

NYC & G

New York Cottages and Gardens

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GLAM PADS

DESIGNER TIMELINE:

Sheila Bridges

A brief history of a brilliant career

PRODUCED BY ALYSSA BIRD

AS SEEN IN
NYC&G
New York Cottages and Gardens

1982

Matriculates at Brown University. During her junior year, she studies in Rome and travels throughout Europe. "Another world opened up to me—one of art, architecture, design, fashion, and beauty. I found inspiration in travel, and I still do."



1988

Shifts gears and takes a position at the architecture firm Shelton Mindel & Associates (now SheltonMindel). Two years later, she de-camps for Renny B. Saltzman Interiors.

1993

Moves into the Harlem apartment where she still resides today. "I love the neighborhood's history, culture, and architecture," she says. "It's where I feel most at home."



1964

Sheila Bridges is born in Philadelphia, the younger of two children. "I loved drawing and helping my dad, whose hobby was photography, develop film in our darkroom," she says.



1986

Upon graduating with a degree in sociology, Bridges enrolls in a buyers' training program at Bloomingdale's. After working in the menswear department for a year, she continues in men's fashion at Giorgio Armani.



1970s

While growing up, she makes frequent visits to a Virginia farm owned by her mother's family. "It encouraged my love of nature and animals," says Bridges, who purchased her own 13-acre farm along the Hudson River in Germantown in 1999. "I always thought I'd become a veterinarian."

1992

Completes a part-time interior design program at Parsons School of Design. During this period, she also studies decorative arts in Florence.

1994

Launches Sheila Bridges Design. "I landed a big freelance client—the founder of Uptown Records, Andre Harrell—which allowed me to go out on my own," she recounts. "That was my big break." During the rest of the '90s, she goes on to decorate homes in Los Angeles, Boston, Washington, D.C., Denver, Martha's Vineyard, and London, among other locales.

2001

Is tapped to decorate former president Bill Clinton's Harlem office. Later that year, *Time* names her "America's Best Interior Designer."



2002

Hosts the television show *Sheila Bridges: Designer Living*, which airs on the Fine Living Network for four seasons. She also releases her first book, *Furnishing Forward: A Practical Guide to Furnishing for a Lifetime* (Bulfinch Press).

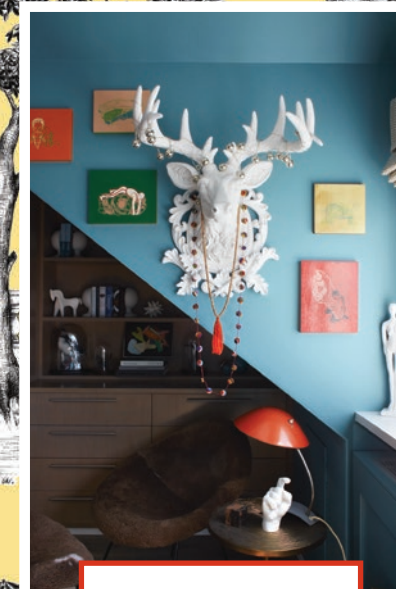


2007

A year after debuting her first wallpaper—Harlem Toile de Jouy, for Studio Printworks—Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum installs the pattern in its permanent collection. Her designs can also be found at the Brooklyn Museum and Washington, D.C.'s National Museum of African American History & Culture. "It's a real honor to have my work in museums," says Bridges, whose other creative endeavors include tableware, bedding, clothing, and furniture.

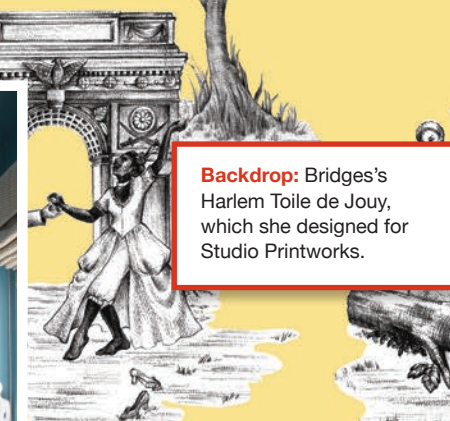
2015

Purchases an apartment in Reykjavik, Iceland. "It's my special place, where I go to unplug and unwind. I'm an urban farm girl, and the culture there is all about the outdoors."



2018

Joins the advisory board of the newly formed Black Artists + Designers Guild, an online directory of black creatives. "This industry hasn't always embraced me," Bridges reflects, "and I've had to bang my head against the wall in significant ways to make things happen. But it's important that I'm visible to young people of color who may not know that this is a viable career path."



2019

"Looking ahead, I'd love to tackle the world of design even more. In order to have clarity and keep moving forward, you have to love what you're doing and really believe in it."



2016

Sells her farm (including her chickens, donkeys, sheep, and goats) and begins working on a new, smaller house near Hudson. "The goal was to downsize," she says. "Now I have only one horse, and I can't even ride him because he's 40 years old!"

2013

Publishes her second book, *The Bald Mermaid: A Memoir* (Pointed Leaf Press), which touches on her 2005 alopecia diagnosis, among other personal experiences. "It was an outlet to express what was going on at the time. I wanted to tell my story."

