



## CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS STAFF REPORT

**Meeting Date:** September 20, 2012  
**To:** Honorable Mayor & City Council  
**From:** Nancy Hunt-Coffey, Assistant Director of Community Services/City Librarian  
**Subject:** Recognition of the Friends of the Beverly Hills Public Library for their donation of \$93,000 to provide original artwork in the Enchanted Woods Room of the new Children's Library  
**Attachments:** Articles regarding the work of artist Alix Soubiran

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### **INTRODUCTION**

This report asks the City Council to recognize the Friends of the Beverly Hills Public Library for their generous donation in support of the Enchanted Woods Room of the new Children's Library.

### **DISCUSSION**

Over the decades of their existence, the Friends of the Library have donated the funding to support a fine collection of rare illustrated children's books to the children's area of the library which is called the Enchanted Woods collection. Long time library supporter Rita Lipkis founded this collection, which includes many classic fairy tales. Programs have been held over the years relating to this collection which introduce children and adults to the art of illustration and rare books. Additionally, the Friends have donated heavily to support the Library's circulation collection of fairy tales for our youngest patrons.

Since Enchanted Woods Room, which is part of the children's library renovation, will house the library's collection of fairytales, it seems appropriate to name the space the Enchanted Woods in the spirit of this long tradition supported by the Friends.

Last year the Friends of the Library expressed interest in conducting a fundraising campaign to provide funding for original artwork for the Enchanted Woods room. The walls of this room are designed to have "pop outs" which look like the pages of a giant book. The Friends wanted to use the funds that were raised to commission an original mural having to do with the fairytale theme of the room. With Council's concurrence the Friends went forward and raised \$93,000 to commission original color murals for these "pop out" walls. Major donors to this project are Councilmember Bosse, Friends of the

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Library members, Fred and Betty Hayman as well as many others. Additionally, in working with library staff and the project architect, the Friends have expressed significant interest in hiring local muralist Alix Soubiran to execute the paintings. Some articles describing Ms. Soubiran's fine work are attached. If Ms. Soubiran's work is acceptable to the Council, the appropriate formal documentation will be brought to the City Council at the October 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None at this time.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the City Council recognize the Friends of the Library for their substantial and continued support of the Library and in particular the Enchanted Woods Room and that they give direction concerning the hiring of Ms. Soubiran to complete the paintings.

  
Nancy Hunt-Coffey  
Approved By

# **Attachment 1**

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## DESIGN; HOME OF THE TIMES; Paper-licious; A muralist designs wallpapers that, as hung in her home, become portals to another time and place.

Young, E. (2011, Jan 01). DESIGN; HOME OF THE TIMES; paper-licious; A muralist designs wallpapers that, as hung in her home, become portals to another time and place. Los Angeles Times, pp. 4-E.4. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/822383396?accountid=47391>

### Abstract (summary)

Inspired by her memories of her native France, those designs have helped to transform a ramshackle 1923 duplex in Los Feliz into the charming home she shares with husband Joe Mauceri, a film and TV director and writer, and their 61/2-month-old daughter, Monica Moonshine. Soubiran's designs are manufactured by the Van Nuys company Astek, which produces digitally printed wallpapers, and by Commerce-based Advanced Screen Graphics, which uses the more traditional screen-printing process.

### Full Text

Alix Soubiran could live quite happily without a stick of furniture.

"A chair can be wonderful, but walls are what you see all the time," she says.

"To me, walls that create a story or a mood are the starting point."

As a muralist, Soubiran is accustomed to using walls as a blank canvas. But she recently began experimenting with decorating techniques, creating a line of high-end wallpapers called Princes & Crows. Inspired by her memories of her native France, those designs have helped to transform a ramshackle 1923 duplex in Los Feliz into the charming home she shares with husband Joe Mauceri, a film and TV director and writer, and their 61/2-month-old daughter, Monica Moonshine.

The duplex, when the couple bought it in 2008, had holes in the ceiling, walls that weren't plumb and a kitchen burdened with an ill-placed toilet and Jacuzzi. Extensive remodeling made the home presentable and functional, taking full advantage of wraparound views of hedges and treetops outside. But the Parisian-born Soubiran's wallpapered rooms are what give the place its homey Franco-California appeal.

