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MY ICON

ROBERT ANGELL REVEALS HIS DESIGN ICON

Robert Angell has had a somewhat prolific career to date. He has worked with David Collins, travelled the globe in search of great design, set up his own company and lecturers on the subject of design, something, which he is passionately involved in.

WHO IS YOUR DESIGN ICON?

Philip Johnson, Architect, 1905-2005.

WHAT IS JOHNSON MOST FAMOUS FOR?

Philip Johnson is one of the most influential modernist architects, but perhaps less well known than contemporaries, who included, Le Corbusier, Marcel Breuer, Mies van der Rohe and Frank Lloyd-Wright. He was responsible for re-shaping American and modernist architecture style that still prevails today. He had three principles; 1. an emphasis on architectural volume over mass (planes rather than solidity) 2. a rejection of symmetry and 3. rejection of applied decoration. He met and worked alongside Mies van der Rohe in 1929 and they collaborated and competed on many projects perhaps most famously on the Seagram Building in New York. Mies designed the building whilst Philip designed the lobby and interiors, including the Four Season and Brasserie Restaurants all of which look as fresh today as they did in 1956 when it was completed. One of his earlier buildings was The Glass House(1949) which he lived in from 1949 until his death in 2005.

HOW WAS JOHNSON'S WORK RECEIVED DURING HIS HEYDAY?

A prolific architect for many decades, Johnson's architectural work is a balancing act between two dominant trends in post-war American art: the more "serious" movement of Minimalism, and the more populist movement of Pop Art. His best work has aspects of both movements. Johnson's personal art collection reflected this dichotomy, as he introduced artists such as Mark Rothko to the Museum of Modern Art as well as Andy Warhol.

WHY HAVE YOU CHOSEN PHILIP JOHNSON AS YOUR 'ICON'?

I have chosen Philip Johnson because of the continued change and recognition by architects and designers to change and adapt throughout their career and to embrace the ever-changing world and styles in design. This self-belief to strive to bring new building and interiors to our city-scape is truly inspiring and is something that is instilled in my philosophy that a unique design requires a unique approach and to recognise what is happening and yet not be restricted to any particular style or genre. It's also his mantra of 'Architecture is basically the design of interiors, the art of organising interior space'

WHICH PROJECTS FROM YOUR OWN PORTFOLIO DEMONSTRATE A NOD TO YOUR ICON'S WORK?

I think most of them do it one way or another. The Chelsea Suites at the Berkeley Hotel follow a modernist principles and as quoted by Johnson himself 'All architecture is shelter, all great architecture is the design of space that contains, cuddles, exalts, or stimulates the persons in that space'

IF YOU COULD BE REMEMBERED FOR ONE ELEMENT OF YOUR DESIGN, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Like Johnson says 'I like to be buttoned onto tradition. The thing is to improve it, twist it and mold it; to make something new of it; not to deny it. The riches of history can be plucked at any point.' I hope that it will be for creating timeless interiors and that will become classics over time, interiors that stimulate an emotion and creates an everlasting memories. robertangelldesigninternational.com