



INTRO

London based architecture firm Studio ID has found its very own visual style and approach to architecture works. Czech-born Dagmar Zvonickova is not afraid to break new ground and explore novel ways to challenge the user with her designs. At just 24 years old, she co-founded Studio ID alongside Ivana Linderova, an architect she met while studying Architecture.

The human experience is the key drive of Studio ID's designs. When developing a project, understanding the site and the future users is always our first step and predetermines every other step in the design process; from the choice of materials and lighting, to the final product specification.

Studio ID's proposals always tell a story - a story based on the client's vision, the history and the memory of the site and its users.

Hey Dagmar! Let's say you just met a stranger at an event from a different industry all together, how would you briefly explain to them what you do at Studio ID?

Hey! Sure, let me try: What we do at Studio ID is not simply about the design. Our approach is going beyond that, or at least we aim for that. We try to combine our design skills, together with strategic thinking and branding. The starting point for each project is the client's vision, which creates a platform for us to build upon. As you mentioned in the intro, our projects always tell a story, a story about a certain opportunity rather than a certain problem. We believe that a good story is the key element of any successful project.

What is a typical day at work for you?

I would say there is not such a thing as a typical day for us, or at least not just yet. Things happens so fast and unexpectedly, and as we are a young start-up company, there is so many things we still need to do in order to get all set up! Additionally, next to running the company I am currently also finishing my Master's degree, so you can imagine last few months has been quite crazy for me, but I love that!

Have other experiences in your life influence where you've ended up now, and do you think you would be in the same place without them?

This question reminds me of one of my favourite speech by Steve Jobs, when he talks about "the dots that will eventually connect". Looking back, everything that happened in the past, no matter how hard it felt at the certain moment, now makes perfect sense. I mean even if you look at "the story" behind studio ID me and Ivana have met about 8 years ago, our paths has then split as each of us went to gain the experience from different parts of the world. However, we always somehow managed to keep in touch, and when I have decided to move to London, she mentioned that in her current office they were looking for a new team member at that time. And although I was invited for interviews in few "star-architects" offices - such as Richard Rogers or Thomas Heatherwick – the way she spoke about her current placement made me want to join her. I guess I was attracted to the amount of responsibility she has been given, that I knew I wouldnt be able to gain in the larger offices. During the two years we were working together on several projects we have realised we are actually a perfect match - and that is how Studio ID was born.

As a team you've lived and gained professional experience in the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Belgium, Austria, Czech Republic and Slovakia. Do you feel like you have taken inspiration from the different places that you've lived to achieve this interesting and unique balance and aesthetic in design?

For sure, traveling and the discovery of new places and cultures is one of the most enriching activities not only for architects or designers, but I would argue for anybody in general. Beeing able to work closely together with people from all around the world, and see their different ways of thinking and working approaches definitely broadened my horizons and opened new opportunities for me.

How can you ensure that you keep your personal style and creative integrity while working with different clients?

Our approach to design is refusing the idea of a "personal style", we see each project as a unique "story" that requires a unique approach.

Studio ID was established in early 2017 . Starting a new business is always exciting and scary at the same time! When you first opened your studio was there one area regarding the business side of things that you were less confident in than others?

The whole thing actually happened so fast. I have always knew I want to work for myself. Me and Ivana got on really well while working together, we have been playing with the idea of starting something for quite some time and then suddenly one project came after another and we thought it was the kind of now or never situation, so we went for it. And I think precisely because everything happened so quickly and there was just so much of an excitement we didn't have the time to think about our fears. Moreover, being two of us, it definitely increased my confidence. I believe that the differences in our personalities – her being very organised, precise and detail focused and me being quite rational, easily excited, and spontaneous is what makes us the perfect match.

Was it hard to get your first clients?

As I mentioned before, the clients actually came prior we set up the company. So we were really lucky in this sense.

Were you ever scared to talk about money and was it difficult to decide what to charge on your first projects?

Actually, since I was previously working as a project lead on several smaller scale projects, these conversations were nothing new to me. Moreover, being a small scale start-up office allowed us to offer quite competitive pricing, and so we see the money talks, rather than something to be scared about, as our advantage.

I'm still blown away that you opened your studio so young. It's refreshing to see that if you're talented it doesn't matter what age you are. How has social media played a part in getting exposure and or clients for your studio?

Social media has made our lives as entrepreneurs so much easier! Whether we speak about Instagram, Facebook, or LinkedIn - all these platforms opened up a great deal of opportunity. And actually, we have been given several projects in the past precisely just because of them!

Do you have any good stories from a project you have worked on?

There are so many great stories that it is almost hard to pinpoint one. But here is quite recent one: When we were dressing a show flat in Soho, we were kind of running out of the budget towards the end, and therefore we have decided to create the artworks for the proposed gallery wall on our own. Till now, I am quite sure that the apartment got sold precisely because of that wall haha!

Can you tell us anything about the projects you're currently working on?

There are several exciting projects coming up at the moment. My currently favourite one is a project located in central London rethinking the shopping experience in today's online world. Another one we have just landed is a project that rethinks the current perception of hotels. Rather than another "just over the night" place, we are proposing a hotel that will become the destination itself.

If given the opportunity to try a new direction or type of project, what would it be?

Currently, we are starting with the VR technology, so that is our biggest challenge at the moment. I think it is unbelievably powerful tool for architects and designers, and I am sure it will see a big boom in the near future.

Have you had some kind of mentor along the way?

I wouldn't say there was one mentor though out my whole journey. (If I don't count my mom, who always kept on pushing my boundaries further, and been a great support and inspiration to me.) There was however few very influential people throughout my life, who taught me that if you want something and you work hard, you can, achieve anything. One of them would be for example Eva Jiricna, one of my previous employers, who I admire not only professionally but also personally. I admire her mainly for the fact, that although she has achieved so much throughout her career, she never lost herself.

Can you describe the creative process of a project? Did the client give you the freedom to explore many possibilities or did you have certain guidelines you needed to abide by?

Usually what happens is that the clients know the reasons why they want something, they also have a kind of vision of what it could be, and how much it should cost, this information then represents a starting point for us, from which we draw the story of their project. Rather than approaching this story in a conventional way, we always try to go beyond the traditional way of thinking and open new possibilities through which the brief can be approached.

How important is storytelling throughout the creative process of your projects?

Storytelling is the key element of our creative process, not only it helps us to define the design approach; it also helps so much while presenting. People remember stories not facts, that is how the human brain works. Let me show you an example, if I tell you a story about the way sandwich was invented you will probably not remember who invented it or when, but you will remember the story about the guy who liked to snack while playing the cards. And therefore came up with the idea of a piece of beef in between slices of toast, which allowed him doing both eat and play the cards in the same time. It has been proved that hearing stories makes people activate their brains and feel engaged and therefore I would say storytelling is one of the best ways to present your work in any sort of business.

FIRE SHOTS [short answers]

Favourite building in London?

Barbican Centre

City where you would love to live in the future?

I love the idea of not knowing

Designer you admire?

Joseph Dirand

Best place to meet clients?

On site

Thank you so much for spending a bit of time with us!