

# DESIGNERS TODAY

style. substance. soul.



MAY 2019



# BUSINESS



## INDISPENSABLE IMAGERY

GORGEOUSLY LIT, PROFESSIONALLY STYLED PHOTOGRAPHY IS THE BEST BAIT FOR EDITORS AND NEW CLIENTS

Photography: Stephen Karlisch/Interior Design: Denise McGaha

This is a visual industry. The imagery on your website and social media is your hook and first chance to tell your story. Getting killer photography is an investment of resources, and one that is mandatory and well worth it if you want to grow your business. With the right team, you get print-ready images and good connections, along with a trusted friendship.

Photographers, stylists, consultants and designers agree the magic happens in collaboration, and good planning is the most important step. Look... it's competitive out there, so give it your best shot.

WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY JANE DAGMI AND JENNIFER BRINGLE





Stephen Karlisch



Beth Bender



Krista Nye Nicholas and Tami Ramsay  
Photo: Jason Thrasher

## THE PREP

Getting your work photographed takes time and money. For the best results, be realistic and organized.

For Krista Nye Nicholas and Tami Ramsay of Cloth & Kind, being realistic means evaluating projects with an editor's eye. "Not everything you design will be portfolio- or press-worthy and worth investing in," they say. The Dove Agency's Beth Bender agrees. "Ask yourself, 'Is this project going to be key to my brand and portfolio?'" If it will, build the cost of photography into that project. Showcasing your best projects attracts better clients.

Once a location is selected, confirm access to the project with your clients, ideally when they are away, unless by chance, your pitch to a magazine requires people in the photos. Dallas photographer Stephen Karlisch prefers no kids, pets or homeowners because they slow the momentum. "They affect the



LeeAnn Baker



Kathy Wall



Frances Bailey

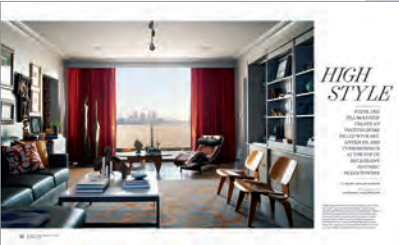
## STYLING

"Interior designers create wonderful spaces for their clients to live in, but how that translates to a printed page can be very different," explains Kathy Wall, principal of The Media Matters. "A good stylist makes a subtle but significant difference to a shoot." Ramsay and Nicholas concur. "Stylists understand what will work for a photograph which, incidentally, is likely to be very different than how you would style the photo."

Beyond the eye, a stylist listens and

translates. "If I've been working with clients for a long time, their ideas are still often front and center in my brain," says Seattle designer LeeAnn Baker. "A great stylist is someone who helps you get back to your original vision and knocks the client's ideas out of your head."

A photographer may double as stylist, as is the case with Mayfield, who pulls from her own prop shelf. Go-to objects include beads, cutting boards,



Steve McKenzie and his Atlanta Homes story shot by Anthony Masterson

energy, things get messy and the homeowner doesn't need to see it," he says.

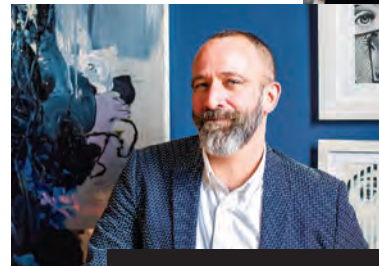
Who you select to shoot and style is who you jive with, who's available, and who fits stylistically. "If the shoot is solely for my website, I have a photographer who captures my aesthetic and lights the space as I love it," says Atlanta designer Steve McKenzie. When pitching to a specific magazine, however, he hires a photographer who understands that book's aesthetic and knows the editors. When Karlisch's clients have a target in mind, they discuss and design around the needs of that publication.

Sharing scouting shots, communicating the story and creating a shot list are next steps. A shot list prioritizes the spaces, keeps a crew on schedule and acts like a map on shoot day, directing all to the next shot. NY-based stylist Frances Bailey relishes the pre-shoot call so she can appropriate budget and props where they're needed most. In order to interpret a designer's vision, she needs to know things like what colors and flowers you hate.

"The more prepared we are, the smoother things go," says Nashville photographer Kristen Mayfield. "A lot of designers will go over to the house the day before to get as much styling done so we can go as quickly as possible on shoot day." With the clock ticking, Bailey advises, "It's better to get fewer shots, styled and shot well, than to get tons that aren't good — less is more!"

coffee table books, pillows and plants. She arrives at a shoot with useful and unglamorous supplies, too — scissors, clippers, tape and a steamer — and often buys flowers, which she says most of her clients appreciate.

Karlisch feels that designers overestimate their floral arranging abilities and often suggests hiring a specialist. He says "Floral is the least understood and makes the biggest impact when the scale is right."