Inside the front door, Soubiran wallpapered a broad arch in her Birds and Flowers print, setting a welcoming and cheerful tone. Abstract flora and fauna in bold teal, green and brown frame the living room, where the walls are painted cream.

"I didn't want wallpaper everywhere because the house needs to breathe," Soubiran says.

The dining room sports Enchanted Gypsy, a geometric pattern that evokes the Orient. Printed on gold paper, the design glows behind a pair of sconces and, Soubiran says, "has a kind of mystery that melts into the room."

The muted blue stripes of French Room set a quiet ambience in the master bedroom. Soubiran first painted the design on the walls of her previous home in Florida.

"It was influenced by the interiors I've read about in books like 'Madam Bovary' and in poems by Baudelaire," she says. "I wanted something luminous, soft and restful."

When Soubiran was a child in Paris, her parents commissioned a mural depicting the discovery of the Americas.

"My sister and I asked the muralist to put us in the mural, and he did," she says. "We were two little girls holding hands on these tropical shores with a little monkey beside us."

Visits with her grandfather, noted French author Andre Soubiran, also made a lasting impression. "He had the Zuber wallpaper called the Views of Brazil," she says, referring to a 19th century scenic wallpaper printed with woodblocks. "We would steal peeks at it behind the books he had stacked to the ceiling. It was magic seeing an exterior on the interior."

An artist creating wallpaper is nothing new. Andy Warhol and Alexander Calder, among others, did it. But Soubiran has the benefit of modern technology: She paints designs by hand, then scans them into a computer. She and Mauceri can adjust colors and scale in minutes.

Soubiran's designs are manufactured by the Van Nuys company Astek, which produces digitally printed wallpapers, and by Commerce-based Advanced Screen Graphics, which uses the more traditional screen-printing process.

The artist's second Princes & Crows collection is for kids.

"I don't know who created that stupid myth of teddy bears and balloons," she says. "I hate walking into a beautiful house where the little girl's room is pink and very cliched."

Her children's wallpapers are gender-neutral fantasies loaded with details. Sea Ballet is an underwater world teeming with coral, eels and jellyfish. Major Tom depicts a kite-flying astronaut amid satellites and stars. In Circus Circus, a unicycle-riding fox shares the panel with a dancing poodle and a juggling cat. The wallpapers cost \$135 or \$185 a roll, depending on size.

Soubiran hasn't abandoned murals altogether. While pregnant last summer, she climbed scaffolding to finish painting a Napoleonic campaign tent on the walls of her daughter's nursery. Unlike wallpaper, the mural lent itself to the room's peaked ceiling and departures from the pattern, such as folds in the tent fabric and a painted cockatoo perched by the window.

What's next? "I'd like to create a big, panoramic wallpaper in the tradition of Zuber and Dufour," she says, citing French firms that date back more than two centuries.

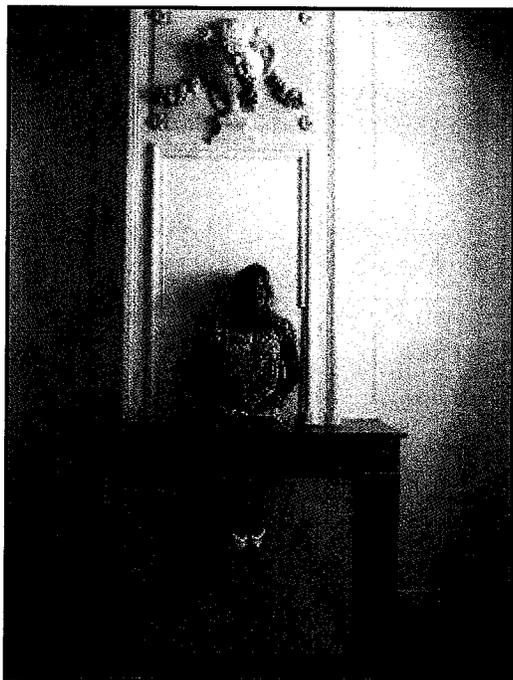
Until then, she will focus on new patterns and new applications.

"I want to wallpaper the closets because I like surprises like that," she says. "No one else will see it, but I will. They'll be like little jewelry boxes."

