

DESIGNERS TODAY

style. substance. soul.



JULY / AUGUST 2020

SCOOP



Once a doctor's wife pursuing a master's in non-verbal communication and symbolic logic, divorce forced **Lillian August** to reroute. No longer able to afford the lofty pursuits of academia, August relocated to Kentucky where she had heard about the state's economic development programs for women. There, she created a business of her own designing fabrics and quilts. One night while sleeping on the floor of a fabric mill, waiting to approve colors, she was asked what name to put on the selvage. "Lillian August," she responded, melding middle and maiden names. And right there in the wee hours, a legendary brand was born. Turn the page to read on.

Photo: Eliza Weiss

AUGUST *RISING*

"You're only as good as your references, research and assessment of the market," says Lillian August, the matriarch and namesake behind a family business that has sustained 30 years, weathered crises and trends, and includes nine licensed furniture, decor, and textile collections with companies such as Hickory White, Wendover Art, Currey & Company and Wallquest for wallpaper and fabric, as well as a flagship store.

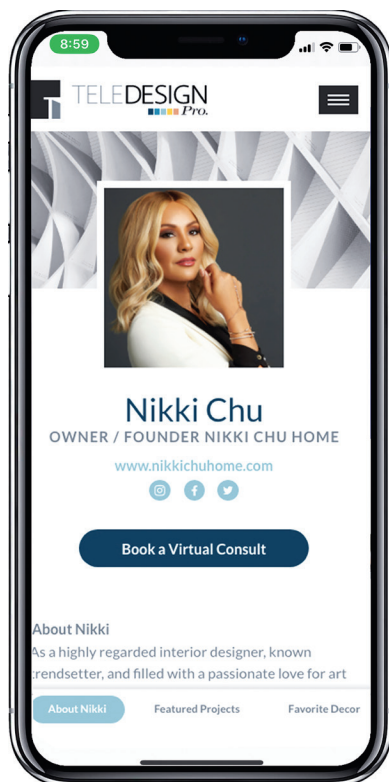
Once coined the American Laura Ashley, it was August's debut wallpaper collection with Imperial in the 80's that first turned heads. That her second wallpaper book was a best seller was no fluke. The design world was responsive to her visually romantic storytelling, drawing on English country houses, coastal mansions and fashion for inspiration.

August's three sons—Dan, John and Michael Weiss—have all participated in the brand's success. Dan, who wrote his college thesis on his mother's cottage business, naturally slipped into the role of licensing agent in 1987 and is CEO of the company today. John Weiss came on board in 1990, and is the current COO. Michael Weiss helped his mother with upholstery designs for Frederick Edward back in the day and has a furniture collection with Vanguard now. August is grateful for the talent and dedication of her sons. "We complement each other," she says, "from my feminine romantic to the male sensibilities for more tailored and modern looks!"



The queen of cross merchandising: August pairs Southport, a chinoiserie pattern from her Luxe Retreat collection with Wallquest with a dining group from her Lillian August collection for Hickory White.

The family tradition continues as August's grandchildren Caleb and Eliza now collaborate—he on the art line and she on an upcoming line geared towards millennials. While Eliza may teach her grandmother about her generation, she is learning about passion and endurance from one of the most driven women in the business of home. Amazed by August's rich supply of clippings and handmade mood boards that rival any Pinterest board today, Eliza says, "She is constantly creating. I never met someone who works harder than she does." — J.D.



What's New With *Chu*

Multi-talented designer and television host Nikki Chu has been—like many of us—stuck at home during sheltering in place. But one area where she is not stuck is creativity, as while she is not able to do many things she would normally do—such as shooting her AspireTV show "Unboxed with Nikki Chu" on site—she has used the time to develop new businesses and evolve others.

Chu has been painting, for one thing, including a new Afro Pop series. She also created a series of rendered Zoom backgrounds for purchase. And, if that wasn't enough, she built TeleDesign Pro, a platform that allows consumers to seek her design expertise virtually. Realizing that her fans and followers want to pick her brain, Chu says, "I was leaving money on the table by not engaging with these people."

TeleDesign Pro design services start at \$49.99; for that, people can upload up to five photos and ask Chu one question. Thirty- and

60-minute virtual design consultations are also available. "Every single day, I am booked," she said. "I can literally be an expert and answer people's questions, set my own schedule and earn a substantial amount of money." Later this year, TeleDesign Pro will also be available for other designers to use to enhance their businesses.

Currently quarantining in Dallas—she lives both in Dallas and Los Angeles—Chu is also slated to launch a branded collection on Walmart.com this fall, and fabric is on the horizon. The next season of "Unboxed," planned for release by the year's end, will feature Chu virtually redesigning homes of front-line workers.

Beyond the pandemic, Chu, a French-speaking Canadian with a Caribbean father and English mum, finds this an interesting and evolving time for minorities in the business. "There have been so many no's because of the minority thing," she says. "Now, however, a lot of companies are revisiting the no." — A.L.

INSPIRATION



*Tried, True, **Blue** & New*

Beloved blue pairs with white so famously, so naturally. Sand and sky, sea and froth, space and stars. The crisp combination yielding much diversity, in shade, pattern and application. Historic and global, blue and white is old world and new, and is often up for adaptation by interior and product designers and artists like ceramicist Elyse Pignolet, who juxtaposes this familiar aesthetic from the past with words related to today's highly charged issues. Turn the page to discover how others are having their way with blue and white. — J.D.

Dish: Elyse Pignolet
Fabric: Paint Dot, in cobalt, from Caroline Cecil Textiles



INDOORS AND OUT, DEEP SHADES OF BLUE ARE SATISFYINGLY SOMBER >

1 Floret enameled iron vase, 15.5 inches tall, [Napa Home & Garden](#)

2 Chou Chou 6x6 ceramic tiles in iris, Sister Parish for [Country Floors](#)

3 Snow leopard lamp, in Classic Blue, 28.75 inches tall, [Wildwood](#)

4 Parisienne Page by artist Gayle Harismowich, [Celadon Art](#)

5 Frank chair, Mr. & Mrs. Howard for [Sherrill](#)

6 Tattersall natural windowcovering, Studio Concepts collection, [Hartmann&Forbes](#)

7 Bywater Bureau, 99 inches high by 56.5 inches wide, William Yeoward for [Jonathan Charles](#)

8 Cirque scalloped style outdoor umbrella, [Santa Barbara Designs](#)

9 Framed intaglios, [Chelsea House](#)

10 Wool/viscose handknotted Thea rug, from Chaos Theory by Kavi Collection, [Jaipur Living](#)

11 Nautical rope dreamcatcher, 52 inches high, by [Tidelli](#)

