

[← Back](#)

Contemporary art underfoot - Rugs take modern masters off the wall and bring bold colors to the floor.

*By Kay O'Donnell July 31, 2004 Publication: San Antonio Express-News (TX) Page: 1E
Word Count: 701*

You wouldn't wipe your feet on a Picasso or walk on a Warhol. Or would you?

Carpet makers, finding floors a blank canvas for decorating, are laying masterpieces at consumers' feet. Elements of works by Andy Warhol and Wassily Kandinsky weave their way into carpets as manufacturers look to classic works from 20th century artists and from movements such as secessionism, a turn-of-the-century modernist group in Vienna. Putting contemporary art in rug form is proving a popular way to bring art - and color - into homes, says Dennis Crawford of O'Krent's Abbey Flooring Center. "People are wanting to make a statement in their homes," he says. A number of manufacturers offer art-inspired rugs. Mourison's Guggenheim collection features the work of abstract artist Kandinsky among others. Those who are attracted to the Guggenheim rug collection "are looking for something to set a room apart," Crawford says. Pop Abstracts, a line of rugs introduced this year from the Andy Warhol Home collection, follows the artful flooring trend. The Warhol collection portrays some of the pop artist's most recognizable works. However, you won't find Marilyn or Campbell's Soup cans underfoot. Instead, you'll see warm tones and simple patterns, with several depicting floral designs from Warhol's days as a fashion illustrator. Even the brighter-colored rugs stick to minimal, yet bold, graphic displays. Manufacturer Sphinx, a division of Oriental Weavers, uses images from Warhol's early days as a graphic artist and some of his early advertising work, says Lissa Wyman, rug editor for industry journal Furniture Today and

the editor and publisher of rugnews.com. The rugs present a scene or small piece of the art rather than a replica of the art. Though the Warhol rugs hit the market in January, O'Krent's didn't have them in stock until June because the manufacturer couldn't keep up with demand. Fashioned out of polypropylene and being machine-made helps keep the cost of the rugs down, with a 6-by-9-foot rug costing about \$370. However, due to the collection's popularity, the manufacturer already has plans to make a higher-end version of some of the rugs, most handmade out of wool. Nourison, Couristan and Momeni also have created collections that draw inspiration from abstract and modern artists, Wyman says. For example, "Momeni has a very popular series of rugs called 'New Wave,' which is not licensed artwork, but evocative of the work," she says. On its Web site, www.momeni.com, the company says it drew upon 1910s Vienna secessionism, 1930s art deco, and 1950s abstract expressionism to create the line. The trend is driven by homeowners gravitating toward bolder home design, says Wyman.

"Basically people respond to color and design," she says. "They respond to the beauty of the rug and enjoy buying a decorative piece for their home." Vivid colors and angular patterns are two of the trends local rug designer Audrey Dorman has noticed. "A lot of clients are going toward bright colors on black backgrounds," says the owner of Cut a Rug, which Dorman started in 1989. Requests for squiggle and swirl patterns are also popular, she says. "I make anything from standard styles to highly contemporary," Dorman says. But "the past five years (the requests have) nearly all been for contemporary." Her one-of-a-kind designs for a room-size rug range from \$1,500 to \$3,500, depending on the design and the materials. To accommodate clients "who consider what I do as art for the floor, we've even designed around furniture to fully optimize the design," she says. Though some of O'Krent's customers have referred to rugs as pieces of art, Crawford says that the majority of those interested in contemporary rugs are "looking for something different, something to give their home some identity." And though you won't have to worry about framing or mounting this type of art, muddy shoes may give you some cause for concern.

San Antonio Express-News (TX)**Date:** July 31, 2004**Page:** 1E

Copyright 2004 San Antonio Express-News