



MICHAEL SHUGARMAN

THE FREEDOM OF LUXURY

Calgary designer Michael Shugarman has always known he belongs in the world of design, but it wasn't until he travelled to Europe that the defining perspective of his vision fell into place.

He headed to Europe after completing his education, and found that it was an entirely different world.

It was a world where product design, interior design and architecture were fluid and firms weren't narrow-minded about their expertise. "It's in executing a design intent," Shugarman says.

He remembers being rather embarrassed after asking a renowned architect what kind of architecture he practised. >>

WORDS seema dhawan

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“Oh yes, you’re American. You either think hospitals, or shopping malls,” the 80-year-old veteran replied.

The European philosophy has been practised and nurtured at Shugarman Architecture + Design Inc., where teamwork and a deep appreciation for cohesive design are key.

“What we did here was very narrow and was very focused on the production of work as opposed to the creation of design work,” says Shugarman.

“We have an educational system of producing work that really focused on the product, instead of value of product.”

After returning to Canada, Shugarman decided very quickly to venture out on his own.

“Because I was working for myself...I had the luxury of producing good work,” he says.

Today, the firm focuses on high-end residential and commercial work.

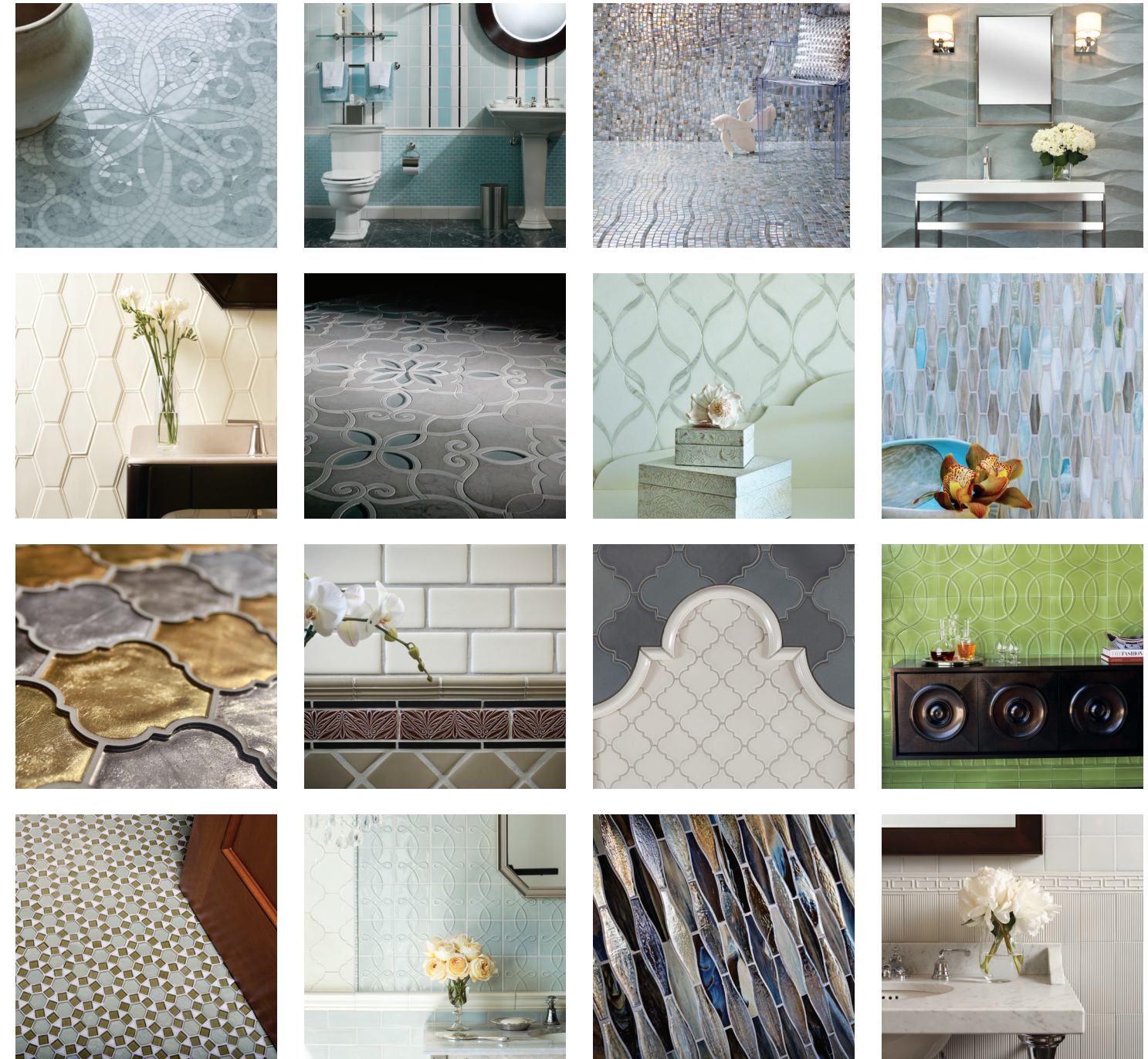
“It affords the kind of creativity that clients are looking for us from us,” says Shugarman.

IT AFFORDS THE KIND OF
CREATIVITY THAT CLIENTS ARE
LOOKING FOR FROM US



TOP Saddle benches, designed by Michael Shugarman. **ABOVE** Incorporating a beautiful backyard view that fuses with the home’s design.

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ABOVE, RIGHT High-end residential and commercial architecture are the heart the firm's design visions.

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He feels lucky to work in Western Canada, where contemporary styles are welcome.

“Western Canada is really an island of progressive thinking,” says Shugarman. “People are willing to take a chance here.”

The firm has been consulting on the Edmonton Arena District (EAD) project, from guiding the master plan to the selection of furniture.

“You go from designing a chair and a kitchen and then you get to worry about a plaza in the city,” Shugarman says.

“I really don’t know how I ended up so lucky...It’s like Christmas everyday.”

He advises those looking to renovate to consider if there are any attributes to the space that have nothing to do with the interiors.

“The way the sun comes up in the morning, the way that goes down at night,” says Shugarman. “Or a space that is set up looking at a television while a beautiful backyard commands attention.”

“I have a real desire to embrace the landscape even if you’re in an urban environment,” he adds.

It’s also important to not be afraid of subtle changes. “Maybe it’s just changing a small pillow on a couch, forget your interior, find something that speaks to you.”

A casual luxury is at the heart of Shugarman’s sense of style. “Luxury in our world is really so you can command your own space and be comfortable in your skin,” he says. “The ultimate luxury is that notion of freedom.”

“You can be in a beautiful pair of sweatpants, cashmere sweatpants, and you can feel as beautiful as a night out at the opera, if the space is right.” ■

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