

THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

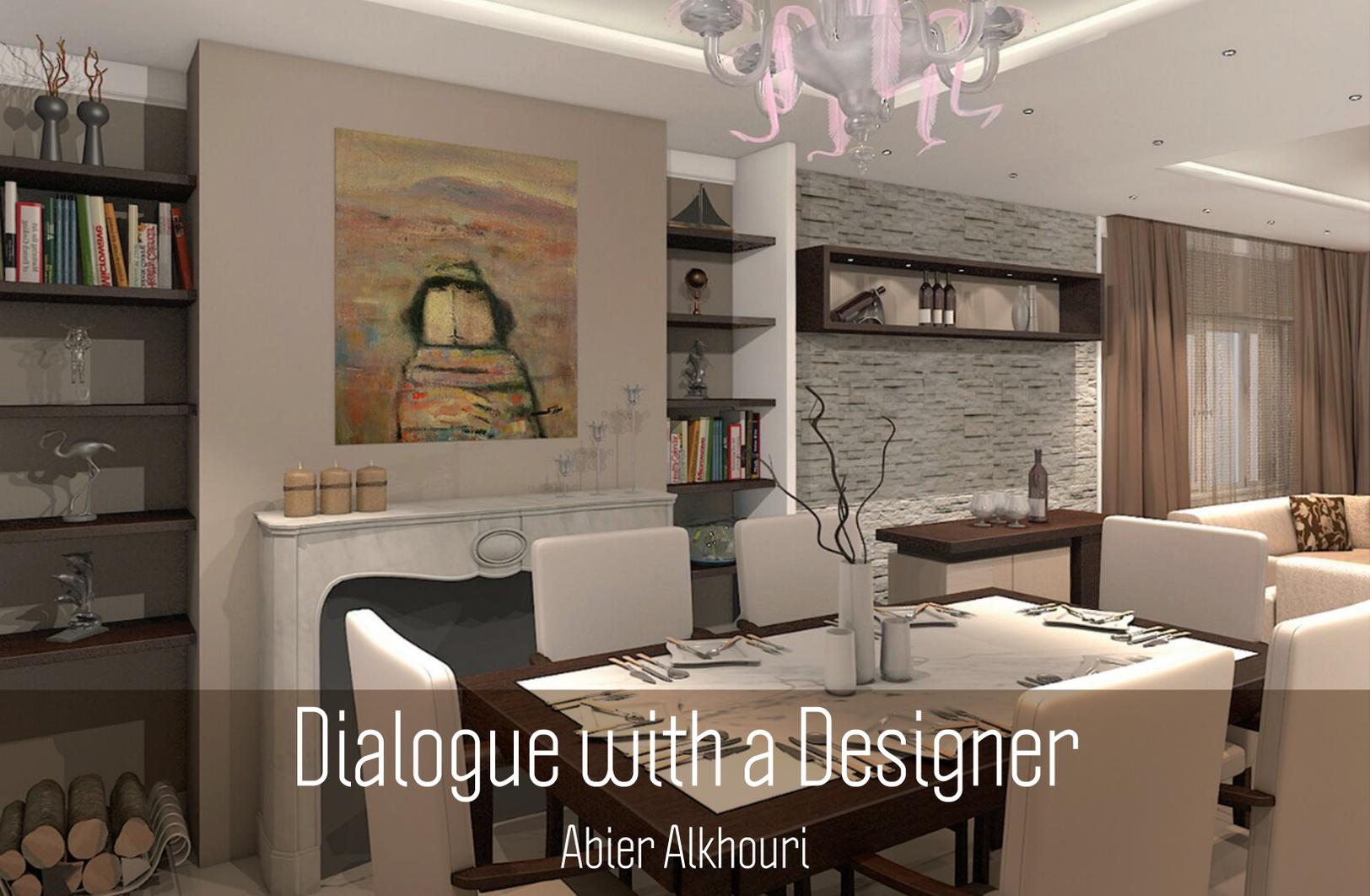
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DIALOGUE WITH A DESIGNER

Abier Alkhouri



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This month The Metropolitan Builder speaks with Abier Alkhouri, CEO of AbierA Dream Design, an international, award-winning architectural and interior design firm that brings unique solutions to all types of residential and commercial design spaces. It has offices in Houston, Paris and Calgary. Abier Alkhouri has more than 25 years of global design and building expertise in architecture and interior design, including technical and construction detailing of end-to-end interior projects and executing conceptual design to delivery. She is fluent in English, French and Arabic.

The Metropolitan Builder: What motivated you to go into the interior design field?

Abier Alkhouri: My passion for design flourished at a very young age. I used to rush home just so I could spend the rest of the evening drawing. My passion flourished throughout the years, inciting me to study architecture at university while working with one of the top architects in Damascus. At a very young age, I began gaining exposure on how to carry out commercial and residential projects in “the real world.” What has kept me in this field is its ability to be constantly evolving and inciting but familiar at the same time. Since opening my own company, I have come to enjoy the freedom of independent and creative thought.

The Metropolitan Builder: How has the field of interior design changed since you graduated?