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home@latimes.com

## **Illustration**



Alix Soubiran

## ARTIST ALIX SOUBIRAN HANGS A NEW PATTERN OF CHIC

BY ELIZABETH KHURI CHANDLER

The Los Feliz aerie of **Alix Soubiran** is just the kind of place you'd imagine for the whimsical designer of **Princes & Crows** wallpaper and decor. A sleepy black rabbit shuffles across the studio's hardwood floor; personal paintings of bunnies, floating rams and a mischievous-looking squirrel are stacked under a suite of paned windows; layers of sloping decks wrap around the home; and narrow staircases connect the three charmingly mismatched levels.

Trained at Atelier Met de Penninghen as a muralist, the former Parisian began her career in 2000, decorating the interiors of various celebrity homes and stylish houses in the West Indies, Palm Beach, France and England. Then, three years ago, something about the reflective light in California and the distance from her homeland sparked a transition to wallpaper.

"I had something to say that I couldn't say with murals," she notes. In her world, scenes of feasts, fawns and cupids would be verboten; nothing would be classic; her papers would have monikers such as "Major Tom" and "Sea Ballet."

The subjects are oversized flowers, deep-sea creatures, animal circus acts and abstract patterns, all in harmonious hues. "The colors cannot not be overwhelming but still must have character," she says, pulling out one of her hand-painted gouaches. "I want my wallpaper to be as if candle smoke were penetrating the walls," she remarks about another and gestures to a soothing mixture of butter yellow and French blue panels, and gold leaves she says could never be called "grandma."

Once she paints a prototype, her husband—music director and visual artist, Joseph Mauceri—helps her transform the colors to Pantone with Adobe Photoshop. The designs are then printed on paper, metallic and vinyl options.

“There is something very primal about art on walls,” she adds. “It’s what the cavemen did, no?” *From \$135/roll; [princesandcrows.com](http://princesandcrows.com).* •

[C What's Hot, One to Watch, April 2011]



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# Wallpaper Designs and Murals by Alix Soubiran

Posted: Jun. 9th, 2011 | Comments 1 | [Make a Comment](#)



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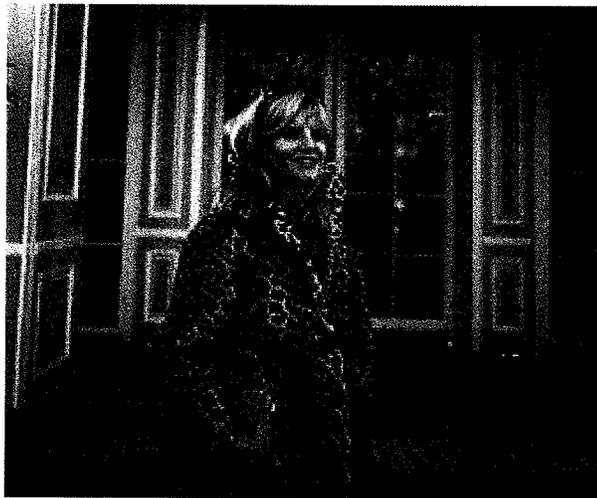
Courtesy of Princes & Crows  
Luxury Guide

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As a muralist and wallpaper designer, Alix Soubiran creates spaces that are whimsical and inspiring, full of imagination and color. For over 12 years the Paris-born beauty has been adorning the walls of high-end residences with her murals in **London**, Paris, Mustique Island, Italy and Beverly Hills.

She cites some of her greatest inspiration as coming from her grandfather's house in the 16th arrondissement in Paris. More recently, Soubiran has translated her inspirational murals onto paper, with elegant wallpaper lines based on her artwork. In 2008, Soubiran launched her exquisite wallpaper collection called "Princes & Crows" and has now added a line for children, "The Little Prince Collection."

Unlike traditional wallpaper makers, Alix took an artistic approach to her collection by painting each design, one by one, and adding them to the wallpapers. Designs are available in a slew of different fabric choices, including vinyl (which comes in handy for wiping down when there are children present).



Although Soubiran is now an Angeleno, the native Parisian gets a lot of inspiration from her native land, which is translated onto the walls of homes everywhere. On her blog **Marvelous Musings**, Soubiran posts photos and thoughts of her travels and life that serve as her creative stimulation and also includes her sketches and photos of new projects.

All papers are printed in Los Angeles with low V.O.C. inks and in small runs to reduce waste. Her special point of view can be seen in her brand new design, "Josephine." To learn more go to **PrincesAndCrows.com**.