

RICHARDSON

DESIGN



Designing Spaces that Tell a Story

Senior Designer Tracy van der Kuil shares how client collaboration and a storytelling approach to interior design produces experiences that connect people to brands.

She had a subscription to *Metropolitan Home* as a high-schooler, and before that at age 11, she gave a report to her class about what she wanted to be when she grew up. Tracy van der Kuil already knew—interior design was an early passion.

“I had a collection Holly Hobby coloring books, and it was all about the color combination of the dresses, and how evenly the color could be applied,” she relates, adding that she also found creative ways to construct a Barbie house from found materials around her home. “I’d make a living or dining room set—for me it was about creating the room more than playing with the Barbies.”

van der Kuil traces her early design back to spending time with her aunt, a horticulturist. “I’d take the graph paper she was using while working on landscape plans for school, and design houses,” she says.

Tracy went on to pursue a degree in Interior Design at Kent State University, and as a newlywed in college, she began to travel with her Dutch husband back to his home in Holland, where a world of design opened up. “The Dutch are amazing designers with no boundaries — design is everywhere,” she says, crediting those trips and later, several years living in Holland and traveling Europe, for the design aesthetic she infuses into her work.

“My personal style is eclectic, leaning toward modern,” she describes. “I can be moved by so many things. A space that feels collected or has evolved over time, in combination with color and texture has to be my favorite. You can find the best inspiration for color and texture in urban and natural landscapes, or from textiles.”

Collaboration with the Richardson Design team fuels her thought process, and clients’ insights are central to the design process, van der Kuil points out. “Clients are the biggest influencers as we investigate and determine what they desire from their project.” van der Kuil says.

Her favorite part of the design process is concept development, when clients bring their inspiration and goals to the table. “We really collaborate with them to take what they like and what they want, and go deeper so we can create a design that tells the story of their brand and how they want it to feel,” she says. “We want the design to leave an impression on the people who are experiencing the space.”

Creating Inspiring Spaces

Inspiration is everywhere. At Tracy’s home and office, you’ll find stacks of magazines focused on interiors, architecture, food, travel and furniture design. “I look at traditional design to the super modern—I like to be educated and aware on all genres because we are not working to emulate just one style,” she says. “Your client is your muse—you want to have an understanding and appreciation of all things and how you put together a style - how to curate those pieces to make the space feel collected.”

“I have a lot of shower moments,” van der Kuil quips. “It’s one of the quietest parts of my day when I might be thinking about what a client said, or what their asks were, or how to come up with a solution to a particular issue. I am always thinking or pushing how to make a project unique. What I love about my work is the character and uniqueness we collectively bring to every client. We try to push them, so they can see their design as a holistic package from brand, to space, to product.”

Designing for Experience

From residential interior design to commercial hospitality spaces, van der Kuil’s work touches a range of clients and different experiences. She began consulting for Richardson Design in 2014, and later joined the team as Senior Designer.

At home, Tracy enjoys gardening, binge-watching Netflix series and traveling with her family. “My gardens tend to be eclectic like my interiors because they are a collection of plants that were given to me by family and friends —I like the story, the history,” she describes.

Looking ahead, van der Kuil is excited about Richardson Design’s trend forecasting capabilities and is especially looking into ways that design can give our constantly connected society spaces to breathe and escape. “I like the way we act as detectives and dive into the process, meeting clients’ needs and exceeding their expectations,” she says. “I love to make people think and wonder as they experience a space, so they can really contemplate it, enjoy it, and feel a part of it.”

As Senior Designer, Tracy fully demonstrates her abilities and design sense on this residential project.



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