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WELCOME TO GUERRILLA TACTICS 2025

Guerrilla Tactics is RIBA's flagship annual conference for sole practitioners and small architectural practices - a key moment in the professional calendar to share ideas, gain practical insights, and explore what it takes to thrive in a fast-changing industry.

In an increasingly competitive and complex landscape, how can small practices define and communicate their core identity, their unique 'DNA', in ways that go beyond the work they produce?

This year, Guerrilla Tactics explores how architects can shape meaningful brands, refine their specialisms, and express their values in ways that resonate with clients, collaborators, and communities alike. We'll look at the elements that form a practice's identity – not only portfolios, but also culture, structure, ethics, and social impact.

As the profession faces economic uncertainty and evolving demands, the conference focuses on how small practices can stay agile while staying true to what makes them distinctive. Through talks, discussions, and panel sessions, you'll gain the skills and strategies to build a resilient, adaptable, and purpose-driven practice.

Hari Phillips
Valuing Architecture

Hari Phillips addresses one of the biggest challenges facing small practices: how to talk about money, cost and value with clarity and confidence. Architects need to understand their own business and the needs of their clients to effectively communicate their value and inform successful fee negotiations. Hari explores how a professional and open approach to money can build a more resilient and successful business to achieve your design objectives. Drawing on his own experience, he offers practical strategies to enable architects to lead with value, enhance their reputation, and strengthen their competitive edge in a fast-moving and ever-changing profession.

Nicola Rutt
Small Practice, Big Projects

Nicola Rutt, Founder and Director of Studio MULTI, reflects on the realities of running a small architecture practice while pursuing big projects and ambitious design work. In this honest and insightful talk, she shares the highs and lows of growth-navigating collaboration, winning work that aligns with your values, and adapting through the inevitable rise and fall of business cycles. With a focus on resilience and strategic decision-making, Nicola discusses lessons learned from leading a small practice with big vision, and how to remain agile, creative, and purposeful in a competitive and changing architectural landscape.

Wongani Mwanza
Radical Practice: Transforming Architecture Through Cooperatives

Can the architecture workers' cooperative model offer a truly regenerative and collaborative way of practising architecture? In this talk, Wongani Mwanza, director and architect at Transition by Design Cooperative, explores how operating as a cooperative enables a practice to function in radically different and equitable ways.

Drawing on lived experience at one of only six registered architectural cooperatives in the UK, Wongani will discuss how democratic member control and shared responsibility, navigating economic uncertainty through dynamic collaboration, embedding community concern into the core of practice, empowering workers through education, training, and access to information, and co-developing transparent pay policies and equitable working structures all shape the cooperative approach. This session offers practical reflections on how this model can shift power dynamics, build resilience, and align architectural practice with principles of social and environmental justice.

Al Scott
Living the Brand

In this talk, Al Scott explores how building a practice brand rooted in process and values can be a powerful tool for success — without being boxed in by typology or past projects. Drawing on the branding journey of IF_DO, whose very name speaks to an approach rather than a product, Al shares how communicating the "why and how" behind their work has resonated with clients and collaborators. He'll discuss how a living brand can foster creativity, attract diverse opportunities, and help practices navigate uncertainty and growth — making brand identity an active driver of agility, not just a name or a label.

Dr Kat Martindale
Embedding Research in Small Practice DNA

While interest in conducting research within architectural practice is growing, it is too often perceived as something only achievable by large studios. This session challenges that misconception, using case studies from small practices to demonstrate that research can be embedded effectively at any scale. It will explore what motivates practices to undertake research, the tangible and intangible benefits it can bring, and practical approaches to funding and resourcing research activities. Participants will also learn how and where research can be integrated into the design process and the everyday operations of a practice, making it a meaningful and achievable part of professional work.

Jane Middlehurst & Amy Poulsom

Empowered Clients, Empowered Practice: Building a Brand Around Agency

In a climate of budget pressures, complex briefs and rising expectations, today's architectural practices need more than a good portfolio — they need a clear, values-led offer. This talk explores how rethinking service structures around client agency can help define your practice identity and win the right kind of work.

Jane and Amy will share how framing your services as "Done for you / Done with you / DIY" allows clients to choose their level of involvement — and how being explicit about these structures can clarify your value, streamline your process, and build trust. They will discuss the cultural shift in practice: from gatekeeper to guide, from all-knowing expert to collaborative enabler.

