

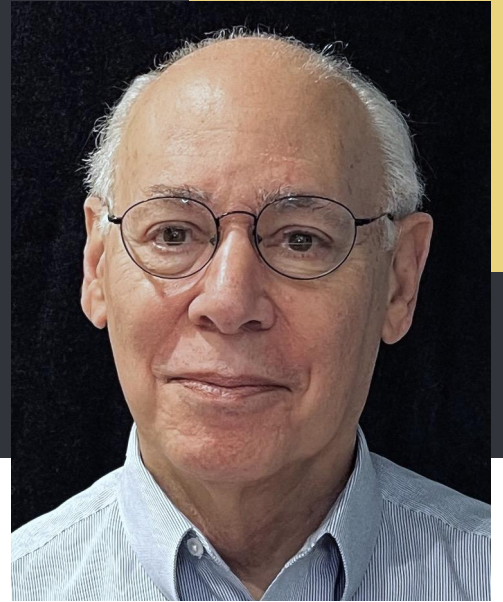
MILTON SHINBERG ARCHITECT



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Meet Milton

Architect. Author.
Inspiring Speaker.



Milton Shinberg, AIA, is principal emeritus of Shinberg Levinas Architects, an internationally recognized practice honored with numerous design awards and published firm profiles.

With over four decades of architectural practice, he has become a specialist in designing public and private schools, religious facilities, and other institutional building types, focusing on creating inspiring environments for underserved communities.

As a long-time adjunct professor at the Catholic University of America, Shinberg has taught design, drawing, and theory courses, including his pioneering "Beauty & Brains" seminar exploring the intersection of neuroscience, related human sciences, and architecture. His innovative teaching approaches earned him the prestigious 2021 Architectural Educator Award from AIA|DC, and he lectures extensively on architecture and neuroscience at regional and national AIA conferences and international programs in Italy, Germany, and Brazil.

Shinberg serves on the advisory boards of the Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture and the International Arts+Mind Lab at Johns Hopkins University. His work bridges the sciences of human experience with architectural practice, advancing empathic design approaches that are driving by human needs and aspirations.

Shinberg's career exemplifies integrating practice, teaching, and research to create architecture that enhances human well-being and dignity, particularly for underserved populations.

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Inspiring Speaker

Milton's authentic voice and expertise make him an engaging speaker who can connect with diverse audiences - from architects and educators and students, to community leaders, and to the general public interested in how buildings affect our lives. His ability to translate complex scientific concepts into practical design strategies, combined with real-world examples from his extensive portfolio, creates powerful and accessible presentations that people enjoy.

Whether as a dynamic presenter for educational workshops, or an expert voice for media coverage on architectural innovation, Milton offers compelling perspectives that bridge architecture, design, science, culture, and human experience.

MEDIA EXPERTISE

- Architecture's Impact on Human Behavior and Wellbeing
- How Architects Can Do Better for People
- Design that Helps Students of All Ages Learn
- Integration of the Human Science, including Neuroscience, and Architecture
- Designing for Underserved Communities
- Architectural Education Innovation
- Architectural Practice Innovation

MILTON'S PRESENTATIONS CAN BE CUSTOMIZED FOR

- Professional Architecture Organizations
- Educational Institutions
- Community Planning Groups
- Design Conferences
- Corporate Events
- Media Interviews
- Adult Education
- The "Coalition of the Curious" Non-Architects Intrigued by Architecture and Architects

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RECENT SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- AIA National & Regional Conferences plus the AIA Small Firm Exchange
- The Society for Neuroscience
- International Programs in Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal, and Brazil
- U.S. Department of Education Webinars
- University Lectures and Seminars

POPULAR SPEAKING TOPICS

The Science of Space: How Psychology and Neuroscience Are Transforming Architecture

Architects often rely on intuition, but emerging research from psychology and neuroscience offers data-driven insights into how people truly experience space. Milton Shinberg explores key findings that have reshaped his approach to design and how architects can integrate these insights into their work.

Beyond Aesthetics: Why Human-Centered Design Is the Future of Architecture

Many architects focus on aesthetics and form, but Milton Shinberg's book, *People-Centered Architecture*, challenges this approach by prioritizing human experience. He discusses common misconceptions about how people interact with buildings and how architects can design spaces that genuinely enhance well-being.

