

products profile **judy ross**

By Ashleigh VanHouten

Photography by Nathan Perkel (portrait), Don Riddle (Hyatt Spray pillow), Charles Masters (Fauna bolster pillow), and Mark Higashino (Indochine interior)



ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

A painter-turned-textile designer builds her brand



Judy Ross started out as a painter, but ultimately followed in her father's footsteps—he worked in the textile industry in New York—and went to FIT to become a textile designer. She credits her fine art background for her understanding of pattern and color and her very identifiable design sense. "My work is very graphic, pattern-based," she points out. "My style comes from studying art and gravitating towards artists that are about form, shape, and color. I like to make something that's a bit askew, creating tension. It has to be dynamic and strong."

Her career path reads like a designer's dream: Before incorporating in the '90s, Ross traveled to India (she now produces all of her work there), and fell in love with the country's hand-embroidered scarves. Soon she was designing her own, and quickly sold her first collection at Saks Fifth Avenue. This led to a partnership with French fashion designer Christian Lacroix and her work being shown on the runway. As she moved into home décor, Barneys began

selling one of her pillow collections. "I was the first person to take the chain stitch and make it a high-end product," Ross says. "New Zealand wool is durable and doesn't pull, so it's really good for the home and for hospitality."

Last year those pillows appeared at the Hyatt New York and the Hyatt Regency Long Beach. Ross also created custom pieces for the Scottsdale Hyatt and the W Hotel Maldives. Currently, she's working with a large hotel complex in the Bahamas, developing oblong pillows with a shell design in bright marine colors.

Although her work certainly has a distinctive aesthetic, Ross' patterns and inspirations vary widely: from Tabla, a woven fabric design with a Japanese feel, to Jalli, which takes cues from her travels in India, and the aptly named Plaid. Ross will

1. Chain-stitch pillows like the rayon yarn-accented Spray appear on the beds of Hyatt hotels.

2. Ross' pillows, including the bolster in Fauna, are crafted from soft New Zealand wool.

3. New York restaurant Indochine features Ross' hand-embroidered fabrics.

also be unveiling a design in the fall that's "African in feeling, inspired by menswear, with a couple classic menswear stripes." And there's her rug collection that mirrors the patterns in her pillow designs.

"Hospitality is fun because you work with great designers, create custom designs, and you're able to provide artisans with work that is fulfilling for them," Ross says. "And providing designs for a public space that lots of people can enjoy—that's always rewarding." **hd**

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