



Kiddie corners

Two moms decorate their wee ones' bedrooms with imagination and style

BY KATHRYN KINGSBURY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTHA BUSSE



Top: Allie Fisher's hot pink room is accented with the ABCs. Animal Parade Alphabet wall cards by EeBoo, \$25/set. Available at J.T. Puffins, 5505 Odana Rd., 274-5613, www.puffins.com.

Bottom: Allie's handmade rabbit was a present from her parents on her 1st birthday.

At right: The whimsical room of Oliver and Toby Hitchcock, lovingly handcrafted by their mother Karen (their story is on page 38).

When Kari Fisher asked her daughter Allie to pick out a paint color for her new bedroom in her Verona home, she didn't expect the preschooler to come up with hot pink. But pink was Allie's passion, so that's what went up.

Fisher knew the bold color would need some balance to avoid giving a throbbing headache to every adult who walked through the door. She decided to go with all-white furniture, white wood trim and a flower border around the room's rim. "Because it was such a bright color, I wanted to subdue it a bit with a white bed and the furnishings," she says.

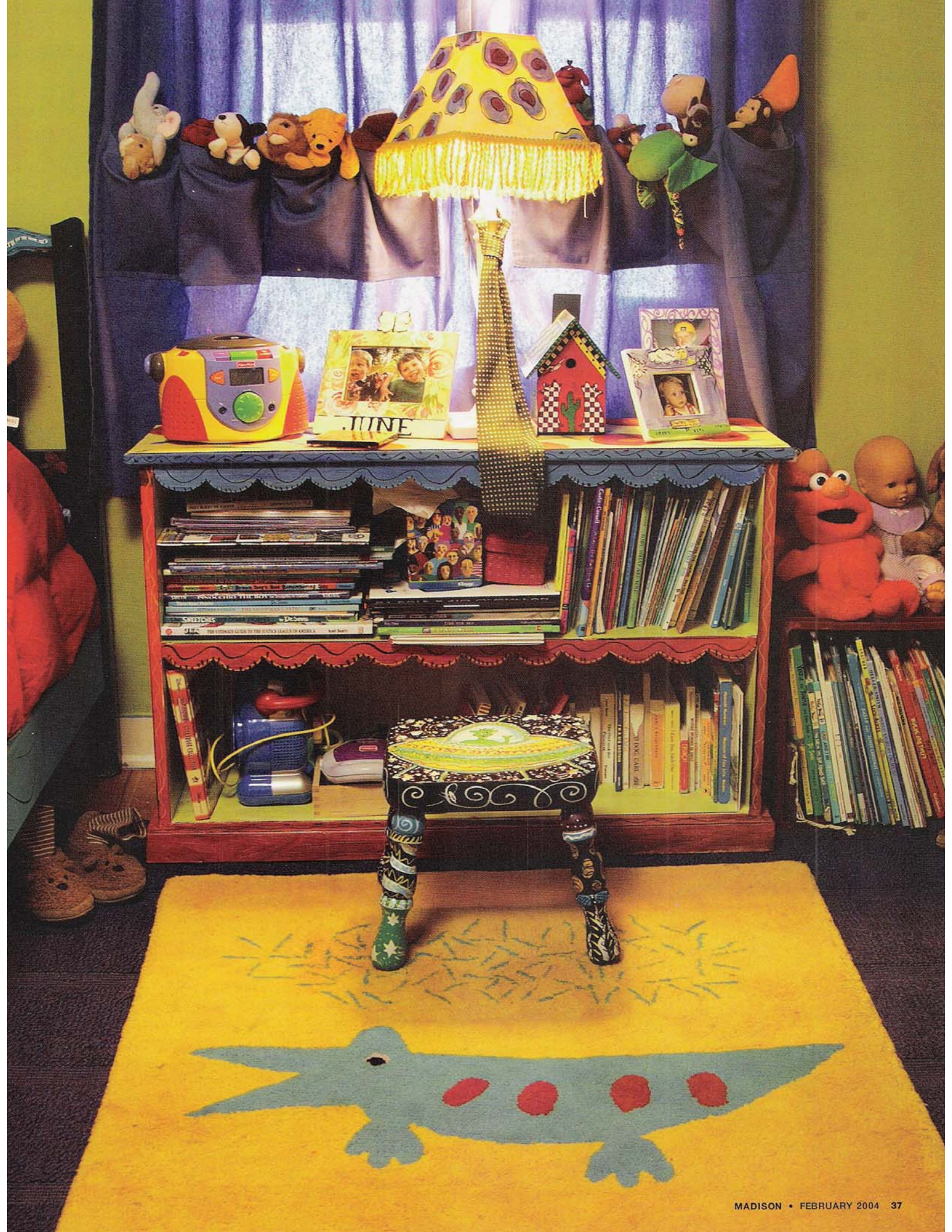
Fisher took a can of white paint to a spare bookcase and a pair of end tables she and husband Bryant (who designed and built their new home) had used in the living room of their old house. She stitched together a white canopy to hang over Allie's bed – the five-year-old is in the midst of a fairy princess craze – and made a large memories board by covering an old door with batting and pink-and-white gingham: "I tried to do things as cheap as possible because you never know how often she's going to want to change it," says Fisher.

