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Q&A: AI and the Future of Architecture

Q: Would you share a moment from your early career that shaped how you think about tech today?

Just after graduation from Pratt, the Architecture School Building, Higgins Hall, caught on fire and all of my models and hand-drafted drawings presented at the end of year exhibit turned to dust. My entire portfolio went up in flames. I was fortunate to be offered a job by one of the university professors as a designer at his architecture practice (Kupiec and Koutsomitis Architects P.C.). Needless to say, I wish we had technology back then.

This general time frame also marked the beginning of a new era as the entire architecture industry went through a technological revolution. I learned how to work on AutoCAD (Release 11 & 12 on DOS) and later learned how to build 3D models of buildings and render them using what would now be considered pre-historic software programs.

After I gained experience and knowledge in the field and learned how to use technology for the advantage of the profession, I joined GF55 Architects. During the last two decades at GF55, we put a priority on new technology that's developed for architecture planning and design. We also hired highly skilled architects that were familiar with coordination and construction administration programs that helped manage the construction process. GF55 is currently working with different technology platforms to keep abreast of latest innovations that impact the future of architecture.



Q: You've personally experienced architecture's tech evolution. How does today's AI wave compare to past transitions?

We're in a very special time where things are changing fast. From drafting with rapidographs on Mylar to 2D CAD, then 3D modeling, and BIM, that's over 25 years of evolution. Now, we're investigating AI programs. It's a big change. Everyone's testing things. We're still in the R&D phase. A lot has been done with hardware and software, but data—the third piece of AI—is still developing.

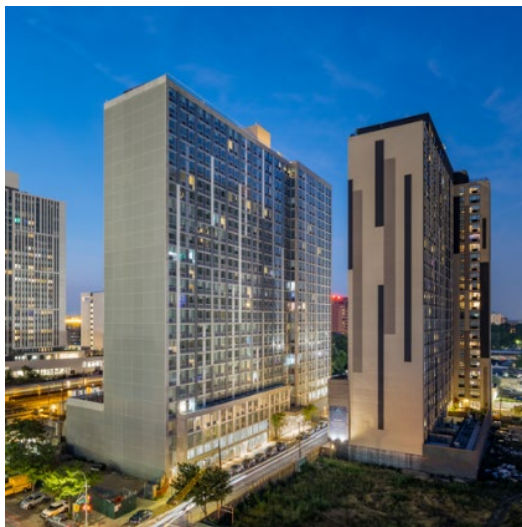
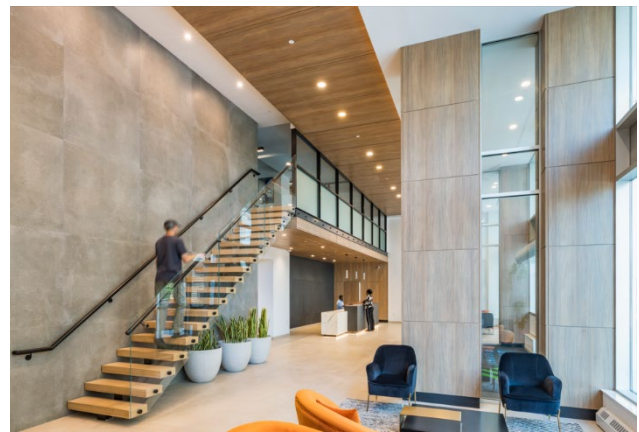


Q: Where do you think AI can make the biggest impact in architecture today?

We're learning how to use AI in our practices, but we're not yet at the point where AI can generate drawing sets or build-ready models. We're getting there, but it'll take time. The greatest potential I see is when we integrate AI across all project players—architects, developers, contractors, financiers. If we can use AI to streamline collaboration, considering construction methods, specs, and costs all in one system, then the promise of AI will be fulfilled. Until then, it's up to us professionals to keep testing and pushing.

Q: You've mentioned the importance of testing in AI implementation. What does that look like at GF55?

We want creative, meaningful results—but that takes learning and experimentation. AI is not plug-and-play—it's a process. GF55 is currently working with different technologies to keep abreast of the latest innovations that impact the future of architecture. We are also working to understand what our staff is actually using. We can't make strategic decisions as firm leaders without that insight.



Q: What's your perspective on the fear some architects have that AI might replace them?

I'll take a shot at a prediction, decision-making will still remain in human hands—for now. We'll be the ones evaluating what AI gives us, and choosing what to accept or reject. There's no true resistance to AI, just hesitation due to deadlines and unfamiliarity. There's a natural discomfort with things we don't know. Also, there's a fear: will AI replace me as a designer? AI might help, but the architect will decide what's valuable, what stays, what goes. The most important thing is to stay open minded, investigate different and alternative solutions to design and construction challenges.