

Rugged Appeal

A well-chosen rug can pull together a whole room. Bringing underfoot warmth to a wooden or tiled floor, or detail to a carpeted area, rugs add colour, texture and impact to any space.



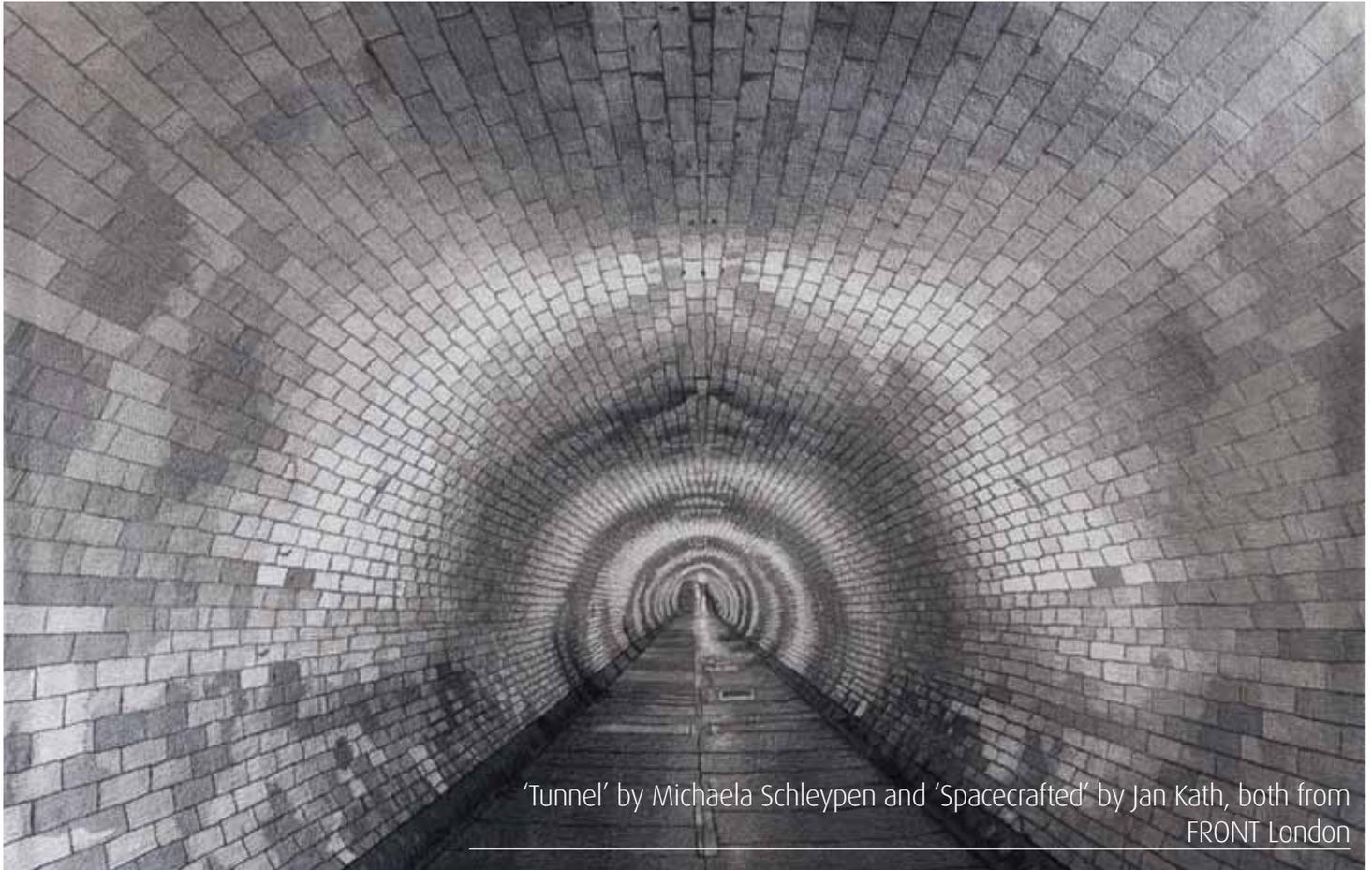
'Threads' by Tania Johnson

The versatility of rugs means infinite design options!

