

INterview: A Dialogue with Michele Meregaglia

— by Keith Potter



Michele Meregaglia, IIDA, AIA

Position

Associate/Interiors Studio Director, RATIO Architects, Indianapolis, IN

Brief History

I was born and raised in Milan, Italy and came to the States to attend DePauw University (BA). I later moved to Chicago to get my B. Arch. at Illinois Institute of Technology. After practicing in Chicago for about 12 years, mostly with Interior Space International, I returned to Indianapolis, my wife's hometown. I was with CSO Interiors for four years before joining RATIO, where I've led the Interiors Studio for a little over four years now.

Design Influences

I get my inspiration wherever and whenever I can get it... art, fashion, books, movies, pop culture, and other designers.

Philosophy of Design

I strongly believe that each client and project is truly unique; so I strive to create design solutions, that are appropriate for the client and address the specific project drivers.

Your practice's focus

Until recently I had thought of myself as an "expert" of the workplace environment, but we've now expanded the focus of our practice to include the life science and higher education markets.

Notable interior projects (last two years)

Hudson Institute Conference Center; Clifty Falls State Park Inn; The Children Museum/Dinosphere; Women Health Administrative Offices.

What do you consider to be your greatest professional achievement?

Yet to be accomplished.

What is the most fulfilling part of your job?

The tangible impact I feel that we, as designers, can have on the quality of life of the end users. Also, having the opportunity to interact with the genuinely nice people in our industry.

What are the biggest challenges facing designers today?

Firstly, the challenge of getting a Title Act passed in Indiana, which is very important to establishing a standard of competency and registration for interior designers. Secondly, how to grow and be profitable in a very competitive market.

What is the biggest thing you've learned in the past 10 years?

To be humble and to truly listen.

What advice would you give to A&D students or those just starting out in the field?

Make sure you are absolutely and positively passionate about design and the profession. Have realistic expectations and try to expose yourself to as many firms, philosophies and markets as possible before developing your own strengths and direction.

What advice would you give to clients on how to create a successful project?

I do believe that it takes good clients to produce good projects; it is a very collaborative process. And above all, trust the designers you hire.

How do you foresee the future of design changing?

I think technology will continue to shape the way we communicate and the speed with which we are asked to react to design challenges. Time is a valued commodity and knowing how to utilize technology to maximize this will be a necessity for all designers.

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A Time to Give Thanks

I would just like to take this opportunity to express my extreme gratitude for all the hard work, dedication, and generosity I've witnessed, from our members and sponsors, during my term as president. It's no wonder that we're accomplishing so much! It's an honor to be part of an organization that really takes pride in serving its membership through loyal and active support.

I suppose this excitement was really stirred up with the incredible success of "One Night in Monte Carlo." In one fabulous evening, we raised over \$9000 to go towards our legislative fund. The success of this event is owed much in part to an amazing chairperson, *Donna Miller*, along with her extraordinary committee: *Julie Burroughs, Michelle Dopp, Brenda Gerst, Debbie Jeffares, Mike Loalbo, Keith Potter, Kim Selzer, and Glen Vandermark*. We could not have pulled this off without the tremendous amount of sponsorship received from the following companies:



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During all of the Monte Carlo hype, our past-president, *Melissa Brewer*, was busy working on this year's sponsorship campaign. Even with all the donations given for "Monte Carlo", we still received unprecedented responses from our industry members for IIDA Indiana Chapter sponsorship. This year, look for events made possible by the following companies:

Allsteel, Bentley Mills Inc., Blakley's, D.L. Couch, Haworth, Herman Miller, Hesler and Associates, Human Scale, ICD, Indianapolis Office Interiors, Jasper Seating Co., Johnsonite, Knoll, Louisville Tile of Indianapolis, Melissa Meeks and Associates, Office Works, and Ohio Valley Supply Company.

I'd also like to mention the committed efforts of those involved with the SAFE Interior Design Coalition and our ongoing legislative efforts. Our VP of Government and Legislative Affairs, *Mike Loalbo*, along with our past VP of G&L, *Melissa Brown*, have gone above the call of duty to get us to where we are today.

One last special "thank you" goes out to this year's remarkable Board of Directors: *Melissa Brewer, Julie Burroughs, Debbie Butler, Myron Cromer, Brenda Gerst, Alie Leach, Mike Loalbo, Melinda McGee, Andrea Meroney, Donna Miller, Nichole Schrader, and Denise Wilder*. When you see these people, thank them for volunteering their time and energy to make sure the IIDA Indiana Chapter delivers what it promises.

