Awash in Color

Designer Angie Hranowsky dials up the drama in her downtown single house

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I live at Folly, and my life has improved immensely since the (alcohol) ban. — See page 38
Decked Out Downtown

Designer Angie Hranowsky uses vibrant color and daring design tricks to blow the doors off a plain-Jane single house in Harleston Village.

Written by Ellen McGauley • Photographs by Julie Lynn
Angie Haranowsky isn’t really a beige kind of gal. Hot pink, sure, and plum works, too, but a house full of safe and surefire neutrals without a healthy dose of daring, a punch of the unexpected? That’s never been her thing. The trailblazing interior designer, known for her pre-Mad Men penchant for mid-mod style and brave (if unlikely) fabric and color pairings, was hailed as one of Southern Living’s “New Tastemakers” just last year, and her work has splashed shelter pubs ranging from Lonny to Metropolitan Home several times over.

The wife and Russian shooter, fabric by Osborne & Little, writes a vibrant tone against an indigo wool and jute rug from McCarth in Atlanta, a steel blue Mies van der Rohe chair, and a deep blue and black Berger. The trio of lighting pendants is 1950s vintage.
And yet, the “uniformly pale, beige” rooms in her new apartment—a two-bedroom single on Bull Street—were a big-time score.

Because rather than seeing bland, Angie saw a blank slate—one part cozy domicile for her and her two young children (Lucas, 11, and Sasha, seven), one part fiercely creative design lab. “This was that rare project that I get to do for myself, so every color—every idea—was on the table. I was ready to mix palettes, try new palettes, and be free to make mistakes,” she says.

Her biggest concern in this leap from somewhat suburban neighborhoods (first in Avondale, then Riverland Terrace) to downtown dwelling was installing a sense of permanence. “Apartments can feel chopped up and disconnected or worse, impersonal. This needed to feel like our house,” says Angie.

There were a half-dozen quirks here and there (i.e., walls had awkward alcoves thanks to fireplaces and odd piping, the galley kitchen was sectioned off by a partial divider, but it was a fairly straightforward challenge: two rooms apiece on the first floor and second, plus a scatter hall and two tiny bathrooms.

For Angie, solutions were everywhere—floor to ceiling, upstairs and down. Here’s how she switched this standard-issue single into a haven of high design and family-friendly comfort.

She Invested in Game Changers
For Angie, these were paint and light fixtures—mixing up these elements in each room (hallway, too) gave the house a starting point that was more her style.

Though swapping out basic light fixtures in a rental is always a fast face-lift, Angie chose chandeliers and pendants that were more than just upgrades. She shopped in statement pieces like a 1940s Venner Pancon chrome disc chandelier in the hall and a trio of vintage globe pendants in the living room.

“The vintage chandeliers add originality and interest juxtaposed against the classic architecture,” says the designer.

The light-reflecting gray paint in the living...
room and lively purple in the dining room, for example, were similarly precise and purposeful. “I invesed time in finding the right colors, mixing and testing until I had what really fit us,” says Angie. Plus, she painted the trim the same color as the walls. “Blending these architectural elements strengthens connectively within the house, reducing that ‘cheap’ feeling.”

**She Created Big Impact**

“In the living room, I found thisalachia cotton woveng fabric that I loved,” recalls Angie, and laughs: “I thought, ‘Why can’t Ihave a hot pink sofa?”

So a Milo Baughman sectional was recovered in the vibrant Giant fabric and played up—rather than down—with semi-transparent pink patterned Roman shades. Every room, in fact, window treatments dial up the drama by echoing the colors of either the wall paint or primary pieces of furniture. And in the dining room, a set of four simple Danish dining chairs was re-covered in a bold purple metallic woven a few shades darker than the walls.

She found other ways to go big, too. The four-foot vertical bulletin board behind the dining table has primo placement as a focal point. “It was meant for the kids’ artwork and projects, but when I filled it, it just looked messy,” says Angie. “Then I centered a couple of larger scale framed photos of the kids in the middle and hang artwork around those. This really streamlined it.”

**Sasha’s bed is outfitted with a graphic tapestry from Urban Outfitters; Angie had the bolster pillow made from the same fabric.**

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She Didn’t Forget Function

"When I was working on the living room, I had to remember that we don’t have another hangout room, like a den or a sitting room. This is it. It has to be comfortable, it has to be inviting enough for everyday," Angie says.

She replaced the structured, low-slung sofa from her old house with a cozy sectional and offset a round Bognor chair with a soft, century-old Bergere for stretching out.

This niche space with function was also the impetus for a clever set of bookshelves along the north wall of the room. "I sketched out a modular system of bookshelves for good-looking storage, but also to optimize a pair of recessed walls," says Angie, who tasked her sketch to woodworker Capers Cothran. "We found some reclaimed pine that was the right thickness, and he built the shelves to be modular, so I can add or subtract with me when I change." In the upstairs bedroom the children share, Angie envisioned streamlined L-shaped beds, leaving plenty of wall space for art and other design ideas. "But Louie was dead set on the idea of a tall loft bed: we went around and around until finally, it came to me, I thought, ‘Well, it’s her room, why not?’ So we went with the six-foot loft towering over Sacha’s bed, and meanwhile, the designer worked with a friend to fashion low bookshelves to fit under the windows. She hung a large-scale painting by R.H. McMinnish from the late ’50s over that, along with a sculptural arrangement of copper pots.

"I always want my spaces to feel warm and interesting and original," says Angie. "Here, I mixed old favorites with new ideas, and this house fits us. It started out as just what I needed, and ended up that way, too."