"There are two distinct trends at the moment," Tim Mook, Director

of Felt told us. "The first is for subtle colour combinations of all-natural, un-dyed wool. Natural wool is effortlessly luxurious and easy to use in any interior scheme, so the creams, greys and browns found in natural

wool are in constant demand. Felt's new white-on-white collection celebrates the beauty of new white wool, with rugs and cushions in a spring fresh all-white felt and braid. On the other end of the spectrum,



'Tunnel' by Michaela Schleypen and 'Spacecrafted' by Jan Kath, both from FRONT London

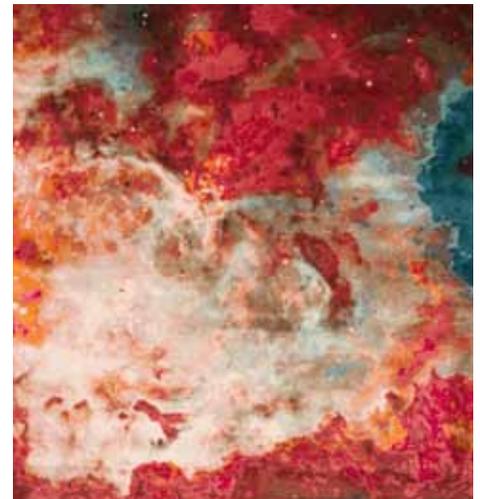
central Asian pattern and colourways, from Uzbek souzanis to Ikat silks, continue to influence Western interior design. Pinks, corals, reds, oranges, greens – often with an anchor of white or black – appear in new contexts on walls, upholstery, and rugs.”

In current client commissions, Felt are seeing monumental room-sized rugs in purple and grey, sumptuous rugs in red, white and orange, and elegant creations in white and grey felt embellished by a subtle blue braid.

Rug designer Tania Johnson creates many bespoke pieces, and describes a recent

project. “With a small swatch of her aubergine sofa fabric to match to, we worked with the client to create a custom colourway of our ‘Threads’ design,” she said. “Less tonal than some of our designs, Threads was a perfect choice for re-colouring with strongly contrasting colours.

“Replacing the background wool tones of orange used in the original with the neutral shades of our client’s accessories, we kept the vibrant silk highlights of aubergine to work with her sofa. Re-scaled as a square for the living room and runner for the kitchen, this design also lends itself well





Harlow Jazz Age rug by Top Floor

▲ to redesigning in any proportion.” While rugs are often used as a neutral anchor for a room, Tania has noticed with her bespoke projects an increased trend of using strong and vibrant colours, particularly these rich mulberry tones. “A current project we are working on with a UK client sees the russet tones of our Breeze design replaced by deep tones of purples gradating into orange hues,” she said. “With the client’s scatter cushions also in these rich tones, the rug will bring the room together beautifully.”

“Like works of art for your floor, a rug can be a room’s centrepiece or its finishing touch,” stated Kelly Butler, Brintons’ Design Manager. “Whether we’ve drawn on our archives or worked with leading design houses on exciting collaborations, we ensure each Brintons rug is beautiful and timeless.”

“With a major Matisse exhibition at London’s Tate Modern this summer, we’re proud to have our very own work in the collection,” Kelly continued. “Mimosa is inspired by a design in the Brintons archive, which was commissioned and created by the artist in 1951. We have modern-day masterpieces from Timorous Beasties, whose rugs play with scale and feature beautiful, directional designs inspired by flora and fauna, as well as bold, pixelated designs from Cristian Zuzunaga.”

Esti Barnes, Founder and Design Director of Top Floor rugs, opined that in the UK market, colours still seem to be stuck in ‘neutral’ – oyster, mushroom, taupe, off-white etc.

“It seems like only our overseas clients are brave enough to choose vibrant colour for their rugs and carpets,” she explained. “We have seen a big increase in demand for silk in both rugs and carpets, and sometimes ▼

▲ on a huge scale. We take a ‘free spirit’ approach to trends in Top Floor, creating what we are attracted to and drawing inspiration from just about everywhere except from within the flooring sector, as is evident with our recently launched Jazz Age Art Deco-themed collection of six designs in wool and silk.”

A recent unusual request from one of Top Floor’s clients was for an enormous stand-alone carpet and multiple wall panels, all to be constructed from the highest quality fur pelts!

Sylka Carpets, meanwhile, are seeing a trend towards bright and bold designs in multi-colours! “Past rug designs tended to be in natural shades, but there is definitely a shift in focus,” stated Steve Farrell, Sylka Carpets’ Managing Director. “We have had a number of unusual requests, including intricate rugs throughout the home of one of Kent’s richest men.

