



DESIGNER DAYDREAM

Go behind the scenes with Micky Klein: designer of interiors, follower of dreams, influencer of elegance.

By: Gitty


MICKY KLEIN INTERIORS

You binge watch HGTV, have countless inspiration photos and built your home five times over in your head. Every trip to Home Goods and every magazine from Restoration Hardware fill your mood boards with new ideas. You know exactly which light fixture is going above your (waterfall?) island and which stone said island will be made of. For most of us, this is a daydream. Micky Klein? Well, she lives in a daydream. With a unique flair for turning fashion into interiors, Micky is always ahead of the design game. An emphasis on precision and innovation puts her design firm at the helm of countless spectacular projects, each one is exclusive while still bearing the Micky Klein trademark: unique, elegant perfection.

Who is Micky Klein?

“Micky is a mom of three who moved from Detroit to Miami three years ago. I got married young, and after having two of my three children, decided the time was right to build a career. I went to school online through Art Institute and jumped right in, working extremely hard through every step. Eventually, word spread, and I was able to design interiors full time. Then, my husband and I decided that we needed a warmer climate, somewhere better suited for our children and so we moved to Miami. After about 18 months of settling in, I reopened my design firm but redirected our focus to commercial projects; there’s nothing like seeing the large-scale spaces come alive.”

What was it like growing up?

“I was always creative and did not do well in school. It wasn’t only about my being the youngest in my class, but academics were totally not me. In 9th grade Hebrew class I was still drawing pictures and coloring with crayons-not out of immaturity, but I just didn’t understand the need for Hebrew-everyone speaks English! It’s funny, I was more into fashion than interiors. Maybe because I wasn’t familiar with interiors at such a young age, but I loved fashion in any form. Clothing, shoes... I used to go shopping and I’d hide the bags in my friends’ houses, so my father wouldn’t see. Then I’d bring them home one by one, so he wouldn’t get upset. Until this day, I’m obsessed with shoes. I’ll ask my husband, ‘which shoe do you like better?’ he’ll say, ‘I don’t like any’ so I’ll be like, ‘okay, I’m taking both!’ My love of fashion does work its way into my designs. If there’s a stiletto I like, you’ll see the shape and its lines translated in my renderings. Same thing with colors, textures and fabrics... I love feathers and bling but in a very elegant way, so I had a custom settee made with nail heads, grey velvet and grey feathers all along the back with some gold accents. I just needed it to be in my home-which we’re building for the past few years. Yes, years! It’s not New York, everyone lives like they’re on vacation here!”



Can you take us on the journey of your business?

“I started out the way most people do, by helping friends and designing my own house. From there, my name spread beyond my immediate circle and one day, I got a massive contract to do apartment buildings and lobbies. I started off as Brin-Klein Design and then decided that as catchy as it sounded, I needed to use my full name-I needed to market me. I wanted to put myself on the map as a designer who did more than just plan interiors. For example, I’m currently working on a wallpaper collection with Elizabeth Sutton. The goal is to have a home décor line and be an overall well-rounded designer.”

What’s your creative process like?

“By now, I have it down to a science. I’ll get a project, scope it out and come up with a preliminary design concept which is just color schemes, materials, different ideas... basically a mood board. Once that’s approved, it goes into a layout and I present an entire package which we’ll tweak as per the client’s specifications and needs. Then, it’ll go into renderings and elevations, at which point they’re then ready to be handed over to the construction team and have the design executed.”



What’s the most stressful part of your job?

“Being the perfectionist that I am, the most stressful part is not dealing with people like you’d think, but knowing that I’m delivering to the best of my ability. If I’m delivering a design concept, I’m always going back in and tweaking things. Not because I’m doubting my choices, but because I want them to have the best. I’ll wake up at 2 am and be like ‘OH MY GOSH! It needs this light fixture or that door handle.’ My brain is always going until the design is approved and we’re on to the next stage.”

What’s your go-to brand and color palette?

“I love Emtex handles, they have amazing quality, finishing and colors. Also, Brizo plumbing fixtures. Those are my two go-to’s as far as brands because the pricing is amazing and they’re really higher end. My favorite color palette is the one I always start with; anything black, grey, white and gold and I’ll adjust it per project. If the client wants wood, stone, marble, pops of color... I’ll play around with it, but those are the colors that I start with.”

What's your favorite project that you ever did?

"I really love them all because I pour my heart and soul into each one, but my favorite would have to be the mikvah (ritual bath) that's part of a shul (synagogue) in Miami Beach that I'm designing. I love how the elegance and simplicity of the design makes a woman feel great about herself. However, I would say that my own home is going to be the project with the most blood sweat and many, many tears because it's something I actually built from the ground up for my kids and (hopefully, one day) grandkids. It's funny, the project already has so much poured into it that my husband always jokes I can't redesign or switch anything. Ever. Not even the tablecloths! (He knows me too well)"



Who's your design inspiration?

"The first one that comes to mind is HGTV's Sabrina Soto. I thought she was always just so happy, and you can tell she loved what she did-her eyes would light up while designing. I grew up watching her and draw inspiration from the way she was always just so full of life.

Design-wise I wouldn't say anyone in particular, because I'm the kind of person that'll follow other

designers and pump them up even if I don't necessarily have the same personal style because I know what went into that and they deserve the recognition. I happen not to be the biggest fan of rustic design but at the end of the day, there are gorgeous designs so why not give the credit where it's due and applaud the designers knocking it out of the park. Any designer doing good work gets my attention, so it's not really one specific person."

