

Glimpses,

glitches,

and gestures

cc-tapis invited five designers to interpret the concept of gesture as hand-knotted rugs for the Gesture Project. Denna Jones investigates



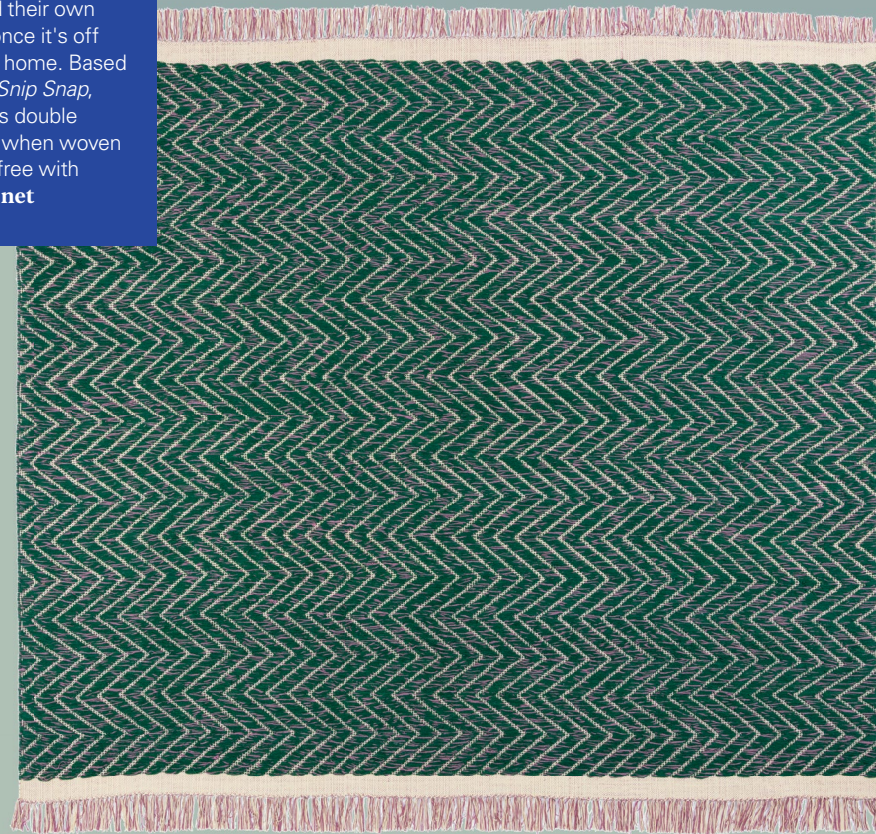
Mindscape

Mindscape by Mae Engelgeer investigates digital gesture to 'take the viewer on a journey to another space'. Her wool, silk and linen rugs rely on texture to mirror the design. The outcome is an interdependence of material and concept that becomes a digital dualism that echoes the concept of the 'ghost in the machine'. www.mae-engelgeer.nl



Cultivate

Cultivate by Yuri Himuro invites the rug owner to add their own gestures to the rug once it's off the loom and in their home. Based on Himuro's project *Snip Snap*, the jacquard pattern's double structure is revealed when woven threads are snipped free with shears. www.h-m-r.net



Patcha

Patcha by Patricia Urquiola adopts the visuals of spontaneous mixed-media collage to create plank-like forms woven with upcycled and left-over materials from textile and rug production. The plank-like forms and 'found' colour of Urquiola's rugs resonate with the forms and colours of St Ives Modernist Margaret Mellis's driftwood sculptures. www.patriciaurquiola.com



The Gesture Project of handmade rugs produced by cc-tapis investigates gesture as the root of artistic expression. An initiative of cc-tapis artistic director Daniele Lora, the project brings together five designers—Patricia Urquiola, Sabine Marcelis, Philippe Malouin, Mae Engelgeer, and Yuri Himuro—who meditate on the meaning of 'simple' hand and tool movements and what Lora describes as the 'single sign' of gesture. The designs led cc-tapis to develop new techniques and to introduce previously unexplored weaving techniques and novel materials.

The background to the project is the 'gesturalism' of the mid-20th-century art movement known as abstract expressionism. The movement's action painters are notably represented by Jackson Pollock who stepped on floor-based canvases to sweep the surfaces with gesture from a paint-loaded brush or crouched over the surface to control long paint drips. The art movement is cited as the influence for the cc-tapis Gesture Project. It's worth considering, however, whether the unique way each designer interprets gesture has more in common with theatrical gesture. Gesture by an actor is a tool they use to paraphrase their performance. It isn't a translation of words, it isn't gestural art, it's a new language. The five designers of the Gesture Project have each created a new language of theatrical gesture enhanced by materials and techniques. www.cc-tapis.com



