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2019 Women Who Build: Lisa Yates, Antinozzi Associates

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Name: Lisa Yates

Position: Senior Project Architect

Company: Antinozzi Associates

How many years have you been in your current field? 25

Which project, deal or transaction was the “game changer” in the advancement of your career during the last 10 years? After working on small, complex renovation projects almost exclusively for 5-6 years, I took on the role of project manager/project architect for Stratford High School, a 245,00 s/f facility consisting mostly of new construction. I am using a very similar skill set to the one needed for small projects, but in construction it became much easier to demand that proper attention be paid to things like detail coordination. When the detail happens hundreds of times the stakes are much higher. On the design side, managing our in-house team really strengthened my teaching and communication skills.

What was your first job and what did you learn from it? I worked for a San Francisco architect during some of the summers I was a graduate student. I learned that I was more competent than I realized, and that good jokes go a long way with the trades when you are administering construction.

What are you doing differently in 2019 that has had a positive impact on your career?

Two things: First, I learned Revit a few years ago. While I don't do a lot of production drawing any more, I'm finding it very valuable to manage the design team by supervising what's happening from inside the model. The second thing is that I am using less paper with each passing year and going electronic; I've found that this really puts everything at my fingertips.

Who are three women – living or dead – that you would like to have drinks with and why?

1. Emily Roebling. Upon the illness of her husband, John Roebling, she “assisted” with completing the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge, basically taking it over – I wonder what that was like.

2. Georgia O'Keefe, because she was so independent and such an original.

3. Marion Mahoney Griffin. When you see a beautiful Frank Lloyd Wright rendering from the early 1900s, there's a strong chance she created the drawing. She was one of the first female licensed architects and FLW's first employee.

All of the women listed here were associated with a man – even Georgia O'Keeffe first became known during her relationship with a much older Alfred Stieglitz. I'm curious about how things would be different for them today since they were all strong, independent and hugely talented.

What were your biggest fears when you started out in your profession? I was afraid I wouldn't be able to find a job in my chosen city, since I had no real experience. Then I was afraid we'd screw something up when the workload was too heavy. Now I know more about how to plan for missteps, which are inevitable. And I've managed to stay pretty busy work-wise.

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