

MON CŒUR

Retail Design Strategist and Author Judy Bell finds the heart of her inspiration
in an artful blend of music halls, museums, and theatres in Minneapolis,

New York and Paris.

photography by spacecrafting



“Minneapolis is a creative mecca for someone with a curious mind and a desire for inspiration.”

JUDY BELL



LIFESTYLE

For Judy Bell, Times Square is the “heart” of New York City. Traveling to work in the retail design community in New York for over 30 years, it has become her second home. No wonder then, that in Minneapolis she resides in the “heart” of the lakes community in her residence at Calhoun Beach Club. Listed in the US National Register of Historic Places, the art deco style of the vintage building is an inspiring backdrop for Bell’s lifestyle that also craves a taste of Paris. A member of Alliance Francaise and a frequent student of French language and cooking, in February Judy hosted a Gertrude Stein style Salon for 20 guests to discuss controversial topics. Appetizers like Quiche Lorraine, Gougeres and Chocolate Ganache from Valorie’s French Kitchen were savored and the paintings of French inspired local artist Dan Raphael were admired.

Passionate about good conversation, Bell is also a writer currently revising the college textbook she authored: *Silent Selling* Published by Bloomsbury, the book offers a path to creativity in retail store design and presentation. Paying homage to the Harry Potter books (also published by Bloomsbury), she is adding *Creative Wizards* and other potions to the mix as she brews up her 6th edition Bell is also on the freelance team at *Design:Retail* magazine, where she enjoys spinning tales with a twist by incorporating her long time study of human behavior. Going hand-in-hand is *Energetic Retail*, (energetic-retail.com) where Bell is CEO, Chief Energetic Officer. In her half-day workshops, retailers and design firms envision a fresh perspective on retail environments. The process leads to novel and eloquent ways to engage and inspire shoppers.

Earlier in her career, Bell’s love of writing and speaking landed her a job at Target for 22 years, where she traveled throughout the US and Europe to seek out presentation trends. She offered her photographs and commentary to 3000 team members annually in colorful and often humorous presentations in venues that included the Guthrie Theatre and Target Center. At Target she served on several national design boards for which she received numerous awards, including the coveted Markopoulos Award “in recognition of extraordinary achievements and outstanding contributions in the visual merchandising and store design industry.” The award honors Andrew Markopoulos, the late, legendary, Sr. VP of Visual Merchandising and Store Design at Dayton’s. Other recipients include past design executives at Barneys New York, Bergdorf Goodman, Neiman Marcus and design firms nationwide.

For someone with a curious mind and a desire for inspiration Judy finds Minneapolis to be a creative mecca. She regularly attends events like Creative Mornings and Capsule’s Think & Link Pants Optional, where innovators gather. She is a member of local chapters of both FGI (Fashion Group International) and RDI (Retail Design Institute). Judy holds season tickets for the Jungle Theatre and the Theatre of Public Policy.

Rustica Bakery is right down the block, Judy’s favorite place to boost her inspiration with a café au lait and the best chocolate chip cookies on earth. Annual fundraising events like Mais Oui? through Alliance Francaise, and Minnesota Orchestra’s Symphony Ball are favorites. A member of the Walker Art Center Film Club along with Mia and the MSP Film Society, she finds her muse in diverse places. That includes Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden where she learned to practice Shinrin Yoku. Judy led a session for design executives in the vineyards of Santa Rosa at the 2017 Design:Retail Forum. But while at home at CBC, an easy walk around the lakes right outside her door is always beckoning with the promise of a delicious new idea.