



MARK SIKES INTERVIEWS MARKHAM ROBERTS FOR HIS BLOG IN 2014 – PART I OF II

MARK SIKES-

"I THINK IF EVERY INTERIOR DESIGNER WAS HONEST WITH THEMSELVES, THEY'D LOVE TO HIRE ANOTHER INTERIOR DESIGNER TO DECORATE THEIR HOME... AFTER SPENDING SO MUCH TIME AND ENERGY DECORATING CLIENTS' HOMES, RELINQUISHING SOME CONTROL MIGHT BE NICE. I ALWAYS SAY IF I COULD HIRE ANY DECORATOR, IT WOULD BE MARKHAM ROBERTS; I'D LOVE GIL SCHAFFER TO DO THE ARCHITECTURE.

I THINK I FELL IN LOVE WITH MARKHAM'S WORK MANY YEARS AGO. I LOVED HIS OWN APARTMENT THAT WAS FEATURED IN DOMINO... IT WAS CASUAL, COMFORTABLE, AND CHIC. I THINK IT WAS BECAUSE OF THIS SPACE THAT I FELL IN LOVE WITH THE COLOR COMBINATION OF CHOCOLATE BROWN AND ICE BLUE.

THEN THERE WAS THIS BEYOND AMAZING NYC HOME THAT MARKHAM DESIGNED THAT WAS IN HOUSE & GARDEN (FYI - I'M ON A MISSION TO BRING THIS MAGAZINE BACK)- THE ONE WITH THE GILT CONSOLE, BLUE AND WHITE VASES AND PEDESTALS IN THE ENTRY AND THAT CHOCOLATE BROWN LACQUERED DINING ROOM WITH TWO GINGHAM SKIRTED TABLES FLOATING- TWO OF MY ALL-TIME FAVORITE ROOMS!

I THINK IT'S HIS ALL-AMERICAN STYLE THAT I'M DRAWN TO... LIKE MYSELF, HE HAS MIDWESTERN ROOTS, AND THERE ARE SOME SOUTHERN TRADITIONS IN HIS WORK. EVERYTHING HE DOES FEELS EFFORTLESS AND EASY; THERE IS SOMETHING GLAMOROUS ABOUT IT ALL, TOO... MOST IMPORTANTLY THERE IS A TIMELESS QUALITY THAT ENDURES WITH EVERY ROOM.

I'M SO HONORED TO GET THE CHANCE TO INTERVIEW MY FUTURE DECORATOR. I HAVEN'T REALLY SHARED THIS WITH MANY, BUT I ALWAYS TELL PEOPLE THAT I'M VERY CLOSE TO I SHOULD HAVE BEEN A BALLET DANCER; I THINK I WOULD HAVE BEEN GOOD AT IT - I THOUGHT IT WAS KIND OF INTERESTING THAT MARKHAM WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE BEEN A DANCER, TOO! THERE YOU HAVE IT - DANCING DECORATORS! ENJOY!"

MARK SIKES - HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE YOUR STYLE?

MARKHAM ROBERTS - I try not to have a particular or recognizable style but rather adapt to my clients' tastes and the architectural or geographic specifics of each job.

That said, I think that comfort and practicality play as important a part of how I want a room or house to feel and function as how attractive I want it to be. No one wants to go into a room full of stiff, uncomfortable furniture and not have ample light or a place to set down a drink.

Adaptable and practical sounds completely boring, but it's the underlying theme or strategy in my approach to decorating. On top of that, I try to finish rooms in a sophisticated, layered way that reflects the clients and suits their needs.



New York City Hall- one of my favorite rooms of all time!



Indiana Living Room



Indiana Dining Room



Greenwich Living Room

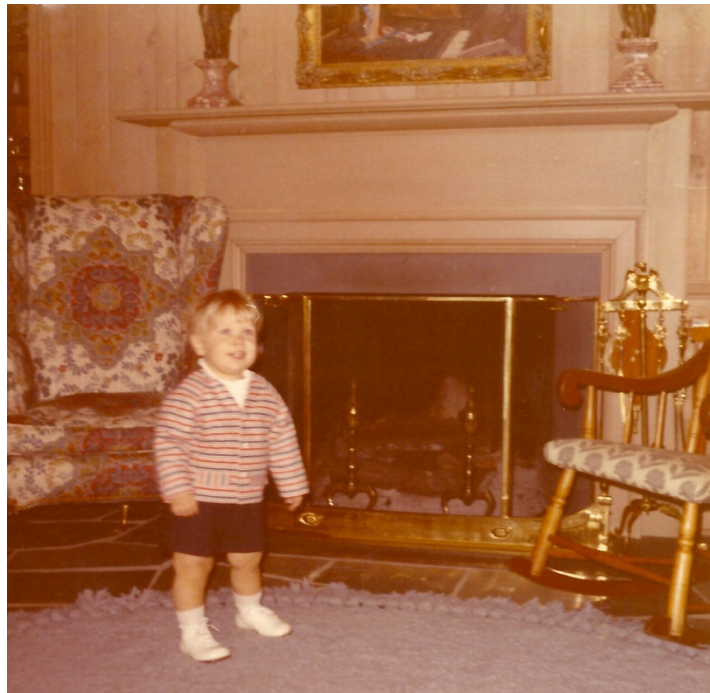
MARK SIKES- WHERE DID YOU GROW UP AND HOW DO YOU THINK THAT INFLUENCES YOUR WORK?

