

TOGETHER BY DESIGN

By Michael Schiavetta (M.A. '07)

At the offices of di Domenico + Partners LLP, every day is an alumni reunion.

Andrew Berger (B.Arch. '86), a partner who joined the firm in 1984 as an intern, is now an award-winning designer of transportation, historic, and educational facilities. Paul Alber (B.Arch. '90),

Since 1981, di Domenico + Partners has hired nearly 40 NYIT graduates—an impressive feat but not all that surprising given that its principal partner and founder, John di Domenico, is also a professor who has taught at the School of Architecture and Design for nearly 30 years. During that time, he has collaborated

“I’ve been hiring NYIT grads since day one,” says di Domenico. “They have a passion that is evident in the quality of work and the focus on what they’re doing.”

One of the crucial lessons he imparts as a teacher—and one of the key skills he looks for as an employer—is the ability to understand the balance among architectural design, theory, and practice. “It’s one thing to have a strong theoretical perspective, but you also need a real enthusiasm for making things,” says di Domenico.

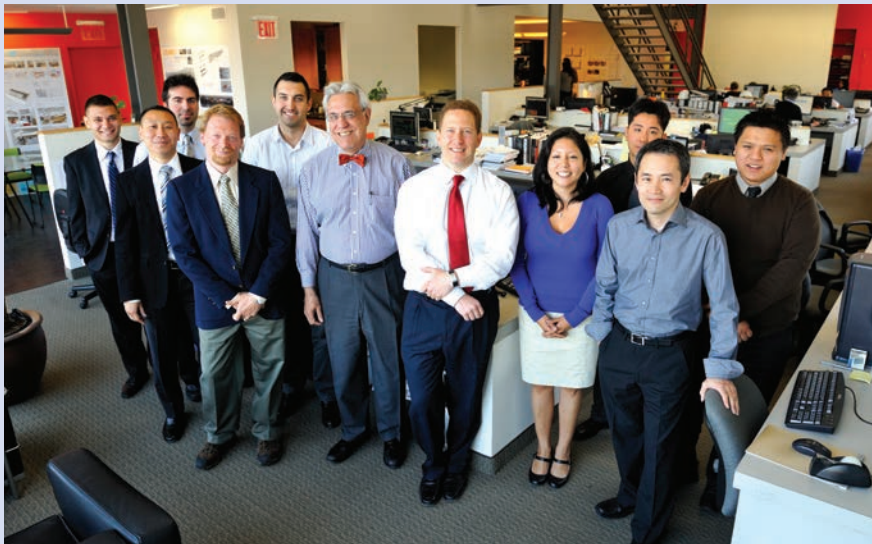
One graduate who brings passion to his projects is Berger, who welcomes the opportunity to work with other NYIT students and graduates, share his experiences, and give them the opportunity to grow within the studio.

“There’s a combination of things that makes up an NYIT grad, such as thinking globally but acting locally,” says Berger. “We also express an interest in making memorable architecture.”

It’s an arrangement that has worked well at the firm’s design studio in Long Island City, N.Y. (earlier locations included SoHo, Chelsea, and Tribeca in Manhattan). Walking into the light-filled, double-height studios of di Domenico + Partners, one is immediately taken aback by the lack of individual office rooms and walls. During the design of the studio, it was their intention to have a space that fosters collaboration, communication, and teaching by example.

“We are in the trenches working with staff, sometimes leading, sometimes shoulder to shoulder,” says Berger, whose wife, Denise (B.Arch. '86), serves as a deputy director at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. By having no cubicles or walls, young architects can see senior architects and designers in action. “It becomes an educational process as they learn what it means to become a senior designer.”

The company’s location in New York City, home to one of the world’s greatest skylines, is also a huge draw for young graduates, not unlike the way that NYIT



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NYIT alumni at di Domenico + Partners (from left): Leslie Jager (B.Arch. '08), Ricky Liu (B.Arch. '00), Efstratios Kouvaros (B.Arch. '09), Paul Alber (B.Arch. '90), Aleksander Kuna (B.Arch. '07), John di Domenico, Andrew Berger (B.Arch. '86), Aileen Munoz (B.S. '07), Sung Kim (B.Arch. '09), Kenji Suzuki (B.Arch. '96), and Kevin Ho (B.Arch. '09). Not pictured is Diana Rodriguez (B.Arch. '07).

a 21-year veteran, is a senior associate who oversees the design and construction of public sector projects. Kenji Suzuki (B.Arch. '96) is a senior associate and a key designer for many of the studio’s projects. Ricky Liu (B.Arch. '00) is a senior associate who specializes in the studio’s civic, transportation, and academic projects. And then there’s Diana Rodriguez (B.Arch. '07), Aleksander Kuna (B.Arch. '07), Aileen Munoz (B.S.A.T. '07), Leslie Jager (B.Arch. '08), Kevin Ho (B.Arch. '09), Sung Kim (B.Arch. '09), and Efstratios Kouvaros (B.Arch. '09).

