

Alex Papachristidis

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LIVING



# Bold interiors by top designers inspire 'Decorate Fearlessly'

By Arlene Hirst

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New York-based Nick Olsen was inspired by gardens for this cheerful, colorful bedroom, where a headboard covered in kelly-green Lee Jofa velvet complements walls upholstered in GP & J Baker pink Paxton Stripe fabric. The bold floral sofa is tamed by its placement against the bed's white Schweitzer Linen sheets.

Photo: Eric Stiffler; artwork courtesy Spanleiman Gallery, LLC; from 'Decorate Fearlessly' by Susanna Salk, Rizzoli, 2014.

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Design aficionado and author Susanna Salk believes that decorating is the one place where copying is acceptable. "I've never duplicated something without feeling rewarded," she says.

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For her eighth book, "Decorate Fearlessly: Using Whimsy, Confidence and a Dash of Surprise to Create Deeply Personal Spaces," Salk has assembled the work of 83 design luminaries to offer readers a wealth of decorating inspiration — from modern to traditional, casual country to city chic.

"I can see red lamps and orange walls in a villa and can use that idea in a different setting in my home in Litchfield," she explains.

And she hopes that readers will follow her lead.

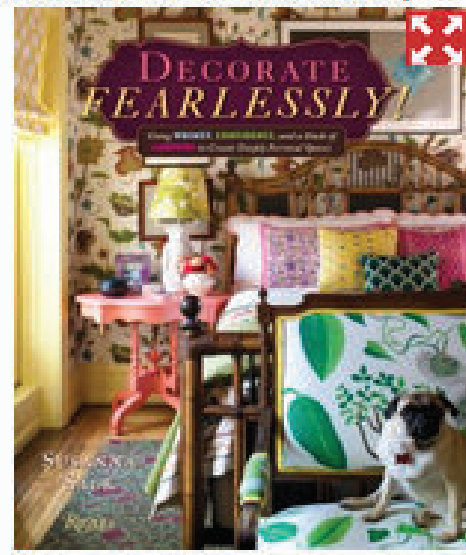
Out this week from Rizzoli, "Decorate Fearlessly" (\$45) features interiors from places as far away as Rome, London and Paris — and as close to home as Brooklyn.

With an impressive roster of design stars that includes Jamie Drake, Ashley Hicks, Amanda Nisbet, Tom Scheerer, Courtney and Robert Novogratz and Todd Oldham, the book is organized by room: living, dining, bedroom and bathroom, as well as kitchens and entryways.

Salk, not a designer by profession, describes herself as more of a stylist, who has worked for Elle Décor and the late House & Garden and now is a contributing editor for 1stdibs and host of the monthly video series "Stylish Shopping With Susanna Salk" on the blog Quintessence. "My eye has always been exposed," she says. "Your eye is a muscle, so train it. Mine is like a triathlete's now."

For this particular book, in addition to contacting designers whose work she knew and loved, Salk spent hours on Pinterest collecting images that resonated with her. "It's like being a Sherlock Holmes," she says. "It's like planning the perfect dinner party."

She extols New York-based Alex Papachristidis, whose designs are frequently found in the pages of Elle Décor and Architectural Digest. "Alex's work has an exuberance that matches his personality," says Salk, who chose two rooms of Papachristidis' Manhattan apartment for the hefty, 255-page tome.



Susanna Salk's new book, "Decorate Fearlessly: Using Whimsy, Confidence and a Dash of Surprise to Create Deeply Personal Spaces"



In the library of his own Manhattan apartment, designer Alex Papachristidis layered bold patterns, like a couch covered in Schumacher ikat fabric and exotic accents such as a custom cocktail table from John Rosselli Antiques.

Photo: Tifa Giovan Photography; from *Decorate Fearlessly* by Susanna Salk, Rizzoli, 2014



In designer Eric Cohler's light-filled Manhattan living room, Gustavian and Louis XVI chairs sit alongside an English Regency sofa. Art and design pieces, such as a Jonathan Adler Tree of Life sculpture, provide a playful touch.