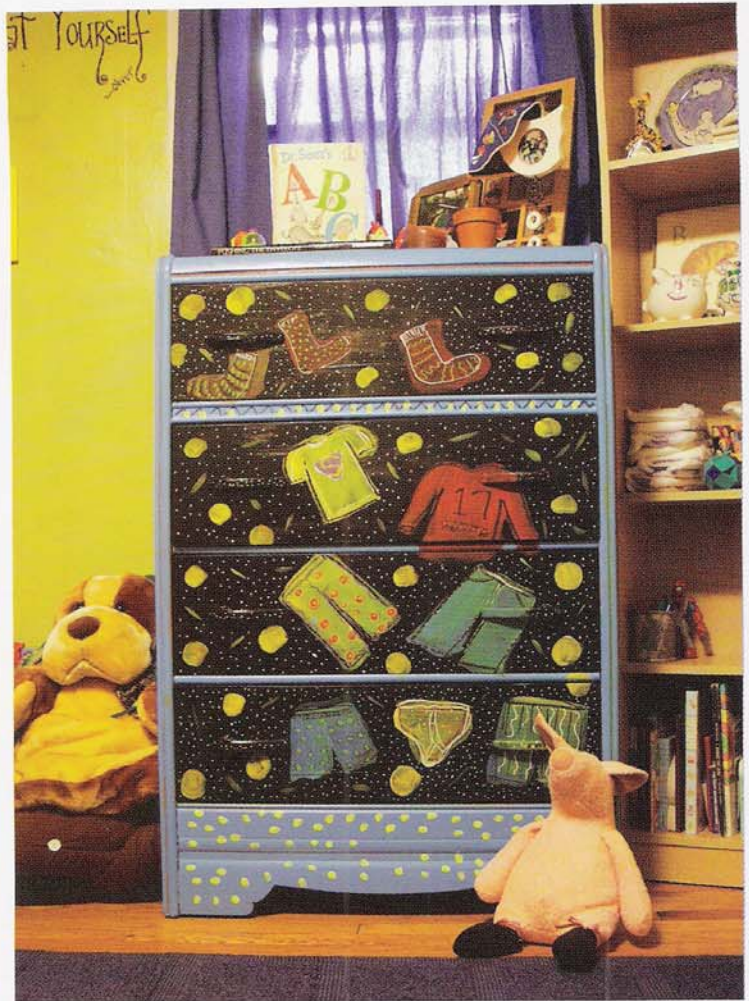
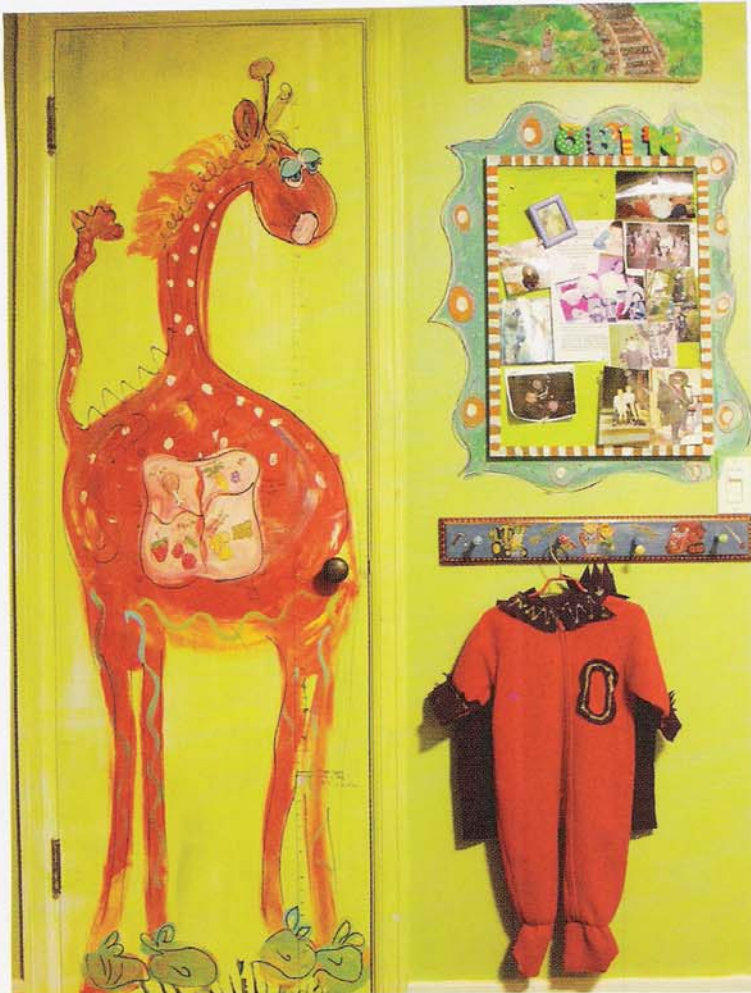
Despite all the color planning, Fisher had second thoughts when the paint dried. "I thought I'd made a huge mistake," she recalls. Once the furniture and wall decorations went in, however, the visual shock of the pink was transformed into pleasantly playful vibrancy.

