

EXPOSED ZIPPERS

INTERVIEW

ANTHONY FAGLIONE

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Native New Yorker Anthony Faglione is the owner of teamCIS, a construction management and general contracting company with a focus in luxury retail. Known as “Fashion’s Master Builder”, Faglione has worked with fashion clientele for nearly two decades, and is responsible for many of Manhattan’s finest high-end stores, including the Halston Heritage and Canali flagships on Madison Avenue. In addition to constructing the Fashion Week runway stages for Calvin Klein and Ralph Lauren, Faglione also recently designed the CFDA’s downtown headquarters on Bleeker Street.





INTERVIEW

Describe your early career and how you've become known as "Fashion's Master Builder."

Having been exposed to all aspects of the project from initial inception to completion, and working as a tradesman in my own right, I have accumulated a wealth of knowledge and experience. My career started off working as an electrician at a mid-size general contracting company (as estimator and project field supervisor), after having taken architectural and engineering classes in school. Over the years, I have self-developed some of my own projects to use that wealth of knowledge and provide a level beyond general contractor – which I can confidently consider a "master builder."

Who was your first fashion client?

My first fashion client was Calvin Klein in 1995. On a Thursday before one of the biggest snowstorms in the history of New York, I received a phone call from someone that I had worked with in the past - a cement floor was installed so no work could be done, but the fashion show was right around corner. They were on an extremely tight deadline and faced with the challenge of installing a set right before the snowstorm.

We worked through the weekend (slept on site) and installed temporary construction and the set turned out perfectly. This was the beginning of my fashion career and many future projects with Calvin Klein.

When are you called onto a project? Do you facilitate all the moving parts, architect? Designer? Engineer?

My preferred time to get called onto a project is when a designer is looking for space. This way, I can give them all the pros and cons on the existing space, including about infrastructure and the concept design. From there, I ask the client to provide me with a concept design, and we go through an extensive Q&A process. After that, I hire the architect, engineer, and co-consulting. I prefer the retailer or fashion client hire the designer.

What defines a signature 'Anthony Faglione' project?

Projects that I work on are constantly being challenged by design and reality. Clients have extremely high expectations, so it's also important to manage that. In addition, being faced with schedule, budget and client criteria, and delivering high quality projects that everyone can be proud of.

My projects are all of the highest quality construction with an acute sense of detail.

How necessary was it for you to learn about the retail process when you started designing high end, luxury stores?

As a master builder, my job, among many processes, is to have a total understanding of what the designer is trying to achieve. The extent of my design is how to get all the materials to come together per the designer's concept.

How is your team involved with fashion week?

Since 1995, we have been building the Ralph Lauren fashion set and during that time, we have built fashion sets for Helmut Lang, Narciso Rodriguez, and Donna Karan.

Were you excited to see what would come when fashion weeks moved to Lincoln Center? What do you think of the setting it has created?

The Lincoln Center facility has allowed for many brands to participate and cooperate in the use of one large facility, and yet maintain a level of individuality.

Having designed the CFDA's new headquarters you must have worked closely with Diane Von Furstenberg. What was she like during the process? What is the most unique part of the new space on Bleecker Street?

I collaborated very closely with the concept designer of the project and worked closely with Diane. The challenges of making the space special, extremely functional, very cool, and yet extremely affordable were at times difficult but well worth it. The best part about working with DVF is that she was very clear in her communication and goals and, at the same time, threw in a little humor, which meant that the whole process was lighter and more fun.

The most unique part of the space is that open spaces are balanced with a sense of containment and enclosed spaces with a sense of opening.

Do you have a favorite installation?

I have many projects that I've worked on that I think are really special. The most recent is the Canali flagship on Madison Avenue. We installed a new storefront and did something a bit different than what was there before, but still fit in with the brand's aesthetic and other stores in the area. A stone staircase in the store has steps that appear to be floating, and an all glass-enclosed elevator within the stairwell opening is extremely sleek.

The second one is Reiss in LA – a very interesting project. We installed an all-glass façade on the building with a glass image sandwiched between layers of glass, giving the appearance of a tree shadow. We also installed thousands of little silver chain hung from the ceiling giving the feeling of London rain.

Last is Varvatos in LA – what can I say, super cool design. We'll let that one speak for itself.