Lessons from Non-Architects: What Everyday People Can Teach Us About Design

Non-architects often have a deeper intuitive understanding of space than professionals realize. Milton Shinberg shares surprising moments where non-architects influenced his design process and how their insights can lead to better, more functional architecture.

The Beauty & Brains Connection: How Architecture Shapes Emotion, Cognition, and Well-Being

Beautiful spaces do more than just look good—they have measurable effects on how people think, feel, and behave. In this talk, Milton Shinberg delves into the research behind the psychological impact of beauty in architecture and how designers can harness this power to create meaningful spaces.

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Bridging the Gap: Preparing the Next Generation of Architects for Real-World Challenges

Architectural education often emphasizes theory and aesthetics, but real-world practice demands a balance of creativity, psychology, and problem-solving. Milton Shinberg discusses the biggest gaps between academia and practice and how educators can better prepare students to design for human well-being.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. You've spent decades bridging the gap between architectural intuition and the human sciences. Can you share a pivotal moment in your career when you realized that integrating psychology, neuroscience, or sociology into architecture could profoundly reshape the way we design spaces?
2. Your book, *People-Centered Architecture*, challenges the traditional approach to architectural design by prioritizing human experience. What are some of the most common misconceptions architects have about how people interact with the built environment, and how can we correct them?
3. One of your key insights is that non-architects often have an intuitive understanding of space that architects can learn from. Can you give an example of a time when a non-architect influenced your design process in a surprising way?
4. You have an extensive background in both practice and academia. What are some of the biggest gaps between architectural education and real-world practice, and how do you think we can better prepare students to design for human well-being?
5. The intersection of architecture and neuroscience is a growing field, yet many architects still rely primarily on aesthetics and intuition. What are some of the most compelling research findings that have changed how you approach design, and how can architects begin to apply these insights?
6. Your firm has designed projects for underserved communities, and you emphasize the role of architecture in dignity and well-being. Can you share a project where thoughtful design had a measurable impact on people's lives, particularly in a community that may not typically have access to high-quality design?

7. In your “Beauty & Brains” seminar, you explore how beauty isn’t just subjective—it has measurable effects on cognition and emotion. What are some surprising ways that architectural beauty can influence how people think, feel, and behave in a space?
8. Many architects struggle to balance their creative vision with the constraints of budgets, regulations, and client demands. How do they navigate these practical limitations while still ensuring that human-centered design remains a priority?
9. Architecture is often seen as a technical or artistic discipline, but your work incorporates elements of storytelling, music, and even Broadway. How do these seemingly unrelated fields inform your approach to designing spaces that resonate emotionally with people?
10. If you could give just one piece of advice to architects, educators, and students about how to create spaces that truly serve the people who use them, what would it be?

"Milton Shinberg's session on Architecture and Neuroscience at the AIA Orlando Convention was one of the most provocative and stimulating conference presentations I have ever witnessed. The discussion and conversation outlasted the time and spilled into the hall."

—Russell Perry, FAIA

Former Director at SmithGroup, Former Managing Principal at McDonough Architects

"Milton Shinberg has helped dozens of public charter schools create distinctive, inspiring, and bold school buildings with very tight budgets. No architect has had a bigger impact on our sector."

—Scott Pearson

Executive Director, DC Public Charter

"Milton's attention to their deepest needs fosters great trust in the school communities he serves. They learn that his architecture is truly inspired by working closely with them. His ways of connecting with people are exceptional."

—Mark Zeizel

Vice-President, Charter School Development Corporation

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PEOPLE-CENTERED ARCHITECTURE



Design • Practice • Education

Architecture shapes how people live, learn, work, and thrive, and yet the profession of architecture, having to focus most on practical design and budgets and legal duties, often lacks a structure for knowing and leveraging a deeper knowledge of people to make wise architecture. While architects are humanists, we can know, and bring to design, a much better understanding of humans.

As this book outlines, that's fixable. In the process, design ideas can become better, affect people more pleasurably, be more humane, more life-affirming and, by the same stroke, take less design time to accomplish. Architects and firms can be re-energized by taking a new look at how we work.

