

# next

Forward-thinking Design from New England Home

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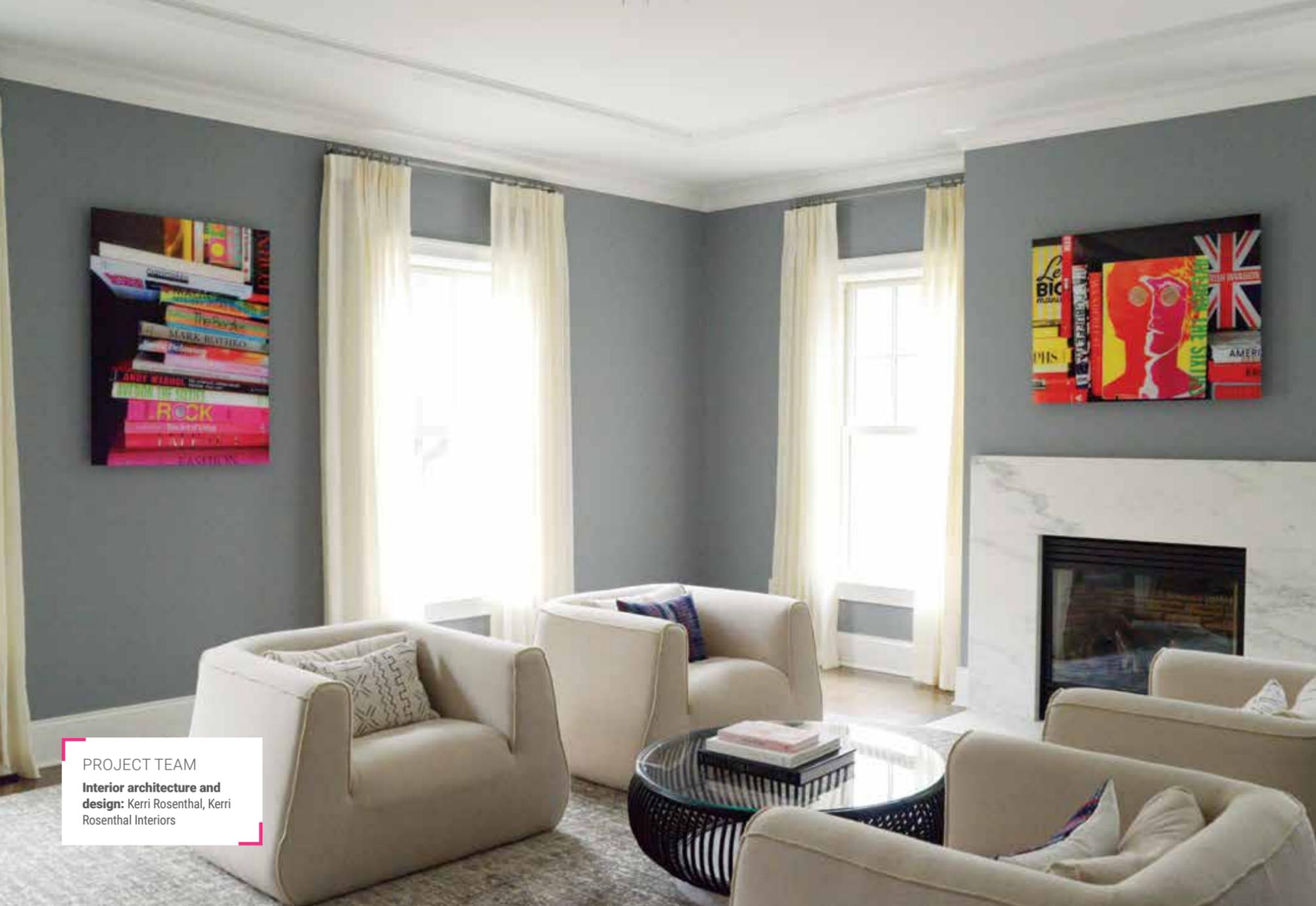
Kerri Rosenthal's own wallpapers make an appearance throughout the home; this pattern, Top Down in a cheerful pink, dresses up the bedroom of the homeowners' twin daughters.



# WORK IN PROGRESS

Artist and designer Kerri Rosenthal helps a young Connecticut couple build the home of their dreams, one room at a time.

