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01 Knots Rugs x Knowle Hall featuring Dawn, Nat Maks x Knots Rugs, Category 7, Best Interior

02 Charm, Marcel Wanders for Sahrai Milano Category 3, Best Modern Design Deluxe



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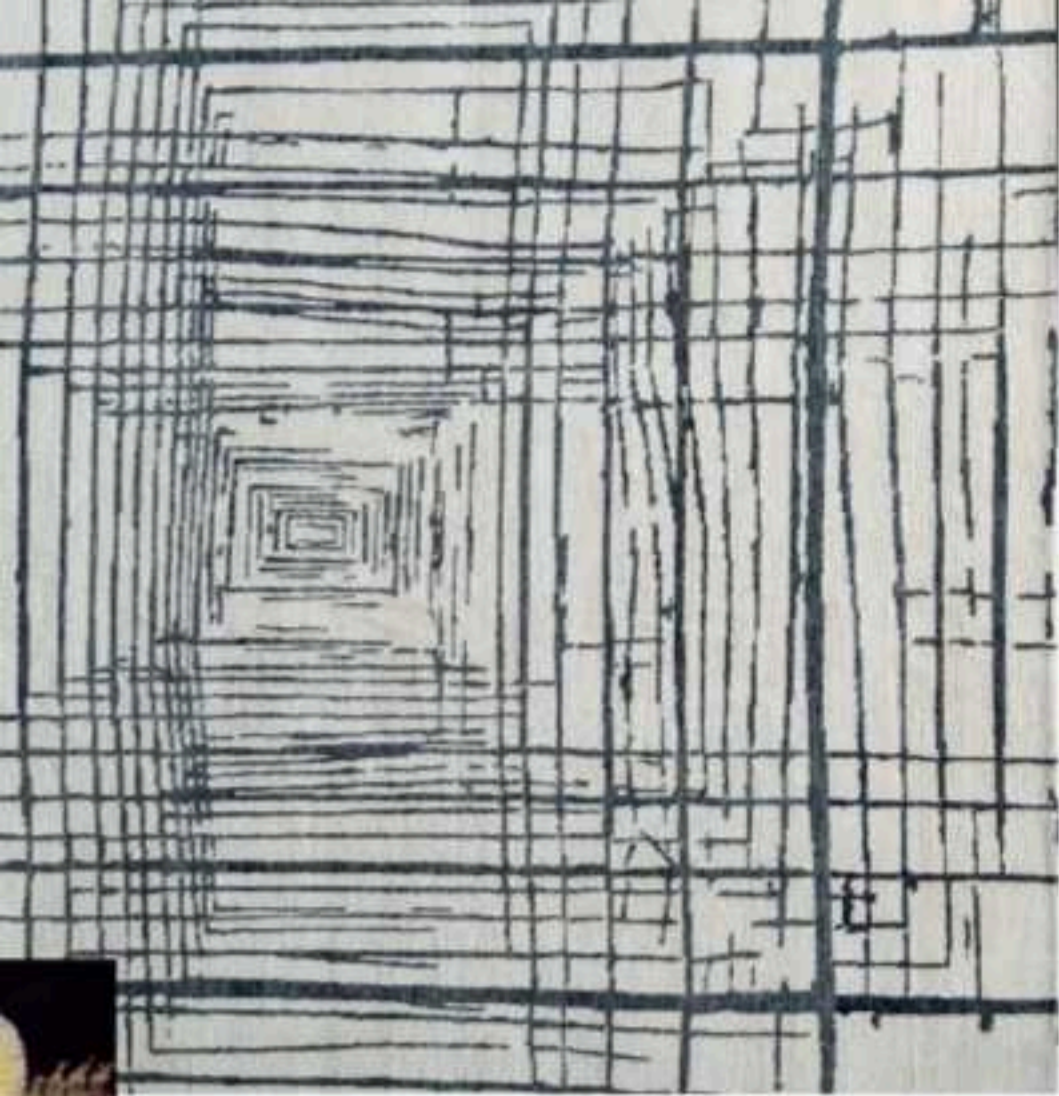


Carpet Design Awards

The shortlisted entries have been selected for the Carpet Design Awards 2024! With more than 200 entries, the jury had a host of options from which to choose their favourite five in each of the eight categories. From these, the top three scoring rugs from each category will be on show in the CDA display at Domotex Hanover. Category 3, Best Modern Design Deluxe, had the most contenders for the shortlist with the five judges, chaired by Jamie Metrick from Elite, voting for sixteen different designs.

