

Women in design: Alison Morita

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Alison Morita, an AIA San Diego Young Architects Commissioner/Board Director, received her bachelor's of architecture degree from California Polytechnic San Luis Obispo in 2002.

"I am not sure what prompted me to choose architecture," Morita said. "I've always been strong in math and science, and ever since I was a little girl, I wanted to be an architect. Throughout my childhood, many of our family vacations were spent visiting and touring historical buildings and California missions. I always loved wandering around the rooms and imagining how people lived in them."

Morita's first year in college saw one of the largest female enrollments in the architecture department. By the final year, her class had lost about half of those women, which Morita said is normal for architecture school. "My senior thesis studio had three females out of 18. I've also noticed that there are not many females in the architecture department in firms. I am not sure why this is. I've never really analyzed it because I never noticed a difference between myself and my male colleges."

Morita hopes to never complete her ideal project. "There are so many components and challenges to architectural projects, and I am constantly learning different aspects of design from each one. I mean, what does one do with their life if they complete their 'ideal' project? Retire?" She would strongly encourage a young woman considering architecture to enter the profession. Architecture, she said, is an interactive profession in which you engage with many different types of people. "It is not just about drawing pretty pictures and creating cool designs. Many people feel that is all we do, but in reality architecture is a problem-solving exercise and is a very hands-on profession. Do not be afraid to question things, do not be afraid to get your hands dirty. Oh, and always keep a pair of work boots at your office."



Morita also advises clients considering hiring an architect to do so. Architects are educated about many different aspects of the construction profession, and many steps toward getting a project completed are alien to contractors and engineers.

"Architects help guide the client through all of these many steps and processes, and carry a project from its first inception all the way until people are living, working and playing in the project."

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