Take time to let all those mentioned above know that you appreciate all they do for our local chapter of IIDA. The future looks bright for the interior design profession as a whole and these are the people and companies standing by us, as we grow.

Thank you!



Julie Burroughs, IIDA
EDITOR

April McClurg, IIDA
Keith Potter
COMMITTEE

If you have suggestions or would like to contribute articles, please contact jburroughs@schotttdesign.com.

Participation is Key

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Spring! It's that time of year. We open the windows and let in the fresh air. We take walks around our communities, running into neighbors we haven't seen in months, except at the occasional holiday or trinket party. Because on those cold and snowy winter days, it's difficult to get motivated to step outside and be neighborly. We shovel the driveway as fast as we can and then go right back in our homes to hibernate. However, something amazing happened on my street a couple years ago, that has become something of a tradition.

One Saturday morning, we awoke to find about eight inches of snow had fallen overnight. And the snowplow had gone through and left a very intimidating hill of packed snow and ice at the end of everyone's driveway. My husband and I were not looking forward to shoveling, but we bundled up and grabbed the shovels anyway.

We noticed that two of our neighbors were helping to clear one of the driveways at the end of the street. One had a shovel and was working on the hill; the other had a snow blower and was moving on to the Alexander's driveway next door. Mr. Alexander brought out his snow blower and together they finished in just a few minutes and were moving on to the next. Meanwhile, more neighbors had come out and joined Mr. Riley with their shovels to clear the end of the driveways and Mr. Meeker came out with another snow blower and cleared all the sidewalks down the block.

When all was said and done, with the combined efforts of everyone it took less time to clear all the driveways on the block than it would for us to clear our own. It was an opportunity to talk to neighbors that we don't get to socialize with very often, even in summer and a chance to get to know the new neighbors who had just moved in late in the fall. That morning, it reinforced that old saying, "there is strength in numbers." By helping each other out, we all reaped the benefits of our community.

We are all busy with family and friends, building our careers and staying active with our places of worship and community service. To volunteer for one more committee or devote time to one more project seems overwhelming. I want to encourage everyone to stay involved with IIDA. I don't mean pay your dues and come to programs, which is important, but there is more to IIDA than that. What I mean is, host a student for Student Mentor Week, make a point to put the Keep Indianapolis Beautiful project on your schedule for next fall, make a date for the next Monte Carlo Night and, yes, join a committee. The more participation, the less time any one individual will need to devote.

So, I challenge everyone who has not been involved with IIDA in the past, outside of attending programs, to step up. Commit to the next Keep Indianapolis Beautiful project, join the planning committee for the next fundraiser event or set aside an hour to write an article for this newsletter about anything you feel is interesting. Contact a board member and see how you can get involved or, better yet, tell us how you want to be involved. You never fully reap the benefits of anything in life unless you are an active participant.



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PLANNING AHEAD — NCIDQ DATES YOU NEED TO KNOW

June 1, 2005

Early-bird NCIDQ Application Deadline

(First time applicants only) for the October 2005 Examination

June 10, 2005

Regular NCIDQ Application Deadline (First time applicants only) for the October 2005 Examination

August, 2005

IIDA Study Session for Sections 1 and 2

September, 2005

IIDA Study Session for Section 3

October 14-15, 2005

Fall 2005 NCIDQ Examination, Indianapolis, IN

For more information, you can check out the NCIDQ Website at www.NCIDQ.org or contact Andrea Meroney at 317-293-4051, or e-mail her at ameroney@rjefurn.com

“Sustainable” Education: IIDA Indiana Chapter Annual Student Competition

This year’s Student Design Competition challenged the students to incorporate a “sustainability focus” into their design. The space they used was the existing shell of the RJE Business Interiors front lobby, reception and conference area. They had a choice of designing an Art Gallery, Design Firm or a Lighting Sales/Showroom. The students were free to re-design the existing shell space anyway they liked, while incorporating LEED certified furniture and finishes.

The judges were Nichole Schrader-Ratio Architects, Ana Maregatti-Maregatti Interiors, Dene Nidiffer-Lohr Design and Anthonette Sandoval-Carson Design.