*Text by ANNIE SHERMAN | Photos by NICOLE STEVENS*



PROJECT TEAM  
**Interior architecture and design:** Kerri Rosenthal, Kerri Rosenthal Interiors



LEFT: By day, the study serves as Michelle Pollack's office; come evening, the plush chairs and fireplace make it a cozy place for quiet conversation with husband Ari. ABOVE: Light bounces off the high-gloss paint on the entry's walls. BELOW: Artist/designer Kerri Rosenthal.



**T**he lone sofa Michelle and Ari Pollack brought along when they moved from their 700-square-foot Manhattan apartment looked lost in the 5,000 or so square feet of their Westport house.

Like many an independent-minded woman, Michelle decided to do her own decorating. She walked into Kerri Rosenthal Interiors in Westport, Connecticut, and selected wallpaper samples. "Then I stuck them up with painter's tape in the bathroom and couldn't make a decision," she laments. "Is this one too funky? Does it work in this small space? Would I get sick of it in a couple months?"

In desperation she emailed Rosenthal. "She was this amazing positive force," Michelle reports. "She said 'go with this one,' switched out two light fixtures, and transformed the bathroom into this cool little space."

As the couple lived in the house and determined how they would use each room, Michelle would call Rosenthal for the next design installment. They craved a light-filled home (this is the northeast, after all, where, as Rosenthal says, "It's



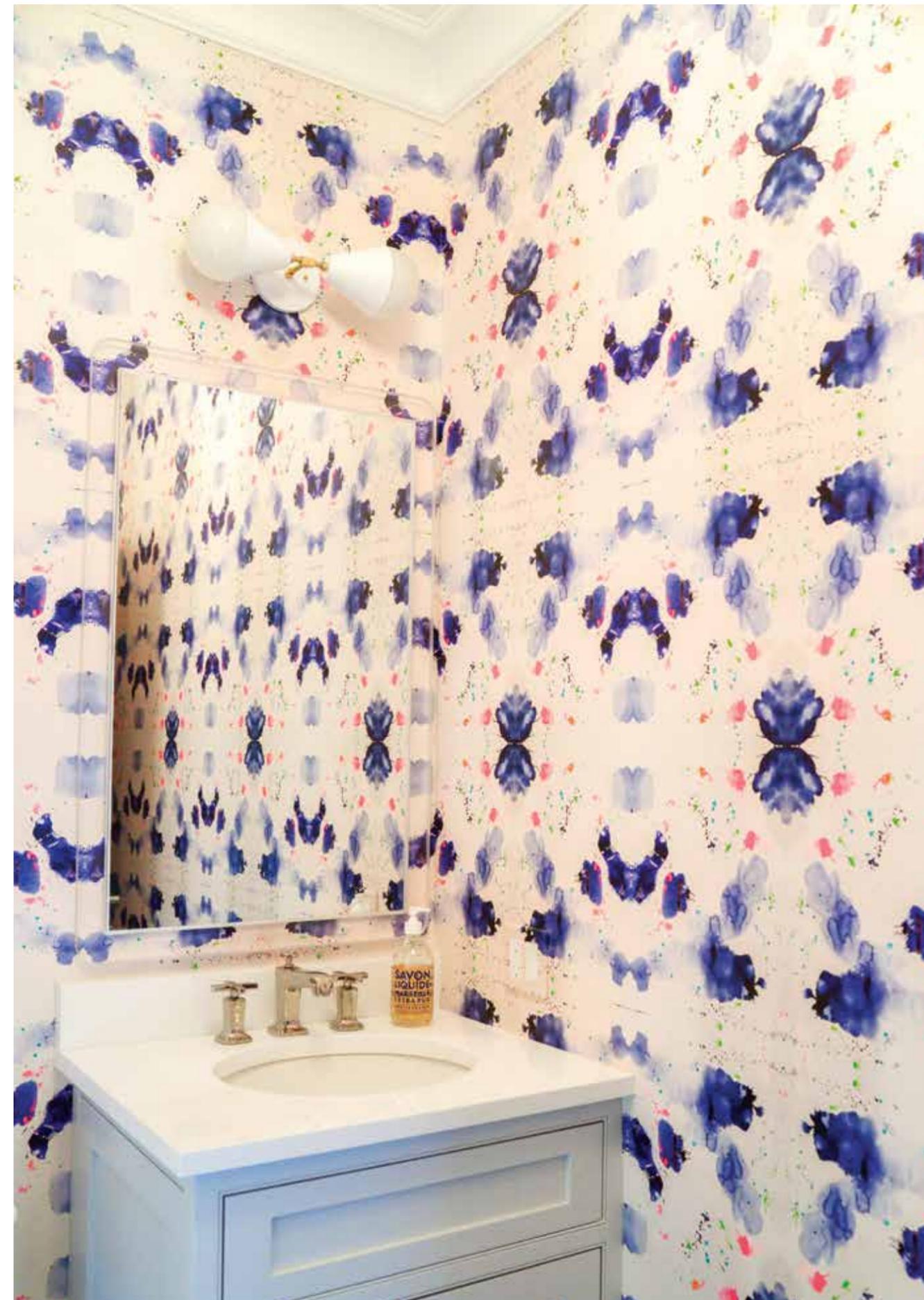
**L**ike all of Rosenthal’s wallcoverings and fabrics, the papers in the house are based on the designer’s own paintings.