Drawing on their own experience as a residential practice and founders of the renovation platform HomeNotes, they will show how empowering clients isn't just good ethics — it's good business, and why putting agency at the heart of your brand might be the most future-proof decision you make.

Darren Bray

Making Meaning: Communicating Practice Values with Clarity and Confidence

In a competitive and crowded marketplace, small practices need to communicate clearly what they stand for. In this session, Darren will explore how practices can meaningfully express their values, identity, and expertise through brand and narrative. Drawing on real-world experience, he will share strategies for framing a practice's story in ways that resonate with clients, collaborators, and peers, positioning work not merely as a service, but as a meaningful cultural contribution. Participants will gain insight into how to articulate what makes their studio distinctive, why this matters, and how a strong narrative can strengthen reputation, attract opportunities, and build lasting connections.

Saina Abollahzadeh

Human by Design: Practice in the AI Era

This talk will explore how Studio Tim Fu is reshaping architectural practice through the integration of AI, not just as a tool, but as a catalyst for addressing long-standing gaps in the traditional AEC workflow. It will examine how this shift is redefining the rhythm and pace of architectural work and reshaping the trajectory of architectural career. The session will also look at what it means to do human-centric design within an AI-enabled process, where speed, clarity, and creative focus are elevated. Finally, it will touch on how the studio identifies and cultivates talent suited to thrive in this fast-evolving landscape.

Esteban Londono & Joey Wilkinson

Operational Clarity: How Reality Capture Streamlines Architectural Practice

Architectural practice runs on information – from first site visit to final handover. Yet much of that knowledge is still captured and shared in fragmented ways. This session explores how reality capture can quietly enhance day-to-day operations, helping architects document, coordinate, and communicate with greater clarity. We'll look at how accurate spatial data supports collaboration across teams and disciplines, reduces time spent on site verification, and strengthens client understanding – without changing how architects design or think. The focus is on small, practical shifts that make everyday processes more reliable, freeing up time for what matters most: design.

Juliette Mitchell

Flip the Story

How can you put your clients at the centre of the story? It's certainly not by leading with your awards, the letters after your name, or a short history of everything you've ever done.

So, here's a different plan of action. Let's look your clients in the eye. Let's make this a story in which they see themselves, and a story which builds connection, confidence, and trust.

This is a short, sharp session to launch the afternoon, upend the narrative, and bring your clients into the very heart of our conversation.

Ben Powell

Foundations of Purpose: Values-driven Practice In Housing

This talk explores how Studio Manifest, a practice specialising in housing, developed its distinctive brand by embedding core values into its operations from the outset. Launched to bridge the gap between theory and practice, the studio offers a holistic and scalable architectural service focused on beautiful, enduring, sustainable, and cost-effective design. Grounded in three core principles – simplicity, active research, and a strong culture – the practice aims to re-establish the architect as the 21st-century Master Builder. The discussion will cover how simplifying services and leveraging technology allows the studio to scale efficiently, how engagement with current research informs sustainable and affordable solutions, and how cultivating a supportive workplace empowers the team to challenge the status quo. By defining its brand beyond individual projects, Studio Manifest demonstrates how architecture can create value, connect with clients, and contribute meaningfully to addressing the climate and housing crises.

Katie Fisher

Rewriting the Rules: Agency and Advocacy for Emerging Architects

In this talk, Katie Fisher explores how small practices and emerging architects can assert agency within traditional architectural structures. Drawing on lived experience and storytelling, she shares strategies for navigating the early stages of practice while making a meaningful impact, bridging the often-fractured space between academia and professional life. Through both personal reflection and systemic critique, Katie calls for a collective responsibility among architects to act as advocates as well as designers - shaping a more inclusive, responsive, and future-ready architectural DNA.

Speaker bios



Hari Phillips

Hari Phillips is an architect and co-founder of Bell Phillips, where he served as Director for two decades. Under his leadership, the practice grew into a respected studio known for delivering high-quality projects particularly in the housing, regeneration and public realm sectors.

Hari plays an active role in shaping the built environment through design advocacy and education. He is Chair of the Camden Design Review Panel and formerly co-chaired the London Legacy Development Corporation's Quality Review Panel. He also serves on several other design review panels across the UK.

