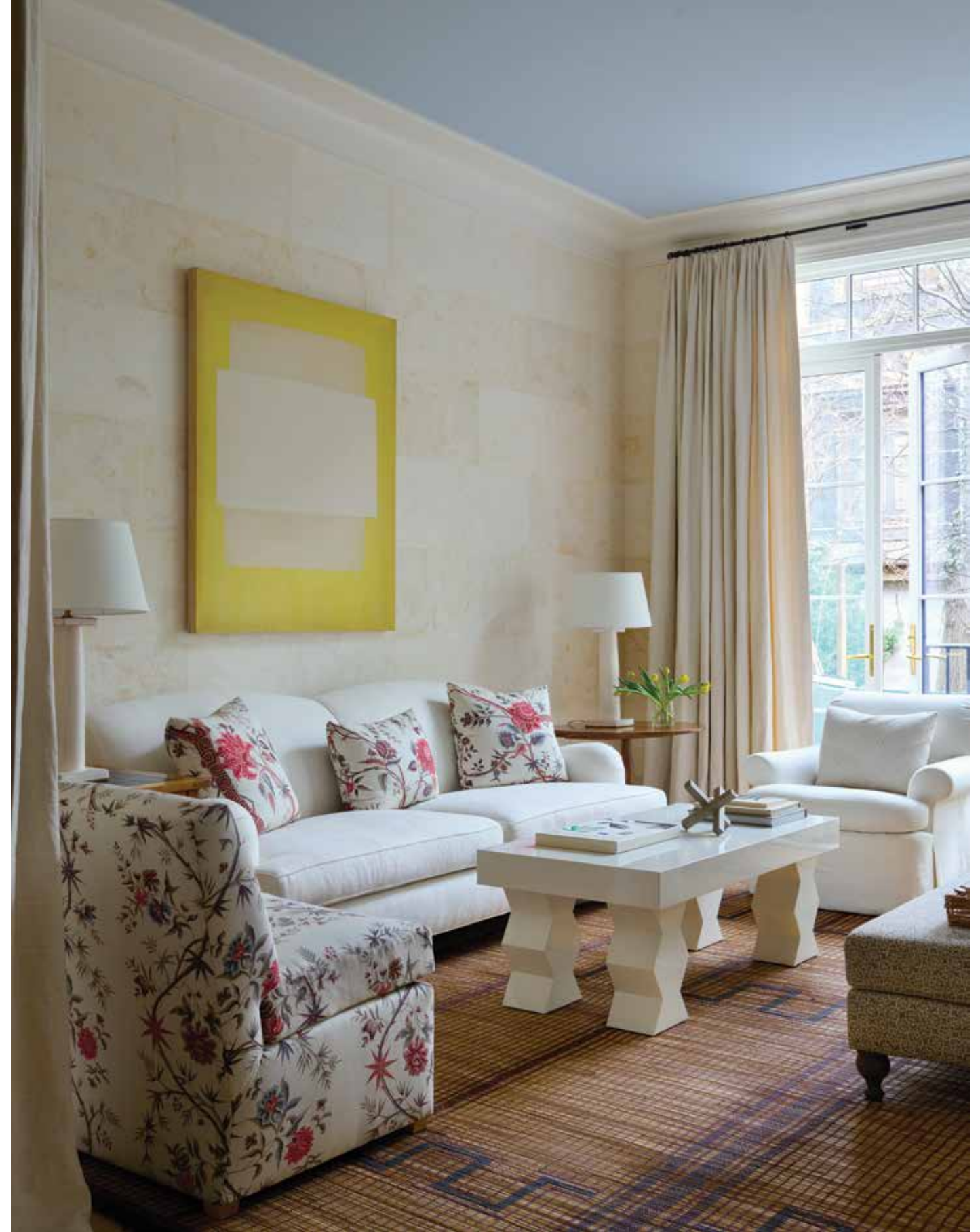


To brighten a client's Upper East Side townhouse living room, designer Lily Dierkes and architect Anderson Kenny added three sets of French doors and a Juliet balcony that overlooks the backyard. Braquenié's Le Grand Géois fabric, a tree of life pattern, adds old-fashioned charm to the airy space, which is wrapped in Barkskin panels by Caba Company with a ceiling in Benjamin Moore's Beacon Gray.

Next Generation

LILY DIERKES TRANSFORMS A CLIENT'S CHILDHOOD HOME ON THE UPPER EAST SIDE INTO A CHIC, VIBRANT PAD FOR HIS OWN YOUNG FAMILY.

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Be fitting her status as a rising star, interior designer Lily Dierkes's career began in Hollywood. There, while interning for filmmaker Roman Coppola's production company, she fell in love with art direction; soon, she'd scored assistant gigs with Coppola and actor Jason Schwartzman. But Dierkes found herself compelled to conjure scenes with more permanence than the ones built for a film shoot one day and destroyed the next. To her, the idea of designing rooms with a longer lifespan felt novel: "I really liked the idea of creating something that would have a life after my part in it," says Dierkes. "So, I pivoted."

