

Meeting Jonathan Adler

Written by Leslie K. Hughes



I was quite nervous to meet him; a legendary designer whose pieces I have admired for years. Walking into his Biltmore store with my list of interview questions in hand, I felt well . . . dorky.

Thankfully, that feeling was whisked away by a dapper man with a contagiously vibrant spirit. Immediately upon meeting Jonathan Adler, I felt relaxed and no, it wasn't just because I was sitting on one of his perfectly dreamy purple sofas. Rather than an interview, it was a conversation -- one that made me forget about my list of questions.

The spark in his voice showed true passion about his work. He admitted that becoming such a renowned designer was an accidental career, not something he intentionally sought out. In fact, it was a teacher who told Adler he wasn't fit for RISD (Rhode Island School of Design) that pushed him to pursue pottery more seriously. And from there the foundation of the Jonathan Adler empire was built.

And what an empire it is! Not only is he a designer and potter, but Adler has also mastered the art of writing. His books are just as gorgeous as the pieces in his store, with colorful words and pictures that will deepen your love and appreciation for this man and his work.



When asked what part of his work and success he is most proud of, Adler feels his greatest accomplishment is that he “employs so many people.” He spoke of his love for his Fantasy Factory (Adler’s magical office) and his team that “turns [his] design fantasies into reality.”

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While not all of us have a Fantasy Factory of our own, chances are good that a great number of us aspire to have a work space where we can collaborate with other wonderfully talented people to make *our* dreams come true. And it should be no surprise that Adler is in full support of this. Though he is “not a big believer in advice,” Adler thinks that aspiring creatives ought to “always show up 10 minutes early.” In other words, don’t just talk about your passion and drive to make your dreams a reality -- prove your passion by turning your talk into action, even the little things.

As someone working in a creative field, I felt incredibly inspired by my chat with Jonathan Adler. Though his skillset is far different (and, honestly, far more advanced) than mine, I felt after meeting with him a deep desire to push myself further and, in his wise words, “never settle for something that’s okay.”