



ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

Inside a Historic Pacific Heights Home That's Become a Living Art Installation

Over the past two years, San Francisco–based artist Danielle Mourning has turned her family's historic Pacific Heights home into an ever-evolving art installation. And now, she's opened it up for public viewing, on a by-appointment basis. "I'm a total voyeur," Mourning says to AD PRO with a laugh. "I've always worked where I've lived, and installation-based work is super inspiring for me—so I tried to imagine how voyeuristic it might feel for other people [to experience my work so intimately]." The result is *Stay With Me*, a multi-space experiential installation that incorporates nearly every room of the 121-year-old Victorian house.

Mourning's latest body of work was inspired by several ideas—from the cycle of life and death to an exploration of her ancestry. "With this show, I've taken on all of these stories—[including] some I didn't even intend to," she says. "It just happened organically." Each of the themed spaces is its own work of art, comprising curated vignettes, mixed-media works, sculpture, photography, found objects, and mementos from people and places in the artist's past.

Visitors to the intimate exhibition are guided through the hour-long experience with instructions on how to proceed, room-by-room, beginning with the entry hallway and finishing up in the home's living room, where Mourning waits to discuss the installation and answer any questions. "The people who've come through, so far, have had incredible emotional responses," she says. "Several people were brought to tears because an object, scent, or sound triggered some forgotten memory or a feeling."

Below, AD PRO takes a room-by-room tour of the home. Information on how to schedule a visit to Chez Mourning can be found on her [website](#). However, tours through March have already been fully booked.



A golden staircase welcomes visitors.
Photo: Seth Smoot Photography

The Gold Stairwell

The gold-leafed entrance to the installation took “a fabulous intern” a week to complete, says Mourning. An Eye of the Heart symbol representing Mary Magdalene was painted on the floor of the threshold, while light sculptures made from branches dipped in resin and tied with plastic gold rope hang above. Collages of vintage bird cards and *New York Times* images line the wall.



The blue landing.

Photo: Seth Smoot Photography

Blue Landing

The landing at the top of the staircase is painted in four shades of blue. The *Untitled Crystal Box* chandelier was constructed from quartz crystals, painted steel, and LED lights. Artworks include a found-object sculpture, as well as paintings reminiscent of Roscoe, Montana, where Mourning has another home.



