



# Sheila Bridges' Scenic View

Interior designer Sheila Bridges' iconic Harlem Toile is now represented and distributed by S. Harris, a division of Fabricut. "I think it's a great fit and an opportunity to finally bring my toile to a bigger audience," says Bridges. "Jodi got it—she understood the Harlem Toile brand, the history and what I was trying to create."

Jodi Finer is the creative director at S. Harris. She first discovered Bridges and her work in the pages of *Elle Décor* and was intrigued and wanted to get to know the designer. She finally approached Bridges a year ago. "Sheila represents bravery, strength, and is a pioneer in design," says Finer. "I was compelled to ask her if she would give us the opportunity to represent and distribute Harlem Toile." Presently, there are 10 colorways for the wallpaper and three linen fabrics.

The wallpaper was created in 2006 when Bridges was looking for the perfect toile for her own home. When she couldn't find it, she designed it. She had a clear vision about the look and hand of the toile as well as the imagery she wanted depicted, she

hired an illustrator to execute her concept. Featuring scenery that satirizes stereotypes woven into the African American experience, Bridges says, "Wallpaper has become a medium for me as an artist to express my personal and political views in ways that I can't when I am designing for clients."

Museums took note of Bridges' interpretation of this classic motif, and several institutions including the Cooper Hewitt and the Museum of African American Culture, have put Harlem Toile in their permanent collections. "It's such an incredible honor," says Bridges, "to know that my work will continue to live on in a museum's permanent collection for future generations to see."

Ensuring that her brand be accessible beyond the trade, Bridges applied her signature pattern to a curated collection of housewares and fashion. All products are considered limited editions so as soon as they sell out, they are gone. The Harlem Toile Converse, a new collaboration with Union Los Angeles, is certain to be a runaway hit. —J.D.



From top left: Harlem Toile Chucks are a new collaboration with Union Los Angeles; Harlem Toile installed in Bridges' upstate New York kitchen; the designer and author modeling an umbrella that quickly sold out after appearing in *O, The Oprah Magazine*; while there is Harlem Toile dinnerware, bedding, clothing and more, ultimately the wallpaper has been the best seller of all. **Photos:** Converse, man in shirt: Union Los Angeles; kitchen toile: Laura Resen; Bridges: Atoosa Mazaheri