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It's all about Winning!

New York-based rug company Warp & Weft launched a competition last year for design students to create their own rug design

The results are in! In November 2011, the New York-based rug company Warp & Weft announced the outcome of the company's Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) student Rug Design Competition, launched earlier in the year. The two winners and three runners-up from the New York art college were revealed to the public just before Christmas. Meanwhile the two winning design are being made into rugs to be shown at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair in New York in May 2012 on the stand of Warp & Weft.

As companies producing interior products such as rugs, textiles and wallpapers look for ways to generate more exciting and innovative designs they are employing big name artists or designers from alternative markets to draw in new ideas and possibly new client bases.

Another way of creating a wealth of new ideas and talent is of course to offer the invitation to students, who are ready and eager to show off their accumulating skills. In doing this companies like Warp & Weft not only bring new insights to their repertoire but also introduce young talent into a more unusual market in the interiors world – few colleges actually promote rug design.

First place in Warp & Weft's competition went to Denize Sofia Maaloe's design *Full Circle* which was inspired by the idea of bringing healing and peaceful energy into the home. Student Maaloe grows healing herbs and plants and had the idea to create a sun-print of sage, which is known for its home blessing and healing qualities. The qualities of the Van Dyke Brown print create an craft-driven aesthetic with a grounding effect. The design will be made into a hand-knotted rug.

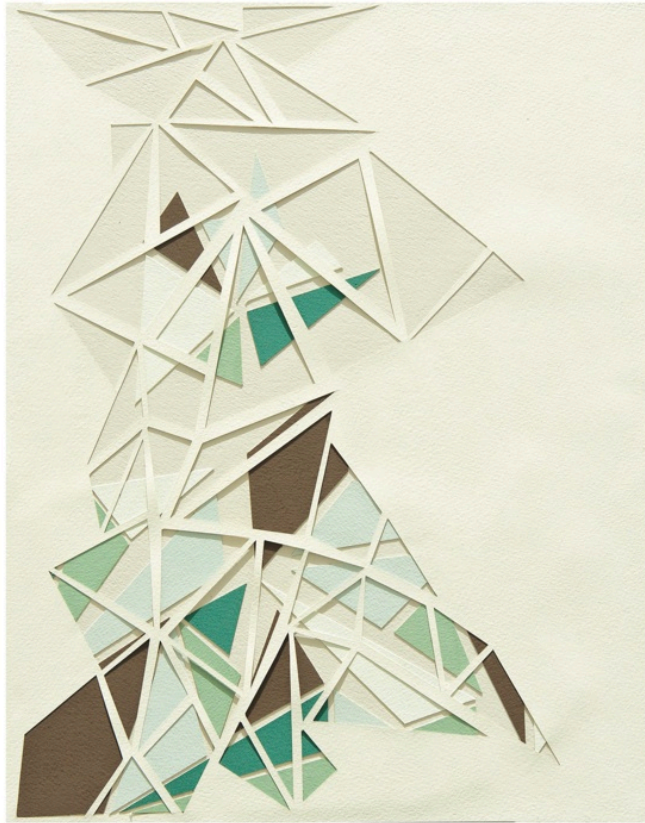
01 Winner: *Full Circle* rug
design by Denize Sofia
Maaloe

02 2nd Place: Rug design
by Charlotte Rodiere

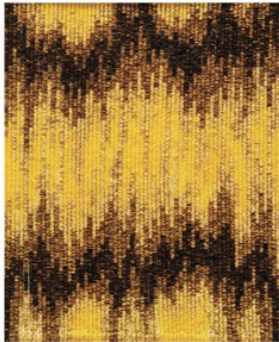
03 1st Runner-up: Rug
design by Carolina Mandia

04 2nd Runner-up: Rug
design by Stephanie Gales

05 3rd Runner-up: Rug
design by Michelle
Parascandolo



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There were so many great designs that two winners were chosen: second place went to Charlotte Rodiere's beautiful geometric design, which was inspired by the aesthetic effects of kaleidoscopes. It will be made into a hand-tufted rug. The two winning designs will not only be shown at ICFF but will also become part of Warp & Weft's Designers' Studio Collection, which represent the collaborative work between artists and designers and company president and creative director Michael Mandapati. He adds: "To say these students are talented is an understatement. The competition was very tough and our jury had an incredibly difficult time making their choices. The results are so impressive, in fact, that even though we had originally committed to producing one top design and showing it at ICFF 2012, we will now be producing the two top designs."

Three runners up prizes go to Carolina Mandia, who used threaded pasta toasted at varying heats to create the colour gradation in her design which gives an ikat effect. The idea came from Mandia's childhood memories of making macaroni necklaces with her mother. Stephanie Gales' design of soft billowing shapes looks both organic and constructed and reminds one of wallpaper or fabric designs. Third runner up was Michelle Parascandolo whose highly textural piece was designed to evoke a feeling of peace and calm with its neutral palette and repeated ripple effect.

Warp & Weft was founded by Mandapati in 2001 as a gallery selling antique oriental carpets. The company then expanded in 2005 to design and manufacture high-end hand-woven and hand-tufted area rugs. www.warpandweft.com 