

Questions

Non-Bio Related

1. Where are you originally from? **Beaumont, TX**
2. What brought you to Houston? **I moved back to Texas after years of being out of state, my immediate family is all now in Houston, so I wanted to be in the same city as them.**
3. What's your favorite wine? **It's a toss up between a Cabernet or Malbec. I'm a lover of red wine.**
4. What's your favorite way to relax? **Reading in a hammock until I fall asleep.**

Bio Related

1. How did you become an interior designer? **I went to school originally for Interior Architecture, then switched to Interior Design.**
2. How did you transition into hospitality interior design? **I interned a lot and was able to turn a hospitality internship into a design job and work my way up from there.**
3. How does it feel being the only minority in spaces within your industry? **It is often very difficult in that when designing public spaces like a hotel you are often looking into the culture and neighborhood or city that the hotel is being built in. Many times designers are wanting to design "diverse" environments, but the ones making the decisions are hardly ever minorities and hardly ever women so you end up spending time trying to convince people the "right" way to celebrate/integrate the local culture into a space without it being a stereotype.**
4. Talk about the memories of trying to fit in. **When I first started out, I remember trying very hard to dress and act "the part." I use to suppress my personal style in order to match theirs and it was taking its toll on me. Being a creative is all about being able to express yourself and I found myself not being my true self because I didn't look or have the same experiences as they did. I also found myself trying to downplay my abilities in order to make others feel better. Because I am often times the only one, I go through the traditional steps of getting a job in that I find a company I am interested in, figure out the contact, send a nice email with my resume attached, interview and hopefully get the job. What I started finding out while working is that several if not all the other people I worked with knew someone that knew someone that got them the job, no real interview. Because of the nature of a catty workplace, many of the women I worked with early on kept trying to make it as if we were in some sort of competition. I found myself downplaying how hard I worked to get there and finally one day I got myself together and started realizing I deserved my place.**
5. How do you ensure now that you're remaining true to yourself in those potentially uncomfortable spaces? **As I've gotten older, I have definitely become more vocal about how I feel about things in the workplace as well as my design vision for a project. It takes time, but figuring out how to vocalize your thoughts in a firm yet respectable way is key.**
6. What difference(s) have you seen between the instances in which you try to fit in and those in which you are candid about your work and who you are? **I produce better work when I am more candid about my work and stick to values.**
7. A lot of women in power and successful minority women are described as intimidating. Tell us how that label makes you feel. How do you respond internally and outwardly? **It is**

extremely frustrating, in that I have been in positions where how I say something is misconstrued into something far worse than if said by my white counterpart. Internally I am livid, but outwardly I often times will point out my intention in a way that makes the other person think twice about how their assumption.

8. After losing your job, how did you find yourself? I started to think about what I really wanted to do, write it down, pray about it, spend time doing things I love, things that re-inspired me.
9. What do you want out of life? I want to inspire other young black girls that they deserve a seat at the design table. That they can be a part of the larger narrative of design and how it impacts our ever-changing communities. I want to be fully happy. To make things that bring others joy and to not spend my life grinding for others, but to build and leave my own creative stamp on the world.
10. In what ways do you invest in yourself? I like to reward myself sometimes after a long stretch of work/deadlines by taking myself to a museum, making sure I take a trip every year with girlfriends, making sure I get my eyebrows done regularly, going to see live music, yoga.
11. How important is that? It's super important because when I do not invest in myself I find that I become increasingly irritated with any and everything and it puts me in a foul mood. It's a way of making sure I keep myself balanced and happy.
12. As someone who'd lost her job and had bills to pay but can now look back on it in a positive light, what advice do you have for those struggling through what seem like huge trials? That you will always make it out of it. Just because things are seemingly falling apart, do not let that get you down. We are all capable of hustling to get ourselves back a float, you might just have to readjust your "plan" and you will be OK.
13. If you could leave one thing with the I Am Blog readers about remaining true to themselves throughout their professional lives, what would it be? You were hired for a reason, you have something innately special and valuable about you that no one else has on the team, make sure you keep tapping into yourself and know that no one can take who you are away from you.