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NY STYLE

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MAGAZINE

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20 Years
IN THE MAKING
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3
New York
INSPIRATIONS
KATIE DAVIS
George Ranalli
HOUSE OF LEWON

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On Architectural Context: "Every project becomes part of a continuum—where materials, craft, scale, and technology are reinterpreted to bridge generations of design".

On NYC Development: "[There are] all these glass buildings ... Unpleasant-looking buildings, I'm afraid to say. Or you have this 'replica' thing... there's no in-between".

ON URBAN DESIGN

"Great cities are not created by choosing between past and present, but by designing where they meet".

George Ranalli

How George Ranalli Bridges NYC's Past, Present, and Playlists

If New York City were a person, it would probably be a charming but high-maintenance eccentric who refuses to throw anything away. It's a city where a glass-and-steel skyscraper can sit comfortably next to a 19th-century brownstone that looks like it's seen things it can't discuss. To most, this is a logistical nightmare. To George Ranalli, it's a symphony.

Ranalli isn't just an architect; he's a bit of an urban romantic who views the "old" of New York not as an obstacle, but as a prestigious dance partner. His approach to bridging historical context with modern innovation is less about "out with the old" and more about "how can we make the old look like it just had a very expensive facial?"

The City As A Living Blueprint

Ranalli's love affair with New York is palpable in every project. While some architects treat a site like a blank canvas, Ranalli treats it like a conversation that's been going on since the 1800s. He doesn't just build; he intervenes. Take, for example, his work on historic loft renovations or his celebrated Saratoga Avenue Community Center. He has this uncanny ability to take heavy, traditional masonry and pierce it with light and modern geometry. It's as if he's telling the bricks, "I know you're tired, but look what you could be with a little more structural sass." This "bridging" is intentional—it respects the gravity of the past while acknowledging that we do, in fact, live in the 21st century.

Architecture Between the Notes

What many don't realize is that before Ranalli was manipulating mortar, he was manipulating melodies. His background in music—specifically his career as a musician—is the secret sauce in his architectural recipe.

In music, the most profound moments often happen in the silence between the notes. That's where the tension lives. Ranalli applies this "musicality of space" to his designs. He understands that a room isn't just about the walls; it's about the void between them.

Rhythm: The repetitive cadence of windows or structural beams.

Tempo: How quickly a person moves through a corridor versus a grand hall.

Harmony: How a contemporary staircase can "sing" in a room full of crown molding.

Just as a jazz musician knows when not to play a note to make the next one hit harder, Ranalli knows where to leave space empty to let the architecture breathe. He designs with a sense of "urban syncopation," making sure the transition from a historic facade to a modern interior doesn't feel like a record scratch.



The Psychologist's Touch: Designing the Mind and the Chair

Behind every great architect is a spouse who probably wonders why he's staring at a door hinge for three hours. In Ranalli's case, that partner is Anne Valentino, a licensed psychologist.

One might think psychology and architecture are worlds apart, but for Ranalli, Valentino is a primary muse. Architecture, after all, is just psychology with a roof on it. Her insights into the human condition—how people feel in a space, the intimacy of a well-placed chair, or the anxiety of a cluttered room—deeply inform his work.

This influence is most visible in his furniture designs, like the iconic Valentine Chair. It's not just an object to sit on; it's a study in ergonomics and emotional security. Through Valentino's lens, Ranalli considers the "inner life" of the person using the space. He doesn't just design for the eye; he designs for the nervous system.



Valentine Chair 2

Anne Valentino



The Operational Soul

Anne Valentino is the ultimate New York City enigma, skillfully balancing the high-stakes chaos of being the COO at GRA with the zen-like precision of a licensed psychologist. Whether she is streamlining global operations or deciphering the complex subconscious of the boardroom, she navigates Manhattan with a sharp wit and an even sharper mind. It is whispered that she can optimize a supply chain and your childhood trauma before her first espresso, making her both the most efficient and slightly intimidating person in the room.

The Architect of the Architect Anne Valentino's Mindful Mastery

While George Ranalli is busy translating the "symphony of the city" into limestone and steel, Anne Valentino is the one making sure the symphony stays in key—and that the musicians aren't having a collective breakdown. As the COO of George Ranalli Architects (GRA), Anne is the structural integrity behind the sketches. But she isn't just managing spreadsheets and supply chains; as a licensed psychologist, she's essentially the C-suite's resident "building whisperer."

In a town where everyone is one delayed subway ride away from a crisis, Anne navigates the high-stakes world of New York architecture with a unique dual-lens. She can look at a floor plan and tell you where the load-bearing walls are, then look at the client and tell you exactly why they're projecting their childhood anxieties onto the kitchen cabinetry. It's a rare skill set: she can optimize a project's workflow and your subconscious before the lunch order arrives.

