





Showrooms:

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RUG NEWS and Design WWW.RUGNEWSANDDESIGN.COM

Rug News and Design is writing about lifestyle from the viewpoint of the floor—starting with the rug—"the fifth wall" To keep up with lifestyle changes, go to www.rugnewsanddesign.com for shared content, knowledge and past articles. Visit www.ruqindustrynews.com for industry information, press releases and upcoming tradeshows and design shows.

Observations

Rugs get re-shuffled every ten years or so.



Big Rugs Big Inventory Big Space

At Home in the Vallev's Formula





Walking the Market

A review of beautiful wool rugs.



Rugs Set the Stage

An Interview with Amy Rubin, Set Designer, "Gloria - A Life"

Designers' Notebooks

Kerrie Kellv Kerrie Kelly Design Lab Sacramento, CA



Publisher - Leslie Stroh Publisher@rugnewsanddesign.com

RugNews and Design Editor - Sarah Stroh Thornton Sarah. Stroh@rugnewsanddesign.com Ecommerce & Production Director - Graham Stroh Graham.Stroh@rugnewsanddesign.com Advertising & Accounts - Kathleen Bingham Kathleen.Bingham@rugnewsanddesign.com Designers' Notebooks Curator - Ann Shriver Sargent Ann@sargentdesigncompany.com

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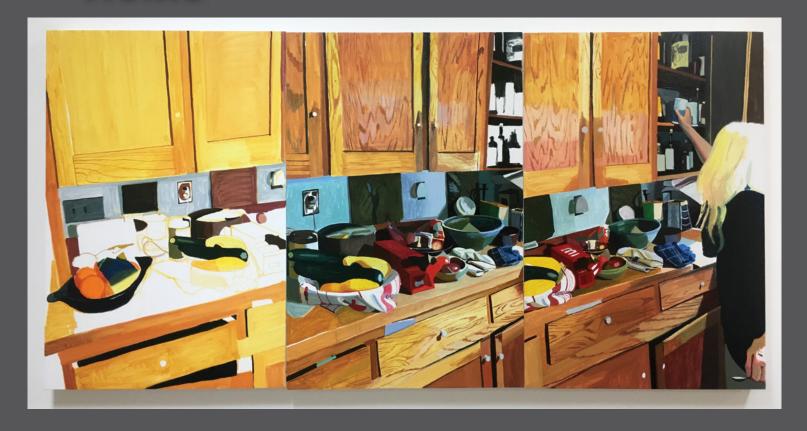








Home



Lyons Wier Gallery (NYC) presents "Reaching for the Salt" by Chelsea Gibson.

Chelsea Gibson paints portraits of home. Home for the upstate New York artist is not a static entity; it cannot not be measured in square feet or valued in dollars. Rather, home is a feeling-something experienced-that roots itself in a person's relationship to space, time, things, and people.

To capture and emit the performative sense of the home, Gibson loads many of her paintings with what some would call quotidian clutter, but that together speak volumes outside of the singular moment being painted. While all of Gibson's subjects are in some ways defined by and also defining their surroundings, the real potency of the artist's work resides in her own (seemingly unseen) presence. There is an intimacy in the paintings-a deeply personal and profound attachment to the people, things, and spaces depicted-that takes on an almost Proustian quality in the age of social

media. In this way, the work is a meditation on life-on our relationship to our surroundings, but ultimately, on our relationship with ourselves.

On the surface, Gibson paints very tangible portraits of people and objects in their homes. From this stems a deeper, reflexive awareness of the performance of living that defines "home" as a state of harmony-as the alignment of person, place, object, and time. Whether in her own home or someone else's, Gibson's portraits and still lives express feelings of loss and love, empathy, and acceptance of the human condition.



RugNews and Design Editor - Sarah Stroh Thornton Sarah.Stroh@rugnewsanddesign.com

On the Cover: "Reaching for the Salt" (detail shown) will be on exhibition at the Lyons Wier Gallery from January 2 to January 26, 2019. 542 West 24th Street, New York, NY 10011. Other pictures from Chelsea Gibson can be seen online www.lyonswiergallery.



IF THE RUG FITS ACCESSORIZE IT

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Tempaper & The Novogratz

friend who knows the business of rugs observed the other day that about every 10 years or so the deck of cards for rugs gets re-shuffled. He said that we are in one of those periods now. He is re-shuffling his deck which is why he shall remain nameless.

