

## An Interview with Top Interior Designer Brooke Moorhead

January 17, 2018

### Tell us a little about yourself.

I was basically raised on a job site. My mother was an interior designer and lived and breathed the business from morning to night. While my classmates were in carpools to gymnastics and soccer practice, I was shuttled to my violin classes squeezed into my mother's station wagon beside stone samples and dining room tables. That said, I didn't always know that design was my calling. I took a long detour along the way, starting my career in corporate law and then switching to finance. When I realized I needed to do something more creative, I decided to go to design school at New York School of Interior Design.



Greenwich, CT Dining Room  
Interior Designer: Brooke Moorhead | Photographer: Jon Heil

### How did your corporate business experience impact your design work?

I think having corporate business experience made me a better designer. It has given me a unique perspective not only in the way I run my business and how I think, but also in understanding the experience of many New Yorkers. Many of my clients work in finance or other business-related jobs, and, having stayed up late (or all night!) for many M&A deals myself, I feel that I have a bit of insight into what their lives consist of day to day. This, in turn, helps me

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understand what they may need in their homes when they come home from a long day.

**Describe your design style. What do you love to put into a room?**

I design timeless, sophisticated interiors that speak to the modern era. One thing I love to put into rooms are lamps. While LED lighting is all the rage, incandescent lamps are particularly important to balance the light and make a space feel warm and livable. They also help balance scale and give a room a sculptural accent.



*West Village Master Bedroom  
Interior Designer: Brooke Moorhead | Photographer: Jon Heil*

**What are the three most cherished items in your home?**

My closet is a dream since I designed the cabinetry to coincide with my wardrobe – the shoes and boots were measured and are housed on specifically-appointed shelves tailored to their particular sizes; jewelry was measured and accounted for; and my personal favorite: the pink leather pulls on the drawers (and I'm not really a pink person!). I'm also in love with my big bubble dining room chandelier which emanates wonderful warm light, and my master bathroom, with a contemporary vanity mixed with unique light fixtures.

**What inspires a published designer like yourself?**

Colors of flowers and food, both the aging and modernity of New York City architecture, set design on Broadway shows and in film, and fashion, fashion, and more fashion... the pigments and textures in fashion designers' campaigns are brilliant and always newly imagined.



*Tribeca Living Room  
Interior Designer: Brooke Moorhead | Photographer: Jon Heil*

**We know that one of your specialties is contemporary design. What are some of the latest trends and what should we watch out for in 2018?**

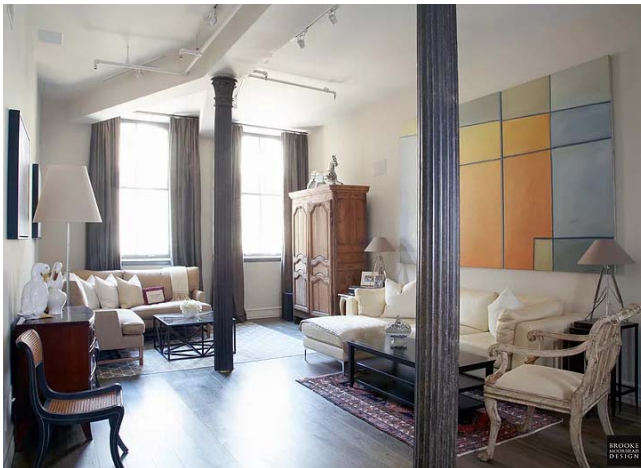
Shimmer and gloss are very “in” right now. I love applying these types of materials to my designs, and there are a lot of very creative products currently on the market that employ glossy finishes. However, I tend to use glossy paint or shimmery wallpaper, for example, with great caution. Looks that are fashionable tend to look like every other design created that year, and start to seem dated in 2-3 years. If I choose a finish or style that I feel may be a trend, I try to use it in a different way than what I’ve seen. I also make sure that the “trendy” element is something that I love enough that I don’t feel I will tire of it.

**What is the one decorating technique that you would not use?**

Nothing! The key to creativity and beauty is to have an open mind and to break your own rules. It just needs to be used in the right way in the right context.

