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## 2026 AIA Fellowship

Candidate Meryati Blackwell  
Organization Marlon Blackwell Architects  
Location Fayetteville, Arkansas  
Chapter AIA Arkansas;

### Category of Nomination

Object 1 (Design, Urban Design, Preservation) > Design

### Summary Statement

Ati Blackwell leverages architecture to elevate experiences and workspace performance, ennobling the overlooked through immersive, dignified spaces shaped from the inside out, where material richness and sensory experience become acts of cultural and civic transformation.

### Education

University of Miami, Miami, Florida, 1984-1988, Bachelor Architect & Planning, Minor Fine Arts  
Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia, Venice, Italy, 1987, Study Exchange  
Architectural Association School of Architecture, London, England, 1986, Study Exchange

### Licensed in:

Arkansas, Michigan

### Employment

Marlon Blackwell Architects, 2001-Present  
Polk Stanley and Associates Architects, 1998-2000  
Whitsell Evans and Rasco Architects, 1997-1998  
Hight-Jackson Associates Architects and Engineers, 1995-1997  
Veritas Design Group, 1993-1995  
Spillis Candella and Partners (currently AECOM), 1991-1993

Sanford E. Garner, FAIA, NOMAC, LEED AP ND,  
Chair, 2026 Jury of Fellows  
American Institute of Architects  
1735 New York Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20006

2026 Fellowship Candidate – Meryati Blackwell, AIA, Objective 1: Design

Dear Chair Garner and members of the Jury,

**Meryati Blackwell, AIA** (“Ati”) is a rare candidate who is, in one individual, an exceptional architect, interior designer, leader, and mentor who can be largely credited for transforming the firm Marlon Blackwell Architects from a sole proprietorship into the thriving international practice it is today. I am honored to sponsor Ati for elevation to Fellowship in the AIA and delighted to introduce you to my extraordinary colleague and dear friend.

I first met Ati in 2016 when I was invited to the University of Arkansas to host a seminar. Prior to the event, I spent the day with Ati touring the works of MBA from Fayetteville to Bentonville in Northwest Arkansas – from their earliest project gems to their most recent, immense successes. Since that first encounter, we seek out one another and support each other’s efforts, most recently with her impressive design of the U.S. Pavilion at this year’s Venice Architecture Biennale. Ati has co-led, co-managed, and co-designed everything at MBA from the days of designing carpools and honey houses to winning embassy commissions and being named an AIA Gold Medal winning atelier. This office of 30 has amassed over 220 design awards and honors- from the AIA and other entities globally, nationally, and regionally - a true testament to Ati’s dedication to creating a local powerhouse of design with an global influence.

Ati brings over twenty-five years of experience to her role as Principal at Marlon Blackwell Architects, where she also serves as Director of Interiors. Her sensitivity as a designer coupled with her knowledge of materials and passion for details enriches every project and touches each user of her special structures. She works alongside Co-Principal Marlon Blackwell, FAIA to thoughtfully ground and carefully guide the design ethos as the firm has grown, always supporting the creation of award-winning

architecture for any place, any scale, any price, and most importantly, anyone. In her mentoring roles, Ati emphasizes the importance of disciplined imagination and building strong teams, such as in her own example of courageously (and successfully) pursuing Alice Walton’s Whole Health Institute in Northwest Arkansas, which required the firm to double down, expand operations, and bet on themselves yet again.

Ati and I continue to walk a similar path: immigrants to this incredible country who came to learn from its illustrious universities and stayed to spend our professional lives to found design-forward offices in America. Although these practices are named for a single creative, the firms require a multitude of skill sets and abilities to design with excellence and operate with success. I have collaborated with Bjarke Ingels since 2006, surprisingly over twenty years fewer than how long Ati and Marlon have been working together. Perhaps what I admire most about Ati is that with her credentials (dual degrees in architecture and planning, licensure as both an architect and interior designer) and the exceptional work produced by the firm, Ati has stayed rooted in her values and refused to chase trends. Ati and Marlon grew the firm intentionally from doing two projects a year to leading major institutional and cultural commissions, putting principle before profit.

Ati is one of the most accomplished design architects in the state of Arkansas, in the South, and across the country - truly a top designer of our time - and one who is fearless in accepting every design challenge no matter the complexity or scale. With great enthusiasm and pure conviction, I respectfully urge you to honor this exceptionally talented designer by elevating **Meryati Blackwell, AIA** to the AIA College of Fellows.

Sincerely,



Kai-Uwe Bergmann, FAIA, RIBA  
Partner BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group

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# ACHIEVEMENTS



**Ati Blackwell leverages architecture to elevate experiences and workspace performance, ennobling the overlooked through immersive, dignified spaces shaped from the inside out, where material richness and sensory experience become acts of cultural and civic transformation.**



### **Elevating Performance Through Healthful Education + Workplace Spaces**

Ati's contributions to school design are both conceptually rigorous and empirically grounded. In every project, she aligns spatial design with educational mission, using daylight, material tactility, and spatial variety to support the physical, emotional, and cognitive needs of students.

At Marygrove Early Education Center in Detroit, her interior strategies: color-coded corridors, courtyard classrooms, and warm wood finishes, create a nurturing, inclusive atmosphere for young learners and have been recognized by both national AIA and international design juries. Her leadership at the Lamplighter School Innovation Lab produced a dynamic environment for hands-on learning, balancing technical performance with child-scaled intimacy.

At Thaden School, Ati coordinated envelope design, lighting strategies, and interior planning across multiple buildings to enhance environmental performance and create a coherent campus identity. These projects are consistently honored for design excellence and performance, but more importantly, they function as community assets that reinforce equity, wellness, and public good through design.

### **Ennobling Overlooked Programs, Underserved Places + Unheard Voices**

Ati leverages architecture to affirm the dignity of places and people often excluded from the design spotlight. Her leadership is evidenced by over two decades of work in under-resourced and rural communities, where she has delivered public architecture that serves both symbolic and practical needs.

At the Gentry Public Library, Ati transformed a neglected building into a civic anchor that helped revitalize Main Street. At the Northwest Arkansas Free Health Center, she created a light-filled, welcoming space for a vital clinic previously housed in a mold-ridden facility. As Co-design Principal for the Durban Consulate, Ati guided the use of local materials and regional motifs to craft a diplomatic facility rooted in place.

Her role in enabling nonprofits to build, often through pro bono design and capital campaign support, demonstrates a commitment that goes beyond design. Through the MBA/NOMAS internship program and the Advance Arkansas Scholarship, Ati has further extended her influence by establishing replicable pathways for students from underrepresented backgrounds to enter the architectural profession.

### **Enriching Environments for a Holistic Sensory Experience**

Ati's authorship is rooted in a repeatable, experience-first methodology; she begins each project from the inside out, ensuring that the emotional and physical experiences of occupants shape form, flow, and material articulation.

This approach is especially evident in her leadership of the Heartland Whole Health Institute, where Ati guided the use of native stone, soft daylight, and curved circulation to create an immersive atmosphere of calm and clarity. The building's spatial sequence, anchored by warm materials and layered transitions, offers users a sense of safety, reflection, and orientation. Her sensibility also threads throughout the Shaw Residence and Tanglewood Cabin, in the vibrant detailing of CO-OP Ramen, and in the choreographed transitions of Vol Walker Hall.

Ati's focus on light, texture, and movement results in spaces that are physically grounding and emotionally resonant. This sensory clarity, especially in liminal and human-scaled thresholds, defines her authorship across typologies. Ati's architecture is measured not only by function or form, but by its ability to support healing, memory, and connection.

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# ACCOMPLISHMENTS



## 2.0 Curriculum Vitae



Born and raised in Perlis, Malaysia, and educated in Malaysia, Italy, England, and the United States, Ati Blackwell draws on a life shaped by movement across cultures and geographies. Early exposure to diverse spatial traditions instilled in her a lasting appreciation for how architecture reflects values, and how even modest interventions can carry profound meaning. She embraces the tension of being slightly out of place, cultivating a heightened awareness of context, nuance, and care.

This sensitivity forms the core of her practice. Ati designs from the inside out, beginning with lived experience, how light enters a room, how thresholds are felt, how materials shape memory. Her work favors specificity over spectacle, translating humble means into immersive, dignified environments that serve both individual and collective needs.

**“What we do best is to instill qualities in places that were not present before or, equally, intensifying those qualities already present and bringing them to light.”**  
*Ati Blackwell, AIA*

### PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

#### Principal and Co Founder

**Marlon Blackwell Architects**  
Fayetteville, AR  
2001-Present

#### Architectural Designer

**Polk Stanley and Associates Architects**  
Fayetteville, AR  
1998-2000

**Whitsell Evans and Rasco Architects**  
Fayetteville, AR  
1997-1998

**High-Jackson Associates Architects and Engineers**  
Rogers, AR  
1995-1997

**Veritas Design Group**  
Kuala Lumpur Malaysia  
1993-1995

**Spillis Candella and Partners** (currently AECOM)  
Coral Gables, FL  
1991-1993

#### Architectural Intern

**Glottmann Architecture and Development Co.**  
Miami, FL  
1989-1991

### EDUCATION

1988  
**University of Miami**, Miami, FL  
B. Architecture & Planning, Minor Fine Arts

1987  
**Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia**  
Venice, Italy - Study Abroad

1986  
**Architectural Association School of Architecture**  
London, England - Study Exchange

### REGISTRATIONS

Licensed architect in AR and MI  
Certified interior designer in AR  
LEED AP since 2009

National Council of Architectural Registration Boards  
National Council for Interior Design Qualifications

### AFFILIATIONS

American Institute of Architects (AIA)  
American Society of Interior Designers (ASID)  
U.S. Green Building Council (USGBG)  
Urban Land Institute (ULI)

## 2.1 Significant Work

**“For 30 years, Ati has worked quietly alongside Marlon, her discerning eye and remarkable sensitivity bringing softness, livability, and joy to every project. Layered over the hard silhouettes of the work, her touch has been essential, making her the unsung hero of a truly remarkable partnership.”**

*Andrew Freear, Director Auburn University Rural Studio*



**NORTHWEST ARKANSAS FREE HEALTH CENTER**  
FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS - 2013

The Free Health Center transformed a mold-ridden office into a clinic where patients feel seen and supported. Ati crafted the forms and interior organization to achieve efficiency and dignity. Her orchestration of warm woods and open sightlines produced a calming environment that countered clinical anxiety. Every element of coordinated design reinforces respect for underserved patients, making architecture an active part of care. Through collaboration, the center became a precedent for community health facilities that balance pragmatism with humanity.