Student Competition Winning Projects

The winning project was Greenstem Art Gallery, designed by Ian Thiele, a junior at Purdue University. The other winners were: Amanda Banet (Purdue Junior), Kayla Flook (Ball State Junior) and Diana M. Clark (Purdue Junior).

Greenstem Art Gallery

Designed by Ian Thiele, a junior at Purdue University

“The Goal of this space was to integrate interior and exterior environments through the use of natural materials and daylight. The gallery’s interior elements are infused with artistic energy, punctuated by shape, texture, and color. With a focus on sustainable design, all appointed furnishings and finishes are rapidly renewable, low-emitting, Greenguard certified and /or constructed of FSC endorsed certified SmartWood. All product suppliers practice in accordance with sound environmental statements and make use of recycled or sustainable shipping materials. To ensure superior indoor air quality, all substantial public entryways have been enclosed with vestibules and the facility has been designated non-smoking.”



Ian Thiele, Purdue University

February Program Highlights

There was a fabulous turnout of professionals and students at the 2005 February Program and Annual Student Competition. The event was held Tuesday evening, February 15th at RJE Business Interiors.

The presentation portion of the program “LEED for Interiors” was CEU approved. The names of our three speakers for the evening were local, very qualified professionals that many of you will recognize. Kevin D. Russell, LEED Accredited Professional from A2SO4 Architecture, Nancy Wright, IIDA, LEED Accredited Professional and Larry Fuhs both from Knoll. Their presentations focused on important LEED details from an interior design perspective as they related to new construction, renovation, interior finish and furniture specifications.

A very special thank you to Knoll and RJE Business Interiors for sponsoring the event.

The People Talk: *One Night in Monte Carlo*

short
PAST
EVENTS

One Night in Monte Carlo

Even weeks after the event, the buzz is still all about Monte Carlo Night. By all accounts, it was a huge success, rivaling even the IIDA Indiana Chapter's biggest annual fund raiser, the golf outing. With over 150 guests in attendance, we were able to raise more than \$9,000.00 for Interior Design legislation. More important, it was a great evening among friends, co-workers and industry partners for a fabulous pre-Valentine's Day evening out. We have had so much positive feedback, we wanted to recap for those who attended (and for those who didn't we wanted to create a little envy and encourage you to attend the next one).

Thanks to all of our sponsors for your support and thanks everyone who attended and we hope you will join us again next year.

Roulette anyone?



"Great job everyone! People were loving it and have been buzzing about it all day today. They want another one next year!" *Brenda Gerst*

"This is such a great turnout, you should [make it an annual event]. People will remember this and will come dressed to the nines!" *Jennifer Hobbs*



A great turnout with over 150 guests.

"I'm in for next year! Everyone I've talked with was very impressed with Fountain Square, but wished the event lasted longer! That must be good!" *Kim Selzer*



Babe Magnet

"I just wanted to thank you for all of your hard work on the Monte Carlo night. I had a great time, and I think everyone else did too. I hope this is a tradition IIDA is starting. Please pass this on to your committee, and thank you again!" *Andrea Meroney*

Will the State of Indiana Register Interior Designers?

Yes! Says the SAFE Interior Design Coalition — by Melissa Brown, IIDA

short
RECIPES
BY DESIGN

By request, a new light-hearted column is being added to the newsletter, with the idea tidbits be submitted by our readers. Jokes, recipes, announcements, questions and comments are all welcome ideas for this piece. This first submission, to get us going, is submitted by your editor.

When I entertain, my guests frequently ask for my Spinach Artichoke Dip recipe. It is quick and easy to make and since it is a popular appetizer at my house, seemed the perfect beginning for this column. Send submissions to jburroughs@schotttdesign.com.

Spinach Artichoke Dip

1 pkg. Cream Cheese
1 cup Mayonnaise
1/2 - 1 cup Parmesan Cheese
1-2 cups Mozzarella Cheese, shredded
1 10 oz. pkg. Chopped Spinach
1 small jar Marinated Artichoke Hearts, coarsely chopped

Mix all ingredients and bake at 325° for 25 minutes or until the edges begin to brown. Then adjust measures of cheese and spinach to your taste. Serve with tortilla chips and salsa, crackers or bread.

We have come a long way from a year ago when we were not granted a vote after testifying for interior design legislation. We are still working for a Title Act similar to what is already in place in 18 other states with requirements of the 3 E's (Education, Exam and Experience) we want to receive the title of Registered Interior Designer to be recognized by the State of Indiana.

