

HABITUALLY CHIC

Creativity at Work



HEATHER CLAWSON

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HABITUALLY CHIC: CREATIVITY AT WORK

by Heather Clawson

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HABITUALLY CHIC

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HEATHER CLAWSON

Introduction

I have always said there are two kinds of creative people. Those who know what they want to do from a very young age and those who get a little sidetracked along the way. I am of the latter variety.

I was very artistic growing up, and even won a few art contests, but didn't keep up with it. I studied art history in college but had no idea what I wanted to do after graduating. I fell into retail management and later went to work at a commercial real estate company. While there, I eventually started to work in marketing and business development, which was slightly creative. After moving to New York in 2001, part of my job dealt with branding collateral materials and updating an online newsletter, skills that would come in handy down the road.

In 2005, I decided to make a change and took a pay cut to work for an interior designer who also owned a gallery. It was there that I started reading shelter magazines and design blogs. When two bloggers in Atlanta wrote about the store that interior designer Charlotte Moss was opening exactly one block behind my office, a light bulb went off in my head. I should write a blog. At that time, not many people writing blogs were actually working in design. They just had a passion for it. I thought I could write about design from an insider's perspective, as well as art, photography, fashion, travel, and other major happenings in New York. From my marketing and branding experience I knew I should name it something that was unique and would come up in a Google search. Since I wasn't sure if my boss would look upon my endeavor fondly, I wanted to remain anonymous. I played around with words in the French and English dictionaries that matched my initials HC until *Habitually Chic* was born in July 2007.

From the beginning, my blog has always been dedicated to inspiring images, but it has also been just as much about inspiring stories. I'm very lucky that so many people in design, fashion, and art read my blog daily, but when I write my posts I often think about that person who is miserable

at work, sitting in a cubicle reading blogs as an escape. I like to remind them, and all my readers, that it is never too late to make a change or take that first step toward achieving their dreams. Martha Stewart was a stockbroker before becoming a caterer and eventually a lifestyle expert, media mogul, and brand. Julia Child didn't start cooking until she was 36 and didn't publish her first book until she was 49.

While many people in this book did know from childhood exactly what they wanted to be like Chris Benz, Jenni Kayne, and Thelma Golden, there are a few who worked at various jobs before striking out on their own like Michael Bastian, Jonathan Adler, and Albertus Swanepoel. Regardless of when everyone figured out what they wanted to do with their life, they all now have their dream job. It is exactly the reason I wanted to profile them for this book.

Something that came to me later in life, and because of my blog, is photography. A blogger these days need to be a writer, editor, and photographer in order to stand apart. I am very grateful that my publisher had enough faith in me to allow me to photograph these subjects in their offices, workspaces, and studios. They spend so much time at work. Their spaces are very personal and full of mood boards and artwork so it's like looking directly into their head.

Creative careers aren't always the ones that bring fame and fortune. Not every day is sunshine and roses. The creative people profiled have all followed their bliss and love going to work. For each of them, the good far outweighs the bad. They will tell you about how they got their start and what keeps them going. Where they go to get away from it all, the best advice they ever received, and more. You'll learn that not only are they all creative, but also curious, courageous, and kind.

I hope they all inspire you as much as they inspired me.

