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KIRSTEEN PIETERSE, IN HER SYDNEY STUDIO WITH HER WORK DISLOCATE, IS ONE OF SEVEN ARTISTS INVITED TO DESIGN A RUG FOR THE RUG PROJECT 2008. AN INITIATIVE OF DESIGNER RUGS AND ART CONSULTANT VIRGINIA WILSON, ALL PROCEEDS FROM THE AUCTIONS OF THE ONE-OFF ART PIECES WILL BE DONATED TO AUSTRALIAN CHARITIES.

design



RIGHT: PIETERSE'S RUG DISLOCATE IS NEW ZEALAND WOOL, ALL CUT PILE USING VARIOUS PILE HEIGHTS. BELOW: AN ASMAT SHIELD BELONGING TO NEWELL HARRY WAS SOURCE MATERIAL FOR HIS RUG RINZAI MOON, BOTTOM, WOOL AND VISCOSE IN BLACK.



ART & CRAFTS

Prominent Australian contemporary *artists* come together with DESIGNER RUGS for a good cause.

SYMBOL OF WARMTH, hearth and home, cultural cipher – rugs hold a significance that transcends the practical. They weave through the work of Adelaide-based, Tehran-born Hossein Valamanesh signifying loss, transmutation and duality. Valamanesh is one of seven artists invited by Designer Rugs and art consultant Virginia Wilson to participate in The Rug Project 2008, creating single-edition wall and floor rugs to be auctioned in aid of charity. As part of each artist's ongoing body of work, the rugs are highly collectable. "The response from the artists has been fantastic," says Wilson. "They've really engaged with the process. Interestingly, all the artists said they had always wanted to do a rug."

Along with Valamanesh are video artist Shaun Gladwell, recently selected to represent Australia at the 2009 Venice Biennale; sculptor, photographer, artist Newell Harry; indigenous painter and performance artist Clinton Nain; Kirsteen Pieterse, whose constructions are like fine line drawings; Justin Trendall, known for his digital and screenprints on paper, felt and silk; and Gemma Smith, whose sculptural paintings are a celebration of colour. >



< The artists were selected by a committee comprising Wilson and Yosi Tal, director of Designer Rugs; David Clark, editor of *Vogue Living*; Christine Morrow and Ewen McDonald of Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art; Paul Flynn, editor of *Artist Profile*; and Sue Cato of Cato Counsel. "We needed people who were familiar with artists around Australia, to help get a diverse range," says Wilson.

What intrigued Pieterse about the project was the opportunity to work on a large scale, and the challenge of translating her work into another form. "I approached it from a drawing point of view, with the idea of freedom from gravity," she says. "Part of my practice is the problem-solving working with sculpture, the weight of it, the balance. I thought it would be nice to see this as a drawing for a sculpture that would be unencumbered by those things."

Says Smith: "I spend a lot of time researching materials, so first I found out what was possible – the types of wools, the way the yarn was felted, how the rug is put together – and that informed the design. >

