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2019 Women in Construction: Ratima Pisalyaput, Project Manager at SGA

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How many years have you been in your current field? 10

Which project, deal or transaction was the “game changer” in the advancement of your career during the last 10 years? Working on Titledown Tech, a 45,000 s/f core and shell building designed for retail spaces and 20,000 s/f of office space for a digital/tech incubator space. It is the first project I have been assigned as project manager and project architect, along with seeing a project through design and construction. It has been a real honor to be able to have an impact on all aspects of the project through each phase.

What are you doing differently in 2019 that has had a positive impact on your career? Despite my natural instinct to be heads down to get the work done and focus on the task at hand, I’ve been put in a position where I am not interfacing with clients more and leading coordination with consultants. Being able to lead these discussions has really impacted my growth in understanding the industry beyond an architect’s design goals. I’ve had a chance to learn more about the greater outside influences.

What were your biggest fears when you started out in your profession? My biggest fear starting out, and even to this day, is that I will stop learning and developing to be a better architect - That I won’t continually be challenged to think of how to create stronger design solutions that impact the world in a socially responsible way. While I’m still learning and developing my own path in this career, I hope that each milestone I can look back at the teams, clients, and consultants that I’ve worked with and develop ways to better execute and communicate my design goals as well.

What was your first job and what did you learn from it? My first job was at MVEI in Southern California – a company that focused on institutional work. I was put on the construction administration team, with little experience and knowledge of this phase in architecture. What I learned from it is some of the realities of construction and how we communicate our designs – I found that while people think design ends during CA, the decisions that are made on field can ultimately change a design, for better or worse.

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

1. Zaha Hadid – a strong figure for women in architecture – it would be great to know what a day in her life was like – and witness how her creative mind drove her career.

2. Ruth Bader Ginsberg – a woman who really led the women’s movement through the years and has seen her efforts take shape and form – I would love to get some advice from her.
3. Gwen Stefani – an Orange County, CA girl like myself that was the leader of a male band, and has influenced fashion – this is my teenage-self talking.

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