



Measured



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Artful, Subtle Architectural Sustainability

Measured Architecture is a driving force toward architects incorporating sustainable practices and artistic elements in their projects, without incurring additional premiums for clients.

Measured Architecture is a rarity in that it's a small firm that strives to maintain its scale, while honing in a focus on what it values most: a marriage between artistic elements, environmental sustainability, and a keen eye on client need sets.

Clinton Cuddington concluded a decade working with Vancouver's architectural big wig Bing Thom to establish Measured Architecture seven years ago, and Piers Cunnington took on half partnership last year—a professional union blithely accented by the coincidence of their surnames.


The firm's structure is strongly informed by Cuddington and Cunnington's past professional experiences, which have left them with a desire to play an intrinsic role in each project the company takes on, to imbue them with their particular set of values. "We've just believed strongly in the small firm. We committed to that as an approach. It just seemed that I had built a life, and Piers had also, just thinking about being in charge of ourselves, and being part of things that [correspond to]



our core value set,” says Cuddington. “I did a long run with a very large boutique firm that was still a boutique firm, so I really modeled [Measured Architecture] after that.”

Another motivation for maintaining their scale is Cuddington and Cunningham understanding that it is their personal brands that draw clients, meaning that handing projects over to colleagues could ultimately disappoint clients, and so they steer clear of this type of delegation. “We can lavish attention on clients and not have to pass it down the line to other staff. Piers and I can be involved in the dialogue with our clients at all times, because they hired us for us, and for our track records,” Cuddington affirms.

While Measured Architecture has worked to establish an industry foothold by singling in on residential projects, Cuddington hopes to see a shift outside of the niche soon, toward institutional projects. Their current goal is to create a split between residential, cultural and institutional, and public art. “We’re interested in diversifying, so we can cross-pollinate between all these different worlds, but we always want to stay at least fifty per cent residential because we’re really good at it, and we like that work,” says Cuddington.



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AWARD RECOGNIZED

Starting out with a solid focus on residential projects has proved to be a solid game plan for Measured Architecture, with their recent Cloister House project receiving the 2014 Vancouver Urban Design Award for Small Residential Buildings.

Yet alongside the recognition that such an award brings, Cuddington finds its context just as significant and encouraging, as it fosters the idea of greater architect sovereignty in projects, as their client allowed them great leeway in exploring their own ideas for the Cloister House.



It allowed the firm to share this free reign with the contractors and designers working on the project with them, such as Fei Disbrow, who participated as design consultant for interiors, and also created art pieces for the exterior of the Cloister House.

“When we won this award with the city of Vancouver, the award was as much an award for the clients that allow architects to flourish with their ideas, so the fact that the city and the mayor had acknowledged that we had made something exceptional with an exceptional client was great, because that was exactly what had happened to us,” says Cuddington.

Additionally, the award hints at the importance of cohesiveness between the city and its architects, and the opportunity for mutual benefit when both parties foster this relationship. “It acknowledged that we as architects had built a very strong relationship with City Hall, and did not consider them adversaries but rather part of the team that we needed to work through to leap up and out of,” Cuddington states.

The firm’s relationship with the city also hinges on the former’s patronizing a city ini-

tiative that provides an avenue where wayward youth on the mend can find resume-building experience. The program involves a dismantling team pulling apart buildings, with the intention of salvaging them for recycled material. This initiative provides an environmentally friendly alternative that simultaneously serves disadvantaged city youth. Most importantly, it allows companies such as Measured Architecture to incorporate it into their projects without incurring premiums for their clients.

Here’s where Measured Architecture’s subtle environmental strategy comes in: they employ eco-friendly alternatives to conventional architectural practices, ones that are established enough to allow for guarantees and no risk, yet bring a great degree of efficiency to the project. “An architect should be looking for innovative solutions that have been through warranty cycles, have a track record of keeping the rain out, keeping the heat in, those kinds of things. We don’t want to be pioneers, nor do we want to pay the penalties of being pioneers, but its amazing how many things have been kicked to the wayside that are positive solutions for building in our society,” explains Cuddington.



Also inherent in Measured Architects' approach is their unique enthusiasm for the process of creating a piece of architecture, rather than romanticizing the end result. This comes through on the company website, which they've modeled to showcase progression over completion. "We have a blog section that's coming alive right now that's



outlining the steps of building and how we empower the people on the team to do so," outlines Cuddington.

It's all part of a mentality that values client satisfaction and architectural longevity wholly, and it shines through Cuddington's speech. "The most important thing to keep a building out of the landfill is to make sure

that people cherish and love it, and so we try to make buildings that will make great ruins one day," he says.

MOVING INTO THE FUTURE

Speaking to the future, Cunnington details company efforts to reinforce the leadership abilities of their core staff, to ensure their endurance and survival in the industry, while looking to more expansive projects. "We absolutely want to move to much larger project sizes, and to start creating the infrastructure to disseminate that. We're ready and game, as well as able, so a lot of the work that we're currently doing is internal, to be able to be leaders if we have to grow the next ring of support for a larger contract," Cunnington states.

Crucial in this transition, of course, is the firm's internal dynamic, and Cunnington and Cuddington work harmoniously to complement each other's perspectives. "We both come at it from a different perspectives. Piers is often the strong buttressing force in the office, while I'm thinking creatively and coming up with some zany idea, and running it past him," Cuddington explains, "We're hitting it from different angles."

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