

Design for the Birds

The host of *Dress My Nest*, Thom Filicia, talks about his new book, his personal style, and his fine feathered friends.



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LOFLIFE: In your new book, *Thom Filicia Style*, you talk about your appreciation for natural and organic forms. How did this become part of your design style?

THOM FILICIA: I tend to like things that are very clean and simple, things that lean modern. Sometimes people think of modern as machine-made and very cold, and I think natural elements are a nice juxtaposition. I like raw with refined. I like shiny with matte. I like having that yin and yang, if you will. It's like wearing jeans with a really beautiful shirt, you know?

LL: On your Style Network show, *Dress My Nest*, you use the everyday fashion choices women make to help them discover their own interior design style.

THOM: Does someone wear a lot of patterns? Do they wear a lot of solids? Are they wearing bohemian things, or very sleek or tailored things? When you open up someone's wardrobe, it gives a great springboard. All of a sudden, people are confident and they start opening up about what they like.

LL: You've designed commercial and residential spaces, which can be very different experiences. What do you see as the similarities?

THOM: At the end of the day you're designing for people. Whether you're doing the interior of a car or a residence, it can be beautiful, but if it isn't comfortable, or inviting, or human on any level, then it really loses. If people aren't comfortable or they don't like it, that's not good design.

LL: You've said the living room is your favorite to decorate. Why?

PREVIOUS PAGE: A waterscape by artist/surfer Alex Winstein and a salvaged piece of wood from a Tibetan prayer house add to the organic tranquility of Filicia's living room. Disparate decorative elements mingle to create Filicia's favorite juxtapositions.



THOM: Because the living room sets the tone for the rest of the house. It's the room I like to be in the most. I like to entertain.

LL: Throughout your design career, the emphasis on 'sustainability' has evolved ten-fold.

THOM: Well, it didn't really exist when I first started. If it did it's because you wanted something to *look* natural and organic. It changed in the sense of how people approach design now—the way we think of materials. Natural is not a death sentence anymore, in terms of it being unattractive. Natural things are really beautiful; we appreciate them.

LL: Judging from your book, your show, and your website, it seems you have a thing for birds. How did your bird motif come about?

THOM: About five years ago, I bought two metal birds from this guy on the street for \$100. I also have a house in upstate New York, and there was this big, majestic eagle flying around one day. And I thought, "Those fabulous eagle consoles they have in

the White House could be a very fun thing to do, but in a modern way.' So, I started designing them for myself.

All of a sudden it was like, 'Thom has a bird thing.' Then, the bird thing became 'the thing' for our show, which had nothing to do with me at all. It was the network who came up with the bird idea. Maybe I was a bird in a previous life? I don't know what it is. I certainly don't have anything *against* birds, but I'm not actively part of the Audubon Society or anything. And I'm guessing I should be, because apparently I love the form of the bird and I'm drawn to the bird.

I got to go easy on the bird thing though, I don't want people saying, 'here comes the bird lady.'

EXIT

For the full interview, visit: loftlifemag.com/thomfilicia

👉 Industrial pendant lighting mixed with sleek appliances and cabinetry capture Filicia's "raw with refined" aesthetic. 🗑️ Safety glass mirror creates a spaciousness while invoking the manufacturing past of Filicia's neighborhood. One of Filicia's "surprise effects" uses his Emmy from *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* as a toilet paper holder.

