



Putting culture in architecture

Master of Architecture Graduate Marni Reti is a proud Palawa and Ngāti Wai woman and the

winner of the 2021 NSW Architects' Medallion, Marni is one of just a handful of Indigenous architecture graduates working in Australia today.

Her work brings an important perspective to this often-Eurocentric field by raising the profile of Australia's rich Indigenous architectural traditions.

"I want to see architecture that's ingrained in Country and cultural knowledge [that is] specific to Australia," she says.

"Our Indigenous cultures are unique and we should be celebrating them. All Australians should be proud of our ongoing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures."

Marni completed the UTS Bachelor of Architecture in 2018 before enrolling in the master's degree the following year. She was

one of the first recipients of the UTS Droga Indigenous Architecture Scholarship, a high-profile funding scheme for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander architecture students.

"It was really a symbolic thing for me to know that UTS and people like the Droga family were willing to invest in students like me," she says.

"It just showed that UTS cared about this issue of representation that I felt like I'd been yelling about

"You're an architect that's trained in a western institution, and then you have elders who have 80,000 years of history and knowledge about Country."

into a void for three years."

Today, Marni is based at Kaunitz Yeung Architecture, a Sydney-based firm known for

delivering architecture projects with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These include the walu-win wellbeing centre in Orange and the award-winning PAMS Healthcare Hub in Newman, Western Australia.

She also remains strongly connected to UTS where she actively supports the School of Architecture to expand its Indigenous curriculum. In early 2021, Marni and her employer, David Kaunitz, led a Master of

Architecture studio subject to the small town of Wilcannia in Western NSW. Here, they taught students to work in consultation with the local Barkindji community to deliver architectural solutions to a range of community challenges.

Studios like these prepare future architects to work effectively with and for Indigenous communities, as well as to connect their professional practice to Australia's unique



Marni Reti, proud Palawa and Ngāti Wai woman

architectural and Indigenous history.

"It's a two-way street of communication and learning and valuing each group's skillsets equally," says Marni, who will lead a 2022 master's studio in partnership with Kaunitz and urban designer Evy Anwar.

"You're an architect that's trained in a western institution, and then you have elders who have 80,000 years of history and knowledge about Country.

"It's understanding those as equal, valuable pieces of knowledge that work together."





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