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HOME BY DESIGN

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Tuesday evening, August 16, 2011, 200 Lexington Avenue, 10th floor, New York Design Center and 1stdbids.com hosted the HOME BY DESIGN Event produced by Fashion Group International, NY.

Featuring Moderator: *Barbara Friedmann, Publisher, Elle Decor*



When Elle Decor first launched it was to be a book on “Fashion for the Home” which featured top models holding products or being placed into interior design environments. It was too forced and an overkill for the concept. Since then Elle Decor has soared and was recently put on the 2011 Hot List, ELLE DECOR, the preeminent brand in the shelter category and the only title in the category to be acknowledged, ranked #3 out of 10. The prestigious honor caps a number of milestones achieved by ELLE DECOR over the past 12 months. One of Friedmann’s favorite columns which has evolved over time is the “*Trend Alert*” it is the most celebrated column they do to date, juxtaposing runway trends with home products. So not only can you wear the look but now you can “live the look”.

Calvin Klein and Ralph Lauren launched their home lines around the same time that Elle Decor launched – creating a real trend of American Designers entering the interior design market, which has continued today. Fast forward to 2011 and designers have transposed from fashion to home back to fashion and beyond. There are no longer any boundaries in the world of design. Look at Anthropology which sells both fashion to wear and fashion for the home. We are seeing more and more designers crossing the lines. Leopard prints may be A-Line skirt or jumpsuits on the runway and in the home it will translate into rugs, bedding and upholstery.

The featured panelists for the evening included:

[Jonathan Adler](#), Iconic Potter, Designer, Author & TV Personality: Currently he has 14 brick and mortar stores and is getting ready to launch a 15th in London, has written numerous books and is currently the lead judge on the TV Reality Show *Top Design*. His favorite motto is “***If your heirs won’t fight over it, we won’t design it***”. Jonathon has also partnered up with Lacoste and is getting ready to launch a line in 2011. He loves the word YES!



Interior Design”.

Stephen Cardino, VP, Home Fashion Director, [Macy’s](#). Stephen started out with a career path in Law, he took a summer job at Macy’s, back when there were only 13 stores and has never looked back. Stephen feels “***Fashion has much to teach***

Clodagh, Furniture & Interior Designer, CEO of [Clodagh Design International](#). Clodagh started designing when she was just 17 years of age. Her philosophy is to “***Cleanse, Clarify, Contemplate and Create***“. She is a leader in the industry in sustainable and green design, for both fashion and in the home.

BF: How did you get your start in the business?

JA: I started out as a potter. I had worked at various jobs but had been inappropriate in one aspect or another and was always being let go. I got into such a depression, but still had my passion to be a potter. One day my therapist said Jonathon, you have to do something, so I did. I got a studio and a wheel and created my own pottery studio. But I was not doing anything with them. SO my therapist nudged me again and said “Jonathon, you must break this rut and make something of yourself.” So I called Barney’s up one day and made an appointment for them to come over to my 5th Floor apartment and look at the pottery I had made. They liked it and placed an order. About three months passed and I had yet to see a check for payment of the goods. My father asked me about this since I was pretty much broke – and I told him “Pop, I do not want to bother them, they are busy.” My father’s response was to call them immediately it had been three months. So I did. I got on the phone and asked them about payment. Barney’s was like” OHHHHHHH, you’re the artist who never sent the invoice for payment. We dd not know how to contact you or where to send a check.” At this time – I was so naive – I did not even know what an invoice was.

I believe in constant change and constant growth – to look at fashion as a model and to say “Yes” to everything – this is how I came to Lacoste – by saying yes.

SC: I originally started out with a career path in Law, taking a summer job at Macy’s, back when there were only 13 stores. I have never looked back. One month into the job I was asked to travel to India to purchase dresses. How could I say no. Comparing retail outlets to what they were 30 years ago, I swear what keeps me young, hip and “in the know” are other young people. The constant evolution and change keeps me engaged.



C: When I was 17, I fell off a horse and broke my back. I was laid up for quite a long time and was supposed to be getting ready to go off and start my life. My parents were bugging me about what I would do and I was looking at a magazine and saw an ad to become a Fashion Designer. So I told them that is what I would do. Just like that while I was lying on my back

recovering. When I was up and about, I left my house because I was a total renegade, who had never been trained and I went out into the world and did my own thing. I went to the bank to get a loan and the Bank Manager asked to see my books. I thought to myself, “Now, why would the bank want to see which books I was reading?” At the time I was so green. I too, always say “Yes”, much to the dismay of my studio. I find it hard to say no.