And the list goes on.

with NYIT alumni to work on the design studio’s diverse projects that include the Stillwell Avenue Portal Building at Coney Island in Brooklyn, N.Y., campus and masterplan improvements at the United Nations in New York City, academic buildings at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., the renovation of Columbia University’s historic Butler Library in New York City, design and construction of K-12 public schools in New York City, the Long Island Rail Road’s Atlantic Terminal Entry Pavilion in Brooklyn, N.Y., concept design for the Dulles Corridor Metrorail in Fairfax County, Va., and concept design for Washington D.C.’s public schools.

Designed by di Domenico + Partners, the new Atlantic Avenue Terminal Complex in downtown Brooklyn, N.Y., connects nine subway lines, three bus lines, and the Long Island Rail Road.

campuses draw budding architects from around the world to its Columbus Circle and Old Westbury locations.

"With so many opportunities to develop relationships with New York City architecture offices, NYIT was very attractive to me," says Liu, a senior associate and adjunct professor/second-year coordinator at NYIT's School of Architecture and Design. "There is also much cultural diversity as students bring their different attitudes and design senses to the school."

Liu served as a project manager for the recently completed Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) Atlantic Terminal Complex Entry Pavilion at the intersection of Flatbush and Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn, N.Y. Completed in January 2010, the project was indicative of the collaboration di Domenico encourages among the studio staff. In addition to Liu's contributions, Berger worked as the technical advisor, Alber served as project manager for earlier phases, and Suzuki was a lead project designer who created 3-D architectural renderings of the finished design.

The project, which di Domenico + Partners undertook in 1997, encompasses a one-million-square-foot terminal space that allows natural light entering from above to serve as a timepiece as shadows are cast on limestone walls. Sustainable design elements include shading "fins" that prevent excess heat gain during the summer and natural ventilation that utilizes the train piston effect



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to help circulate air throughout the terminal structure. Pedestrians, upon entering Atlantic Terminal, experience a vast daylight atrium space before making their way to the grand stairs that wrap the perimeter of the Pavilion toward their destination.

Meeting the needs of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, New York City Transit, and the LIRR also meant accommodating nine subways line, six LIRR tracks, and five bus lines for 57,000 daily commuters. For Liu, one challenge was working with the contractor to maintain passenger safety at the work site in the 24-hour facility while assuring the project remained consistent to the design intent.

The finished design, with a construction cost of \$169 million, has won the Building Brooklyn Award from the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, *New York Construction Magazine's* Best of 2010 Award of Merit for Transportation, and awards from the New York Landmarks Conservancy and the American Council of Engineering Companies.

For some, seeing the 13-year project realized was its own reward. "It was in my mind as a virtual 3-D model for so long," says Suzuki. "To actually walk through it was quite amazing." ■

►► **Shane Bouslough (B.S. '91)** is vice president for information systems at Glowpoint in Hillside, N.J. He has more than 20 years of experience building and managing technology and has held senior engineering and management positions at Periphonics Corp. and InfoHighway Communications.

Author **Michael L. Faulkner (M.B.A. '91)** has released *Coming Face to Face with the Neo-Warmer's Agenda*, which discusses the impact of radical environmental ideas. Michael is an associate professor at DeVry University and the Keller Graduate School of Management as well as a former U.S. Marine. He has 30 years of leadership experience at Fortune 500 firms and major nonprofit trade associations. Michael is also a member of MENSAs and a Rotary International Fellow.

Bradley Flansbaum (D.O. '91) has been selected to serve as the Society of Hospital Medicine's representative in the American Medical Association's House of Delegates. He serves as chief of hospitalist services at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City.

Publisher Castle Connolly Medical Ltd. has named **James Reilly (D.O. '91)** one of the top doctors for women's health in the New York metro area. He specializes in colposcopy, laparoscopy, hysteroscopy, and obstetrics and teaches at Richmond University in Staten Island, N.Y.

Sometimes it takes a woman to run a team of Wise Men. **Juuhi Ahuja (M.B.A. '92)**, president and CEO, created the Houston-based company in 1997 as an executive search firm and since then has expanded its services to include consulting, supply chain solutions, IT training, and project management. By focusing on what she calls the "two-Q" mantra—quick and quality—Juuhi says she is able to address many of her clients' needs. Shortly after the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in spring 2010, the British petroleum giant contacted Wise Men ►►

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