- 2014 + Gulf States Regional AIA Honor Citation Award
- 2013 + AIA Arkansas Merit Award



**GENTRY PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
GENTRY, ARKANSAS - 2007

The Gentry Public Library reimagined a dilapidated hardware store into a civic anchor for a rural town. Marlon and Ati partnered closely, balancing the building's gritty structure with new civic presence. Ati led interior space development including custom casework and crafted vitrined interventions, pressing back on layout to maximize daylight and flexibility. In addition to prioritizing materials reuse, blending the old and new with harmony. Her orchestration of steel, glass, and wood balanced modest means with dignity, transforming the project into a source of civic pride. The result shows how collaboration can ennoble overlooked communities with architecture that is both practical and symbolic.

- 2009 + National AIA/ALA Library Design Award
- + AIA Arkansas Honor Award
- + Remodeling Magazine Grand Design Award
- + Metropolitan Home 100 Best Designs



**SHELBY FARMS PARK**  
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE - 2016

The reimagining of Shelby Farms Park was shaped through collaboration, balancing large-scale civic planning with the intimacy of public buildings. Transforming a former prison farm into a vast park and multicultural collector, Marlon set the forms and exterior material palette, while Ati led the interiors of the Visitor and Events Centers. Her orchestration of porches, courtyards, and tactile finishes pressed back on massing and circulation, ensuring comfort matched the park's scale. Through their collaboration, humble structures became civic icons, an accessible public landscape enriched by design at every level.

- 2019 + AIA National Honor Award for Regional and Urban Design
- 2018 + Chicago Athenaeum American Architecture Award
- + Finalist (Civic and Community) World Architectural Festival

## 2.1 Significant Work

**“Ati’s design brilliance, talent, and agility are essential and critical to the success of the collaboration. She excels at creating spaces of wellbeing that are key in achieving an architecture of resoluteness and dignity.”**

*Rod Bigelow, Director, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art*



**HERMANN PARK FAMILY COMMONS PAVILIONS**  
HOUSTON, TEXAS - 2024

The Family Commons at Hermann Park in Houston was forged through collaboration. Marlon developed exterior gestures framing pavilions and gathering spaces, while Ati resolved interiors to enhance that vision. Programs include two restrooms, a carousel pavilion, and a snack shack, humble services elevated through design. Ati emphasized materiality, safety, and well-being, shaping details into tactile, durable surfaces. Airflow, shade, finishes, and acoustic strategies were integrated as architecture, ensuring inclusive use across ages. The result is a public environment where everyday amenities become places of belonging and delight through dialogue between authors.



**ART PARK | CBMAA CAMPUS PARKING**  
BENTONVILLE, ARKANSAS - 2024

Art Park, the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art (CBMAA) Campus Parking project reimagined an overlooked typology as an architectural threshold. Marlon set the garage structure and site strategy, while Ati led the design and architectural material selection for public areas including the cafe and welcome center; two glass volumes inserted at ground level to activate the plaza and welcome visitors into the museum campus. She developed both the architecture and interiors of these pavilions, ensuring transparency, comfort, and material richness connected parking with cultural life. Through their collaboration, the project reframed infrastructure as cultural hospitality, transforming a mundane type into an asset for civic experience.

2025 + World Architecture Festival Awards Finalist (Transport, Best Use of Colour, and American Beauty)

+ AIA Arkansas Design Award



**COLUMBUS AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER**  
COLUMBUS, INDIANA - ANTICIPATED 2027

The Columbus Air Traffic Control Tower was designed through continual exchange, balancing technical rigor with human experience. Marlon and Ati worked together on the tower's architectural gesture, uniting form and performance. Ati led the design and detailing of all interiors, refining layouts to ensure clarity, light, and refinement supported critical work. Her orchestration of enclosure, color, and tactile finishes worked from the inside out, bringing interiors to the same level of refinement as the exterior. The result shows how collaborative authorship can elevate even specialized facilities into civic symbols of care and performance.

2025 + World Architecture Festival Future Projects Award Finalist (Infrastructure)

## 2.1 Significant Work

**“Over 25 years, Ati Blackwell has composed the interiors and exteriors of our school into a complex song of movement and light, making it a delight for students and staff to spend their days. With warmth and pleasure, she has helped elevate perceptions of the school, speaking beautifully through subtle and clear architecture.”**

*Victoria Butler, Founder, Fayetteville Montessori*



**COLLEGE + CENTER**

FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS - 2016

The transformation of a long-vacant mercantile into MBA's studio emerged through continual dialogue. Ati led the project, developing shaping the architectural and interior transformations with a new layout, circulation, and daylighting strategy. Her orchestration of birch plywood, raw steel, and sealed concrete elevated modest means into luminous workspaces. Built-in elements and glazed partitions balanced privacy with collaboration, reinforcing clarity throughout. Marlon contributed to the west façade composition, while Ati carried the vision through every detail and construction. The result is a studio of clarity and generosity, an everyday workplace where material and spatial decisions demonstrate design excellence at every scale.



**FAYETTEVILLE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY**

FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS - 2012

The Montessori Elementary School required a design of independence, clarity, and connection to nature. Ati and Marlon together generated the mass, shaped by streamside regulations. Ati led plan development and program distribution, resolving the site's irregular geometry to support individual and collective learning. Her orchestration of muted palettes, soft surfaces, and filtered light linked classrooms to gardens and rainwater landscapes. Interiors were tuned for focus and autonomy, yet opened to views and play. The result is both teaching tool and nurturing environment, an architecture of performance and well-being.

- 2016 + American Architecture Prize (Educational Buildings, Gold)
- 2014 + Chicago Athenaeum American Architecture Award
- 2013 + AIA Arkansas Honor Award



**FAYETTEVILLE MONTESSORI PRIMARY**

FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS - 2015

The Montessori Primary School emerged through rapid exchange, moving from engagement to opening in just six months. An addition transformed the L-shaped plan into a Y, a compact solution on a constrained site. Ati resolved this geometry, refining classrooms and common areas into tactile, light-filled spaces that balanced intimacy with performance. Her detailing of surfaces and thresholds shaped the envelope, ensuring children experienced clarity and security. Wood, soft colors, and daylight framed calm independence. The result translated Montessori pedagogy into architecture, where the environment itself became a teacher.

- 2016 + American Architecture Prize (Educational Buildings, Gold)
- + AIA Arkansas Honor Award
- + Metal Architecture Design Award (Ribbed Metal Wall Panel Category)

## 2.1 Significant Work

**“Ati brought a keen understanding of teaching and learning to our project. She positions herself as both student and teacher. This allows her to lead and be led by the project with the students at the center. Her design was sophisticated, yet simple. Her vision brought a calmness that resonates with our community. We’ve found that students use the spaces more expansively than we had envisioned. The results are incredible.”**

*Dr. Joan Hill, Head of School, Lamplighter School*



**BELLA VISTA PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
BELLA VISTA, ARKANSAS - 2020

The Bella Vista Public Library expansion was shaped through collaborative exchange, balancing civic function with atmosphere. Marlon set the building’s massing, while Ati extended the design inward, refining sequences of light, material, and scale. Her orchestration of reading rooms and gathering areas required adjustments to circulation and openings, aligning space with community use. Wood, stone, and soft finishes foster intimacy, while glazed thresholds connect interior life to the surrounding landscape. Together, these moves transformed the project from a simple addition into a civic living room, rooted in material richness and dedicated to everyday ritual.



**HARVEY PEDIATRIC CLINIC**  
ROGERS, ARKANSAS - 2016

Situated in a fast-growing medical corridor, the Harvey Pediatric Clinic distinguishes itself as a humane, healing environment for children, families, and staff. Ati emphasized light, color, and spatial clarity to transform routine care into an uplifting experience. A bold cayenne façade establishes identity, while skylit exam rooms bring daylight deep inside. Glass-lined tenant spaces and waiting areas connect patients to landscape, offering calm and orientation. Thoughtful details, from shaded east-facing lounges to the mezzanine retreat for staff, balance efficiency with care, ensuring the clinic fosters wellness, comfort, and dignity.

- 2018 + Mies Crown Hall Americas Prize Nomination
- 2017 + AIA Healthcare Design Award
- + American Architecture Award
- + Gulf States AIA Design Merit Award



**SRYGLEY OFFICE BUILDING**  
JOHNSON, ARKANSAS - 2004

Ati guided the Srygley Office Building’s transformation from a conventional suburban office brief into a humane, place-specific workplace. Building on the structural diagram, she shaped the spaces to prioritize light and elevated modest materials resulting in rich interior environments. Her leadership brought clarity to circulation, layering burnished masonry with warm walnut and shaded decks that extend workspaces into the landscape. Ati framed views with native plantings, giving each office individuality and calm. Through her focus on atmosphere and wellbeing, the project resists standardization, offering staff and clients a refined, restorative environment rooted in dignity and care.

