

## ACSA Candidate for At-Large Director (3-year term)

**Mara Marcu, University of Cincinnati**

### **Candidate Statement**

Since 2010, as an ACSA member, I have witnessed the expansion of the organization's core values from teaching and learning to research, scholarship, and creative practices. This also impacted on my growth as an educator and designer. It was timely—despite an incredibly challenging global pandemic—to see the focus being recast on pressing issues such as equity, social justice, and climate action. This is an exciting time for our discipline, and I am honored to be considered for the At-Large Director position.



Born in Romania prior to the 1989 Revolution, I have an innate appreciation for freedom, justness, and diversity. Although only a 9-year-old at the time, I remember vividly how life looked like in the absence of these values. I credit my formative years in Romania to have taught me the capacity for empathy and the ability to connect with others regardless of race, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, and religion. Somehow being born in a country marked by political unrest managed to teach me tolerance. Later, as an international student in the United States, I received an incredible education, traveled the world, and—at times—also experienced a deep sense of cultural anxiety. It is this upbringing nevertheless that helps me foster an equitable learning environment for my racially and ethnically diverse students both in the US and abroad.

Besides the Glenn Murcutt International Class in Australia, my education includes a Master of Architecture from Harvard Graduate School of Design and a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Houston, where I received the “Best in Show Design Award”. This granted me acceptance to the design build Ghost Laboratory with Brian MacKay-Lyons, in Nova Scotia - Canada. The widely published Shobac Cottages we built are now open to the wider public. Following, I worked for BSKS Architects, Rafael Vinoly Architects, Ed Mills and Associates, in New York City—and Design Lab Houston. Each of these opportunities provided a diverse experience of responsibilities and environments.

After my fellowship at the University of Virginia, I joined the University of Cincinnati School of Architecture and Interior Design. There I focused on technology and robotic fabrication, hosted the weeklong 2015 ACADIA International Conference, and received numerous grants and awards. In 2016 I was invited to teach as a Visiting Professor at the American University of Sharjah in the UAE. My recent research investigates the role of artificial intelligence applications in architecture and addresses climate change through material research such as recycled concrete 3d printing and biogenic aggregates. Similarly, my teaching encompasses coordinating the second semester of the Master of Architecture I program, advising thesis projects, and teaching graduate seminars in computation.

It is this dichotomy of experiences that shapes my current practice, MMXIII LLC—a design research collaborative. The technological component of my work favors the peculiar and the absurd over the ever-changing architectural style. Central to my interests have been questions of representation, processes of making and thinking, urbanism, and pedagogy with a penchant for the flawed, the outcast, the oddly gendered, the ludic and the nostalgic. My work has been published and exhibited in conference proceedings such as ACSA and ACADIA, journals such as IJAC and venues such as the Venice Biennale.

Administratively, and aside from leading various committees and coordinating studios, lecture courses, and study abroad programs, I have served on the ACADIA Board of Directors for six years in various capacities such as Steering Committee Representative, Development Officer, IJAC representative to Acadia, Technology and Media officer, and have been ACADIA's Secretary for four years. Academically, I have administered several editorial efforts such as the Editorial Board for the International Journal for Architectural Computing and co-editor for the Architectural Science Review journal.

In an increasingly divisive world, I hope to contribute to ACSA's mission and foster an equitable environment for creativity, climate action, research, and education. I bring to the table a stark commitment to intellectual content and scholarship, and a clear hands-on understanding of being part of a board of directors—to include fund raising, publishing, and administration. In short, I believe my diverse experiences and skillsets can be of service to an exceptional organization.

## Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae—Mara Marcu

Mara Marcu is Associate Professor of Architecture with tenure at the University of Cincinnati and runs a maximalist design office entitled MMXIII LLC (eM eM Thirteen). Specializing in architecture, the research-oriented collaborative structures work around various collection lines: MMI, MMII, MMIII... and so on. Their focus ranges from mathematical experiments, the natural versus the artificial, breeding taxonomies to emergent primitives. Marcu co-established the Architectural Robotics Lab at the University of Cincinnati (UC) and received the Outstanding Faculty Award in 2017. Her book *Echos*—published with Actar and awarded Top 50 Books and Covers by the American Institute of Graphic Arts—is the first compendium in the history of the school that documents graduate and undergraduate research at the University of Cincinnati. Her research has been published and exhibited widely. A project expanding on augmented reality was displayed at the “Time Space Existence” show at Palazzo Bembo, organized with the occasion of the 2018 Venice Biennale. Currently, Marcu works on a cluster of projects documenting and reinterpreting late Eastern European Modernism.

### EDUCATION

2010 Glenn Murcutt International Master Class | Sydney, Australia | Master Class Certificate  
2009 Harvard University, Graduate School of Design | Cambridge, USA | Master of Architecture  
2005 University of Houston | Houston, USA | Bachelor of Architecture  
2000 Ion Mincu University of Architecture | Bucharest, Romania | Pre-Architecture Program

### ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

2019- University of Cincinnati, SAID | USA | Associate Professor | with tenure  
2013–19 University of Cincinnati, SAID | USA | Assistant Professor | full-time tenure track  
2016 American University of Sharjah | UAE | Visiting Assistant Professor  
2011–13 University of Virginia | Charlottesville, USA | Virginia Teaching Fellow  
2010–11 University of Houston | Houston, USA | Lecturer

### SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

#### Books

2018 Marcu, Mara, ed. *ECHOS*. Barcelona: Actar. December. Print.  
ISBN 9781948765046. Library of Congress Publication Data: 2018942687

#### Book Chapters

2020 Marcu, Mara; Tang, Ming; Schueler, Adam. “BUBBLEgum”. *Data and Design: Methods of Computational Design Strategies*, edited by Marcella del Signore, Nancy Diniz, and Frank Melendez. Taylor & Francis/Routledge. Print.

#### Edited Journals

2019 Christenson, Mike; Gerber, David J.; Jabi, Wassim; Marcu, Mara; Wit, Andrew John, ed. *Architectural Science Review Special Issue: Means, Methods, Machines and Making in Architecture*. Vol. 6, No. 5, Taylor Francis/Routledge. October. Print.  
2018 Clayton, Mark; Daas, Mahesh; Gerber, David J.; Jabi, Wassim; Marcu, Mara; Parlac, Vera; Vasey, Lauren; Wit, Andrew John, ed. *The International Journal of Architectural Computing: Artificial Intelligence and Robotics in Architecture: Autonomy, Agency and Indeterminacy*. Vol. 16, Issue 4. Sage Publishers. December. Print.

#### Journals

2016 Marcu, Mara; Ming, Tang. “Physics Simulation & Form Seeking in Education”, in *International Journal of Architecture, Engineering and Construction*, <http://www.iasdm.org/journals/index.php/ijaec/issue/current>. February. Print.

#### Conference Proceedings

2018 Marcu, Mara; Tang, Ming. “Optical Illusions of Volume: Simulation-based form finding and fabrication”, *ACSA 2018 The Ethical Imperative Paper Proceedings*. ACSA Press. May. Print.  
2018 Marcu, Mara; Tang Ming. “Augmented Bubbles”, *ACSA 2018 The Ethical Imperative*  
2017 Marcu, Mara; Tang Ming. “Augmented Coral”, *ACADIA 2017 Disciplines Disruption Projects Catalog of the 37th Annual Conference of the Association for Computer Aided Design in Architecture*. USA: Acadia Publishing Company. October 2017. p. 250-255. Print.