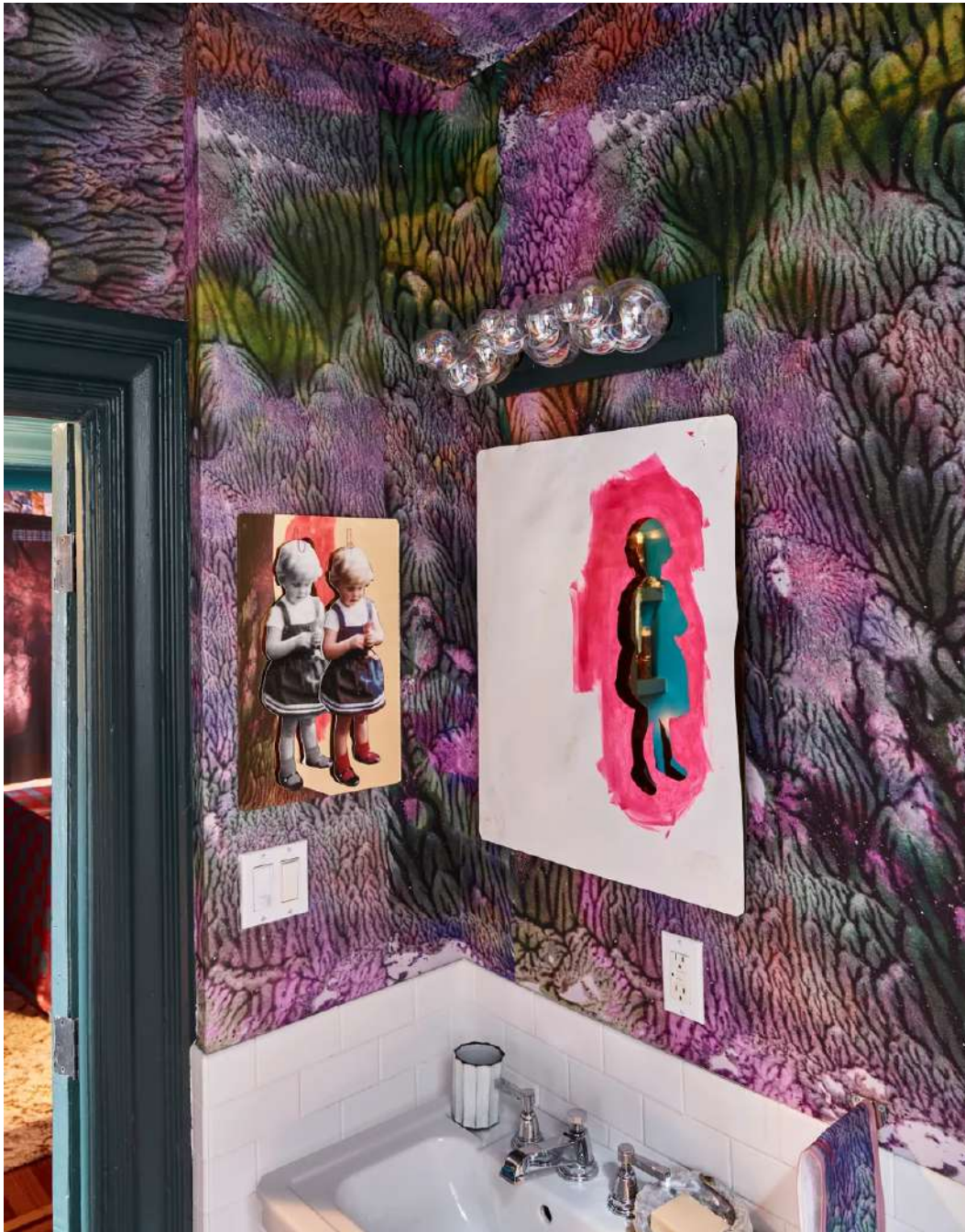
Floral wallpaper peppers this space.
Photo: Seth Smoot Photography



An homage to family and ancestral lineage.
Photo: Seth Smoot Photography

Ancestor Room

Photographs that Mourning took of daisies in St. Helena, California, were turned into a dark wallpaper. She covered the floor with 700 pounds of volcanic earth procured from just outside the Bay Area that, in part, symbolizes the cycle of life and death. The daguerreotypes all originated from one family album—which dates back to the 1850s. It was found in the barn on her Montana property. She painted each one by hand with neon acrylic and had them dipped in resin to create what she calls “photo blocks.”



A cute and colorful bathroom.
Photo: Seth Smoot Photography

Bath Room

Artwork by a friend’s daughter inspired this space, which was the first room Mourning started. The wallpaper design—which she credits to “Alice and Eloise”—was created from photographs of the original painting. Cutouts of photographs embellished with neon pink acrylic are placed over gold acrylic mirrors.



A dining area that has been transformed thanks to Mourning's art.
Photo: Seth Smoot Photography

Canopy Room

Originally the home's dining room, this space was meant to feel like old-world San Francisco, thanks to its dark colors; moody, feminine wallpaper; and homemade linens. On the table are clay and resin *Acorn Bowls* made from nuts she collected from an oak tree in Healdsburg along the Russian River. Four fur coats—inherited from her two grandmothers—have been transformed into a sculpture at the table. The windows are covered in photo-printed vellum, while artworks in the room include a self-portrait on fabric, mixed-media pieces mounted to plexiglass, and a variety of found objects and textiles.



The teeny, tiny table of the yellow kitchen.
Photo: Seth Smoot Photography

The Hippie Boat Kitchen

“This is really the happiest room in the installation,” Mourning says. “It’s the space I spend the most time in, even though it’s so small it could be the kitchen on a boat.” The cheery wallpaper—titled *The Last Jar of Calendula*—was created from photographs she took of Calendula flowers. The tiny table altar includes pottery and two small collage works, over which a framed wedding photograph of her grandmother hangs. Several ink-print self-portraits and bird collages mark the walls.



