



Paper view

Jocelyn Warner is the queen of British wallpaper designers, and now she's making a splash on walls around the world. Liz Hoggard visits her at home in London. Photographs by Andrew Hayes-Watkins



Jocelyn Warner knows a thing or two about wallpaper. Her hand screen-printed designs (luminescent leaf patterns, swoony botanical prints) have featured in interiors programmes such as *Changing Rooms* and *Property Ladder*, as well as the Hollywood film *Hitch*, starring Will Smith. Her "Kew" wallpaper was awarded Best Wallcovering of the Year by *Elle Decoration*, and three of the papers have been acquired by New York's Cooper-Hewitt Design Museum for their wallpaper collection. No surprise then, that Warner's Grade II-listed home in Chalk Farm is the perfect showcase for her designs. Her husband Simon and six-year-old son Gilbert are used to walls being re-papered overnight for shoots.

But the four-storey town house is also very much a family home. A cat lolls in the armchair, Gilbert's toys are scattered in the kitchen, and there is washing drying in the dining room/conservatory. Warner works too hard to be a neat freak.

She believes passionately in the power of wallpaper to transform a tricky or unprepossessing room. Or simply to introduce bold colour. Her basement kitchen, with its Conran wooden table and bench, is enlivened by her new optical print "Kaleido" in pink, which offsets the utilitarian stainless-steel kitchen and sleek white cupboards that line the room. There are eccentric touches though: carved wooden figures bought in Macau, a painting given to her parents as a wedding present, and a giant papier-mâché fish that swims across the pile of logs in the fireplace. "We've never actually had time to light the fire," Warner confesses.

Warner grew up in a 1960s house designed by her architect father, filled with fabrics and furniture by John Piper and Lucienne and Robin Day. She took a degree in textiles at Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts and later an MA at Central Saint Martins, where she developed a hand-printed scarf collection that was later sold through Paul Smith, Joseph and Bergdorf Goodman.

Eventually she moved over to designing hand-screen-printed wallpapers. Her first collection in 2000, *Larger Than Life*, was created by scanning plants and objects at life →

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From left, previous page: Warner in the kitchen with 'Kaleido' paper; wallpapering 'Kew' paper in the living room; the main bedroom, papered in 'Oval Shimmer', with a Marcel Breuer chaise

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size, then manipulating them on the computer to simplify their form and blowing them up on a grand scale to create stunning repeat patterns.

Warner's papers have an Arts & Crafts feel, combining traditional hand-printing techniques with the latest developments in printing gloss and iridescent inks. "Kaleido" is inspired by the fleeting images you see looking into a kaleidoscope, combined into an organic embroidery structure that floats along the wall like fine-cut crystals. The edges are also blurred slightly, making the paper look 3D.

Warner's hand designs work beautifully with the new interiors trend for maximalism. But if you are of a nervous disposition, you don't have to paper the whole room. You can simply use an abstract print such as *Step* – concentric-ed strips of colour – on the chimney breast or the alcoves. Warner has pioneered the idea of "one wall" decorating and banner hanging styles, whereby a single section of paper is hung on a wall. Some fans even frame her papers like art prints.

The family moved into the house in 2000. It has an illustrious pedigree. The renowned psychoanalyst and art therapist Markon Miller lived here until her death, and there is a genuine air of serenity. But Miller hadn't renovated in 70 years, so it took Warner 18 months to make it a family home. A modern extension has been added, to create more light, and she and Simon remodelled the "long garden, building three crescent-shaped plaster walls filled with flowers and plants.



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From left: 'Oval Shimmer' wallpaper in the bedroom and 'Kew' in the living room

But Warner found the fastest way to create atmosphere was wallpaper. The second floor of the house is one long sitting room, divided by an arch. Warner has used her bold, calligraphic "Kew" paper in brown and blue in the lighter front room. Corner bookshelves from Habitat, filled with art books on Giacometti and Caravaggio, add to the clabbable feel. There are theatre posters by David Hockney and even a vintage box of a children's game, Jackstraws, that Jocelyn picked up in a junk shop.

In the darker back room, Warner has used "Kaleido" screen-printed in white with iridescent inks. It's amazing how different a wallpaper can look in a different colourway. "It's more subtle, you can hang paintings and pictures on it, but you've still got the tonal difference going on." When sun floods in through the window, it produces a translucent sparkle across the paper.

This is the spot most stylists choose for a shoot. Warner has decorated the fireplace with three ceramic vessels from Clockwork Studios in Camberwell ("it's like a little trinity") and a huge plaster disc made by her architect friend Jonathan Adams, who worked on Cardiff's new Millennium Centre. "He literally cast it in the sand when he was on a French beach," says Warner admiringly.

In the couple's bedroom, she has chosen her iridescent "Oval Shimmer" paper ("it's both masculine and feminine"). A few beautifully chosen pieces – Isokon's Marcel Breuer chaise, a leather artwork case from Liberty – keep the room uncluttered. While the guest room is decorated with a very early Warner paper, Lily, in soft lime green. "It works beautifully with the magnolia tree outside the window which comes into blossom in April."

Many of Warner's designs have a fluid, painterly feel (you hardly notice the repeats), and she is clearly influenced by the British art scene. In the sitting room she has a glass painting by Gary Hume, and a Gillian Wearing print. Throughout the interior she alternates lampshades from her own collection with moulded plastic Le Klint ceiling lights from SCP.

Just before I leave, Warner pounces on an ornament left over from last week's shoot and studies it critically. "I sometimes think, 'Would I actually want to live with that?'" she laughs. "Styling is quite different from what you'd actually choose in real life." And of course her peers get to judge her taste when the photographs are printed in style magazines. "Yes, you can just imagine them going. 'Does she really have pot pourri?'" "Kaleido" is being launched at 2000's Design, Earth Court, London SW16, on 24 September (www.zooprecendesign.co.uk). To view the full Jocelyn Warner Collection, which includes both wallpapers and lampshades, visit www.jocelynwarner.com

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