

Halcyon Heroine
Nicole Bauman, Owner
February 13, 2013

Summary by Stephanie Roland

As a second semester senior, I find that I am getting advice about “life after graduation” and “what is coming next” from all fronts: parents, siblings, older friends, anyone and everyone who has an opinion and experience on the subject. That is why listening to a speaker like Nicole Bauman is so refreshing. She went through the same TMD program, understands what our classes have taught us, and has learned how to use her skills in the real world.

Graduating from URI in 2006 with a degree in TMD (with a special interest in Interior Design) and a minor in art, Nicole began her career at the very bottom, working as a librarian for a small design firm in Connecticut. Although not right in the action, Nicole said that even this experience was important to the development of her career and passion for design. She became a sponge, soaking up all the information she could about how the business was run. Her passion then took her to Boston, where she worked for a small residential design firm as a junior decorator. Nicole pinpointed this job as the place that she learned the most about the industry as a whole. She designed, developed vendor relations, conducted site visits, and even performed some accounting duties. After a brief stint in San Francisco at a commercial textiles company, she found her way back to Providence to work in interior design. In addition to working full-time as a visual merchandiser for Restoration Hardware, Nicole started her own small-scale residential interior decorating firm. As if these two jobs aren't enough, she also designs her own hats and fascinators to be sold in consignment stores, online, and in the bridal market.

Her interior decorating and fascinator businesses both draw on her creative skills and she takes her ideas from the art world. She cites texture and color as her biggest source of inspiration when she is creating a one-of-a-kind fascinator. The colors found in nature are a particular favorite of hers. Birds and flowers find a way into almost all of her fascinators and hats, through the use of feathers, flowers, or just the color or form of a piece. Soft forms and colors are not, however, her only muse. She also draws on geometric pieces, such as the paintings of Sarah Morris. These strong, geometric lines and bright colors offer contrast and balance to her soft, pale colors and shapes. In her interior design work, color is also her most important asset. She is constantly blending cool and warm colors for a feeling of balance without the predictability of symmetry.

Nicole's education in the world of design and interior decorating continued after college, and she stressed that her most important learning was done through hands-on experience, not in the classroom. Listening to how Nicole jumped around different aspects of the industry and then ultimately discovered her true passion and dream career is a lesson for all of us. Just because we might not get the exact job we want right after graduation does not mean we never will. Every job has something to teach us, and as long as we soak up all we can in everything we do, we will eventually find our own dream career. This gives me hope for my future and puts some of my fears at ease. I now plan to follow Nicole's advice and to “go into everything I do with goals, not expectations”.