake Design, is a multi-award winning designer. Most recently she picked up the Residential Interiors Architectural

Design Award and the Commercial Industrial Architectural Design Award for the Waikato region at the 2013 ADNZ Resene Architectural Design Awards.

Diana says throughout her career, women in architecture have never really been visible for her to learn from and inspire her. "I am always searching for inspiration from other designers, and would have loved to have seen more work from women architects and architectural designers being celebrated. In fact, it wasn't until 2008 when architects Jane Aimer and Lindley Naismith from Scarlet Architects were announced as finalists in the Home of the Year Award for their design "Whare Mahanga/Twin House" that I was truly captivated by the work of a female architect."

Tushka Glintmeyer of Space Architecture who recently won two awards at the regional competition of the 2013 ADNZ Resene Architectural Design Awards says on the contrary that there have been many women architects who have inspired her for different reasons.

"I admire the many women who forged a way forward in the industry, whose passion for architecture opened previously firmly closed doors in education and created opportunities and support for women in the industry. Janet S Thomson is one such woman. I also admire my colleague Sheryl Lewis, a registered architect; both for her design approach, her work and her work ethic and for her personal sacrifices to practice architecture full-time with a young family," says Tushka.

"In my experience I don't feel like I have had fewer opportunities than my male counterparts, both in New Zealand and overseas, and I don't believe I have been dis-advantaged in any way because I am a woman. I have definitely always been aware there are fewer women in the industry and that it is a male dominated one, but I think attitudes to women architects and designers have changed significantly since I started out and continue to change both in the work place and in the market place," says Tushka. "Women hold many senior positions in various industry groups and organizations and run very successful practices. So perhaps we are out-numbered but I don't think we are outdone."

Diana Blake agrees, saying young women should not be put off by the male dominated reputation of the architecture industry.

"I have found the industry to be very accommodating for a positive work/life balance. I have brought up children, worked from home and carved myself a strong career in architecture. Working for myself has enabled me to stay in the industry while also raising a family. I think for many young women, their success in the industry falls on the flexibility of their employers. Employers must nurture young women designers and celebrate their point of difference. Being an architectural designer as a woman is doable, it just takes a lot of hard work, juggling of commitments and dedication."

Doing our bit, ADNZ introduced a special provision in October 2010 for members for parental leave . This allows members to retain membership without paying subscriptions for up to one year and then after that only paying half the subscription – yet still receiving full benefits and entitlements of membership. Listening to our member’s needs, this provision was introduced to enable women in practice to have time out for a family and still remain connected to the sector. In addition to discounted subscriptions, in order to make a good work/life balance more achievable, ADNZ CPD events and activities are largely held during the day and online learning opportunities have become a growing trend.

Raising the visibility of women in architecture and providing a framework for connections, collegiality, discussion and celebration is part of the mission of Architecture + Women NZ. From the 19th to 29th of September, Architecture + Women NZ is running an exhibition showcasing a collection of stories and work that aims to make women in architecture and their work visible.

ADNZ members have been invited to submit their work for display and statistics of our membership will also be included in the exhibition.

I look forward to viewing the work of talented women in our industry and encourage members of ADNZ, and the architectural community to get behind the work of this inspirational organisation.

**For more information on the Architecture + Women exhibition visit
<http://www.architecturewomen.org.nz/>**

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