Heather Clawson

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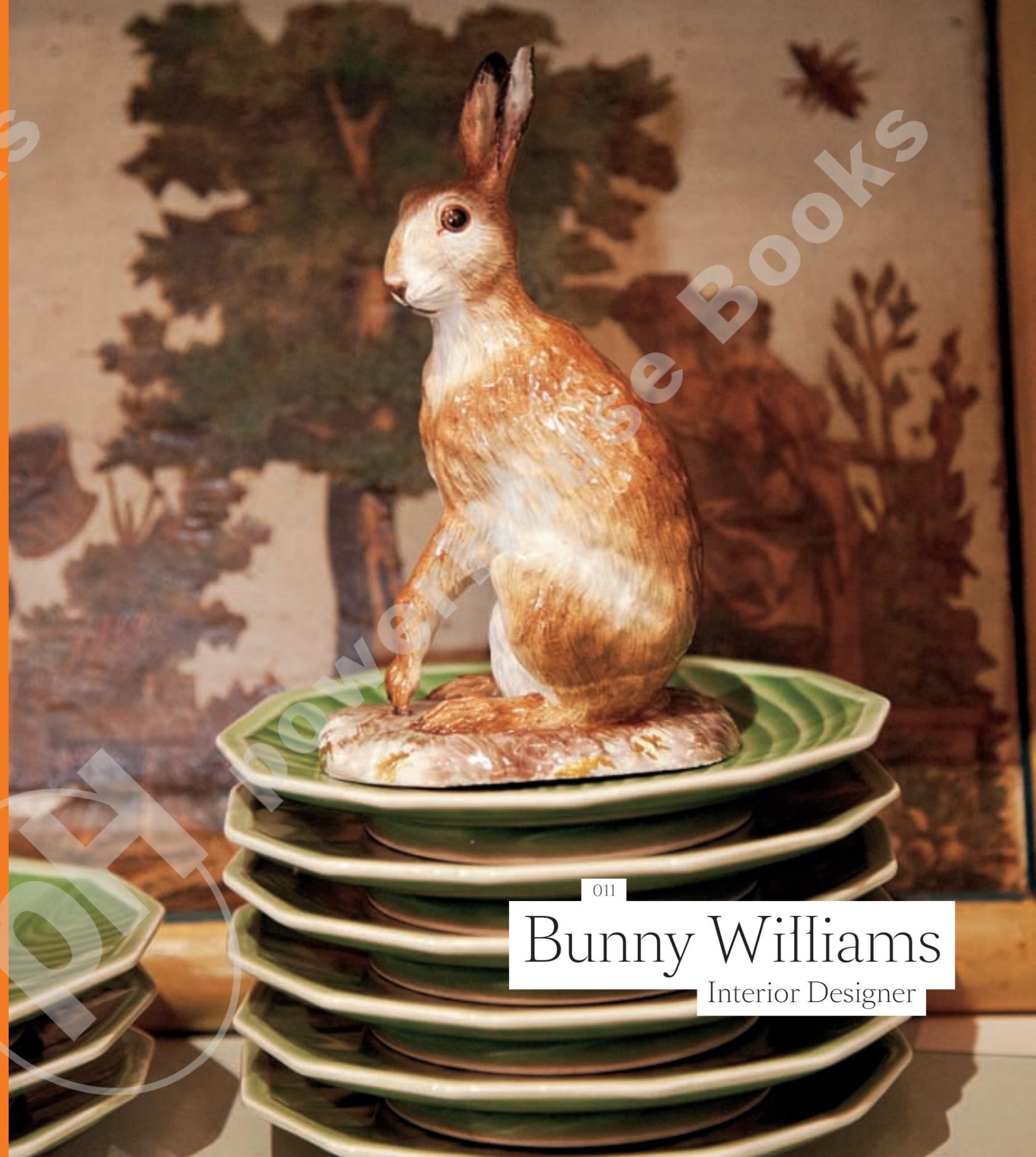
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“Things won
are done;
joy’s soul lies
in the doing.”

William Shakespeare



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Bunny Williams
Interior Designer



“To be creative and never turn your back on new ideas and new possibilities.”



Here is an old adage that nice guys finish last, but interior designer Bunny Williams is so nice that I think it's definitely one of the secrets to her success. She is also incredibly talented at creating inviting rooms that make you want to sit and stay a while. She will have thought of everything and there will always be a place for you to set your drink. But then again, she learned from the best. She worked for 22 years at the venerable interior design firm Parish-Hadley whose door she knocked on one day looking for a job. Even though I've never worked for her, I find myself learning from her example as a designer and a businesswoman. But most importantly, I will always remember to be nice.



“Do your work,
and I shall
know you.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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Lorin Stein

Editor, *The Paris Review*





THE PARIS REVIEW

UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE



“Life is short.”

Anonymous

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Philip Crangi

Jewelry Designer



“Those who don't believe in magic will never find it.”

