

VOLUME FOURTEEN FALL 2020

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MAGAZINE

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INSIDE THE WORLD OF  
COREY DAMEN JENKINS

Around the World with Event  
Magician Bryan Rafanelli

From Her Newbury Street  
Design Studio Lisa Sharp  
Links Quality of Surroundings  
to a Happy Life

Hacin + Associates Wows  
Crowds With A Pair of New  
Restaurants



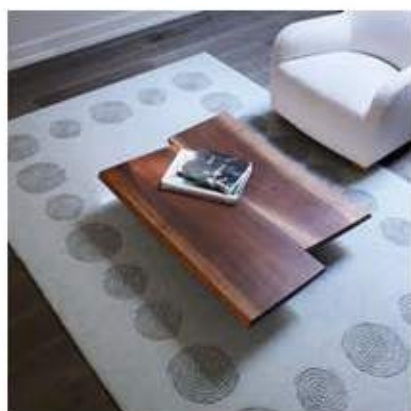
MERIDA

## MAKER'S GUILD

*Under The Guise of Creative Director Sylvie Johnson, Merida Keeps  
The Craft of Rug Making Alive with Its Atelier Collection*

Upon first meeting Merida Creative Director Sylvie Johnson, one might not expect she is a Paris Institute of Political Studies graduate and former public servant. Before stepping into her new role, the Senegal-born Parisian's ascent into the art scene happened rather accidentally. While on vacation in Brittany, France, Johnson stumbled into an exhibition and instantly fell in love with the textiles on display. Soon afterward, she decided to take a year off to learn how to weave. Her career in textiles began with an apprenticeship with a couturier who had previously worked for Christian Lacroix and Chanel. Later, she founded her own Parisian atelier, and this small-batch shop earned her the reputation of "the refined designer's source for textiles."

In her role at Merida, Johnson is rebooting the forgotten tradition of weaving and has given the brand a new focus: the materials used to craft the high-quality, natural, and sustainable rugs. In her words, "Everything begins with the yarn," and this philosophy has produced design results that are subtle, minimal, and above all, a celebration of the materials. Using both powered looms and hand work, Johnson is now working with the design team to create inventive and original rugs by mixing materials and patterns through the interplay of yarn blends, plies, textures, and weaves. A new innovation at Merida, with the help of Johnson, is their "reverse twist" wool rug weaving technique. It was developed to create a tufted crimped yarn for the ultimate innovation in softness. It took Merida two years to develop and was spearheaded in Belgium. The result is a luxurious and resilient rug that is everything you want to feel in a room.



There is a unique soul in textiles that holds up over time, because we can touch and feel it. Oftentimes I travel with the yarns to play with and find inspiration from new and different textures, colors, and materials throughout my travels. Most of my inspiration comes from my travels, time spent in museums, and objects found. I wanted to bring this exceptional magic of yarns to Merida and for each design to feel as if the rugs are a piece of artwork. To do this, I try to understand the yarn and find the best way to promote and celebrate them instead of looking to trends. I look for the right blend, the right colors, and the right design. With the new Atelier collection for Merida, I wanted to introduce new yarns like mohair and alpaca as well as new colors.

- SYLVIE JOHNSON

