

Colding's Calling : Danielle Colding The "Design Star"

By Kam Williams Special to *The Skanner News*

36 year-old Danielle Colding is an interior designer with her own residential and commercial design firm in New York City. A former professional dancer, she also has a bachelor's degree in Anthropology from Stanford University as well as an associate's degree in Interior Design from the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandise on her resume.

As a self-described problem-solver, Danielle uses her open, friendly and quirky personality to connect with her clients. She characterizes her design style as global chic, classic modern and edited traditional. Here, she talks about participating as a contestant on the new season of *Design Star*, which airs Tuesdays at 9 PM (8 PM Central) on HGTV (House & Garden Network).

Kam Williams: Hi, Danielle, thanks for the interview.

Danielle Colding: Hi, Kam. It's my pleasure.

KW: What interested you in appearing on *Design Star*?

DC: My friends convinced me to go, thinking I'd have a good chance. To tell you the truth, I wasn't so sure. I went to the open call just to see what happened, and it just snowballed from there. The next step became the next step and I found myself on the show.

KW: How has the competition surprised you?

DC: The competition surprised me in that it was truly a supportive environment. I was skeptical about doing a completion show because I'm not into that kind of drama. But this experience was the opposite, sure we had our moments but for the most part I made friends for life and we supported each other every step of the way. We felt like we were experiencing something very special together.

KW: Has your life changed since you've become a celebrity?

DC: A celebrity? I'm not there yet. My life has not changed tremendously other than I have a sense of confidence in my work that only this experience of making design decisions in minutes and living with them can give you.

KW: Do you ever want your anonymity back?

DC: That's something I still wrestle with.



Danielle Colding

I have just started being recognized on the streets of New York, and it's a trip. So far, though, it's been a lot of fun.

KW: You studied Anthropology at Stanford. So, why did you become a professional dancer after graduating?

DC: I started dancing at the age of 6. So, it was something that was always there on the side. My mother pushed me to go an academic route but was cool about me studying something that I loved without the pressure of doing something that would land me a career. Cultural Anthropology and my minor in African and African-American studies were simply areas of study I was drawn to. Through-

out college, I danced with a choreographer that I really loved and respected and who started a company using several dancers from Stanford. I would spend weekends in San Francisco and Oakland, rehearsing and performing. When I graduated he had a spot for me in his company, so I went for it. It was a dream come true and an incredible creative experience.

KW: How did you go from dancing to interior decorating?

DC: My years as a dancer in San Francisco were extremely taxing. I held several jobs to live there as a dancer. I was a first grade teacher for two years, taught dance in

public schools, waited tables, was a Pilates instructor and, of course, rehearsed and performed. By the end of four years I was spent. I knew I needed some other way to make a living and my passion for dance wasn't carrying me through. So, I literally went on a trip with a friend and reflected on all the things I was naturally good at and all the things that I would love to get up in the morning to do... And interior design came from that. It is truly my passion, and I am lucky to have been on a path where I've been able to do what I love.

KW: What would you say characterizes your designing style?

DC: I do not have one design style. I like so much of so many different styles that I hate to claim one. My design is very intuitive and client-driven, but also there's an eclectic approach. I like homes to feel like they reflect the people who inhabit them... that every item fits and could tell a story. That being said, I value a certain level of elegance and sophistication in all the spaces I design.

KW: Every reality series has to be edited. Do you think this one is portraying you fairly?

DC: I do. I think I am coming off the way I am in person. The tough part is that so little of what happened can be shown in a one-hour show. That is frustrating. There are so many factors that shape our decision-making that the viewers don't get to see. They see us making crazy decisions but don't know the full story and the amount of pressure we are under.

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