- 2006 + Gulf States AIA Design Award - Citation
- 2005 + AIA Arkansas Design Honor Award

## 2.1 Significant Work

**“Ati’s work ensures every surface is tactile, every transition generous. She demonstrates that even overlooked typologies can be reframed as civic experiences, proving that dignity and engagement belong in every corner of the built environment.”**

*Anne Fougeron, FAIA*



### **ONYX AT BUD'S PRESERVE**

BENTONVILLE, ARKANSAS - ANTICIPATED 2026

Onyx at Bud's Preserve was designed as a community restaurant within a preserved natural area on the Walmart Home Office Campus. Marlon and Ati worked in deep collaboration combining earthwork and infrastructure into spaces that merge seamlessly into the landscape, its carved cave-like form anchoring the building to its site. Ati led the development of the interior experiences, shaping a fully continuous surface of ceiling, seating, and lighting that unified the dining experience with the overall architectural expression. Her orchestration of plaster, concrete, and figurally veined stone created contrast and tactility. The result is an immersive dining environment where landscape and architecture converge, and hospitality is experienced as atmosphere, material, and light.



### **DURBAN US CONSULATE LEASE FIT OUT**

DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA - DESIGN 2021

The Durban Consulate was designed through an iterative dialogue balancing institutional dignity with cultural resonance. Marlon and Ati developed new façade materials and concepts together, while Ati shaped interior sequences so light, material, and proportion enrich daily use. Her orchestration of wood ceilings, figural stone, and brass screening formed a layered, tactile environment aligning circulation, furnishings, and openings. Spaces feel warm and open to work rhythms yet maintain required security. Through this reciprocal process, the consulate shows how regulated facilities can embody hospitality and cultural respect to honor our diplomatic missions abroad.

Durban Consulate Lease Fit Out has completed bridging design and has been awarded for design build construction.



### **CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM STORE**

BENTONVILLE, ARKANSAS - 2011

The Crystal Bridges Museum Store was forged through seamless collaboration, extending the museum's architecture into a crafted retail interior. Through their design collaboration, Marlon and Ati integrated detailing at every level, translating the lamella structure into a ceiling of ribbed cherry plywood that evokes local forest canopy. Their orchestration of materials balanced layout, lighting, and acoustics, producing warmth, rhythm, and clarity. Fabric-covered display walls and wood flooring carried tactile richness across the room, creating continuity with the museum while establishing its own identity.

- 2015 + National AIA Honor Award for Interior Architecture
- 2013 + Contract Magazine Interior Design Award - Retail Category
- 2012 + Gulf States AIA Honor Award [Interior]
- + AIA Arkansas Honor Award

## 2.1 Significant Work

**“I had the extraordinary good fortune and privilege of being a client of Blackwell, proving true their mantra that good architecture should be available to any client, at any scale, for any budget. In designing an extraordinary living space for my family, Ati embodied that commitment, enlarging our lives and expanding my understanding of what architecture can truly mean to all of us.”**

*Tim Walker, Client, Graphic House*



**L-STACK HOUSE**

FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS - 2006

For their own home, Ati both self-contracted and served as architect and designer on this deeply collaborative project with Marlon, leading design coordination across a highly constrained site bisected by a seasonal creek. The house was conceived as a bridge, its stacked “L” configuration resolving program and circulation while minimizing street presence and honoring neighborhood scale. Ati guided the development of the architectural and interior detailing, ensuring material strategies, wood rain screen, glazed stair hinge, and light-filtering facade, balanced modest means with contextual richness. The result is a contemporary home that feels both grounded in place and quietly transformative.

- 2010 + Residential Architect Magazine Grand Award
- 2008 + AIA National Housing Award
- + Gulf States AIA Honor Award
- 2007 + AIA Arkansas Honor Award



**GRAPHIC HOUSE**

FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS - 2019

The Graphic House was conceived through merging ideas into a unified vision, balancing suburban context with bold architectural presence. While Marlon focused on massing, Ati led the project—shaping design strategies that unified parti, form, and interior experience into a single, continuous concept. Her orchestration of wood, steel, and concrete produced a seamless relationship between exterior figure and interior life, where spaces flow from intimate alcoves to expansive living areas, each tuned through light and proportion. The result is both a neighborhood home and a graphic architectural statement, its clarity born of collaboration and Ati’s leadership.

- 2017 + AIA National Housing Award
- + Gulf States AIA Merit Award
- + AIA Arkansas Honor Award



**A STREET HOUSE**

BENTONVILLE, ARKANSAS - 2024

The A Street House emerged through sustained collaboration between Marlon and Ati, its design carefully tuned to the homeowners’ lifestyle and daily rhythms. Working in concert, Marlon focused on the massing, establishing the home’s strong formal presence and relationship to site, while Ati led the planing and material logic. A broad, welcoming front porch opens the house to the neighborhood, while an intimate courtyard at the rear offers privacy and connection to the cycling trail beyond. Form, site presence, and interiors were developed in dialogue, balancing contemporary living with material tactility. Wood, stone, and concrete extend across gathering spaces and retreats, their textures animated by shifting daylight. Transitions, kitchen to courtyard, stair to landing, terrace to room, were choreographed as daily rituals, linking architecture to lived experience. The result is a residence both grounded and luminous, where shared authorship unites formal clarity with sensory richness.

## 2.1 Significant Work

### Selected Mentorship + Academic Activities

#### MENTORSHIP + VOLUNTEERING

##### Urban Land Institute Northwest Arkansas

- 2025** **Faithful Foundations:** Ati volunteers as a pro-bono architect with ULI's Faithful Foundations, assisting faith communities in reimagining underused land for affordable housing.
- 2025** **Emerging New Urbanists:** Ati serves as a mentor for Emerging New Urbanists for hosting events and showcasing work for local chapter members.
- 2023-24** **Women's Leadership Initiative (WLI):** WLI is committed to increasing the number and visibility of women leaders in ULI through education, and mentorship.

##### AIA Arkansas Emerging Professional + Young Architect Outstanding Friendly Firm Award

- 2023** As Principal in Charge, Ati allocated resources, drove efforts, and encouraged an ecosystem where Young Architects feel empowered and educated.

##### Texas Cultural Trust / Texas Women for the Arts

- 2023** Ati presented and led a tour the Ledger Bentonville to Texas Women for the Arts, a program of the Texas Cultural Trust/

#### ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

##### Fay Jones School of Architecture + Design, University of Arkansas - Figures and Logics, Studio Co-instructor

- Fall 2024** The project for this course was the Marfa Cultural Residency, a place for reflection, interaction, work, and fellowship.

##### Honors College, University of Arkansas - Leadership Seminar, Guest Lecturer

- 2025** Designing for Health Panel Discussion and Project Tour of Heartland Whole Health Institute
- 2020-23** Inspired Class on Creativity Course by Marlon Blackwell and Meryati Blackwell: Together in the Cause of Architecture

##### University of Auckland, New Zealand, School of Architecture and Planning, Guest Critic

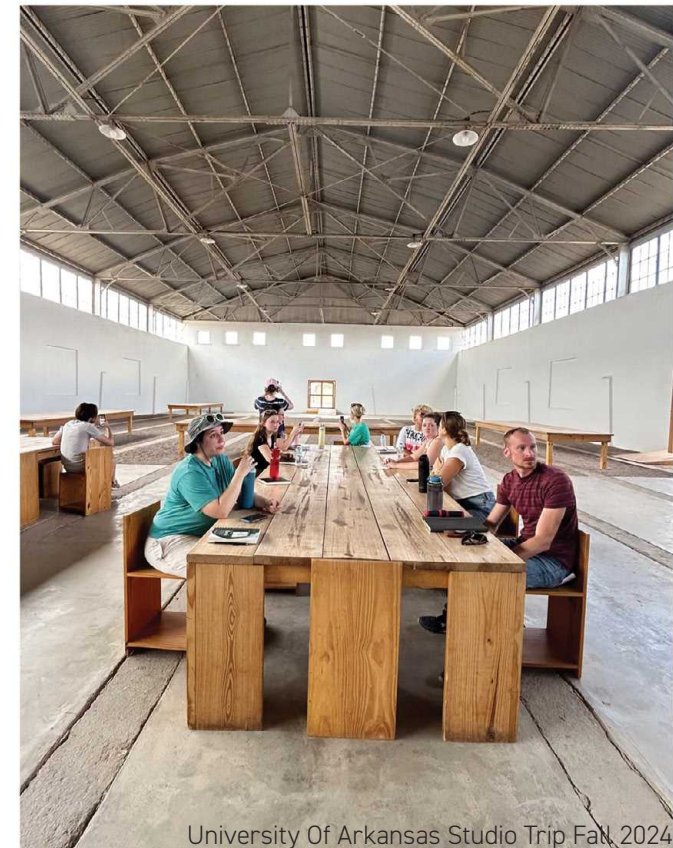
- July 2024** This studio examined community resilience and tectonic responses to climate change in New Zealand's South Pacific.

##### Rural Studio, Auburn University, Guest Critic

- 2020-23** Ati has collaborated with Auburn University's Rural Studio, sharing her expertise on integrated design as a regular guest critic.