BF: What has Fashion taught you that applies to Interior Design?

SC: We need to pick up the pace. Interior Design needs to create a newness. Our typical customer will go the RTW section of the store and shop. She will see the new merchandise every 6 weeks. When “she” (I call her “she” because that is what “she” is) When she comes to the [Home department](#) she sees the same merchandise for a full year unless we are lucky enough to have a good seller which will fly off the shelves in 18 months. I believe in the 80/20 rule. How do you create 20% new to rotate into the 80% staying power on the floor?

BF: Do apparel and home appeal to the same consumer?

C: Well I do not design for anyone in mind. If you like the context and the joy it brings you then you are my

client. I am designing a home for a 77 YO who just lost everything to fire. Then I also have teens who wear my clothes. It is a point of view. I design for everyone 0-100.

BF: How do you see yourself expanding into fashion?



Lacoste

JA: I do what feels right. I have been a [Lacoste](#) fan since I was 13, I even wore one to my [bar mitzvah](#). So designing handbags for Lacoste feels right to me, it is an extension of my design abilities. I do not ever see myself as a full-fledged Fashion Designer, as I have a lot to learn. But a fashion designer is not only about the esthetic but also the hype behind the designer. With home there is less hype behind the designer as it is all about what is being designed for the home and the final product.

BF: What kind of impact to see with online shopping as Amazon and Apple have just been announced as the top 25 sellers online. Amazon has 46% growth and Apple 32% growth with online sales? How does this impact the business – what works with Bricks and Mortars versus .com's?

SC: .com is the fastest growing division currently in Macy's. Most .com customers have never been into an actual store. It is a totally different demographic – much younger. Bricks & Mortar allow you the customer to see an in-store presentation. .com becomes about the item. How it is photographed. It is a completely different mindset.

Has anyone ever heard of [overstock.com](#)? I discovered this site this past weekend and realized, there was no reason to ever leave my home again. I spent over 3 hours on overstock.com. I did not buy anything. I understand the ease now and the breadth of the customer. It is a good teaching tool – there is much to learn about the “closeout” and the \$\$\$ game. Online there is no emotional connection with an item. It comes down to price and where can you get it for the best price.

C: Sitting in space – that optimizes online shopping. Authentic branding is the key and it has never been more important. People will buy it if they have touched or worn or know the brand. They have an emotional connection. To those over 35 – knowing the brand matters to those under 35 – they do not care to know the brand so much.

JA: I feel lucky to be working with materials that cannot be replaced virtually. You cannot live in a virtual house with virtual stuff. It is impossible. You need the real McCoy. Even with us opening up our 5th store in London, our website is our #1 store with sales up 90% this year. This is evidence that you need to focus on the brand. The Brick and Mortars are just big ads for the web. We live in a very cluttered world and you have to try to hit people on the head every way you can. you must have everything, Brick and Mortars, Web, TV, radio, print, and all the social networking – it is exhausting.

C: I am a digital immigrant. How can you sit on a virtual chair? You have to go out and actually sit on it.

BF: With so many brands, how do you create a constant image or message?



SC: Crate & Barrel created one singular view. I used to go there and look at them and think Macy's should do the same. But looking back that would



have been a mistake.

Customers shop different – they all have different esthetics and tastes. One might prefer Martha Stewart while another person may prefer Ralph Lauren or Calvin Klein. When the economy is tough it is important to put money into what is really selling – that allows us to be more fluid.

We recently created a program called “*My Macy’s*“. This is where the regional stores and employees guide the buy. We are able to get localization, since these people are in the store and know their customer.

BF: *Working at a shelter magazine and being in a “bad economy” I believe people are going to “nest” more. They are not going away, but staying home and remodeling their homes to fit their lifestyles. In terms of your businesses, have you seen this “nesting” pan out?*

C: Pubs and restaurants are full. But I believe people are doing more home cooking, and purchasing great cookware, bedding and other necessities. But they are not buying the stuff they cannot use. People have gotten away from the trivial and purchase what is needed.

JA: I personally think the recession has been a horrible time for this country. But my business is up – the recession has forced me to be a better designer. Not being able to coast as a designer, for the past few years has been the best thing for me. I am more focused – even though it is sad for the world, it has made me work harder and better.

SC: We have seen a real fallout in the last five years with retailers and vendors. Those still standing are obviously the strongest. The business is evolving and we are creating closer relationships with our vendors. Part of that is viewing the products in earlier stages. If I go to a show and have not seen what is being launched prior to the show – I am not doing my job. It is better to see the product prior to launch to ensure it will be a success and be placed properly with in the store.