More than a decade later, Dierkes—who opened her own New York studio in 2020 after working for the likes of David Netto and Tom Scheerer—found herself presented with an invigorating new challenge, courtesy of a couple who had discovered Dierkes's work through Instagram. The husband had grown up in an Upper East Side townhouse that they now planned to renovate and make their family's primary residence. It had remained largely untouched since his childhood. "It was truly a time warp when

ABOVE: A painting by Alex De Bruycker begins the thread of sunshine yellow that Dierkes carried throughout the house. Table lamps by Visual Comfort flank the sofa; Dierkes designed the Brancusi-inspired white lacquer coffee table. OPPOSITE: A Mike Diaz mirror (available through KRB) radiates above the Chesneys limestone mantel. Sconces, Urban Electric Co.; lithograph, Jasper Johns.



I walked into it for the first time,” says Dierkes. “It was 1980s New York, interiors with vines going through the window, you know?” In cinematic terms, like a vestige of Whit Stillman’s *Metropolitan*.

Dierkes set out to honor the history of the house, with architectural upgrades meant to feel as if they had always been there, while personalizing the space for a contemporary family with two young kids. With an eye toward the comforts of home and a sophistication that allowed for plenty of entertaining, the modernization began.

The wife’s and Dierkes’s shared reverence for historical rooms is evident throughout the house. Take the classic-yet-understated living room, which pays homage to the library of Bunny Mellon’s Oak Spring estate, its white seating accented by pops of Braquenie’s Le Grand Génois tree of life fabric. “She told me early on that she liked tattered, WASPy stuff, but nothing preppy,” says Dierkes, who understood the brief implicitly.

That feeling continues in the study. “My client and I both loved Madeleine Castaing’s Rayure Fleurie fabric even before we began working

ABOVE: A “counterpoint” to the lightness of the living room, the library is swathed in Benjamin Moore’s Mississippi Mud. Coffee tables, Lawson-Fenning; sconces, Galerie des Lampes with shades in Schumacher’s Masaccio Taffeta; Roman shades in Mellier Plaid by Schumacher. LEFT: The dining room shares space with the staircase as a walk-through (or with kids, a run-through) between the living room and the library. Dierkes re-covered the clients’ existing chairs in a Jane Shelton check. Picasso ceramic plate lithographs add dimension; on the adjacent wall are works by Bill Jensen (top) and Antoni Tàpies. OPPOSITE: Paper-backed Rayure Fleurie by Madeleine Castaing—a favorite fabric of both Dierkes and her client—extends the library’s treetop views. The glossy Pantón chair is a playful accompaniment to the 1930s desk. Window shades, Renato Linen Sheer by Schumacher.





“I love to use color, but I wouldn’t say it’s in a maximalist way—it’s always color as a device.”



The primary bedroom was inspired by yet another room that Dierkes and her client both loved: Hubert de Givenchy’s bedroom at Le Clos Florentina. The ivory linen bed canopy is lined in Schumacher’s punchy Giordano Taffeta; the vintage bench, reupholstered in a lime-green Jerry Pair leather with red Samuel & Sons trim, balances the statement. OPPOSITE: A seating area in the corner is comprised of a custom sofa in a Nîmay Samay print, De Troupe coffee table, and Louis Poulsen floor lamp. Wall sconce, Soane.



together,” says Dierkes, who had always wanted to cover a room in the iconic botanical stripe. The outcome? A spectacular third-floor sanctuary whose foliage-laden walls seem to blend into the treetops outside. “In the spring, it feels like you are up in the trees themselves,” says Dierkes—a rare and exquisite sensation in the middle of Manhattan.

What makes the project feel distinctly Dierkes is her ebullient California palette that somehow uplifts, balances, and grounds a room all at once. “I love to use color, but I wouldn’t say it’s in a maximalist way—it’s always color as a device,” she explains. A sunny yellow threads throughout the townhouse, from the Alex De Bruycker painting in the living room to the dash of

golden taffeta that lines the primary suite’s canopy bed to the egg-yolk “secret” pantry in the otherwise dazzlingly white Plain English kitchen—all part of an artful subplot that brings an essential lightheartedness to a bustling home. Dierkes’s attention to zippy detail has not gone unnoticed. “What the couple has told me the most since completing the project,” she says, “is that the townhouse just feels so much like their family.”

ABOVE: When the client expressed a desire for an all-white kitchen, Dierkes suggested painting the interiors of the pantry, china cabinet, and storage closet in Farrow & Ball’s India Yellow for a fun surprise. OPPOSITE: Dierkes worked with Plain English to design both the mudroom and kitchen; an interior window allows light to flood from the mudroom to the windowless entry. Flush mount light, Urban Electric Co.; floor tile, Solar Antique Tiles; cabinet paint, Stingray by Benjamin Moore.