Roald Dahl



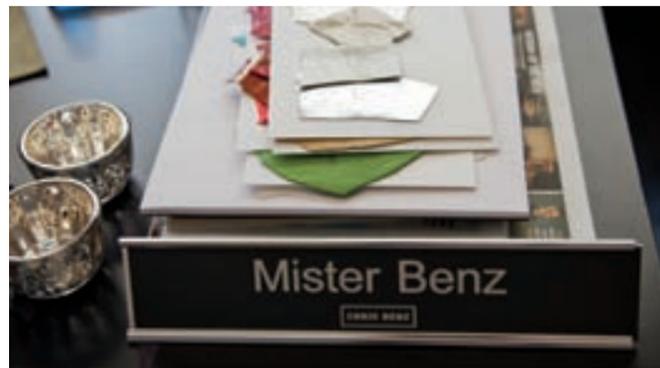
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Chris Benz

Fashion Designer



*“My life is really my work
and my work is my life and
I wouldn't have it any other
way. I've never understood
how to keep them separate!
I think you have to commit
to that from the moment
you start your own company.”*



I feel like in one way or another I've always wanted to be a designer. I grew up reading so many magazines and books. You have to allow yourself to follow the path of what the universe has in store for you.

I actually can't believe that my parents let me move to New York City when I was 17 to attend Parsons. Growing up on Bainbridge Island in the Pacific Northwest was, for such a visual kid, eclectic eye candy, a perfect cross section between the preppy "water and sailboats" crowd and the dark grunge of Seattle, with a hippie constituency in the mix.

I really count myself so fortunate to have been a part of two very unique American design teams. At Marc Jacobs you learn high fashion and creating one-of-a-kind pieces with beauty, and at J.Crew you learn to create items for any woman to wear. With that mix, you can learn to create something amazing and make it fit for any woman, which is really the balance we strive to achieve with the Chris Benz collection.

I feel like I'm living the idea of a big break. I've always lived my life with a strong work ethic and "the best is yet to come" mentality, which I hope has helped me to steer clear of resting on any proverbial laurels.

I find inspiration from strange places. Oftentimes an inspiration is a muse or a painting, but it can truly be anything for me, even a pattern in the light reflecting in the back of a taxi. You will find inspiration when you least expect it and it can change everything about a collection.

Seeing the way clothes can truly transform how a woman feels is so exciting and gratifying for me. I think about the magic in that in every step in the development of the collection, from design all the way through to production.

Work hard. Be nice. Don't stop. Keep going. See more. Do more. Be prepared to fall on your sword. Be thankful.