Andrew Joseph



Chris Edwards

Sandra Funk



## SHOOT DAY

Since your project is looking its best, it's a good opportunity to nab some headshots on location. House of Funk's Sandra Funk arrives with hair and makeup done. Karlisch concurs, "Everything is already lit so jump in!" When Charlotte photographer Chris Edwards takes an editorial portrait, it's typically more spontaneous. Edwards' goal is to capture who the person is authentically rather than what they think they should look like.

Don't be afraid to step outside the norm of traditional studio headshots," advises P.R. exec Andrew Joseph of Andrew Joseph P.R. who is asked to send press-ready photos to publications daily. "Shoot on location — it's unique to you and helps define your brand and business. Put a little personality into your shots, but don't distract from YOU!" Joseph suggests updating your headshot once a quarter.

# SHOOT DAY WISDOM

*Hire a good point-and-shoot photographer to come in extra-early and take quick hand-held details that are good for social media.*

—The Dove Agency

*Don't tell yourself 'I can always go back and get more photos,' because it probably won't happen!*

—Sally Williams, Colorful Concepts Interior Design

*Make sure to get video footage of the shoot. Hire a videographer or intern. All that behind-the-scenes action makes for great content.*

—Sandra Funk

*The very best shoots are a collaboration between designer, photographer and stylist. Allow people to do their best work, and speak up if the direction isn't feeling right.*

—Frances Bailey

*Don't assume you know what they know. They are the professionals, so step back and let them work their magic! Just like we don't like it when our clients fancy themselves designers.*

—Cloth & Kind

*DO have your team on hand to go run out and get that one thing you forgot, even if it feels silly, because it will be a lifesaver in the moment.*

—Lauren Czarniecki, Czar Interiors

## THE STYLIST KNOWS...

FRANCES BAILEY'S TOP TIPS FOR TIP-TOP STYLING

1. Be judicious with the karate chop (and tell your housekeepers too!)
2. Not everything needs to be so perfect. Add some folds, wrinkles, looseness to the space.
3. Add something alive (plant, foliage, food, drink, flowers, etc.)
4. Add a touch of whimsy — a child's toy on the ground, a dog peeking into the room, etc.
5. Open a window or a door to give the room a sense of space.
6. Lose the family pictures; they don't add to the big picture. Trust me on this.
7. Lamps off, people!

“Always photograph the area before you start moving and removing personal items so you can put everything back as you found it.

—LeeAnn Baker

## CONTRACTS

Contracts protect your business and intellectual property. Leaving out the legalese, designer Lori Paranjape, of Mrs. Paranjape, and photographer Kristen Mayfield, explain how their present contracts operate simply and successfully.

When Paranjape discovered that images of her designs were sold and used without her consent, she felt remarkably violated. A photography contract she signed years prior left her vulnerable. The new contract she's drafted protects her better. "The contract is very basic and explains that I will be paying for the images but will share the rights," she says. "I will use them for publication, advertising, social, etc., as that's why I'm having them shot. Additionally, the photographer is prohibited from selling the images without



Lori Paranjape



Kristen Mayfield

my consent — an important element in our easy-access digital age!" For the most part, so far, every photographer has happily signed.

Mayfield's designer clients can use the images she shoots for social media, websites, marketing and magazine submissions as long as they give her photo credit. Designers have full usage rights, but cannot sell the images to a third party without her consent. "I cannot for the life of me understand why some photographers hold images hostage," she says. "The designers pay me. Without them I have nothing to photograph." She believes that more business comes in when sharing images respectfully.

## MANNERS

A recent poll on the Interior Design Community's Facebook page asked: If you have paid a photographer to shoot a space in which you own the photographs and rights to the photos, do you believe you still have to credit the photographer each time you post a photo? An overwhelming majority said yes, stating it was simply good manners and that mutual support was a benefit to the business of design.

**Credit, credit, credit. We always credit our photographers whenever we use their images — from our portfolio to social media, to press**

—Cloth & Kind



Portraits and house photos: Kristen Mayfield Photography



The Wither-  
spoon project  
was Paranjape  
and Mayfield's  
first collabora-  
tion. Many have  
followed.

## BEFORE + AFTER

When starting a project you know is going to be an important portfolio piece, document the process, as it can make for a dramatic story. Kristen Mayfield and Lori Paranjape work together often and chronicle works-in-progress. Mayfield says, "To me, the process is as cool as the finished product with every choice shaping the completed design. It's satisfying to see her vision come to life."



## Scouting

Photographer Stephen Karlisch shares this scouting shot of the opening image used for our story, to show how professional photography, lighting and styling transforms a space. Scouting provides intel on best angles, best light, and styling needs, **and** saves lots of time on shoot day.