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One
little girl's
irrepressible
spirit inspires an
irresistible room—
and with her hue-
happy mom as
designer, the
room tells a
fun story!

Lucy in Wonderland

Written by **Louise Ritchhart** | Photographer: **Gordon Beall** | Field editor: **Sandra L. Mohlmann**



Giggly Lucy Keim entered her wondrous new world not through a looking glass, but via jumbo jet. Still, her journey from China to a new life in North Carolina was nothing short of magical—as is Lucy. “Since infancy, Lucy’s had this fantastic, wide-open personality,” says interior designer Beth Keim, Lucy’s adoptive mother. “We knew her room needed a bold, bright palette to match her nature.”

In fact, Lucy inspired the color scheme of the entire Keim home. In their quest to create a “fun, kid-friendly” home, Beth and her husband, Keith, swapped sedate blues and browns for daring reds, oranges, and yellows. In Lucy’s room, hot pink replaces red, but maintains a tone consistent with the rest of the house. The result is a pleasing visual flow from the main level through the upstairs bedrooms occupied by Lucy and little sister Kate.

Meanwhile, unexpected geometric patterns pump up the home’s fun factor. In Lucy’s room, large painted squares and rectangles float randomly on the walls. “When you tell someone you’re painting big squares all over the walls, you can tell they’re thinking, *Oh, no!*” Beth says with a laugh. “People are scared half to death by that kind of art. But when it works with everything else in the room, it’s not so scary.”

Plus, the large designs promise a future payoff. “Clearly, as children get older, it helps if there’s not a lot of pattern in a room,” Beth says. “Before you know it, they start acquiring so much—pictures on the walls, their collections. Little-bitty patterns tend to





Never afraid to make a statement, designer Beth Keim gave a vintage dresser in her daughter Lucy's room bright stripes even though she painted most of the furniture white. Mom-and-daughter chairs provide the perfect place for bedtime stories; shelves above display toys and accessories.



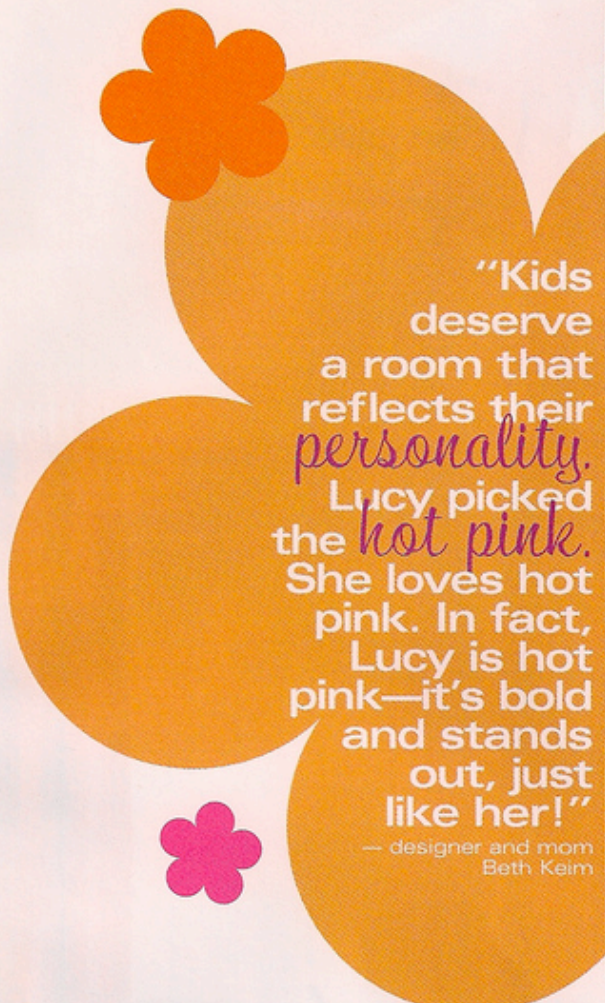


OPPOSITE:

Lucy's thronelike bed is a vintage piece rescued and refinished by her mother. Beth kept wall artwork minimal—the painted blocks don't need help brightening the room. **THIS PHOTO:** Lucy loves to snuggle on her lime-green pillows with a book. The bed is her favorite piece of furniture.



OPPOSITE: Clever space-savers turn a standard closet into a mini dressing room and give Lucy extra space for her collection of teddy bears and books. **THIS PHOTO:** A child-size dressing table is one of many vintage finds that have come together to create a striking room.



“Kids deserve a room that reflects their personality. Lucy picked the hot pink. She loves hot pink. In fact, Lucy is hot pink—it’s bold and stands out, just like her!”

— designer and mom
Beth Keim



look busy once you have 'kid stuff' going on in a room. If you keep pattern to a minimum, or use it on a large scale like in Lucy's room, the walls won't fight with all of their personal things later."

Beth drew inspiration for the painted blocks, as well as the room's color choices, from a striking area rug with geometric designs. "That rug dictated everything," she recalls. "When I design a room, I like to start with one major item, like a rug or fabric, and then work my way around it. In Lucy's room I wanted the major punches to be on the floor and walls, and just keep the furniture simple."

Though simple, the furniture has plenty of character. "To me, furniture that matches is predictable and boring," Beth says. "I like to collect pieces that have the same chunky feeling, or come from the same time period, but are unique. It feels great to resurrect a thrift-shop find that has great

lines, but is just a mess." She decided to paint most of Lucy's pieces glossy white so they visually pop from the walls. To add an extra dash of personality, she finished a vintage dresser with hot pink on pink stripes, and switched its plain glass knobs with large white balls and yellow daisies. "I like to mix knobs up," Beth says. "For example, if you put daisy knobs on the entire dresser, it would detract from the fact they're daisies. If you use just a few across the top drawer, they stand out."

The daisies, the hot pink—everything combines to suit Lucy. "Kids deserve a room that reflects their personality," Beth says. "Lucy picked the hot pink. She loves hot pink. In fact, Lucy is hot pink—it's bold and stands out, just like her!"

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Lucy spends long hours reading books pulled from the four-tier book rack in her room, but she also plays for hours at her custom-painted kitchen set. Her mother jokes, "Lucy was born to be either a rocket scientist or a waitress!" Above, a tea party on a picnic table hangs from the ceiling!



anyone hungry?

As in Wonderland, things get curiouser and curiouser when visitors to Lucy Keim's room notice a whimsical table clinging to the ceiling. There, an enticing tea party fit for March Hare and the Mad Hatter waits for weightless guests. Beth Keim got the idea while visiting a New York City restaurant that covered its ceiling with table settings. For her daughter's tea party, she used china pieces collected through the years and fun everyday table accents.

If you want to try this in your home,

be sure safety is at the top of the list. Beth secured all the floating items to a board with industrial-strength glue, and then bolted the board through the ceiling to the attic with eye screws.

Want some more ceiling art ideas? We brainstormed these scenarios, maybe one will strike your child's fancy (or yours!):

- For an oceanside feeling, attach lightweight lures, shells, and plastic fishies to a net, and cast it up to the ceiling with sturdy twine or hooks.
- Let your little sports fan fall asleep

gazing up at baseballs and gloves, adhered to a field of green (created with a bit of paint or a patch of plastic grass).

- You know all those annoying little plastic doodads and prizes that your kids accumulate from fast-food joints, birthday party favor bags, and arcades? Once they are no longer played with, give them a second life as ceiling art. Create a sculpture and hang it on high. *

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