

Design News

SOUTH



CAUSING A SCENE: Painter Victor Lawrence sits in front of his waterfall mural at the Decorators Showhouse in Birmingham, Ala.

Showhouses

Artist in Residences

Victor Lawrence was painting a mural for one of his toughest clients while the family was away on vacation. After he was done and the family was back, this ballroom dance instructor-turned-full-time artist got a phone call.

The 5-year-old girl, whose room Lawrence painted with rose-strewn trellises and brown bunnies, enjoyed the lifelike artwork, but she wanted to be able to see the fur between the bunnies' toes. "That was her favorite part, so she stood behind me as I got out my brushes and painted the hairs in. Then she asked if I could paint a caterpillar staring out from the wall at her on the bunny's back. So I did," said Lawrence.

The artist, who works both alone and with interior designers, has been painting professionally since he started his company, A Change of Scenery, two years ago. His work graced the recent Decorators Showhouse in Birmingham, Ala., when neighbor and designer Bobby Owens asked him to paint a mural in the dining room.

Lawrence used oils to create this landscape. "The only downside was how long it took to dry. I took a client to the showhouse three weeks later, and part of the white in the waterfalls still wasn't dry."

A CHANGE OF SCENERY, 1314 32nd St. South, Birmingham, Ala.,



COVERING THE ANGLES: Quilts of hand-dyed silk triangles surround their creator, Paige Thorn Hathaway.

Textiles

Coloring Outside the Lines

"As a child, I was denied access to coloring books, but I was allowed to paint every piece of my bedroom furniture green," said South Carolina's Paige Hathaway Thorn with a giggle as she explained her parents'

views on creative freedom.

"Later, as an architecture major, I found it very restricting to stay between the lines as was required in precision drawing. When I started to draw slightly askew shapes on fabrics as part

of a textiles class, I knew I would be a textile artist instead of an architect."

Drawing inspiration from both nature and the rich architectural ornamentation of her native Charlestown, S.C., Thorn hand-dyes raw silk, charmeuse, dupioni, and velvet in shades of Bordeaux, cherry, eggplant, chocolate, and her favorite color, chartreuse. She then silkscreens designs, sometimes leaf and flower patterns, onto these newly colored creations.

Once the embellishments are complete, Thorn hand-sews the seemingly multidimensional silks into pillows, throws, and scarves. Whether doing custom work or her own designs, Thorn's colors and fabrics change with the seasons. Most recently, this textile artist has looked to Mexican tile, Indian calligraphy, and patchwork geometrics for her designs.

PAIGE HATHAWAY THORN, 531 Parkwood Estates Drive, Charleston, S.C. 29407, 803-766-1948

—Susan Bailey

Sources

Strange Things Afloat

The phone was ringing around 11 a.m. in Miami Beach's Helium. It was a fellow area merchant looking to buy a gift for one of his friends. "I can't get anything from my store," he said. "It's too boring. You guys have the coolest stuff. I'll be over at lunch time."

Such a scenario is the norm for this Ocean Drive shop, which features hand-blown glass



HOB-KNOBBING: Miami's Helium boasts Jose Regueiro's "Earthen Elements Hardware Collection."

architect's Tiffany-style, marble-beaded lamps and glass jewelry boxes. "Here's the story," said Frank Foti who owns Helium with Alfie Feola, "we only sell things we would

Regueiro's "Earthen Elements Hardware Collection." The hardware is handmade from industrial stoneware and stainless steel, and is hand-brushed with multiple glaze coats in 12 colors, including beachstone, gun metal, fog, grapevine, and pear.

Regueiro's doorknobs have been grazing the hands in such notable locales as New York's Jean-Gorges restaurant, Louis' Charleston Grill in South Carolina, and Michael Jordan's new restaurant in Chicago.

HELIUM, 760 Ocean Drive, Miami Beach, Fla. 33139,