

## Designer Fawn Galli brings wit and whimsy to Brooklyn pad

By David Caplan

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Ten years ago, then-pregnant interior designer Fawn Galli decided to bid adieu to her out-all-night Manhattan lifestyle — as well as her West Village rental — and move with her husband, Spanish architect Julio Salcedo, to Brooklyn's tranquil, family-friendly Carroll Gardens.

"Even though I was like, I will never move to Brooklyn — because I was a downtown-working, party-girl kind of person — sure enough, now I love it," says Galli, 45.

Galli and Salcedo ended up buying a turn-of-the-20th-century brownstone on Union Street, off Smith Street, and occupying the 2,500-square-foot, three-bedroom, two-bathroom duplex on the parlor and garden floors. They rent out the two top floors.

The main floor includes the living room, dining room and kitchen, while the lower floor houses the master and kids' bedroom — for sons Gaspar, 9, and Laszlo, 6 — as well as a space for the au pair.

"When we moved in, it was painted dark red, so it was dark and dire," says Galli, who worked for architects Robert A.M. Stern and Peter Marino before establishing Fawn Galli Interiors in 2007. "My main objective was not at all about renovations, but minimal work to bring light in, paint it and change the configuration of the garden level."

Galli decorated it in her own unique style that she describes as "a mix of vintage and contemporary with pops of color. I always like to create, if I can, a dreamy, atmospheric, fantasy wildlife interior. I love nature, but in a fantasy, C.S. Lewis sort of dreamy way."

Indeed, the living room, which faces Union Street, is part Garden of Eden, part Studio 54. The walls, covered in metallic silver wallpaper by Brooklyn's Flavor Paper, are a nod to Galli's past. "I spent a lot of time in discos when I was younger," she says, laughing.





"I also like light spaces, so it was a way for me to bring some light into a dead space. It was a functional, aesthetic choice." On one wall hang two large pieces of framed Lichtenstein wallpaper, which Galli snagged after a client's art installation ended: "I like the Sixties," she explains.

A white leather Natuzzi sofa adorned with an eclectic mix of custom-made metallic, fur and Edelman Leather pillows is "a mix of bohemian, disco and color," says Galli, adding, "and one would be afraid of white leather, but it's very durable."

The sofa is flanked by a pair of custom-made lamps that Galli found at "one of those little stores on Ludlow Street" and had their shades covered with wallpaper. A cuckoo clock from Moss in SoHo — which she describes as "surrealist ... just a touch of that was what I was looking for" — hangs between a pair of windows covered by hand-woven green silk drapes.

"The drapes are my favorite thing in the whole entire world," she says. "They are from Laos and were fabricated by [designer] Carol Cassidy, who worked as a textile expert with the United Nations Development Programme."

A large black fiberglass statue of a deer Galli picked up at the Chelsea Flower Market stands next to the living room's non-working fireplace; on the marble mantel, a gold metallic bunny statue by fashion designer Paul Smith faces a pink ceramic bunny.

A vintage birdcage Galli snagged at the annual Brimfield Antique Show in Massachusetts sits on a marble-topped console with glass doors her husband designed. On the other side of the deer is a mushroom-shaped ceramic lamp she bought on eBay. "It's just another part of the magic mushroom fantasyland of my living room," she says.

The living room opens up into the dining room, which has a simpler, more straightforward modern aesthetic. It includes a marble dining table from White on White surrounded by white vintage leather chairs from Sag Harbor's Ruby Beet Antiques and overhead, Design With Reach's acrylic Kristall Chandelier.

On either side of a second non-working fireplace are custom-made, floor-to-ceiling walnut bookshelves, filled with tomes largely dedicated to design, architecture and travel. And the nature theme continues, with wooden owl and bird figurines dotting the shelves.

"This is the hub," Galli says of the dining room. "We actually do sit here and read books, and the kids do homework here. This is my favorite room because of that."





