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ANATOMY OF A COLLABORATION

BY MARY SHUSTACK



IN TODAY'S BUSINESS CLIMATE, WHEN IT OFTEN SEEMS THAT EVERY COMPANY IS OUT FOR ITSELF, IT'S REFRESHING TO HEAR ABOUT AN EFFORT THAT BILLS ITSELF AS ONE "PROMOTING COLLABORATION OVER COMPETITION."

Fayette Studio, a Greenwich-based designer and curator of luxury rugs and carpets, has partnered with Art + Loom, a bespoke rug company based out of Miami.

The result is Art + Loom x Fayette Studio, not only a stunning capsule collection featuring four hand-knotted rug designs but also a testament to the power of collaboration.

Each rug in the collection is made to order, customizable in aspects that include size, color and material composition and showcased in two to six different colorways.

The rug designs include Vibration, which is designed to "evoke the feeling of movement;" Watercolor Dot, in which "multiple shades of one color create the image of an ink blot on wet paper;" Drifting Wings, "a romantic take on the crossing of two drifting butterfly wings;" and Etchings, "an illusion of words and communication."

Kyra Schulhof, founder of Fayette Studio, and Samantha Gallacher, founder of Art + Loom, are the forces behind the effort, each taking time to share their perspectives on the collaboration with WAG.

As Gallacher says of the project, "We wanted to tap into the idea of a bohemian art studio where every medium of fine art could be interpreted and displayed on the floor. All drawn lines feel organic, and the stroke of a paintbrush creates movement and style."

The goal of the project was never far from thought, adds Schulhof.

"Samantha and I share an incredible passion for making exquisite handcrafted rugs and a commitment to our customers that comes before any competition that may exist between us."

Here's the story behind the collaboration, thanks to a behind-the-scenes peek with each of the participants.

THE GREENWICH CONNECTION

A look at the collaboration, from Kyra Schulhof of Fayette Studio.

Tell us a bit about your background – training, inspirations – and the founding of Fayette Studio.

"Fayette Studio was founded somewhat unintentionally while trying to source carpets for many of my design clients. While designing homes, I continually had trouble sourcing exactly what we were looking for from our local carpet stores. I'm very determined to find the right fit, so that led me to working directly with sources in Nepal and India to custom-create rugs that fit our exact client needs. I can now customize design, size, color and material.

"This customization option started catching on to other tristate designers and my business evolved to what is now known as Fayette Studio. We still source from all of our favorite designer-driven rug and carpet brands, but what makes Fayette Studio unique is our direct relationship with the mills that allows us to custom-make quite literally any type of rug you could dream of."

Who is your ideal customer?

"I love working with clients who truly appreciate the customization work that our mills do abroad. The result is a one-of-a-kind piece of art that complements and elevates the look of your home. We mostly work with interior designers but we work directly with homeowners as well. Our clients all appreciate the concierge-like service we provide that ensures the process is smooth from conception to installation."



(Top) Kyra Schulhof, founder of Fayette Studio in Greenwich. Courtesy Fayette Studio. Samantha Gallacher, founder of Miami-based Art + Loom. Courtesy Art + Loom.

What do you think customers in the metro area look for when it comes to design for their homes? Are there common threads or is each project different?

“Each project is definitely different in terms of needs and styles. We have a healthy mix of modern and traditional styles in this area. However, the common thread is that families in our area understand the value in quality. They’re looking for the best quality and design at a fair price. They want a rug that will be easy to maintain and look great for years to come.”

How did the collaboration with Art + Loom come about? Is this your first collaboration? What were the goals – and do you think they were met?

“One of my design clients fell in love with Miami-based Art + Loom designs and suggested I connect with the owner, Samantha Gallacher, regarding offering her rugs in Fayette Studio. I carry many brands (that) designers admire, and I love a collaborative approach, so I invited her to come visit my studio. Upon meeting, we quickly realized that we had gone to college together and had many friends in common.

“There was an instant trust and excitement to come up with an exclusive collection for Fayette Studio. We’re both women business owners and value collaboration over competition. We share industry knowledge and bounce ideas off of each other all the time. Samantha has become a true friend and invaluable colleague through this process.”

How did the design process actually work with you here in Connecticut and Samantha Gallacher in Florida?

“It is very easy to communicate and collaborate with technology these days. Samantha and I are always in touch, whether it be texting, calling or emailing. We have a very open line of communication and we both understand the rug industry very well, so the design process was pretty seamless. There were lots of designs we shared and mulled over, ultimately selecting the strongest four designs that we thought would resonate with our design-driven audience the most.”

How has the response been to the collection – any surprises? What’s been most rewarding about it, and do you see yourself creating future work with Art + Loom?

“The response has been great. I am totally open to expanding

our capsule collection with Art + Loom. Samantha is a talented rug designer. I find it fun to see what she comes up with and how her mind works. We have learned a lot from each other and work really well together.”

AND FROM MIAMI

Samantha Gallacher of Art + Loom offers her take on the project:

Kindly tell us a bit about your background and the creation of Art + Loom.

“While I am an interior designer by trade, I took a break from design for a few years to develop textile designs for West Elm. There I fell in love with the craft, particularly when it came to designing rugs. There were no limitations, no minimum orders and no pattern repeats. The rug became my canvas. After moving to Miami in 2009, I resumed my interior design business and, with my new-found rug knowledge and factory relationships, I started making original rugs for my clients. It snowballed to me designing rugs for friends’ clients and so on. As a result, I launched Art + Loom, which was born from the concept of me taking my drawings to the loom... from Art to Loom.”

Can you tell us about your history with collaborations – the challenges and rewards?

“Collaborations are so much fun because you have a meeting of two different creative brains with completely different ideas and skill sets, working together to create something completely unique. As long as you collaborate with some you trust and admire, the process should be near seamless.”

How did you end up working with Fayette Studio? How did you know it was going to be a “fit”?

“I was introduced to Fayette Studio by a designer who was purchasing a rug from me. The designer said, ‘I know you are competitors, but I have a feeling you guys can work together in some way. You seem like you should be friends.’ Once Kyra and I met, we realized we actually went to college together. We were so excited about working together we decided to think outside the ‘competitive’ box and see how we could develop on a mutually beneficial project together.”

What were some of the challenges of this project – and the rewards?

“There have not been many challenges with this project aside from the typical rug-sample waiting process. You never know how the first samples are going to turn out. But honestly, the waiting process with rug samples is the same no matter who is creating a rug. It’s just part of the process. We both bring different skill sets to the table, so that has resulted in a very positive experience for me. It’s good to lean on each other’s strengths.”

What are you most proud of with the launch of this collection?

“I am most proud of the uniqueness of the collection. The designs and colorways are unexpected yet remain easy to use when designing a space.”

Who do you think will be its ideal customer?

“Interior designers who have a transitional vibe with an edge, someone who is not afraid to make a statement in a room.”

For more, visit fayettetudio.com.

