Inspirational Architect Will Alsop Passes Away

Will Alsop, the British architect, visual artist and academic who designed OCAD University’s iconic Sharp Centre for Design, died on Saturday May 12, 2018 at the age of 70 after a brief illness. Will Alsop’s buildings, most recently Finch West and Pioneer Village subway station, are renowned for visual clarity, playfulness and a mix of sculptural and painterly detail. Marcos Rosello, director of dLl Design, which Alsop set up in 2011, shared the following, ”Will has inspired generations and impacted many lives through his work. It is a comfort to know that due to the nature of Will’s work and character, he will continue to inspire and bring great joy... His design ethos, essentially to ‘make life better’, is evident in the architecture of his buildings and their surrounding communities. We will miss him greatly.” OCAD U can concur. Alsop understood the transformative impact that the Sharp Centre would have for OCAD University, worked closely with both the university and local community and delivered a building that continues to act as both brand and beacon for our school. The Sharp Centre has been credited with kicking off architectural creativity in Toronto, according to Nick Patch of the Toronto Star, ”Perhaps some amount of credit is due to Alsop’s checkerboard in the sky, which with playful irreverence, set a bar for risk-taking architecture in the city just ahead of a transformative boom in reimagining Toronto’s cultural icons.” Alsop stayed close to OCAD U, acting as Adjunct Professor and occasional sessional instructor and connecting with the OCAD U community when in Toronto.

By 2000, when he began design of the Sharp Centre, Will Alsop and was elected to the Royal Academy, won the Sterling award and two RIBA awards, and was appointed OBE (Order of the British Empire). In the last decades his work has been focused on large international commissions (in particular in China) as well as residential housing and TTC stations in Toronto. Will Alsop sat on the architectural advisory boards for Wandsworth and Kensington & Chelsea Councils. He was Professor of Architecture at TU Vienna, Professor of Architecture at Canterbury School of Architecture, UCA and in 2018, received the degree of Honorary Doctor of Design (HonDDes) from the University of Greenwich, in recognition of his achievements.