In a re-shuffle maybe the number cards become more important than the face cards. And maybe the face cards get re-colored. And maybe the designs on the face cards are rescaled.

In practical terms, maybe copies of Jan Kath's erased look have peaked as a design direction and people are starting to explore structurally developed designs to work within a specific space. A room is four walls and a floor with contents, lighting and a ceiling.

The bulk of four walls are covered by paint, but wallpaper, particularly digitally printed wallpaper is making a comeback as a decorative element. Wallpaper does not have to cover all four walls but can be used as a decorative element all in itself. Peel and stick wall paper can even be a custom method of showing room settings or product shots in place of inventory at a trade show—horizontally instead of vertically. Custom peel and stick vinyl is re-useable.

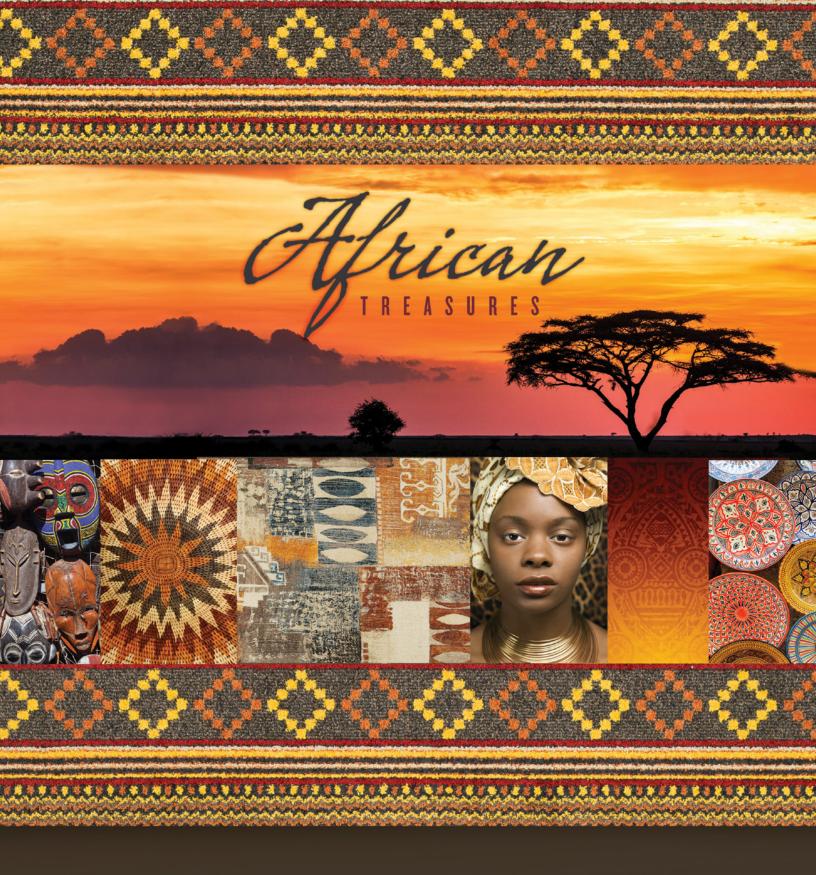
For short term apartment rentals where the walls have to be returned as rented, the peel and stick wall coverings whether vinyl or paper were designed with that in mind. Wouldn't be the worst thing in the world to give millennials a coupon for a wall mural with every rug sold. Co-marketing to a high turnover market isn't the worst idea in the world. Ten rolls of peel and stick free or at a discount for a designer's client's children isn't a bad idea either.

From the research reports I have seen, apartments turnover faster than homes. That suggests to me that the demand of rugs that is linked to space changes more often in the apartment market than in the standalone home market. From what I read, more millennials live in apartments than in houses. Household formation as measured by marriage runs up against one research report that found that millennials were more likely to buy a house first and get married second. Libby Langdon at Kas, talked about furnishing dorm rooms as step one. Step two was taking the dorm room furniture to the first apartment, and step three was using family hand me downs.

The other surprise the I found in reading about millennials was that they would use Interior Designers. This was reported as a result with no explanation. I don't know whether it is a design issue, a service issue, or a form of social media to get design expertise in person.

Whatever the reason, engagement with a person is a part of selling, a part of designing, and a part of a community. We want to fit in which makes us want to look a little bit like our friends and neighbors, with the shock value of some eclectic variation. Status may not be keeping up with the Jones' but being a little more original than the Jones'.

