

Interview with Dorien Janssen



How do you describe yourself as an interior architect?

I'm able to translate dreams, wishes and desires into interiors. My endeavor is to create an interior that is more than materials and objects alone. As far as I am concerned, an interior should be a home where the user feels free and secure.

How do you know what the customer wants?

By continually communicating with each other (that is, communicating with each other often and speak out 'freely'). I always ask whether the customer can tell me something about his taste in the form of a small collection of images. What he finds beautiful, and dislikes. My aim is to figure out what forms, atmospheres, materials and colours make the customer happy. Also, I'm curious about how the customer thinks about art. Because even that can constitute an indication for the final design. So developing a conversation about (dreamt) images and desires but also practical issues such as a time schedule and budget.

What's your method?

By linking my intuition and gut-feeling to the intellectual and practical in the package of demands. I dive into the personality and taste of the client and connect this to my knowledge in the field of architecture, materials and colors. In addition, I sit right on top of things during the entire renovation process from A to Z and can take this aspect out of the hands of the customer. I re-think the design, calculate the estimates, negotiate with the contractor, do the construction assistance and stand with my coveralls on the construction site. I like to bring everything down to the

smallest details; the furniture, the upholstery and the lighting up to and including the crockery, linen, and bathrobes in the bathroom. I am involved 'to the last gasp' so that I definitely know that the result are exactly as we previously had discussed.

What is a typical recurring phenomenon with refurbishments?

That a demolition hammer reveals more than you often expected. Through the use of available drawings you can pretty well anticipate problems that may arise during the modifying process. But approximately five percent always remains uncertain. The art is to remain flexible and accurate rather than inventive during this phase and to remain as close as possible to the process. That five percent demands that it fit within the predetermined design plan so that the initial concept remains intact.

Whether an interior is found to be beautiful or not is often an issue of taste, so goes the saying. What is your vision

on this? Of course, beauty is subjective. There is no argument there... But there is actually a lot to learn and a feeling for beauty can be developed. I make my clients happy with my way of looking and help make them become aware of what they see. Seeing beauty is in the final analysis, the ability to recognize beauty. And there is of course, quality.

Good quality and an eye for detail inspires in a universal manner and lets one see that which shakes the soul and awakens the eye.

How important are colors for you?

Very important. But all colors can simultaneously be beautiful and ugly. A color is not a color until it

stands adjacent to another color. Only then does a color come to life. As for myself I prefer as I mentioned, mature colours. They are layered, and present themselves in a manner that can be easily received. I cannot describe it other than that.

What about materials?

Each material has its own expressiveness, and is also influenced by its context. When the shape, finish and color of a material combines well, it gives character and brings it to life. Most materials are good to work with, although I work economically when using materials such as granite. Modify and apply it as you will, it remains hard material, although sometimes in a space that is what is needed.

How precise is the ultimate design?

Once the architecture and design is well structured, the customer has the freedom, if desired, to allow things to take their course. It shouldn't be that when shifting an ashtray on a new kitchen table, that the whole interior 'falls apart'. Ideally the architecture provides room for change and one's own creativity.

What is for you a dream job?

That the customer gives me the space and confidence to plan the architecture, the interior, the furniture, right up to the hanging and selection of art. Again: the desire and the importance of the customer are always paramount. But if given the chance I would like the freedom to dream and produce the result in my own way.