University of Auckland Review July 2024



University Of Arkansas Studio Trip Fall, 2024

## 2.1 Significant Work

### Selected Community Involvement + Exhibitions

#### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

##### ULI Real Estate Diversity Initiative [REDI] Program 2025

Participant in ULI NWA's Real Estate Diversity Initiative: completed a 14-week mentorship & development program covering all stages of real estate development, produced a full development pitch, and expanded networks and industry confidence.

##### 30x 30k, 30th Anniversary Campaign, Rural Studio, Auburn University 2024

Marlon Blackwell Architects pledged towards the creation of a permanent trust to support student work to design and construct housing and civic facilities for under resourced rural communities in west Alabama.

##### National Organization of Minority Architecture Students (NOMAS) Summer Internship Program at Marlon Blackwell Architects, Established in 2021

The annual MBA NOMAS Summer Internship gives minority students real design experience and mentorship. Ati leads outreach, interviews, and mentoring, ensuring participants gain skills, exposure, and pathways to growth within the profession over the course of a 10 week internships at MBA.

##### Meryati and Marlon Blackwell Advance Arkansas Endowed Scholarship, Established in 2020

The Advance Arkansas Scholarship supports Fay Jones School students from the Delta, fostering diversity in architecture and design. It assists new, returning, and transfer students committed to completing their degree at the University of Arkansas.

##### Ernie Jacks Lecture Endowment, Established in 2009

The Annual Ernie Jacks' Lecture in honor of a Professor Ernie Jacks, graduate of the inaugural class of University of Arkansas School of Architecture, and longtime professor and dean of the college. The series has hosted acclaimed architects including Tehrani, Berke, Mayne, Tabassum, Snow, Maltzan, Phifer, Scarpa, and Kéré.

#### FUNDRAISING AND PRO BONO SERVICES

Ati has been the driving force behind fundraising efforts that make impossible projects possible. Seeking out material donations, working with industry partners to get in-kind and at-cost services as well as offering discounted or pro-bono design fees are what enabled such projects as Gentry Public Library (2003-07), The Free Health Center(2011-13), Bella Vista Public Library (2011-2020), Bella Vista Animal Shelter(2015), and Bismark Public Library (ongoing).

#### EXHIBITIONS

##### Selected as Architectural Designer for United States Pavilion, Venice Architecture Biennale, Venice, Italy | 2025

Architecture Material Technology Commons at Columbus, Indiana  
Visitors Center, Columbus, Indiana | 2025

National Academy of Design | 2024

Rome Architecture Festival, Rome, Italy | 2022

American Academy of Arts and Letters | 2022

A South Forty, Venice Architecture Biennale, Venice, Italy | 2021

Detroit Design: 139, Detroit, Michigan | 2019

Design for Good at Museums of Design Arts, Atlanta, Georgia | 2018

Building Community, Venice Architecture Biennale, Venice, Italy | 2016



## 2.2 Awards, Honors and Recognition

### Selected Awards + Honors

**“I think architecture is a way to live life – to frame beauty in a way that helps people see the world differently, with more clarity, humility, and care.”**  
*Ati Blackwell, AIA in Madame Architect*



#### INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

- 2025** + Dedalo Minosse International Primio Andrea Palladio Prize - Thaden School
- + Mies Crown Hall Americas Prize - Cycle 5 Winner - Thaden School
- + World Architecture Festival [WAF] Awards Finalist (Office and Best Use of Stone) - Heartland Whole Health Institute
- + WAF Awards Finalist (Transport, Best Use of Colour, and American Beauty) - Art Park | CBMAA Campus Parking
- + WAF Awards Future Projects Finalist (Infrastructure) - Columbus Air Traffic Control Tower
- + AZ Awards of Merit: Architecture - PS1200
- + AZ Awards of Merit: Multi Unit - PS1200
- 2024** + The Plan Award Finalist (Education) - Marygrove Early Education Center (EEC)
- + The Plan Award (Mixed Use) - PS1200
- 2022** + Dedalo Minosse International Prize Regione del Veneto Special Prize- Marygrove EEC
- + The Plan Award Finalist (Education) - Marygrove EEC
- 2021** + The Plan Award (Education) - Thaden School
- 2020** + The Plan Award (Education) - Lamplighter School Innovation Lab
- 2018** + The Plan Award (Landscape) - Shelby Farms Park

- 2017** + WAF Awards Finalist (Healthcare) - Harvey Pediatric Clinic
- + The Plan Award (Health) - Harvey Pediatric Clinic
- 2014** + AZ Award (Best Commercial/Institutional Architecture, 1,000+sqm)- Steven L. Anderson Design Center and Vol Walker Hall
- + Mies Crown Hall Americas Prize Nomination - St Nicholas Eastern Orthodox Church
- + The American MasterPrize American Architecture Prize (Educational Buildings, Platinum) - Steven L. Anderson Design Center and Vol Walker Hall
- 2013** + WAF Awards Finalist - Little Rock Creative Corridor
- 2012** + WAF Awards Finalist (Shopping) - Crystal Bridges Museum Store
- + WAF Awards Finalist (Urban Planning) - Little Rock Creative Corridor
- 2011** + WAF Award Winner (Civic & Community) - St. Nicholas Eastern Orthodox Church
- + WAF Awards Finalist - Indianapolis Museum Of Art Ruth Lilly Visitors Pavilion
- 2010** + The Architectural Review Housing Award (Commendation) - Porchdog Residence
- + The Design Museum Brit Insurance Design Award Finalist - Porchdog Residence
- 2008** + Phaidon Atlas of 21st Century World Architecture Top 100 Buildings - Blessings Golf Clubhouse

#### NATIONAL AIA AWARDS

- 2024**  AIA Honor Award for Architecture - Thaden School Performance Building
- 2023**  AIA Honor Award in Regional and Urban Design - Thaden School
-  AIA/CAE Educational Facility Design Award - Thaden School Bike Barn
-  AIA Design Honor Award - Marygrove EEC
- 2022**  AIA/CAE Educational Facility Design Award - Thaden School Reels Building
- 2021**  AIA Architecture Award - Lamplighter School Innovation Lab
-  AIA Interior Architecture Award - CO-OP Ramen
- 2020**  AIA/CAE Education Facility Design Award - Lamplighter School
- 2019**  AIA Honor Award for Regional and Urban Design - Shelby Farms Park
- 2018**  AIA Honor Award - Steven L. Anderson Design Center and Vol Walker Hall
- 2017**  AIA Housing Award - Graphic House
-  AIA Healthcare Design Award - Harvey Pediatric Clinic
- 2016**  AIA/CAE Educational Facility Design Award - Steven L. Anderson Design Center and Vol Walker Hall











## 2.2 Awards, Honors and Recognition

### Selected Awards + Honors

**“This collection of work conveys the most succinct, clear, and rigorous design ethos. This is design with conviction.”**  
*Jury Comment, #1 in Design, 2016 Architect 50*



#### NATIONAL AIA AWARDS (cont.)

- 2016**  AIA/CAE Educational Facility Design Award – Fayetteville High School
- 2015**  AIA Honor Award for Interior Architecture – Crystal Bridges Museum Store
- 2014**  AIA Honor Award for Analysis and Planning - Little Rock Creative Corridor
- 2013**  AIA Design Honor Award – St Nicholas Eastern Orthodox Church
-  AIA / Faith+Form Honor Award – St Nicholas Eastern Orthodox Church
- 2012**  AIA Honor Award – Indianapolis Museum of Art Ruth Lilly Visitor's Pavilion
-  AIA Small Project Award - St Nicholas Church
-  AIA Exemplary Use of BIM in a Small Firm
- 2009**  AIA/ALA Design Award – Gentry Public Library
- 2008**  AIA Housing Award – L-Stack House

#### NATIONAL AWARDS

- 2025** + Architecture Record Awards - Heartland Whole Health Institute
- 2024** + A4LE Project Award - Marygrove EEC
- + Architect's Newspaper Best of Design Residential Mixed-Use - PS1200
- + Architect's Newspaper Best of Design Award in Education - Thaden School Performance Building
- + USITT Architecture Award for Merit - Thaden School Performance Building
- 2022** + A4LE James D MacConnell Award - Thaden School

- 2021** + Wood Design and Building Awards Honor Award - Thaden School Bike Barn
- + Wood Design and Building Awards Merit Award - CO-OP Ramen
- 2020** + Architectural Record Interior Design Award - CO-OP Ramen
- + Architects Newspaper Best of Design Award - Thaden School Bike Barn
- 2019** + North American Copper in Architecture Award - Lamplighter School Innovation Lab
- 2018** + Chicago Athenaeum American Architecture Award - Shelby Farms Park Visitors Center
- 2017** + Chicago Athenaeum American Architecture Award - Harvey Pediatric Clinic
- + Metal Architecture Grand Award - Shelby Farms Park Visitors Center
- + Metal Architecture Category Award - Harvey Pediatric Clinic
- 2016** + American Architecture Educational Buildings Platinum – Steven L. Anderson Design Center and Vol Walker Hall
- + American Architecture Educational Buildings Gold – Fayetteville Montessori Elementary + Fayetteville Montessori Primary
- 2014** + Architect's Newspaper Building of the Year - Steven L. Anderson Design Center
- + Chicago Athenaeum American Architecture Award Fayetteville Montessori Elementary
- + Chicago Athenaeum American Architecture Award

