

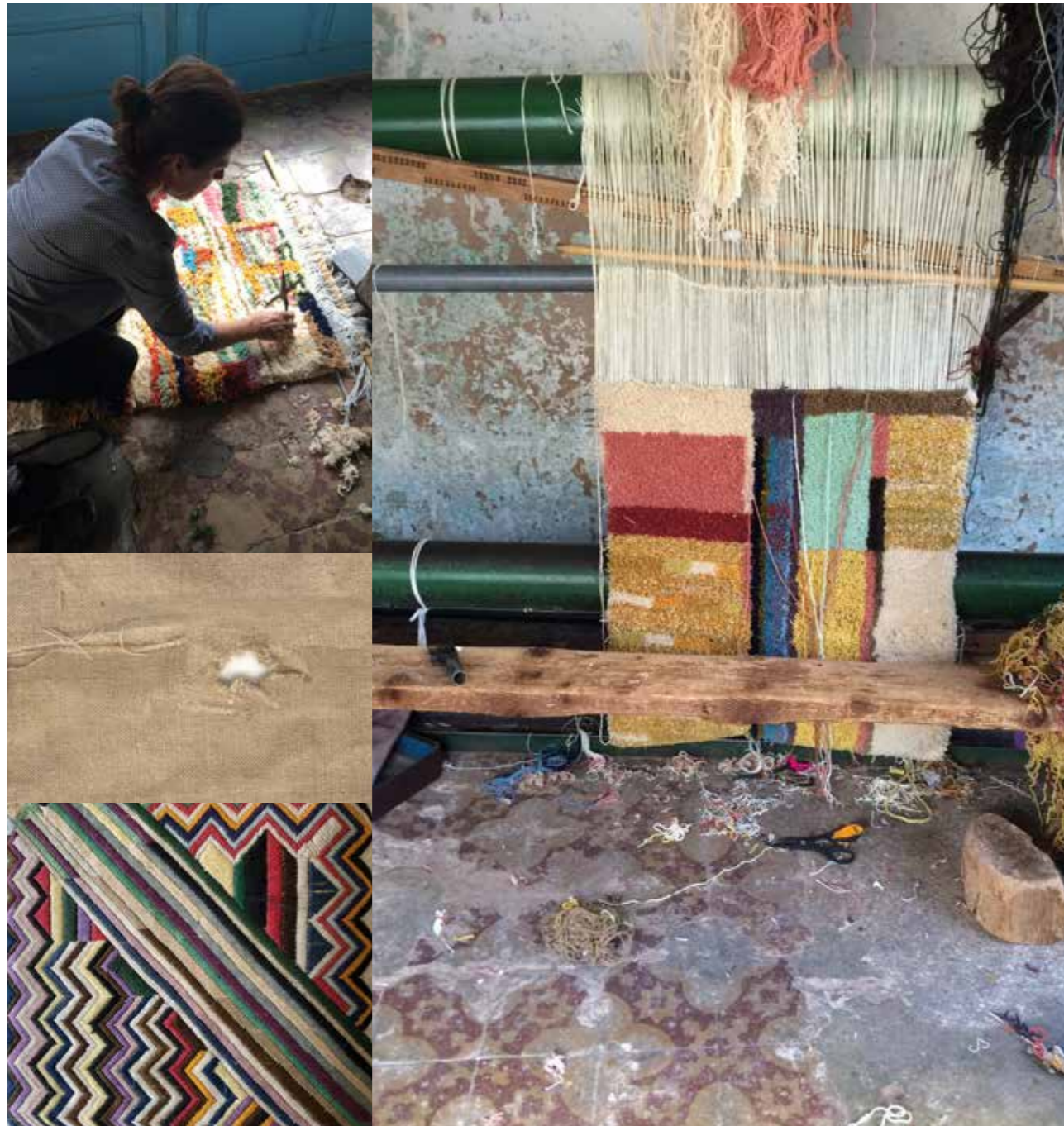
*“I think I do  
slow design”*  
NICOLETTE  
BRUNKLAUS

Canvas Collage made by Dutch designer Nicolette Brunklaus back in 2014 is one of the most successful Ege Carpets collections ever, and her carpet designs now cover the floors of many beautiful hotels and offices around the world. As the collaboration continues, the collection has been enhanced with new, textural structures and stunning colours. We met Nicolette in her studio in Amsterdam to find out more about her thorough, personal and very ambitious approach to design.