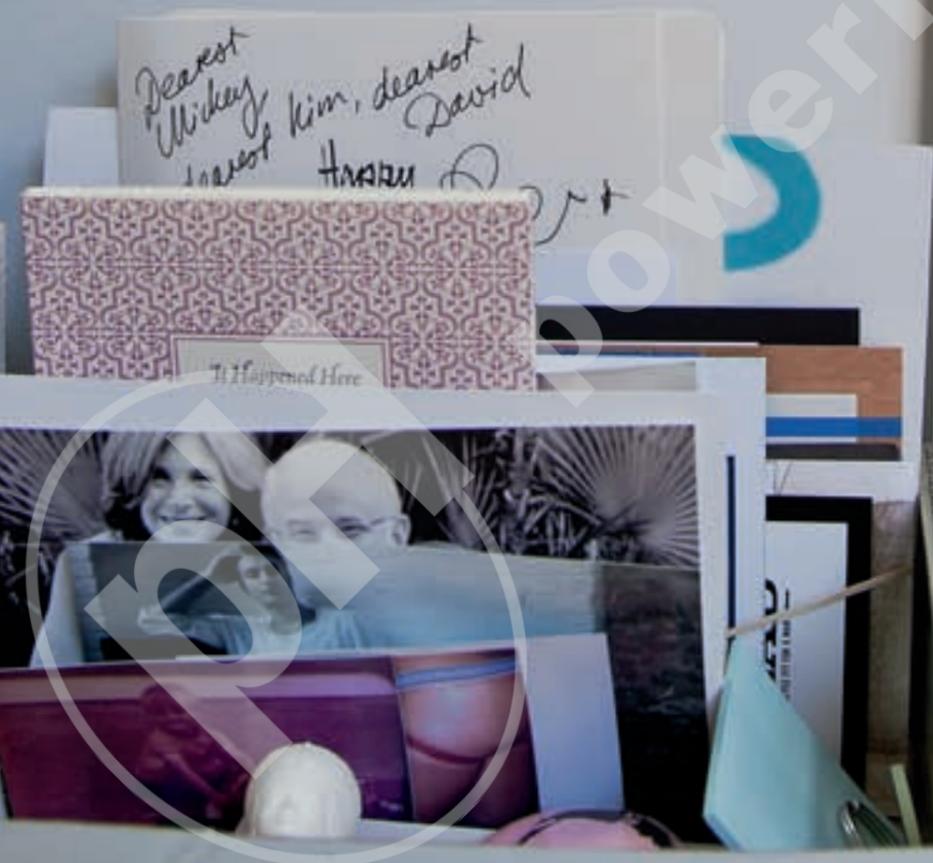
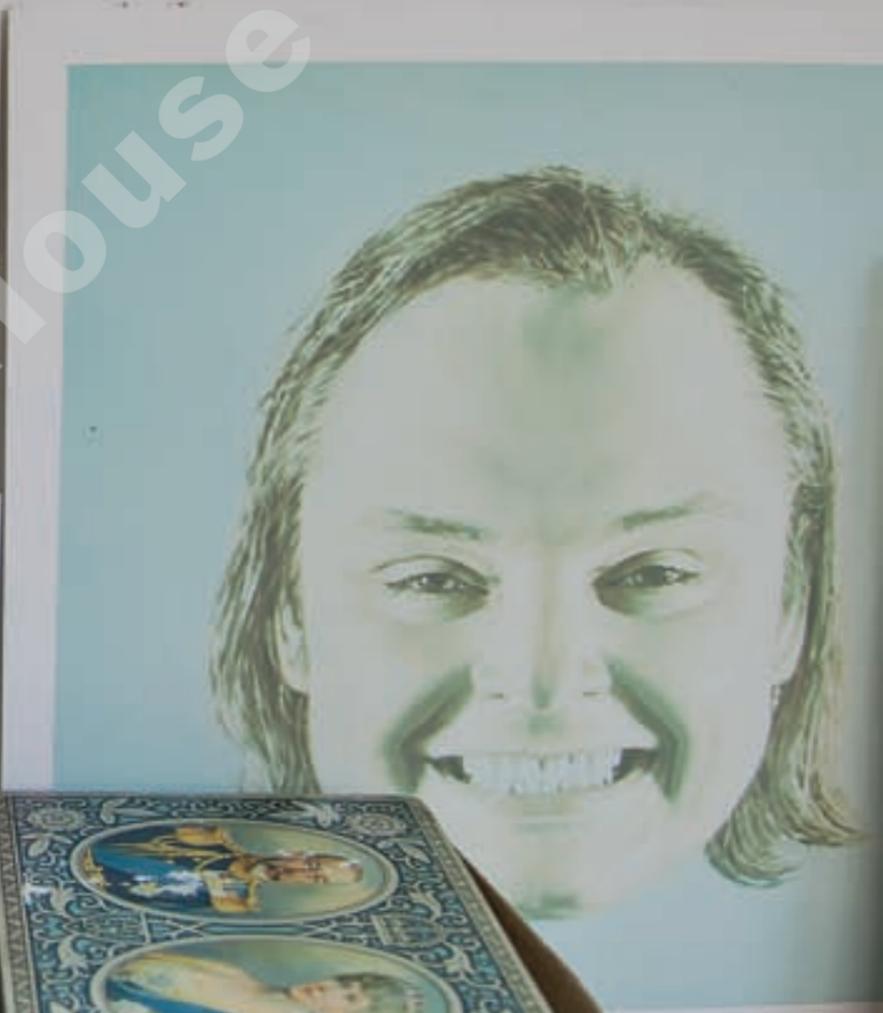
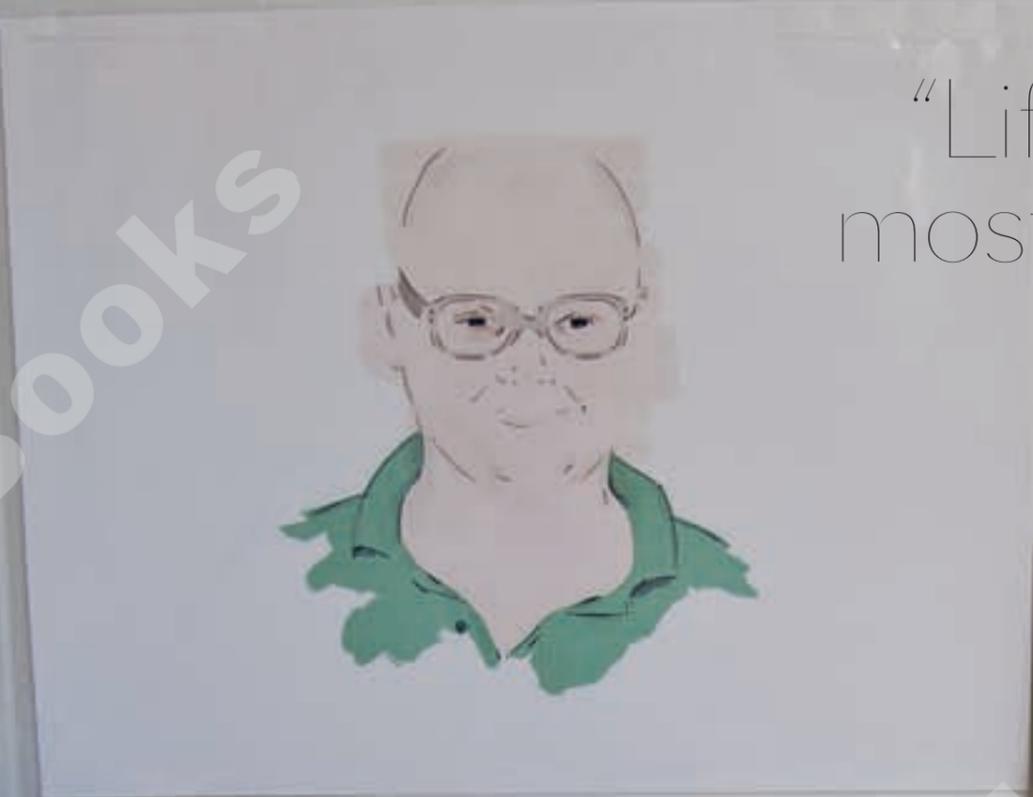
Mickey Boardman

