flower

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Floral

Alicia and Adam Rico, the husband-and-wife team behind **Bows & Arrows** *in Dallas, bring a painterly touch and a signature organic style to arrangements that are right on target*

By **ABBY BRASWELL** *Photography by* **STEPHEN KARLISCH**

Alicia and Adam Rico, each with a degree in painting, share a passion for flowers. "We're on the same page, pretty much always," says Alicia. In the foyer of a Highland Park home decorated by Cathy Kincaid, open petals of 'Coral Charm' peonies have a gradation of color, which the duo prefers as opposed to materials in saturated hues that look "straight out of the tube," says Alicia.

'Buckeye Belle,' 'Red Charm,' and 'Coral Charm' peonies are a living reflection of the blooms in the *Jasper Peony* wallpaper by Carleton V. The drapery fabric is *Gallica* by Colefax and Fowler. OPPOSITE: On an antique Jupe dining table, white scabiosas dance in an arrangement that includes hellebores, alliums, and trailing Carolina jasmine. The color scheme is fitting for a room enveloped in the rural scenes of colonial life in Zuber's *Views of North America*. Overhead is a Regency crystal chandelier from the 1820s.

WHEN TWO PAINTERS MET IN A CHANCE ENCOUNTER at a restaurant in Brooklyn, they never would have imagined that they'd fall in love, get married, and have two beautiful daughters. And they certainly wouldn't have foreseen teaming up deep in the heart of Texas to foster a movement that would involve switching their artistic medium to flowers.

Armed with painting degrees (hers from Texas Christian University and his from Pratt Institute), Alicia and Adam Rico decided to pick up and move to Dallas, her hometown. She had some experience working at a flower shop in New York, so they decided to combine their pursuits and open up a flower shop and art gallery. "We had a funky little space and had art openings every month," says Alicia. "We waited to see what could support ourselves. Eventually the flowers won."

Today, the couple owns Bows & Arrows, a floral-and-events firm known for its lush, over-the-top designs that leave quite the impression. With a big-as-Texas following in the wedding industry, they create flowers for nuptials in the Lone Star state as well as in far-flung locations from Thailand to Puerto Rico.

No surprise that there's plenty of Bows & Arrows buzz around town. "Their work is just gorgeous," says interior designer Cathy Kincaid, who decorated the circa-1921 Highland Park house in which the arrangements for this story were photographed. Kincaid's richly layered rooms share a lavish sensibility with Bows & Arrows' arrangements. "I love that there's so much detail in Cathy's design, from the wallpaper to the hardware, and I think our work is heavy on the details, too," says Alicia.

"When we opened Bows and Arrows in 2009, we wanted to bring a gardenesque, organic perspective to the area," says

An arrangement of blush-colored peonies and lisianthus among purple and mauve hellebores, cornflowers, and coleus lends a moody effect to faux bois–painted corner with a John Rosselli bedside table, lamp by Christopher Spitzmiller, and butterfly art from Kenneth Neame. OPPOSITE: Golden tones in Braquenié *Bengali* wallpaper and Lisa Fine *Rambagh* and *Baroda II* fabrics are mirrored in a sunny arrangement of peonies, dahlias, alliums, hellebores, and 'Beatrice' garden roses.

Alicia. Indeed, every Bows & Arrows arrangement has a just-plucked-from-the-garden look, perhaps belying that each and every element is meticulously selected and carefully placed.

The Ricos' art backgrounds continually shape their aesthetic, especially when it comes to color. When choosing flowers, they try to steer clear from "straight-out-of-the-tube" colors, as they call them. Anything with a palette that fades is preferable, such as the subtle gradations on the petals of an open peony.

While they both forage and condition materials, Alicia typically makes all of the smaller arrangements and Adam handles on-site installations and the building of structures. Having mastered how to work in tandem at home, office, and wherever their flowers take them, the duo encourages and critiques one another along the way. The tiniest leaf or petal, direction or curve is not off limits. "Most of the time we can read each other's mind," laughs Alicia. And, ultimately, each creation reflects the shared vision of two painters who are definitely leaving their mark on the world of flowers.

For more information, see Sources, page 84.

Cathy Kincaid

The renowned Dallas decorator's rooms in a client's "traditional, English chintzy house," as she calls it, serve as sumptuous counterparts to Bows & Arrows' garden-style arrangements. Here, Kincaid shares a few of her floral favorites.

FLOWER ... Roses. On my seventh birthday, my mother had to cancel my party because I had the measles. So the mothers of all my friends brought me roses from their gardens. I had these little vases of roses all over the house. To this day, whenever I smell them I'm reminded of how they lifted my spirits as a little girl.

FABRICS ... Robert Kime, for the interesting colorways; Pierre Frey, for the Indian-style prints; and Penny Morrison, when I want a more contemporary look.

GARDEN SHOP ... Thompson & Hanson in Houston is one of my favorite places to go for plant material. It's a wonderful little shop that changes seasonally. They also have a fabulous café called Tiny Boxwoods.

SCENT ... Anything by Jo Malone! I really just love all of her fragrances—they're such interesting mixes.

PUBLIC GARDEN ... I love the New York Botanical Garden, especially the Enid Haupt Conservatory with all of the orchids. And there are some beautiful gardens right here under our nose, like the Fort Worth Botanic Garden.