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AIA Conference on Architecture 2017

**Elizabeth Diller**

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## THIS MANHATTAN STUDIO IS A LESSON IN HOW TO MEDITATE AT HOME

*A new meditation studio in Manhattan teaches New Yorkers that your "zen" can come with a side of technology.*

BY [KELSEY KLOSS](#) JAN 26, 2017

There is a famous scene in "Eat, Pray, Love" where Elizabeth Gilbert (aka Julia Roberts) begins to practice meditation — and before she knows it, her mind is racing about how to plan her very own meditation room at home.

*Oh*, haven't we all been there.

The thing is, you can't really blame Gilbert, because creating an environment that's conducive to slowing down and [practicing mindfulness](#) is important. Nobody knows that better than the creators of [Inscape](#), a new, modern meditation studio in Manhattan that incorporates technology into the fundamental simplicity of meditation.



Inscape

"I thought, 'Why not be able to have a physical studio that's in the middle of the city, on a chaotic block, and yet have it be peaceful?'" says Khajak Keledjian, founder and CEO of the studio (and founder of [Intermix](#), a luxury clothing retailer).

Keledjian partnered with Lew Frankfort, executive chairman and former CEO of [Coach](#), to bring his urban concept of meditation to fruition in a 5,000-square-foot studio space on West 21st Street.



Inscape

They partnered with renowned architect [Winka Dubbeldam](#) to design a space that would offer a multi-sensory experience.

"We wanted to make an immersive environment of light, sound and amazing air," says Dubbeldam. "So all your senses would be responding, almost without you knowing it, to impulses from the environment that help you get to another state of mind."

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Care to do the same in your home? Take inspiration from the studio with the tips below, and create your own zen atmosphere.

#### **Create A Transition Space**

In the studio, Dubbeldam wanted to take attendees from the outside world to the meditation spaces slowly, using "transition" spaces such as the living room, the retail area and the relaxation space to calm and relax before the darker meditation rooms.





Inscape

"It's really important to leave everything you bring at the front door," says Dubbeldam. "But it takes a little bit of introduction and follow

up."

In your own home, that may mean focusing on the areas surrounding your meditation room first. Is the hallway cluttered with shoes and kids' toys? Or are there a few potted [plants](#) and a nice, soft [rug](#) to lead you to your zen state of mind? It'll be far more difficult to stay mindful in your meditation room if you enter it from a literally chaotic space.

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The logo for the AIA Conference on Architecture 2017, featuring the letters 'A' and '17' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'A' is red and the '17' is white.

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### Focus On Low Lighting

Inscape is unlike other meditation studios in that it embraces technology — something most studios push away as a distraction. Inscape even offers an accompanying app for meditators. Take, for example, the dim lighting effects in the meditation rooms that create the illusion of an endless horizon.

"In general, we tend to put lighting overhead, but lower lighting is actually much more comfortable," says Dubbeldam. "So use lamps and very low lights. They are very helpful because the moment you have no light on your eyelids, you immediately calm down."

In your own home, this may mean installing dimmer lights in your meditation room or placing a low-light lamp in the corner.





Another way to stay engaged in your meditation is by creating an environment that's consistent in sound and temperature. This was a crucial element for the Inscape team to incorporate into the bamboo-clad meditation spaces.

"You want some sort of continuous sound, whether it's music or just white noise, and a perfect temperature," says Dubbeldam. "Consistency is really it, because everything else will distract you."

If the room you're considering for meditation tends to be too cold or too hot, you may want to pick a different space or invest in a [smart home](#) thermostat (remember: it's OK to use technology!). Also, don't feel bad using your iPhone to play some relaxing sounds or music. This is the 21st century, after all.

Beyond that, Dubbeldam and Khajak promise it's not too difficult — focus *does* come from within, after all. Find a comfortable seat, set the thermostat just right and dim the lights. You'll be on your way to enlightenment without even leaving your well-designed home.



Inscape

An advertisement for the AIA Conference on Architecture 2017. The background is a dark, textured wall with vertical wooden slats. On the right, there is a portrait of Francis Kéré, a Black man with short hair, wearing a dark shirt. On the left, the text reads "A'17" in large, bold, red and white letters. Below it, "Francis Kéré" is written in white, followed by "KEYNOTE APRIL 27" in smaller white text. At the bottom left, there is a red button with the text "Register now" and a right-pointing arrow. In the top right corner of the advertisement, there are small icons for a play button and a close button.