A feather wall helps frame an indoor hammock.
Photo: Seth Smoot Photography

Feather Wall Porch

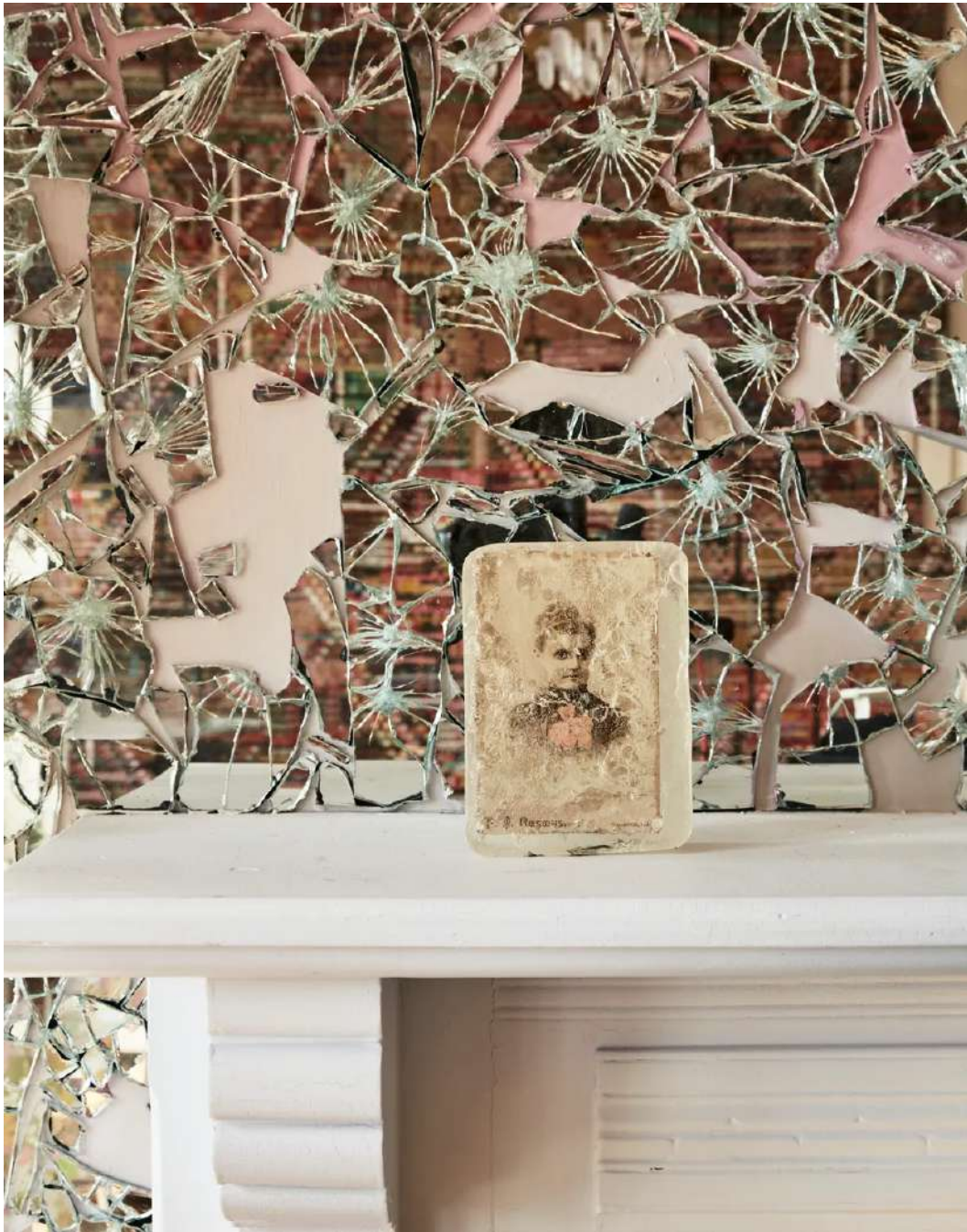
“I wanted this space to be incredibly serene—a place where you could just drift away.” The feather wall was one of the first projects Mourning undertook. Constructed by threading the found—and cleaned—feathers onto burlap ground cover, the wall comprises three hand-woven panels. Light fixtures made of found branches are illuminated with handmade light bulbs by Nude.



