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In conversation with Indy's built environment CHAMPIONS and INNOVATORS.

CRAIG McCORMICK



"Our goal as architects is to make a better city, a better community, and create walkable, livable places."

Cycling from his house in the Windsor Park neighborhood on the Near East Side of Indy to an office on Monument Circle, architect Craig McCormick sees firsthand the changes that have occurred in the city since he purchased his first downtown condo in the mid-1990s.

Circle Center Mall was just being built, and urban nightlife in the Circle City was almost nonexistent, with only a handful of establishments, such as the Chatterbox Jazz Club and Old Point Tavern. Fastforward twenty years, and his architectural firm, Blackline Studio, now helps shape the way people live and work in the city.

"When the economy tanked, the last thing anyone wanted to do was build," McCormick says. "Blackline grew out of that recession and focused on mixed-use and multi-family buildings. We thought this was going to be an area of growth, and that turned out to be true."

The Ball State University graduate originally planned to move to New York City after completing a master's degree at Rice University in Texas, but the decision to start a family led him back to his hometown. Commenting on how much it's matured in just a decade, he now sees Indy settling in as a city with bike lanes and connectivity.

"Our goal as designers is to make a better city, a better community, and create walkable, livable places," he says.

In addition to designing homes, Blackline Studio creates collaborative workspaces, with a portfolio that includes Milhaus' office and The downtown Speak Easy. His approach to these projects was to design around how people interact with one another and within an office space environment

"It's great that we have Salesforce as an anchor downtown, but there is so much collaborative work happening among small companies that we try to make collaboration part of our M.O. on how we approach design," he says.

In addition to running a successful architecture firm, McCormick recently completed the Stanley K. Lacy Executive Leadership series. He's deeply involved in the local arts scene, serving in positions for organizations such as The Harrison Center and Big Car.

"I'm passionate about community-based work in the arts on a small scale. They have a huge impact on the maturity of our city," he says.

McCormick's interest in the arts also involves a side photography hobby. Learning from his father who was a photojournalist in the Marine Corp, his early work put photography into crisis by abstracting the images.

"I started shooting documentary spaces in the city; especially during the recession," he says. "I documented a lot of the change that was happening due to financial reasons and how it was affecting the urban neighborhoods."

As for Indy's future, in terms of design, he offers some thoughts on what it will take to make it stand out from other cities.

"Its building owners and developers taking bigger risks," is what Indy needs, according to McCormick. "There's a lot of creative work happening right now in the city, but there's still opportunity to shift from a more conservative approach to investing in better building design."

ARCHITECT

Words by THERESA PROCOPIO + Photograph by ELESE BALES + Design by ANTHONY CARRANZA

ROB GERBITZ



Looking almost anywhere around Indianapolis one inevitably finds new construction of one kind or another. Much of it is quite large, but not all of those massive projects stand to have as much impact on the city as those headed by Hendricks Commercial Property.

Hendricks CEO Rob Gerbitz is the driving force behind the two such projects here in the Circle City, and it is because of his personal attention to quality and craftsmanship that these in particular stand out.

Chances are, especially if you frequent the north side of town, you are already familiar with the shops and restaurants at the Ironworks building on 86th Street, just west of Keystone Avenue. That is a Hendricks property. Going up directly across the street is the new Ironworks Hotel, currently scheduled to open the second week in September. The hotel seems destined to be a crown jewel in the Hendricks portfolio, and Gerbitz is responsible for many of the reasons why.

Take, for example, the large looming cranes that dominate the entrances. The massive steel structures are more than 100 years old – the real thing versus modern reconstruction. Immediately, the cranes set the aesthetic tone for the entire building, a concept focused on workmanship in an era where the quality of one's work still mattered.

"One of the things I hope people will appreciate is the brickwork on this building. I think the mason did a phenomenal job and ... I think people are going to look at the quality and detail and really appreciate it," Gerbitz says. "I think quality is really what matters."

Attention to quality is the primary reason he is CEO of the multi-state development company. "I was hired, to do work that we can really be proud of it," he says. Gerbitz hopes that high standard mitigates much of the risk that comes with opening a mixed retail and hospitality facility on the north side of town. "There are always risks," he says. "There's no question. The Fashion Mall has had how many places go away? So there's always that risk. I think our quality is what gives us an edge."