Photo: Yale Wagner; from *Decorate Fearlessly* by Susanna Salk, Rizzoli, 2014

designer Carlo Scarpa.

"Both the modern and rich formality of the lines are warmed by the painting — see how the spirals in the painting match the spirals of the chair backs — and the fun light fixtures over the table add excitement — they're not the expected conventional chandelier," says Salk of Stuart's dining room. "Designers say that the best rooms are when things don't match."

"Would you want black walls?" she asks, referring to the designer's exotic library. "But it works so well; it envelops you. I said, 'I have to have a dark wall like this' — so I used the idea in my bathroom." She also admires the pair of vintage foo dogs over his sofa. "There is harmony and whimsy here," she enthuses. "Look at the rug [an all-over chevron pattern in shades of orange, red and lavender that Papachristidis designed]. It just works. There's a visual layering of textures and patterns, which shows a lot of it is confidence."

On the opposite end of the style spectrum, she selected the sleek, uncluttered work of Annabelle Selldorf, a New York-based architect known for her 200 11th Ave. condominium across from the High Line, in which every unit has its own garage.

"Annabelle is super-fearless," says Salk, using her title's theme word to describe Selldorf's style. The room featured in the book is in the home of fashion designer Jill Stuart — a penthouse in the Urban Glass House, a West SoHo building that Selldorf created with the late Philip Johnson. The dining room is simply but elegantly furnished with a custom table flanked by classic Thonet bentwood chairs that provide a curvaceous contrast. A painting by Sue Williams overlooks the setting, with vintage light fixtures by Italian

Salk is also a fan of Marian McEvoy, former editor-in-chief of *Elle Décor* and *House Beautiful*. McEvoy, famous for her way with a glue gun — she even wrote a book about it, “*Glue Gun Decor*” — outfitted her Hudson Valley cottage with her own handwork, from upholstery trim to curtains to lampshades. She tacked tribal fabrics from Central Asia to the faces of her dining chairs and painted or hand-appliquéd almost everything in the house.

In the featured living room, handmade and haute live in perfect harmony: To the sofa from Ralph Lauren Home, McEvoy added black and red trim, making the piece more distinctive. Mirrors from Treillage reflect the red, black and white scheme of a woman who has never met a color she didn't like. McEvoy notes in the book: “Decorating is definitely not scary — it should make you happy and delight your friends and family.”

Miles Redd and Jonathan Adler, two top New York decorators featured in the book, are fearless, too — in a chic way, Salk explains. “Jonathan should get the gold medal of fearlessness. His use of color is so delightful,” she says. Salk has included two Redd projects and four by Adler, who is best known for his droll product designs.

Adler's creation of a child's pink bedroom is a far cry from the expected cotton candy look. A single wall is painted magenta, but the rest of the walls are white. Just doing one wall in a bold color, says Salk, is a great solution for parents fearful about going overboard. The bed is upholstered and tufted in an orangey-pink velvet — a vibrant contrast to the pink wall.

Salk, who notes that many people are paralyzed when faced with redecorating a room, hopes her book will inspire readers to take the decorating plunge, noting that you can do it on any budget, just by painting a wall or adding a leopard-patterned pillow. “Fear keeps you from making it happen,” she says. Her advice is to do just a little at a time. “Change a room, tinker, with it, but never do it from top to bottom. It can't be all or nothing or you'll wind up with nothing.”



For a Manhattan guest bedroom, interior designer Doug Meyer went gaga for green. The Plexiglas and painted wood headboard is upholstered in five different shades of this verdant hue. The red of the fluffy rug, dresser and bedspread trim pop in contrast.

Photo: Mark Roskams; from *Decorate Fearlessly* by Susanna Salk, Rizzoli, 2014

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