The Mama Pink Room.
Photo: Seth Smoot Photography



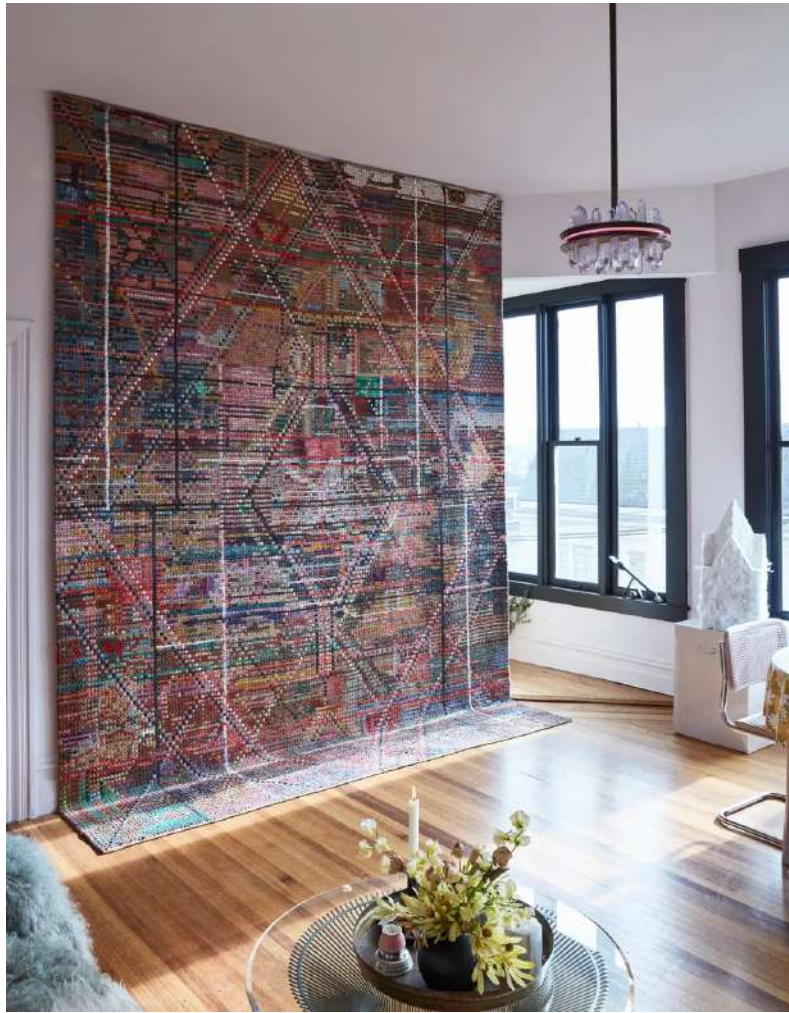
This space is arguably the linchpin of the entire home.
Photo: Seth Smoot Photography



A mirrored mosaic tops the fireplace.
Photo: Seth Smoot Photography



More art can be seen hung on the wall.
Photo: Seth Smoot Photography



The Knoll coffee table, seen in the foreground.
Photo: Seth Smoot Photography

Mama Pink Room

The home's living room has become a partial representation of the artist's relationship with her mother. "It's incredibly inviting, and it faces south so it has really beautiful light all day," says Mourning. The entrance to the space is curtained by a sculpture made with bound Dutch brooms she's painted pink. An enormous wool rug—a gift from her mother—that was once beige has been transformed into a fully painted wall sculpture. "It's just like my mom to be so excited about giving me a beige rug, and then I completely [alter it] with paint." The *Shattered Mirror Fireplace* is an assemblage of mirror fragments glued to wallpaper that's been painted with varying shades of pink to create an ombré effect. The vintage Knoll Platner coffee table belonged to her parents (her mother was an executive at Knoll). Four Marcel Breuer chairs, set around a dining table, have been painted a shade of pink called Versailles Rose. Once again, a variety of wall art, found objects, and sculpture dot the space.



Another doorway, which is framed by large pink tassels.
Photo: Seth Smoot Photography



Danielle Mourning, photographed inside her artistic home.
Photo: Seth Smoot Photography