Editorial Director, *Paper*

“Life’s a banquet and most poor suckers are starving to death!”

Auntie Mame

ID	Position	email
229	Executive Editor	amc
241	Managing Assistant	amc
247	Creative Director	amc
251	Executive Editor	amc
242	Senior Editor	amc
243	Executive Editor & Editor in Chief	amc
244	Senior Editor	amc
245	Executive Director and Office Manager	amc
246	VP Creative Services/Marketing	amc
247	Managing Editor	amc
248	Executive Director of Sales	amc
249	Senior Editor	amc
250	Executive Director of Sales	amc
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269	Senior Editor	amc
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I remember seeing *Paper* magazine editorial director Mickey Boardman on various television programs dropping bon mots and funny commentary. To me, he seemed to epitomize old-school, Studio 54 New York. Never did I imagine that I would not only get to meet him but actually get to know him all because of Twitter. He's the person that I enjoy running into most at a fashion show or event. He is the life of the party who also gives his time generously to charity. He's a fashionista who is usually wearing a sparkly necklace, and has a heart of gold to match. New York could use a few more people like Mickey Boardman.

"I'm the type who finds a place he likes and stays."

“Early in life I had to choose between honest arrogance and hypocritical humility. I chose the former and have seen no reason to change.”

Frank Lloyd Wright

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Joel Chen

Antiques Dealer, JF Chen





I attribute my longevity in this business to my passion for all things design.

Los Angeles is where I spent my college years and where I have been for the last 40 years, so I could not imagine being anywhere else. Art and design have always been emerging, and now they're here. The attention to the wealth of art and design in Los Angeles and Southern California has definitely grown.

Classics like Robsjohn-Gibbings, Giò Ponti, Jean Prouvé, Charlotte Perriand, and Mies van der Rohe never go out of fashion.

I just went to India and South America and each place has its own interpretation of living, arts, and design. I like to combine different ethnic cultures with something from someplace entirely different, while still achieving harmony.

What's exciting, is that for me, it's not a job... it's a quest for my next endeavor.

My way of relaxing is not relaxing. I always have my eye out for things and love working day and night.

I do not travel as much as I used to. Every new place still excites me, but I love going back to the Scandinavian countries. I have yet to go to Africa or Australia. I'm hoping Africa is my next destination.

If you believe in something substantially, you go for it.



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