*Left:* Nicolette Brunklaus was an artist in residence in Morocco where she learned the skill of carpet knotting by local women in a garage. She later returned with some of her designs that the women helped her produce. The old piece of linen was the main inspiration for the Canvas Collage Collection. The colourful cushion was made by Nicolette's grandmother many years ago

*Right:* Rewoven is one of the Canvas Collage carpet designs inspired by the handwoven tactility of a piece of linen



*Describe your working process?* I take photos. Lots and lots of photos. When I go for a walk. If I cycle into the city, visit museums, see new architecture, enjoy nature or travel. It can just be a photo of a curtain moving in the wind. I take so many photos. And I save them onto my computer where I can sit and look at them and work on them to create new patterns and colour combinations. I save them again and I may not look at them for years. Until one day when I come across them in my digital archive and they just feel right for a specific project or just because it feels right for me to continue working on them.

The computer is very much my tool in this process but my work is also very tactile. I have to use my hands. Making ceramics, weaving or knotting, or just having loads of samples of real materials to touch and put into new interesting combinations. I have many boxes of textile samples, yarns and threads and I learn a lot from going to ceramic studios or attending craft sessions that are showing new techniques.

I think I do slow design. I put a lot of thought into it. It has to come from me. I never leave it

until it is absolutely 100% perfect in my mind. Of course, you have to meet a deadline but everything is so much about efficiency today. There is very little time for reflection. Today, we have to be careful when we design and produce. It has to be long lasting and stay with us for years. We should not design for the moment. Therefore, the process is very much about intuition in order to deliver something special. And I have always believed that personal, original design will stick around.

*Where do you find your inspiration?* Inspiration comes very much from my own experience of life, surroundings and people. I do not follow trends. I prefer galleries and art museums. I think my artistic background demands originality and imagination. Therefore, I spend a lot of time searching for a sincere and honest interpretation of my visual ambitions and apply my artistic approach into products that people are using. I translate art into useable products. I think that is why my work is recognisable. It has a lot of me in it.

*Why are textiles a constant theme in your work?* Textiles have always been a big part of my life. My mother was always sewing. We were five children, and she made all our clothes so there was a lot to sew. I was 14 before I was allowed to buy a pair of pants from a shop! I remember sitting next to my mother hearing the sound of the scissors cutting fabric. And at night, she would be knitting. My grandmother was the same. She would also make pillows and plaids. I am so impressed how these women could be so creative and make something very artistic while looking after their families. Of course, it inspired me. At an early age, I asked my mother for leftover materials to create my own little tapestries and collages.

I think I like textiles because of the contrast they create. I also like wood, ceramics and stone, but it is the contradiction in the combination of the materials that fascinates me. Textiles deliver softness, movement and texture to a creation or an interior. They have a silence, no noise or only a soft, pleasant sound when you touch a piece of fabric or walk on a carpet.



*Nicolette Brunklaus took photos of dahlias fading over time and translated them into a beautiful carpet design*



*How would you describe your home?* A complete reflection of myself. It might look organised right now but it can also look completely messy. I do not make a distinction between work and home. I work whenever I am inspired. My home can be filled with things that I lay out on the tables or the floor. Fabrics, materials, drawings, photos.

As you grow older, your home becomes more personal. You inherit things that are part of your life story, and you have acquired and kept the things that mean something to you. I think with age, you become more selective. Many things can be shallow and do not create any emotion or motion. I love the feeling of someone having put his or her thoughts and efforts into a positive contribution. It takes time and personal effort. I need a bookcase. I have for years. But it takes me such a long time to design it and have it made because it has to be something that fits exactly into my home and my personality. I may never get it.

*How do you feel when you see your creations being used by others?* It actually becomes distant. It suddenly belongs to someone else. It is like an

actor who plays a role and after the final night, he moves on to the next play. It is not that I am arrogant and do not appreciate it. I do! However, it is not the end result that is most fulfilling to me. It is more the process and I am always in a new process. When I see one of my designs leaving the factory, I am on a high. I am proud to take it to the market. But then it starts to live its own life. People will use it in the way they like. They might put furniture that I do not like on one of my carpet designs. Or use a wall colour that I do not like. Or a colour I do like. But that is not for me to decide. I just hope they are happy with my designs.

*How was the design process for the Canvas Collage carpets?* The collection focuses on a woven textile structure like linen or a canvas upon which I have added motifs, patterns and colours. The structure is the foundation of all the designs and the carpet quality and colour technology of Ege Carpets really manage to interpret it perfectly.

