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Fever Pitch

Ellen Barkin: Life as the New Mrs. Perelman

Peewee Redux: Paul Reubens Stages a Comeback

Confessions of a Celebrity Shrink

Teeth Envy: The Quest For the Perfect Smile

Plus: Joseph Fiennes, Jemima Khan, Ellen Gallagher, the Hottest New Decorators & Suzy

Toujours Couture

The Scoop From the Paris Runways



The Home Team



enjoy discussing the work itself, which is characterized by a fresh approach to "Classicism" and minimalist by Jerry modern details. Unconcerned by conventions of traditional design, his interiors have a formal rigor and clarity without sacrificing comfort or aesthetic variety.

Flicks does both residential and commercial spaces. "The two spheres involve different ideas and materials," he explains, "but I find that there is often an intriguing overlap. Of course, residential work is a much more emotional process, but you have to approach every job from the starting point and the individual point of view of each client."

Flicks is currently working on an 8,000-square-foot duplex residence on Grace Square in New York (with architect by Alan Tanenbaum), a loft in Tribeca, three projects in Miami, a town house in Washington, D.C., and a house in the Catskills. As for what's next, he is keeping his options open. "I'm trying to do some work in the West and to move into hotel design," he says. "Basically, I'll go anywhere there is interesting work. You know, Hava fabrica, will travel."

Laura Kirar's business card says it all. After "Tis, the name of her company, the card lists "art, design, furniture, interiors" as the services she provides. "Focusing on one thing bores me," she says. "I design interiors and products as well as making sculptures. An interior is like an installation, you need a strong concept and the elements and how to execute it."

Indeed, Kirar, 37, often turns to the art world as a reference point for her interiors. When asked to cite her main inspirations, she is quick to name both Eileen Gray and Louise Bourgeois. Her background shows the same attitude: Kirar studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, dividing her attention between the sculpture and interior architecture departments. Her first job out of school was working at the Holly Hunt Design Studio, where she developed furniture and occasionally assisted on interior design projects.

"One of the most important things I learned was how to deal with workmen to get things fabricated," she notes. "An art school 'craft' was a dirty word. But you can't be a designer without understanding craftsmanship. Quality is everything."

After three years of designing furniture, lighting and accessories for Hunt, Kirar heeded the stern call of Godwin, eventually landing a staff position at Jed Johnson & Associates, helping to develop custom furniture. Two years later, she became the project manager for Brown, the fashionable restaurant in Manhattan's burgeoning district. "I was involved in the architectural aspect as well as the design of the chairs, tables, lighting and everything else," she says.

Kirar subsequently established Tis, which serves both residential and commercial clients. "Commercial work has great appeal because it always has a finite end," she says. "Residential work goes on forever. Still, I'm always excited to find a client who lets me be creative because to produce a work of art, which is what a residence can be."

In addition to designing furniture under her own name and pursuing various licensing agreements, Kirar recently completed a bookcase by Jesse Ming at Max Stern. With a rich combination of painted metals, recycled pine and wood flooring and tinted polycarbonate sections, the Ming project is indicative of Kirar's thoughtful design sensibility.

"Every design must have its own personality and communicate the singular soul of the creative idea," she avers. "There must always be an almost accidental discovery of something special. Whether it's a small table lamp or a large fountain, that something special is what moves design into the realm of art."

At the age of 35, Sara Bengala has already accomplished something extraordinary: She's managed

to decorate the East Village apartment of a producer and his wife, Laura Kirar (left center) utilized her own creations, including an open-arm chair and table lamp (top) and dining room chairs (below).

