

**Lola Sheppard**, B.ARCH, M.ARCH, OAQ, MRAIC

Lola Sheppard is a registered architect in Quebec and educator based in Toronto. She received her B.Arch from McGill University and her M.Arch from Harvard Graduate School of Design. She is a Partner in Lateral Office, Toronto and Associate Professor at the University of Waterloo, School of Architecture. Sheppard worked for six years in Europe, most notably at Jean Nouvel (Paris), Erik van Egeraat (Rotterdam), and Allies and Morrison (London). She returned to North America as the Lefevre Fellow for Emerging Practitioners at Ohio State University in 2003 and moved to Toronto in 2005.

In 2003, she founded Lateral Office with Mason White, a design firm that operates at the intersection of architecture, urbanism, and landscape, and is deeply committed to design of the public realm. The work of Lateral Office embraces architecture as the interplay of dynamic spaces formed out of and responsive to a context's environment and history, and understands Architecture as a by-product of complex networks within ecology, culture, and forms of urbanism. Lateral Office's work is often situated within difficult, marginal or overlooked sites, where the systems and practices that determine these environments must be uncovered and rethought. In these situations, design is not about introducing foreign elements, but rather, it is about recalibrating existing elements - whether programmatic, environmental or physical, in order to reveal what is dormant in a situation, latent but overlooked. The themes that run throughout Lateral Office's projects –interactivity and adaptability - operate at multiple scales, from large urban projects, territorial landscapes, to buildings and installations.

Sheppard is deeply invested in the intersection of Architecture and Nature. Increasingly, the distinctions between built and natural, urban and non-urban, sustainable and not, are blurring. Sheppard is interested in architecture's role within the ambiguous conditions of our built environment. Sheppard earlier work investigated the capacity to rethink exurban development and the challenges of post-industrial waterfronts. Ongoing is masterplanning and urban design work in northern cities including Reykjavik, Klaksvik / Faroe Islands and Nuuk.

Over the past three years, Sheppard and colleagues have been pursuing teaching and design work entitled *Next North*, which examines architecture's capacity to sustain local ecosystems and cultures in the Canadian north. Travels to Iqaluit, Whitehorse, Inuvik, and Tuktoyaktuk, rendered tangible to Sheppard the unique challenges that the North puts forward to architecture. How might architecture enable dispersed communities to share social and cultural resources through new programmatic and building typologies? How might one build *with* climate, rather than against it? What does public realm mean for communities with a rich of tradition of nomadic life? *Next North* proposes that rather than import southern models, one can rewire existing systems, and harness local knowledge to imagine architecture and infrastructure that operate through geographic scalability, environmental adaptability, and multi-valent programmability.

Lateral Office was awarded the Holcim Foundation Gold Award North America in 2011 for their proposal Arctic Food Network, and were awarded the 2010 Professional Prix de Rome from the Canada Council for the Arts for their project Emergent North. The *Next North* work has been exhibited in Fairbanks Alaska (2012); Reno Museum of Art, Reno NV (2011); the Gallatin School, New York (2011); Cambridge Galleries, Cambridge ON (2011); Pearson Airport, Toronto (2011) and Extension Gallery, Chicago (2010).

On Lateral's work, the Canada Council jury wrote: "Lateral Office shines in their ability to engage in a conversation that moves across architecture, landscape design and through all scales of intervention, including urbanism, regional and even national infrastructure planning. The issues they address

remained outside of the architectural imagination for too long; their decision to focus on research and share their findings will make it possible for a broad community of actors to engage in the search for appropriate solutions.”

Lola Sheppard is one of the founding Directors of InfraNet Lab, an exploratory initiative launched in 2008. InfraNet Lab is a design research laboratory, looking at the role that infrastructures and networks play in our environment. InfraNet Lab produces the journal *Bracket: Architecture, Environment, Digital Culture*. ([www.brkt.org](http://www.brkt.org)) Lola is co-editor of *Bracket [goes Soft]* and *Bracket [at Extremes]* (2011). Lola is also co-editor of the series *Twenty+Change*, a biennale exhibition and publication dedicated to disseminating the work of emerging architects in Canada.

Lateral Office has won or been shortlisted for competitions internationally, including WPA 2.0 (2009), Vatnsmyri Masterplan, Reykjavik (2007), Orphan Spaces in Toronto (2006), Metis Garden (2005), Memphis Riverfront Competition (2003).

Lateral Office received the Emerging Voices Award from the Architectural League of New York in 2011. They were recipients of the ACSA Faculty Design Awards in 2012 and 2011. Lateral Office and InfraNet Lab’s work is the subject of *COUPLING: Strategies for Infrastructural Opportunism*, published by Princeton Architectural Press (2011). They were selected as one of five finalists for the competition WPA 2.0 run by City Lab and UCLA. In 2005, the practice was selected for the Young Architects Forum from the Architectural League of New York.

Sheppard’s work within Lateral Office has been exhibited at National Building Museum, Washington CD (2009); Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto; Walker Center for the Arts, Minneapolis (2008), Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh (2008); Yale University, School of Architecture, New Haven (2009); Architecture Gallery, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto (2008); Design Exchange, Toronto; YZ Artists Space, Toronto (2007); Urban Center, New York (2005); Ohio State University, Columbus (2004); and Cornell University, Ithaca (2005).

Sheppard has taught at the University of Waterloo, California College of Arts, University of Toronto, and Ohio State University. She has served as a visiting critic at the Universities of Michigan, Buffalo, Rice, British Columbia, Toronto, McGill, Savannah College of Art and Design, Cornell, Yale, and the Architectural Association in London. She has lectured in numerous cities in North America and Europe.

Lola Sheppard’s work bridges architecture, territorial investigations, teaching, curation and publication. In so doing, she has set a new model for emerging practice, research and experimentation.