

College of Fellows Lecture  
APT Conference, Seattle, Washington  
Date: Thursday, October 12, 2023  
Time: 7:00 -8:30pm (PT)  
Location: Town Hall Seattle, Seattle, Washington

*Lecture Title:*

**Lessons from Global South: Community Engagement for Decolonization and Decarbonization of the Built Environment**

**Abstract:** At 82, architect Yasmeen Lari is forging a path in fortifying Pakistan's rural communities living on the front lines of climate change. Sharing vernacular building knowledge has been at the core of Lari's work since she left the commercial sector of architecture. In her retirement, she has witnessed the devastating 2005 earthquake and torrential flooding in 2012 and continuing severe changes in the climate. The continuing flooding in Pakistan have caused devastation on an unprecedented scale, leaving one third of the country under water and 33 million people displaced ---- she points out 'they are absolutely down to climate change'. And the focus on immediate aid needs to go further, to long-term rebuilding and ensuring those saved from drowning do not succumb to disease. Her practice and its approach to solving problems is focused on the humanitarian basics of clean water, food and shelter.

Lari, Pakistan's first female architect, left a lifetime of multimillion-dollar projects in the megacity of Karachi to develop pioneering flood-proof houses. In the last two decades, the first female architect of Pakistan seeks to mitigate the "effects of climate change by reducing its carbon footprint" in her home country and help others in the international community. Yasmeen will share the many challenges of doing so and how she was able to activate and engage communities in Pakistan to work towards decarbonization of the built environment — lessons from the Global South - a significant pledge coming from an architect who recognizes that the construction industry she was associated with is responsible for nearly 40% of global climate emissions.

In this lecture, Yasmeen will share her ideas, inspiration, and lessons for decarbonization of the Built Environment as evidenced by her recent experiences and her Foundation's work to promote low tech building techniques to expand on the training of villagers displaced by the floods to build prefab sustainable shelters.



**Bio:** Yasmeen Lari has shown us how architecture changes lives for the better. In 2021, Yasmeen Lari set up the Pakistan chapter of the International Network of Traditional Building, Architecture and Urbanism (INTABU). In 2019, her name was among the 60 women who contributed most to 60 years of UNESCO; in 2018, she won the World Habitat Awards for the Pakistan *chulha* (low-cost smokeless stoves that became an enterprise for rural women) and in 2016 she accepted the Fukuoka Prize for Asian Art and Culture from Japan. In Pakistan, has been bestowed with the highest civilian awards of Sitara-e-Imtiaz in 2006 and Hilal-i-Imtiaz in 2014. She has an honorary degree from the Politecnico di Milano in 2021 and an honorary Doctor of Design from Oxford Brookes University in 2023.

Most recently, RIBA announced its 2023 Royal Gold Medalist recognizing Yasmeen Lari as an architect and humanitarian hero.i. RIBA president Simon Allford is quoted as saying: 'An inspirational figure, she moved from a large practice centred on the needs of international clients to focusing solely on humanitarian causes.