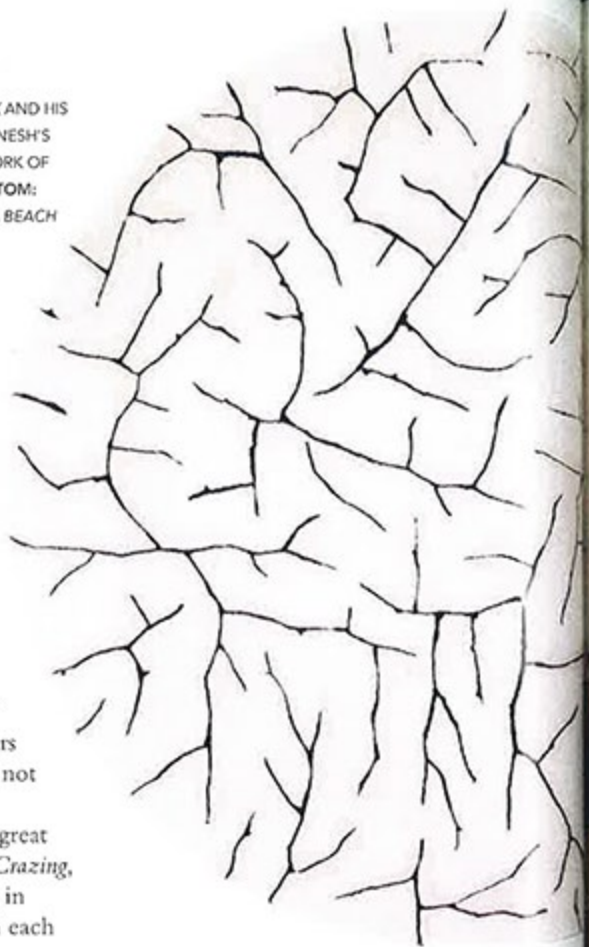
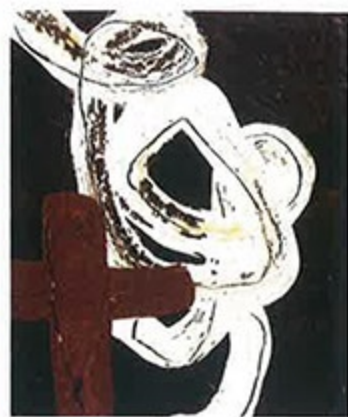
SYDNEY-BASED ARTIST GEMMA SMITH, ABOVE, IN HER REPRESENTATIVE GALLERY, SARAH COTTER GALLERY. SMITH'S RECENT ARTWORK BOULDER 1, ABOVE CENTRE, AND HER RUG UNTITLED, ABOVE LEFT. SHAUN GLADWELL'S RUG DOUBLE VANITAS, BELOW, IS A MIX OF TWISTED AND FELTED YARNS.



IN HIS SYDNEY STUDIO, SHAUN GLADWELL STANDS IN FRONT OF HIS ROLLED RUG, SURROUNDED BY OBJECTS OF INSPIRATION.



LEFT: CLINTON NAIN'S RUG NO WHERE TO WALK AND HIS ARTWORK UNTITLED, BELOW. HOSSEIN VALAMANESH'S RUG UNTITLED, RIGHT, IS INSPIRED BY AN ARTWORK OF HIS MADE FROM MAIDENHAIR FERN TWIGS. BOTTOM: JUSTIN TRENDALL IN HIS STUDIO, AND HIS RUG A BEACH HOUSE FOR TWO ARTISTS, BOTTOM LEFT.



< "I've recently been working through an idea that involves overlapping areas of colour," Smith continues, "so the rug is influenced by sculptures that use translucence, where colours merge where they overlap. A project like this is conceptually interesting to me because it's not translating something I've already done, it's a whole new way of thinking."

"I wanted to keep away from traditional imagery," says Valamanesh, "although I have a great interest in carpets. This image came from a very small work on paper that I'd done, titled *Crazing*, made from branches of very fine maidenhair fern which I used as cracks, like the crazing in a ceramic. What's interesting about the design, I think, is that the branches connect with each other – the way the crack is travelling through the surface."

Since its founding in 1986, Designer Rugs has worked with designers such as Akira Isogawa, Dinosaur Designs and Collette Dinnigan, artists including Janet Laurence, John Coburn and, most recently, the late Minnie Pwerle. "The goal of The Rug Project," says Tal, "is to reach out to new audiences and engage further with the creative community, including designers and architects, introducing them to the applied art of rug design and creation." BETSY BRENNAN

The seven single-edition rugs will be auctioned live at an invitation-only event, hosted by Designer Rugs and MCed by Vogue Living editor David Clark, on 27 August at B2 Studios in Alexandria, Sydney. Auctioneer is Paul Sumner of Mossgreen. All proceeds will go to nominated charities Cure the Future (the Cell and Gene Trust) and the Stephen Sanig Foundation. Enquiries, (02) 9550 9933; www.designerrugs.com.au.



"I APPROACHED
IT FROM A
DRAWING POINT OF
VIEW WITH
FREEDOM FROM
GRAVITY"

