



2023 Women in Construction: Kathy Chan, STUDIO V Design + Planning

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Kathy Chan
Partner

In the past year, what project or accomplishment are you most proud of? During this past year, we hit a milestone in our studio – we have the same number of female staff as male staff, and with interns this winter, we have more women in our studio. I am thrilled with the increased number of applicants that are women over the years and I personally review resumes and portfolios to create a culture of collaboration, inclusivity, and diversity in our studio. Our studio is now balanced in many more ways with more women, and I am very proud of that.

What was a pivotal point in your career? Meeting Julia Jacobs. I didn't know it at the time when I worked for her early in my career, but as I moved on to other positions, we remained close, and she mentored me throughout (professionally and in life). As a child of immigrant parents, it was difficult for me to navigate career and life options. Julia guided me and contributed to a big part of who I've become. Now, as partner of a small business, I am proud of what I have accomplished and often dispense advice and encouragement to young women starting out, as Julia had done.

Which professional associations or organizations would you recommend to women who are starting out in the AEC industry? I would recommend women attend events at all types of associations and organizations so they can network and fine-tune what they want to focus on, and then perhaps join them as a young member. I recommend attending events at some of these organizations: Municipal Arts Society, Van Alen Institute, Architecture League, AIA New York/Center for Architecture, Marketing Society, Society for HR Management, Urban Land Institute, Council of Urban Real Estate, and The Urban Design Forum.

What is your favorite building in New York? The Bowery Savings Bank at 130 Bowery St. Growing up in the Lower East Side, this building was prominent among the tenement buildings around it. I would grocery shop with my mother in Chinatown in makeshift stalls and stores filled to the brim with dry goods. But going to the Bowery Savings Bank to make our weekly deposit was thrilling. Walking into the soaring space that resembles a Roman temple with marble colonnades all around the perimeter of the grand hall took me to a new world. The neoclassical style building by McKim, Mead, and White still invokes grandeur, steadfastness, and beauty to me. I am still in awe of the building when I walk past or attend events there.