One of the reasons Hendricks properties stand out is because of their ability to blend in, which is likely one of the reasons the company was awarded the contract for developing the Bottleworks project downtown in the former Coca-Cola bottling facilities. The buildings alone are known for their terra-cotta art deco work, something that Gerbitz says they'll repair and work into the new construction, helping it to fit in with the aesthetic look and feel already present along the Mass Ave. corridor.

The artistry and ambience won't be lost on the new buildings either. "I don't think that it's going to feel that different," Gerbitz explains. "We want it to feel like it fits in. We want them to feel artistic and, I don't want to say old, but like they've been there for a while."

Again, this is familiar territory for the developer, who says one of his greatest compliments was when a visitor to a facility told him, "Man, you did a great job remodeling this old building." In reality, that building was all new construction. But the quality craftsmanship helped it appear in step with the rest of the neighborhood.

The Ironworks Hotel was 18 months in construction; however, the Bottleworks project is considerably more extensive. The Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission, which unanimously approved Hendricks' plans for the project this past July, expects full completion on the Bottleworks to take seven to ten years.

"I would like to cut that in half, but that can't always be done," he says. "We'll close in September and look to get started quickly.

"I think quality is really what matters ... I was hired to do work that we can be proud of."

KRISTIN OKELEY

MICAH HILL

"To do things differently ... and bring more of a lifestyle concept to design."

Kristin Okeley's dad probably didn't realize he was setting her on a career path when the industrial arts teacher built his 9-year-old daughter a dollhouse, which she promptly remodeled and renovated. – Kitchens by Design whose operations later expanded well beyond the kitchen and throughout the entire house. By then it often, but now the world is so much more

"I always knew I wanted to own my own business," Okeley says. "I had so many bring more of a lifestyle concept to design so it didn't have to feel either too fluffy or too cold." And now she's got an entire team dedicated to bringing cool, functional

Okeley doesn't like to tie her aesthetic too

closely to passing trends, instead opting to let her clients and their homes speak to her and inform her designs, making sure they are also functional: "I'm a chameleon." But that doesn't mean she's not excited later she launched her full-service company wonderful change in the Indianapolis design scene," says Okeley. "There was a time when you had to go to Chicago or New York interconnected, and we have so many more resources." She says that social media has made the process a lot more fun, both for her and for her clients. "The clients are so much more savvy, and I actually love that."

> A perfect example of Okeley's design philosophy might just be the most recent Dream Home in Indy, which she described were able to recycle and resource true mid-century pieces that feel like a piece of

Local builder Micah J. Hill has always loved in the downtown area and surrounding design, construction, and building. From a young age, he would notice housing structures and knew he would forge a career in building construction. Armed with a business degree from Taylor University, he enhanced his skill set by interning and working for larger firms, learning everything from framing to landscaping. Today, Hill is a founding member and principal of Compendium Group LLC.

"I've been building downtown since 2000 - well before it became cool," he says. "It's been really interesting and fulfilling to see downtown change from the community it once was. It used to be urban pioneers moving downtown, and you rarely saw families. Now I have clients with kids who are making the choice they want to be in

Hill and his wife, Tatum, and daughter, Cora, reside in the house that he built in the Windsor Park Neighborhood, on the Near East Side. It's a short distance to the city's parks, trails, and cultural districts that the family enjoys. Compendium Group focuses its construction endeavors solely

neighborhoods; specializing in residential, commercial, healthy homes, and historic projects.

The firm recently completed a rehab of the oldest house in Fletcher Place. It was built in the 1870s. The neighborhood was not going to allow it to be destroyed. While challenging - the house had rocked and twisted, and its walls had been shored up for Hill. Compendium Group is now involved in redevelopment of the land surrounding the old Indiana Central State Hospital.

right now," Hill says. "It went from a place that for so long had a 6-foot-tall fence and barbed wire around it. Now that's all gone, and I'm really happy to be a part of it."