The Power Behind the Blueprint

If George provides the rhythmic precision of the design, Anne provides the psychological foundation. Her influence is the "silent partner" in every GRA project, ensuring that the human experience isn't just an afterthought to the aesthetic. It's one thing to build a room; it's another to understand how a human soul will actually feel standing in it.

Operational Zen

Keeping a premier NYC firm running requires the patience of a saint and the tactical mind of a chess grandmaster. Anne possesses both, usually while maintaining a level of composure that makes a Zen garden look chaotic.

The "Valentino" Effect: It's rumored that her insights are the secret ingredient in George's most celebrated works, like the iconic Valentine Chair. After all, why just sit when you can be ergonomically and emotionally supported?

Manhattan's Most Intriguing Multi-Hyphenate

Navigating Manhattan as a high-powered COO is enough to send anyone to the couch, but Anne is the couch—metaphorically speaking. She balances the cold, hard realities of urban development with the nuanced complexities of the human mind. She is the steady hand in the whirlwind of New York's architectural scene, proving that the most important structure any firm can build is a deep understanding of the people inside it.



The Psychologist's Touch: Designing the Mind and the Chair

In the grand design of the Ranalli-Valentino partnership, George may draw the lines, but Anne ensures they're sane ones. She is the ultimate New York enigma: the executive who can read your balance sheet and your dreams, all without breaking a sweat in a midtown heatwave.



George and Anne first met in 1984

George Ranalli Architect, NYC



1. The Peak Housing in Hong Kong Cir. 1983
2. Morningside Cafe Cir. 2025
3. Sure Thing Chapel Cir. 2026
4. Saratoga Ave Community Center Cir. 2009
5. Doylestown Community Theater Cir. 2016
6. First Of August Cir. 1976
7. Blumenthal Addition Cir. 2005
8. Hudson Valley House 2026 Cir. 2026
9. Yale Commercial Building Cir. 2000

GEORGE RANALLI & ANNE VALENTINO

A LEGACY IN DESIGN

ARCHITECTURE, PSYCHOLOGY & THE ART OF BUILDING WELL.

From George Ranalli's decades-long architectural practice to Anne Valentino's human-centered leadership as psychologist and COO, their partnership blends design rigor with behavioral insight. Together, they have shaped George Ranalli Architect into an interdisciplinary studio known for contextual design, craft, and spaces that serve both people and place.



SINCE 1977: GEORGE RANALLI ARCHITECT

ANNE VALENTINO: COO & DESIGN OPERATIONS

TWO DISCIPLINES. ONE ENDURING VISION.



FOUNDATIONS OF VISION

Bronx roots. Pratt. Harvard.

Born in the Bronx in 1946, George Ranalli studied at Pratt Institute and Harvard Graduate School of Design before founding his practice in 1977. His work has long been guided by craft, proportion, and a respect for context.

“Architecture combines both art and function.”

— GEORGE RANALLI



THE HUMAN IN THE ROOM

Psychology meets design.

Anne Valentino joined the firm in 1985 and developed a unique role as chief of design operations and COO. A psychologist and educator, she brings behavioral science and environmental psychology into the design conversation.

“Our practice is really an interdisciplinary partnership between behavioral science and architecture.”

— ANNE VALENTINO



PROJECTS WITH CONTEXT

Community. Restoration. Innovation.

The studio's work spans residential, commercial, public, and cultural projects—from the Saratoga Avenue Community Center to landmark renovations, exhibitions, and product design—shaped by clarity of form and sensitivity to place.

“Design is strongest when place, purpose, and people align.”



A PARTNERSHIP IN PRACTICE

Life and work, in harmony.

Together, Ranalli and Valentino unite architecture and artistry, precision and empathy. Their collaboration is a model of how design leadership can be intellectually rigorous, deeply humane, and built to last.

“A lasting legacy is built through trust, craft, and collaboration.”

THEIR ARCHITECTURAL SIGNATURES

- Context-driven design
- Meticulous craftsmanship
- Historic sensitivity
- Human-centered planning
- Interdisciplinary thinking
- Art and function in balance

“Where vision meets behavior, architecture becomes experience.”

— RANALLI & VALENTINO

WHAT DEFINES THE DUO

- Architecture informed by behavior
- Leadership across design and operations
- Public, cultural, and residential impact
- A shared commitment to craft
- Enduring influence in architecture and education
- Built to last. Designed to matter.

THE TAKEAWAY

George Ranalli and Anne Valentino built more than an acclaimed practice—they've built an interdisciplinary model where architecture, psychology, and partnerships work as one.

THEIR LEGACY ISN'T JUST IN BUILDINGS, IT'S IN HOW PEOPLE EXPERIENCE THEM.

