

# cover

Winter 2017 /  
£5 €8 \$10  
cover-magazine.com  
Hali Publications Ltd

**THE ORIGINAL  
DESIGN ISSUE**

ISSN 2042-7069

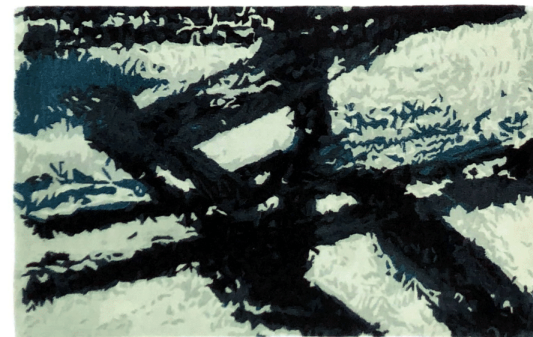
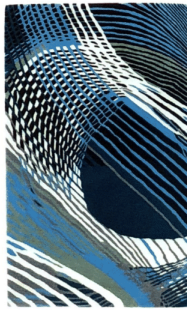


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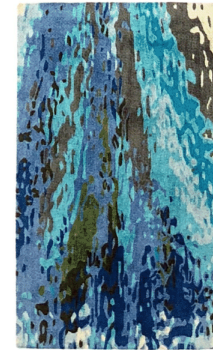
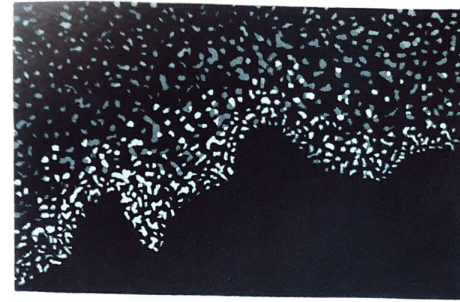
# FOR DIFFA'S SAKE

The DIFFA Collection of 17 rugs by 17 designers launches the Obeetee Express programme, and supports the foundation's fight against AIDS. **Rachel Meek** reports

One of India's largest handmade carpet producers, Obeetee, added another string to its bow in October with a new quick-ship programme of hand-tufted rugs: Obeetee Express. To demonstrate the potential, the company invited 17 interior designers and architects to create customisable rug designs.

The results form the DIFFA Collection, which will benefit Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS (DIFFA) in a number of ways. The first editions were sold at a silent auction during the launch event at Obeetee's New York showroom, and 100% of the proceeds went to the foundation. Going forward, 10% of the net sales from the DIFFA Collection will be donated too, regardless of the clients' colour selections (and there are 194 to choose from). This continuing charity means Obeetee has become DIFFA's sixth Affiliate to participate in the Specify With Care cause-marketing program, which allows DIFFA to support HIV/AIDS service organizations year-round. 'Obeetee has a long philanthropic history, so this is a great fit for us,' enthuses Obeetee's Gretchen Auer.

Many of the designers involved have already created bespoke rugs for interior projects but this is the first time their designs are available commercially. WUNO's Rebecca Wu-Norman reflects on her *Lifeforce*: 'My main considerations were to create a unique product which contributed



to the current dialogue about the global situation with HIV/AIDS. It was important to me to remain on topic, so I created a design using abstracted natural forms in combination with reinterpreted motifs and patterns from sub-Saharan Africa, with the aim being to bring positive attention to the part of the world with the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS. I came to design with the belief that it has the capacity to foster change, so this project was not only a pleasure, but an experience that refreshed my belief in the power of design.'

V Starr Interiors' *Convergence* pays homage to CEO Venus Williams' sporting background, referencing a tennis racket, and Wesley Moon's *Flight to Memphis* nods to a design movement that was all the rage in the 1980s: the decade when AIDS became a prevalent issue and DIFFA formed as a result. Moon states, 'The Obeetee Express programme is brilliant. It fills a void in the rug market that designers have needed for a long time. I just designed a rug that I would want for myself. Naturally I've already ordered a large one for my office conference room!'

Try your hand at customising the DIFFA rugs to immediate and (if you like) crazy effect online at [www.obeeteexpress.com](http://www.obeeteexpress.com)