

FRETTE – Luxury Linens

DESIGNER OF THE MONTH – January 2008.

Amy Lau



Amy Lau is known for crafting original and personal surroundings, filtering various styles, objects and preferences of her clients through the lens of modernism, resulting in spaces that are more "curated" than "decorated." She founded her interiors firm, Amy Lau Design, in 2001, after studying Art History at the University of Arizona, and receiving a Master of Arts degree in Decorative Arts from New York's prestigious Sotheby's Graduate Program, where she honed her curatorial eye and love of decorative arts and design.

Early professional activities included serving as Director of Aero studios and Design Director of New York City's Lin-Weinberg Gallery, specializing in international mid-century modern design. She also co-founded the invitational Design Miami fair in 2005, created to run in conjunction with Art Basel Miami Beach.

Alongside Amy Lau's many residential projects, a recent addition to the firm's portfolio is a project in fashion retail design for Elie Tahari. She has been featured in Interior Design Magazine, Elle Décor, the New York Times House and Garden among other publications.

Named "The Next Garde" by New York Magazine, "Young Designer to Watch" by House Beautiful magazine and included in Metropolitan Design's "Who's Next " Young Designers series, indeed affirm Amy Lau's standing as an important interior designer today .

ASK THE DESIGNER OF THE MONTH A QUESTION

FRETTE Q&A –Amy Lau

1. Your Kips Bay project generated quite a bit of buzz this year, why do you think the press and design industry were so enthralled by your interiors?

I took a unique approach to the design at Kips Bay. My palette was inspired by a Joseph Albers "Formation" color field painting and the room captured the essence of spring's fresh saturated hues – from bold citron to soothing cobalt and turquoise. The décor comprised of unexpected haute couture objects, materials and accessories mostly made especially for this installation. I collaborated with talented artists like Kevin Inkawich who created an organic mobile that was made from stems of dried crespedia vegetation that hung over a staircase. Hundreds of custom ceramic petals by Jennifer Pritchard arranged on the wall and the embedded embroidery with plaster overlay that was made to emulate the Big Sur rocky coastline on the walls.

2. How did you come to be involved with Art Basel Miami and how does your participation influence your designs?

Actually, I'm the co-founder of Design Miami which is an offshoot of the well established Art Basel. Design Miami came about because I'm a big believer that design should be on the same level as art, and it should not be seen as the aesthetic step child. There wasn't a platform for contemporary design so we framed design to make it understandable to the art world. It's a shift from the traditional trade show and the way design has been presented until now. This is more of a collector's fair; it's definitely geared towards the connoisseur.

The best part of the weekend in Miami for me is seeing all the amazing, talented designers and dealers emerge from all over the world under one umbrella. I get a chance to see what's pulsating in design from the latest technology to the newest materials being showcased.

3. The environment and furnishings you have selected for your Frette project are more subdued in color than your published designs, is there a change in your creative direction which inspired this?

When I think of Frette, I think of luxury. Beautiful, soft spoken luxury that makes a statement. My work is always changing like the seasons, with each new client and where I recently traveled to. I was so taken with the silvery-gray colors and textures in the Liegi line that once I felt the linens I knew that's what I wanted to use with the James Mont bed.

4. You immediately had the James Mont four-poster platinum bed in mind after visiting Frette's showroom. Please tell us what drew you to this bed.

This custom four poster 1960's James Mont bed is one of the most unique beds I have seen in my life-time. The headboard is upholstered with a grey silk velvet and silver leaf finish, each post decorated with gilded and carved flame finials and rests on a platform base decorated with carved classical Greek key in gold leaf. It commands attention and looks amazing with the Frette linens. The bed is available at Todd Merrill Antiques, New York.

5. What is your definition of "glamour"?

Elegance, luxury, magical, sexiness, opulence and just plain beauty.

6. What should we expect from your follow-up to your Four Seasons furnishings collection? Any other exciting projects you'd like to share with us?

Currently, I'm working on a new product line that's also nature inspired and finishing up a bathroom project for the Kohler Company where I am developing specialized glazes on hexagonal tile for Heath Ceramics. As far as interior projects, I'm gearing up for a combined 3 ½ unit, 12,000 sq ft penthouse apartment in Tribeca. It's the latest that design and technology have to offer. I'm collaborating with the Parisian designer, Patrick Jouin to create a custom bar and Enzo Enea, a Swiss based landscape architect to design an outdoor 5500 square foot terrace that includes a hot tub, shower, steam room and trees 12ft high. It's truly going to be spectacular!