Hill sees the city's IT boom factoring into local trends and influencing the build environment in downtown Indianapolis

Companies are attracting employees from larger cities, such as San Francisco and downtown. He sees the impact on the local

you look back in history, was how people incorporated the materials they had around them. From the timber-framed cabins to the stone cottages that were built around the natural environment and resources that were available," he explains. "Today, Indy's strong IT presence is dictating housing in a similar way, from style to technology. If they can get it on their phone, they want it in

The Greenwood native wasn't initially sold on staying in Indianapolis, but began to feel more settled about ten years ago, as the city continued to evolve.

"It's about all the connections. There's from people. It's being a part of the growth of a cool and vibrant city," he says. "I eventually stopped looking outside of Indianapolis and said this is where I'm putting my roots down."

DESCRE

Words by **ABBY GARDNER** + Photograph by **ESTHER BOSTON**







ARCHITECT

Words by CHARLES LETBETTER + Photograph by ELESE BALES

Brian Burtch is a casual kind of guy that's fun to hang around with. He's friendly and easy to talk to. He and his fiancé, Joey Ponce, like to travel and check out native landscapes. To see Burtch tapping at his laptop in a Fletcher Place coffee shop, one would hardly guess he's one of the most talked about architects in Indianapolis.

He's done numerous interviews in the past two years, for both print and broadcast media, and enjoys a bit of local celebrity, but in a modest, understated way.

People familiar with Indiana architecture, especially people who live around Fountain Square, are likely more familiar with Burtch's house than they are with the designer himself, (even though he created and lives in it). He wowed everyone with his first design: the NEON house. Built on a lot that is a mere 21-feet wide, his NEON home redefines efficient living space.

"Part of the challenge (in architecture) is getting people to buy into a different style," Burtch says. "People don't really know what they want until they see it."

That means to demonstrate how efficient a modern style home might be, he had to actually build one first. "I'm trying to take more of a developer's approach," he adds. This puts him in a different position from more traditional architects who don't have to worry about such things as suppliers going out of business.

Which actually happened to him.

When Burtch built the NEON house, one of the major talking points was that it was prefabricated construction built by a company in Decatur, Indiana. But before he could build a second one like it, the construction company went belly up. And then a second company he talked to went out of business before they could ever start their first project together. As a result, the young architect has had to learn to become a builder as well.

Not that any of those obstacles have slowed him down or changed his thinking all that much. He still wants to get people to think differently about housing. A current concept that excites Burtch involves building 650-square-foot houses, four to a lot. He thinks this approach could answer some of Indy's housing issues.

"There are not enough new affordable homes," Burtch says. "There is a huge demand for young professionals who want to live in the city, but there's no affordable

housing. Too many older homes are for sale, and younger home buyers have too much college debt."

Sure, there are plenty of apartments and condominiums going up in the downtown sector, but Burtch sees those as a short-term solution, at best.

"Inherently, Indy is a single-family-home city," he says.

He is full of ideas on how the city can improve its housing situation. "We have to be more aggressive when we develop. ...Is the city doing enough to encourage different types of [housing] development?" Burtch then puts much of that responsibility on the backs of his fellow architects. "If we don't think about the future of housing, someone else will."

For his part, Burtch's current projects are smaller homes with frost-protected shallow foundations, following the German Passivhaus concept, though not quite as extreme as an authentically certified Passive House. The homes are all-electric and pre-wired for rooftop solar energy panels, which should such become feasible in the future.

"Indiana still isn't that strong a solar market yet," he says. "But we've pre-wired the homes to keep that option open."

His fiance's passion for perennial gardening also has Burtch excited about the inclusion of natural plants as part of the overall design. "It's really amazing to consider all the natural plants that really are indigenous to Indiana," he says. "I'm finding ways to incorporate those into our landscaping, starting with our own house."

Burtch's small houses hold out big promises for the future of Indy's housing market.

JANICE SHIMIZU & JOSHUA COGGESHALL

Janice Shimizu and Joshua Coggeshall moved from Los Angeles to become professors of architecture at Ball State University in 2009. Today they are sitting at their wooden dining room table that has a kind of handmade charm, which is accentuated by the set of eight blue and white Eames Molded Plastic Chairs. Their dining room in Muncie, Indiana, is filled with art and design pieces on the wall and resting in the corner. The inside of their home suggests a rich inner life filled with things that tell meaningful stories from lives well lived.