- Steven L. Anderson Design Center and Vol Walker Hall
- + Lumen Award for Excellence - Steven L. Anderson Design Center and Vol Walker Hall
- 2012** + Chicago Athenaeum American Architecture Award Indianapolis Museum of Art Ruth Lilly Visitor's Pavilion
- 2011** + Chicago Athenaeum American Architecture Award St Nicholas Eastern Orthodox Church
- 2010** + Residential Architect Magazine Grand Award - L-Stack House
- 2009** + 100 best designs (#27) Metropolitan Home - Gentry Public Library
- 2008** + Custom Home Magazine Merit Award - L-Stack House

#### SIGNIFICANT HONORS

- 2025** + Centennial Alumni Medal, University of Miami School of Architecture
- + Forbes Top 200 Residential Architects
- + AN Interiors Top 50 Architects and Designers, Six Consecutive Years (2020-2025)
- 2024** + Forbes Top 200 Residential Architects
- 2022** + Architect's Newspaper Best of Practice Award
- 2016** + National Design Award in Architecture, Cooper Hewitt
- + #1 Design Firm Ranking Architects 50, Architect Magazine
- 2011** + Residential Architect Firm of the Year

## 2.3 Significant Publications

### Selected Profiles

**“Ati Blackwell fuse[s] influences - geological forms, vernacular building traditions, automotive paint - into buildings that are rooted in the Ozarks but resonate far beyond their place.”**

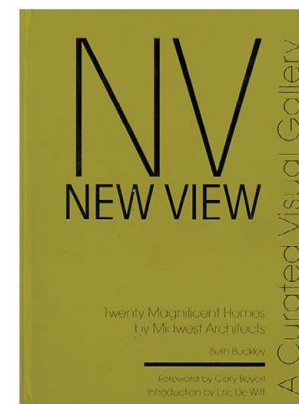
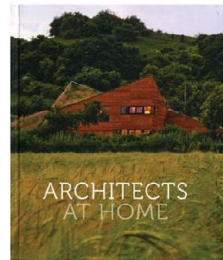
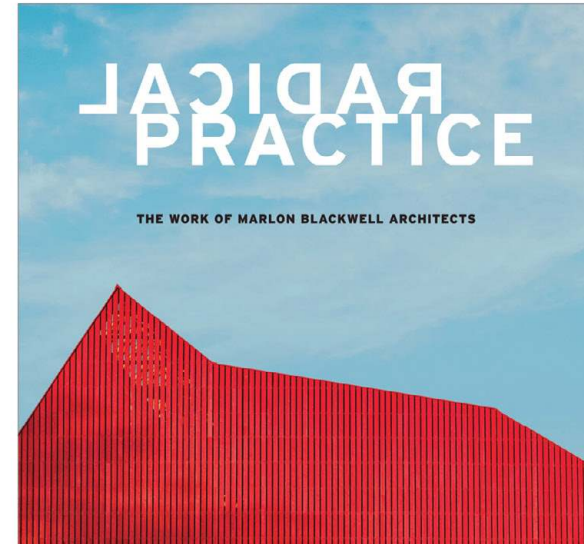
*Avinash Rajagopal, Metropolis*

### MONOGRAPH

MackKeith, Peter, et al. Radical Practice. Princeton Architectural Press, 2022.  
Radical Practice: The Work of Marlon Blackwell Architects

### SELECTED PERSONAL + FIRM PROFILES

- Rajagopal, Avinash. “The Blackwell Philosophy Turns Sites into Statement”. *Metropolis*, 2025.
- Buckley, Beth. New View: A Curated Visual Gallery: Twenty Magnificent Homes by Midwest Architects. Foreword by Gary Beyerl, introduction by Eric De Witt, Benton Buckley Books, 2025.  
- Featuring Shaw Residence
- Pittman, John David. “A Home to Grow Older In.” *Wall Street Journal*, 24 Feb. 2021.  
- Featuring Shaw Residence
- Dimond, Patrick. “Places to Dwell: Marlon Blackwell Architects' Meryati Blackwell on Her Foundation in Malaysia, the Natural Environment, and Beauty.” *Madame Architect*, Madame Architect, 8 June 2022
- Cramer, James P., and Scott Simpson. Small Firm Success: How Small Firms Can Thrive in an Age of Acceleration. Wren Editions, 2022  
- Firm Profiles: Marlon Blackwell Architects
- Mutlow, John V. Architects at Home. Images Publishing, 2019.  
- The Best of New Urbanism in Arkansas  
- Perfect Balance : L-Stack House
- Adams, Carolyn. Small Gesture Big Impact. Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017.  
- Small Gestures Big Impact Tactical Urbanism Personal Essay
- Cary, John. Design for Good. Island Press, 2017.  
- Design for All  
- WelcomeHealth: Northwest Arkansas' Free Health Center
- Keates, Nancy. “Top Architects Go Local.” *Wall Street Journal*, 30 Dec. 2011.  
- Featuring Marlon Blackwell Architects



## 2.3 Significant Publications

### Selected Print + Online

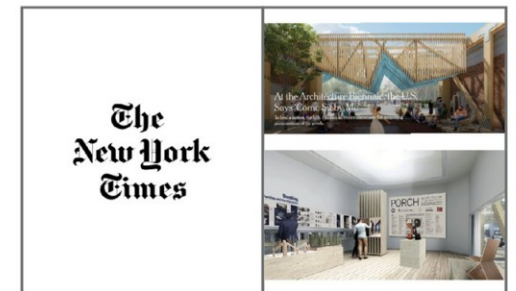
#### ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

- 2025** Thaden School in Bentonville, Arkansas Wins 2025 Mies Crown Hall Americas Prize (with EDR, Andropogon)  
Meet the 2025 Mies Crown Hall Americas Prize Finalists  
Alice Walton Expands Her Vision of Integrating Art and Wellness with Two New Major Buildings at Crystal Bridges  
In Venice, an Architecture Biennale with a Dystopian Flair
- 2024** Development Ramps Up in Downtown Bentonville, Arkansas With 'Bikeable' Mixed-Use Building: Ledger  
Marlon Blackwell Architects Reveals Design for Air Traffic Control Tower in Columbus, Indiana
- 2023** Marlon Blackwell's Bold Residence in Fayetteville Provides a Study in Contract within its Traditional Context: Shaw Residence
- 2022** Marygrove Early Education Center by Marlon Blackwell Architects  
Thaden School by EskewDumezRipple, Marlon Blackwell Architects, and Andropogon
- 2020** Knock Wood: CO-OP Ramen House by Marlon Blackwell Architects
- 2019** Lamplighter School Innovation Lab and Barn by Marlon Blackwell Architects
- 2018** Shelby Farms Park by James Corner Field Operations and Marlon Blackwell Architects
- 2016** Marlon Blackwell and Meryati Johari Blackwell
- 2014** Everything in its Place: Fayetteville Montessori Elementary School
- 2013** Object Lesson: Fay Jones School of Architecture by Marlon Blackwell Architects
- 2008** Civic Buildings, People First: Gentry Public Library



#### THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER

- 2025** Marlon Blackwell Architects adds the Heartland Whole Health Institute to Crystal Bridges campus.  
The Commons at Hermann Park by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates and Marlon Blackwell Architects opens in Houston
- 2024** In Fort Worth, Texas, Marlon Blackwell Architects delivers a distinctive live-work complex - PS1200
- 2022** Best of 2022: Best of Design & Project of the Year Finalist - Marygrove Early Education Center



## 2.3 Significant Publications

Selected Print + Online, cont.

### ARCHITECT MAGAZINE

- 2021 Co-Op Ramen
- 2019 An Urban Park for All: Shelby Farms Park
- 2018 Learning Light: The Steven L. Anderson Design Center
- 2017 The Graphic House
- 2016 Top Design: Marlon Blackwell Architects
- 2011 Top Firm: Marlon Blackwell Architects  
Ruth Lily Visitors Pavilion

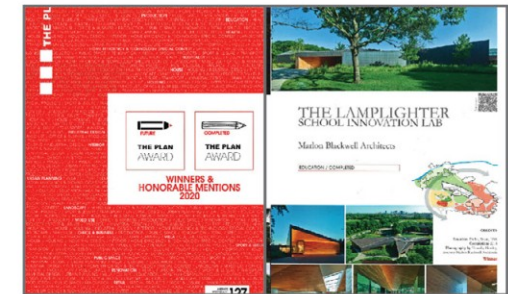


### THE NEW YORK TIMES

- 2025 At the Architecture Biennale, the U.S. Says 'Come Sit by Me'

### THE PLAN

- 2024 Letter from America, PS1200 Mixed-Use Complex
- 2021 Accompanying the Development of an Education Model: The Innovation Lab Of the Lamplighter School
- 2020 The Lamplighter School of Innovation Lab - Winner
- 2018 Shelby Farms Park - Winner

