

## **Zahra Rasti**

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## **CV**

December 2023

### **Education**

International Master of Interior Architectural Design (IMIAD), 2014  
Lahti University of Applied Sciences, Lahti, Finland

International Master of Interior Architecture, 2013  
Stuttgart University of Applied Sciences, Stuttgart, Germany

Bachelor Degree of Architecture, 2008  
Zanjan University, Zanjan, Iran

### **Academic Appointments**

**California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly), San Luis Obispo, Architecture Department, Lecturer, 2019 – Present**

Contributions involve the authorship of project briefs, overseeing design studios of 17 to 23 students, and supporting students in their design development, execution, fabrication, and structural analysis tasks (ranging from models to full-scale projects). This also includes facilitating group presentations, implementing exhibition design and installation, offering guidance to students as research assistants, and organizing and leading field trips.

### **List of Courses Taught**

Arch 132	Studio	Design+Visual Communication II	Winter 2020
Arch 241	Activity	Technology Fundamentals 2.1	Fall 2021-2023
Arch 242	Activity	Technology Fundamentals 2.2	Winter 2021-2023
Arch 207	Activity	Technology Fundamentals 2.3	Spring 2020-2023
Arch 251	Studio	Architectural Design 2.1	Fall 2029-2023
Arch 252	Studio	Architectural Design 2.2	Winter 2020-2023
Arch 253	Studio	Architectural Design 2.3	Spring 2020-2023
Arch 307	Activity	Architectural System Integration	Fall 2020
Arch 341	Activity	Architectural System Integration	Winter 2020
Arch 462	Seminar	Mapping for social Justice	Fall 2023
Arch 451	Studio	Architectural Design 4.1.	Summer 2024
Arch 420	Seminar	Architectural History, Theory	Summer 2024

## **Arch 132 Design and Visual Communication** | First Year Design Studio

One of three sequential courses

The significant coordination and collaborative teaching distinguish the first-year foundational studios, an aspect of my teaching philosophy that I find especially rewarding. These studios serve as an introduction to fundamental concepts, processes, and skills in two- and three-dimensional design. Key objectives include refining observational skills through sketching, instructing students in visual communication techniques (such as orthographic projection, diagramming, and model construction) to convey project intentions effectively, and acquainting students with essential principles of composition and geometry. Moreover, these courses strongly emphasize hands-on craftsmanship, with segments where students collaborate to construct full-scale artifacts. For instance, one project involves creating a component within a proposed architectural design. At the same time, other challenges students to design a cluster of six rowhouses, both experiences that enhance their practical understanding of architectural concepts and design.

## **Arch 251 + 252+ 253 Architectural Design** | Second Year Design Studios

Three sequential studio courses

In the second-year design studios, crucial to architectural education, students delve into fundamental elements like building typology, program development, site analysis, drawing conventions, and square footage. These studios offer an adaptable curriculum, allowing instructors to customize the learning experience. The term begins with a one-week introductory project covering key design concepts such as edge conditions, urban contexts, layers, topography, and the concept of unit to whole at varying scales. This project acts as a foundation for skill development and exploration of emerging technologies, preparing students for the subsequent ten weeks of complex projects with rich conceptual representations. The pedagogical approach integrates diverse cultural case studies and reverse engineering, enabling students to collect documentation, understand core concepts, and create interactive representations. Site and user analyses are prioritized, ensuring designs are not only visually appealing but also functional and socially responsible. Iterative study models, sections, and immersive views enhance spatial comprehension and foster architectural creativity.

## **Arch 241+242, Arch 207 Architectural Technology Fundamentals**

Three sequential Courses

These three architecture courses collectively provide a comprehensive exploration of construction materials, systems, and environmental design. "Materials of Construction and Their History" delves into construction materials, from their origins and historical significance to contemporary applications, enriching students' knowledge. "Advanced Construction Systems and Documentation" builds upon this foundation, emphasizing construction systems and the skills essential for precise documentation. Finally, "Architecture and Climate Control" delves into the theory and practical application of climate, energy use, and occupant comfort, focusing on small-scale buildings. All three courses offer flexibility in delivery format, with options for classroom-based, online, or hybrid learning, ensuring students acquire a well-rounded understanding of these critical architectural aspects. As an instructor, I have contributed to these courses by leading activity sections and enhancing the overall learning experience through my guidance in these hands-on sessions.