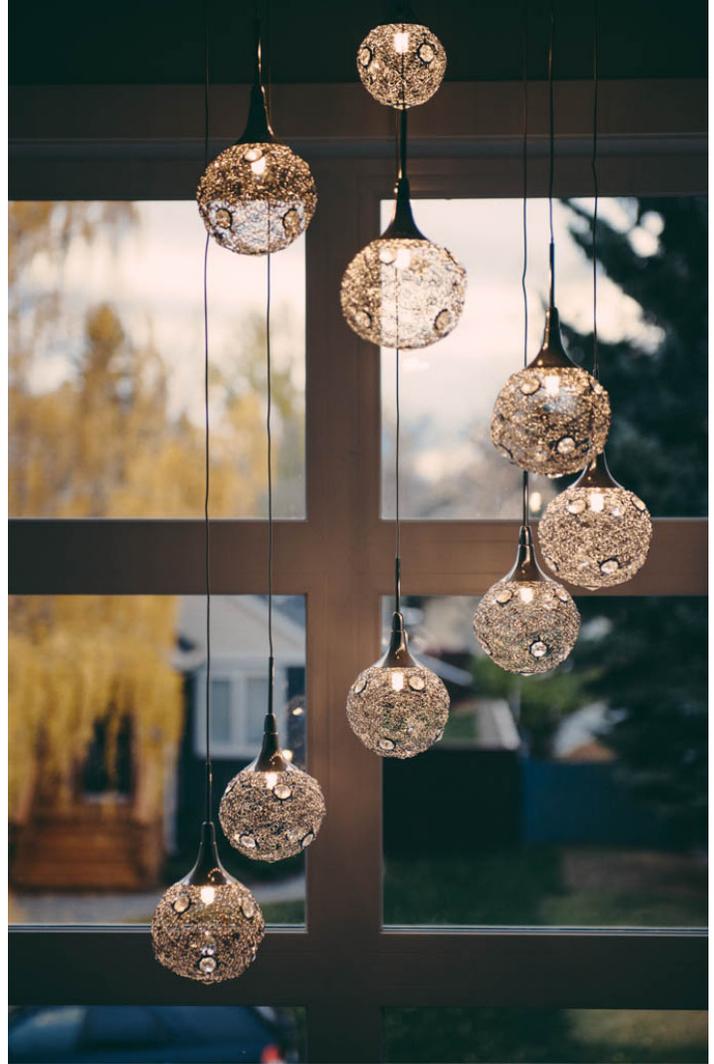
Abier Alkhouri: Throughout the many years, the exterior facet of interior design – the styles, trends and colors – have drastically changed. Nevertheless, the basics of interior design have remained the same; that is, merging the latest trends with classic undertones to create a unique space for clients

The Metropolitan Builder: How can an experienced interior designer help custom home builders or remodeling contractors with their building or remodeling projects?

Abier Alkhouri: Interior designers are necessary to piece the big picture together and put forward a goal by which the clients and builders can use as a guide. Not only is this cost-effective, but it ensures that the final product is coherent.

The Metropolitan Builder: What sets you apart from other designers?

Abier Alkhouri: I am fortunate enough to have lived in over seven countries and visited many more. This international experience has exposed me to many different architectural tastes and designs, which I carry with me today. Moreover, it has taught me how to run projects under many different



rules and regulations. It's also exposed me to a wide variety of people, strengthening my interactions with clients to facilitate turning their dreams into reality.

The Metropolitan Builder: What has been your most challenging project and why?

Abier Alkhouri: Each project is unique and has its own challenges that I and the crew have to overcome. However, at the end of the day, the most difficult part of the job is pleasing the clients. Sometimes, however, that does not mean granting them the complete freedom to choose whatever they like. There are often many brainstorming sessions before we come to the final decision, as my role is to provide the big picture, which sometimes the client finds difficult to see when choosing individual pieces.

The Metropolitan Builder: How do you begin the material selection process when working with builders' and remodelers' clients?

Abier Alkhouri: Once the design has been confirmed, the material selection process begins. The clients and I have many discussions about the style that they wish to see in their home. We then go by many trades to look at the different options and combinations available. After thorough consideration of all, the client and I come to agree on a consistent theme.

The Metropolitan Builder: What are some common mistakes made by builders and homeowners?

Abier Alkhouri: The most frustrating part of a remodeling or building of a new house is when the project gets delayed! However, homeowners can reduce their chances of this occurring by hiring a good team that's on the same page before the project has started. As an architect and interior designer, I line up all the trades and buy all of the materials before breaking ground to minimize costly mistakes or delays.

The Metropolitan Builder: Speaking about staying current, how to you keep yourself up to date with all the design trends happening in the industry today?

Abier Alkhouri: I keep up with the latest ideas and trends by making it a habit to attend seminars, markets and design shows in the US, Europe and Canada. This helps me (and by extension, my clients) to keep informed about what's going on in the industry. Design trends are constantly evolving, but it is important to stay on track to continue to broaden the horizon of my creativity via exposure.

The Metropolitan Builder: What is your favorite design style?

Abier Alkhouri: Naturally, I tend to enjoy practicing



modern design. Nevertheless, I enjoy mixing it up and working with contemporary, transitional and traditional designs as well.

The Metropolitan Builder: What fascinates you and how have you incorporated that into your designs?

Abier Alkhouri: What never ceases to inspire and fascinate me is the prominence of architecture throughout eras. I enjoy visiting old historical sites and reflecting upon the amazing architectural capabilities and design in society at the time. I take this with me to truly focus on making a piece that is unique to its time and to the people that call it home.

The Metropolitan Builder: How would you characterize your personal style?

Abier Alkhouri: I typically will stick to the design theme that my clients express they want, whether contemporary, traditional, modern or anything between. Nevertheless, I always encourage the clients to do a unique take on design,

fusing themes or adding personal touches.

The Metropolitan Builder: : What would be your recommendation for what to do first in a decorating project when working with the builders and/or homeowners?

Abier Alkhouri: At the beginning of every project, I prefer to have a series of meetings with client and builders. Not only does this give time to discuss the project, but it also helps to build a strong foundation for client-personal relationship – something that is necessary to openly discuss ideas in the future.

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