**Is there a noticeable difference in the interior design styles of properties in TriBeCa and Upper East Side for example?**

In general, I have tended to see mostly contemporary designs in TriBeCa and downtown. The Upper East Side seems to have more of a mix – the traditional designs are certainly present, but I am seeing a lot of contemporary and transitional designs further north as well, especially as people begin to move in to old co-ops that need gut renovations. However, I feel that design style is more a reflection of the individual than the area... some people just love one or the other and can’t imagine living any other way, no matter what neighborhood they choose.



*TriBeCa Loft*

*Interior Designer: Brooke Moorhead | Photographer: Jon Heil*

**What’s the one thing that every room needs?**

A well-thought-out floor plan, good lighting, a balance of different scales of furniture and objects, and window treatments. And if a room is beautiful but untouchable or too delicate, or pretty but incredibly uncomfortable, it makes it very difficult to love living in it. Every room needs to “work”.

**How can someone make a “cookie-cutter” apartment unique?**

Paint and wallpaper can do wonders for design, especially if owners are willing to take risks with color and pattern. Light fixtures are also incredibly powerful tools, since they can be sculptural in an otherwise architecturally mundane space.



West Village Triplex, Children's Room  
Interior Designer: Brooke Moorhead | Photographer: Jon Heil

### What is a design mistake most people make?

Designing something piecemeal. When renovating, the team (architect, interior designer, and contractor) should all be brought on together, at the beginning of the project, to cover all the bases and plan for all design decisions. On smaller projects, the designer should be brought on at the beginning and not after the client has tried to do it alone. Also, a design scheme should be considered as an entire project. It's very difficult to tie things together if each piece of furniture is decided separately.

### What would you advise a condo buyer to look for when purchasing in Manhattan?

Good bones – I'm sure this is what you would say too! The things you can't change – good light, high ceilings, good floor plan (to some extent) – these are what you want to start off with. You can always fix other things with renovation, good design, or creative touch ups.



Tribeca Dining Room  
Interior Designer: Brooke Moorhead | Photographer: Jon Heil

### What do you recommend to a couple that has different design styles?

I'm smiling.... This is a good question for therapists too, and designers tend to play "marriage counselor" a lot! In my experience, it's all about compromise. Even in my own family, I've had to make design compromises. Often, looking back on those compromises, they were the right decision. But the bottom line is: both people live there and they both need to be happy. Rooms with different elements that excite both parties can be dynamic and beautiful. There are always clever ways to weave in both peoples' tastes, whether it's merging together two different styles into one unique style or putting different styles in different rooms.

**What are some inexpensive tricks that someone on a budget should consider?**

Again, painting any room is always a great "bang for your buck". Painting a piece of furniture, also, is a great way to transform a room. If you're renovating, I would consider that whatever covers the largest square footage will likely make the most impact, and work from there. This usually includes walls and floors, and rugs also make a huge difference. Also, often less is more... a principle that can be advantageous when designing on a budget!



Fifth Avenue Bathroom  
Interior Designer: Brooke Moorhead | Photographer: Jon Heil

**How does your design service work?**

I love to advise people in the way they feel most comfortable. Generally, I like to meet people and get a sense of what their interests are, what is important to them, and how I can best be of service. Then I like to clear my head and come up with my best guess as to the design scope and style that would best fit their needs. The rest is a lot of dialogue, meetings, and back and forth on dialing in on the right style: how will they live in their space, what types of furniture they will want and need, their color tastes, the flow of the home, uses for different rooms, etc. Intertwined with all of this is decisions on

construction, cabinetry, paint, etc., and deciding the best approach to/ next steps for renovation, if that is desired.

#### How can people find you?



My website is [www.brookemoorhead.com](http://www.brookemoorhead.com). Instagram shows some of my day to day and my own snapshots that aren't photographed professionally yet [@brookemoorheaddesign](https://www.instagram.com/brookemoorheaddesign). And of course people can just email me if they wish... [brooke@brookemoorhead.com](mailto:brooke@brookemoorhead.com).



Fifth Avenue Hallway Repurposed to be a Master Closet  
Interior Designer: Brooke Moorhead | Photographer: Jon Heil

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