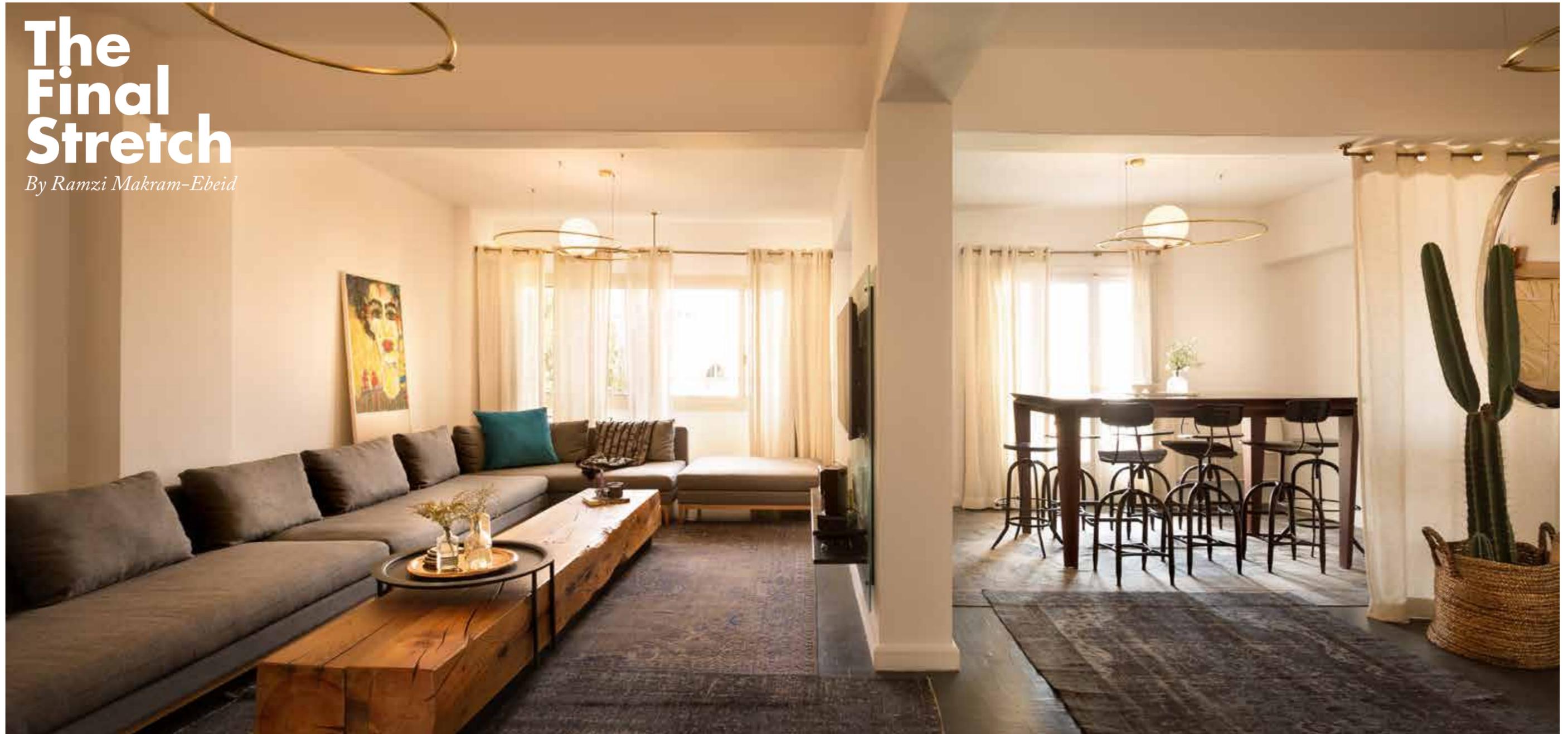


The Final Stretch

By Ramzi Makram-Ebeid



After months of designing and constructing, you sometimes see the horizon and, usually, are so spent (metaphorically and financially) that you start giving up. The space has killed your soul, your spirit and you either want to get divorced, file for bankruptcy and/or go on a killing rampage. Nothing matters anymore. You just want the space done.

This is the precise moment you should be a real man or woman, not the spoilt brat you've become. Toughen up. These last few weeks (or months depending on numerous factors) are what brings to life all the energy, money and time you've sacrificed. This is when your OCD side should come out, and this is definitely when you channel the "Hell No" attitude with anything that you are not fine with honey. Sure, you might go back a couple of steps, but remember that you can create

the dream space if you do it right. So here's the snag list you should consider for the final stretch:

Alignment - If you designed your space properly, elements should be aligned and sometimes, aligned with other elements. For example, your electrical and lighting face plates should all be straight, and if you have a couple together then they should be aligned and all spacing between them should be equal.

Finishes - If the wood isn't finished properly, redo it. If the marble is not shiny or matte like you wanted, redo it. You paid for a certain finish and the supplier is obliged to deliver that said finish. (You should've have asked for samples for all finishes. And, yes, even a white wall needs a sample.)

Windows/Doors - Are they easy to open/close? If you cannot fully open, why is that? Also, do the windows let any air in or too much noise? (If you're in Cairo, unless you buy the most expensive windows, you'll still get some noise.) Windows should be sealed as much as possible.

Power - If you put everything on, does the space burn down? If not, make sure everything is operating at full capacity.

Water - Put on every faucet, shower, dishwasher and any other water source at the same time, see how strong the pressure is and where the weak points are.

Your Mistakes - Yes, even you make mistakes. Maybe you put a plug in an

inaccessible or stupid place, or maybe the stain prone material you chose for your kitchen counter was the wrong decision like the supplier told you, change it now.

Functionality - Yes, this is related to point 6, but it needs to be stressed. Move around the space, see where you will put the furniture, imagine using the space - not in a fairytale way but in the real and probably sad way you live/work already. Does the space work for YOU? Does it work for the OTHER people in the space?

This snag list will be needed with all suppliers, even the best ones because shit does happen. And if you're suppliers are not top notch, you should be on top of them from the get go, with weekly if not daily visits to the space.

Most importantly, there should be ONE contact person for you on site and he/she should be the project manager, so no "miscommunication" aka estabat rasme happens between teams. Further, this one contact person will deal with each sub supplier directly and schedule them in the most efficient way. Finally, before my final inspection, I ask the project manager to make each sub supplier go through all their work and fix any problems they see. I call this "client ready," i.e. if the quality does not meet my criteria I certainly won't show it to my clients. If you are the client, and you feel there are too many problems in the space to do a snag list, leave the space and make it clear that you will not do the "final" walk-through until each team in the space is satisfied with their work.

If you've ever read anything I wrote before, you'd know that once you move in, you don't want to do anything major to the space because you will only bring in disaster. Do it (metaphorically and physically) now. **TL**



With a BA in International Business from GWU and a Professional Interior Design Certification from UCLA, Ramzi established the boutique interior, furniture and product design firm, Human Nature in 2007. Since then, Human Nature has been the designer behind a variety of commercial and residential projects, as well as several bespoke furniture pieces.