## **Arch 351, Arch 307** Architectural Systems Integration

Two of three sequential Courses

ARCH 307 is a natural progression from ARCH 341, focusing on climate, energy use, and comfort as core elements in designing large-scale buildings. It explores architectural and mechanical systems for ventilation, cooling, heating, lighting, acoustics, and water management in internal-load-dominant structures. The course, offered in multiple formats, includes 2 lectures and 2 discussions. I have contributed as an instructor for the discussions. Similarly, ARCH 341 builds on ARCH 207, teaching students about constructing large-scale structures using masonry, steel, concrete, and combinations. Both courses offer flexibility in delivery (classroom, online, or hybrid) and play a pivotal role in architectural education.

## **Arch 420** Architectural History, Theory, and Criticism. (Tentative)

Specialized seminar in Architectural History, Theory, and Criticism. It delves into various topics, focusing on specific approaches, historical periods, and cultural or geographic regions. The chosen topic for each offering will be listed in the Class Schedule. In this instance, the seminar explores the design principles associated with Alvar Aalto, a renowned architect with a distinctive architectural style and philosophy. Students in this course will examine and analyze Aalto's contributions to architectural history, theory, and criticism.

## **Arch 451. Architectural Design 4.1.** (Tentative)

Addressing the challenges of rising architectural complexity requires thoroughly integrating architectural theory, design methodologies, and building systems, mainly focusing on multifunctional singular structures. This approach involves engaging in five dedicated laboratories to explore these intricacies.

An exciting upcoming initiative is the Summer Studio Program, taking place in Finland in the summer of 2024. During this program, the primary focus will be on the design principles of Alvar Aalto, with particular attention to the Paimio Sanatorium and the broader theme of architecture for well-being. This immersive experience will provide students with a unique opportunity to study Aalto's architectural legacy in his home country while investigating the concept of architecture that promotes health and well-being in its users.

## **Arch 462 Topics in Architectural Practice -Mapping for social justice**

This course explores the dynamic fusion of architecture and urban design as vehicles for advancing social justice. It harnesses user-generated content, video posts, and social media imagery to provide real-time insights into activism and protests, such as the Iranian women-led Woman Life Freedom Movement and the Black Lives Matter Movement. The course aims to develop active engagement in social justice discourse and create a manual empowering urban designer for collective social justice efforts. It also seeks to construct a platform merging data analysis methods to enhance social media accuracy, aiding international human rights organizations. Students will engage in analyzing user-generated content, image, and video analysis, creating cohesive event timelines, merging student-generated data with public content, and designing a manual for social justice advocacy. This transformative course prepares students to be advocates for social justice, encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration, critical thinking, and socially conscious design.

**Stuttgart University of Applied Sciences, Stuttgart, Germany, Lecturer  
Department of Interior Architecture, Spring 2015| Part Time**

Contributing to the coordination of multi-institutional seminars and workshops. Responsibilities encompass creating project briefs, supervising workshops with 12-15 students, and providing support throughout their design processes, including execution, fabrication, and structural analysis (from models to full-scale projects).

**Baharestan College of Architecture, Isfahan, Iran, Lecturer  
School of Architecture, Spring 2008, Full Time**

I contributed by teaching fundamental architecture design and communication, and I also took on the responsibility of organizing workshops focused on physical model-making and artifact fabrication.

**Research**

Mapping for social Justice Dedicated to advancing social justice through multidisciplinary research that bridges architecture, urban design, computer science, and software engineering, specifically focusing on mapping protests and conflict areas. This research explores the transformative potential of spatial analysis and mapping, including user-generated content, to address and alleviate societal inequalities within urban environments.