This book aims to bring truly people-centered design to the forefront and make design both easier and faster. It can be more joy than struggle. Architects can have more access to doing what we enjoy most, for fulfilling the reasons we became architects, and in the process help firms work more efficiently, more effectively. One major advantage: we can be more likely to gain design approvals from clients and stakeholders and the public at large for what we propose with enhanced design. There are new doors to open.

Drawing on five decades of experience as an architect, educator, and thought leader, Milton Shinberg demonstrates how insights from integrating the sciences of people and the wisdom of non-architects can revolutionize architectural practice. He shows how our deeply embedded evolutionary instincts, instincts from our beginnings as a species, still drive us today and shape what we like, from comfort to beauty, and what we don't. Preferences can, to a much greater extent than is typically recognized in design, be identified and designed for. The insights are valuable. Some reinforce our long-held traditional ideas. Some challenge them. Together, our understanding and our work is enhanced. Architecture and architects, humanists at heart, can be perceived as the best friend of communities and society.

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PEOPLE-CENTERED

A R C H I T E C T U R E

Design • Practice • Education

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SUBTITLE – Driving Design, Practice, and Education

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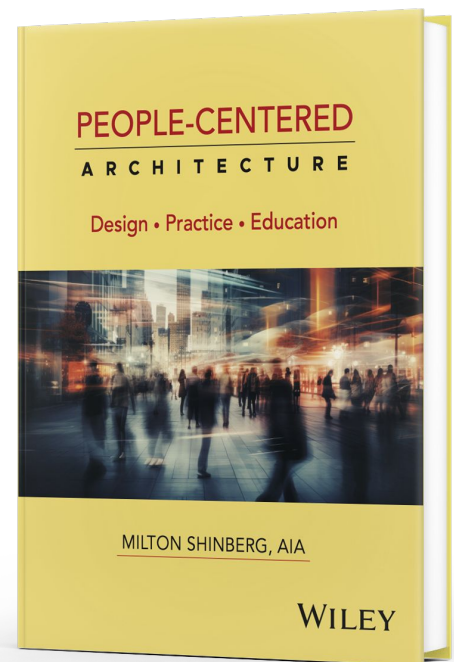
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CONNECT WITH MILTON

Whether you're interested in speaking engagements, professional consultations, or discussing the ideas in *People-Centered Architecture*, Milton welcomes the opportunity to engage with fellow architects, educators, students, and anyone passionate about creating environments that enhance human well-being. Please use the form below to start the conversation.

Website – [MiltonShinberg.com](#)

Email – Milton@MiltonShinberg.com

LinkedIn – [Milton Shinberg](#)

Facebook – [ShinbergArt](#)

[MiltonShinberg.com](#)

PEOPLE-CENTERED ARCHITECTURE

Design • Practice • Education

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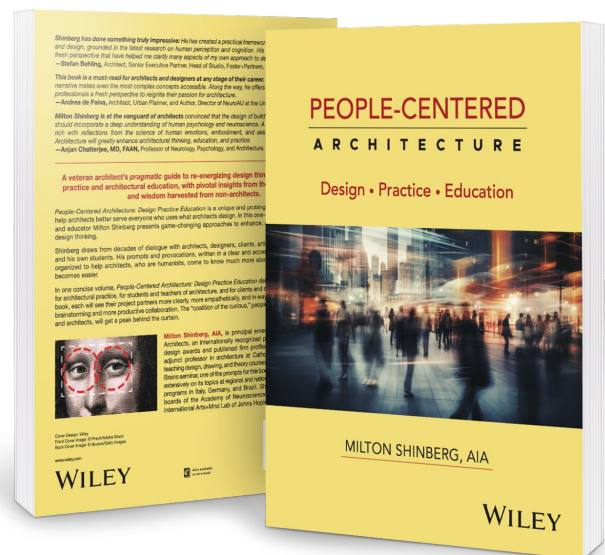
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SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This book is designed to enhance core elements of architectural thinking that practicing architects, teachers of architects, and students of architecture can easily bring to their important work.

This is a book for architects at all stages of their careers, for students and teachers of architecture, and for the “Coalition of the Curious,” people who want to know more about architecture and architects. For each of them, in different ways, the curtain is pulled back.

