

# “At ETH Zurich I learned how to give my all – and how to take joy in that”



Tilla Theus studied architecture at ETH Zurich. Today she heads the architecture firm "Tilla Theus und Partner" in Zurich, which specialises in sophisticated urban construction projects and reconstructing and renovating buildings of historical significance.

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ETH alumna Tilla Theus is one of the most prominent contemporary architects. She tells us which places at ETH are close to her heart and why she has decided to lend her support to scholarships for today's generation.

*Can you describe the first hour of a normal working day for you?*

**TILLA THEUS** – I need some time to wake up. Then I read the newspapers while drinking warm water. After my morning fitness routine (pilates, balance and strength) I usually show up at the office at around 9 in the morning – where I then stay until around 9 in the evening.

*What lessons did you learn at ETH that still stick with you today?*

How to give my all – and how to take joy in that. If you fail, analyse why and then immediately start over with what you've learned.

*Do you have any special memories connected to your time at ETH?*

We spent a lot of our days as students in the “catacombs”, where we cooked, conversed and basically lived, for all

practical purposes. At that time there was a very likeable custodian who worked there, and he would open the door for us just before midnight so that we could still catch the last tram. And of course there were the impressive lectures given in the Audimax by architecture icons like Louis Kahn, James Stirling and Aldo Rossi.

*What's your favourite place at ETH and why?*

In particular I like the narrow walkway that goes around the Audimax and the grand room under the ETH dome, where the University's only supercomputer at the time used to be housed. The former is cosy, and the latter impressive. I shouldn't forget to mention the entrance hall to the Main Building with its exhibitions – or with our homemade decorations during the Polyball.

*How and when did you hear about the ETH Foundation for the first time?*

Some of my classmates were able to study thanks to ETH scholarships. Already at the time I thought this was a great thing, and today I'd like to contribute to ETH so that the young people of today also get this chance and can follow their dreams.

*What advice would you give to current ETH students?*

Always stay curious. Try unfamiliar things. Critically question even the best solutions. By the way, in our team, which intentionally includes very different kinds of people from a variety of fields, we always have ETH graduates on board.

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PDF exported on 01/10/2026 16:53

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