Committed to supporting the next generation of architects, Hari provides guidance and mentoring to emerging practices, tutors at Ravensbourne University, and is an external examiner at the University of Brighton. He is a judge for the Housing Design Awards and the Civic Trust Awards and is a trustee of the Museum of Architecture.



Nicola Rutt

Nicola Rutt is the Founding Director of Studio MULTI and has over twenty years' experience transforming large, complex sites for workplace-led projects. Renowned for the award-winning *Here East* development – the reinvention of the London 2012 Olympic media hub – she went on to lead the concept design for Canada Water's Printworks and author the research study Industrial Rehab.

Re-use and innovation are central to Nicola's work, with recent projects reimagining late twentieth-century business parks and commercial buildings for more diverse communities. Formerly a Partner and Head of Workplace at Hawkins\Brown, she has delivered projects across the residential, education, arts, and workplace sectors. Nicola is a RIBA Awards judge, member of the TEDI Strategic Advisory Board, and Speaker for Schools. In 2020, she was a finalist for the *Architects' Journal* W Awards for Excellence in Practice, celebrating women's contributions to architecture.



Wongani Mwanza

Wongani Mwanza is a director, architect and participatory urban designer at Transition by Design Cooperative. He specialises in community-led design and engagement working on projects with an environmental and social justice focus. Wongani is an associate lecturer at Oxford Brookes University, a Design Council expert and a repeat judge for the AJ Architecture Awards. Wongani also sits on the Oversight and Grants Committees for the Church of England's Housing Project. Furthering his interest in housing provision and affordability, Wongani is engaging in research on the topic of intergenerational wealth, race and housing in the UK. He mentors students and recent graduates from underrepresented backgrounds through POC in Architecture CIC and Black Females in Architecture.



Al Scott

Al Scott is Co-Founding Director of IF_DO, where he leads the practice's sustainability agenda, economic oversight and project direction. With 20 years' experience, he specialises in innovative, environmentally conscious architecture across public and residential sectors. His current focus includes carbon-neutral housing solutions, adaptive re-use and circular economy projects.

Al is committed to knowledge sharing serving as a mentor for the Social Mobility Foundation, a guest critic at Westminster University, and a community governor at Old Newton School. Al is a non-executive director and advisory board member at Natural Building Systems-championing climate-positive, bio-based fabrication.



Dr Kat Martindale

Dr Kat Martindale is the founding director of Architecture + Urbanism Research Office. She trained and has practiced as an architect, urban design and planner in the UK and overseas, and was previously head of research and innovation at the RIBA and research director at BVN Architects and has taught at universities in the UK, Canada and Australia. Kat has spoken at academic and professional conferences and universities around the world. She has over 25 years' experience designing, conducting and delivering applied research on topics including housing and planning policy, social sustainability and community engagement, urban placemaking, sports development and mega events, environmental sustainability and ESG. Her articles and reports have been published by The Guardian, The Sunday Times, RIBA Journal, Architecture Today, the Architects Journal, BE News, PrimeResi, RIBA, RICS, RTPI, and the Department for Communities and Local Government, and is the author of Research for Architectural Practice (Routledge).





Jane Middlehurst and Amy Poulsom

Jane Middlehurst and Amy Poulsom are co-founders of HomeNotes, a digital platform that helps homeowners confidently manage their renovation projects. Drawing on their years of experience as residential architects at their practice *Poulsom Middlehurst*, they created HomeNotes to bring clarity, transparency and structure to what can be a confusing and stressful process.

Their work champions client empowerment and smarter ways of working — helping architects rethink how they communicate their value, structure their services, and build more resilient, purpose-driven practices.



Darren Bray

Darren Bray founded Studio B.A.D in 2019, following many years in boutique practice specialising in high-end residential design. Establishing his own studio allowed him to pursue a more socially conscious approach, using architecture to address the environmental, political, and socio-economic challenges of the 21st century.

With extensive experience across a diverse range of projects – from community-led schemes to bespoke homes – Darren previously held the role of Technical Director at the acclaimed PAD Studio. Passionate about education, he leads first-year design studios at the University of Reading, serves as an external examiner at the University of Hertfordshire, and is a Part 3 examiner at the University of Portsmouth.

A strong advocate for inclusivity within the profession, Darren is proud to contribute to the RIBA Role Models initiative, inspiring and supporting the next generation of architects while continuing his own journey of lifelong learning.



