

Panel discussion centered on understanding the creative process from varied perspectives across the art, architecture, dance and design industries.

(PRLEAP.COM) SAN FRANCISCO, CA (July 10, 2014) — Jeff Schlarb, principal of [Green Couch Interior Design](#) hosted the Bay Area's finest creative minds at [Coup d'état](#) on Wednesday, June 25 for a panel discussion centered on understanding the creative process from varied perspectives across the art, architecture, dance and design industries.

Panelists included illustrious choreographer, Alonzo King of the [LINES Ballet](#) , artist [Katina Huston](#), and Stephen Sutro, principal of [Sutro Architects](#)

. The conversation followed a deliciously catered lunch and highlighted each panelist's creative process, challenges, inspiration and each perspective work styles.

"This is the second panel discussion that we've had the exciting opportunity to create and host," said Schlarb. "It is so inspiring to get such a collective mindset of the creative industry. Learning more about my peers who are doing incredible things in different ways brings so much inspiration to Green Couch and our design clients."

Questions spanned from who put you on the path for a creative life to what is your end goal and what is your work meant to stand for? The first question of "Did you learn your own process for creativity or was it taught?" kicked off the discussion.

"I think it evolves over time," said Steven Sutro. "In architecture, there are constraints and a subjective creative component. I constantly learn how to be creative even though it can make me nervous. If I am in an art class and someone gives me a blank paper it is scary, but if we are given a set of constraints or a goal, it becomes easier. I think if you teach your self to assess and then challenge the assumptions it can provide a great platform for creativity."

"When you learn how to draw, you learn how to see," said Artist Katina Huston. "If you want to make contemporary art, there is a requirement that you invent intellectually, meaning I can't make anything that's already been made or rework someone else's concept and have it be intellectually valid. In order to achieve mastery, I need to have my materials, technique and

thinking transcend anything that has happened before. It's got to be a new invention."

Let's start back at the beginning. You've got an idea: a project, a new season? Who leads the dance, what comes first? "With creativity there are a lot artists who are not creative and many business people who are. It's how you plug into creativity that is the point. My preparation has to do with me," said Alonzo King. "I stop eating a certain way, I spend more time alone so that clarity can come. It is not an on and off thing. It is about how you live and interact, how you view everything that has ever been made or done - whether it is food, a room or a human being it is just a way of living. It is not something you do."

"Physically what do you do as part of the creative process?""When you are working with other artists, you are interested in their contributions so you are looking for someone who is a genius and who has really tapped into themselves and the brilliance of their mind, but you also want them to be like children and follow and trust," said King. They are strong in their own voice can take direction at the same time. The dancer's own understanding offers a new take on the idea you have and you have to be sensitive to the dialogue. Self-thought is a wall between people and creativity

"If I would play with clay, I would work it so much that it would crumble, said Schlarb. When do you know when your work is done?""It depends on the thing, said Katina. When it is no longer a wheel or when it vibrates at a certain level. There have been pieces that I took to the brink and then stopped, lived with for four years and then put one more mark on. You listen to the piece until it screams at you silently. You can do showy, beautiful things that have flash and style, but there is a depth that you want to have that ties to struggle. That patina of human contact that provides weight to an object. You don't want the thing to be too brassy, shiny, new, hard edged. You have to kill the piece and then restore it, which brings more integrity."

"The idea of shiny and self consciousness. Anytime you require a skill and can express it easily you develop an ego, but then you have to crack it," said King. The only thing that is going to crack it is humility. And you need that because sometimes you may want a little shiny but the good messenger is not interested in you saying you are attractive or showing themselves off but making the message as clear as possible so that is understood."

"Deadlines let you off the hook in some way because the thing needs to be built. The end goal after a piece of architecture is done it needs to behave in the way it is supposed to but also evolve in how the people who use it," said Sutro. We love when we hear the way that people

are using it is great. We seek to create well-rounded, cozy and flexibility that can be enjoyed from different angles and do lots of different things for a variety of circumstances.

What is the hard fast rule you have and the one you broke? "I was taught to always question the rules, even by my parents, said King. "I was told to question everything. Do not allow yourself be comfortable. I would also dismiss fear. There should be fearlessness in your approach all the time."

"Tell the truth and don't try to impress anyone, and let go of the outcome or you leave where you are," said Katina. Follow the work to where it is supposed to go and be willing to trash things."

How much do you care about what people think? "I can't care at all. I am in a room by myself for hours on end. I have the benefit of being isolated, said Katina. "When you get socialized, you work within constraint and how to fit in. If I think you are better than me I try to please you and I can't be anything at all. In childhood you learn how not to get beat up, and in adulthood you learn to liberate yourself."

"We live in a very fast world, so when someone gives you two hours of their time, you need to feed them and give them nutrition. You also want to slap them, and remind them," said King. "You want them to leave feeling changed, and challenge their humanity and belief systems in a way that will alter them and bring them light."

What do you do when something is no good? "We are fortunate in the architectural process to have many reviews along the way and benefit from the many sets of eyes that look and question and provide their own perspectives along the way," said Sutro. "If something is not good we ultimately throw it out but we hope to create time and opportunity in the process to offer all of the ideas to it."

"I'm obsessed with the idea that we are all doing the same thing so good and bad have to be eliminated. There is an artistic conscience about the choices you make. You could scribble something and say that is crap, but it may simply be something you don't understand yet. They may not work here but don't judge it. Just keep going. Talk to any composer and they all have a favorite work. They all describe it as a gift. When I can't hold onto the gift I go back into

intellectual thinking, structures, trends, or musical devices. Outside of that, trying to find it is a tricky place, but everything is useful eventually," said King. "Morality is tricky. Brilliant minds can do mean things. What do you write about what do you draw is separate from skill, the honing of a human being is a big deal about good and bad and there is a knowing about what needs to be done."

Favorite Quote"I have two, said King. "It doesn't matter what happens to you in life but what you become because of it. The second one is: If you are putting out effort now, everything will improve in the future."

For more on the panel discussion, please visit <http://vimeo.com/100171598>.

About Green Couch Interior Design: Green Couch interior design employs its [team of artistically accomplished minds](#) to create inspired designs, classic enough to transcend the trends and brave enough to provide a fresh, eclectic atmosphere. Led by company founders Tray and Jeff Schlarb since 2002, Green Couch has built its [portfolio of curated residences](#) throughout San Francisco, Southern Marin and the Bay Area's legendary Wine Country, with an eye toward expanding into Southern California, as well as overseas. The company's uncompromising standard for talent and customized design and service has earned Green Couch participation in the 2011 and [2012 San Francisco Decorators' Showcase](#), as well as acclaim in such publications as California Home and Design, San Francisco Chronicle, Women's Day, 7x7 and Trends Magazine. With a rapidly growing reputation for imaginative, contemporary concepts and positive client relationships, the company continues to expand with a San Francisco new design studio on Potrero Avenue.