MARKHAM ROBERTS - I grew up in Indianapolis but spent summers on Lake Michigan and would go down to the Gulf coast of Florida in the winters, so I had a broad exposure to different types of seasonal houses, which I'm sure gave me an understanding not only of how houses fit into their surroundings, but also how they reflect the lifestyles of their inhabitants.

We traveled as a family, and I've spent time all over America and Europe, with a few trips to more exotic places. I am happy and proud to be American, and looking inward at our wide-ranging country and outward to the world, it is this diverse spectrum of cultural references and different influences that interests me as a decorator.



Meridian Street Roberts House



Sunset Lane – Markham



Northport



Northport- Tina, Markham, and John



Northport- Julie and Markham



Naples – Surf Song



Boca Grande – Markham

MARK SIKES - IF YOU WEREN'T DOING THIS, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING?

MARKHAM ROBERTS- Maybe a shrink or a mediator as I have practical experience in those fields from years of decorating. Seriously, I'd like to write or I'd probably try to be an artist. I did take ballet at boarding school and really loved it. I would have liked to have been a dancer, but at 46 I probably won't get that chance should I get sick of decorating.



Montana Living Room



Southampton Dining Room

MARK SIKES - WHO OR WHAT IS INSPIRING YOU RIGHT NOW?

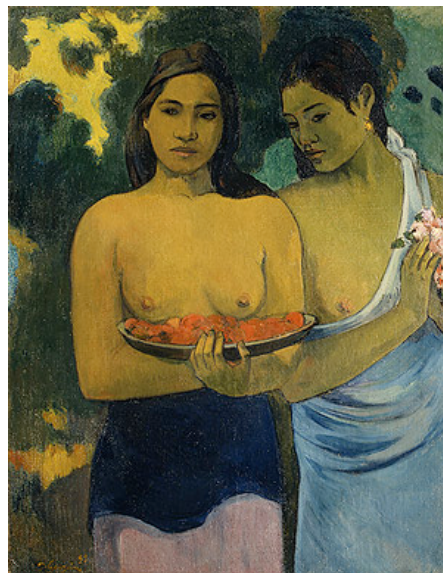
MARKHAM ROBERTS- I can be inspired by the most random thing as much as the totally obvious. There is something beautiful everywhere you look. It can be the pattern of moss on a stick I pull out of my dog's mouth or it can be the colors of a Tahitian-period Gauguin hanging in the MET.

I try to look around everywhere and at everything – art and architecture, nature, and the work of others.

And I really get inspired by things I see others do that I wish I could do better or regret I can't do at all. My friend David Netto is a great decorator, which everyone always knew, but I am blown away at what a brilliant, funny, and knowledgeable writer he is.



Moss on a tree



Gauguin

MARK SIKES- WHAT IS THE FAVORITE ROOM IN YOUR HOME?

MR- I do love the study I did for the Kips Bay Show House this year. Since my inspiration (in truly self-absorbed fashion) was to do a room for myself and to use all of my favorite things, this is definitely my perfect room.



Kips Bay Show house – Study by Markham



Kips Bay Show house – study by Markham

MARK SIKES - IS THERE ANYTHING YOU OBSESSIVELY COLLECT?

MR- Since I was small I have collected shells and things found in nature, which I store in two handsome collectors cabinets.

As an adult, I collect naturalistic watercolors and drawings, photographs, Indian miniatures of temples, and Neapolitan gouaches.



Shells



Pictures of Indian miniatures



Pictures of Vesuvius Gouaches



Conference room with pictures of Indian miniatures and Vesuvius gouaches

MARK SIKES - "I COULD NEVER OWN TOO MANY ____"

MR- Socks, pencils, gloves, umbrellas, or canvas bags as they seem to constantly go missing.

Seriously I suppose acres of land to preserve. Or if the question were "could never have too much", the answer would be long-term friends to count on. I was going to say loved pets, but that might be too close to a crazy cat lady answer.



New York Stair hall



Quogue Living Room

MARK SIKES - IF YOU COULD DECORATE ANYONE'S HOUSE, WHOSE WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

MARKHAM ROBERTS- My immediate reaction is Dolly Parton – she seems like she would be a lot of fun to work with, and I love people who don't take themselves too seriously.

So if she or another dream client were allowed to buy the Crane house in Ipswich or got Clarendon Court in Newport with a direction for me to “have at it” and not to worry about timing or budget, that would be awfully nice.



Crane House