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DESIGN

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Stepping Out

Meet the idea generators behind hospitality's new frontier

brands' new looks
LURING NEXT-GEN GUESTS

social scene
CHECK OUT THE CHECK IN
AS A GATHERING PLACE



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Jessica Lotner



Photo: Erica Aitken Photography

Being a designer is a bit like being a chameleon.

That's what Jessica Lotner, senior designer, The McBride Company, thinks. "I love developing the visual language for each new project," she said.

Lotner's degree in painting and art history led her to travel extensively. "My sketchbooks soon became filled with interior details: mosaic and tile patterns, doorknobs and hinges, fabric prints, textiles and moldings," she said. From there, she interned for an interior designer who happened to be a family friend. "She became my mentor and pushed me to pursue my passion. I have never looked back," said the designer.

Lotner then earned a Master's degree in interior design with a concentration in exhibition design from Brooklyn's Pratt Institute. Before joining The McBride Company, Lotner garnered over a decade of experience as a senior designer at Hirsch Bedner Associates (HBA) and Rockwell Group, and also designed showrooms and mosaic lines for Urban Archaeology.

When it comes to mosaics (3), Lotner praised **Sicis**. "Whether cut-stone flooring or a wall mosaic on an accent wall, Sicis is the feature that literally takes a client's breath away," she said. "When possible, this is where I allocate the money. I have placed Sicis mosaics on a bar floor in Istanbul; in elevators; in ceilings illuminated by cove lighting; on a curved wall behind a freestanding tub; and even on the bottom of an outdoor pool."

According to the designer, she's inspired by discovering new craftsmen, her children's art and anything off the beaten path: the woodworker in Bali, the markets in Istanbul, the little boutique on the beach in Tulum.

As for her approach to design, Lotner said she brings "an understated elegance to every project. With a careful play between modern and traditional, I strive for timeless design. My design style tends to be tailored, cohesive and visually striking, punctuated with bold and memorable design elements."

For instance, Lotner loves furniture (1) by **Eric Schmitt**. "Every project needs a signature piece. Eric Schmitt makes furniture sculptural, bold and sensual," she said.

Lotner also has a preference for **Alger-Triton International**'s light fixtures (2). "Lighting is like jewelry; it provides the sparkle," she explained. "Alger brings a designer's vision to life. From the owner, Mishel Michael, who personally gets involved, to the rep to the project manager, the entire team makes sure the final product is exactly to a designer's specifications by creating detailed renderings and shop drawings."

Prior to starting any project, Lotner develops a strong concept. "I provide the client with a curated presentation of images," she said of her process. "The concept becomes the underlying force behind all design decisions—from planning to material and furniture selection—and considered in even the smallest detail."

"The devil is in the details," Lotner continued. "Whether designing residential or hospitality, even a sofa cushion can make an impact. Aviva Stanoff [of **Aviva Stanoff Design**] has an incredible collection of couture pillows (5). She brings her knowledge of fashion and color to her line of pillows. She embosses the pattern into the textile itself so not only are the color selections sophisticated and luscious, but the design is dimensional and tactile."

Lotner also praised London-based **Based Upon** for its metal paneling (4). "It makes the most incredible metal paneling, which can be used in key locations, such as behind a reception desk or in an elevator lobby," she said. "Based Upon works directly with the designer to richly layer artifacts, photography and enamel into the metal surface. Its finishes take my breath away."

— Nicole Carlino