- Presented at: AIA women Leadership summit Boston, 2023.
- Presented at: 7th annual social justice Teach-In, Cal Poly, SLO, 2023
- Presented at: University of district of Columbia, 2023
- Course development: Through this research, the co-development and co-teaching of 'ARCH 462: Mapping for Social Justice' has been realized, empowering students to harness mapping for addressing inequalities and advancing equitable urban spaces.

**Received Granted:**

- College of Architecture and Environmental Design Teacher and Student Scholar Support Program, California Polytechnic State University. 2023-2024
- Paul & Verla Neel Professional Development Fund, California Poly Technic State University, 2023
- Global Program Development Grant, California Polytechnic State University 2023
- EU Program for education, training, youth and sport, 2013
- The BEACoN research scholar | Diversity & Inclusion, Cal Poly Office of University Diversity and Inclusion
- Invitation for a call for Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Request for Statements of Interest to Protect and Promote Human Rights
- LAEP (Learning Aligned Employment Program) -Winter/Spring 2024

## **Selected Publications:**

### **“An Insight into passages and Malls in Isfahan,” Memar Magazine, No. 44, 2007, Iran, Zahra Rasti, Leila Izadi**

This study delves into the climatic design response of Iranian bazaars, vital urban spaces facing challenges from unsustainable developments. Focused on Isfahan's bazaars, it combines qualitative methods and historical maps for in-depth analysis. Content analysis unveils nuanced socio-spatial characteristics, emphasizing their organizational pattern. The findings highlight Iranian bazaars' pivotal role in shaping urban structures and the significance of climate design adaptation.

### **“Hotels & Hostels”, Memar Magazine, No. 45, 2007, Iran, Zahra Rasti, Leila Izadi**

This study broadens its scope to Karvansarays, akin to modern hotels, exploring their design evolution and application in hospitality. It investigates the adaptation of traditional principles in contemporary contexts, emphasizing cultural and architectural significance preservation. The study aims to uncover parallels between Iranian bazaars and Karvansarays, revealing insights into cohesive and sustainable urban development for commercial and hospitality purposes. Utilizing a sustained qualitative approach, the research delves into the values shaping the interplay between climate design drivers and the cultural context in Iran.

## **Scholarship Activities:**

- Visiting Faculty, University of the District of Columbia, Washington DC, Architecture Department, 2023
- Guest Critic, Design Studio, Mid- Review and Final Reviews, Collage of Architecture & Environmental Design, Undergraduate Architecture Design Studio, Jury Critique (2<sup>nd</sup>,3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Design Studios, 2019-2023
- Guest Critic, Arch 420 Seminar in Architecture in History, Theory and Criticism, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, College of Architecture and Environment design, review for undergraduate architecture fifth year seminar: Imaging the global south. Professor: Padma Dorjeland, 2019
- Guest Speaker, UDC, University of District of Columbia – mapping for social Justice,2023
- Guest Speaker, SoCal NOMAS - MEET THE PROFESSORS Event,2020.

## **Interviews and Media**

- From Class to Community, the story of Professor Zahra Rasti and her mission to make a supportive community out of her students By Collin Vermilyea,2020
- HIST 206, Interview with an Immigrant: Zahra Rasti, Caius Cowgill, 2020
- Foodway Project, cultural anthropology (Ant 201) by Zack Bullock,2021

## **Professional Experiences**

### **Project Manager, Banta DESIGN, California, United States, 2017-2019**

As a Project Manager, I played a pivotal role in leading and contributing to various projects, showcasing my design and project management expertise. Notable projects included the

transformation of an existing sign fabrication factory into a 30,000 sq ft BMW collision repair center with administrative offices in Albany, CA; the management of a 15,000 sq ft tenant improvement project for General Mills' organic and natural food brands in Berkeley, CA; and the leadership in the adaptive re-use of a brick warehouse into a 30,000 sq ft Community Art Center, incorporating a new wing of affordable artist's housing (21,000 sq ft).

As Project Manager, I relied on my design skills, leveraging analytical abilities, creative concepts, and aesthetic intuition. I seamlessly integrated these skills with effective project management practices, ensuring the satisfaction of clients, fostering collaborative efforts within the design team, and facilitating smooth operations during the construction phase. My sophisticated and urbane design sense not only elevated the quality of our services but also contributed to a positive and collaborative work environment. Technically proficient, I used REVIT for design documentation.

