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Zoë Ryan



Photo by Lisa Predko

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Zoë Ryan, Curator | Inspiration = Curiosity

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MONDAY, OCTOBER 15TH, 2012

For Design Bureau's second anniversary issue, we asked eight guest editors a question: What inspires you? In September and October, we're posting the words and images that demonstrate each of these guest ed's creative passions. Today, we're featuring curator Zoë Ryan.

Interview by Lesley Stanley

Portrait by Lisa Predko

Zoë Ryan is the John H. Bryan Chair and Curator of Architecture and Design at [the Art Institute of Chicago](#).

I'm very curious about people, especially those that are creative and have the capacity to produce inventive work.

Design today is less about function. It's very much about our emotional well being, concepts and ideas, and narratives.

Architects and designers help us overcome challenges and allow us to accept things in everyday life. I made that connection early on, that the spaces we live in tell us who we are and influence us.

I'm attracted to the generosity of one's spirit in others. I work with some of the most interesting designers and architects who are very generous in their work, as well as to younger talents in the field.

Growing up, I was surrounded by creative people who were always making things and explaining the importance of art as a form of personal expression, and how those ideas related to daily life.

One of the things I love about being a curator is being able to go behind the scenes, poke around designers' studios, and have access to their thinking and approach.

If i wasn't a curator, I'd work in period films. I love imagining places, spaces, and how society influences architecture and design.

It's important when you do a challenging project that you love the material, and that you are convinced that the materials are rich and rewarding—that's what keeps you going.

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