Just as architecture is a process of connected thinking, tapping diverse realms of knowledge and intuition to help make humane architecture, *People-Centered Architecture* provides both a general framework and deep inquiry into areas of knowledge and insights about real people to.

A better understanding of people, the people we create architecture for, is the book’s premise and promise.

CHAPTER 1

PEOPLE: CONNECTIONS WITH ARCHITECTURE

Human Factors & Architecture

Among the sources to enrich our understanding of people are the sciences of people, “Human Factors.” Each is examined and transformed into actionable approaches for architects and students that are easily integrated into design thinking. The approaches may initially surprise but, in short order, designers will find themselves feeling quite at home. Current research is highlighted, challenging some design assumptions and reinforcing others.

Chapter 1.1 - Senses & Architecture

The real ways people take in the environment can, with decoding, draw a strong contrast between what in architecture can be perceived, and what can’t. Knowing the difference enables the effective design of sensory cues that actually impact real people.

Chapter 1.2 - Reality & Architecture

Every species creates a different “reality” through the evolved limits of their perceptions and the way we integrate that information for action. We’ll refer to that as “cognition.” An understanding of the specifically *human* version of “reality,” something we continuously create, can drive design that works *in concert with* our reality, can promote positive engagement with reality, and can uncover the hidden dimensions of architectural experience.

Chapter 1.3 - Behavior & Architecture

The “Who” of who we are was a long time developing, taking millions of years, helping humans survive to keep trying today. How we behave, specifically in the realms of architecture, can be observed and, carefully analyzed, made part of the core of architectural thinking. “Refuge and Prospect,” so strongly present in Wright’s Prairie Houses, is just one example of many that offer insights and frameworks for design.

Chapter 1.4 - Embodiment, Affordances, & Architecture

Effective architecture, like all design, is a hand-in-glove operation. What we get built “affords” behaviors the support they need. Literally, in the case of chairs, they afford us comfortable anti-gravity ways to sit. Architecture, likewise, respecting the whole mind and body together, “affords” us physical solutions to help us with all the ways architecture can support us. In this framework, the potential of the things we design becomes much more obvious. What will work and what won’t become far more apparent.

Chapter 1.5 - Beauty & Architecture

Is Beauty decipherable and decodable in ways that don’t devalue or damage the essence of beauty in architecture? The answer, well supported in philosophy, phenomenology, and the sciences of human experience, is a resounding Yes. Aesthetics has structure. Aesthetic preferences aren’t superficial. They connect most deeply with our deepest emotions. They even derive from critical processes that helped our ancestors survive the greatest challenges of evolution. Beauty is at the human core.

CHAPTER 2

PEOPLE: DIALOGUES ABOUT ARCHITECTURE

Chapter 2.1 - Listening to People

Do architects know everything, or at least enough to have the primary answers the design of a project should accomplish? In reality, no. Non-architects, authentically invited to share gut reactions and the thoughts that go with them, can open the eyes and minds of architects to ideas and agendas otherwise missed or dismissed. They’re too valuable to ignore as contributors and collaborators.

Chapter 2.2 - Images & Words from People

Just as our gut reactions to architecture and images of architecture can be felt in a millisecond, the same is true for non-architects. Working on our own, and working in concert with clients and stakeholders, we can directly utilize images and words to draw out the strong preferences that go beyond the superficial and right to the core of architectural experience. Knowing those realities in advance of design gives us an extremely valuable resource for “getting it right,” finding agendas for design that match our own best thoughts and the values of those who live with what we design.

CHAPTER 3 DRIVING DESIGN

Chapter 3.1 - Intuition, Emotion, Reason, & Architecture

Our intuitions are our foundation, but are they reliable? Are they sufficient? This chapter probes our resources and how we balance them to achieve the ideas results that excite us and give meaning, utility, and pleasure to the people we serve.

Chapter 3.2 - Enhancing Design

Manifesting a deeper knowledge of people, both through the sciences of people and by listening to them at real depth, makes architects into humanists who actually practice humanism in our professional realms. Design can be easier, richer, wiser, and more enjoyable, humming at the pitch people hear and feel in their bones and souls.