Three of the other judges—Carin Terins from RugVista, artist and interior designer Sandra Keja-Planken and Decor8 founder Holly Becker—have returned to the panel having sat on it in 2023, while the Azerbaijani artist, Faig Ahmed is new to the 2024 Awards panel. Shown here are some of the rugs in the running for the coveted CDA trophies. Be sure to attend the CDA ceremony at 5.30pm on Friday 12 January at Domotex Hanover to hear the winners being announced. www.domotex.de





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03 *Kismet Manchaha*, Jaipur Rugs, Category 4, Best Transitional Design

04 *Labyrinth*, Wool & Silk, Category 2, Best Modern Design Superior

05 *Illuminata*, Edelgrund, Category 8, Sustainability Award

06 *Maschera*, Dena Lawrence, Category 1, Best Studio Artist Design



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07 *White & Beige Collection*, Maison Rhizomes, Category 6, Best Collection

08 *Chalet*, Creative Matters, Category 5, Best Flatweave Design



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Sustainable goals

In September 2023, COVER magazine and Label STEP came together to host two enlightening Round Table Discussions at COVER Connect New York. The sessions—led by STEP Director, Reto Aschwanden and COVER Editor, Lucy Upward—provided a collaborative platform for members of the handmade rug industry to delve into critical topics, including sustainability and the global weaving landscape. Here, Kate Kolberg offers insight into the first of the discussions about sustainability in rug design



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01-03 Images of production in Nepal, courtesy of Label STEP

The first Round Table Discussion at COVER Connect New York (CCNY), titled 'Sustainability Goals: The Rug Industry Working Together', revolved around the subject of sustainability in the handmade rug industry. Discussing this issue, alongside Lucy Upward and Reto Aschwanden, were industry panelists Ali McMurter from Creative Matters, Daisy Barquist from Tamarian and Tovi Diler from Kirkit Rugs.

The panel began by considering the ways in which the handmade rug industry is already well-positioned to meet the growing demand for eco-friendly, sustainable products. The most obvious reason for this is that handmade rugs are fabricated using manual labour rather

than energy consuming machines. However, less obvious is that there is a durability and longevity inherent to the quality and design of high-end rugs, which means they tend to have a much longer lifespan than some other mass-produced carpets.

In contrast to these positive qualities, the session acknowledged that there are environmental challenges connected to the production and distribution of handmade rugs. Issues such as untreated wastewater, excessive plastic usage in packaging, and the long-distance transportation of rugs via air freight were highlighted. Participants delved into the existing approaches and strategies, including those spearheaded by Label STEP, aimed at

reducing the industry's environmental footprint.

Panelists and attendees, including Deborah Hernandez and her students from the Contemporary Rug Design program at The Fashion Institute of Technology, fostered new ideas and identified opportunities for collaboration to create a more environmentally conscious rug industry. Suggestions included the possibility of collaboration between rug companies to ensure best practices in production, such as wastewater management, were being implemented. A LinkedIn group, 'Environmental Stewardship in the Rug Industry', was also created as a platform for continuing this conversation and collaboration (see News for how to join).

CCNY 2023 provided a platform for crucial conversations that addressed the challenges and opportunities facing the handmade rug industry. From fostering sustainability initiatives to celebrating the diversity of global weaving regions, the event demonstrated that the industry is committed to evolving, while preserving the heritage and craftsmanship that make handmade rugs truly exceptional.

www.label-step.org

Profile

CREATIVE MATTERS

As the founder and president of Creative Matters hands over the leadership reins to two long-standing team members of the Toronto-based brand, **Rachel Meek** reports on the managing partners' plans

'I'll never forget walking into this tiny studio and seeing desks strewn with gorgeous paint pots and sketches' Ana Cunningham recalls of a textile-school field trip in the 1990s. 'There was so much happening, and I thought, this is where I want to be!' The Toronto studio was that of Creative Matters Inc. (CMI). She joined the rug company in 1998 to assist in the transition from hand-painted to digital design processes and, in the mid-2010s, was instrumental in expanding its capabilities within the hospitality industry.