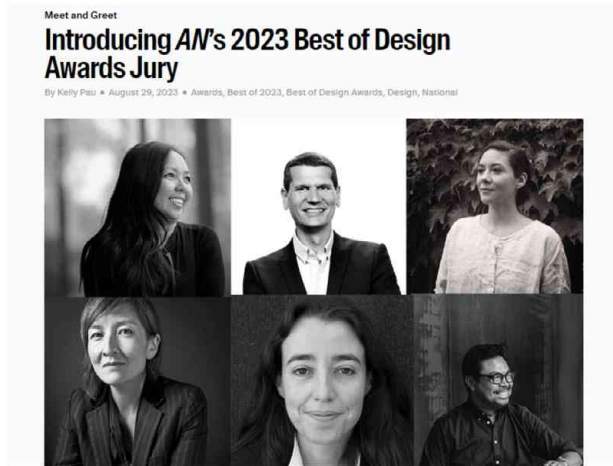


### OTHERS

- 2025 **Wall Street Journal** The Heartland While Health Institute: A Building for Well-Being
- Financial Times** Venice Architecture Biennale 2025: welcome to the age of adaptation
- Wallpaper\*** The 2025 U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale asks visitors to gather round
- Dezeen** Giraffe stone wraps nonprofit building in Arkansas by Marlon Blackwell [Architects].
- METROPOLIS** This Arkansas Institute Brings a Holistic Vision to Health-Care Design.
- 2023 **Domus** Bike Barn, Bentonville, Arkansas, USA
- 2020 **dwell** The Dwell 24: Mountain Majesty - Tanglewood Cabin
- 2016 **DETAIL** Thaden School in Arkansas
- 2011 **RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECT** Firm of the Year: Marlon Blackwell Architects
- 2008 **METROPOLITAN HOME** A Creek Runs Through It: L-Stack



## 2.4 Presentations + Speaking Engagements



### DESIGN AWARDS JURIES

- 2025** + World Architecture Festival Judge
  - + AIA Iowa Central States Excellence in Design Awards
- 2024** + AIA Utah Design Awards
- 2023** + **Architects Newspaper Best of Design**
  - + AIA Kansas Design Excellence Awards
  - + AIA San Francisco Design Awards
  - + AIA Utah Design Awards
- 2022** + AIA Tennessee Design Awards
- 2021** + AIA Columbus Architecture Awards
- 2020** + AIA National Small Project Awards
- 2019** + AIA/CAE Educational Facility Design Awards

### SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- 2025** + Labor Day Porch Dialogue / US Pavilion, Venice Biennale
  - + AIA Kansas Keynote Speaker
  - + Indiana University Lecture
  - + Detailed: An original podcast by ARCAT 133 Vertical Fins
  - + NWA Founders #12
  - + Architect-ING #82
  - + Designing for Art & Wellness Conversation at Heartland Whole Health Institute, w Moshe Safdie, Marlon and Ati Blackwell, and Wesley Walls of Polk Stanley Wilcox
- 2024** + AIA Colorado Keynote Speaker
  - + University of California Berkeley College of Environmental Design Q&A
  - + AIA Committee on Design, Connecting Cultures: Catalyzing Change, Arkansas

- + Texas Society of Architects Design Conference, Northwest Arkansas Tour
- + Talk Design Podcast
- + aecKnowledge Insights Interview
- 2023** + **University of Miami School of Architecture Tecnoglass Lecture**
  - + Business of Architecture Podcast #453
- 2022** + Princeton University School of Architecture Q&A
  - + Indiana University Eskenazi School, Miller M.Arch Lecture and Exhibition Series
  - + Kansas State University AIA Gold Medal Symposium Q&A
  - + Monograph Webinar: How to Craft a Culture of Quality and Purpose
- 2015** + **Datum KL - headline event for Kuala Lumpur Architecture Festival (KLAF), with 3,000+ attendees**
- 2014** + Louisiana Tech University, Insite: Lecture LATech School of Design



**"I had an opportunity to visit the Center just last week and it reinforced my admiration for how the design consistently inspires and sparks the creativity and imagination of young children."**

**Wendy L. Jackson**  
*Detroit Program Managing Director  
The Kresge Foundation*

# EXHIBITS LIST



**“Heartland Whole Health Institute is a special building. You feel the calm the moment you walk in. Ati wove art, nature, and light into every part of it in a way that feels true to this land and our corner of the world. It shows the power of what I’ve long believed that art and architecture can be healing.”**  
*Alice Walton, Philanthropist,  
Founder Heartland Whole Health Institute*

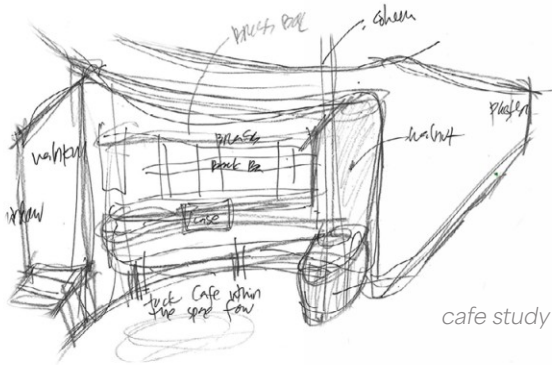
- 1 Heartland Whole Health Institute
- 2 Steven L. Anderson Design Center and Vol Walker Hall
- 3 CO-OP Ramen
- 4 Lamplighter School of Innovation
- 5 Marygrove Early Education Center
- 6 Thaden School
- 7 Tanglewood Cabin
- 8 Shaw Residence

## 3.1 Exhibits

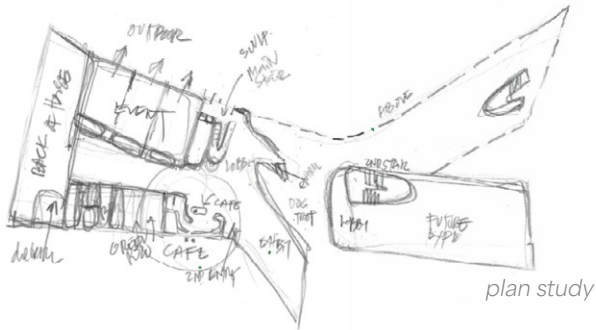
### Heartland Whole Health Institute

BENTONVILLE, ARKANSAS | 2025

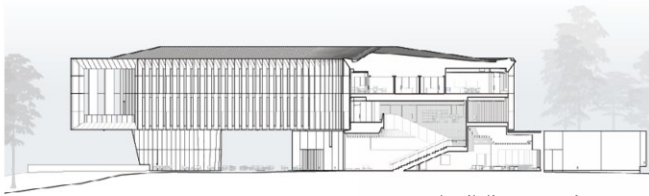
*Elevating Performance Through Healthful Education + Workplace Spaces*



cafe study



plan study



building section

**CHALLENGE:** Set within the Ozark landscape, the Heartland Whole Health Institute integrates health, wellness, art, and nature into a cohesive environment. Built on a former parking lot, the project reclaims a civic threshold for research, education, community outreach, and healing.

**ROLE:** The design was conceptualized together through continual dialogue. Working with Marlon Blackwell shaping the formal presence and site organization, Ati Blackwell led the interior planning and detailing in a resonant architectural language. Their exchanges, working back and forth on fins, stone walls, and sectional cuts, produced an architecture of caves and clefts, where light, shadow, and passage define the experience. The result is a holistic design in which visitors are enveloped by an uplifting and peaceful atmosphere, flowing gently through the site and into the museum grounds.

Ati's authorship is clearest in the interior spaces, conceived as an extension of the larger concept. Thresholds and circulation were choreographed as moments of orientation and calm, transforming movement into healing. Classrooms, workspaces, and gathering areas were unified through proportion, sequencing, and the spatial clarity of light-filled clefts.

Sustainability and wellness strategies are embedded at every level. Daylighting, acoustic balance, and flexible work environments reduce stress, improve focus, and support collaboration.

**RESULTS:** The result is an institution both civic and intimate, demonstrating how collaborative authorship can catalyze holistic well-being.

#### SCOPE

Cost withheld, 85,000 gross sf building including event spaces, exhibition areas, classrooms, art exhibition areas, offices, kitchen, and roof terraces.

#### AIA FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGN EXCELLENCE

- + Integration: Native stone and curving forms unite building, landscape, and wellness mission.
- + Equity: Public galleries and learning spaces expand access to whole health.
- + Well-being: Daylight, materials, and sequencing create restorative, calming and healing environments.
- + Resources: Regional and renewable materials reduce embodied carbon and reinforce regional identity.
- + Legacy: A new model for holistic health architecture, shaping future wellness institutions.

#### AWARDS + RECOGNITION

- + World Architectural Prize, Finalist (Office), 2025
- + World Architectural Prize, Use of Stone Finalist, 2025
- + AIA Arkansas Design Honor Award, 2025

#### ROLE OF CANDIDATE

- + Collaborative Design Partner; Principal in Charge of Planning + Interiors

#### ARCHITECTURE FIRM OF RECORD

- + Marlon Blackwell Architects

#### DECLARATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

I have personal knowledge of the candidate's responsibility for the exhibit listed above. That responsibility included: the candidate is one of the principals largely responsible for design.

