

# Human Ecology

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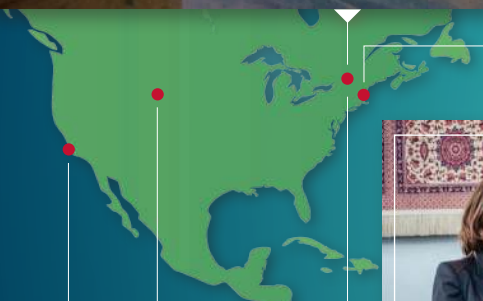
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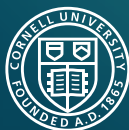
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## INSIDE: HUMAN ECOLOGY'S IMPACT

Regional, national and international influence



College of Human Ecology

# DESIGN GIFT

Julie Salles Schaffer '89 lets D+EA students flex creative muscles



Schaffer



Designed by Salles Schaffer Architecture

Julie Salles Schaffer D+EA '89 knows building design inside and out. The former interior design major has constructed a career in architecture on the foundation of creativity, flexibility and hard work – skills she hopes to nurture in current Cornell undergraduates through generous donations to the College of Human Ecology.

“My background in interior design is unusual for an architect,” said Salles Schaffer, who chose her Human Ecology major because – unlike pure design schools – it allowed her to flex her creative muscles while taking classes across a wide array of disciplines. “I consider the interior of a project to be as important as the exterior. The inside and the outside inform each other.”

At her firm, Salles Schaffer Architecture, Salles Schaffer and a handful of employees have been applying this marriage of function and aesthetic to a wide-range of projects in Manhattan and beyond since 2001. Her designs for interior family spaces, offices, exterior projects, her family's Connecticut vacation home, and even furniture, have earned her steady word-of-mouth recommendations, coverage in such publications as *Architecture Magazine* and *Vogue*, as well as the Matthew W. Del Gaudio Award from the New York Society of Architects.

Salles Schaffer attributes her success not least to a core lesson she internalized as a D+EA student: “I was taught to focus on what a client is really saying, know how to record it, and work it into the design,” she explained. “For example, many kitchen renovations require some intense understanding of the way my

client lives. The cabinetry guts can be a puzzle to solve just as fascinating as regarding land on a site.”

In 1996, she earned a Master's Degree in Architecture from Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation and went on to work for architect Bernard Tschumi. “I learned the importance of developing and holding on strongly to a concept in your own work,” Salles Schaffer said.

Thanks to her recent donation to the department of D+EA, several students got to experience firsthand the flexibility required to make such original ideas jibe with outside requirements.

Under the tutelage of Associate Professor So-Yeon Yoon, undergraduates Brendan Elliott, Jialin Ke and Jonathan Pao were selected to create *Pulse*, an installation in an 8x8x8-foot cubic space. It provided visitors with an immersive, therapeutic musical experience and awareness of their heart beat.

“The students had set out to do one installation in concept, and when the exhibit needed to be tailored to the experimental space, they learned to transform their initial plans,” Salles Schaffer said. “I'm happy that the show enabled the students to experiment with some interesting ideas about human perception and space and get some outside feedback on their work. I think it's important to give back to Cornell and the department that taught me so much.”

– Olivia Hall

take her further in that direction. She graduated from Columbia Business School in May 2018.

“In those two years, I often felt I was drinking water through a fire-hose,” Lutz said. “The MBA strengthened my knowledge of strategy, finance, operations and leadership, building out my personal toolkit for tackling complex business problems.”

Lutz has been applying these skills as a senior associate in the strategy practice of KPMG. “My position as a generalist allows me to work outside my retail comfort zone,” she explained. In her future career, she plans to serve in the leadership of a major company and start her own business.

That is where Josefina Hamren FSAD '14 MBA '18 is headed, as well, albeit it in a different industry. After graduation, Hamren entered the tech sector via a product development consultancy and then location intelligence company Foursquare.

“FSAD's cross-disciplinary curriculum prepared me

to thrive in an environment where I had to just as easily understand business concepts as I did engineering specs and user experience design,” she said.

Eventually she hopes to bring her multidisciplinary skills to bear in her own company.

Seeking an MBA, these FSAD grads may be in the vanguard of a growing trend, as their peers begin to recognize how this type of investment can pay off.

“Many people in the fashion industry still question the value of an MBA,” Freeman said. “However, my peers and I are seeing many retail businesses struggle in the competitive and ever-changing environment and that there is definitely an opportunity to further develop internal strategy teams to keep the businesses competitive and profitable. So while many of my FSAD peers are still working in fashion, many have also switched into roles like user experience design or are also thinking about pursuing their MBA.”

– Olivia Hall



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– Josefina Hamren  
FSAD '14 MBA '18