This year, the company celebrates its thirty-fifth anniversary and, with founder and president Carol Sebert leaving to concentrate on other artistic pursuits, Cunningham has taken joint ownership of the company, as managing partner with Ali McMurter—a designer at CMI since 2006. The handover began in 2017, and it is clear from the partners' ambitious outlook that, under their experienced guidance, exciting times lie ahead for Creative Matters.

A newly refreshed showroom, studio and website represent CMI's strong creative principles, and a refined custom order process makes it as easy as possible for designers to access and understand potential outcomes for custom design solutions. This builds upon a 'floor to ceiling' service for bespoke interior surfaces, so the company is in a prime position to take on more of the complex, creatively invigorating projects that Cunningham and McMurter clearly delight in.



Photo credit: Brandon Barry

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01 BKS Speakeasy at Muir, Halifax, Nova Scotia by Studio Munge with hand-tufted carpet by Creative Matters Inc.

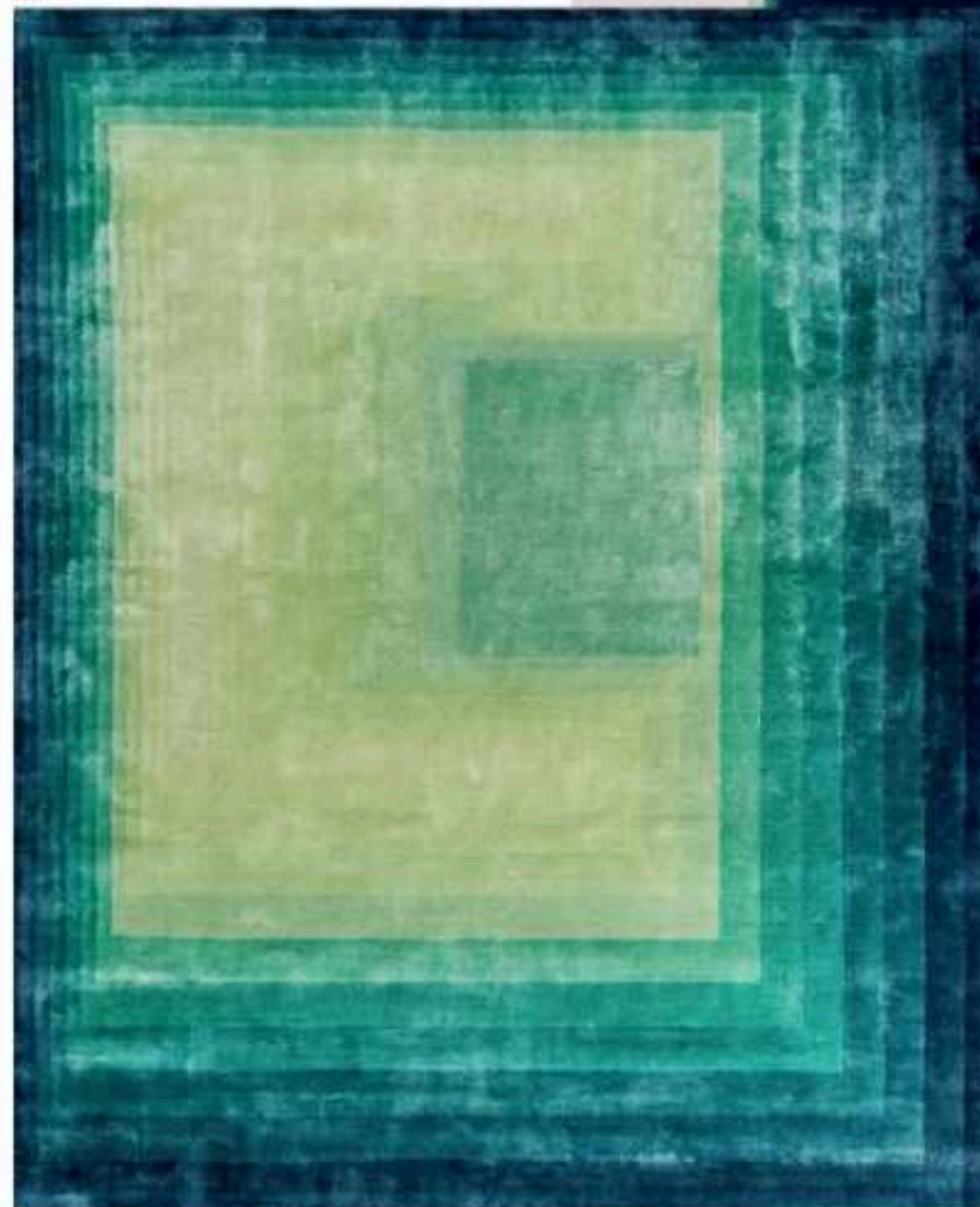
02 *Exhale* rug, Vanguard collection

03 *Aura* rug, Vanguard collection

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04 Ali McMurter and Ana Cunningham, managing partners, Creative Matters Inc.

05 *Shorelines* rug, Arcadian collection

06 *Boulevard* rug, Vista collection



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Three new CMI collections launched at COVER Connect New York in September: Vanguard is hand knotted in Nepal and draws upon various art movements. From it, the spacious *Exhale* apparently evokes many an audible sigh from viewers; Vista is the company's first collection to be hand knotted in Afghanistan with Ghazni wool; Arcadian is inspired by the ways that water flows across various natural landscapes. Plus a partnership with the Toronto design firm Burdiflek was announced, on an upcoming collection of pure silk rugs.

Water has been a key theme for CMI elsewhere this year too.

The *Redoux Passager* installation at Paris Design Week saw woven and tufted surfaces—by Creative Matters—that appeared to be brimming over the wooden frames of furniture by LOMA, like an overfilled cup (see Last Page). Plus, water stewardship at its mills is key to the brand's current sustainability goals.