How do you reconcile a client's wants with your personal style/design knowledge?

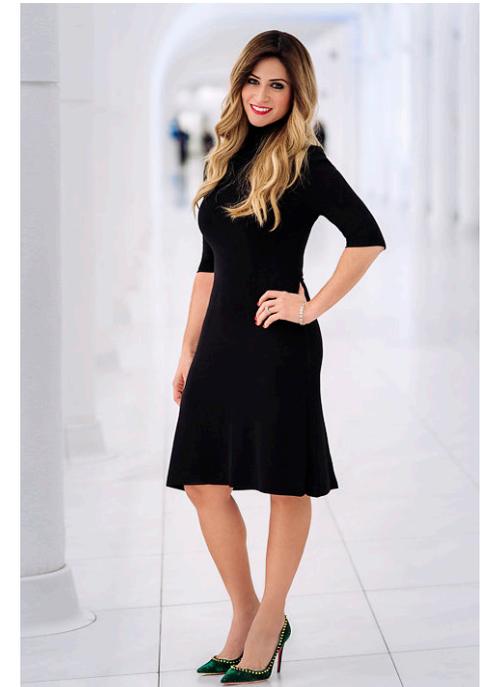
"If I see a conflict happening, I'll do my best to design within the box they want while making it work for the space. Like, if they want a purple chair and purple just doesn't match, I'll pick a different tone of purple or I'll use a pop of purple. And if it doesn't look amazing but the client is ecstatic, then I did my job because at the end of the day, a happy client is all I can really ask for and that's really what matters."

Your work schedule must be demanding-how do you manage?

"My husband is very supportive and really lets me breathe easy. Because I'm travelling A LOT for work and usually for a few days at a time, he'll pick up the pieces and make sure everything's running smoothly. Even though two of my kids are older, he'll make sure to be home before they'd go to sleep, so he can hear about their day. My husband really does what it takes and he travels a lot too, so we try to really balance it out."

Do you think it's necessary to go to school for interior design?

"I started with nothing and did an internship before I went to school. I called an interior design company and said, 'I want to know what this is about, are you looking for an intern?' She gave me a chance and really believed in me. After a few weeks, I decided to take some courses because I wanted to learn the parts of the job that weren't strictly about design. The woman I was interning for really instilled this confidence in me, she said 'y'know, you really remind me of myself. I didn't go to school, I built myself up, read every book out there, learned on the job, I busted my you-know-what to get to where I am today and it's amazing to see that drive in you.' It's not necessary to go to these big design school programs and you really just learn from experience in this field but you do need to know the basics. Nowadays, everyone needs AutoCAD because everything is computerized. Pulling design things together, that's learned on the job but learning renderings and elevations, that would be the most bang for your buck."



You've been on the business scene for a while, how has social media impacted it?

"It's a loaded question for me because I'm not so into it, but I have to be. I'm not the biggest fan because of the time it takes to be on Instagram, keeping everything rolling and making sure everyone is in the know. It's very out of my comfort zone because I'm the kind of person who walks into a room and would love to go hide-not in the corner but like along the wall. That's where I'm comfortable, yet I still somehow manage to find myself in the middle of the room and Instagram is the same thing for me. I don't want to be like 'hi everyone, this is my life today.' I also want to stress that I have to keep it strictly business and I admire moms who do the same because there are girls like my daughter on Instagram and I want them to log on be like, 'my mom is a rockstar' instead of 'my mom shared our dinner on Instagram.' I want her to know I work hard but still make sure to be there for her. I'm trying to build followers in a very authentic way so just like I won't buy them, I won't entice people to follow me based on gossip. I also think Instagram should give all businesses the swipe up feature-if I'm creating a space, I want to be able to share the wallpaper or the rug with my followers. It's very hard to build followers and be authentic at the same time."

Advice for people breaking into the field?

"Just do it. There's a lot of competition in this field and there are a lot of people that don't want you to succeed. I experienced a lot of people saying, 'are you sure?!' and my advice is, don't listen! Anything you put your mind to, you'll figure it out. Even if it takes a little longer than you expect, don't give up-you'll get there. The more you succeed, the more haters you'll have and at this point, I tune it out. It's not that I think I'm better than them or I'm flaunting, I genuinely don't hear it. I had this happen twice where I was at a restaurant and women came up to me to say how much they liked my work. It was so humbling to hear that people are in tune with what I'm doing. Even when you have those bad days, drink some extra coffee-you got this. My next piece of advice would be to stay true to yourself and who you really are. I'm doing a lot of social media now and I don't ever

want to come across as someone fake or someone I'm really not. If I'm posting a story of myself on site, you'll see, I'm there, I'm focused, I'm trying to get it all in so that it stays about the design, but you can never allow yourself to lose that smile. Stay happy, just enjoy it. It shouldn't be some show to get more followers.

How many pairs of shoes?

I don't even know-I can't count. More than 40 for sure.

Shoes, bags, or clothes?

Shoes

Lipstick or gloss?

Stick

Movie that made you cry?

A star is born. It was long but I cried like a baby

Favorite color?

I wanna say every color if it's done right but I'll say grey because it looks good with everything

If you had a coffee date...

Oooh this one's a hard one... Probably myself because it would give me some alone time.

One food for the rest of your life?

Fries. It solves all problems

If you wouldn't be designing interiors you would be...

Designing shoes.

