



# Ones to Watch in 2020

**HAILING FROM ACROSS THE U.S., HOUSE BEAUTIFUL'S NEW CLASS OF NEXT WEVERS ARE** the 14 most promising up-and-comers in our industry right now. Their styles run the gamut, but every single one is already pushing the boundaries of what it means to be a great designer.

*By Hadley Keller*

We'll be celebrating these winners all year on [housebeautiful.com](https://housebeautiful.com)



## ◀ Sean Leffers LOS ANGELES

"I have been reading every shelter magazine I could get my hands on since I was about 10," says Sean Leffers. While working at Taschen just out of college, he began buying fixer-uppers and renovating them on shoestring budgets. The experience taught him the nitty-gritty of the construction process, a valuable foil to the love of art, antiques, and collecting he has developed since then, and a trademark of his work today. "I want the houses that I work on to be therapeutic sanctuaries for their inhabitants," he says. [@seanderlust](https://www.instagram.com/seanderlust)

LEFFERS IN AN ART-FILLED SAN FRANCISCO HOME OF HIS DESIGN.





FLANIGAN IN  
A HOME SHE  
DESIGNED IN  
HOUSTON.

## Marie Flanigan

HOUSTON

Some designers might turn up their noses at a small project, but not Marie Flanigan. "When I'm working on a home that has a smaller footprint or presents a unique set of obstacles, I find I'm always pushed creatively," says the designer. Flanigan founded her firm in 2010 after shifting from architecture to design for the closer relationship it allows with her clients. "I love to see the complete picture," she says, "from the beginning to placing the final piece of art." [@marieflaniganinteriors](#)



## Noz Nozawa

SAN FRANCISCO

Despite skipping over design in favor of a more "stable" career to please her parents, Noz Nozawa found herself in the industry anyway when she landed a job in marketing at Houzz. In 2014, she started her own firm, where creative color and pattern have become her calling card. "I think there is a freedom to the way I design spaces that untethers them from the pressure to be strictly beautiful," Nozawa muses. Another signature? A dedication to sustainable materials. "It 100 percent drives the decisions I make," she says.

[@noznozawa](#)





MATT AND  
HEATHER  
IN THEIR  
SANTA FE  
STUDIO.

## ^ French & French

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

When Matt and Heather French decided to build their own house, neither realized it would result in a dual career change. "We became stronger during the process, so I knew we were onto something," says Heather. Once the project was complete, Matt (a trained electrical contractor) and Heather (a natural-health professional) founded French & French. They are deeply influenced by the adobe aesthetic of their hometown, Santa Fe, which manifests in colorful, folk-inspired interiors, and they recently launched a lighting line, which they sell out of their shop. "We never would've guessed that this is what we'd be doing," Matt says, "but we love it."

@frenchandfrenchinteriors



## NEXT WAVE

BOSBYSHELL IN THE ENTRY OF AN ATLANTA HOME SHE DESIGNED.

### Clary Bosbyshell

#### ATLANTA

Having grown up admiring the design work of Dorothy Draper and Bunny Williams, Clary Bosbyshell unsurprisingly tends toward a classic approach. But, since launching her own firm in January 2019 after working alongside her mother for 10 years, the Atlanta native has started infusing old-school American style with current comforts—and a bit of the unexpected. “I try to create timeless interiors that layer color and pattern with a mix of fine antiques and one-of-a-kind pieces,” she says.

@clarybosbyshell



### Linda Hayslett

#### LOS ANGELES

When Linda Hayslett began looking for a second career after burnout from the fashion world, “interior design was just never on my radar, because in my mind, a designer was an older woman who covered things in frilly florals,” she laughs. But after redoing her own home in California, she went back to design school—and took to it. Hayslett loves devising unique solutions for her clients and working closely with a construction team to do so (“I love being in the middle of it”). And she still often looks to fashion for inspiration.

@lhdesigned



HAYSLETT AT A MANHATTAN BEACH, CALIFORNIA, PROJECT OF HER DESIGN.



## Katie Hodges

LOS ANGELES

While studying speech-language pathology in college, Katie Hodges took a job as a personal assistant and got into her boss's home renovation: "She recognized me for the closet creative I was," laughs the designer, who went on to start Katie Hodges Design, a design-build firm, just a few years later, in 2014. "My style is deeply rooted in the feel of California," she says, "but every project has a unique story."

@katiehodgesdesign

## Mikel Welch

NEW YORK CITY

When Mikel Welch, uninspired at a corporate job, found himself window-shopping at home stores for 45 minutes during a lunch break, he knew it was time for a career switch. He began by designing rooms for no more than the price of the furniture, eventually landing Steve Harvey as a client. The comedian put the young designer on his talk show eight years ago, and Welch's TV design career was born (in 2019, he appeared on the reboot of TLC's *Trading Spaces*).

@mikelwelch

WELCH IN THE ROOM HE DESIGNED AT THE 2019 BROOKLYN HEIGHTS DESIGNER SHOWHOUSE.







## ◀ Gordon Dunning

ATLANTA

While some design duos may be opposites who attract, Lathem Gordon (right) and Cate Dunning say they are, well, the opposite. “We’re like a Venn diagram that overlaps, with tiny, separate slivers on the sides,” laughs Gordon. The duo founded their firm in 2014, creating a kind of contemporary Southern style that finds bold new uses for classic motifs. Says Dunning, “The architecture of the South and the Low Country is very much seeped through our souls.”

@gordondunning

## ▶ Anthony Gianacakos

NEW YORK CITY

Before founding his firm and textile line in 2012, Anthony Gianacakos, a self-proclaimed “maximalist at heart,” went on a trip to Brazil, where he cemented his design ethos. “I thought, This is what I’m going to do—I’m going to sketch on these trips so that I can come back to my studio and create an actual collection.” His latest, for his fabric line, Anthony George Home, reinterprets Spanish architectural themes, taking the wildly colored tilework of Antoni Gaudí as inspiration.

@anthonygeorgehome



GIANACAKOS IN A COLORFUL APARTMENT HE DESIGNED IN HARLEM.





## MA Allen

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

It makes sense that MA Allen initially set out to pursue a career in law before pivoting to design: Each of her projects begins with a sweeping research phase. "Almost like an anthropologist, I learn everything I can about my clients, their families, and how they live," she says. Allen has a knack for translating this practical knowledge into colorful, art-filled interiors that break rules in just the right ways—a fitting parallel to her own daring fashion sense.

@maalleninteriors

ALLEN IN HER  
FABRIC LIBRARY  
IN DOWNTOWN  
RALEIGH.



## Whitley Esteban

NEW YORK CITY

For the past five years, Whitley Esteban has been behind the scenes at Roman and Williams, quietly shepherding the firm's projects (including the highly anticipated British Art wing at the Met, opening this spring) as its managing director. Esteban's personal style and process reflect the best of her firm's: She's passionate about classical art and design, fascinated by context, and always looking to experiment. "I want to be able to acknowledge the classics and play them back in a reverential way," she says.

@whitleyesteban