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SHEILA BRIDGES JUST UNVEILED THE PRETTIEST NEW COLLECTION WITH WEDGWOOD

The designer put the tea in toile.

By [CAMILLE OKHIO](#) FEB 28, 2022



Courtesy Wedgwood

By now every design devotee must be familiar with [Sheila Bridges's Harlem Toile](#). It's the pattern she created 17 years ago, taking a decorative cue from 18th-century French toile de Jouy and replacing the pattern's key characters with Black faces more like her own. Instead of toiling in fields or tending sheep, these new protagonists are at leisure—playing basketball (with historically accurate woven baskets!), jumping rope, or dancing a jig. The stories are Bridges's answer to African American stereotypes, transforming the ridiculousness of assumption into lighthearted fun.

From wallpaper to [sneakers](#) to [speakers](#), [the pattern](#) has covered categories like a moss, yet Bridges continues to find new blank slates for her decorative fancy, this time with a history of its own. On March 3, she will release a collection of fine china, a collaboration between herself and English heritage brand [Wedgwood](#), exclusively available (until July) through Bloomingdale's. "What I love about this is the story continues," says the [ELLE DECOR A-List](#) designer, "there's another chapter to my Harlem Toile, and so much of it is up for interpretation."



Courtesy Wedgwood

The scenes from Bridges's toile have been extracted and placed off-center on teacups, saucers, teapots, and bowls, with details stretching to the insides of cups and undersides of vessels, bringing a story to your morning cuppa. And, of course, the designer made sure to inject the collection with her customary dose of vibrant color, with pieces doused in blood orange, teal, lilac, and banana yellow—a refreshing update on Wedgwood's classic pastel hues.



Courtesy Wedgwood

Aside from the reference-packed imagery, there are also personal notes that run through the assemblage. “My mother used to collect jasperware when I was growing up, and then as an adult I started collecting it,” says Bridges. “She gave me a Wedgwood slave medallion for my birthday [one of which Benjamin Franklin also owned], which sparked research into Josiah Wedgwood’s involvement in Britain’s anti-slavery movement.” Not only did Wedgwood work alongside abolitionists, he also partnered with other makers in England’s 18th-century decorative arts market, proving that collaborations were just as important to the brand 260 years ago as they are today. This collab marks Wedgwood’s first with a Black designer.

