

# BUILT BY DESIGN GLUCK+ AND DESIGN BUILD

*In the spirit of this issue's theme, going **Back to Zero**, we revisit our AIAS roots by looking at the value of architectural education, registration and the lost art of making in architecture.*

*CRIT Editor-in-Chief George Guarino III, AIAS recently spoke to Peter L. Gluck of GLUCK+ - as originally published in the pages of CRIT: Ideas by the Future of Architecture. CRIT is the official publication of the American Institute of Architecture Students.*



**Peter L. Gluck**

is Founder and Principal at GLUCK+ in New York, has taught at Columbia and Yale schools of architecture and received both a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Architecture from Yale University.

Over a 40-year period, **Peter L. Gluck** with GLUCK+ has generated a multi-faceted approach to the design of award-winning buildings, recognized for their inventive, conceptually unique and comprehensive design solutions; with most having been constructed by the firm. The practice is committed to pushing the boundaries of design together with real-world expertise to deliver the highest quality built result. The firm has designed buildings throughout the United States, ranging in type from houses, schools, religious buildings, and community centers to hotels, mixed use/housing, corporate interiors, university buildings, and historic restorations.

GLUCK+ was recently featured in Fast Company's 'Making It' video series for *The Stack*, the first steel and concrete mixed-use residential development to be built in New York City utilizing offsite modular construction. Current and recent projects include the Collegiate School in New York, Cary Leeds Center for Tennis & Learning in the Bronx's Crotona Park, a marine science and conservation genetics research building for Duke University Marine Lab, the Admissions and Financial Aid Building at Skidmore College, in Saratoga Springs, New York, and several residential mixed-use developments.

**Where do you think architects are most under or overvalued?**

**Where are architects needed most or wasting their valuable skills?**

I think architects are generally undervalued, though in their own minds they may overvalue themselves. I think the general perception of architects is that they are rather impractical; they are not actually capable of carrying out their ideas. A comment by Frank Lloyd Wright epitomizes the way the world thinks about architects: one of his clients is eating dinner with their family and water splashes down on the table from a leak in the roof. They call the architect and say, "Water is splashing down on the table!" and Frank Lloyd Wright replies, "Get a bucket!" That story symbolizes what the world thinks of architects. It is regrettable. It represents the kind of air-headed thinking that most people associate with architects.

**How can emerging architects increase their relevance as they enter the profession? How can they position themselves to have the greatest impact?**

They can begin to understand the entire process of the making of our environments. It is not simply abstract design; it involves construction, finance ... all kinds of issues beyond pure design. Architects and our roles are misunderstood. You are marginalized if you are not involved in all aspects of the construction. You are marginalized in terms of your value, and you're marginalized in terms of your understanding and comprehension of what needs to be done and how to do it.

**What are your thoughts on the massive student debt that many students of architecture graduate with?**

I think all students of today's world graduate with large debts. The question is: are we, as architects, going to be able to pay it back? Architecture is already an extremely low-paying profession, given the qualification, talent, and skills of the people doing it.

**What motivated you to begin practicing Architect Led Design Build?**

Well, when I was in school, several students would build houses over the weekends. We became familiar with construction. It wasn't presented to us as being a mystery or something that we should be afraid of, something with implicit liability. Over the last 30 years, the idea has been set forth that when you get involved in the real world, be it construction or other related facets of building, the way to stay whole as an individual and firm is to not take any risk -- to avoid liability, to avoid involvement in all of those critical factors involved in making things. That is ostensibly what architects are supposed to do, make things.

**How does communication among yourselves and other stakeholders differ at Gluck+ from a typical firm? Do you draw differently?**

We do everything differently. We don't make a set of drawings for a contractor. We make twenty different sets of drawings, one for each subcontractor. They are each prepared at different times of the process and each prepared to reflect the phase in which the work will be accomplished during the sequence of construction. Annotations are specific to the tradesmen they are intended for.

**Does your firm have any desire to grow or expand? Do you think it would harm the way you practice?**

I think we are expanding. I don't see it causing harm; we do the work that we like to do. The work is getting bigger and more interesting.

**Do you think all architects should practice architect-led design build? Do you think there's still a place for other practice models?**

I wouldn't say that all architects should practice design-build. I do think that all architects should expand and involve themselves more. I think we've lived through a period of time when the role of the architects has seen a series of limitations of their involvement. Architects used to supervise their work; it was standard practice. Now architects are told not to supervise their work.

**How do you think that shift took place?**

I think it was the mistaken view of the lawyers that architects relied on. I also think that it has to do with the schism between professionals and tradespeople. Somehow, architects like to think that they're artists, and therefore not involved in the dirty or demeaning business of building their work. It's very strange. ■

*Architect Led Design Build (provided by Gluck+)*

*Architect Led Design Build is single-source responsibility for the design, construction and commissioning of buildings. Typically, an owner hires an architect to draw a building and a contractor to oversee the subcontractors that will build the building. This separation is adverse for the quality and cost of building. Project stakeholders lose out.*

*Architect Led Design Build is an agile process in which the same people are responsible for an entire building project. Our architects are also construction managers, meaning feedback between method of construction and design is fluid and responsive. Priorities between design, cost and schedule are clear. Creativity is responsible.*



**George Guarino III, AIAS**

is a student in the final year of pursuing his B.Arch at Syracuse University School of Architecture. Having been involved with the AIAS since his freshmen year, George now serves as the Editor-in-Chief of CRIT. Upon graduation, he plans to vigorously pursue licensure and exciting opportunities beyond traditional practice.