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ROMEO SOZZI
AND HIS MAGIC MOMENTS

MOUNTAIN VISIONS BY
CHARLOTTE PERRIAND

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THE EDGE OF ELEGANCE

THE GIRL FROM BRAZIL
CRISTIANA MASCARENHAS

STORM KING
ART CENTER

CARLOS SLIM'S
MEXICAN MUSEUM

HOMAGE TO
ART DECO

STEPHANIE ODEGARD
HER GLOBAL MISSION

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text: Izabel Spike
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Above: detail of Stephanie Odegard's living room in Manhattan with, in the foreground, a table which she designed and had produced by skilled craftsmen. Above the fireplace, a photo of an iceberg in Disko Bay taken by Lynn Davis. On the mantelpiece, an antique Spanish lantern stands on one side and, on the other, a wooden, polychrome Tibetan box containing a portrayal of the Dalai Lama: a 'yangam' in Tibet. Boxes of this type were used to store precious objects. (date 18th/19th century). Top right, on the wall, an antique polychrome depiction of angels; it came from a church ceiling in Brazil.

Below it, two Ming 'kosus' portraying flying horses.

Right-hand page: Stephanie Odegard.

stephanie odegard's global mission

She provoked a revolt in America's carpet world. Creativity and social responsibility have equipped her in her quest to revive and modernise the traditional Tibetan carpet-making industry and introduce the products in America. She translated classical motifs into almost minimalist patterns and had the carpets made locally.

The product, starting with sheep shearing and then spinning the wool and dyeing the yarns, is entirely performed by hand, with absolutely no child labour involved.

It is a process that makes of every carpet a unique work of art. Stephanie Odegard may live and work in Manhattan, but she has lost her heart to various other countries, including Nepal, Jamaica, India and Fiji, where she has launched projects to present old crafts in a new light and guarantee the workers a decent living.



photo: Avis Nadel

These pages show pictures of Stephanie Odegard's showroom in the New York Design Center on Lexington Avenue, Manhattan.

Top left: a Stephanie Odegard Ainu design, based on a 13th-century Japanese textile design licensed by the Museum of New Mexico.

The white marble table is a hand-crafted Jali Jour design inspired by the Indian Moghul period; it is a design by Paul Mattieu for Stephanie Odegard. The pattern in which the marble has been carved is unique – this was the first time Indian Jali had been interpreted without straight sides; it was made by master carvers in India.

Also, a bronze Champa table by Devi Design. The standing lamp is a reproduction Mario Fortuny design, manufactured under licence.

Top right: a reproduction gilt Tibetan door-handle made by master craftsmen in Nepal. They applied the same techniques as used in Derge Tibet in the 17th century. The hand-knotted silk rug was designed by Laura Valentine, who won the Odegard Design Competition in 2007.

Below left: a rug inspired by the work of the photographer, Michael Somoroff. Odegard met him when she designed a rug, in collaboration with an architect, for the photographer's Soho loft in the 1990s.

In the foreground, a blue rug designed for Donghia. The white marble table was designed by Paul Mattieu and the two bronze objects are original repoussé designed by Viya Home.

Below right: Stephanie's Cypress Oushak rug with a silver-coloured chaise designed by Paul Mattieu for Odegard.

Right-hand page: Stephanie Odegard's Ikat Flowers rug. It is made from hand-spun Tibetan wool.



In the 1980s she presided over the reintroduction of modern carpets in the United States. For many years the main interest had been focused almost exclusively on Persian rugs, dhurries and sisal matting. The fact that she – a woman – had the guts to revive the lethargic American carpets market with new, pure designs, caused a veritable revolution. She introduced hand-made Tibetan carpets of the highest quality, simplifying the traditional motifs and creating in that way an entirely new, modern look.

Stephanie Odegard: "Initially most people had difficulty understanding what I was doing. At that stage, people from the arts world and leading interior designers were the only ones who appreciated the intrinsic beauty of my rugs. They saw the beauty of hand-spun, dyed woollen yarns and the hand-knotting that makes every carpet a unique work of art. In Nepal they create as the knotting process progresses. It makes a great difference."

When, in the 1980s, she was working as a consultant for the World Bank in Nepal, she encountered people among the Tibetan refugees, as well as among the Nepalese themselves, who were skilled in hand-knotting and weaving. The beauty of the traditional artisanal products immediately appealed to her, and she started collecting them.

"I came to the conclusion that those traditional, often ancient patterns could have a modern flavour if minor alterations were made. I began by capturing the essence of the Tibetan designs, often in one colour. I got rid of all the frills. The re-



sult was a more or less minimalist rug that, in its very simplicity, radiated great beauty. I formed a small collection of around twenty rugs, that I imported to New York. On the carpet scene, where there were no real designers, scepticism prevailed. It was a world of imitators, with an absence of any kind of innovation. My collection worked as a slow-starting shockwave.” Few people in that world of carpets paid attention to the word ‘copyright’ and thought that her ‘original design’ had little legal significance. It took the necessary lawsuits to protect the copyright: both for herself and for the artisans in Nepal who made the rugs.

The motto for the 25th anniversary of her Odegard Carpets Collection: Environment, Breaking the Cycle of Poverty through Sustainable Design and Social Responsibility, was no fluke. She not only changed the face of the age-old Nepalese carpet industry, but she also succeeded in raising the living standards of thousand of artisans and their children. She founded RugMark Nepal (today known as GoodWeave), an organisation that checks the working conditions in the factories and seeks to end child labour. Her new approach to the Nepalese carpet-making art has meant that many craftspeople found new work and were guaranteed a fixed income. They could send their children to school and give them the foundations for a better life.



Above: the living room in Stephanie Odegard's Manhattan apartment. The walls are hung with antique textiles, mainly from Tibet. At the windows, 13th-century velvet, also from Tibet, and what is probably part of a wall hanging that belonged to an important Tibetan Buddhist lama. Below right: one of Stephanie's favourite artworks hangs in her bedroom. It is a Ravi Varma print of Radha and Krishna decorated with silk and pearls.

“Through our work we have achieved a great deal for former child slaves. We’ve ensured education and good jobs for them. Those children are really smart and know how to persevere. GoodWeave and responsible buyers have a tremendous job battling against human trafficking. Consumers want to pay less and less for carpets, especially with the Internet, so child labour in carpet production is a growing phenomenon.” The craving for pure beauty and social responsibility is an important guideline in Stephanie Odegard's life. She has served as a volunteer for the UN Peace Corps, as a marketing consultant for the United Nations, the World Bank and is frequently called in by the governments of Nepal, Jamaica and Fiji to take part in sustainable projects aimed at improving the inhabitants' social conditions. Over the last twenty years she has been particularly active in Jamaica and Fiji on behalf of small-scale industries, also with respect to the export of their products. “The idea is always to elevate existing indigenous craftsmanship to a higher level. When things are produced in a certain country the product gets ‘soul’ and we make sure the people there receive fair payment. After all, it’s about the people who put their very hearts into the products. Many of my clients are art collectors who can appreciate that”, Stephanie told us – mentioning in passing that her carpets grace the painting galleries of the Getty Museum in Los Angeles. Together with the museum curators she conceived a series of rugs to complement the art on the walls.



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