

VIEW FROM THE TOP

High-rise living has become an increasingly prominent facet of urban life, emblematic of the ongoing transformation of our cities. Recognizing this unique trend in the marketplace, Zonda, ARCHITECT's parent company, is convening some of the industry's foremost experts at Elevate, a new conference slated to take place at the Fontainebleau Miami Beach Dec. 4–6. This premier gathering unites the best minds to chart the course for the future of high-rise living, while also recognizing Rottet Studio's Lauren Rottet as the "Architect and Designer of the Year" and Terra's David Martin as the "Developer of the Year." Here, to celebrate the visionary work of Rottet and Martin, we delve into their creative brilliance and innovative contributions that have left an indelible mark on creating truly livable high-rise communities. —PAUL MAKOVSKY

EDITED BY ANDREA TIMPANO

LAUREN ROTTET Q+A

Architecture, interiors, and product design all have a place in this pro's diverse portfolio.

What's the best way to describe your approach to architecture and design?

I do not have a preconceived idea about any space or design. I am most intrigued when the design parti is sparked by the parameters (context, purpose, site, and influences) and then my own attitudes and feelings toward those influences. I do have design tools that I explore in every project. These include ways to make an interior feel more alive and less static, how to make an interior space feel larger and like it has no physical boundaries, and how to create visual comfort yet stimulation in an interior.

Which projects of yours best illustrate that approach?

For almost all of our projects, we research the client, the need, the purpose of the project, the venue, and the exact site conditions (smells, sounds, neighbors, habits, sunset and sunrise, etc.). Then, we basically write a script, assign characters to it, and begin to create an environment for this script and characters—essentially, we set design. This can be seen in our projects as early as The Surrey on New York's Upper East Side, circa 2009, and then in the St. Regis Aspen, the Presidential Bungalow at the Beverly Hills Hotel, the Belmond Cap Juluca in Anguilla, and a few



From cutting her teeth as an architect at SOM to flexing her interior design muscles on hospitality projects and launching her own line of furniture, Lauren Rottet, FAIA, has explored numerous creative paths throughout her decades-long career. Here, the founding principal and president of Rottet Studio weighs in on her work and the artists who inspire her most.





ELEVATE

The Art of High-Rise Living

↑ Plush furniture and a screen of lacquered wood and bronze dress up this Central Park Tower space in New York.

↔ Blurring the lines between indoor and outdoor living took top priority at the Stolle Residence in Houston.

COURTESY ROTTET STUDIO

years ago, the Conrad Washington, D.C. In our high-rise residential [projects], we also write a small script and assign characters. This helps us see through [the buyer's] eyes everything they might need in their home. The key is knowing your market and buyer and creating a sense of place and a point of view, but not so strong that it overwhelms or does not allow the buyer to have their own imagination.

What's one building you wish you had done?

Perhaps the Farnsworth House—the siting and those impeccable drapes! Or the Empire State Building or Rockefeller Center, as they defined New York. What a moment in time.

What is the greatest challenge facing architects and designers today?

Schedules for design are tight as schedules for construction seem to be getting longer. The time to research, think, and really design is compressed. For many people, it is all about the “image” and while [that] is very important, it is really more about the why and

↑ The revamped La Colombe d'Or, a historical 1920s home turned boutique hotel in Houston, sports a vintage back bar from France.

↓ A luxury high-rise in Houston, the River Oaks boasts ample space for displaying artwork.



the long-lasting impact of the structure, not just the wow of an Instagramable image.

What does design misery mean?

Thinking you have the breakthrough idea only to lose it a few minutes later late in the night and start going in circles.

What does design happiness mean?

Finding the breakthrough idea and developing it into a finished product with all the supporting details, and it looks and feels as fresh and spontaneous as the idea was when it was first conceived.

What would you have been if not an architect and designer?

A landscape designer. I went to college to be a doctor and studied 2.5 years before switching to architecture. I would not have made a good doctor!

Which artists do you most admire?

Andrée Putman (an interior designer who I consider an artist), Claes Oldenburg for his tenacity, Theaster Gates for his work and his commitment to his community in Chicago.

What's the last drawing you did?

I draw every day. Today it was a lamp design for one of our projects, followed by a hallway of an over-the-top, lavish ballroom we are designing.

What do you hope your legacy will be?

Known for architectural interiors that inspire. Creating environments that are pleasing to the eye and are recognizable in that they are noticeably relaxing and invigorating at the same time. I began my architectural career designing high-rise buildings and had designed three by the time I was 30. Then buildings stopped during the Texas recession, and I was asked to do interior design. As an architect, I thought it was beneath me, but then I realized it was far more difficult to learn how to sculpt from within and create environments that not only feel wonderful as they surround you but serve all the functions required of them. With building architecture, one can create models or renderings and see them as they will be seen in the skyline, but with interiors, not until they are finished and occupied can they actually be seen in their true form.

COURTESY ROTTET STUDIO