A pass-thru connects the dining room with the kitchen, which was updated three years ago with white Ikea cabinetry, stainless-steel appliances and marble counters but maintains its original terracotta tile floor. The kitchen opens out onto a terrace with a barbecue.

The quirkiness continues downstairs — or rather, on your way downstairs. The wooden handrails are painted pink. “I love pink,” Galli says. “It makes me so happy.”



Off the lower-level hallway, which includes floral-inspired stenciling on the ceiling Galli did herself, is the master bedroom, which, when the couple first moved in “was particularly dark, so we added doors to the garden,” she says.

The now-bright room’s curtains and wallpaper, from Scotland’s Timorous Beasties, are a gorgeous jumbo print of birds, iguanas, and other flora and fauna, in hues of brown and green. “I wanted a savage art feel,” Galli says.

Thematically, the print meshes well with the ceramic parrot lamps from Roost on the bedside tables, and matches nicely with the king-size bed’s custom-made burnt orange mohair headboard.



Next door, the couple’s sons sleep in bunk beds in a shared bedroom, with one exposed brick wall painted a muted pastel green.

Again, a nature theme is present: Bed linens feature a print of trees, owls, elephants and other animals, as do the curtains.

In a nod to Galli’s extensive travels, a colorful piece of framed Mexican embroidered tapestry she picked up at a flea market near Tulum hangs on the wall.

“I love textiles from everywhere in the world,” she says.

“I like to use them in children’s rooms to show them the world, but not in a straightforward kiddie way. It’s more abstract.”

Being abstract definitely describes part of Galli’s design aesthetic, and even parts of her life.





But now that she and her family have a decade behind them in Carroll Gardens, is she itching for a change of scenery?

"I'm not thinking about moving," she says. "Carroll Gardens is very conducive when you have a family. Working so hard in New York, to have that threshold of a front garden makes a difference."

But there is something on her wish list. She says, sighing, "But I would like to make the fireplaces work!"

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## GALLI'S 5 FAVE BROOKLYN DESIGN SOURCES

### • **Holler and Squall**

119 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn Heights



Galli loves "the eclectic range of Old World library British furnishings" at this Atlantic Avenue shop, just a few blocks from Brooklyn Bridge Park. Husband-and-wife owners Gillette and Zak Wing have a great eye for antiques that cover all styles and price points — from a Thonet bentwood armchair (\$1,050) to a 1940s deco-style coat tree (\$550) to a hand-blown blue glass vase (\$14).



• **Open Air Modern**

489 Lorimer St., Williamsburg



Set in a former garage — the driveway is now a garden — this furniture showroom “is a wonderful source for mid-century treasures,” says Galli. Its founder, Matt Singer, stocks vintage Scandinavian and American pieces — including chairs from Eames and Hans Wegner — as well as design, photography and fashion coffee-table books.

• **Flavor Paper**

216 Pacific St., Boerum Hill



“One of my favorite neighborhood spots, they have a wide range of wild wallpapers,” says Galli. The firm — which has created wall art for the likes of Lenny Kravitz, Neil Patrick Harris and the SLS and W Hotels — hand-screens and digitally prints the designs right in their storefront: “It’s interesting to see the process,” Galli says.



- **Noble Goods**



Crafted by the Brooklyn-based duo of Christopher Moore and Molly FitzSimons, this line of handcrafted, eco-friendly wood and resin products is championed by Galli for its sustainability, functionality and beauty: “I love their use of color and resin in their designs; it’s where I go for organic, modern furniture.” Available only online.

- **Build It Green**

69 Ninth St., Gowanus



“An architectural salvage place, who doesn’t love that?!” enthuses Galli. Indeed, with a bit of digging, you can find just about anything and everything to renovate your home — including the kitchen sink (literally): A vintage double-basin farmhouse sink from Richmond Co. is priced at \$295. Also look for flooring, paint, light fixtures, furniture and more.