My experience as a Project Manager reflects my ability to successfully lead and contribute to complex projects, meeting design and operational objectives. This role has equipped me with a diverse skill set and a proven track record of delivering high-quality results.

### **Architect, Ramboll Finland Oy, Finland, 2016-2017**

As the BIM Modeler—STRUCTURE Buildings in a global High-Rise department at Ramboll, I was part of a dedicated team with expertise in designing over 150 tall building projects worldwide. My role involved coordinating with project managers and engineers for Revit modeling work in different locations across the globe, supporting the global department in Finland and India. Key responsibilities included ensuring technical correctness and timely delivery of drawings, staying updated on industry advancements and regulations, and optimizing resource planning. With a background in Architecture and strong knowledge of Revit, I contributed to drafting standards, distributing work within the team, and enhancing efficiency.

### **Architect, Arkkitehtuuritoimisto Ovaskainen Oy, Finland 2014-2016**

As a Design Assistant at Oskanian Office, I played a pivotal role in collaborating with the architectural team, contributing to a diverse range of responsibilities crucial for the successful execution of projects. My responsibilities included meticulously preparing primary drawings, actively participating in conceptual design discussions, and engaging in land use planning to ensure regulatory compliance. Leveraging my proficiency in AutoCAD, Revit, and Photoshop, I excelled in creating high-quality 3D visualization images. I approached tasks enthusiastically, consistently completing assignments with attention to detail and within specified timeframes. My evolving proficiency in the Finnish language enabled effective communication about work tasks. I was recognized for fostering a positive team environment.

### **Architect, Lappeenranta kaupungintalo, Finland 2015**

At Lappeenranta City Municipality, I worked on a significant project focused on developing a comprehensive facility complex in the western area of Lappeenranta City. This undertaking involved the integration of pre-school, daycare, school, library, and youth facilities within the Sammonlahti area's service network. My commitment to this extensive task was immediate, and I approached it with a dedicated and thorough research methodology. I proficiently utilized Autodesk (Revit and AutoCAD). This experience underscores my work ethic and proficiency in various relevant software.

### **Architectural Project Manager, Green Line Consulting Engineers, Iran, 2005-2008**

As an architectural graduate, I held a significant role at Green Line Art and Architecture, working full-time. I showcased a dynamic set of skills and contributed substantially to the firm's projects during my work.

In the capacity of a junior architect, I demonstrated outstanding creativity, diligence, and a strong work ethic that distinguished me from my peers. My role involved active participation in developing design details and construction documents, ensuring meticulous coordination of drawings with other disciplines, and aligning specifications with project requirements. Engaging in construction administration, I was responsible for preparing sketches and conducting on-site visits for data gathering. Additionally, preparing presentation drawings, and contributing to internal and external presentations was another category of task that I was responsible for.

My responsibilities extended to conducting research and creating graphics for marketing proposals, showcasing my versatility in various aspects of architectural work. I exhibited leadership skills by leading other junior architects earning recognition from my immediate supervisor and board members. I confidently navigated diverse challenges and consistently delivered high-quality results. I am proficient in Autodesk Building Design (2D&3D), Photoshop, and Microsoft Office.

This description of my role at Green Line Art and Architect reflects my dedication, adaptability, and ability to excel in a collaborative architectural environment.

### **Designer, Polsheer Architects Planners Engineer, Iran, 2002-2005**

As an architectural undergraduate student, I held a position at Polsheer Architects Planners Engineer, initially working part-time during multiple summer internships and later transitioning to a part-time and full-time role. In this capacity, I developed a dynamic set of skills and provided valuable assistance to two project architects. The projects I actively contributed to include a rehabilitation center and an aqua recreation center. Additionally, I was part of a research team investigating the role of bazaars and commercial arcades in Isfahan, Iran. This research initiative later expanded to explore Karvansarays and hotels as part of the design for hospitality structures within the same context.