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## **2025 Ones To Watch - Rising Stars: Austin Lee, Elkus Manfredi Architects**

May 23, 2025 - Spotlights



Austin Lee AIA  
Associate

“Austin is an especially talented designer, intelligent and astute, with a diverse portfolio ranging from mixed- use development in the city of Shenzhen, China, to a Boston University theater, to a Maine student center, to a five- star boutique resort in California. Poised, quick to learn, and highly adept at creatively applying innovative technologies, he is a skilled communicator, problem- solver, and unflappable team member, always collaborating with the entire team to create great projects.” - John Martin, Principal at Elkus Manfredi Architects.

What's one challenge you've overcome in your career so far, and what did it teach you? Graduating from UC Berkeley in 2009 into a great recession, I faced the challenge of starting my architecture career in a volatile job market. I took an opportunity in Shenzhen, China, immersing myself in a new culture and learning to navigate unfamiliar design and construction practices. In 2016, I returned to the U.S. and joined Elkus Manfredi Architects, where I continue to work on a great diversity of project types. These experiences taught me to be adaptable, approach uncertainty with curiosity, and to stay open to growth - even when the path forward isn't clear.

If you could give advice to someone just starting out in your field, what would it be? Stay curious and immerse yourself in new challenges. The architecture profession is evolving rapidly with the influx of new technologies, so it is important to remain agile. The more you can explore different roles and project types across multiple scales, the more opportunities you will uncover. Architecture is not created in a vacuum, and inspiration can be found in unexpected places. Try to keep an open mind and remember to take time for self- reflection.

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