

# MARION MAHONY GRIFFIN

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PRIZE  
WINNERS

2012-2013



Australian  
Institute of  
Architects

NSW

We would like to acknowledge the First Nations people of the lands on which we live and practice, and to pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging. We would like to acknowledge the 60,000+ years of continuous cultural connection to this land and its waters, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, whose knowledge as Traditional Custodians is incredibly rich - its importance to the future of this continent and surrounding islands, for a shared way forward, should never be underestimated.

The Australian Institute of Architects thanks the patrons and supporters of the Marion Mahony Griffin Prize and Gender Equity Taskforce initiatives:

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**'2020 is a distinctive year for women in architecture. For the first time in NSW we have a female Government Architect and our membership, academic and regulatory bodies are all led by women.'**



In recognition of this, we commemorate the Marion Mahony Griffin (MMG) breakfast this year with 20 previous MMG prize winners joining us for the event. These remarkable women have progressively disassembled the glass ceiling and continue to lead the way for the next generation of architects to follow. NSW Government Architect Abbie Galvin will deliver this year's keynote address, and a panel discussion involving some of the previous winners will discuss their philosophies, passions and experiences. We are in for a real treat!

23 years ago, in 1997, Beverley Garlick chaired the Australian Institute of Architects Women in Architecture Task Group. The remit of the group was to 'investigate more thoroughly the situation of women architects in the profession and to take measures to increase their involvement and representation.' At that time 7% of registered architects were female, and 15% of Institute members were women. (Source: Architecture Bulletin December 1997, p10.)

20 years later, in 2017, the Institute had 25% registered members that were female, and 29% of all members were women. (Source: Institute National Committee for Gender Equity 2019.) Clearly we still have a long way to go.

However there are positive signs of change. In 2019 the Institute National Board reached 60% female to 40% male representation. The gender target mix was achieved in the first year of this target mix discussion.

Quotas work, targets work, open and frank conversations addressing the issue work. So does support, mentoring and sharing the knowledge of what we have learnt and how we can do better.

Looking to Marion Mahony Griffin, the namesake of this prize, we see a female architect of tremendous depth, passion and a true driver of collaboration. The prize in her honour recognises her depth and breadth of commitment to the profession by acknowledging a female design professional for a distinctive body of work.

American born Marion Mahony graduated in 1894 from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She was the second woman to do so. Her first role was with her cousin, an architect in Chicago, Illinois, in which state she became the first female to license and practice. In 1895 she was Frank Lloyd Wright's first hired employee, working with him until 1909, when he eloped to Europe with his married client Mammah Cheney. In this period of scandal and uncertainty, he asked Marion to run the studio in his absence, but she declined. Instead Herman Von Holst took over the studio's commissions with Wright's stipulation that Marion retain design control. To assist with the workload Marion recommended Walter Burley Griffin join. In 1911 they were married.

Thereafter is the story we are all familiar with, when the Griffin/Mahony designs and water colours won the jury's hearts for the Canberra competition, culminating in them moving to Australia in 1914. They have been winning hearts ever since. Based in Sydney, Marion managed and was responsible for all their private commissions. If the Canberra competition had been today, her joint contribution with Griffin would have seen rightful recognition on submission and credits. Events like the MMG breakfast let us tell stories and recognise the contribution of these remarkable women. It lets us celebrate their contribution to the profession and to the built environment, and importantly, it encourages the next generations to keep moving us forward. #EachforEqual.

**Kathlyn Loseby FRAIA**  
NSW Chapter President

# 2006

## Kim Crestani

### Jury Citation

This year, two candidates were particularly outstanding, contributing in distinct ways through the aligned fields of education and practice. The common thread in both candidates was their commitment to the social and cultural dimension of architectural practice; foregrounding the capacity of this profession to contribute to social justice and welfare. We have decided to award them both.

Kim Crestani is a dynamo of energy and enthusiasm, who has shown through her trail-blazing career how women can positively impact on the profession in their own way. Her contributions have been diverse including: private practice, teaching at all of the architecture schools in Sydney, and participating in the Institute, other professional groups and government advisory panels. Kim has always taken a unique path, ensuring that the achievement of affordable, quality design is at the forefront.

After Kim graduated from architecture in the mid-1980s, she set up her own practice in Parramatta to bring good design to the western suburbs of Sydney. She has built on this contribution through her participation as an advisor on the Inner West Council's Design Review Panel on residential flat buildings and SEPP 65 legislation.

The advice from these panels has been instructive not only for the proponents of the designs submitted but also for the council's assessment staff and elected representatives. In the early-1990s when the architecture profession was in recession, Kim, as a NSW Chapter Councillor, created the small practice network. This group, which has continued to grow and strengthen, provides a relevant way for architects running their own small practices to connect with others and share experiences and information. Kim's office is based on the principles that: there should be good life/work balance; each member of the office (or family) should contribute to the outcomes that she 'choreographs'; and they should be producing quality design for affordable prices to enrich people's lives. Her many long-term staff, two Institute merit awards for low budget projects, and multiple HIA and MBA awards demonstrate her success in this area. Several of these awards were given to projects Kim developed herself - showing her ability to walk the talk when she wants to see her ideals realised. Kim's latest venture - the Pod System - reveals her progress in bringing streamlined, affordable design to a wider group of people.

Kim has been an important mentor to many young female architects. She is a strong role model in both her practice and teaching. Her relative youth bodes well for continuing influence and we consider her well deserving of the Marion Mahony Griffin Award.



