



AUGUST:

# SPOT • LIGHT

Jessica Gutierrez

Junior Project Designer | Infrastructure Consulting & Engineering

01

## How did you start your career in the design industry?

My family has always been very artistic, and I believe working with my hands is in my genes. Knowing this, studying architecture was one of my first choices. I studied architecture in Bogotá, Colombia, and it was there that I entered the world of design. I started working and doing my internship in companies based in or connected to the United States. My first job as an architect involved reviewing designs by globally recognized architects and identifying pieces that could be designed or produced by the company where I worked. Every day, I fell more in love with architecture and what you could communicate through it—whether it was something specific related to space or telling a story about historical architecture. It can be as bohemian artistically speaking or as precise as one wants to see it.

02

## Tell us about the accomplishments in your career path and personal life?

I have been on several paths throughout my career, especially in territorial planning. I feel that my greatest achievement has been working with the Colombian government and contributing my knowledge and research to finding the best solutions for various projects of national impact, such as the Naval Base, the Ministry of National Defense, and the prisons in Bogotá, among others. Getting to experience up close how important, necessary, and complex a national project can be is a challenge that I am very glad to have taken on. It is through these opportunities that I have learned a lot about urban regulations in my country and about design based on these established norms.

03

## Which women designers have inspired you?

Deconstructivism has always been something present in my projects, and the biggest influence in this regard has always been Zaha Hadid. It's interesting because throughout my career, I have learned so much from her style of architecture and I have a deep admiration for her work. In my first job as an architect in 2016, I received plans for a building under construction in New York, and we were quoting some pieces for its completion. When I opened the plans, it turned out to be a building by Zaha Hadid! It was one of the most surreal moments I've experienced as an architect and designer. It was amazing to see her plans! I was a newly graduated architect, and I was fascinated by every detail in her drawings. Unfortunately, we didn't get the job, but at least I had the opportunity to see something designed by her. Sadly, shortly after we quoted for the project, she passed away. Another woman I greatly admire, especially in this field, is Jeanne Gang. She has a very distinct design approach and can also lean towards deconstructivism. It's impressive how these two women, through their work, adapt a building to a spatial zone that connects through movement. Architecture is about empathy with the people who will use the space, and I believe women can have a heightened sense of that in design, much like Zaha or Jeanne.

04

## What would be the one advice you'll give to all women in architecture and design out there?

I would encourage them to never give up on their dreams and to find something they are truly passionate about. The journey may seem difficult or attainable at times, but the satisfaction of a job well done and working for humanity is fulfilling. Also, enjoy the process; design and architecture are constant learning experiences.







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05

**What remarkable project you would refer to as a precedent for your students that has positively impacted their learning process?**

Although I haven't had students myself, something a teacher once did in university that was quite pivotal for our project design was akin to Bjarke Ingels' approach. It involved developing a design or idea based on repetition or elements surrounding the space, while also considering the principles of Francis DK Ching regarding form, space, and order. I believe that for architecture with high impact and great design, starting to think about development through forms alongside the architectural program can lead to significant progress.

07

**Podcast you enjoy listening to and/or book you recommend.**

For podcasts, I enjoy listening to Mel Robbins; she's an author, motivational speaker, and life coach who motivates and teaches you to achieve your life goals. As for books, I love romance, and 'Redeeming Love' by Francine Rivers is one of my favorites. It's based on Biblical characters and is truly beautiful.

06

**Pancakes or Waffles? Wine or Beer? Paperclips or staples? Cats or dogs?**

Wine, but if it's very hot, beer.

Paperclips forever.

I prefer cats and have one, but I like both a lot.

This is such a difficult question. Can I have both? Pancakes for breakfast and waffles with fruit for dessert after lunch.