

Phillip Jeffries' **Shangri-La** is inspired by exotic garden motifs found on traditional Japanese screens; phillipjeffries.com.

TO A 21ST-CENTURY jet-setter who continent-hops like a skipping stone and has encyclopedic access at his fingertips, the notion of experiencing an exotic place is practically pedestrian. Yet the age-old desire to completely immerse oneself in a fanciful, faraway land without leaving home is flourishing. Case in point: a spate of new scenic wallpapers rolling out this spring that feature mythical flora and fauna with paradise-found allure.

These wallcoverings, with design references that range from verdant tree of life forms to exotic kimono motifs, are the latest iteration of a centuries-old Western tradition of fetishizing the foreign with scenic papers depicting distant destinations. During the early 18th century, when a fascination with far-flung locales like China and India swept through western Europe, the East India Company imported Chinese hand-painted silk papers that the English used as wallcoverings. Then, with the popularity of turn-of-the-19th-century "panorama" exhibits, in which a visitor experienced a 360-degree view of an oil landscape painting hung inside a circular building, French wallpaper companies began to produce block-printed

Change of Scenery

Wildly imaginative, vividly colorful, and meticulously detailed, today's versatile, digitally printed scenic wallpapers are just as sublime as their panoramic predecessors.



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scenes without repeats that simulated a panoramic effect.

The largest of these, *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique*, printed in 1804 by French manufacturer Joseph Dufour, featured fanciful imagery based on the accounts of 18th-century European explorers of the New World. “These

panoramic papers transformed interior spaces by bringing imaginary landscapes, along with the illusion of greater space and light, into homes,” says Carolle Thibaut-Pomerantz, an art historian and antique-wallpaper collector. “They had the effect of ushering in a breath of fresh air.” Although wealthy Americans

imported French panoramic papers through the end of the 19th century, Thibaut-Pomerantz notes their heyday occurred between 1804 and the 1840s, which overlapped the zenith of Europe’s Industrial Revolution.

As with their forerunners, today’s scenic wallcoverings are a true product

of their time, both thematically and technologically. Made from drawings and paintings that are digitally printed on a range of materials, these images are produced in panels that repeat after several widths, allowing for a custom, hand-painted look with far more design versatility. ♦

❶ Braquenié’s *Le Paradis aux Mille Fleurs*, printed on grass cloth, depicts a tree of life pattern extracted from a plate created in the 18th century; pierrefrey.com. ❷ *Secret Garden* by Richard Smith for No.9 Thompson features a trompe l’oeuil balustrade overlooking a secret garden; no9thompson.com. ❸ Jennifer Shorto’s *In the Woods* draws inspiration from the scene depicted in the Stag Room at the Palais des Papes in Avignon, France; jennifershorto.com. ❹ Kit Kemp’s *Mythical Land* appears in the Whitby Hotel and is inspired by American folk art; kravet.com. ❺ Élitis’ *Les Pays Lointains* is based on hand-drawn reproductions of Japanese kimono motifs; elitis.fr. All papers to the trade. Elegant Earth **Madison Bench**, \$544; elegantearththathearbor.com.

In Good Taste

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HOT SEAT

WORLDLY WISE

From her shapely Victorian-inspired chaise in her London flat, textile designer **Jennifer Shorto** talks heavenly blues, antique textiles, and how looking at art fuels her creativity.

THE SOFA

"I do all of my favorite things—drink coffee, read, talk on the phone, dream—right here." Upholstery, Leo; jennifershorto.com.

HAIR AND MAKEUP STYLING BY CELINE NONON.

JENNIFER SHORTO INSISTS she's not a natural traveler. It's an unexpected disclosure from the textile designer who has lived in six countries and whose catalogue of wallpapers and fabrics reads like a pattern-book compendium to *Gulliver's Travels*. But, as she explains from the homey comforts of her richly layered London flat, it's her infinite curiosity about other places, people, and centuries—not a penchant for adventure, per se—that fuels her globe-trotting. “I’m a passionate dreamer. I’m drawn away by interesting people in faraway lands.” Here are 10 other secrets Shorto shared during our parlor chat.

The first time I visited a house decorated with antique textiles, it felt like I was visiting a treasure trove. The patterns were so inventive and the colors were so masterly. They gave me a rush. I currently have some fabrics that really should be in museums, such as a Chinese embroidery depicting all the trade boats of the 18th century.

I love the peace of quiet morning moments before everyone else wakes up. I’m very excited about coffee these days. I buy delicious Hasbean beans, which I grind in a beautiful machine designed by my friend Michael Anastassiades.

I am not fully dressed without my necklace, which was made by my very talented brother-in-law Carlos Souza. It resembles a Byzantine medallion. It’s like a talisman to me, and I feel better with it on.

If I’d had a mentor, it would have been Geoffrey Bennison. I admire how he dressed up a room with such mastery while keeping it relaxed. His knowledge of history is a delight. I’ve always been so interested in the way he mixed patterns and his understanding of color.

Blue always seems to appear in my collections, and it’s not a choice. I aim for a sense of harmony because the home is a retreat from the outside world. I guess blue would be heaven.

I’m an introvert who sees herself as an extrovert, or maybe it’s the other way around. I love hosting small dinners. To me, having friends over for dinner is a moment of love, and creating a beautiful table is the first step. I like to use silver goblets for Champagne.

If I weren’t a textile designer, I would be an art collector. Art is a refuge for me, like a secret world where truths and visions come to life. I have a lot of art at home, like the 13 Raymond Pettibon watercolors I inherited from my first husband, who passed away. I spend a lot of time in museums or churches looking at old and new works. It unlocks certain ideas and keeps me inspired.

I love Baroque music. My favorite composer is Bach for his clarity and spirituality. I find

the act of creation so visible in his music, which seems to unfold with these bursts of colors.

I started making shawls with my Kashmiri friends as a sort of investigation into weaving. I wear them all year long, and they’re great for traveling. I still sell some of them through Neue Galerie in New York.

One thing I could never live without is fresh flowers. I love to plant bulbs, like hyacinth for their sweet scent, in Chinese vases.



1. Antique textile from Shorto's collection. 2. Michael Anastassiades and Carl Auböck for Sigmar **Coffee Grinder**, \$2,200; sigmarlondon.com. 3. Saint Laurent **Medallion Pendant Necklace with Stones**, \$495; bergdorfgoodman.com. 4. Interior from **Geoffrey Bennison: Master Decorator** by Gillian Newberry; \$60; rizzolibookstore.com. 5. Jennifer Shorto **Shea Tree fabric**, to the trade; jamesshowroom.com. 6. **Mini Sussex Silver-Plated Goblet**, \$85; corbellsilver.com. 7. Raymond Pettibon's **No Title (Deeper, Above All...)**; raypettibon.com. 8. Johann Sebastian Bach **Brandenburg Concertos**, vintage; amazon.com for recordings. 9. Jennifer Shorto **Bregenz Shawl**, \$545; neuegalerie.org. 10. **Bird Vase**, \$102; onekingslane.com.

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