The market both online and Brick & Mortar (B&M) sells new. Everybody, at all levels of distribution, has their perennial best sellers. Designers have a look, and the community that they sell to has a look. As we have been told, (elsewhere in this issue) maintaining a brand is about re-coloring it. A good design continues to sell. Maintaining quality allows the brand to hold on to its established market position and then build on it with new colors.





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Madcap Cottage has a look and a following

One of the great strengths of the Persian rug market was the ability of weavers to make a product that looked like a better quality in a slight-

Jason Oliver Nixon, Madcap Cottage



ly lower cost structure weave. This produced a unique geographic effect. As a product sold better the number of villages making variations on the original expanded. As the product wasn't the original it sold for a slightly lower price. The profits were in the gap between the slightly lower price and the lower cost of manufacture and the buyer's perception of value.

In a hand knotted carpets there is very little room for productivity improvements. All weavers tie about the same number of knots per day per quality. Wool prices are indicative of quality of wool meaning that there are no bargains, the price is indicative of

the quality and color. For a custom rug, costs of preparation and loom drawing are assigned to one rug. For production rugs the set-up costs are distributed over a number of rugs.

One very wise old rug merchant, now deceased, told me that when he went to the rug producing areas he always stopped in the food bazaar to check the prices of onions, cooking oil and rice. These prices were indicative of the base level of weaver's wages. Recently there was an article in the Indian newspapers that said the farmers were only getting 1.8 rupees per kg for onions. That is well below the cost of growing onions. The retail price in the major cities was holding at 20 rupees, the middlemen taking the difference. The same situation was affecting potatoes. The article was about a crisis in agriculture.

Since rug weaving in India is co-located with agriculture, this should mean that the farmers (men are weavers) will turn back to weaving for supplemental income. Either that, or there will be more women weaving and tufting rugs by necessity.

As much as I like talking about and writing about the product—rugs, the real questions are how to use them, how to clean them, and how they change the look and feel of a room.

Those are questions that can only be answered one on one. To do that all of us have to engage more with consumers. In every town or city there is at least on real estate agent who gets most of the listings. In real estate listings are the money. I am sure that the person with the most listings also has the largest social network in town and talks to the most people each week.

Libby Langdon's presentation at Kas in High Point was solving a dorm room problem, fitting two people in no space.



Libby Langdon

We talk of social media as if it is a new idea. Technologically it is a new idea. I can be friends with someone in India. But if I am selling something locally, being friends with someone in India is a counter-productive use of time. Social networking within 30 miles, an easy drive, makes more sense. Social networking is more important than social media.

Until two people engage in talking and sharing ideas the conversation is lop-sided. Solving a problem is part of an engaged

conversation. However expressed, listening to the customer's problem or the customer's need is the real key to engagement. Finding that out is difficult. It is even more difficult if there is a more than decade age gap between the two parties to the conversation. You might as well call in a translator. For anyone reading this: Who is your 25 year old, your 30 year old? If it is not you, then then listen to them. If you can't identify a 25/30 year old in your sales staff, then you have a communications problem.

For those with experience, not 25/30, volunteer for every opportunity. Volunteer for the committee with the most other volunteers. As a B&M owner, make your stacks moveable so you can offer free space to local organizations. The more volunteer work you do, the broader your social network. The more events you promote, the more traffic you see.

For every category of potential customer that you can think of in your area of expertise, who is your engagement contact person. The internet sells price. Everybody else has to sell engagement before they sell product or for a designer, outcome. If people are not walking in to your front door, then you have to find their front door. **

This picture from the 295 Fifth Avenue Nourison showroom window tells the kind of a complete story that suits every showroom at every trade show.





At Home in the Valley's Formula

umbstruck! This is what happens to most first-time buyers walking into the 18,000 square foot warehouse, according to Steve Steinhardt. They don't know where to turn. The sales staff is forbidden to say, "Can I help you." Because the overwhelmed customer doesn't know what to say, so s/he says, "No, I am just looking." Rather let the customer absorb the surroundings, and then they will begin to engage themselves in a process of discovery.

"Get them in the door then engage them"

Customers swing the rug racks themselves, unless they are old and infirm. Feeling, touching and experiencing the rugs, the customer becomes self-engaged in the process. Steve says a client may spend an hour or more just going through the racks, before they ask a question. Contrary to many brick and mortar rug stores, the stacks of rugs on the floor are minimal – maybe 4 or 5 to the stack. But there are sales people nearby to answer a question or flip a rug pile. There is no mystery about the rugs. Hang tags prominently display the price, and the math of discounts is done for the customer. Manufacturer's labels are not removed.