Shimizu and Coggeshall built the dining table for the simple reason that they needed a table. "We had just moved from Los Angeles, and we had about an afternoon to build it," he says. "I just grabbed a sheet of plywood, and Janice and I worked out the design and made it out in the driveway."

It's this kind of direct approach to solving design challenges that seems to permeate so much of who they are as partners in design and life. They describe their working style as one that has evolved over the years – one of them develops a project conceptually, then brings it to the other person who critiques it, adds to it, and then the other person continues on.

"There's no single author," Shimizu explains.
"Everything we do has both our input in it.
Sometimes, when one of us is working on
a drawing, or an idea, the other person just
picks it up and runs with it for a while."

Their professional lives have been intertwined since graduate school in architecture at SCI-Arc. The personal relationship came later and today includes two young children. "Joshua was one of the people that I always had a lot of respect for," Shimizu says.

After working for a number of large design firms in LA, Coggeshall started his own architectural practice in 2001 and was doing a lot of small additions; 200-, 300-, and 400-square-feet projects. Shimizu joined the practice in 2004, and their firm

Shimizu+Coggeshall Architects (S+CA) was created. Together they grew their firm into a busy practice and completed one of the first certified Platinum projects in the LA LEED for Homes program.

And then they decided to move to Muncie, where Coggeshall took a tenure position in the College of Architecture and Planning at Ball State; Shimizu teaches there, and is the director of the Master of Architecture program.

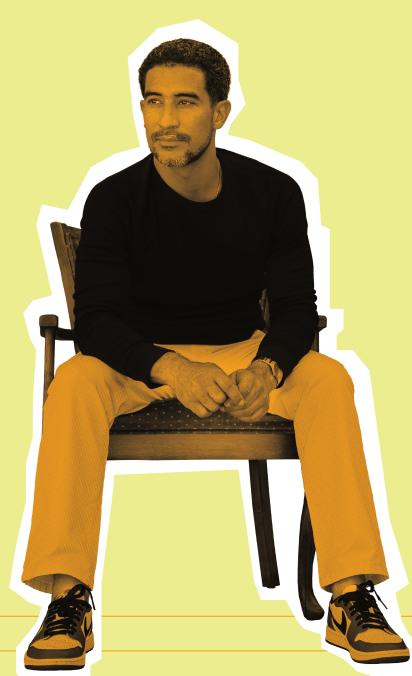
They explain that moving to Indiana allowed them to rethink the way they practice:
"We were intrigued by the opportunity to be a part of the shifting design community in Indiana, and help grow a larger conversation in the Midwest around design," Coggeshall says.

They were willing to take a risk to leave their west coast life and move out here. Shimizu says it was a leap of faith, but when Coggeshall interviewed with the school and met with the students, he was impressed by the facilities and the students' Midwest work ethic—their ability to fabricate and fix things.

If they have any reservations about their decision to move to a small town in northern Indiana, they don't let on about it. "We've been here long enough that we now have a good network at the university, in Indianapolis, Columbus, and also regionally," Shimizu says.

They've worked on a variety of projects around the state, including creating a commissioned installation for The Public Collection with Stuart Hyatt at Horizon House, a day center for the homeless on the near east side of Indy. They are members of the founding curatorial team that created Exhibit Columbus back in 2014. In addition, they are coordinating the University Installations for the 2017 exhibition, where six universities from the heartland have each built site-responsive installations next to Central Middle School.

"I'm a designer, a creator; I'm curious and an agitator."



Talking shop with Wil Marquez is like listening to an energetic Dalai Lama of Design.

The 40-year-old architect speaks with a unique balance of enthusiasm, warmth, and inspiration. He layers his language with careful insight, honed from seventeen years of architectural prowess. And he constructs his narrative with passion, emphasizing more than once the importance of "bringing people together."

"Celebrate a community's arts and cultural assets around a collective space that serves its local needs, and that will reinforce the connectivity among residents," he says.

A specialist in urban design, his portfolio bulges with impressive projects that began when he worked for big firms during his days in Dubai and Morocco. These days Marquez's philosophy on the future of design and placemaking appears in various publications, books, and blogs. And his speaking engagements pack lecture halls at renowned universities (from Tuskegee, Alabama, to Buenos Aires) and at conferences and professional organizations around the globe.

