

A/Z Exhibition: Talking With Isay Weinfeld At Espasso



On November 13, 2013, acclaimed Brazilian architect and designer Isay Weinfeld opened A/Z, his first ever US exhibit at Espasso in New York City. Espasso's showroom is dedicated to featuring modern and contemporary Brazilian furniture and this new exhibit showcases many of Weinfeld's products. The exhibit also focuses on his newly released monograph compiling his most recent works in celebration of his studio's 40th year. I was fortunate enough to be able to sit down with him to discuss his journey, which, according to Weinfeld, is far from being over.

"Pleasure," Weinfeld said with warmth in his eyes as he contemplated the one word that sums up the feeling of looking back at his studio after 40 years. Weinfeld is responsible for numerous minimalistic and contemporary boutique, home, restaurant, and hotel designs, projects that have received many accolades. Though despite his tremendous success, Weinfeld does not feel that he has reached a marking point in his career worth such nostalgic reflection. "I don't feel that time passed like this so quickly as I am still working. I don't feel as if 40 years is a marking point, something that is strong. It's still going," he said confidently then adding with a laugh, "I am not dead yet." And it soon became clear that as long as Isay Weinfeld is alive his designs would continue to flourish as well, for creating seems to be a part of who he is.

He admits that he doesn't remember how he got into architecture, it simply just happened. This seems to be how he begins many of his designs as well, by just letting it happen. He doesn't constrain himself to stick to any particular style or set of materials, in fact he says he cannot even commit to a favorite. Instead he treats each project as an individual, creating each piece with inspiration from various aspects of life, art, dance, theater, film, etc., and choosing materials that will best compliment his design. "I never start with a material, it's always a consequence," he explains. It is clear that Weinfeld views architecture as more than simply a strive for a finished product.

He treats the whole process like an art form and finds pleasure from the first sketches to the end product. "It's like a baby that I take care of from the beginning to the end," he says. And just like a father would say of his children, Weinfeld says that he cannot pick a favorite or most meaningful project because they are all unique and important in their own way. He does admit that he receives great pleasure from seeing the finished product of a work he put 100% into. Weinfeld doesn't remember any significant ups or downs over the past 40 years and modestly says he always felt to be at a consistent middle level of work, never at the top, never at the bottom. But he says this is not what he focuses on, instead he focuses on doing his best designing a variety of projects like hotels, spas, fitness, and cultural centers. He dreams of designing a brothel in the future but says with a grin "I'm still waiting for a call." A/Z will be on display at Espasso until December 1st. As I left the exhibit and thanked Isay Weinfeld for his time he gave a "good luck" to any aspiring architects. And as for anyone who is still looking for their calling he simply says to "let it be."