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# HOME

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# GARDEN

## *SANCTUARY*

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OUT OF ONE WOMAN'S GRIEF JOURNEY  
SPRINGS A GARDEN OF BEAUTY,  
TENDED BY DESIGNER KARA COX.





Original abstract art by Windy O'Connor hangs over a Highland House sofa with bullion fringe. Michael Clement hand-painted porcelain lamps sit on the side tables, and Gillette's antique chairs flank the sofa. The mirrored coffee table is from A. Tyner Antiques.





WHEN HOMEOWNER Pam Gillette lost her husband in 2014, she and her two daughters moved to Greensboro to be closer to family and make the transition to a new way of living easier. Coming from Florida, Gillette was looking for a fresh start and was eager to create a warm, colorful, and happy home the three could retreat to while they grieved and moved forward.

“It was important to me to set an example for my daughters on how to move through adversity and be strong,” explains Gillette of her decision. They found a charming 1930s home in Irving Park and set about making it their own. But as Gillette struggled to settle on a cohesive look in the new home, she knew she needed to consult an interior designer. She contacted Kara Cox after a friend, one of Cox’s clients, suggested she reach out.

“Honestly, Kara’s style was very different from mine at the time,” says Gillette, “but I think we decided to

give it a go after I explained my situation and what I was looking for. Kara came up with an idea for a design I loved after discovering that I spent two summers in a row in the English countryside.”

While on her grieving journey, Gillette and her best friend escaped to England for some quiet healing, and as such, went on walkabouts in the gardens of the English countryside. Each morning they were given a map and were allowed to wander on their own. “Those were some very special moments, and I did a lot of healing during those walks in nature. I wanted to bring that same feeling to our new home in Greensboro,” says Gillette. Having picked up painting, Gillette’s pieces were full of color and whimsy, two elements that she wanted for her daughters in their new space.

“When I came together with Pam, she had a lot of large antiques that she loved and wanted to reuse,” recalls Cox. “So, we did, but we added color and pattern, along with some more modern touches.” With



An original piece from artist Philip Durst made from crumpled book pages hangs over an antique secretary in the library. **OPPOSITE:** Phillip Jeffries silk Stardust wallpaper gives the walls a sunset glow in the dining room. Host chairs backed with Lee Jofa embroidery fabric sit at the antique dining table, and a custom drapery rod and chandelier, both made by Louise Gaskill, add glamour.







In the family room, a card table and vintage carved chairs in yellow velvet found on Chairish create a cozy corner. **OPPOSITE:** The primary suite is modeled after an English garden. John Derian for Designers Guild wallpaper envelops the room in cabbage roses. Custom bedside lamps made with Venetian glass are by Louise Gaskill, and Gillette used her own antique furniture.













**ABOVE:** Artwork from Gillette's own collection hangs over her antique tea cart in the dining room.

**OPPOSITE:** Library walls in this garden-inspired home were covered in neutral Phillip Jeffries grasscloth wallpaper, and trim and bookcases were lacquered in a custom color from Fine Paints of Europe in spring grass green. The Knole sofa sits in the bay window, with an ottoman covered in Osborne & Little cut-velvet fabric added for comfort.

a neutral canvas to work from, Cox set about adding layer upon layer of color and pattern, all the while bringing an English country garden to life in North Carolina. "Pam also loves folk art, so we added some vibrant colors on the walls," she says. "She was never afraid of any color. She was a maximalist. And that's something I knew I could get into."

The dining room provided a starting block for the rest of the home, designed in a sort of sunset palette that changes throughout the day. "I didn't want my home to be like everyone else's," says Gillette. "I needed it to reflect my personality. It needed to be fun and cheerful, and make people wonder." Cox gathered many of Gillette's findings from hikes outdoors and used them to accessorize different rooms. Her bird nest collection or the occasional curiosity, for example, was mixed skillfully among vintage and found objects that the pair discovered when shopping together in High Point.

In the kitchen, Cox only added some vintage rugs and window treatments, and left the original wallpaper up in the entryway. New lighting, modern sculptures, vintage rugs, and art transformed the surroundings into a cohesive home that delighted Gillette. "The house really does read like a garden



The kitchen was left relatively untouched by Cox, who only added a vintage rug and some simple Roman shades over the sink window. **RIGHT:** In the library, a small TV is hidden behind a custom-made panel with hand-painted book bindings meant to blend in with bookshelves, lacquered in custom paint by Fine Paints of Europe.









In the breakfast room, Gillette uses her antique farm table, paired with Cox's addition of Hickory Chair chairs covered in blue vinyl from Designers Guild. Drapes made with an Osborne & Little fabric swatch the windows, and the light fixture is by Coleen and Company.





An antique Oushak rug from Nashville Rug Gallery welcomes guests into the home. A Lucite pedestal with an original bronze figure from Anne Irwin Fine Art sits in the corner, while a Visual Comfort chandelier hangs overhead.



walkabout,” says Cox. “It’s very colorful but has visual breaks and neutral moments.”

In the center of the home sits a library, where Gillette spends a good deal of time. It serves as one of her favorite rooms in the home, along with her bedroom. Cox wanted this space to be especially bold, so she chose to lacquer the trim in a high-gloss bold green, swath the walls in grasscloth by Phillip Jeffries, and add floral draperies. Bookcases are filled with books and mementos, and they even hide a TV behind a custom-made cabinet covered in hand-painted book spines that match the room palette.

In Gillette’s bedroom, Cox used a cabbage rose wallpaper from John Derian to fully envelop the room. In combination with her antique four-poster bed, it imparts a truly private English garden sanctuary.

Ultimately, a sanctuary is what Gillette and her daughters were looking for, and Cox is grateful to be a part of creating it for this weary threesome. “There’s always some level of intimacy to working on someone’s home,” she says. “But adding the element of combating loneliness, or grief, or simply ferrying someone to a happier place in life through design is something that can’t be conveyed in words.” ♦