

## BUREAU EXPERT: DUO DICKINSON

*Architect George “Duo” Dickinson puts the practice on blast and explains why he thinks the system is broken*



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Top: Gustafson residence;  
Above: Duo Dickinson  
Right: Sidorenko residence

ARCHITECT GEORGE “DUO” DICKINSON IS A force to be reckoned with, and he knows it. From his razor-sharp tongue expounding on the danger of architects becoming “irrelevant” in today’s society, to being licensed to practice in 10 states, he has positioned himself as an ambitious aesthetic aficionado who straddles style and substance with rare architectural aplomb. But will that help him save architecture?

**What are the significant shifts in self-perception and design-perception you’ve witnessed within the field?**

It’s a gigantically broken system. The most amazing, damning thing is that there have been more than 300,000 people who’ve gotten professional degrees and about 80,000 who actually practice. We have a training-to-practicing ratio of basically 4 to 1. Law has 2 to 1.

Something is wrong. What we are selling is not being bought. We don’t have the relevance to create the demand. There is a perception that we’re out of touch, not concerned with

economics, the needs of the client. We’re dilettantes in black wearing nice eyeglasses who go to art openings. “The oracle that will define how you live.”

**Your latest book is *Staying Put: Remodel Your House to Get the Home You Want*. Does this book attempt to meet the needs of an economy that is suffering, or is it a way to shift the paradigm of desire—that sometimes the grass is greener (or could be) right here?**

I cannot tell you how many times in the past three years, people have said, “We’re going to die here. We can’t move, and we realized we don’t want to.” However, I had zero success with this concept in early 2000. People thought, “I can sell this at a profit when I’m done.” There was no motivation economically, environmentally. But it’s crazy to remove something that’s viable to make something that you just happen to like. “I’m the king of the world. I can do what I want.” When houses become a commodity, they cease to be something that people hold dear. This works against the usefulness of architects in our culture. ♡



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