

# cover

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## SPRING INTO CREATIVITY



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WOMEN IN RUG DESIGN • DESIGN DOHA  
TURQUOISE MOUNTAIN • JENNIFER MANNERS  
CRISTINA CELESTINO • MILAN DESIGN WEEK



Photo: Davide Lovatti

01

# Cristina Celestino

As the Milan-based designer prepares for the upcoming Salone del Mobile Milano, she talks to Denna Jones about her many collaborations, and how she goes about creating new life experiences through architecture and decor



Photo: Claudia Zella

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*Fil rouge* in English literally means red thread, but its figurative meaning describes a guiding principle. It is used in relation to Italian architect, interior and product designer Cristina Celestino, and how she weaves interdisciplinarity into her practice. Not to be confused with multidisciplinary where disciplines are isolated, interdisciplinarity is the integration of disciplines. This uncommon and intuitive gift marks out Cristina Celestino as one who creates innovative outcomes that transform traditional forms, reconsider scale, reveal new meanings, and change lives for the better through the sculptural manipulation of space.

Celestino's myriad collaborations include rugs with cc-tapis including *Envolée* and *Paysage* for Maison Matisse, hand knotted in wool and silk; and the Avino capsule collection, also hand knotted in wool and silk, designed by Celestino for Palazzo Avino Hotel on the Amalfi Coast and created for the hotel in custom sizes by cc-tapis PROJECT, the studio's contract division.

Ahead of Cristina Celestino's participation in Salone del Mobile Milano 2024, which includes the debut of heritage brand Fornace Brioni's new collection designed by Celestino and Snøhetta, we posed a brief Q&A to allow her to express her *fil rouge* and reveal what's upcoming.

## Describe your general approach to interiors and interior design

Our work always begins with a phase of deep investigation and research. We listen to the place or, in the case of a product, we listen to the needs of the clients. I feel, we feel, free to explore different themes: we are passionate about materials and geometries, both natural and those created by humans. We move through history and traditions, working on the scale of objects and creating new conceptual and decorative codes. What we aim to achieve and propose are new creative life experiences, through architecture and design.



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**01** *Levante*, Cristina Celestino x cc-tapis. Celestino designed the Avino rug collection as one element in the custom furnishings she created for the refurbishment of Palazzo Avino, Ravello, Italy

**02** *Panorama*, Avino Collection, Cristina Celestino x cc-tapis

**03** Cristina Celestino with her handwoven wool-and-silk rug *Paysage* for Maison Matisse, produced by cc-tapis

Photo: Marina Denisova



04 *Envolée*, Cristina Celestino x cc-tapis

Geometry of a Match', exhibition, Milan Design Week 2023, The Tennis Club Milano Alberto Bonacossa

05 'Clay Court Club:

06 *Levante*, Cristina Celestino x cc-tapis in Palazzo Avino



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#### How do you use rugs and carpets? What inspires your rug designs?

The carpets serve as expansive reference islands, akin to two-dimensional architectures. In our designs, they play a pivotal role in accentuating specific areas, leveraging their materiality, colour or pattern to create emphasis. I am often inspired by nature itself, as in the case of *Envolée*. This design takes inspiration from the wings of a butterfly. Observed under a microscope, their beauty is so sophisticated that it defies every type of description. The wings of lepidopteran butterflies look like brushstrokes, like paintings in motion. The elegance of their composition, under an attentive eye, has almost the consistency of a fabric. It's a process that aims to translate that which is not visible to the naked eye

into a macro scale. The decorative motif is thus revealed by the alternation of chromatic compositions defined by different material densities, from wool to linen.

#### What are your feelings about collaboration and rug design? Such as with cc-tapis?

Collaborations are essential, in general terms, because they facilitate the exchange of knowledge, culture and human relationships that form the foundation of a successful project.

I have been working with cc-tapis for many years and hold their work in high regard precisely because they possess an immense technical expertise. Their production in Nepal aims to keep the work where it originated, adding an ethical value to their endeavours. Many times, during the carpet design phase,



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cc-tapis have even suggested technical changes that have proven beneficial to the design itself!

#### What products are you showing at this year's Salone?

At the moment, I am working on a new carpet for cc-tapis, which will be presented later on. It's a beautiful monochromatic project with a very subtle pattern. As for this year's Salone, I will be unveiling a new armchair for Gervasoni, named *Plumeau*, my inaugural door handle design for Manital, along with new flooring and wall coverings for Fornace Brioni.

#### You describe the Rome attic apartment as your studio's 'most important residential project so far'. Are the layers of Baroque 'perceptive deception' in your work where the audience in the apartment sees a scene unfold as theatrical layering?

The Roman project, as you propose, had to consider multiple layers, blending the realms of interior and a green exterior. The apartment is highly exposed, allowing natural light and the landscape to permeate from every angle.

Conceptually and aesthetically, we've crafted these viewpoints akin to binoculars, offering preferred perspectives to observe and admire the external environment from within. If I were to pinpoint a reference, I'd stay closely aligned with the Roman and Baroque influences, where visions intertwine, creating elaborate stagecraft and 'compelled' visuals, constructing beauty through the intentional visual constraints imposed by humanity.

[www.cristinacelestino.com](http://www.cristinacelestino.com)



Photo: Davide Lovatti