A sales lady was heard to say to a confused couple, "Perhaps, if you identify the rugs you DON'T like, you will be able to know what you DO like." It wasn't long before the couple was actively asking questions. Sarah watched them discover a large rug which they quickly brought. The process of touching and feeling the rugs and experiencing the color made the buying decision easier than if a salesperson had been pressuring them.





The staff is salaried; there is no commission. So, a sales person can and does offer help and advice to any customer in the store; they will focus on that customer needs not on what product will earn the bigger commission or reduce dead inventory. For instance, if a customer has fallen in love with a rug, but it their hesitancy suggests the price is pressuring their budget, the sales person will show them a similar rug of less price.

"Come in to enjoy the experience and fun of rug shopping where you can touch them and see their true colors in person!"

The racks are arranged to educate the customer up the price range, starting with indoor-outdoor at the front of the store and working up to higher quality. Sixty-five percent of the rugs are of manmade fibers, or some combination, such as viscose and polypropylene. Thirty-five







percent are wool. The large majority of the rugs are machine made, with an emphasis on texture and design. Old fashioned traditional rugs are rare.

Throughout the space are aids to help the customer know what size rug to buy for the space. There are bedroom vignettes with Queen and King size beds. Different living room settings are shown with rugs – as are dining room vignettes. And on the floor, are outlines of rug sizes, again subtly educating the customer up the size scale. The web site has diagrams of furniture placement and rug sizes.

BIG RUGS for BIG SPACES

And so, over 2,000 rugs of the 4,000 rug inventory are larger than 8x10! There are 12'x18' foot rugs in inventory; 10' x 13' and 12' x 15' are popular sizes. These rugs are shown on large racks in some cases, two rugs high. The rugs are easily and quickly dropped down for the customer. Sarah Stroh observed a customer saying, "I would like a rug in a slightly lighter green." And she swears that within 2 minutes a lighter green large rug was dropped in front of the customer! No waiting while two men flipped through a large pile of rugs looking for the "light green."

The At Home in the Valley target customer is furnishing a \$750,000 plus home – probably more like \$1-2 million. Rooms are big. "Great





Rooms" are the norm. Wandering around the 18,000 foot warehouse with huge rugs hanging above them, the buyers begin to understand that BIG is good. This sensation is absolutely impossible to get surfing the Internet. 5'x8' rugs are sold often as smaller version of the large rug. The store carries all sizes in a programed line. It appears that the customer comes into the store to buy a rug for a large space; they don't come for small rugs. They buy a smaller rug for a back bedroom or a kitchen as an add-on to the main purchase. The emphasis throughout the warehouse is on BIG.

West Coast Tastes are Different

Steve maintains that the West Coast buyer wants plain colors, enhanced by design and texture; the palette of colors is subtle. Runners are a popular item with a whole section devoted to them. Few hand-knotted rugs are sold and what does sell is half the price it was a few years ago. Today, the variations of design and texture possible with machine made rugs are almost infinite.

Millenials will NOT buy anything their parents bought; they want plain colors enhanced by design and texture. Their price point appears to be in the \$500 - \$800 range; so large rugs purchased by them tend to be thinner and definitely need a rug pad, which is an add-on sale. Signage explains rug pads.

Sourcing Rugs

At Home in the Valley concentrates their relationship with a limited number of vendors/manufacturers. Other than a cursory look-arounds at market, they only make appointments with these vendors. Given the

size, manufacturers' reps serve them well. Criteria for selecting a vendor: maintain quality, deliver on time, and don't sell through the internet below their prices. Given the At Home in the Valley selling formula, celebrity licenses do not help sell rugs. Steve prefers to work himself with manufacturers' in-house design staff creating and coloring rugs which he knows his customer base will buy.

Manufacturer's sales aids are used. We saw Jaunty's sample racks and Dalyn's explanation of creating a custom rug. Loloi's Magnolia Display was in the center of the show room.

Who Runs the Store

Nancy & Steve Steinhardt are the nominal owners and managers. But Sonny is the Vice President and Gypsy is Chief of Staff. They are respectively 9 and 2-year old Golden Retrievers. They have two jobs: Greet and engage customers and Prove that rugs and dogs go together. #

Photo's by Sarah Stroh Thornton the Saturday before Christmas in At Home in the Valley's warehouse,.

