

Bio:

Leah Alissa Bayer, AIA, NOMA, NCARB, is President of Architects FORA, a 100% women-owned, 100% virtual mid-sized architecture firm specializing in affordable housing. An alumni of Cal Poly, SLO, she first studied engineering then graduated with a B.Arch and Fine Arts Minor. Passionate about equity, business, and the future, Leah regularly advocates to improve the profession. Serving in leadership for nearly a decade, she is currently President of AIA Silicon Valley, an AIA California Board Director, member of AIA CA Practice and Planning and Finance Committees, 2022 AIA Women's Leadership Summit Co-Chair, and serves on NCARB's Futures Collaborative.

Philosophy:

We are at a pivotal point in time where the way we live and work is fundamentally reforming before us. While the magnitude of changes have been stunning, I am excited by what we might become, as individuals, a profession, and a whole.

I've spent the past decade observing our industry, listening to our diverse professionals' needs, and relentlessly pushing the boundaries of practice, service, and education because I believe in an innovative, just, and equitable future for all. As a result, I've taken radical approaches to practice over the years:

- Work from anywhere, anytime (since before the pandemic)
- Flat, transparent salaries (and overall financials / policies)
- One of extremely few firms owned solely by three (young) women (with an overall incredibly diverse staff)
- Research married with practice (everyone gets time and funds to become an SME)

I am dedicated to improving the profession through experimentation and advocacy and would bring an underrepresented yet important perspective to the Strategic Council that aligns extremely well with AIA's goals to address equity and climate action. I aim to represent the vision of architects in California making bold moves, and to advocate for a diverse, inclusive, authentic, and influential profession at the national level.