



## Interior Designer And Architect Eric K. Daniels Is On The Verge Of Even More Greatness

*Daniels works to educate future designers about what the industry really entails.*

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Eric K. Daniels has had quite the journey to get to where he is today. A trained architect, Daniels worked in the field for many years before he decided to complete a B.F.A program at the Parsons School of Design.

Today, he is the founder and principal architect of ekdnyc, a New York City-based design firm. The firm handles both residential and commercial projects, as well as non-profit projects, health-related projects and more. The firm's time is pretty much equally divided between residential and commercial projects. Additionally, Daniels is a tenured Professor of Interior Design at the Fashion Institute of Technology and the former chair of the school's Interior Design Department.

Daniels studied architecture at the Pratt Institute and then went “the typical route” of working for small and large architectural firms.

Next, Daniels cut his teeth working for residential architect Scott Bromley. His first residential design project was as a project manager refreshing an approximately 3,500-square-foot apartment located at the intersection of New York City’s Park Avenue and 78th Street.

“That was a sink or swim kind of thing because Scott had a small firm,” Daniels said. “Everybody working in there was pretty much the project manager of their projects and Scott would just give the design direction and then we’d have to take it all the way through to construction and finish.”

During his time working under Bromley, Daniels learned millwork design, furniture, finishes and “more than just the architecture [he] was doing.” After his time with Bromley, Daniels taught an evening course as an adjunct professor at Parsons School of Design. That led to him taking a continuing education class before he went all in and completed the B.F.A program at Parsons. Later, he would teach at the Pratt Institute in the Graduate Interior Design program.

Daniels credits Bromley with influencing his style and work ethic. Under Bromley, Daniels also discovered his aesthetic, which he described as a “minimalist kind of aesthetic.”

He later worked for two architects who did both residential and restaurant work, and through his time with them, Daniels learned how to design for restaurants. This was a great time of learning for Daniels. He recalls a time when he worked with two different restaurant clients simultaneously. One client was “completely involved in the design” and the other was more hands-off and willing to depend on Daniels’ expertise. Both projects involved extensive communication. Daniels learned that building trust with clients is crucial to good relationships and successful project outcomes.

“When they trust what you’re doing, that’s when the projects work out better,” Daniels said.

And just because a client trusts the designer, that doesn’t mean the designer has free rein to do whatever they want with a space.

“You have an obligation to make sure that you’re not taking them down some road that they didn’t expect to go on,” Daniels said. He added that the design world “is very different from what clients are used to, especially business clients and financial clients and people like that.”

Another project of which he is proud is his [Central Park West](#) residential project, one which involved two apartments that were combined to create a single, not-to-be-forgotten space.

“I worked with a designer who did the furniture and finishes and I did the architecture, all of the millwork and all of the cabinetry,” he said.

After closely listening to the client’s needs, Daniels was able to work with the client to tailor design plans from their original idea to a version more closely aligned with their ultimate

vision. Thrilled, the client went with Daniels' recommendations.

“Now they're a repeat client and I'm going to be doing a second project for them,” Daniels said. “That's what you want as a designer—repeat clients or a recommendation.”

These days, Daniels is certainly busy, but isn't showing any signs of slowing down—if anything, he's speeding up. He and his firm partner just launched a new service called thinkshift, an immersive learning company which teaches organizations about design thinking. Design thinking is highly collaborative and takes a deep look into the human need for a design, centering an approach that promotes making design decisions with the end user in mind. He also teaches the topic at the Fashion Institute of Technology's business school.

“It's not just the client involved but all of the end users,” Daniels said. “All of the people who are going to use the space have the buy-in from the very beginning.”

Daniels never loses focus when it comes to educating his students and preparing them for the interior design world outside of the classroom. He noted that home-related TV shows often paint an unrealistic portrait of the interior design world, so he works hard to educate his students about the profession, what to expect and how to work in the best interests of their future clients.

“[These shows do] leave an impression, especially when students come to FIT or any design school,” Daniels said. “They come with the idea of: ‘I thought this was going to be about decoration because that's what I see on TV’ and then we say, ‘No, we have to deal with sustainability and we have to deal with landmarks and we have to deal with ADA compliance and building codes ’ and then they are deer in the headlights the first semester. Then they eventually get over it and they're brilliant.”

Daniels may have a full plate, but he says he wouldn't have it any other way.

“This is what I love to do,” Daniels said. “I love to design and I love to do projects and get into the construction. I do everything, from filing the drawings all the way to seeing the construction happen, and so I love the whole process. To continue doing that would be brilliant.”