But he gets most excited telling folks about his work with young people and "contributing his skill set to more meaningful and relevant environments" – like the neighborhoods here at home – in Indiana.

"For a long time I thought that changing the world through architecture meant designing buildings, but to just say I'm an architect who sits in a cubicle and draws drawings, that's not what I'm about," he says. "I'm a designer, a creator; I'm curious and an agitator. I'm still loyal to architecture, but I also sort of stand on the outside of that ring and look inward and say, 'What can we do to make this profession more available to the masses?'"

For one thing, he thinks architecture should be more publicly engaging and equitable. In 2009 Marquez founded the consulting company, "w/purpose," which specializes in architecture services for clients who believe that good design can make a difference in both their lives and in the lives of others. His creative studio devises nontraditional solutions for homes, interior designs, public art, streetscapes, retail centers, and learning environments.

His concepts extend beyond sticks and bricks. "It's not just about the buildings, but also the spaces between them," he says. "That's also architectural space."

WIL MARQUEZ

He thinks architects need to talk to people about ways a building can perform for the inhabitants inside, but also for what's going on outside. As for his own designs, some of Marquez's brightest sparks ignite in blighted communities.

Examples include a colorful bus-stop collaboration with Arlington High School students, a pocket park created with public art installations, and a chic apartment building resurrected from an abandoned candy factory.

W/Purpose partnered with Keep Indianapolis Beautiful to construct Purpose Park at Holmes and W. Washington streets. The little greenspace packs an artful punch with its bright-yellow, 1964 Pontiac Bonneville positioned upright on its nose as a centerpiece.

As the lead designers, w/purpose also helped transform the vacant Homer J. Williamson Chocolate Factory into The Overlook at the Fairgrounds – the new \$14 million, 4-story mixed-use building at 38th Street and Fall Creek Parkway.

One of Marquez' ongoing passions includes the Design Bank at E. 38th street, which he and cofounder NaShara Mitchell renovated. It now stands as a twenty-first-century, hands-on learning center, featuring 3-D printers, scanners, and a design curriculum.

"We thrive at educating people in general. I'm committed to these things – to public space and cities that are committed to art and design, and to kids doing their work. They need platforms to do their most creative work. We want to develop those platforms."

Additional projects on the books for Marquez include creating a makerspace for a Boys' and Girls' Club in Rocky Mountain, North Carolina, a 48,000-square-foot concept design for a community center in South Bend, and the master plan development for Evansville's Main Street (1.9-square-mile neighborhood – the North Main corridor). And though his work keeps him crisscrossing the map, Marquez' roots remain in the 317.

"I've been here 20 years, and I've made a commitment to dig my feet in and stay committed to the city," he says.

ARCHITECTS

PLACEMAKER

Words by **RICHARD MCCOY** + Photograph by **CHRISTOPHER WHONSETLER**

TOM GALLAGHER



Everyone is creative. The logically minded among us may rise in protest at this declaration, but all of our brains are wired to think just as creatively as they do analytically. Often, it takes the right teacher to bring that creativity to the surface.

This is what Tom Gallagher aims to do. In his role as Associate Principal of Urban Design at RATIO and as a visiting professor in the College of Architecture and Planning at Ball State University, Gallagher is on a mission to prove that even the most dissenting students are creative; they just need a nudge in the right direction and a willingness to be proven wrong.

Gallagher's specialty is landscape architecture. Often considered an afterthought—a last-minute determination of where walkways should be laid and the azaleas should be planted—the role of landscape architecture is commonly misunderstood. But to hear Gallagher explain it,, an argument can be made for all architecture being considered landscape architecture.

"It is interesting how often landscape architecture is called in at the end," he says. "But every building meets the ground. That should influence how you approach the project as a whole."

It becomes immediately apparent that Gallagher is an ardent defender of his profession, and rightfully so. You'll notice RATIO and Gallagher's mark all around town. Whether you're enjoying the new pavilion at the Indianapolis Zoo, or engaging in festivities on the new and improved Georgia Street, chances are you've benefited from his team's hard work. Gallagher credits every member of the RATIO team as being incredibly talented and fundamental to the company's success.

"At RATIO, one of the things we are trying to do is recognize there is different expertise, but then we try to build a team that is interdisciplinary," he says.