BF: *What inspires you now?*

C: A big question to answer...*Nomadic Life*. I love to travel everywhere with my camera and take pictures to remind me of where I have been and what I have seen. Recently I was in Korea – where is was once a concrete gray. Today is is green . Green, green, green. From the concrete garden to the green garden. It is inspiring to bring the outdoors in and the indoors out – to integrate our living.

JA: I have no particular answer. It is just my eyes and mind. I keep them open at all times. The challenge is editing all the ideas and being able to channel those ideas into coherent messages.

SC: Educating and the schooling of a culture. There is a total cultural shift and change – it is about the “casualization” of lifestyles – open floor plans – colors do not have to be homogenous to a particular room – there is room for more and to mix and match. Our country as a whole has been mixed culturally. We see this abroad as well – where energy and ideas have shifted.

C: My favorite thing to do when I travel is to go directly to the markets. To see the people, the stalls, the merchandise, to observe what is happening, to get into the belly of the country.

QA: How do you recommend we strive for constant newness with design to create heirlooms?

A sleek homage to the Jonathon Adler peacock lollipop holder \$98.00
The most exotic and flamboyant bird of all. A perfect desk accessory or fab in the kitchen!

JA: I'll take this one! It is a constant challenge. We as people are constantly buying clothing and stuff and then shoving it into a closet. Wardrobes change. Homes. Do not change. They become either a fab or not so fab time capsule. Ever notice you walk into someones home and it never changes in 20 -30 years. My goal is to always create heirlooms. I want people to fight over everything we make. It needs to be irresistible. "Did not know I needed this – BUT I NEED IT!" kind of moment. For

instance our peacock lollipop holders or our brass hippos.

C: I strive for simplicity and authenticity – I try to boil it all down to a balsamic reduction and go from there. For instance the T-shirt design furniture. To gave something a non-design or silent design. It is about getting back to the basics and how I can make it, simplify it, make it better to touch, feel, use, move...jut to make it better.

SC: I just want to get the register to ring.

QA: How do you reconcile the 20% newness with the 80% staying power of the collection?

SC: You get the core working for you and the 20% becomes the crowd mark down. You create excitement on the floor, not only with the visual team and the sales personal but with the consumer too. If you do not continue with great design products within the 20%, the stopping and starting of that excitement becomes problematic and it destroys the margins. For instance an Ed Hardy shirt can cost \$135. and sell out like hot cakes in one department and in the same store in the Home division we can have an eleven piece bed-in-a-bag set for the same price of \$135 – and it is not moving. I am thinking...all that yardage...

QA: How does art inspire the look in art, fashion and design does the line become blurred?

Jonathon Adler Brass Hippo \$495.00

JA: We live in a time of incredible dialog and a constant dialog almost – a true no holds barred "town square". People just spit out what ever they have to say. The runway used to filter into the street now the street filters onto the runway and in to the home. I used to throw [Chanel](#) teapots.

C: Yes, look at how art such as graffiti is being used in fashion and in decor. People are painting on fabrics and clothing. It is part of the art movement. People are walking billboards. It is perfectly acceptable to have a [Rothko](#), [Basquiat](#) and [Graffiti](#) art hanging in the same room. There is room for all. *How do you marry? They are all authentic!*

Great panel and even better information. I think I have been inspired now to go home – redecorate and nest some more – while riding the wave in this turbulent economy.

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**About sonyacashner**

Having worked with various high fashion companies and clients within the "luxury lifestyle" - such as Chanel, Dior, Louis Vuitton, Hermes, Mercedes Benz and many many more, I traveled both nationally and internationally as an Art, Creative & Fashion Director, producing photo editorials sometimes up to 3 shoots per week in places such as Paris, Cannes, Vienna, London, New York and more. With over to 20 years of advertising and marketing experience under my belt, I am a whiz at the various stages of the creative concept and product development processes, integrating the campaigns throughout social media, direct mail, print, and TV. Currently a member to Fashion Group International Philadelphia, I am sharpening my fashion business skills even more by sitting on the Board of Directors and serving as the Chair of PR/Communications as well as the Co-Regional Director Elect for 2012/13. I also Chair Communications for the Junior League - just to keep my business and design skills fresh in this turbulent job market. During my years as an award-winning Fashion, Art and Creative Director I have helped developed numerous highly successful integrated campaigns for industry giants such as AT&T, Avon, Chase Manhattan Bank, Macy's, Neiman Marcus, Kohl's, Sprint and Tanquery 10, amongst numerous others. I am continually setting new standards for ingenuity, creativity, and measurable success that both peers and competitors strive to achieve.

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