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2018 Ones to Watch: Alfonso Oliva, Director at LERA Consulting Structural Engineers

May 15, 2018 - Spotlights

Name: Alfonso Oliva

Title: Director

Company: LERA Consulting Structural Engineers

Address: 40 Wall Street, New York, NY, 10005

Year that you entered your current field? 2011

How do you contribute to the future of your industry?

In the past 10 years, I have focused my career on the design and optimization of complex geometries and special structures. My ongoing ambition is to build what seemingly cannot be built. This ethos drives the work we take on at LERA+, where we come up with novel and innovative solutions that preserve visions—whether it's the design of a tower or a sculpture or a piece of furniture—through the implementation of cutting-edge technologies and custom software development.

How do you manage the work/life balance?

I try to be as efficient as possible in the office so that I can leave on time every day. As a dreamer and a thinker, however, my mind constantly wanders in many directions, so I have to remember to keep myself on track! I am also a researcher at my core—after earning my third master's degree in 2016, I decided to start my Ph.D. in computational design, which I am currently conducting with my alma mater University in Italy, UNICAS. On top of everything else, I do my best to carve out time to work on my art, some of which was recently exhibited at a gallery in Chelsea and is currently being considered for Miami Art Basel later this year.

Who or what do you attribute to your success?

Definitely to my art. As a computational artist, I am always looking for new and interesting ways to express feeling and emotion through art installations. Buildings are very similar to an art installation in this regard, with the only difference being that buildings remain visible for longer periods of time,

whereas artworks are only briefly seen by the public (though they live on even when not on display!). Through my artistic lens, I've developed a deep appreciation for building aesthetics, and make it my mission to preserve designer's visions, helping them to push the boundaries of form through computational techniques.

What are your professional goals for 2018?

2018 marks a milestone in my career: as of this year, I became Partner Member of a software development company connected to LERA+, in which we are breaking new ground in the industry. We are currently working on the concept design for an interactive installation, and we aim to do more of this kind of work in the near future. My primary goal for 2018 is to collaborate more with creative designers who look at the building design process the same way an artist conceives an art piece. Ultimately, I aim to make more art in my professional and personal life.

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