

New York, August 2021

Interview with Hannah Wong during her 12 weeks' internship at TSNY:

Hannah, this was your second internship with Transsolar. Has your opinion on climate engineering changed?

I feel that my understanding of what climate engineering is and how it is incorporated into the built environment has expanded. Especially after the pandemic, there is a renewed focus on health and wellness of not only the occupants, but also the spaces themselves. There is also a renewed sense of commitment to conservation, biodiversity, and connection to nature that has become intrinsic in the work on sustainability and thermal comfort that I think should be embraced.

How was your second internship different from the first?

During my first internship in 2017, I had little to no experience in climate engineering and sustainability and was primarily learning the tools to perform simulations and analytics. This year, as an architectural designer, I focused more on learning the concepts behind our analyses to understand how I could integrate what I've learned at Transsolar in my future practice.

Were your expectations met? If so, how? Was there anything surprising?

Yes! I worked on many projects and performed many types of tasks as I did in my previous internship, but I was surprised how much more autonomy I had during this internship.

Your internship experience in one sentence:

My internship was a fulfilling experience where I worked on a great diversity of projects with a great diversity of people on very important work.

Your internship experience in one word:

Challenging.

What were the challenges during your internship that can be assigned to Covid19 limitations? How did Transsolar address this?

When I was working remotely during the first few weeks of my internship on the west coast, the time difference made scheduling difficult. Coming to New York and working in office really helped, but because a lot of people were working from home or remotely I didn't get as much interaction with the team as I would have liked.

Did your internship meet your needs anyway? Which modifications would you advise Transsolar to allow the best experience and learning results during internship under Covid19 restrictions?

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Yes! I would advise as many activities in person as possible while maintaining equity across the team.

What were some of the most useful experiences during your internship?

Some of the most useful experiences were direct interactions with clients, architects, and engineers, rather than just being an observer.

What is your favorite Transsolar project and why?

My favorite Transsolar project that I worked on was the Pandemic Resilient Housing with AAFE. It was very interesting to understand the environmental impacts of the pandemic and to think about how design could help with the socioeconomic inequities in housing. It was also very important to me as an Asian-American to work with an organization that focused on the health and safety of our community within our cultural context.

What did you like the most about your internship? What did you not like so much?

I enjoyed working on so many projects! Being able to see diverse work and many different working styles and methodologies is very inspiring and helpful in pursuing my own career as an architect. Unfortunately, we were understaffed and I often felt I was taking on several responsibilities without proper guidance or on unreasonable timelines.

What are your next steps after the internship?

I am starting my second year of my M. Arch at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. In addition, I work as a data analytics and diversity, equity, and inclusion consultant and a social media startup and a researcher for the Critical Design Lab on disability and design.

Thanks for a great summer, TSNY!