

This Modern Gothic Nursery Has an Unexpected Two-Tone Ceiling



by [Thao Thai](#) • published 2 days ago



Credit: [Christian Garibaldi](#)

When you step into this playful nursery, your eyes can't help but be drawn to the graphic whale wallpaper, which gets mirrored on opposite walls of the room. It was selected for the smallest member of the family, whose name is — of course — Jonah! This Jersey-based family of three is not at all afraid of bold design, which is reflected even in their littlest one's space, and they called on designer Karen B. Wolf to help bring their vision to life. Wolf says, "They love pattern and whimsy and wanted to bring this design aesthetic to their newborn son's nursery."



Credit: [Christian Garibaldi](#)

Aside from that stand-out wallpaper, there's no shortage of interesting touches. The vaulted ceiling is painted in alternating shades of white and charcoal to complement the walls of the room, highlighting the unique architecture of the space. Wolf says, "Ceilings used to be one of the most neglected spaces in design but now is considered a fifth wall. I added a two-toned ceiling to balance the patterns and ground the room." Even the hanging light fixture presents a moment of glam and architectural interest, with the vertical lines contrasting against the horizontal stripes in the ceiling.



Credit: [Christian Garibaldi](#)

The black furniture, from the dresser to the [Delta crib](#) and bookshelf, all work together to ground the nursery. And to break up the grey-and-white scheme, there are touches of lime green in the [patterned rug](#) and art, and vibrant turquoise in the rocking chair and throw pillows. The family is drawn to “the fun, colorful touches, like the lime green bamboo mirror and the blue marquee arrow that provide pops of color against the wallpaper.” All these details are thoughtfully executed, and tie the room together, giving it a cool and playful theme that’s reminiscent of a cool downtown music venue.



Credit: [Christian Garibaldi](#)

In curating objects for a space, especially one that is already so bold, Wolf advises, “It’s important to find objects of various sizes and textures that catch the eye and play to the overall vibe of the room.” Her picks are of a similar style — vintage-modern — and come from local antique dealers. Look for items that are a little unexpected as decor, such as the vintage black jack toys resting next to a painted skull vase. The wooden letters and numbers all get grouped together on a bookshelf, giving a sense of cohesion to the vignette, even though each piece is curated from different places. About her unusual and fearless style, Wolf says, “A design crafted without personality is boring and forgettable.”

For functional rooms that can grow with kids, the trick is to keep the motif timeless. “First dream up a design that features neutrals paired with pops of color and pattern; [then pick] a formula that without question encourages the wow factor,” says Wolf. “We try to avoid themes as that can get dated.” There’s nothing bland about this space, and we have a feeling that Jonah will find new things to explore in his room for years to come.