

AD

AD100

SO-IL: Meet the AD100 2023 Debut

By Samuel Cochran

Founded by husband-and-wife team [Florian Idenburg](#) and [Jing Liu](#), this Brooklyn studio has paved the way for a new generation of architects, challenging the status quo in enigmatic buildings of all kinds. In Brooklyn, their design for the Amant arts complex combines textured expanses of brick, concrete, and aluminum into a dynamic sequence of spaces. A Long Island house assembles gabled volumes into a poetic cruciform layout. And their transformation of Site Verrier de Meisenthal, a historic studio-glass center of France, unites three neighboring institutions with an undulating addition that frames a public plaza. “We are both locally rooted and nationless,” they reflect of their wide reach and diverse team, whose origins imbue [SO-IL](#) projects with “global narratives and perspectives.” At the core of their practice, however, is commitment to designing for the greater good. “We explore how the creation of environments and objects inspires lasting positive intellectual and societal engagement.”



A property designed by SO-IL overlooking the Long Island Sound.

Photo: Iwan Baan

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Which designers/architects in history are in your personal pantheon? Which projects of theirs do you find most inspiring? (Feel free to name a favorite building of all time if you like.)

Idenburg: Sigurd Lewerentz's St. Mark's Church; Toyo Ito's Tama Art University Library; Luis Barragan's Capuchin Convent Chapel; OMA's Rotterdam Kunsthall.

Liu: Lina Bo Bardi's Teatro Oficina; SANAA's New Museum; Ensemble Studio's Ca'n Terra House.

What is your latest obsession (something you collect, a new material you're working with, etc.) and why?

Idenburg: Chair prototypes—sitting is simple, innovating in it is hard. There are so many experiments, but so few breakthroughs.

Liu: Books about the history of land and soil. Modern architecture and modernity's willful negligence of them have obscured our understanding of the nature of the reality of the world we live in for so long. We need to work very hard to start to see them again.

What is the best piece of career advice you've ever received?

Idenburg: Convince yourself before trying to convince others.

Liu: Every seven years, you start a new career, even if you run your own office.

What type of project or type of space are you dying to design that no client has ever asked for and why?

Idenburg: An architecture school and a memorial—both types where design has to do a lot of work.

Liu: A completely circular building. No one wants to pay for it now but we are all paying for it ultimately.