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Great ROOMS



With burlap, paper, paint, and finesse two designers transform a San Francisco duplex BY CINDY EHRLICH



Stepping into Brett Landenberger and Scott Waterman's apartment is a little like visiting some wacky chapel on a sun-drenched Aegean island. The feeling derives only in part from the decor, which includes neo-Gothic niches and wooden draperies salvaged from a burned-out church. What also contributes to the impression of winking sanctuary is the palpable sense of love and humor that has gone into the making of their combination house and studio.

The two moved to San Francisco from Atlanta, where Waterman, a decorative painter fond of "deteriorated things," began his career working on trompe l'oeil murals and the restoration of historic buildings. Landenberger's specialty is decorative paper designs, which translate into fabrics, wallpapers, and prints.

The quality of light was one reason they chose San Francisco. It also influenced their decision to rent a featureless 1945 duplex because its five rooms are dazzlingly bright. The designers let the light shine: they reflect it with white paint, propel it through dark hallways with mirrors, and barely filter it with curtains made of cheesecloth, canvas drop cloths, and paper. Citron-colored beads sparkle in the kitchen doorway. "We wanted it to look like a Mexican restaurant," explains Waterman. "The palette in the rest of the apartment is more neutral because that's where we work." For his hand-painted papers Landenberger currently favors golds, browns, and grays—colors that reappear on the furniture, fabrics, and sculptural objects that are everywhere.

Waterman and Landenberger let necessity and spontaneity dictate room use. The designated dining room serves as Landenberger's studio. Waterman's studio contains the library; he works on larger projects in what was originally the living room. Their art provides much of

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the visual splendor that surrounds them. Landenberger wraps his papers around picture frames, boxes, and obelisks; Waterman paints lampshades, pedestals, screens—anything that doesn't move. They continually arrange and rearrange and simplify.

Both designers arrived at their occupations by way of studying architecture and art, pursuits that continually resurface in their work. They have re-created furniture spotted in Renaissance paintings, replaced ceiling lights with Louis XIV-style suns, and adorned walls with burlap bearing Hispano-Moresque tapestry designs. In the hallway, Landenberger assembled a frieze out of architectural fragments they bought "by the pile" from a salvage shop in Atlanta. "These things serve as inspiration, which is another kind of utility," says Landenberger. "That's what we look for in everything—for the spirit it imparts." ♦

Editor: Sharon Wick





The apartment is a living collage



Wooden draperies from a 19th-century church hang above a mantel, *previous page* and *top*, in Brett Landenberger and Scott Waterman's living room/studio. Waterman's screen design is Picasso-inspired. *Above*: Hispano-Moresque tapestry motifs painted on burlap line the bedroom, which features two neo-Gothic church niches and 1950s rugs hooked by Landenberger's grandmother. *Right from top*: Waterman, at left, Landenberger, and their cat, Minnie, surrounded by their designs. Waterman's studio shelves display his boxed collages. Indian umbrella borders dangle above the kitchen windows. *Opposite*: A studio lectern modeled after an example in a Renaissance painting. The wall is patterned with urn cutouts made from a 1930s theater magazine. The angel is part of the designers' collection of architectural fragments. Details see Resources.