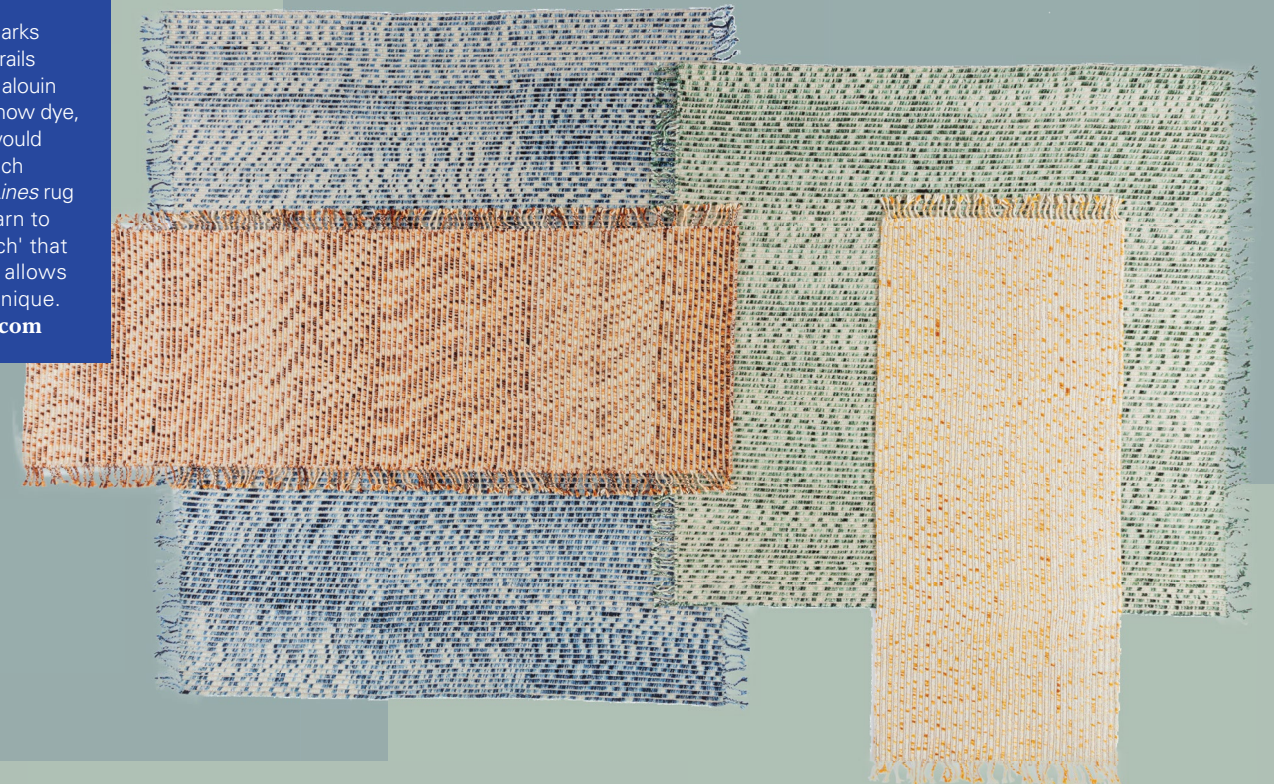
Stroke

Stroke by Sabine Marcelis employs a domestic theme that references home as a canvas where daily activities include cleaning a smooth surface with soap in sweeping, arms-length linear strokes. www.sabinemarcelis.com



Lines

Lines by Philippe Malouin represents the irregular marks left by a soft crayon as it trails across a paper surface. Malouin and Lora collaborated on how dye, material and production would accentuate the design. Each weaver who works on a *Lines* rug uses a different ball of yarn to introduce a stylistic 'glitch' that echoes the concept and allows each rug to be entirely unique. www.philippemalouin.com



Cutting edge: talking Snip Snap rugs with Yuri Himuro

Denna Jones talks to cc-tapis collaborator Japanese designer Yuri Himuro about how her innovative Snip Snap textiles translated into covetable rug designs



Photo: Katsuke Higuchi

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01 Cultivate rugs designed by Yuri Himuro for cc-tapis

02 Snip Snap textiles by Yuri Himuro

How did you get the idea to do create your Snip Snap work?

I realised that I could associate the texture of the threads with many different things. Even when the texture of the threads is the same, it would appear as if we are looking at a water splash if there is a person swimming in the foreground, while it would seem that we are looking at a mowed lawn if there is a lawnmower. If there is an airplane, the cut threads would seem to have formed contrails.

By cutting the threads to a uniform length or cutting them all off, or by changing the way or the angle they are cut, you can create subtle changes in the tapestry or rug's texture. Each of us can arrive at different stories when the same work is approached from different perspectives. I feel as if I've provided my audience with the stage and the characters on it, and it's up to them to decide what sort of stories to come up with by snipping the threads.

Do you weave Snip Snap tapestries on a handloom?

They are woven using a computerised jacquard loom at a factory in Gifu. When the weaving is done they are cut into smaller pieces by hand at the studio.

Do people snipping your scenes feel like they too are artists?

Those who cut *Snip Snap* have different ideas. Some people think about the structure as if they were creating their own work as an artist and cut it as if they were painting. At some of the stores where the tapestries are sold the sellers sometimes also snip and turn them into collaborative works of art with their customers. Some people also want to keep a trace of the cut as a memento of their child's first use of scissors.

Are kids more willing to 'snip' than adults?

Kids are definitely more willing to 'snip' than

the adults! While the adults cut with a picture of what they want their end products to look like, the kids don't really care—they simply enjoy doing their thing with the scissors. The kids all ended up with very vigorous and unique final products.

Was it difficult to translate your tapestry process for the cc-tapis weavers who created your Snip Snap rugs?

I've designed a few rugs before using the gun-tufting technique, but this is the first time I've designed a woven rug. The cc-tapis team reinterpreted the structure of *Snip Snap* to translate it into rugs and they completed the transformation after we went through multiple rounds of trial and error. There are a lot of things that need to be taken into account when it comes to making this type of rug, such as making sure it doesn't unravel when cut, and making sure the threads don't get tripped up too much.

Will people who spend money on a cc-tapis rug be reluctant to cut into it?

I don't know anyone who has the rug yet because it only launched last month (July 2020). I can understand people's hesitation when it comes to cutting something so expensive. I think it's possible to actually use it without cutting it. As you use it, you can cut it if you want to make a few design changes, or if it gets dirty somewhere, you can just cut out that part. You don't have to cut it immediately after you buy it. When or if to cut it is up to the person who has the rug.

Are wool rugs popular in Japan or are tatami mats more common?

In Japan the tatami mat used to be culturally popular, but now most houses only have wooden flooring. I think more and more people are incorporating rugs into their flooring.

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