

Emerging Talent: Acre Architects

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Monica Adair, Stephen Kopp. Photo by Scott Munn

Seven years after launching, Acre Architects has piled up multiple accolades: they were named one of Canada's top emerging design firms by Twenty + Change, and selected for Wallpaper magazine's 2016 directory of rising-star practices from around the globe. Co-founder and studio lead Monica Adair, MRAIC, 39, also received the RAIC's 2015 Young Architect Award. It's heady stuff for the seven-person team led by Adair and co-founder Stephen Kopp, 40.



The recently completed Rose Coast Residence references local barn typologies. Photo by Mark Hemmings

Partners in business and life, the two left busy careers in New York a decade ago, stored their belongings with Adair's father in New Brunswick, and traveled in Europe while planning their next endeavour. "We didn't originally plan to settle in St. John," says Adair. "But when we returned, we discovered that we have a lot of freedom here to explore new directions—there are no constraints in terms of 'how things have always been done.'"



Picaroons General Store is a community hub in uptown St. John, New Brunswick. Acre is currently renovating an 1885 railway roundhouse as the company's new brewery and head office. Photo by Mark Hemmings

Adair and Kopp describe their practice as “storied architecture,” designing buildings that inspire people to live great stories. It’s an approach that has resonated in projects such as Picaroons Traditional Ales, a microbrewery set in a reimagined 1885 former railway roundhouse, and Port City Royal, a top Canadian restaurant in a once-neglected heritage storefront. There are also new builds, like the airy Tinker’s Orchard, designed to take advantage of breathtaking orchard and river views, and an increasing number of private residences for discerning clients.



The Centennial is a contemporary bachelor’s suite addition to an existing Saint Andrews home. Photo by Sean McGrath

Presently, the studio is collaborating with the mayor of Grand Falls, New Brunswick, on an exceptional new fire station and teaming up with comedian Shaun Majumder to design a summer home in Newfoundland. And if that’s not enough, they’ve got three research projects in process—including a submission to the Venice Biennale.