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Rug design takes shape



Interior designer David Kaihoi had the living-room floors of his New York City apartment painstakingly painted with an intricate tumbling-block pattern. Resistant to covering the floor space with the typical rectangle of an area rug, he decided to get creative by cutting a Moroccan wool remnant into an 8-foot-wide Y shape, and positioning one end under the sofa with the other two forking into the room. The effect has the dignity of an area rug, though it is just a little bit lighter. Kaihoi has since teamed up with the venerable brand Patterson Flynn Martin on a collection of conceptual carpets including the contoured, XY design. The motivation for doing so was an idea gaining some traction in the world of rug design: uncommon shapes.

Spanish brand GAN, architect and interior/product designer Patricia Urquiola is also embracing out-of-the-box shapes, ranging from jagged-edge geometrics to the more organic Mangas collection, including the luxurious runner above that adds a sense of warmth and movement to the hallway of the above Madrid apartment. Rugs being seen in different ways are a dynamic part of the space. It would appear Ms. Urquiola is known for innovating; when it comes to shape and scale.

San Francisco designer Lauren Geremia installed Grain Design's blobby Pool rug for a grounding element more

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feminine in nature. She paired a braided-wool amoeba with round-back rattan chairs and circular accent tables to serve its curves. In a Manhattan living room featuring a gridded wall of windows and fireplace with a sharp-lined metal facade, Joe Nahem, of Fox-Nahem Design, introduced a serpentine sofa and curvy midcentury club chairs, and a customized carpet with a slithering, meandering silhouette, an amorphic shape that not only breaks up the hard angles of the room's architecture but contours around the furniture, which makes the signature layout unique.

Within the living room of decorator Regina Moskow's Manhattan apartment, a pair of wavy-edged rugs from Edward Fields carefully delineate the two seating areas while the white silk pile parts like the Red Sea to reveal a path of bare hardwood floor leading to the room's balcony. These smaller irregularly shaped rugs serve to freshen up the layering for occupants who want a conversation piece in front of their sofa or under the coffee table. One of these rugs is ideally suited, according to New York designer Tamara Eaton, who added that: *"It's a bit more exciting than a square on top of a square."*

As with any nascent trend, purposely misshapen rugs have few precedents to reference. The appetite for them has been likened to the geometric abstraction movement in art, the echo of an Ellsworth Kelly impulse, which is to break the shape of the canvas itself. While woven patterns and pile cut in relief have been widely explored, there are designers who believe that shape is the last frontier in creative rug design. Time will tell!

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