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Check Out Cat Carothers's Story

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Today we'd like to introduce you to Cat Carothers.

Hi Cat, so excited to have you on the platform. So, before we get into questions about your work life, maybe you can bring our readers up to speed on your story and how you got to where you are today.
I am a Kansas native and continued my undergraduate education at the University of Kansas. Going into my freshman year, I was unsure of the path I wanted to take, so I began exploring a variety of courses that weren't offered in my high school curriculum. I enrolled in the Introduction to Asian Art and fell in love with the class. My curiosity to learn more about other cultures led me to pursue Art History as my major and History as my minor.

I knew I was passionate about art history but wanted to hone in on a particular sector that would lead to a career path. A summer internship at the Nelson Museum of Art taught me the nuances of museum operations, but I found it wasn't a good fit for me. After speaking with a family friend about my experience at the Nelson, they suggested I apply to Sotheby's Auction House summer internship program.

Fast forward to spring 2011, an acceptance letter from Sotheby's Auction House arrived in the mail; I was headed to New York City. I was excited but also scared. I hadn't been to the city since I was 8 years old.

The first few weeks in New York weren't easy. It was a major adjustment from my college life in Kansas. By the end of the summer, I had fallen in love with the city and made lifelong friends in the program. As the summer came to an end, I had made the decision, "I would do whatever it took to be back in the city after graduation."

Although I thoroughly enjoyed the Sotheby's Internship program, I felt I needed to work in a field that allowed creative freedom and was more hands-on, interior design.

I enrolled at the New York School of Interior Design and was accepted into the MFA program, beginning fall 2012. I received my Master of Fine Arts degree in the spring of 2015.

In January 2016, I was hired as an interior designer at WeWork, the leading provider of leased coworking space globally. My four years at WeWork gave me invaluable experience working in a fast-paced environment alongside the best in the industry. It taught me how to use creative skill sets while maintaining brand standards and corporate guidelines for one of the fastest-growing companies at the time.

After moving from New York City to Dallas in 2020, I felt something was missing; the rich history and creative spirit that fills the streets of the city. This left me contemplating my next career move as a creative. I took time to think about what motivates and inspires me and kept coming back to my love for 20th-century design.

While visiting New York City in the summer of 2021, ideas were bounced around over dinner with friends and the foundations of The Selby House were born. The Selby House takes a fresh and forward-thinking approach in showcasing vintage finds by combining designs from different styles, time, and origin. We specialize in curating and customizing timeless furnishings that feel collected, not decorated.

Located in the Dallas Design District, the studio takes inspiration from both the past and present. The space showcases our current collection and is constantly evolving with the vision Selby House has created – a place to collaborate, to build relationships with other designers and creatives.

Can you talk to us a bit about the challenges and lessons you've learned along the way? Looking back would you say it's been easy or smooth in retrospect?

As an entrepreneur you take a lot of risks and have to be extremely confident in what you are creating. I went from working in a large corporate environment to two smaller start-ups, to becoming a first-time business owner. I have found that as a new small business owner, you have to wear many hats: designer, accountant, finance, marketing, social media, branding, photography, operations, etc.

Starting a company in a new city has taught me the importance of connecting with others and building meaningful relationships. Building trust in clients, upholsterers, workrooms, and other vendors was an early focus of mine and crucial for delivering quality products in the most cost-effective and timely manner.

Alright, so let's switch gears a bit and talk business. What should we know about your work?

The Selby House is dedicated to providing high-quality, authentic pieces for the home. We love old objects and believe every piece has a story; we give new life to the old.

We are intentional with our selections, inspired by the craftsmen we work with, and strive to support local artisans and trades. At The Selby House, we curate and customize timeless modern furnishings that feel collected, not decorated.

In addition to our select inventory, we offer custom sourcing services working with clients and designers to find one-of-a-kind pieces specific to their needs.

What do you think about happiness?

Spending time with my immediate family, my husband and two Berne doodles, and extended family. The majority of my family lives in Kansas City and my husband's in Baltimore, Maryland, his hometown. We plan an annual trip to either the East Coast or somewhere closer to the Dallas area. After living on the East Coast for eight years, I do miss being close to the beach and the charming towns of Upstate New York.

My husband and I love to travel. We enjoy the spontaneity of going somewhere new and taking the path less traveled. Exploring different cultures and understanding how others live is an integral part of seeing the world through a wider lens.

My yoga practices. I try to practice yoga at least twice a week. I do a combination of Ritual One Yoga and Core Power Yoga. I started practicing five years ago while living in New York to help with stress and anxiety. The mental and physical benefits from yoga have kept me grounded and levelheaded through major life changes over the past two and a half years.

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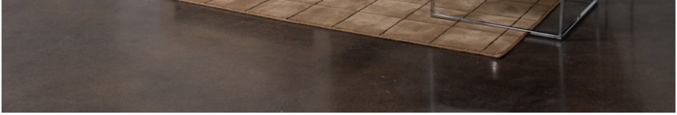

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