

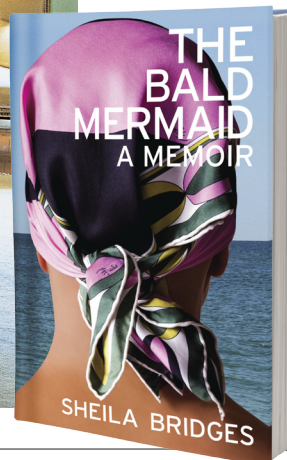
WHAT'S NEXT

The dining room of a Harlem apartment decorated by Sheila Bridges.
RIGHT: Bridges as a child.



TRUE BEAUTY

As one of America's top decorators, Sheila Bridges is adept at creating picture-perfect scenarios, from the handsome Harlem offices she designed for former President Bill Clinton to the elegant interiors she fashions for her well-to-do clientele. But as Bridges reveals in her new memoir, *The Bald Mermaid* (Pointed Leaf Press), the reality that lies under the pristine surface is often quite a bit messier. Design lovers will enjoy her blow-by-blow account of a day in the life of a decorator. But there is much more to Bridges's story. In this funny and honest book, she describes



how a beautiful young African-American from Philadelphia heads to New York, dates a bunch of charismatic frogs, becomes a celebrated interior designer and noted fashion plate, gets her own television show—and, oh yes, goes completely bald due to an autoimmune condition known as alopecia areata. That she embraces the last as stylishly as she does everything else is classic Bridges, as *The Bald Mermaid* makes amply clear. “It gave me a chance to redefine beauty on my own terms,” she writes. “For me, beauty became the courage to be myself.”

DREAM SEQUENCE

Over a career spanning three decades, the Cuban-born photographer Abelardo Morell has experimented with many of the same techniques that the earliest photographers used, to sometimes disorienting effect. Using makeshift versions of the age-old camera obscura, he projects instantly recognizable vistas, like the Golden Gate Bridge or Manhattan's Central Park, onto unremarkable surfaces, such as a patch of turf or the walls of a living room, creating dreamy, double-layered images that turn the familiar into the uncanny. “Abelardo Morell: The Universe Next Door,” a new exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago, features more than 100 works, including his haunting black-and-white pictures of everyday objects as seen from a child's point of view—wet footprints across a bathroom floor, an empty playhouse. *Laura and Brady in the Shadow of Our House* (1994), right, and other photos of his family reveal him to be a profound chronicler of the joys and anxieties of childhood. Morell encourages us to see the world through fresh eyes (June 1 through September 2; artic.edu).



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: WILLIAM WALDRON; SIDNEY R. BRIDGES; DANA MEILUSON;
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