At Home in the Valley

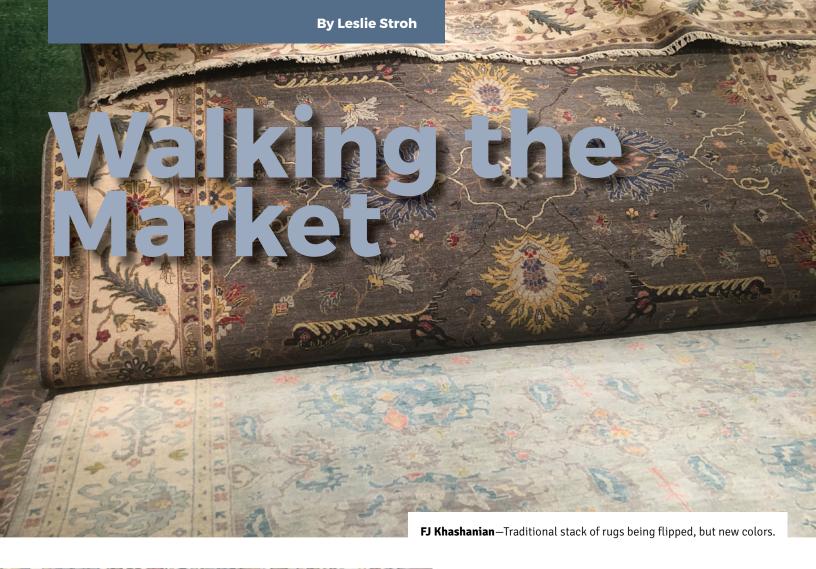
Established 1979 16531 Saticoy Street Van Nuys, CA www.athomeinthevalley.com 18,000 square feet warehouse, 4000+ rug inventory Target Market - \$750,000+ homes within 100 Miles.







FEIZY





ool is the most traditional material for rugs, wool. But today, the wool rug is traditional, modern, and everthing in between. The following images of rugs captures the variety and innovation that we see walking the markets, this year, and every year.

Touch and feel sells rugs, and the most expected, luxurious feeling rugs are still made out of wool. It is a traditional fiber in a whole range of designs and constructions.

Brick and Mortar retailers who carry large selections of wool rugs will always have an advantage over those who don't carry wool. More than 50% of millennials shop for touch and feel. Online does not provide touch and feel, except with returns.

A search of the term "wool" on the Rug News and-Design website identified 1,460 posts incorporating the word wool. Wool is very much the staple of the rug world. **

Karastan—The best selling Karastan 717 design in updated colors.



Feizy-An amalgamation of designs and colors in several samples for a knotted wool rug.



Eliko-Traditional Khorrasan weave from Iran in vintage look with current coloration.

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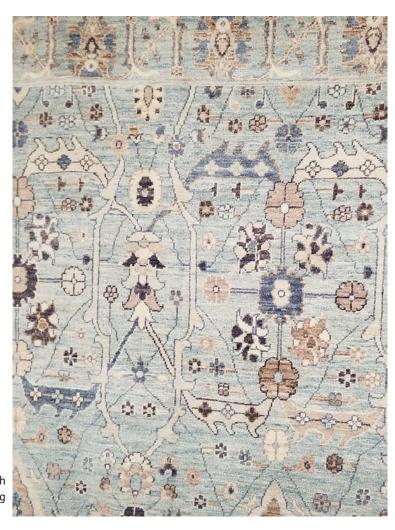
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Caravan Modern—Finely woven in Pakistan this modern knotted rug is a subtle presence especially suited for large sizes.

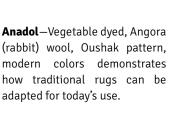


Merrifield Oriental Rugs—Woven (knotted) in Afghanistan, dyed with vegetable dyes, adapted traditional designs in lighter colors, this rug illustrates current production.



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Creative Touch—The new Erin V. Collection designed by Erinn Valencich is a compilation of modern abstract designs with a midcentury influences. It pops.





Harounian Rugs International—Woven in a high low pile construction of wool and silk in India, the details show a unique texture in the Intrigue Collection.



Radici—Fascianosa Collection hand woven in wool in a high low pattern flat weave.