As I mentioned, it is important to me to make designs that are long lasting. Part of it is design. The other part is quality. I am a creative. Not a producer. Therefore, it is essential for me

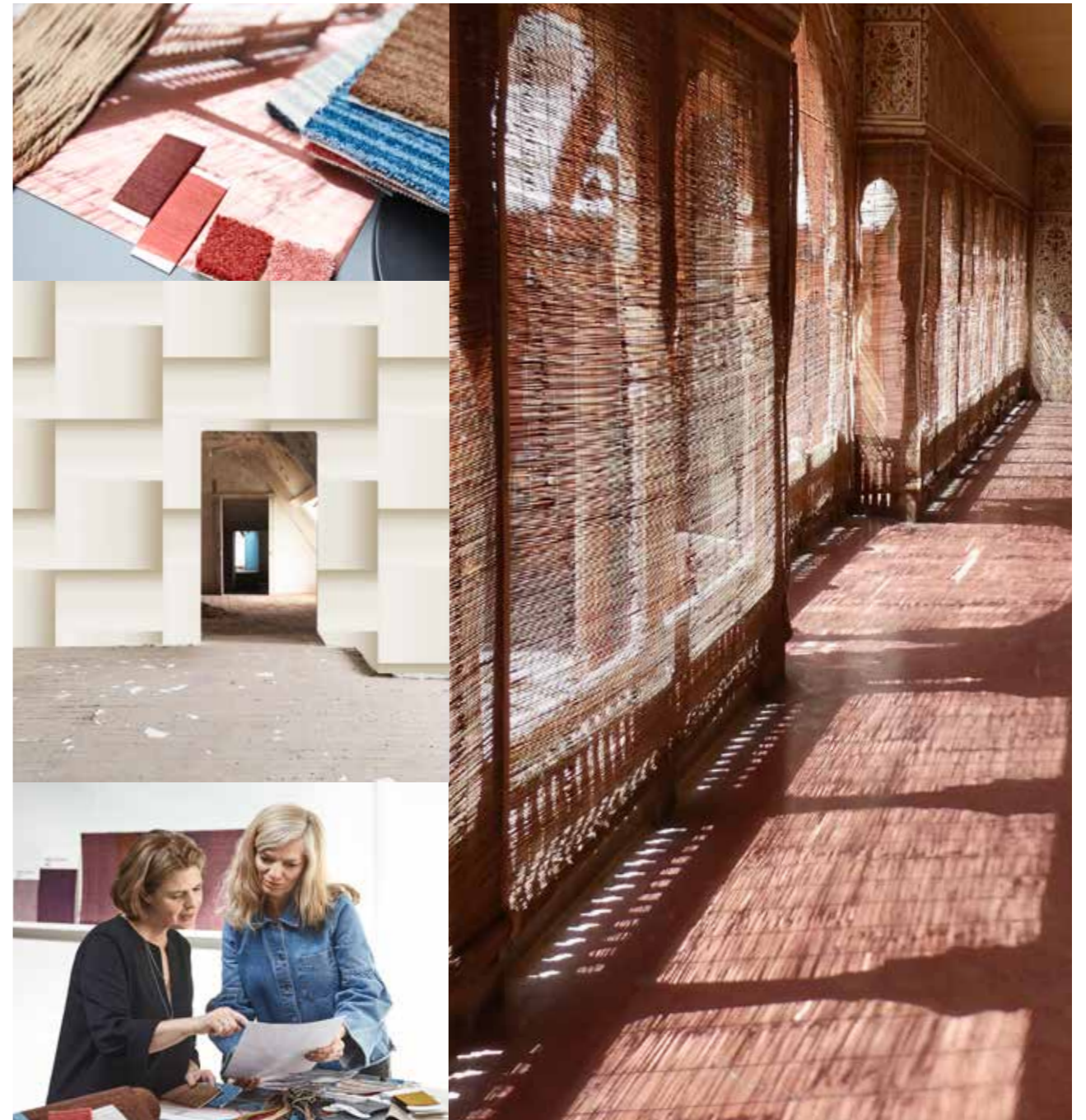
to find working partners that can guarantee and ensure long lasting quality. Ege Carpets is a big company with many years of experience in carpet production and with many competent and qualified employees. I work very closely with Helle Lykke Jensen, one of the most experienced designers at Ege Carpets and I think I have found a soulmate. A friend. My work is so personal that I have to click with the person I am working with, be able to have fun together and find understanding. She has that understanding. She is also a designer. We speak the same language. One thing is looking at the designs on a computer but trying to imagine how they will work in a large scale as flooring is a different and quite challenging task. I am very grateful for all her expertise during this process.

Nicolette Brunklaus

*Nicolette Brunklaus is a Dutch product designer whose art and design pieces are exhibited all over the world. She holds an Art degree from the Academy of Art in Groningen. Her passion for photography and love of colour are clearly visible in her designs, each of which tells its own poetic story.*

Left: The Twine design from Canvas Collage

Right: Photos by Nicolette Brunklaus were used as inspiration for the Canvas Collage designs that were developed in close co-operation with Ege Carpets designer Helle Lykke Jensen





The Twine designs use the transparency of yarn linings to create a textured base layer in the carpets