

By Cathy Whitlock



# Design *via* Fashion

A CONNECTICUT DESIGNER'S LOVE OF TEXTILES.



Hollingsworth used layers of warmth and texture and organic materials for a master bedroom in the West Village.





Linherr Hollingsworth

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rom Armani and Trina Turk to Gaultier and Diane Von Furstenberg, the fashion industry has made its mark in the world of interior design. The creative and design processes are quite similar, making the move from runway to interior a natural progression for many a designer.

Case in point is fashion-turned-interior designer Linherr Hollingsworth. “I think we are all born into the world with a predisposed talent. Typically we go where our passion is and are drawn toward what we love in life.”

For the Connecticut-based designer, her first passion was fashion. Growing up as a child on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, exposure at an early age came from her parents, a mother who was a model for *Look* magazine and a father who was an executive in the textiles industry. Hollingsworth’s first foray into the field was for the legendary chairman Mickey Drexler (known as the man “who dressed America”) at Ann Taylor. “New York City was on fire then, and the fashion industry was booming,” she notes.

**“It was an era when retail was really retail, out-of-the box thinking and pushing the limits. Drexler’s mind-set was inspiring.... It was push, push, push, and if you can dream it, it can happen.”**

Opposite page:

Top: Since the ceiling slab presented a unique challenge, recessed lighting gave way to a pair of unique torchère wall sconces. Retouche fabric from her eponymous collection was used on the sectional pillows.

Bottom: The designer created a “tonal, sublime and calm” bedroom for the daughter of a client. A pair of mirrors and bedside tables from Holly Hunt flank architectural framework behind the bed.

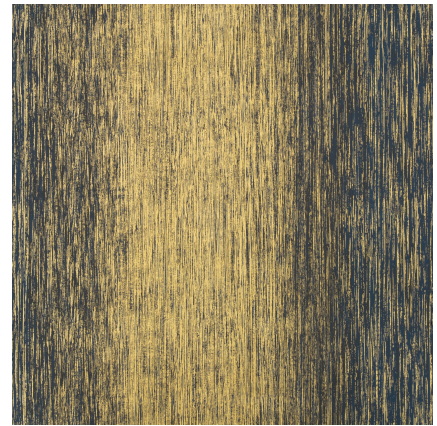
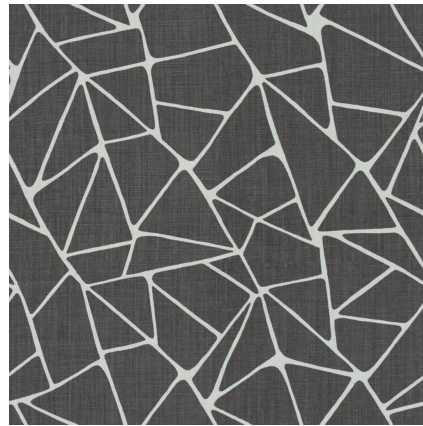
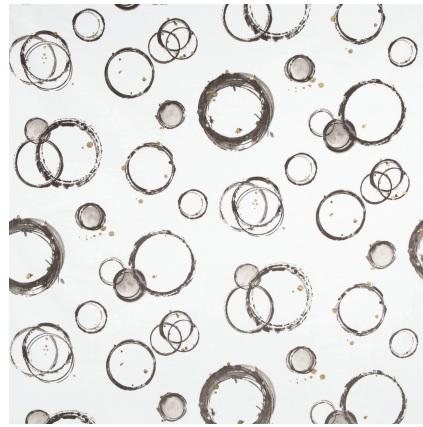
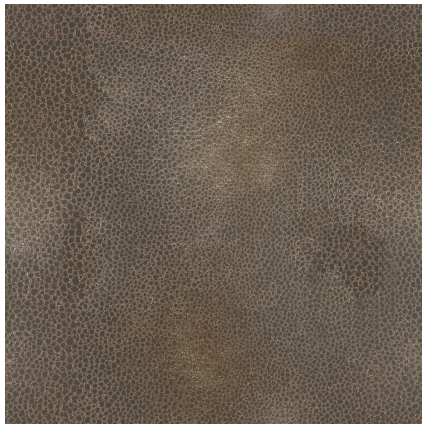
Positions with Elie Tahari in menswear and activewear at Adrienne Vittadini soon followed and proved to be vital experiences for the next chapter in her life. A third child and a subsequent leave of absence coupled with the renovation of the family house in Darien, Connecticut, resulted in a new career in interior design. “I fell in love with architecture while working on our house. I worked with metals and molding and became quite passionate about it,” she explains about the career-changing experience. “It was on-the-job training, and design came about organically. I never looked back.”

Fashion provided business experience and product knowledge, as Hollingsworth explains, “Menswear is all about merchandising, and Seventh Avenue is all about fashion, line, and drape.” Today she looks to clothing for inspiration, citing the runway shows in Paris and Milan and fashion photography as major influences for her interior designs.

Hollingsworth’s small boutique practice in Norwalk is known for her custom interiors and clean, refined, and comfortable spaces. “My signature is handsome and organic infused with subtle and sophisticated. Everyone wants to feel wonderful in their spaces and people always tell me, ‘I love what you do, it’s a casual luxury.’” Her balance between strength and tension versus softness and refinement are characteristics reflected in her residential work, as is her penchant for mixing the old and the new.

**“I love pure modern lines and see the use of a subliminal focus on antiques with a fresh new perspective. Great design is the ability to infuse a room and create a space with a really great collection that gives it soul and depth.”**





Fabric

Wall Covering

#### Opposite page:

Top: To the Point wallpaper and Cubist carpet in Mink is a complementary backdrop to Bijoux fabric in Indigo on the Karl Sofa. All fabrics, trims, and furnishings from the Linherr Hollingsworth collection.

Bottom left: Zebrato wallpaper and Lou Lou Slipper chair in Modica in coal colorways from her line.

Bottom: right: Hollingsworth's love of metallic is reflected in the Mosaïque trim in Sand.

#### This page:

Fabrics and wallcoverings from the designer's collection are available at Kravet.

Hollingsworth's interior work led to product design as well. Upon discovering a lack of product in the market, particularly with patterned grass cloths, she started a file of patterns for inspiration that eventually grew into a line of wall coverings for Kravet. "Creating patterns that are both masculine and feminine, the line goes back to organic, soft, subtle, and sexy. I looked to St. Tropez and Italy for my 'Bohème' line that is carefree, timeless, easy, and unbound by any convention."

The designer and her team of artisans receive requests for a lot of custom wall finishes, a collaborative process that she enjoys. "Our clients want a high level of design and something well-suited for them. My first call is to the people I know and work with—it's all about the collaborative process and my love of metal in particular. It's a focus on the right amount of tension and where to place it, where to hit the high notes, where to place the light, and when to pull it back."

Her line at Kravet includes fabrics (velvets, leathers, and soft linen prints), trims (tapes and small cords), and carpet. Her love of burnished metals is translated into metallic accents. An organic color palette, abstract patterns, and free-flowing forms are also hallmarks of the collection. In all her work, there is the ever-present play of masculine and feminine.

While Hollingsworth's practice is primarily residential and product design, branching out is clearly on her mind. "I would love to do some commercial work and perhaps a fashion showroom, restaurant, or yacht, as we are good with small spaces. I would love to do a Gulfstream in the future!"