Amer-- Very high quality hand knotted of New Zealand Wool and Raw Silk in India, sizes up to 12'x15 and custom.

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Shop SFC members for products and services that help to sustain a healthy future.



WHAT WOOD IS GOOD? Deforestation is a problem around the world.

LOOK FOR

- Certified by a reputable organization like FSC
- Made of solid North American hardwoods
- Reclaimed materials like old Elm
- Fast-growing renewables like Bamboo
- Plantation-grown wood, such as Mango



WHAT FOAM FOR HOME? Foams and wraps are usually petroleum-based.

LOOK FOR

- Natural latex from rubberwood trees
- Spun wraps from recycled bottles
- Bio hybrids that mix soy and petrol
- Down, kapok or other natural wraps



WHAT LEATHER IS BETTER? Leather production uses land, transport, and chemicals.

LOOK FOR

- Vegetable-Tanned
- US or EU leather production and manufacture



WHAT FABRIC IS FANTASTIC? Textile production is chemical intensive.

LOOK FOR

- Certified organics, especially for cotton
- Other natural fibers such as wool, linen, hemp, and abaca require less water in production
- Recycled content, especially in synthetics



WHAT FINISH IS FINE? Finishes can off gas toxins called VOC's.

LOOK FOR

- · Water-based lacquers, not acetone
- Natural finishes like waxes and oils



WHAT IS AN LCA?

A Life Cycle Assessment tracks environmental impact over extraction of raw materials, processing, manufacturing and transportation through the use, reuse and recycling of the product until it returns to the earth as a nutrient or toxin.



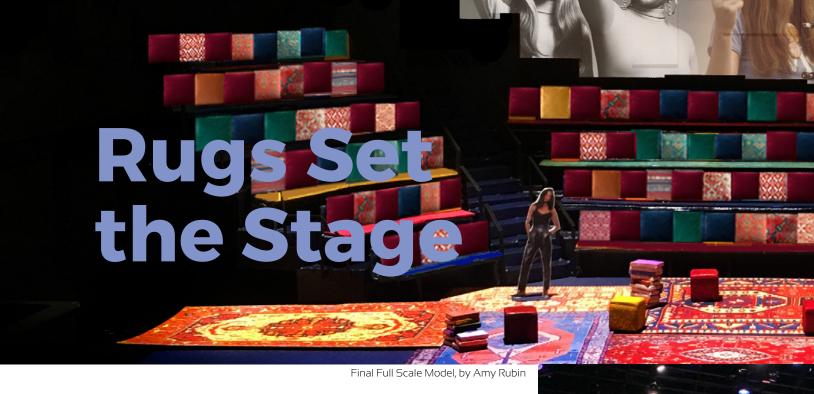












An Interview with Amy Rubin, Set Designer, "Gloria - A Life" Starring Academy Award winner Christine Lahti

by Gretchen Auer

ow does one design a set for a biopic play about a woman who has spent decades advocating for the complete end of hierarchy? Amy Rubin accepted this challenge as the Scenic Designer for the world premiere of "Gloria: A Life," which opened this past October at the Daryl Roth Theater in Union Square. Rubin designed the whole space, not just the stage. She explained that it was important to break down the wall between the audience and the stage because the second part of the play opens up to the audience to create a talking circle, (in fact there is seating on all sides).

The director, Tony Award-winning Diane Paulus, wanted to take inspiration for the set from Gloria's UES apartment at a brownstone building at 118 East 78th Street. Steinem first moved into the apartment as a renter with a friend in 1966 and launched Ms. magazine from the living room in 1972. It was not until decades later that Steinem feathered her nest.

