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FRANKLIN REPORT RATINGS

Recommendation: ★ ★ ★
Work Quality: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Cost Evaluation: $ $ $ $
Value Analysis: ★ ★ ★

FRANKLIN REPORT RATINGS

Services & Specialties
Interior design – fine art specialist

FR REVIEW:

While many interior designers have an affinity for fine art, Richard Rabel has executive-level experience – this former Christie’s Senior VP designs stylish, refined interiors for clients who are serious about art (or would like to be). Stylistically, Rabel leans modern, favoring clean lines and neutral backgrounds with a cool Nordic color scheme and layered textured finishes. He’s a fan of using contemporary artists, bespoke furnishings and vintage or antique pieces that correctly fit the room in shape and proportion. Rabel isn’t completely bound to these distinctions – he works with clients to create rooms that reflect their tastes and interests. That being said, this is not a designer for boho glam or finicky period rooms – the final product is a comfortable, smart and edited space with a masculine sensibility.

Born in the States and raised overseas, Rabel has led a peripatetic life – by thirty, he had lived in seven countries and learned five languages (English, Spanish, Italian, French, Portuguese). His professional life has been equally full, including an engineering degree and MBA from The University of Texas Austin, and a stint as a business consultant with a former Chilean Finance Minister. However, it was at Christie’s where Rabel found his true calling – as one of two (out of fifty) offered a job out of their education program, he went on to rise through the specialist ranks of the famed auction house. Design came later, though it was always in his blood. With a few years of Brazilian architect Ugo di Pace’s tutelage under his belt and studies in architecture and interior design at UT/Austin, Parsons and the NYSID, Rabel struck out on his own in 2010. Currently he works with an assistant and trusted freelancers for specialized tasks like CAD and renderings, focusing his personal attention on a small number of projects (one gets the sense that the designer is a regular on his job sites).

Unsurprisingly, clients tend to either come from the art world or share its values. As a rule, they see art holistically – its beauty, history and cultural cache – and appreciate the considerable expertise (and rolodex) Rabel brings. However many are simply happy to have an approachable, trustworthy, knowledgeable and hardworking professional who “really walks you through the process and makes you feel at ease.” Rabel generally breaks his pricing down into one fiat fee for conception and planning of the design and a purchasing fee for shopping and execution. Those who engage his services feel they “get so much more than they expected” for the price and praise Rabel’s attention to detail, his good humor, and his dedication to the craft.

REPRESENTATIVE CLIENT COMMENTS:
“Richard is the most worldly person I’ve ever met.” “He understands the art world in and out, and can be relied on for expertise for any art question.” “He’s very methodical - seeing the issues that will come up ahead of time and dealing with them early.” “Richard has a roving intellect, he knows a lot about a lot and brings that to his design work.” “My partner and I were both leaning for a strong midcentury modern look, Richard helped us bring depth to it by using an occasional antique piece - I was really thankful for his input.” “An encyclopedic knowledge of aesthetic styles.” “He oversaw a complete gut renovation from drawing to execution. He calmly guided us through the process and made it so easy on us.”