cloudy nine months of the year. At least it feels that way.”) The designer obliged, painting most walls in a high-gloss white that reflects the light. The effect is breathtaking in spots, such as the two-story foyer where light bounces off every surface. An oversize Moooi globe pendant hangs above, looking as if the sun itself had floated indoors.

Rosenthal is an artist as well as a designer, and an all-white house runs

counter to her nature. Given Michelle’s initial wallpaper choices—and the ultimate decision to go with Splat KR, a carefree paper from Rosenthal’s own collection with an abstract pattern in blue shot through with pink—she knew her client was up for some fun. Stripe on Stripe, with its irregular black and white stripes, lines the pantry walls. The nursery, where Michelle and Ari’s twin toddler daughters sleep, is outfitted in a cheerful pink-and-

Rosenthal enlivened the living room’s neutral backdrop with deep blue upholstery and graphic pillows. **FACING PAGE:** The powder room’s Splat KR wallpaper from Rosenthal’s collection sparked the home’s design scheme.





**G**iven Michelle's choice of colorful wallpaper for the powder room, Rosenthal knew her client was up for some fun.

**ABOVE:** Color, as in a trio of paintings by Rosenthal, makes a bright foil for the kitchen's graphic black and white. **LEFT:** Another Rosenthal paper lines the pantry walls. **FACING PAGE, TOP:** Sliding glass doors give

the open dining room a more intimate feel and add a design element to the hallway. **FACING PAGE, BOTTOM:** A custom picture ledge wall in the breakfast area displays cookbooks, photos, and objets d'art.



white paper called Top Down. Like all of Rosenthal's wallcoverings and fabrics, the papers in the Pollack house are based on the designer's own abstract paintings.

For the most part, the floorplan worked well, but the placement of the dining room didn't feel right. "It was open to the hallway, almost like a movie set," Rosenthal says. She installed hefty hardware across the wide opening and hung a pair of glass-paneled doors that slide apart for a barn door effect, giving the room a sense of structure and lending design interest to the hall space.

Day to day, family meals are more likely to be enjoyed in the dining nook Rosenthal tucked into the kitchen. Outfitted with a cushioned wicker bench for the girls and a duo of woven café chairs for Mom and Dad, it makes a more intimate, cozy setting.

While the public spaces serve up a bright, energetic look and feel, Michelle's office adopts a more sophisticated tone, with walls the color of storm clouds, diaphanous draperies, and oversize linen lounge chairs that beckon the event planner to relax once her to-do list is complete. This is her favorite spot in the house, she says, and it's not just a work space for her. She and her husband often sit by the fireplace in the evening, sharing quiet conversation while the girls run in and out. "It has this calm feeling. I feel really good in there," she says. "And I love that it's a multipurpose space."

Next on the decorating agenda, now that the first floor is complete, is the second-floor master suite.

Oh, and about that lonely sofa that made the trek from Manhattan? It's now comfortably ensconced in a playroom, where the twins are given free rein to jump on it as much as they wish. **11**

**EDITOR'S NOTE** For more details about this home, see Resources.