

LD+A

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FACES OF THE FUTURE



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AMER MALEH
CONTINENTAL LIGHTING
NEW YORK CITY

CAREER CAPSULE

- LEED AP
- IESNY 2005 Student Grant Design Competition-First Place
- Key projects: One Island East offices, Hong Kong; Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis; Highline Hybrid Tower, New York City; Newtown Creek Plant, Brooklyn, NY

‘There have been a couple of exciting moments, from managing a multi-use project in China to randomly meeting Ingo Maurer on a focusing job at 3:00 a.m.’

Amer Maleh’s experience as a designer might not necessarily open doors with his new clients, but once inside, it does give him a plenty of good talking points.

Earlier this year, Maleh, the one-time lighting designer/project manager with the highly regarded firm L’Observatoire International, moved to the other side of the fence, in the role of lighting specifications consultant for Continental Lighting, a manufacturer’s representative. Even though he’s now in sales, Maleh still speaks the language of the discriminating designer. “Working as a lighting designer in a high-end firm like L’Observatoire, I reviewed a lot of different products and had representatives calling on me all the time,” says Maleh. “I was very nitpicky when it came to products and always had some kind of modifications or custom requests with very tight timelines. So in a sense, I embodied the most demanding client I would have in my position at CLSI today.”

The desire to gain a broader view of the industry prompted Maleh’s transition to sales. “I realized that I’m more interested in getting a full understanding of the lighting business and wanted to get involved in the other side,” he says. “Being an industrial designer too, I’m interested in product manufacturing and sales.”

Still, Maleh hasn’t completely let go of design. Since 2009, he’s operated a small firm, maleh.design, where he’s had the luxury to pick and choose among projects. “I’ve been working on some fun and diverse projects,” says Maleh, among which are several private residences in Manhattan, the Brooklyn Brewery in Williamsburg and one of the tallest buildings

in Beirut. “For now, I plan on keeping a very small number of projects per year to which I can bring substantial added value and creativity. I have seen too many designers lose their passion as a result of stress and overloaded deadlines because of the number of projects they need to keep afloat. I am not interested in that.”

This dual-track career path makes teaching a natural fit. Maleh is an instructor at the Parsons School of Design, where he earned his Master of Lighting Design in 2006; he also holds a Master of Industrial Design from the Pratt Institute.

Whether it’s design, sales or teaching, they’re all complementary pieces of a larger puzzle. “Quite simply, I am in love with light,” Maleh says. “Like a kid, I am still fascinated by this ethereal, ephemeral source of life.”

A FEW KIND WORDS: “Amer is a key addition to our agency,” says Jean Jacques vice president of sales for CLSI. “His education and experience in the fields of electrical engineering, industrial and lighting design provides his clients with a level of expertise that is somewhat unique in our marketplace. As the lighting technology and landscape evolves so too does our agency, and Amer is a key component in that evolution.”

DOWN THE ROAD: Maleh foresees continued multi-front involvement in the industry. “Whether this relates to innovation in product design, creation of a new business model or introduction of new lighting concepts, I hope to elevate the general awareness of lighting and its impact on our living environments and our bodies.”

Paul Tarricone