“While the demand for luxury carpets and rugs continues apace, clients are looking for something which is a little bit more hardwearing and affordable. With Sylka, clients get the best of both worlds, an extremely luxurious floor covering that is durable but also more affordable than silk, viscose or bamboo.”

The use of geometric shapes is one of the biggest trends that Jennifer Manners is currently seeing with contemporary rugs.

“From chevrons to hexagons to circles and diamonds, their bold form used in a repeating design are in vogue,” she told us. “Simple geometric shapes can look ultra-modern when scaled to a large size yet used in a smaller scale can look more ▼



Roger Oates' Tapis in raspberry & mulberry



Jennifer Manners' Arabesque

▲ traditional. The lines are refined and clean and I think they are popular for adding to the overall sense of calm.”

People are using geometrics in very different ways too. “Tonal palettes are popular in greys and taupes where the same colour is used all over the rug but in wool and silk,” explained Jennifer. “The silk reflects light so that the shapes are very subtle, giving the rug and the space a very lux feel. We also

see clients using contrasting colours – but almost always two-colours only. The contrast of the colours can be used effectively to complement an already existing scheme or to introduce another colour to create more interest. Either style works to instantly make a room feel very contemporary and updated.”

People are also starting to use smaller rugs in bolder colours to transform a space

without overpowering it. Rugs are one of the quickest ways to alter the feel of a room and smaller pops of colour are effective in creating a sense of fun while maintaining balance.

“I think people find it safer to commit to some colour if it doesn’t dominate the room, and jewel tones are huge with teals and peacock blues dominating,” added Jennifer. “These bold colours look great” ▼



'Mimosa' from Brintons

▲ with a strong contrast colour of ivory or grey and can work seamlessly into most schemes. Rugs are unique in their ability to transform a space instantly so making a rug work for your room and the feel you are going for is the key."

Woven on traditional narrow-width looms the Roger Oates flatweaves can be joined by hand to create rugs of almost any dimension. Recent projects include a 17m long rug seamed with a plain border commissioned for a wide corridor in Somerset House, and a patchwork rug that incorporated several different flatweave designs for an embassy in Madagascar.

"There is a real sense of wanting things to feel made with a freshness and originality," said Roger. "This translates into products being designed which are more colourful and decorative with texture and a real personality. Consumers are happy to invest in a more expensive product that they are excited by, and that will endure."

The Roger Oates Tapis wool collection offers a similar flexibility to the flatweaves. Designs are made up in geometric modules of stripes, squares and rectangles joined by blanket stitch.

A most interesting – and groundbreaking – trend in luxury rug design at the moment is photorealism.

"We represent two of the world's most innovative rug designers, Jan Kath and Michaela Schleyphen, both of whom have presented photorealistic rugs as part of their latest collections," explained Aigars Zelmenis, Managing Director of FRONT London. "Michaela Schleyphen, for example, works with hand-tufted techniques and ▼



Central Asian patterns and colourways from Felt



WovenGround: Bandas
by Gandia Blasco

120 colours – each colour is represented by an individual coloured yarn – which are often changed knot by knot.

“The trend for interesting textures and combinations of materials and manufacturing techniques is continuing to be strong and there is much demand for this kind of product,” Paul Vowles of WovenGround told us. “Rugs have taken on a more important role in interiors as wooden floors remain popular, especially in living areas, and we see an increasing number of industry professionals designing their schemes to complement the rug, not the other way around. A rug adds an invaluable layer of texture to a room, which can then be complemented by accessories and soft furnishings.

“The new colours are fresh but soft, a touch sharper than the pastels we have seen earlier this year – yellows, oranges, teal blues, combined with neutrals and black,” Paul concluded. “There is a lot of detail and interest in the most successful new designs.”

So roll out a new rug and reveal a new room!

▲ used her signature super fine colour gradation to create near photographic appearance in her Tunnel rug. Taking inspiration from the Greenwich foot tunnel, which runs north to south beneath the river Thames, this large landscape format draws the eye to the centre of the design, giving the impression of a three dimensional space.

This is an exceptional design, given that this is the first time we’ve seen photorealism in hand-tufted rugs.”

Jan Kath on the other hand practices hand-knotted rug weaving. His latest design, Spacecrafted, pushes the boundaries of what is achievable by incorporating more than