*'A dynamo of energy and enthusiasm, who has shown how women can positively impact in their own way.'*

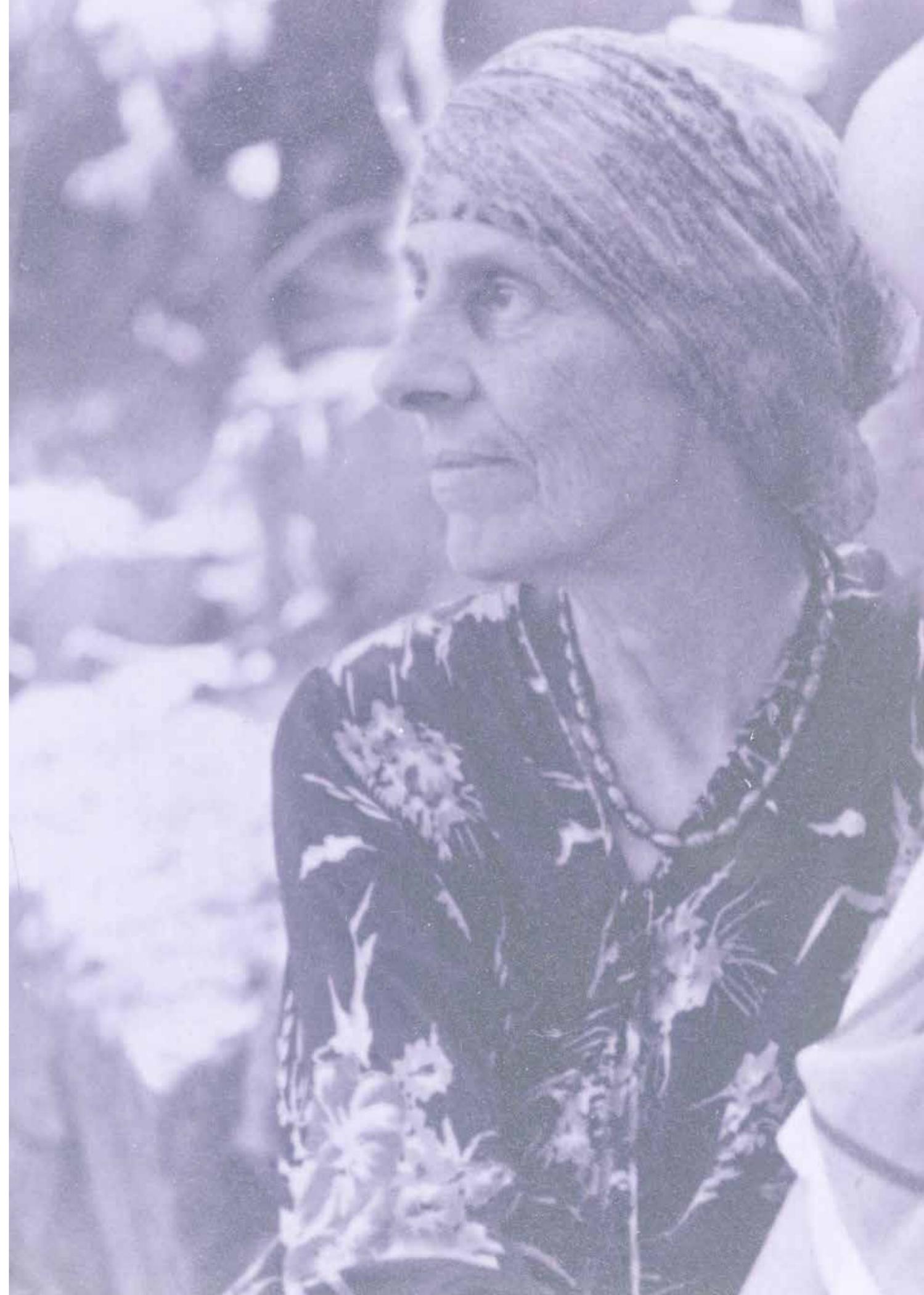
### Reflection

Time certainly passes so quickly. The past 14 years have been incredible. My practice and way of working in the profession has morphed into what I now call a 'portfolio career'. I have come full circle: setting up my original practice at Parramatta in 1984 when there were very few architects, then being appointed to the Parramatta Central Planning Panel in the 1990's, and now Parramatta's first City Architect. This role has been extraordinary with the completion of some 25 + Design Excellence Competitions, including Parramatta Square, the new Civic, Cultural and Community Building and the Aquatic Centre. My mother asked me 'When will Parramatta be finished?' and I said 'Never'. Architecture is an amazing profession where it is an honour to work with incredible International and Australia-based architects as entrants, Jury members and advisors, to ensure the City of Parramatta evolves. In February 2019, I was appointed to the competition jury for the Powerhouse Precinct and will be on the design integrity panel for the duration of the project.

I have been a senior executive in the NSW Public Sector; the principal manager Architecture and Station Precincts for the North West Rail Link Project. I am a member of the Design Review Panels for Sydney Metro; both Stadiums in Parramatta and Sydney; Westconnex; Brisbane's Cross River Rail and recently Western Sydney Airport Design. For the private sector, I have been appointed to the design excellence jury for Atlassian's Sydney Headquarters at Central. In 2016 I was awarded the UTS Alumni Award for Excellence UTS Design, Architecture and Building Faculty and was proud to deliver the Occasional Speakers address to UTS Graduates in 2016. The past 20 years have been amazing: one of six practices to design Newington Village for the Sydney Olympics; working in the NSW Premiers Office for the NSW Nation Building + Jobs Plan Taskforce; being in the ABC television series 'In the Mind of the Architect'; and guest on Radio National's The Comfort Zone. I look forward to the next chapter of this career and to promoting the highest quality built form and public domain.

**‘Each generation is under obligation not only to do its own work but so to teach the succeeding generation as to cause progress.’**

- Marion Mahony Griffin





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