Adding to the playfulness are the hand-painted flowers and jaunty writing that adorn the top of each wall. Similar touches are found in toddler Jenna's nursery. Fisher, who does the drawing and writing freehand with the help of craft store paint pens, has a degree in elementary education and an associate's degree in commercial art.

"Go confidently in the direction of your dreams," reads one of the walls – perfect advice for any young girl as she nods off to sleep.

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What little boys' rooms are made of

Oliver and Toby have writing on the walls of their West Side bedroom, too, but the phrases are a little more down-to-earth. "If you were a Rice Krispie Treat, you could eat yourself," reads one wall. Their mom, Karen Hitchcock, jotted that down after five-year-old Oliver made the pronouncement one evening at dinner.

The boys' room is small but lively. Bright blues and reds pop up again and again against the muted green of the walls and Oliver's bed frame, giving cohesion to the multicolored scheme. In true kid spirit, Hitchcock drenched the furniture and walls with color and free-form drawings.

The whimsical giraffe on the closet door, which doubles as a growth chart, was a collaborative effort between

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Pictured above, left: The Hitchcock boys' giraffe was a team effort: Mom designed the growth chart, but Oliver made sure the animal would get enough sweets to eat. Right: Karen Hitchcock's work on her own home inspired her to go into business. She sells her hand-painted furniture and also offers custom design work. Visit www.karenhitchcock.com



Kari Fisher crafted a memories board for her daughter **Allie** by covering an old door with pink-and-white gingham.

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Hitchcock and her sons. It was Oliver's idea to give the giraffe a stomach with four chambers – one for meat, one for veggies, one for fruit, and the biggest one for dessert. Each boy has a pillow featuring a childhood photograph of the parent he looks like most – dad Andrew for Oliver and mom for two-year-old Toby. Hitchcock printed them from her computer using fabric printer paper and framed them with boldly colored fabric scraps.

Artistic flair runs in Hitchcock's family – her mother, sister and grandmother are all artists – but only recently did she realize it was a trait that she had inherited. Now she sells furniture at art shows and galleries: "I never thought I could be an artist until I stopped trying to copy what my family had done and instead did what felt right, and it worked."

Kathryn Kingsbury is a Madison-based freelance writer.

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