

BREATHING SOUL INTO HER CRAFT

In an open, honest conversation with, *TL*, multi-medium stylist and interior designer, Doha-based Stéphanie Bourland shares both about her artistic self and her professional life and how she manages to connect both of these.



HER STORY:

“Growing up between France, Italy and the US, I have always been attracted to art works, colours, shapes and creative tasks. This naturally led me to artistic education first in France (les Arts Decoratifs), then Barcelona (La Massana) and I finished my master’s in NYC (Parson’s School). It required research, development and deliberate effort, which I was only too happy to make.”

HER DESIGN PHILOSOPHY:

“In all of my creations, one finds multiple cultural origins, from lines to colours, from fabrics to materials. The body of my work is always rooted in deep cultural experiences developed around the world. My aim is to bring soul in all my creations whether interior, graphic, ceramic or product design. Whenever one creates, one needs to connect to the end user, be it someone who will switch on the light on her/his desk for a few hours’ work, or someone who will sit in her/his living room and relax: the designer should be able to bring comfort to him/her. The idea is to have inspirationally-designed furniture shape his/her environment and mood effortlessly. That’s how I would define the connection between my creativity to my clients: an alivestyle answer.”

WHAT SATISFIES HER:

“To see beauty. I see beauty everywhere, and I believe that sometimes one just has to set a light on it. When it comes to interior design, for private villas, I like to work with my client’s old furniture or art pieces to try and understand what made them select that particular item, at a certain point in time, as opposed something else. I try to respect that choice and create items that echoes the original choice. The connect is not only at the aesthetic level, but also at the human level. So, when the villa furnishing and interior décor is finished, the client is not only impressed by the look but they start owning the place immediately. It is a very satisfying experience for a designer. The same process works for product design: I create objects that my clients can connect to instantly.”

CREATIVE RECHARGE METHOD:

“Re-inventing yourself is the paramount necessity of any designer. I allow my soul to be inspired by others, travel experiences, life and personal emotions, and sometimes, one of my projects also nourishes the other. Creatively that is never a problem and only time-lines can drive you mad sometimes!”

TIPS FOR FIRST-TIME TRAVELLERS TO DOHA AND MUST SEES HERE:

“Don’t come with a closed mindset. Accept the cultural complexity and variety of Doha and use it to open new creative directions.”

- Qatar National Museum
- Museum of Islamic Art
- Souq Waqif
- The entire neighbourhood of Qatar Foundation
- The new Msheireb
- Inland Sea
- Zekreet for Serrano’s sculpture and kite surfing
- Katara

INTERIOR DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY:

“Technology has been and will be a tremendous exponential means to diversify design work. As opposed to the past when one had limited access to learning, today there are unbelievable sources of inspiration and sharing through technology. Basic historical limitations such as light or weight have found new horizons today, thanks to alternative solutions arising from technology such as LED, PVC, and other composite materials. It is our duty, as designers, to keep up with the pace of new technology and apply it, or chose not to, in our work.”

DESIGN MANAGEMENT METHOD:

“Design is about communication. Best designers have had the right mindset allowing their creations to match and meet client’s expectations. This is especially relevant because everyone has different sensitivities, personal expectations. Every designer is willing to tap the customer’s sensitivity and there is no better way than sharing, before, during and after the creative experience between the designer and the beneficiary of the design work. There could always be differences of opinion between clients and designers and none of which should be obstacles to a successful relationship, given a mature handling and mindset.”

PROJECT IN OR OUT?

“I make sure the project is consistent with my technical abilities and sensitivities. Whilst I can (and have in the past) worked on many different artistic means, I am also aware of my personal limitations – be it with regard to certain materials or technology embedded in a new project. Besides this, I make it a point to check, before accepting any new project, whether the sensitivities required in any particular project are consistent with own personality and approach to my work.”

THAT’S LIVING COLLABORATION

“To work on pieces that would match an already existing collection is like working with the most defiant client but, once the pieces were put in place, seeing how they blend and continue the story, was deeply satisfying.”