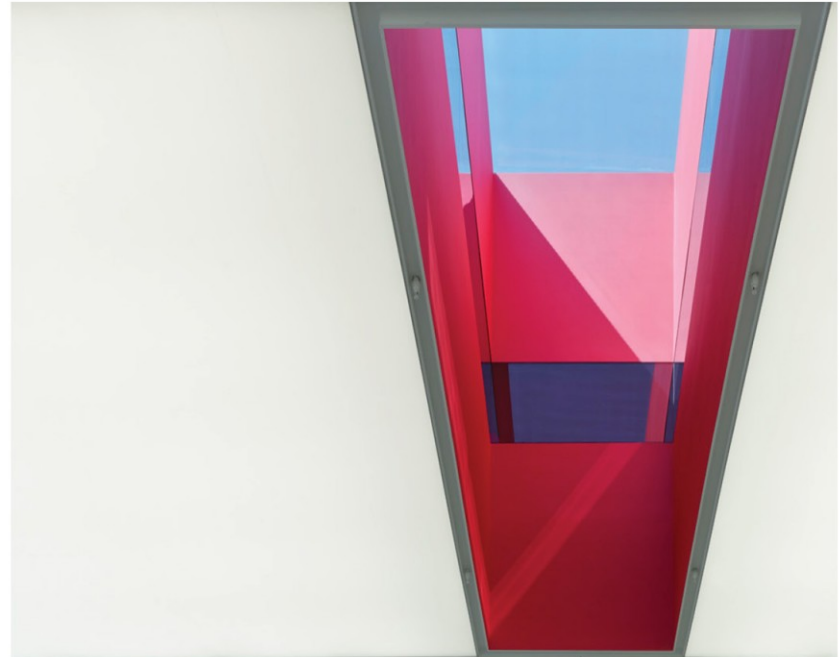
- Scott Eccleston, Director of Operations, Art and Wellness Enterprise, Walton Family Foundation









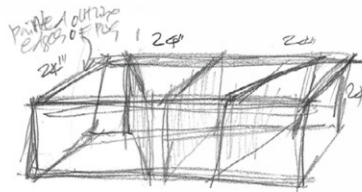


## 3.3 Exhibits

### CO-OP Ramen

BENTONVILLE, ARKANSAS | 2017

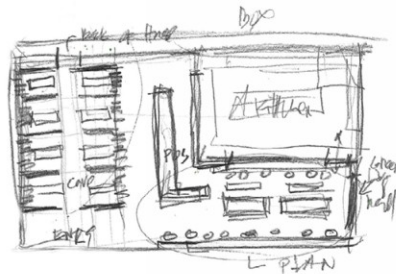
*Enriching Environments for a Holistic Sensory Experience*



ceiling unit study



banquette lamination study



plan study



building section

**CHALLENGE:** Set within a raw industrial shell in Bentonville, CO-OP Ramen challenged the team to create a design forward, yet casual restaurant that could elevate humble materials into a crafted, immersive dining experience. The goal was to transform a compact footprint into a place of beauty and utility, where the act of sharing good food and good conversation connects guest, chef, and community.

**ROLE:** The design unfolded as a dialogue of proposals and counter-proposals. Within the constraints of the industrial shell, Ati Blackwell advanced the idea of a continuous plywood ceiling as the project's primary organizing figure. This move was tested, refined, and extended through collaboration with Marlon, until it became both the spatial anchor and the atmospheric driver of the design. The ceiling thickens into booths, counters, and lighting elements, unifying the room into a single experiential field.

Ati's authorship is clearest in this orchestration of material and light. She elevated construction-grade plywood into a crafted, luminous surface that modulates acoustics and creates intimacy. Warm lighting emphasizes the layers of the material, while the serrated concrete block walls and a living green wall provide tactile counterpoints. Together these elements establish a cadence of hard and soft, raw and refined.

**RESULTS:** Her detailing made every surface a point of encounter, from varied seating arrangements to the open kitchen staged as a theater of making. The result is a restaurant of crafted intimacy, proof that through careful dialogue and design, even the most ordinary materials can become an immersive sensory experience rooted in place, atmosphere, and community.

#### SCOPE

2,000 SF restaurant fit-out within an existing raw space in a renovated former industrial building at cost of \$550,000 (kitchen equipment cost by Owner).

#### AIA FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGN EXCELLENCE

- + Integration: Interiors and furniture as one.
- + Wellness: Light and acoustics create comfort.
- + Resources: Modest Materials + innovative assembly
- + Community: Kitchen and craft connect.
- + Discovery: Compact plan offers exploration.

#### AWARDS + RECOGNITION

- + AIA Arkansas Honor Award, 2022
- + National AIA Interior Architecture Award, 2021
- + Wood Design and Building Merit Award, 2021
- + Architectural Record Interiors Design Award, 2020

#### ROLE OF CANDIDATE

- + Principal in Charge

#### ARCHITECTURE FIRM OF RECORD

- + Marlon Blackwell Architects

#### DECLARATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

I have personal knowledge of the candidate's responsibility for the exhibit listed above. That responsibility included: candidate largely responsible for design.

- Yume Rudzinski, AIA,  
Former Director of Projects at BlueCrane LLC (Owner)

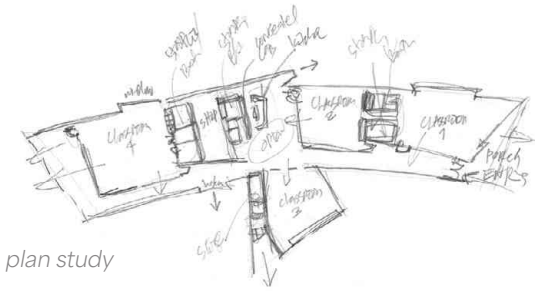


## 3.4 Exhibits

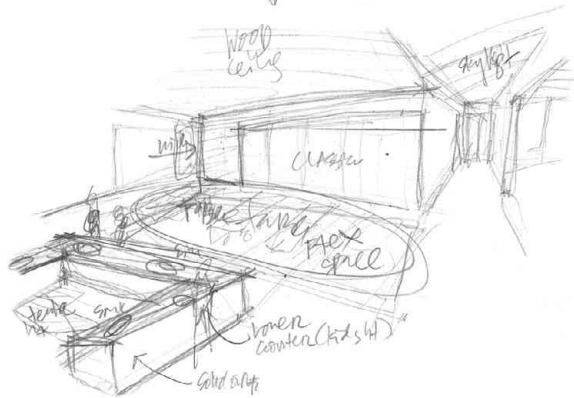
### Lamplighter School: Innovation Lab, Student Services, and Renovation

DALLAS, TEXAS | 2017

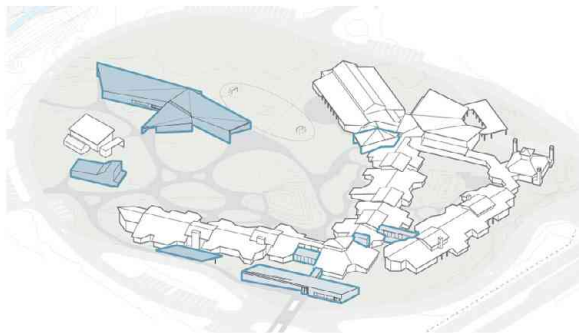
*Elevating Performance Through Healthful Education + Workplace Spaces*



plan study



central hub study



campus axon highlighting interventions

**CHALLENGE:** Expanding the historic O'Neil Ford + Frank Welch campus of the Lamplighter School posed the challenge of creating new spaces for hands-on learning while preserving the setting's character. The goal was to design environments that were adaptable, student-centered, and forward-looking, and still rooted in traditions of discovery and care.

**ROLE:** The design advanced through continual exchange. Marlon Blackwell initiated the parti, tying the Innovation Lab and Student Services building into the village-like campus, while Ati Blackwell reframed the design through sequences of light, scale, and material details that made classrooms adaptable and engaging. Iterations required adjustments, roofs lifted to admit daylight, circulation extended learning outdoors, plans reconfigured for flexibility, until architecture reconciled order with sensory richness.

Ati's authorship is clearest in orchestration of interior experience. She composed luminous labs for woodshop, robotics, and teaching kitchens, filled with daylight and tactile finishes reinforcing joy in discovery. Her attention to scale and material continuity let the additions connect with existing buildings while elevating the campus's identity.

Durability and stewardship guided her detailing: warm wood, low-maintenance finishes, and acoustic strategies balancing practicality with comfort. Porches and courtyards reinforced integration of learning and landscape, extending education beyond the classroom.

**RESULTS:** The result is architecture both practical and inspiring, empowering curiosity and resilience while balancing tradition and innovation around the student experience.

#### SCOPE

Phase I \$3.7 million, 10,600 gross sf of new classroom and maker spaces, and Phase II \$13.1 million total budget, 3,200 sf renovation and 5,300 gross sf of classroom and admin additions.

#### AIA FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGN EXCELLENCE

- + Integration: Campus and new learning spaces.
- + Discovery: Spatial variety fosters curiosity.
- + Wellness: Daylight and acoustics aid focus.
- + Resources: Beautiful + durable materials + finishes.
- + Ecology: Porches link creek and learning spaces.
- + Change: Planning anticipates future shifts.

#### AWARDS + RECOGNITION

- + AIA Arkansas Design Award, 2025 [Phase II]
- + National AIA Architecture Award, 2021
- + National AIA Educational Facility Design Award, 2020
- + AIA Arkansas Honor Award, 2020
- + The Plan Award Winner (Education), 2020
- + AIA Arkansas Honor Award, 2019
- + Copper in Architecture Award, 2019
- + Mies Crown Hall Americas Prize, Nomination, 2018

#### ROLE OF CANDIDATE

- + Collaborative Design Partner; Principal in Charge of Planning + Interiors

#### ARCHITECTURE FIRM OF RECORD

- + Marlon Blackwell Architects

#### DECLARATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

I have personal knowledge of the candidate's responsibility for the exhibit listed above. That responsibility included: the candidate is one of the principals largely responsible for design.