CHAPTER 4 DRIVING PRACTICE

Chapter 4.1 - Probing Practice

How is the profession of architecture doing today? Who are we, and are we advancing, not only in performance, but in using our talents and experience in the most efficient and satisfying ways to benefit our clients, broadly defined as those who pay us and those deeply affected by what we create.

Chapter 4.2 - Enhancing Practice

Can we bring new ideas into practice, significantly improving the appplecart rather than upsetting it, improving how and how-well we work, streamlining the design process while greatly improving it, and opening the space of architectural practice for more joy and greater financial and personal profit?

Chapter 4.3 - Increasing Value & Prestige

Architects were, for many years, among the most highly respected professions. Not anymore. We're not even on the list in most surveys of public opinion. What can the profession of architect do about it, substantively, authentically, bringing our ideals back to our practices, not window dressing. This chapter investigates problems and solutions. We can "do well by doing good."



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CHAPTER 5 DRIVING EDUCATION

Chapter 5.1 - Revisiting Education

What's the overall state of architectural education? Are students being prepared to contribute to the well-being of people and communities, going beyond skills and in the direction toward wise architecture?

Chapter 5.2 - Enhancing Education

By adding more focus on the nature and needs and aspirations of real people, education re-targets its objectives beyond the “what’s” of architecture to the “who” of architecture. Real inspiration for broader, and deeply architectural thinking emerges with knowledge, with insight, and with thoughtful leverage of architectural intuition.

EPILOGUE

Pathways forward and opportunities to choose among them are shared, all for re-energizing practicing architects and students of architecture, reframing careers, intentions, and the reasons for having a profession of architecture in the first place.



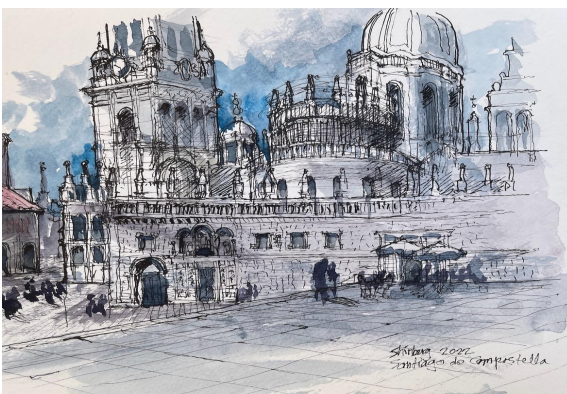
Creative Expression

A Life of Visual Expression

Milton Shinberg's artistic journey began at age 13 with a fortuitous visit to the National Gallery of Art. Originally intending to study anatomy by copying Michelangelo and DaVinci for a future medical career, he instead found himself captivated by the art of drawing. This pivotal moment redirected his path from medicine to the creative worlds of art and architecture, launching a 55-year engagement with visual expression.

Watercolor Explorations

Eight years ago, Shinberg embraced watercolor painting as a way to expand his creative horizons and challenge the precise approach to drawing that characterized his architectural work. His paintings reflect an ongoing dialogue between structured precision and fluid spontaneity, as he works to "enjoy the unpredictable and unintentional, though with the momentum of an underlying intention."



Exhibitions and Recognition

Shinberg's artistic talents have been showcased in five solo exhibitions, including shows at the prestigious Torpedo Factory and Politics & Prose. His work has also received recognition through numerous juried submissions and awards in competitive exhibitions, affirming his skill and unique artistic vision.

Photography

Parallel to his architectural career, Shinberg has been a dedicated photographer with an interest in portraiture. His photographic work, like his paintings, emphasizes compositional tension and engaging visual forces. He extends his creative process through digital editing in Lightroom, allowing for more painterly interpretations of his images.



A Multi-Faceted Creative

Beyond visual arts, Shinberg is an accomplished musician who performs chamber music and has composed original pieces, including wedding processional music for his daughter. He and his wife host Broadway singing parties, weaving their love of music into community gatherings.

The Integration of Art and Architecture

This multifaceted engagement with visual and performing arts enriches Shinberg's holistic approach to architecture. His artistic sensibilities permeate his architectural practice, teaching methodology, and theoretical explorations, demonstrating that architecture is indeed both a technical discipline and a profoundly human art form.

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