

## 2004/12: Emily Johnson

Emily Johnson is one peripatetic person. She has lived in thirteen cities in her short lifetime (one of which was the very cool and progressive Amsterdam ). When asked the relatively simple question, “Where are you from?”, there exists no simple answer. The closest one she can come up with is the locale in which she spent the longest amount of time: West Chester , Pennsylvania , a burg just outside of Philadelphia . We know she likes Dallas , though. Why? She earned her undergraduate degree in Art History at Dallas’ Southern Methodist University, and although she’s lived many other places since then, she keeps coming back. Read on and we’ll fill in the gaps.

An undergraduate degree wasn’t enough for Emily, and this education junkie considered several fields of study when it came to grad school: Art History, Architecture, Museum studies, and even Business. However, she followed her instincts and now Emily is in the final stages of securing her Master of Fine Arts in Interior Design at the Savannah College of Art and Design. She’s in the midst of the second quarter of her thesis and will be graduating in March of 2005.

Although she’s had many career directions, Emily has always been interested in art and design: “Majoring in Art History during my undergraduate education gave me a lot of exposure to the decorative arts and architecture, which sparked my interest in interior design.”

Before settling in at grad school, Emily has had several other stops along her career path, and this overachiever’s work history has been nothing but diverse. While at SMU, she interned with a local graphic design firm, a situation that led to a full-time position as a liaison between clients and graphic designers. She soon found a certain something lacking, so she went on to be a sales representative for a gift company, as well as a project manager dealing with contractors, schedules and finishes for a commercial real estate company. Even when she was living overseas, she immersed herself in fundraising and charity work while she was without a work visa. Obviously, the woman just can’t sit still, but all of that vast experience has sharpened her people and communication skills – valuable aptitudes for interior designers.

While at SCAD, Emily has used her communication talents to help other interior design students, as well as the department in general. Two years running she has served as a community chairperson, a position in which she has helped to get both the IIDA and ASID student chapters more involved in the Savannah community outside of the college. All of this work has taken the place of non-design related employment during school – she simply doesn’t have the time. However, she has definitely made time for those ever-so-important internships.

During the summers and holidays Emily has smartly been interning with design firms. Currently – during SCAD’s winter break – she is interning for ForrestPerkins, a hospitality design firm in Dallas , which also has a Washington , D.C. location. This past summer she worked for Wilson & Associates, another hospitality design firm in Dallas , but with other offices in New York , Los Angeles , Singapore , Johannesburg and Shanghai .

Emily greatly encourages all design students to seek out internships whenever possible: “I think that having an internship while you are in school is a very important part of design education. It is important to get outside of the school environment, make contacts, and see how projects progress in the ‘real world.’ It’s important to be introduced to the endless amount of design resources that are available in the professional world. As soon as you can learn about new products and materials, the better. It only gives you a leg up when you get out into the working world.”

As you can probably discern, Emily is leaning towards a career in hospitality design. However, she has also completed other brief internships with designers practicing in residential, a field that still appeals to her because of its possibilities for independence. “Another major consideration when I decided to pursue a career in interior design is the fact that you can work independently and be successful pursuing entrepreneurial endeavors.”

So why does Emily like Dallas so much? A strong design community for one. Good friends and a low cost of living for another. And it doesn’t hurt that DFW Airport is one of the major flight hubs in the country. Emily’s got to satisfy that peripatetic jones, you know.

The fun questions...

P&C: What’s your favorite holiday tradition?

EJ: Christmas and everything that surrounds it... decorating the Christmas tree, baking, singing Christmas carols, spending time with family and friends...

P&C: What’s the best Christmas present you ever received?

EJ: A plane ticket to Italy.

P&C: What's your favorite holiday food?

EJ: Not sure about this one... anything and everything Italian!

P&C: What do you hope to accomplish before 2004 is over?

EJ: I hope to graduate from school and land a fantastic job!!!

P&C: Any other links that you would like to include for our readers?

EJ: Unfortunately, I don't have a website, but I enjoy looking at [www.dailycandy.com](http://www.dailycandy.com) (a fun site about fashion, travel, design, and lots of other cool stuff).

You can contact Emily by emailing her at [ejohns22@student.scad.edu](mailto:ejohns22@student.scad.edu)