Another new initiative, with a potentially massive environmental benefit, is the new EcoAx line of Axminster carpet, launching autumn 2023. Geared towards the hospitality industry, this cradle-to-cradle product is not just bio-degradable but compostable, meaning it nourishes the soil upon



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decomposition at the end of its serviceable life. With the volume of carpet consumed for relatively short periods by this industry, this stands to be a hugely beneficial invention.

So, with CMI's creativity taking so many admirable paths, I ask what is at the core of its new-era-ethos: 'That we continue to offer a high-quality service across all levels of the business,' says Cunningham.

'I've experienced an organic career trajectory with Creative Matters,' McMurter reflects. 'Ana and I are focused on providing that same experience for other members of our team who want to continue growing. We are ready to push forwards as leaders in the company and help other people to accelerate their professional growth in the process.' creativemattersinc.com

The wonder of water

The precious nature of water was the subject of Canadian rug brand Creative Matters' installation *Redoux Passager* during Paris Design Week in September. Back in 2022 the brand teamed up with Paris design studio LOMA to create the *Winter Garden* display for PDW. For 2023, the two brands came together once again to create an installation made of sustainable and natural fibres such as silk, wool and wood at Galerie Heureux les Curieux, in the heart of the Marais district.

With multiple elements including numerous rugs, the display was intended as an immersive experience for visitors to understand Creative Matters' commitment to water stewardship in rug production (see Profile). Managing partner at Creative Matters, Ana Cunningham, commented, 'We were so thrilled to be back for Paris Design Week. Our *Redoux Passager* caught the attention of the show's community in a deep and captivating way. Visitors became lost in a sea of wondrous, vivid blue shades, a tactile experience complementing the exquisitely made furniture. The powerful message of sustainability resonated deeply, reminding us of the importance of preserving our planet's precious beauty. An unforgettable experience that has left many in awe.'

www.creativemattersinc.com