



JohnStephen

Interior Design Student's Inspired Work

The Back Story.....

Instructor Mary Saleeby teaches *Residential Design and Documentation* in the Interior Design department at The Art Institute of New York City. The class syllabus for the summer quarter revolved around one project – an Inspiration Piece. On the second day of class, she escorted students on a field trip to the Museum of Modern Art. She lectured on three paintings: a Picasso, a Van Gogh and a Jackson Pollock. Students were asked to write a paper on the artist of their choice, and design an entire room around the Inspiration Piece.

The project went beautifully. Students reaped the bonus of a beginning understanding of a master artist. Mary Saleeby hoped that they would continue to study one or all of the artists.

Student JohnStephen (his preferred spelling) subsequently told Mary Saleeby this story: He had been working on an interior design job (one of his first) and ran into a problem. The space was extremely large with high ceilings and commercial grade vinyl floors. He didn't figure in sound proofing to compensate for the noise factor. After a great deal of thought and concern about this problem, he got the idea to purchase sound proof boards covered in canvas. He said that he didn't know much about Jackson Pollock until the class, and was so inspired by the lecture and the artist that he continued to study and analyze his work. He did some additional

research and decided he would use these sound-proof canvases and do his version of Jackson Pollock's action painting on them. The paintings are stunning, the noise level was corrected, and his client was thrilled.

"This is the reason why people become educators-- to make a difference in someone's life. The feeling that you encouraged and inspired a student makes it all worth while. It touches my heart to think that I might have played a part in his education and new-found appreciation for fine art," said Mary Saleeby.

In John's Own Words.....

"My client was absolutely thrilled with the result, from both the aesthetic and functional points of view. With the addition of paisley-embossed denim fabric "corkboards" in the individual workspaces, the echo problem was completely resolved. Because of the overwhelming response to the paintings from my client's employees, and a similar noise problem upstairs in the executive floor, my artistic partner, Davis Berry, and I have been commissioned for 50+ more paintings.

Throughout this entire experience of having a real-world design job while still a student, I have found myself just barely in-over-my-head. I enjoy the 'sink or swim' challenge. What a thrill it has been to come out swimming! I owe a great deal to my instructors at The Art Institute of New York City who have literally taught me EVERYTHING I know about design. From Amy Sinclair, who taught Color Theory, to Pedro Lima, who gave the best advice ever, to Dr. Mary for so many things! Finally acknowledging my passion is really what all of this is about. The minute I started to listen to myself, great things began to happen."



