MADE ON THE SOUTH COAST



FALL RIVER-BASED MERIDA IS REDEFINING HIGH-END DESIGNER RUGS















from British and New Zealand wool that are sent to the state of Georgia to be dyed, then woven and finished here.

The factory is located not in an old mill building, but in a rather nondescript converted warehouse in the industrial park. The floor is gigantic, with a number of looms to produce rugs of varying

weave complexities. There are jacquard and dobby looms. Some are programmed by a computer; others follow an old-fashioned punch card for instruction.

The foundation of a rug hangs vertically off to the side of the floor and a robotic tufting machine fires away at areas of the rug to give it a cut pile look. When any of

them are running, their paired human craftsperson is found working side by side with his/her robotic counterpart.

At least a third of the site's floor space is taken up by a more than thousand square foot table, where Merida staff can put finishing touches by hand on a large rug.

But what stands out is the volumes of





left Phan at dobby loom with undyed wool creel **middle** Shelves with yarn colors (from top to bottom) Luna, Venus, and Barragán

right A 6-foot jacquard loom from back











yarn. Merida boasts perhaps the largest yarn libraries in the country. They are strung into the looms from rolling stacks of spindles. When the looms are running, it is a sight to see them all spinning furiously. When the warp yarns have to be changed out, the restringing of a loom can take days.

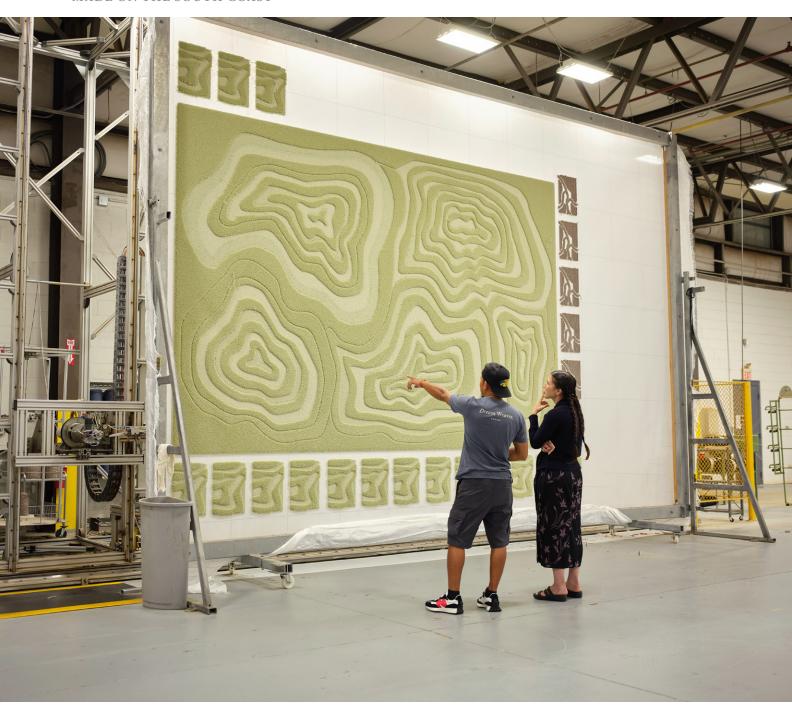
In the Fall River facility, the design staff—overseen by Johnson who meets with them in person or over Zoom from her Paris offices—is hard at work coming up with designs for future collections, all of which are made into reality through computer-aided design (CAD). But they take a break from their computers

and often work side-by-side with the craftspeople on the floor and see their designs come to life.

Last year's collection was based on Arte Povera, one of the most significant and influential avant-garde movements to emerge in Southern Europe in the late 1960s. This year's inspiration has been



opposite page (top left) Textile CAD Designer
Tiffany Megumi Gerdes working in the design studio
(bottom left) Senior Designer Gabrielle Marie Ferreira
working with samples in the design studio
(right center) Yarn cards Jasper, Saffron, Thyme, Sea,
Midnight, Orchil and Grenat (right bottom) View of
Kachina 509 Parchment in the sample department
above Weaver John Costa at the 10-foot jacquard loom



named Land Art. Each year, Merida comes out with 36 pieces in each collection. Designers are already finalizing designs for

Designers are already finalizing designs for next year's collection and the constructing of the rugs should begin this fall.

Sometime next year, these unique rugs will adorn lavish residences as well as the foyers and rooms of commercial spaces all over the world.

meridastudio.com/manifesto



above Tufting Operator VichethKragn and Gerdes looking at a rugat the tufting machineleft View of Dapple and Stellasamples in the sample department