Saina Abdollahzadeh

Saina Abdollahzadeh is an ARB-registered architect and RIBA Chartered Member whose work sits at the intersection of design, technology, and storytelling. As Lead Architect at Studio Tim Fu, she guides a multidisciplinary team on projects across Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa, with a particular focus on integrating AI thoughtfully into architectural workflows. Combining experience in traditional practice with expertise in emerging technologies, Saina's work explores how generative tools can enhance creativity,

improve collaboration, and challenge conventional timelines, hierarchies, and definitions of practice. She is passionate about using innovation to expand the possibilities of architecture while maintaining design rigour and narrative depth.



Juliette Mitchell

Juliette Mitchell is not an architect and never has been. But for the last eight years she's been on a mission to help architects shift their mindset and get their story straight. As Architypal she's helped small practices feel comfortable in their skin, growing practices find their place, and large practices put the human back into their voice and narrative.

And now she's poured her thoughts, ideas and strategies into *The Storytelling Manual for Architects*. It's a quick-fire, practical book, and a heartfelt manifesto for a better way to write and talk about what you do.



Ben Powell

Ben Powell is an experienced Architect and the Founding Director of Studio Manifest. He shares the practice vision – to make architect designed low energy homes more attainable for all.

Ben is also a lecturer in Architecture at the University of Suffolk and fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Working across both academia, and the construction industry, he is focused on developing meaningful dialogue between these disciplines to improve the long-term impact that architects have on addressing some of the major societal issues that we face.

Ben has extensive experience designing beautiful, practical and liveable homes, whether it's an extension, full refurbishment or an entirely new build.

Outside of architecture, Ben has recently taken up kitesurfing and can be found along England's east coast beaches, camped up in his van waiting for the right swell.



Katie Fisher

Katie Fisher is an architect, mentor, and advocate recognised as a 2024 RIBA Rising Star for her work promoting inclusion and agency within the architectural profession. She teaches at Ravensbourne University and has held visiting roles at Westminster University and UCL. With experience delivering creative workshops in SEND and secondary schools, Katie is also an active mentor on programmes including the Design Museum's Ardagh Young Creatives, Built By Us FLUID, Open City Accelerate, and the Social Mobility Foundation.

With eight years' professional experience across housing, cultural, retrofit, and higher education sectors, her previous roles include work on estate regeneration at Grounded Practice Ltd and the Museum of London redevelopment at Stanton Williams Architects. Katie serves on the RIBA National Council and holds ambassador and committee roles with the Architects Benevolent Society. She is also an Architecture Foundation Young Trustee alumni, championing underrepresented voices in the industry.



Tomas Millar

Tomas Millar, co-director of Millar Howard Workshop, has been at the forefront of exploring the intersection of digital technology and traditional craftsmanship in the world of architecture for the past two decades. His pioneering adoption and innovative use of emergent technologies, such as virtual reality, photogrammetry, and drone scanning, have positioned him as a forward-thinking leader in the architectural field.

Yet, despite this embrace of the digital, his architecture remains deeply grounded in the tangible, physically rich experience of space. His practice's designs often nestle seamlessly into historical and natural environments, reflecting a materially rich ethos that speaks of respect for context and heritage.

In 2020, Tomas broadened his horizon by embarking on a fellowship at the University of Bath, delving into the exploration of data and its relationship with architecture. Part of the fellowship involved experiments with early versions of GPT3 the precursor to GPT4 and chatGPT.



Esteban Londono

Esteban Londono is a bilingual (English/Spanish) Solutions Engineer at Matterport, helping customers leverage spatial data and 3D digital twin technology to achieve their business goals. Since joining Matterport in 2018, he has served as Global Technical Lead and Technical Support Engineer, bringing deep expertise in technical solutions, product demos and product adoption. He has worked with customers across a wide range of industries, most notably in AEC and Manufacturing, where Matterport's technology drives measurable impact.



Joey Wilkinson

Joey Wilkinson is an Enterprise Account Executive at Matterport, partnering with architects, contractors and estate teams across the UK & Ireland to integrate 3D digital twins into everyday practice. His work spans Scan-to-BIM and 3D CAD/Point Cloud deliverables, Autodesk and Procore integrations, and programmes aligned to the Building Safety Act and the Digital Golden Thread. Joey supports organisations from healthcare trusts to utilities and telecoms, focusing on measurable ROI - faster surveys, clearer coordination and stronger asset data for handover and day-to-day operations.

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