- Dr. Joan Hill, Head of School, The Lamplighter School

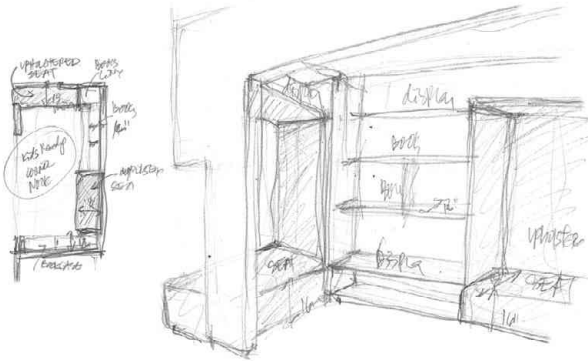


## 3.5 Exhibits

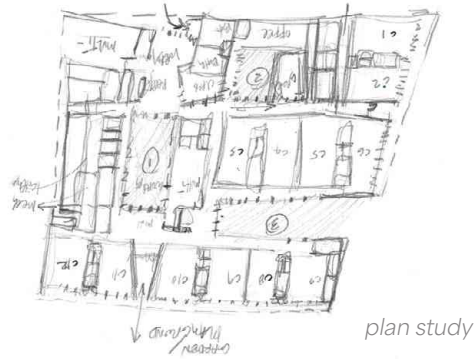
### Marygrove Early Education Center

DETROIT, MICHIGAN | 2019

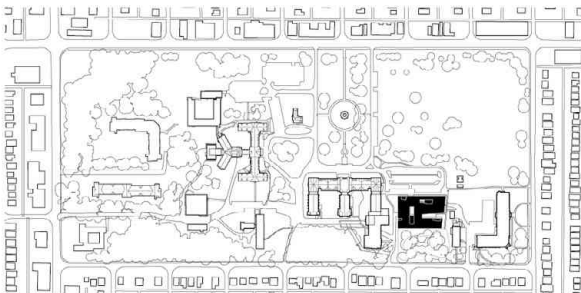
*Ennobling Overlooked Programs, Underserved Places + Unheard Voices*



book nook study plan and sketch



plan study



campus site plan

**CHALLENGE:** The Marygrove Early Education Center was the first phase of the ambitious P-20 Partnership, a campus-wide initiative delivering cradle-to-career education in Northwest Detroit. The challenge was to create a community-rooted school for children from birth to five that blends pedagogy, play, and dignity in a city long shaped by disinvestment.

**ROLE:** The design advanced through continual dialogue. Marlon Blackwell established massing around courtyards linking classrooms with light and landscape. Ati Blackwell extended this strategy into immersive, child-centered interiors, crafting the project's most distinctive qualities.

Ati's authorship is clearest in her orchestration of light, color, and material detailing. She composed classrooms balancing acoustic clarity with vibrancy, using bold hues, warm wood finishes, and furnishings scaled to children's reach. Thresholds became moments of orientation and discovery, while her reinterpretation of Detroit's masonry traditions through a child-focused lens creates a sense of joy and play while grounding the building with cultural resonance and durability.

**RESULTS:** Every decision reinforced equity and wellness: adaptable layouts for evolving pedagogy, resilient finishes for stewardship, abundant daylight to nurture growth and promoting growth, discovery and learning. The result is a place where children feel secure, families welcomed, and a neighborhood sees dignity expressed through design. Through Ati's leadership, Marygrove shows how architecture can ennoble overlooked communities by elevating daily life into civic transformation.

#### SCOPE

28,871 sf building with classrooms, offices, lounge, workrooms, kitchen, a small library, 3 courtyards, and a play yard at \$15.8 M.

#### AIA FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGN EXCELLENCE

- + Integration: Pedagogy and play unified.
- + Equity: Neighborhood anchor sparking.
- + Wellness: Courts, acoustics, color calm.
- + Discovery: Planned to foster play.
- + Change: Layouts adapt needs.
- + Legacy: Color for continuity.

#### AWARDS + RECOGNITION

- + A4LE New Project Award, 2024
- + National AIA Design Honor Award, 2023
- + Detroit AIA Honor Award, 2023
- + Dedalo Minosse International Prize - Regione del Veneto Special Prize, 2023
- + Architect's Newspaper Best of Design Award, 2022
- + The Plan Award Finalist, 2022

#### ROLE OF CANDIDATE

- + Collaborative Design Partner; Principal in Charge of Planning + Interiors

#### ARCHITECTURE FIRM OF RECORD

- + Marlon Blackwell Architects

#### DECLARATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

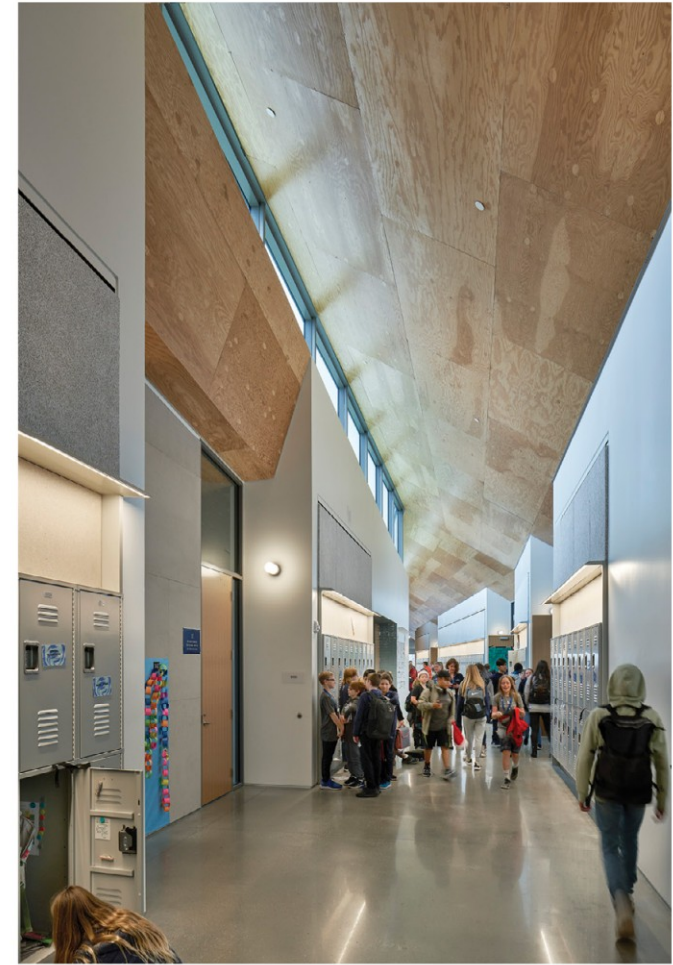
I have personal knowledge of the candidate's responsibility for the exhibit listed above. That responsibility included: the candidate is one of the principals largely responsible for design.

- Wendy L Jackson, Detroit Program Managing Director,  
The Kresge Foundation











## 3.7 Exhibits

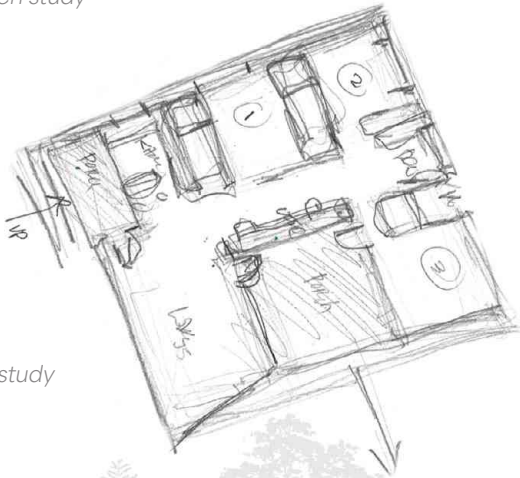
### Tanglewood Cabin

ROGERS, ARKANSAS | 2020

*Enriching Environments for a Holistic Sensory Experience*



kitchen study



plan study



building section

**CHALLENGE:** Perched on a steep bluff overlooking Beaver Lake, Tanglewood Cabin challenged the team to create a retreat that was both private and open, compact yet expansive, immersed in the rugged Ozark landscape. The owner wanted a place, on a modest budget, for their young family to connect together in nature.

**ROLE:** Ati Blackwell led the development of the site plan, building organization, and interior sequencing, listening closely to the clients to align daily rituals with the power of the setting. She proposed a bold courtyard plan cantilevered from the hillside, reframing early slope-bound schemes into a cliff dwelling, at once cave and overlook, where hearth and horizon merge. Marlon acted chiefly as critic, refining gestures that Ati carried through to resolution.

Her authorship is clearest in the orchestration of continuity and atmosphere. Porches and apertures weave interior life with exterior presence, while the courtyard became the house's heart, sheltering from wind, modulating light, and embracing family life in intimate security while opening to the vast landscape.

The material palette reinforced this duality: pine, polished concrete, and glass amplify tactile richness, while charred cypress siding anchors the house to its site. Every threshold, porch to courtyard, alcove to horizon, was tuned to heighten sensory connection.

**RESULTS:** The result is an elemental refuge, simple and comfortable, modest in size and material. Rich in light and views to nature, a place to enjoy family life and experience the everyday.

#### SCOPE

2,180 SF residential cabin with two bedrooms, and a private courtyard porch overlooking Beaver Lake at a cost of \$600k.

#### AIA FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGN EXCELLENCE

- + Integration: Porch-centered plan unites shelter and nature.
- + Ecology: Modest size touches the ground lightly.
- + Wellness: Wood, glass, and light create calm retreat.
- + Resources: Shou sugi ban cladding ensures durability and sustainability.
- + Discovery: Apertures frame Ozark views near + far.
- + Legacy: Porch reimagined as elemental, modern refuge.

#### AWARDS + RECOGNITION

- + AIA Arkansas Design Merit Award, 2021
- + Gulf States AIA Design Merit Award, 2021
- + Featured in Dwell, "Mountain Majesty" 10/2020

#### ROLE OF CANDIDATE

- + Principal in Charge

#### ARCHITECTURE FIRM OF RECORD

- + Marlon Blackwell Architects

#### DECLARATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

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- Leah Curry, Owner





