



Luxury Designer Jonathan Rachman

By Sherrie Wilkolaski

Jonathan Rachman is an internationally-acclaimed designer, soon to open an eponymous store of custom made goods, J. Rachman, in San Francisco, recently featured on HGTV, ELLE DECORATION and C MAGAZINE. He is about to open a store in San Francisco which will showcase many of his custom-designed goods in addition to serve as a showroom for my design business. In addition to designing, he is the editor-in-chief of a little magazine called DiSini DiSana, which means "here and there" in Indonesian, he says, "my heart is here and there all the time."

In recent interview with Luxe Beat Magazine, he shared with me he thoughts on design and told me about how one chance meeting, changed his design career forever. Here is the interview:

Sherrie Wilkolaski: Residential vs. hospitality. Which type of design work do you prefer?

Jonathan Rachman: I truly have no preference between the two. What I do prefer is to work on a project where the client and I speak the same 'language' - appreciate the same style and design intent for the specific project. When this happens, so does magic! The project naturally takes on its own fabulous course, which will ultimately show in the final work.

SW: How did you get into the business, particularly...working with celebrities?

JR: I never intended to be an interior designer - I was once your typical corporate "soldier". I left everything behind and opened a floral shop in a tiny neighborhood in San Francisco. Low and behold, Marc Jacobs and his creative team walked in and hired me on the spot to do their store floral arrangements, which ultimately lead to clients like Sarah Jessica Parker, Oprah and the like... later I did event designed including the 60th United Nations anniversary celebration and few other high profile events.

We were also the preferred purveyor for The Four Seasons Hotel. Because of all of that exposure and my storefront, clients saw my aesthetic and design style and learned what I was all about. Because I never went to a formal design school (except in fashion,) I have always designed intuitively: from the heart.

I break rules and simply follow my gut instinct and taste.

SW: Design is interpretive, how do you ensure a positive outcome at the completion of a project?

JR: It is absolutely essential that you know your client, be it an individual, couple, family or a company, very well, in their intent of the space, home or property. To know the "why" is as important as to fully understand their style. You must also have a solid understanding of the type of

property's nature and location: a beach house in Bali must have a different decor from a pied-à-terre in Manhattan or from a mansion in a traditional setting. The same can be said about a hospitality work: a boutique hotel in an urban setting should read differently than a commercial business hotel. To understand your scopes and agree on them with your clients is the first rule of business.

SW: When you are designing, how do you draw the line between your personal style and the taste of a client?

JR: It goes back to the foundation of a solid understanding of the intention of why they are awarding me with the design work: for what type of property, the function of the property, who will be using the property and ultimately to interpret





the sum of all of this knowledge into a style which you deem to be most appropriate. My taste should guide each specific design work: and that's why our clients award us the project - they see that our taste is the right one for them. My personal style must remain discreet, unless of course, it happens to be the appropriate style for the assigned project, which at times may happen.

SW: You are known for your "collections" what does that mean?

JR: I collect objects from all over the world which speak to me emotionally. I collect all kinds of artifacts, furniture, objet

de curiosité, art etc. At times, they remind me of my childhood, others simply remind me of the rich history of architecture, the object itself and world history. I believe in the 'Venn diagram'. Some people share my passion in collections and will appreciate my collections, simply for the sake of appreciation or to incorporate them into their space, as I am a firm believer that a home should be 'collected' not designed, which translate to a curated home which is much superior to a home that's simply designed with this week's fashion.

SW: What does luxury mean to you, when it comes to design?



Churchill

Gondola Ride

Deep Jungle

that, to be with the love of my life in this experience and find the cherished object was like discovering the ultimate truffle!

SW: How would you describe your design style?

JR: Thoughtful elegance: timeless interiors - interpretations of clients' personal styles and collections. Seamlessly blending the past and the present. My aesthetic is part classical, part contemporary.

SW: Do you have a favorite color palette?

JR: Because of my belief in customizing each vignette, each room and space and each project, I don't have a favorite color palette: I believe there is no ugly color, there is simply inappropriate application.

Each year, while I don't subscribe to the color trend, I do have fave colors. I like what I called 'ugly beautiful' color: an odd color that belongs to several families of colors. Is it blue? Is it green? Is it gray? You can't pinpoint the exact color, yet, it

is intensely beautiful. This year, I love C2 paint: Churchill C2-730 and Topiary C2-696 and from Benjamin Moore: Deep Jungle: 595 and Gonola Ride 602.

SW: What is one piece of furniture no room should be without?

JR: For a home, your most precious heirloom or a piece of furniture that is rich in history, be it your families or the world's.

SW: Have you thought about writing a book?

JR: In fact, I am currently writing a book: a memoir about my late sister, she was my angel on earth, and now she truly is my angel. I am in two design books written by Maria Spassov, titled, CELEBRITY DESIGNERS: 50 Interviews on Design, Architecture, and Life available on Amazon.com and hardcopy is out early 2016.

To learn more about Jonathan Rachman to go www.jonathanrachman.com/.



JR: It translates the same way with what luxury is in life - in general: being able to afford what you like, anytime, anyplace and be content with it, which does not necessarily have to be dripping in monetary value. It is more a state of mind. For example, to convert your formal dining room, instead to a library for your collection of fashion drawings and vintage bags, simply because you want to and are able to. I think that's luxury!

SW: What do you consider the three most important elements in the design process?

JR:
1. Being able to communicate your

ideas as well as understanding the scope: which is intrinsic to the communication
2. Being able to visualize, conceptualize and implement your design: which is technical and industry knowledge
3. Editing skill is a must: knowing when more truly is more vs. less is more and vice versa.

SW: What is your favorite memory of your time spent in the flea markets of Paris?

JR: To simply wander and discover. To quote Forrest Gump with a tweak: "the flea market is like a box of chocolate, you'll never know what you're gonna get," and on top of