This year in January, the SAFE Interior Design Coalition testified in front of the Employment and Labor Committee and there was a unanimous yes vote, even though we had opposition from AIA. After the 130 House Bills were killed after the Democrats walked out before the deadline, we made many calls to see how to keep our bill alive.

With the help of many emails and visits to the State Capital on March 23, Representative Randy Boror, who sits on the Employment and Labor Committee, made a motion to amend our verbiage from House Bill 1434 into Senate Bill 139 authored by Senator Roberts Meeks. This committee passed it a second time. This means we are on our way to have the entire House of Representatives vote on the bill. If we get a majority vote from the 100 House members we will then move to the Senate to have them approve the amendment of our verbiage, we will need a majority vote of the 50 Senators as well.

ACTION : We need your help to keep emailing and visiting your State Representatives and Senators and ask for their support for Interior Design Legislation. You can locate your Representatives by going to our website: <http://www.SafeInteriorDesign.org>. It is as simple as calling their assistant and asking when is a good time to come and see them. They will make time for you because it is their job. Check out their website and bio to see what profession they are in as well as their interests, it helps break the ice.

- PLATFORM** :
1. Allow Interior Designers to practice to the full extent of their education and experience.
 2. Indiana funds 6 state colleges to educate Interior Designers. We want to keep our graduates in Indiana since 18 other states have similar Legislation for State Registration.
 3. Help Protect the Health, Safety and Welfare of the public.
 4. This is not a licensure bill and does not limit the practice of Interior Designers who do not become registered.

Great progress has been made so far, but in order for a Title Act to become reality, we need your continued support. Visit the website or call a board member if you have any questions.

Want to Really Get the Corporate Message Across?

U S E ☺ A R T

By Pat Bacon — Owner, Art in Harmony, Inc., • 1488 E. 86th St., Indianapolis • 317-819-2787

ductees
NEW
MEMBERS

New Members since October 2004

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Emily Mills

Mike Moffett

Kathleen Montgomery

Jacki Partlow

Carol Payne

Karen Schmidt

Joni Schulz

Jennifer Steliga

Katrina Very

Danielle Wilken

It seems so strange to me that art is often the last thing to be discussed when it comes to a design or remodel of an office or company space. Yet, art is the strongest way to make a statement and it has real power to affect the bottom line. Once it is installed, everyone agrees and loves it so what's the problem? The excuse is so often that there is no money left or it is just put off until "later." Perhaps, we, as designers and consultants, need to share with clients why there is a real business need to talk about art sooner in the process. That is what this article is about.

Clients are always willing to spend a lot of time and money to define and clarify their "identity." They hire marketing experts to help position themselves in the marketplace to get more customers, to generate more revenue...to increase that bottom line. It's important to "get it right." With today's competition, it can literally mean the survival of the company. Most companies understand that part of that "identity" is translated into the surroundings and furnishings of the physical spaces in which associates work and into which customers and guests are invited. Designers are often hired to help choose colors, fabrics and furnishings that symbolize and reinforce their corporate message. But, somehow art gets put at the bottom of the list as an afterthought, if approved at all.

We would all agree that our senses are always challenged when we walk into any space. The things we see, hear, smell, touch and, in some cases, taste, can make the difference between building a long-term relationship or going to the competitor. What we often don't acknowledge is that art is essential! Art always evokes an emotional response and, if you "get it right," that emotional response will make a lasting impression.

Art is often misunderstood and many are intimidated by the idea of it. Some may think that art must be expensive, massive, and difficult to interpret. Actually, quite the opposite is true. It is our responsibility as designers and consultants to make art selection a joy and an easy process for our clients. Art can be as simple and inexpensive as re-framing current work, or framing poster prints. Finding pieces of memorabilia from the company's past and displaying or framing them in creative ways can make a statement of stability and longevity. Art can be a mural on a wall painted to depict a scene that makes customers feel they are walking into a quiet, tranquil setting. It can be a modern, contemporary sculpture that says "we are the future." It can be fun, whimsical pieces that encourage creativity.

Art is not just for the customer or visitor. Art is also for those who come to work everyday. More and more we realize that the environment in which we work is important to our overall well-being, and that being proactive in providing comfort and style to our workspace contributes directly to the productivity and creativity in the workplace. It also leads to higher employee satisfaction which, in turn, has a direct and positive impact on the bottom line, because it keeps employee turnover costs down and productivity up. Again, one thing is clear and bears repeating—art generates an emotional response. So, as long as organizations are full of human beings that can react positively to art, it seems logical that art should be among the first discussions when it is time to design and remodel a space.

