

It Starts with *A Spark*

FEAT. _____ JERSEY ICE CREAM CO.



DESIGN TEAM TARA MANGINI AND PERCY BRIGHT OF
JERSEY ICE CREAM CO. SHOW US THAT WHEN WE LET
A SINGLE SOURCE GUIDE THE DESIGN OF A SPACE,
A PERSONAL POINT OF VIEW TAKES SHAPE.

STORY BY MICHELLE SASSA PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAX BURKHALTER & JILLIAN GUYETTE/MAGNOLIA NETWORK

HOME is where we feel most ourselves. It's the place, more than anywhere else, that we want to reflect what we love and treasure most. But sometimes it can be a challenge to know how to make a favorite piece, heirloom, or idea fit within the overall look and feel of a space.

What if we shifted our approach and, instead, let our one source of inspiration lead the way? Choosing a beloved piece, or even our surroundings, to serve as our “true north” gives us aim and direction as we design—and ultimately helps us create a home we love to be in.

For Tara Mangini, the vision for one of her bedrooms began just beyond its window. It was her first summer in the farmhouse she and partner Percy Bright were renovating in Upstate New York, and she was delighted to discover the fields of native blooms that sprang up in warm welcome. Inspired to bring the outside in, she used the wildflowers as the spark to set that inspiration in motion.

At first, Tara experimented with wallpaper, but every pattern she tried felt too “flowery,” a little too heavy-handed. She was aiming for a subtle way to capture the wildflowers’ essence, and the idea of creating a print came to her. She set out to handstamp the bedroom walls with delicate sprigs of goldenrod, aster, foxgloves, and daisies—a subdued backdrop that lends a calm, natural feel to the space.

“The room has this serene feeling that makes you want to walk in slow,” Tara says. “The color and pattern change with the light.... It feels special!”

Tara chose a meticulous process, but you don't have to be as hands-on to create what she calls “pure magic.” When seeking an anchor for your own space, follow Tara's lead and start with a source you find meaningful. It might be a work of art you're drawn to, a tile pattern that makes you smile, or a piece that evokes a memory—like the cedar chest that's been in your family longer than you. Spend time in and around your environment, dream, and see what sparks creativity.

As in the wildflower room, your chosen muse doesn't necessarily have to be the space's focal point but its essence. When you pull from your object's color, texture, or time period, or echo its overall style throughout, a cohesive point of view will naturally emerge.

When we design this way, home starts to look and feel a lot like us. Items and designs that carry meaning, or ones we simply love, offer clues to who we are, where we've been, and, as in Tara's case, how we view the world around us. They invite our guests to notice and ask for the story behind them, giving our truest selves the chance to be seen—and feel at home.



“The room has this serene feeling that makes you want to walk in slow.... It feels special.”

—TARA MANGINI



THE MUTED, NATURAL COLORS OF THE WALL PRINTS SERVE AS A PALETTE FOR EVERYTHING ELSE IN THE BEDROOM, CREATING CONTINUITY AND A RELAXED FEEL.

PHOTOGRAPH (ABOVE) BY JILLIAN GUYETTE / MAGNOLIA NETWORK PHOTOGRAPHS (TOP & LEFT) BY TARA MANGINI

TARA'S TAKE

Creating *Personal Spaces*

DESIGN WHAT FEELS LIKE YOU.

Your home is yours. It's where you rest and get filled up, so design your space based on what resonates with you, not what you think others want to see.

LOOK CLOSER.

Dig deeper. See what's underneath floors, behind walls, hiding in plain sight. If there's old wallpaper or tile around, give it a second look. Consider what it could become. Let the spark catch.

LET WHAT YOU LOVE GUIDE YOU.

If you're drawn to something, let it take the lead. Pull a color. Be inspired by the pattern. Or give it the spotlight, let it stand on its own, and keep the rest of the room simple.

Tara Mangini and Percy Bright are a design team known for living in the houses they renovate. You can watch them transform their old farmhouse on *The Story of Home*, found on Magnolia Network.