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Sylvie Johnson's Paris studio.

MAGAZINE

Sylvie Johnson Weaves a New Narrative From Her Paris Studio

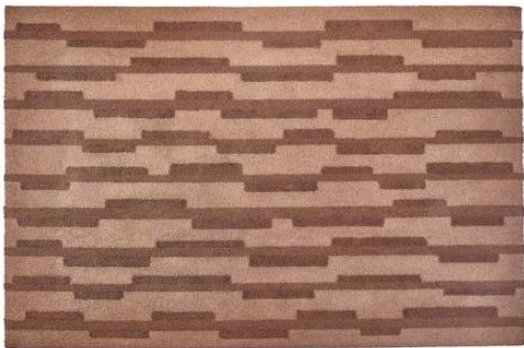
The design sensation counts AD100 maestros like Lee Mindel, Annabelle Selldorf, and Jacques Grange among her loyal clients

Sylvie Johnson's atelier brims with books—more than 700, by her estimate. There's a 19th-century technical guide to weaving, and reference books that range in subject matter from Japanese textiles to Donald Judd. She credits such volumes—and the mentorship of a haute couture weaver—with teaching her a new craft when she left the art world some 15 years ago. Studying complex techniques, then experimenting on a small hand loom, she eventually created samples that could be produced at large scale by a team of weavers. AD100 maestros like Lee Mindel, Annabelle Selldorf, and Jacques Grange took notice, becoming loyal clients. And just last year, the rug company Merida tapped her as its creative director.



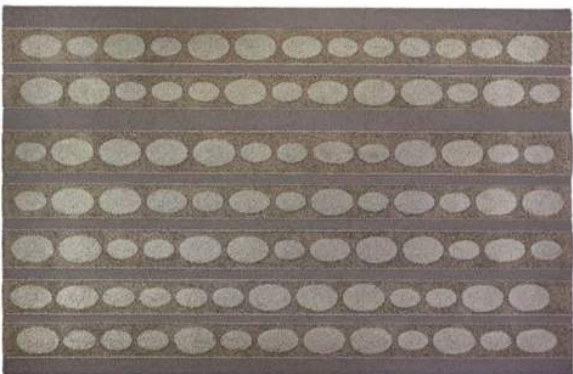
Johnson at her desk.

Photo by Ambroise Tézenas.



Verbena 769, woven from Mohair, Wool, and Linen.

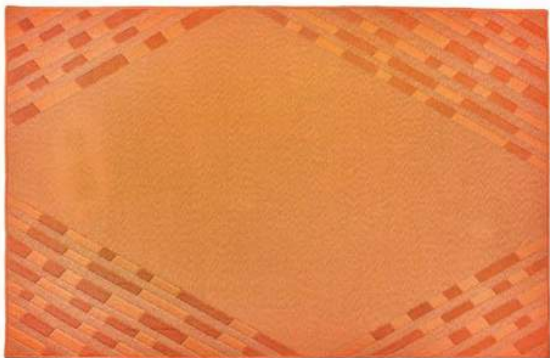
Photo by Angel Tucker.



Verbena 749, woven from wool and mohair.

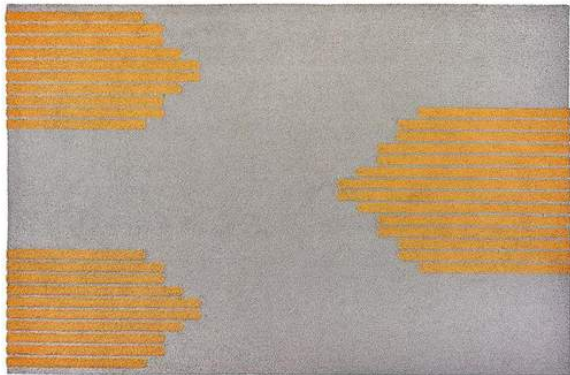
Photo by Angel Tucker.

“Without the technique, you don’t have freedom,” says Johnson, who has impressed the artisans at Merida’s Massachusetts mill with her know-how. Four collections in, she has pushed those experts beyond their comfort zone with her approach. As evidenced by her latest line, Atelier, debuting this month, her designs are sophisticated and subtle—monochromes, stripes, simple geometries—while her techniques are complex and her fiber blends unusual. “Silk, linen, cotton—it’s how you use them that makes them shine. Yarn is like words. And every rug is poetry.” meridastudio.com



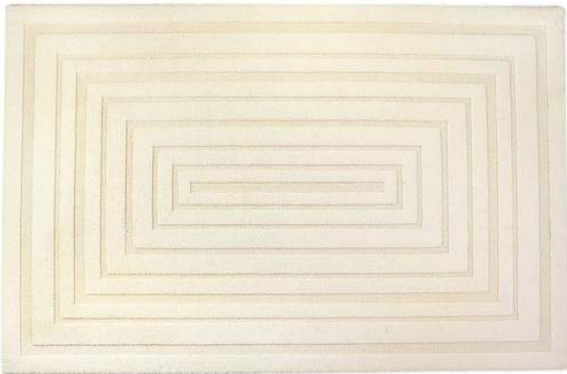
Sahara 409 rug.

Photo by Angel Tucker.



Mesa 609 rug from Johnson's atelier collection for Merida.

Photo by Angel Tucker.



Verbena 719, woven from wool and merino.

Photo by Angel Tucker.