It is an approach that is as applicable in the classroom as it is in the field. As the students in Gallagher's graduate studio course familiarize themselves with the profession, he inspires them to hone each of the disciplines that contributes to becoming a successful architect and a true artist. He does so deliberately, which means, much to the chagrin of some of his students, his classes are tough, some of the toughest in the major. This seems to be a point of pride for Gallagher.

"I'm not an easy professor," he says. "I was teaching graduate students, and that particular group was not used to the rigor I was asking of them. In response to the coursework, they would often tell me 'I have a family and kids.' Me too. I'm coming all the way to Muncie to do this for you. It's worth it, trust me."

Time and again, after surviving the brutality of being pushed to their creative and logical limits, students often express disappointment when their time with Gallagher comes to an end. He demands their dedication but with a greater purpose in mind; not just to design well, but to engender an unshakable belief in themselves.

It would be imprudent to discuss any form of architecture without discussing its roots in artistic expression. Often, we think of buildings functionally; as meeting places where our lives intersect for a multitude of reasons. But how much more fulfilling do those interactions become against mindfully designed backdrops?

"Beauty is important," says Gallagher.
"Ultimately, we sustain the things we love, so we have to love it.

He continues, "What we do needs to be designed for people. What I'm doing is translating someone's values into a built language that someone else can understand. I'm an interpreter as much as I am an artist."

Gallagher teaches us that the benefits of thoughtful landscape architecture are clear. We are our environment. So much of our peace and wellness can be attributed to the spaces we occupy. Hopefully, our homes are welcoming and reflective of our personalities, and if we're lucky, our workspaces have a similar appeal. But, it's important to notice how we feel in the spaces in between. How do we feel when we stand in line at the grocery store? How much of our disdain for going to the post office or bank is an unconscious reaction to the dreariness of those spaces? How are our lives made easier and more fulfilling by thoughtful design? When considering landscape architecture, we learn it would do us well to look past the azaleas.

"Beauty is important ... I'm an interpreter as much as I am an artist."

HOPE PACE



"There are no rules! The key is keeping things cohesive."

Hope Pace might not actually possess a sixth sense, but if she did it would be communicating with houses. "I kind of think of myself as the Home Whisperer," she says.

Owner and Principal Interior Designer of So Chic Home Design & Staging, Pace laughs slightly at her own notion, but admits to having a high degree of intuition when it comes to her clients' decorating needs. (The online assessment of their style, colors, and design preferences they complete prior to her consultation helps too.)

"Often they don't know what their style is, but they know their likes and dislikes. I help them determine where they are and where they eventually want to be with their homes, and then I try to fill in the gaps," she explains.

Pace earned the 2016 Decorators Show House Rookie of the Year distinction. She feels especially honored, considering her skills were judged against that of more than 30 other local interior designers. And though she's had a passion for this profession for decades, Pace just founded So Chic three years ago. Successful left-brained ambitions early on sidetracked her design career.

An undergrad degree in psychology and sociology led to a job as a group home manager for Social Services. Then she shifted to the commercial health insurance field and proceeded to collect her MBA in finance and marketing. From senior business development to director of client services, her executive job titles were heavy on business development, but light on creativity or personal spark.

"I wasn't doing what I was passionate about," she says. "My passion is interior design – decorating. That's the thing I would do literally for free, because I enjoy it so much, and always have."

So Chic's tagline "functionality + personality = sanctuary" succinctly sums up Pace's philosophy. "These are the two fundamental elements necessary for a home to be a peaceful 'sanctuary,'" she says. "The design needs to be practical, day in and day out, and it should authentically match one's personality."

Pace considers her style as transitional eclectic. "I'm always going to pull from several different design aesthetics to make it my own unique style–from neutral and formal to funky and modern patterns," she says. "I love Boho chic, glam chic, and the modern use of gold, bronze, and other different metals in a home."

Whether she's working with residential redesigns or consultations for commercial spaces, Pace says a good rule for interior design is "there are no rules!" She cites decorating dos and don'ts, but says any design rule can be broken, adjusted, or redefined. "The key is keeping things cohesive and using the space to tell your personal story. Design should not be overly complicated."

DESIGNER