

BEST EMERGING PRACTICE

The OAA has established this new award to recognize the contribution of young firms that have been in practice for five years or less — practices that have a clear vision, goals and proven effective strategies that provide a competitive advantage. A plaque is awarded to one practice per year.

DUBBELDAM DESIGN ARCHITECTS

TORONTO

Established in 2006, this sole proprietor, multi-disciplinary design and architectural practice was born from a young architecture-only practice established just a few years prior. With a focus on clean, classic, modern design, projects include contemporary, residential, corporate and institutional architecture, as well as interiors, garden and landscape design, lighting and furniture design.

With innovation as a core element of practice, the firm engages in experimentation with building materials, building form and spatial qualities, pursuing a rigorous level of detail and craft. The Practice operates in a studio setting using a collaborative approach to projects with other architects as well as designers from other disciplines. Each design entails a high degree of involvement from design through to construction and finishes, with the architectural design team working closely with contractors during the construction process to maintain tight control of project quality and detail for ultimate client satisfaction.

— EXCERPTED FROM THE SUBMISSION BRIEF

Heather Dubbeldam has outlined an ambitious strategy for company growth. Among the Practice Goals described in the brief are: steady and sustainable growth, a discerning project

selection, giving back to the profession and achieving “a healthy work-life balance for both principal and staff.” Under Practice Growth, Heather lists involvement in all aspects of a project, even beyond traditional expectations, including such things as complete project budget projections, furniture and artwork selection and extended contract administration.

The practice has also embraced the principles of sustainability to a high degree:

The firm advocates the use of sustainable building practices as a matter of course, including: renewable or recycled materials; promoting reuse/repurposing of building elements, as well as facilities within; utilizing efficient and sustainable energy systems; and incorporating green roof installations wherever possible. Conservation of existing building fabric and envelope is considered carefully in the design process of every project with a dual objective of preservation and cost reduction.

Further goals and practices for the firm include skills development teaching and mentoring.

The jury was impressed by the firm's success after only 5 years in practice. Through the use of “innovative resources, savvy use of media and marketing and creative approaches to skills and professional development” as well as unique client services, the firm has been able to maintain a clear vision and a competitive advantage. The submission clearly addressed the criteria requested in the submission requirements, making Dubbeldam Design Architects the jury's clear choice for Best Emerging Practice. ■