

This year's Women's Commission Conference Keynote Speaker is celebrity interior designer Genevieve Gorder, well-known for hosting her many popular series on MTV, HGTV, and Netflix, including shows such as "Trading Spaces," "Town Haul," "Genevieve's Renovation," "Dear Genevieve," "Design Star," "A Hero's Welcome Home," and HGTV's "White House Christmas Specials."

Genevieve was born in Minneapolis in 1974. After a relatively typical American childhood, she attended Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon, and majored in international affairs. But a graphic design course turned her path in a different direction. She started working at MTV after an internship there, which opened the door to her current celebrity lifestyle.



first person

with Genevieve Gorder

by Angie Kay Dillmore

She began her work as an interior designer after earning a BFA from the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan. Today, Genevieve is a big-hearted, city-dwelling, music loving, curious-minded world traveler and mother who believes beautiful things are essential to a well-lived life. She is a master at the art of branding and will talk to conference attendees about "Building a Creative Brand," relating to the everyday woman who struggles to have it all in today's world.

Thrive magazine recently tracked down this busy trendsetter in the days leading up to her very first visit to Louisiana.



As a child, you helped your family renovate and design old Victorian homes. What is your favorite style of home today?

I don't have just one. I'm generally a pre-war kind of girl but love modern too... I guess if I had to pick one it would be an Italianate row house in New York.

You've designed homes for countless clients, but in 2014, you renovated and designed your own Manhattan home. Which is more of a challenge – designing for others or yourself?

Myself! Because I have to pay for it!

When designing a room or home, where do you find your inspiration?

That is a very long answer as it isn't just one place. My job is to see harder than you; travel is my continuing education where I take my eyes on dates and come back full. But I can easily come up with an idea from a song, a photo, a person... anything. Inspiration is not an issue; having enough time in this life to execute it all is the real concern.

You have designed everything from the interior of cruise ships to a Tanqueray bottle. What is your favorite type of design work?

Design work that changes a person's life. Simple.

You're well-known as a television host and celebrity designer, but you are also a humanitarian. Tell us about that.

Design is a powerful tool -- not fluff, not extra -- but truly a necessity in the life of everyone. No matter our culture, economic status, gender, or geography, as humans we adorn for joy... we all want to live beautifully and most importantly, in a place we feel safe. I research this, I promote this, I speak about this, I'm an advocate for this, I lobby for this basic right for people around the world. It is my pleasure.

Of all the projects you've worked on, which has been the most rewarding?

My ambassador work with Oxfam America has been the most fulfilling and inspired work yet. They've sent me all over the world, refugee camps to Capitol Hill, as an advocate for home and the globally displaced. Connecting design to the greater good of humanity is the greatest joy.

As a seasoned world traveler, where is your favorite place on earth to go?

Ugh. Favorite? There are so many for so many reasons... my favorite cities are Rome and Istanbul. For beaches, I enjoy Croatia and Sardinia. Morocco and Norway are my go-to destinations for design. In America, I love the southwest and New York.

With all you do, you are an incredibly busy woman. How do you relax and unwind?

I like to cook and surround myself with my tribe. When my house hums, I'm truly at my happiest.

The lives of children today are very technology-oriented. Name three things you enjoyed doing as a child.

Unfortunately so. A constant struggle in every parent's life right now. As a kid I loved soccer, drawing, and [spending time with] my brothers.

What's up next for Genevieve Gorder?

Two new series, new collections of wallpaper, fabric rugs, and a great new collection now at The Land of Nod. Getting married and being a mom to my nine-year-old daughter.

To hear more from Genevieve, come to the Women's Commission Conference, Oct. 19, at the Lake Charles Civic Center. Check out www.womenscommissionswla.com for registration information.

