

Dream Weaver

He looks more like a banker than a craftsman, but this Iranian designer has confounded tradition to create one of the year's most beautiful collections

Words by RUE KOTHARI

Abandoning his career to pursue his passion was no leap of faith for Hossein Rezvani. The age old tradition of weaving carpets was in his blood. From Iranian descent, it was almost natural that his focus settled on the iconic Persian carpet and a compulsion to reinvent it, to give it a modern context. His family had been in the carpet business for three generations, so Hossein took to the road with his father, visiting traditional weavers, using a natural eye for design and innovation to give his father's knowledge new life. In 2008 he quit his job and began designing the first ever contemporary collection of Persian carpets. Three years later and he has travelled the world, acquiring a wealth of inspiration and ideas along the way. His work has been awarded, and the beautiful, fractured carpets widely acclaimed, loved for their raw beauty and originality.

HOW DOES YOUR CULTURAL BACKGROUND INFORM YOUR WORK?

My family is from Iran but my father moved to Germany in the early 60's, and over the years we traveled extensively, discovering different cultures, so of course these are all evident in my work. I like the clean, minimalist European style, but on the other hand I love the Middle Eastern aesthetic, so I always try to mix these elements. Personally, I think it is a gift to have experienced such diversity and to distill this into your work, it's just fabulous.

WHAT IS YOUR DESIGN PHILOSOPHY?

Trends come and go, but the classics remain, that's my philosophy. I wanted to reinterpret an ancient tradition for the third millennium, to create a true modern classic that endures.

HOW HAVE YOU EVOLVED AS AN ARTIST?

My first collection, the Design collection was very abstract and noisy, using bright colors and strong patterns. This year I wanted to create something more neutral and to pay tribute to my Iranian heritage. It's the result of a whole process of growth that has lead me to take traditional patterns and play with them, to create designs with history.

TELL US ABOUT PERSIA REINVENTED?

Tabriz and Bakhtiar are patterns which have existed for more than 100 years. I have taken these ancient traditional patterns and minimized them, adapting the colours for a contemporary feel, but leaving the most



REINVENTING TRADITION
The Tabriz pattern resurrected in pink and cherry tones

REZVANI'S DESIGN COLLECTION
The original carpets drew from traditional modern themes



important thing visible, its origin. Winning the prestigious, international REDdot Award for this work was very precious to me because it acknowledges that I have really connected with people. And it's not just about industry recognition, because these rugs have found a home in beach houses in The Hamptons, minimalist apartments in New York, and palatial villas in The Emirates Hills.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR YOUR CRAFTSMEN TO WEAVE EACH CARPET?

Depending on the quality it can take from three months. For our exclusive, superfine rugs, the weavers take six months. Of course every single piece is made by hand so if it sometimes takes a little longer to reach 100 per cent perfection, that's better. And of course, this handmade quality is reflected in the price.

HARPER'S BAZAAR INTERIORS WOULD LIKE TO CHAMPION THE 'MADE IN ARABIA' HALLMARK AS A STANDARD FOR GREAT CRAFTSMANSHIP AND LUXURY QUALITY, TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE PHENOMENAL TALENT THAT HAILS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THERE IS

A GREATER AWARENESS TODAY OF THE GIFTS THAT THE 'ARABIC' CULTURE HAVE GIVEN TO THE DESIGN INDUSTRY?

Absolutely! With the growth of cities like Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Doha and others, the general awareness of this region has improved massively. The Middle East is gaining attention in every way; the art sector is booming, some of the most striking architectural icons are built there and the design scene is gathering pace every single day. I think it's the combination of the past and the future which makes this region so interesting,

actually the same ingredients which I am putting in my carpets. Arabia is a land filled with opportunity. ■

Hossein Rezvani's Persia Reinvented collection is available from around Dh\$3000 per square meter, at Casapaïou Sheikh Zayed Road. For more information, go to www.hosseinrezvani.com