In summary, art is not just a "final touch," it is a statement! It is the organization's opportunity to declare to the people who work there and to the public that walk through the door, just who the company is and what they stand for. A painted wall is just that—it can be a beautiful color, but if there is nothing on it, an opportunity to make a statement has been lost. An empty corner evokes no response, but put a piece of pottery or sculpture there and you have a conversation.

Leonardo da Vinci said, "To give body and perfect form to your thought, this alone is what it is to be an artist." Every organization has an opportunity to be the artist of their message. And, we as designers and consultants have the opportunity and responsibility to introduce our clients to the benefits of planning for art in the early stages of the design project. Always remember that art is the most versatile venue for making the message strong, clear and positive!



IN 24

FORUM

Lunch Meeting
Details soon

FW 20

TRENDS IN WALLCOVERING

Presented by D.L. Couch
Bill Wooten



IN 13-15

NEOCON

Merchandise Mart
Chicago

FW

NEOCON BUS TRIP

Details soon

SB

WHAT IS GREEN?

Mark Lacrois
Interface Fabrics
CEU



IN 28

ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

Details soon

FW 12

FWCC GOLF OUTING

Details soon



IN Identifies newsletter content related to the Indiana Chapter in whole.

FW Identifies newsletter content related specifically to the Fort Wayne Center.

SB Identifies newsletter content related specifically to the South Bend Center.

Molding Young Minds — by Julie Burroughs, IIDA

Mentor, advisor, guide, teacher, counselor, guru; all words with one common meaning: one who shares knowledge.

This year, 21 students and 17 professionals participated in Student Mentor Week. This event gives students an opportunity to experience, first hand, a day in the life of a professional. One of the best ways for future interior designers to learn about what to expect when they graduate, what career options are available and what an employer is really looking for in a job candidate is to have face-to-face time with someone who has "been there, done that." April McClurg, IIDA and the design staff at Schott Design, Inc. had two opportunities to host students in their office.

It was a pleasure and a privilege to share their experiences with Kara Jewell, a design student from Purdue University, during Student Mentor Week. The day began with quick introductions and a brief meeting to go over the schedule. The first task was some hands on experience field measuring a client space and then back to the office to assist with space planning an office expansion. After a break for lunch, Kara sat in on a meeting with an art consultant and ended the day with a question and answer session.

When asked about the experience, Kara stated "This opportunity allowed me to interact with de-signers and see what their average work day was like. I received a hands on look at the design process and had a chance to speak with design professionals and benefit from their experience. I feel that I now have greater knowledge of job options within the design field and my participation in Student Mentor Week helped create a clearer picture of what is in store for my future. I am glad that I took advantage of the opportunity."

Kara came prepared with lots of great questions and as the day progressed the professionals turned the table inquiring about what her expectations were upon graduating and what her overall perspective was about our field. "We were all refreshed by her enthusiasm for interior design and her eagerness to learn. We benefited by her discussion about the interiors program at Purdue. The students are covering a lot more in depth and well rounded information than we did." When asked if they would participate again, they replied, "It was a wonderful day and we would encourage all professionals to participate in this worthwhile program. We will definitely participate again."

The designers at Schott didn't stop there. They also had an opportunity to host two young ladies from Brownsburg Middle School for a career day project. Their assignment: pick a profession you are interested in and job shadow for a day. "These students were interested in interior design, but weren't sure what we actually did. Their exposure was limited to the TV show "Trading Spaces" and HGTV. We helped them with their resumes and let them loose in our library to put finishes together for a fictional project. It was eye opening, but not unexpected, the misconception that these young students have. They were surprised that there was such a thing as a college degree in interior design. One of the students sent a note of thanks and expressed this experience had helped her decide she wanted to go to school and study interior design."

The interest in Student Mentor Week grows every year and next year participation is expected to increase. It is a worthwhile and rewarding experience to mentor, advise, guide, teach, counsel and share our expertise with young designers. You never know what they might have to teach us, too.

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!!!!

Let us know how IIDA Indiana Chapter is doing. Send your comments to: jburroughs@schottdesign.com

The deadline for submitting articles for the next issue is August 5, 2005