



ARCHITECT JOANNA SHAW

OF WINKELMAN ARCHITECTURE ON RESPECT IN ARCHITECTURE

RESPECT RUNS DEEP



I am most frequently inspired by a site and the gentle capacity of architecture to both celebrate a place and to integrate into its environment. At the core of my philosophy on contextual design is one simple principle: respect."



MH+D ASKS SHAW TO TELL US MORE.

Q. What exactly are you respecting when you design a space?

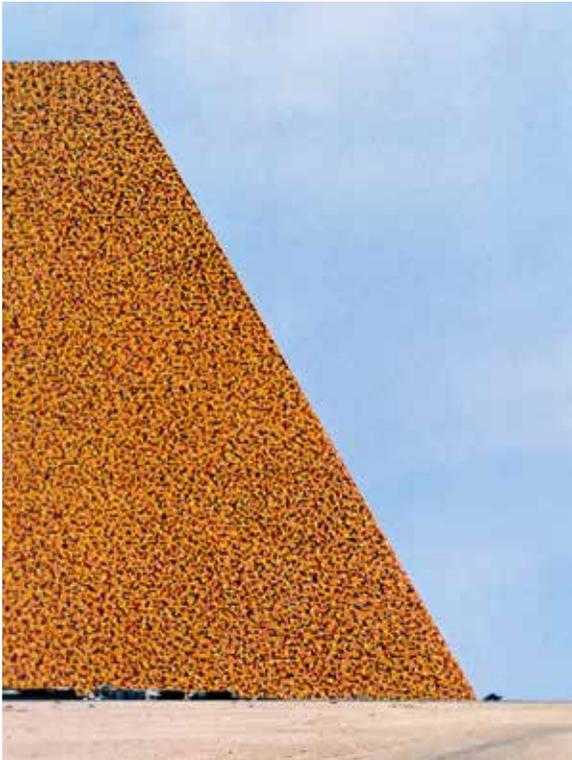
A. Respect for ecology, for people, history, and future generations. Respect for nature and experience, treading lightly and considering how a building delicately touches on a site. I aim to embrace the natural ecology of a place and the people who inhabit it, to become a part of a unique experience.

Q. How, in practice, is the notion of respect driven?

A. Respect begins with listening to the client,

their story, and their vision. My goal is for the design process to become a trusting relationship. An openness to the experiences, perspectives, and ideas of those we work with is essential. My process is driven by learning and setting aside preconceptions, but also by embracing knowledge (old and new). Respect within the team is an essential ingredient, before we even begin to address a design itself. In our office, respect for people is one of the greatest charges we carry with us, to create a collaborative process among the client, builder, designers, and all involved in bringing a project to life. We then embrace respect through our impact on the site and the greater context.

Photo: André Grossmann © 1979 Christo



Q. Have you always practiced contextual architecture?

A. My earliest interest in architecture grew from site-specific artworks. From the works of Jeanne-Claude and Christo, Richard Serra, and Andy Goldsworthy, I dove into a world of design and found that the balance among place, beauty, and the basic necessities of human dwelling were my source for inspiration. I studied art, architecture, and urban design, all leading to a contextually inspired process for designing. I have always embraced culture, people, places, ritual habits, and histories as part of my work.

Q. How do you translate the importance of respecting the site to your clients?

A. Early in each project we talk with the client about the site and the unique pull they have to the place. We embrace the reasons someone chose the particular land they are building on. Sometimes a connection to land is created through a family history, while in other instances a connection is inspired by beauty or ecology. The greatest commonality in our clients is that each person has a remarkable appreciation

for the natural environment and a desire to be immersed in their surroundings.

A respect for the site is respect for our clients. We aim to protect and preserve the qualities and experience they're drawn to, while teaching them methods to maintain those special relationships through thoughtful design.

Q. Are there any indigenous materials you find you often use in your designs?

A. Our palette of materials is often influenced by local resources, local crafts, and a desire for durability. Timber products and granite (varying by quarry) are two common materials. These hardy natural resources provide great character along with connections to the land and to working with craftsmen, who have a rich history and skill when it comes to working with local materials. I often design spaces with exposed framing, celebrating the building's structure and the materials performing at its core. With respect for reduced waste in replacing materials and reduced maintenance, we discuss the lifespan of materials, always aiming to design a building that will age gracefully. **MH+D**



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