# cover

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# SSR X RUG STAR COLLECTION

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MILAN DESIGN WEEK • NEW AT CC-TAPIS
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CO LLEC TIONS

# Christiane Millinger x Michael Howells

**'I think there is a tendency to fear colour. One reason why we shot the rugs in interior environments is to demonstrate that they work'**

02



03

**01** Interior featuring *This is a Millinger + Howells Rug Yastik 2.1*

**02** Detail of *This is a Millinger + Howells Rug Luri 2.1*

**03** Interior featuring *This is a Millinger + Howells Rug Qashqaii 2.1* and *This is a Millinger + Howells Rug Luri 2.1*

Interior designer Michael Howells and rug retailer Christiane Millinger, both based in Portland, Oregon, share a passion for textile art. Howells caught the 'rug bug' from visiting Millinger in her gallery and the pair have worked on many custom rugs for projects all over the US as well as the EasyMe rug collection with Jürgen Dahlmanns of Rug Star back in 2019.

For 2022, the duo have a new collection of rugs which certainly demand attention. Howells has great respect for Millinger's vast experience with rugs and the collection was born during the pandemic from their shared ideas and knowledge. 'The goal was to reinterpret antique patterns with a dynamic modern vocabulary,' says Millinger, who chose which designs would work, selected yarns and knot counts and commissioned the work in Nepal. 'It was labour intensive, but so much fun!' she adds.

For the dramatic designs Howells was inspired by antique rugs. 'I was initially inspired by my own modest collection of Turkmen pieces, all of which I acquired from Christiane,' he comments. Other designs come from a 19th century yastik, and Bakhtiari and Qashqa'i rugs. In creating a Turkmen rug for today's interiors, his background in photography helped him to produce 'action shots' of rugs, creating a blurred effect that he describes 'like the blur of the stars in *Star Trek* when the ship goes into warp speed'. The effect creates dynamic compositions that transform traditional motifs.

The bold colours add even more movement and life to the designs. 'In my own work I see colour as an opportunity and the lack of it as a missed opportunity,' explains Howells. 'I think there is a tendency to fear colour. One reason why we shot the rugs in interior environments is to demonstrate that they work.' And why should they not? The colourways are based on the antiques that we have adorned our spaces with for centuries. Millinger adds: 'I think colour is one of the greatest gifts the universe gave to us humans.'

Millinger has been studying tribal rugs for over thirty years, having worked with rug restorer Robert Mann and then Jim Opie, meeting most of the world's most important rug collectors and experts along the way. 'Rugs for me have been an incredible platform for my never-ending search for beauty,' she explains. After being surrounded by so many rug creatives and the brands she admires for so many years, it is only now that she has taken the step to create her own collection, thanks to the support and encouragement of Howells.

The resulting designs are what Millinger refers to as 'unapologetically joyful', paying full respect to both antique and contemporary rugs. Asked if he has any new rug ideas, Howells says, 'Always. It's a bit like fly fishing: you make the most thoughtful cast you can and hope for a strike. Christiane lets me know when I have hit upon something that might be interesting for someone beyond myself.'

**www.christianemillinger.com**
**www.howellsarc.com**