

## REAL ESTATE | DESIGN

# Brush Up on Art History With Rugs Inspired by Paintings

Regret sleeping through that elective? Shop these carpets which instructively riff on everything from Monet's water lilies to the graffiti works that emerged in the 1970s



1. Claude Monet's "Waterlilies at Giverny," 1908, at left, is one of many types of canvases being interpreted as rugs like Marc Phillips's Monet Garden, right. (\$14,850 for 9 feet by 12 feet, marcphillipsrugs.com)

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**DON'T KNOW** much about art history, or whether you prefer the kooky irrationality of Dada to the strict linearity of de Stijl? A host of new carpets inspired by paintings provide a primer on art movements and their major players. You might even find a woven work suitable to hang on your wall.

## 1. Impressionism

Beginning in 1874, a wave of painters shook up the stuffy French art world by depicting everyday life, rather than the approved myths and Bible stories, and by using loose, "impressionistic" brushwork to mimic the effects of natural light. The way sunlight dallied with the water lilies in his garden at Giverny, France, so entranced Claude Monet that he painted them nearly 300 times. His immersive perspective—which he called "the illusion of an endless whole, of water without horizon or bank"—works equally well on the wall and on the floor, where Marc Phillips's hand-knotted wool and silk rug will surely make an impression.



## 2. de Stijl

The school of de Stijl—Dutch for "The Style"—was founded in Leiden during World War I. De Stijl artists rejected the decorative fanciness of Art Deco in favor of precise geometric shapes, often rendered in pure primary colors. By reducing art to its essentials of color and line, they immodestly hoped to restore world harmony through a universal visual language. Though Piet Mondrian is de Stijl's most famous alumnus, architect Elliott Barnes took inspiration from Theo van Doesburg's more muted, meditative palette to create this. This

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2. Théo, \$15,865 for about 7 feet by 11 feet, [manufacturecogolin.com](http://manufacturecogolin.com)

mixed, meditative palette to create this Theo rug for La Manufacture Cogolin.

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TEXT



3. Tour Eiffel, \$5,297 for about 8 feet by 11 feet, [roche-bobois.com](http://roche-bobois.com)

### 3. Surrealism

Surrealism flourished in Europe during the interwar years, fueled by Sigmund Freud's theories on dreams and the subconscious. Salvador Dalí's melting clocks and René Magritte's faceless men in bowler hats shared a disquieting dreamscape, rendered uncanny by their flat photorealism. Freud would have had a field day with French Surrealist artist, playwright and poet Jean Cocteau, who set his first play on the Eiffel Tower and made the phallic Paris landmark a recurring motif in his visual art. With the blessing of Cocteau's estate, Roche-Bobois reproduced his enigmatic lithograph "Profil à la Tour Eiffel" in tufted New Zealand wool, complete with the artist's signature.



4. Riff Rug, \$5,500 for 8 feet by 10 feet, [soudasouda.com](http://soudasouda.com)

### 4. Dadaism

Another disillusioned response to World War I, the Dada movement, founded in Zurich, confronted the horrors of modern life with absurdist mockery and perversity. French painter and sculptor Marcel Duchamp submitted a (now iconic) porcelain urinal to an exhibition. The amoeboid shape of Souda's braided Riff Rug—available in several customizable colorways—recalls the Constellation series of wood reliefs by French

Dadaist Jean Arp, who turned to curvy biomorphic forms as an alternative to the rationalism that had led to the Great War.

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5. Bisous, \$16,000 for about 9 feet by 12 feet, [mehraban.com](http://mehraban.com)

### 5. Abstract Expressionism

After the upheaval of World War II, American artists rejected figural subjects and traditional tools such as paintbrushes and easels in favor of nonrepresentational compositions and experimental techniques. Jackson Pollock threw, dripped, splattered and poured paint on huge canvases to evoke the disorienting chaos and freedom of the modern world. Willem de Kooning used long-handled brushes to give his paintings an awkward, out-of-control quality. And Clyfford Still—whose enormous fiery works inspired FORM Design Studio's hand-woven Bisous rug—used a palette knife as a trowel to layer on heavy impasto textures.

### 6. Color-Filed Painting







The Color Field painters, who emerged out of abstract expressionism, worked in broad, irregularly shaped expanses of saturated color instead of violent lashings of paint, taking a more contemplative approach to the poetry of pure color. Beni Rugs' wool Fields carpet, handmade in Morocco's Atlas Mountains, is instantly recognizable as a homage to the group's trailblazer Mark Rothko, who used shimmering hues to express what he called "the big emotions—tragedy, ecstasy, doom."

6. Fields, \$2,480 for 8 feet by 10 feet, [benirugs.com](http://benirugs.com)



7. Puppet Master, from \$280 per square foot, [josephcarinicarpet.com](http://josephcarinicarpet.com)

## 7. Graffiti

Graffiti art erupted from the streets of New York in the 1970s. Initially spray-painted on the sides of buildings, bridges and subway trains, the mural-sized works moved into museums and the mainstream thanks to pioneers like punk-turned-painter Jean-Michel Basquiat, pop-art activist Keith Haring and anarchic prankster Banksy. Though these guerrilla artists were self-taught, rule-breaking and outspokenly political, gallerists were seduced by the subversive art form. Joseph Carini Carpets partnered with Brooklyn-born street artist RAE to create this hand-woven Himalayan wool and silk rug, part of a limited series of collaborations with contemporary artists.

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