

Atlanta

NEWH

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Westin Plaza Hotel Tour With Black Dog Studio



Kelly Bowen, Francisco Montiel, Valerie Haase, Daniela Castellon



Nicole Higgins, Daniela Castellon, Jennifer Loux,
Miranda Calhoun, Tara Hebert



Ryan Rawlins; Stacy Costa



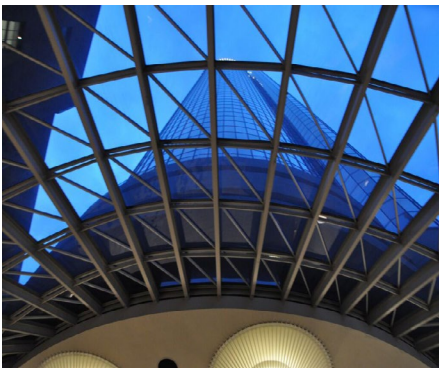
Westin Plaza Guest Room



Nicole Higgins, Valerie Rutherford, Kayla Ingalls, Jessica Casiano, Elaine Domingo, Jennifer Loux, Kathryn Arnold



Westin Plaza Chandelier



Westin Plaza Ceiling Detail



Westin Peachtree Plaza Lobby

Black Dog Studio Interview

A Conversation with Francisco Montiel

When did you know you wanted to become a designer and why?

I am an architect by education but considered for a long time transitioning into Interior Design before it actually happened. I thought there was an opportunity there to be more creative and develop other aspects of the design of a space such as finishes, color, furnishings, lighting, fabrics, etc.

How many years have you worked as an interior designer?

I transitioned into Interior Design in 2010. Before then, I worked in Architecture for 16 years.

Have you always designed in hospitality?

In my first job as an architect, I worked for about 10 years doing limited service hotels and after that did multi-family residential projects for about 5 years. My whole experience in Interior Design (a little over 5 years now), has been in Hospitality.

NEWH recently hosted a hotel tour at the Westin in downtown Atlanta that you and your firm designed; where did the concept come from and what was the design process?

The primary 'story' for the design of the public spaces is based upon the concept of Biophilia, which is defined as the instinctive bond between human beings and other living systems. We merged this idea with Westin's latest design direction which looks at nature under a microscope and developed some of the design elements that were incorporated into the Lobby space, like the carpet and laser cut stained wood screens.



A Conversation with Francisco Montiel Continued...

Our intent was to bring ‘nature’ from the outdoors into this concrete jungle in a different way than John Portman did in the original design of the Hotel back in the 70’s and make the space warmer, taking away some of the inherent coldness of the concrete which is very prevalent throughout.

One of the main elements in the design of the lobby atrium area is the mural in the center elevator core of the space. This mural which was hand painted in its entirety, was commissioned to Raymond Saa and took approximately seven weeks to be completed. The main goal was to create movement in the space and incorporate some of the biophilic design concept previously mentioned. The mural won a CODA WOrX (Collaboration of Design & Art) award in 2014.

As part of the process, we also wanted to bring more light into the lobby space so all the lighting was changed to LED. We were able to transform a previously very dark and dull space into a much brighter and animated one.

Is there anything you would change?

We had a lot of freedom in the design process and development of the concept for the renovation; we were able to carry the original design all the way through to construction with Starwood and Westin’s approval. There were no major value engineering items and they gave us a lot of latitude in terms of the design direction, concept, fabrics and furniture selections.

There are obviously some areas where we would have liked to spend a little more money to be able to go into more detail in terms of the design, but there is always going to be some restrictions in terms of budget and the amount of money the client wants to spend. But in the end they were very generous with their budget and we were able to achieve all of our design goals.