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## NIALL SAVAGE

In his application to architecture school **Niall Savage (M.Arch.89)** wrote, "I may not have been a born architect, but I believe I was born to learn how to be one." It is this idea of the education of the architect that continues to define Niall's approach to both teaching and practice, and to the setting of goals for the future.

After completing a B.A. in English at the University of Alberta in his hometown of Edmonton, Niall found the studio culture and the world of architecture at first a challenging shift in thinking but ultimately the real direction for his life. "I loved architecture school," he says, "the people, the environment, but mostly the way we learn – through design and the study of the language of architecture, its history, technology and unique method of representation."

After graduating from TUNS Niall planned to return to the UK where he had spent an earlier year in London, but life and fate had other designs for him. He found himself with a life-partner from Halifax and a seat in the office of **Brian MacKay-Lyons (B.Arch.78)**, where he had previously spent a work term. The 2nd phase of the education began. During the 6 years Niall worked with Brian he learned the idea of excellence, played a part in many published works and shared the recognition from many architectural awards including 2 Governor General's Medals. Throughout this period Niall simultaneously pursued a career in teaching, first as an assistant, and eventually as a half-time faculty member. This dual route is central to his belief about the education of the architect, where practice informs teaching and teaching keeps practice focused.

In 1996 Niall stepped out on his own with a couple of projects, a growing teaching commitment, and a chance to team up with another TUNS grad in a similar place. Savage Stewart Architecture with **Jennifer Stewart (M.Arch.90)** completed some 20 projects over the next 4.5 years.

Today, Niall is interested in making a contribution to the school and to the profession. Being continuously involved in the development of the revised program for the school was a satisfying undertaking, while developing courses in design, professional practice, and in the newly formed Representation teaching stream are academic high points. "As a graduate of the school who is now a member of the faculty, I am proud of

the work being done by our alumni and my classmates." The Prix de Rome has been won by 4 grads from Niall's era: **Michael Carroll (M.Arch.88)** and **Danita Rooyakers (M.Arch.89)**, **Andrew King (M.Arch.90)**, and **Peter Yeadon (M.Arch.89)**, who Niall visited in Rome. "There is something about this school and the foundation of our program that prepares our students to make a contribution to architecture in this country."

In collaboration with **Grant Wanzel**, Niall has been learning the role of the architect in the design of high quality affordable housing. 2 of 4 projects for an urban site in Halifax have been built, including Metro, a 19 unit apartment building for hard to house singles, and the Creightons, 6 semi-detached houses occupied this fall by their new owners. The next 2 phases include an 11 unit apartment building and a 36 unit condominium development.

Niall Savage Architecture has been busy with other projects like Spiritspa with **Tyler Sharp (M.Arch.02)**; The Music Room, a small concert hall in Halifax; 2 private houses on the south coast; a 60 unit retirement residence in Bedford with **Terrance Galvin (M.Arch.88)**; and, either fearlessly or masochistically, a renovation to the Faculty's lobby, now nearing completion. This work has recently been published in *Arts Atlantic*, *Canadian Architect*, and *Building Art*. Recent awards include Lieutenant Governor's Medals of Excellence for Metro and The Music Room.

"My goals remain the same," says Niall, "to learn to be a better teacher and to learn to do a very good building." In both cases it is the learning part that matters. Niall can be reached at [niall.savage@dal.ca](mailto:niall.savage@dal.ca).



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