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## **Kirksey Architecture's Michelle Old wins AIA Houston Ben Brewer Award.**

**HOUSTON, TEXAS** — On Saturday, AIA Houston awarded Michelle Old the Ben Brewer Young Architect Award at the 2022 Celebrate Architecture Gala. The award recognizes architects in their first ten years of practice who exhibit excellence in their work and ability and who have contributed significantly to the practice of architecture. Michelle is the sixth Kirksey designer to win the award.

Michelle joined Kirksey as an intern during her senior year at the University of Houston College of Architecture. Today, she is an Associate Vice President and Senior Project Designer. Her professional journey is one of art, community, and family. Michelle cites the idea that architecture is art for the masses as the impetus for her career when the concept first resonated with her in high school. "I realized that buildings could be seen as art and that art could serve the greater community," notes Michelle, "That thought shaped my career and is part of my design philosophy."

Her commitment to designing buildings that contribute to the community they serve is evident throughout her portfolio. Some of her most significant projects to date illustrate both a community impact and the inclusion of the people at the heart of the project in the design process. For instance, Michelle recalls the process of designing the 20,000-sf Queensbury Theater in 2012 and how well she got to know the company members and staff by simply listening to their stories. Their passion for storytelling and the relationship between the theater and the neighborhood helped Michelle and the team create a design that recaptured the theater's identity and invited new audiences into the fold. Similarly, the alumni and surrounding community's dedication to preserving a historic 1926 building inspired her work on Houston ISD's Milby High School. The design reflects the close collaboration with invested community members and their desire to see the school's position as a pillar of the neighborhood preserved.

"Michelle's desire to create a positive impact is evident in her designs and the network and community she cultivates in her professional life," remarked Gary Machicek, Design Principal at Kirksey Architecture. Michelle's commitment to the future of the profession is significant and evident in the time she spends working with college students at both the University of Houston and Prairie View A&M University. She also volunteers at the Michael G. Myers Competition for high school students.



Michelle's dedication to the industry is also evident in her continued pursuit of knowledge. She regularly speaks at conferences and has been published twice in Texas Architect Magazine with articles on the importance of public green space and her experience designing mass timber projects.

At Kirksey, she is described as a natural leader. "Michelle leads projects, committees, and initiatives in the office and for outside organizations," says Kirksey Architecture President Wes Good. "She is called on often to present to our staff and leadership group and is a true champion for design and sustainability."

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Kirksey is a sustainable architecture and interior design firm with more than 38 million sf of LEED projects in their portfolio. With offices in Houston, Austin, and Dallas, Texas, Kirksey is team-based in structure and serves Commercial, Collegiate, Community, pK-12, Government, Healthcare, Hospitality, Science & Technology, and Multifamily Residential markets. To learn more about the firm, visit [www.kirksey.com](http://www.kirksey.com).