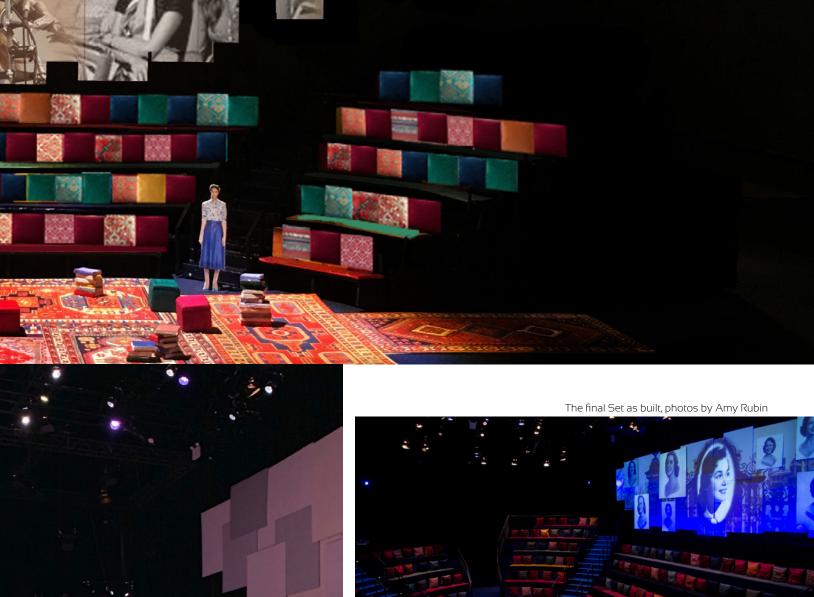
In 2012, Oprah described the style as "bohemian chic" during a tour of the apartment, (the video tour can be found on YouTube). Rubin and Paulus toured the apartment for research and very much wanted to emulate the warm inviting feeling of the apartment. There are lots of rugs, fabrics, throw pillows and art from her travels. Steinem often cites her two years in India after college as having a huge impact on her. One can only speculate that perhaps she also gained an affection for hand-made textiles.

Rubin visited a nearby storied rug dealer in hopes of sourcing rugs from them. It turned out to be too expensive and the store was not interested in play as a marketing opportunity. Rubin did say that going through all of the piles of rugs was helpful in getting a better idea of the style of rugs she wanted. In the end, she purchased 11 rugs from ebay from a dealer in Maryland.

Rubin had custom banquettes upholstered in velvet for audience seating. There are over 200 throw pillows to emulate the "nesting" feeling of Gloria's apartment. The audience seated in the round is drawn into Gloria's personal space, becoming her "talking circle." The audience shares Gloria's life and is motivated to participate in her future.

The Play runs through March 31st at the Daryl Roth Theater in New York City.

Gloria's audience sitting in the round,
Photo by by Xanthi Elbrick
www.xantheelbrickphotography.com









Smyrna Trading—Featuring one-of-a-kind rugs hand knotsd from Turkey, India, Pakistan and Nepal ranging from traditional to contemporary designs.



Pacific Collection—Producing traditional antique designs in Afghanistan as reproduction knots in classic colors and sizes.

Samad Brothers—This picture of wool being dyed is one of my favorite pictures of 2018. Red is a difficult color to dye. The yarn is a beautiful shade of white. It is going into a machine woven rug that will be traditionally washed and finished. This one picture captures my fascination with the business of rugs. Happy New Year. LS.





sign trends and tips. Kerrie is the creative director at Kerrie Kelly Design Lab, a northern California based firm that has design collaborations with many product manufactures including her Feizy rug collection, Coastal Layers. Upon meeting Kerrie it is easy to see why manufactures want to partner with her, she is engaged at the cutting edge of what is going on in the industry from materials to tech and has such an upbeat and forthright demeanor, a winning team member for sure!

To keep relevant Kerrie and her team have not let go of the ground up design projects that put them on the frontline as buyers. Kerrie shared with me some of the ways she thinks about using rugs in her designs. We selected to feature a Spanish Revival home with a flowing open floor plan. I liked this project because of the mix of rugs that were used and how they played off of the other materials in the space. I asked Kerrie to talk about her process and selections.

"I love what is going on in the rug and design industry right now, there is so much good design. We have started to mix in outdoor products indoors in high traffic areas very successfully with natural fiber rugs and skins. Skins are great too because everything cleans off them so easily."

Kerrie Kelly Kerrie Kelly Design Lab Sacramento. CA

"In this updated Spanish Revival house we committed to dark wood floors and a single color on the stucco walls throughout the open space. With this set up of high contrast we then use color and pattern to start layering. The vibrant hand knotted rug in the living room is large and makes a statement, it also gives a wink to the tiled stair risers and sets the pallet for the other accents and fibers throughout. We used a skin rug in a sitting room and a Jute rug in the dining room, this mix of natural fibers works well together and speaks to an easy lifestyle. The best part of a good hand knotted rug is all the different ways you can use it over its lifetime. One can redecorate entirely and keep the same rug, move it to a different room or a different house and build a totally new feeling space around it!" #

Kerrie Kelly Design Lab: kerriekelly.com

By Ann Shriver Sargent with thehometrust.com





