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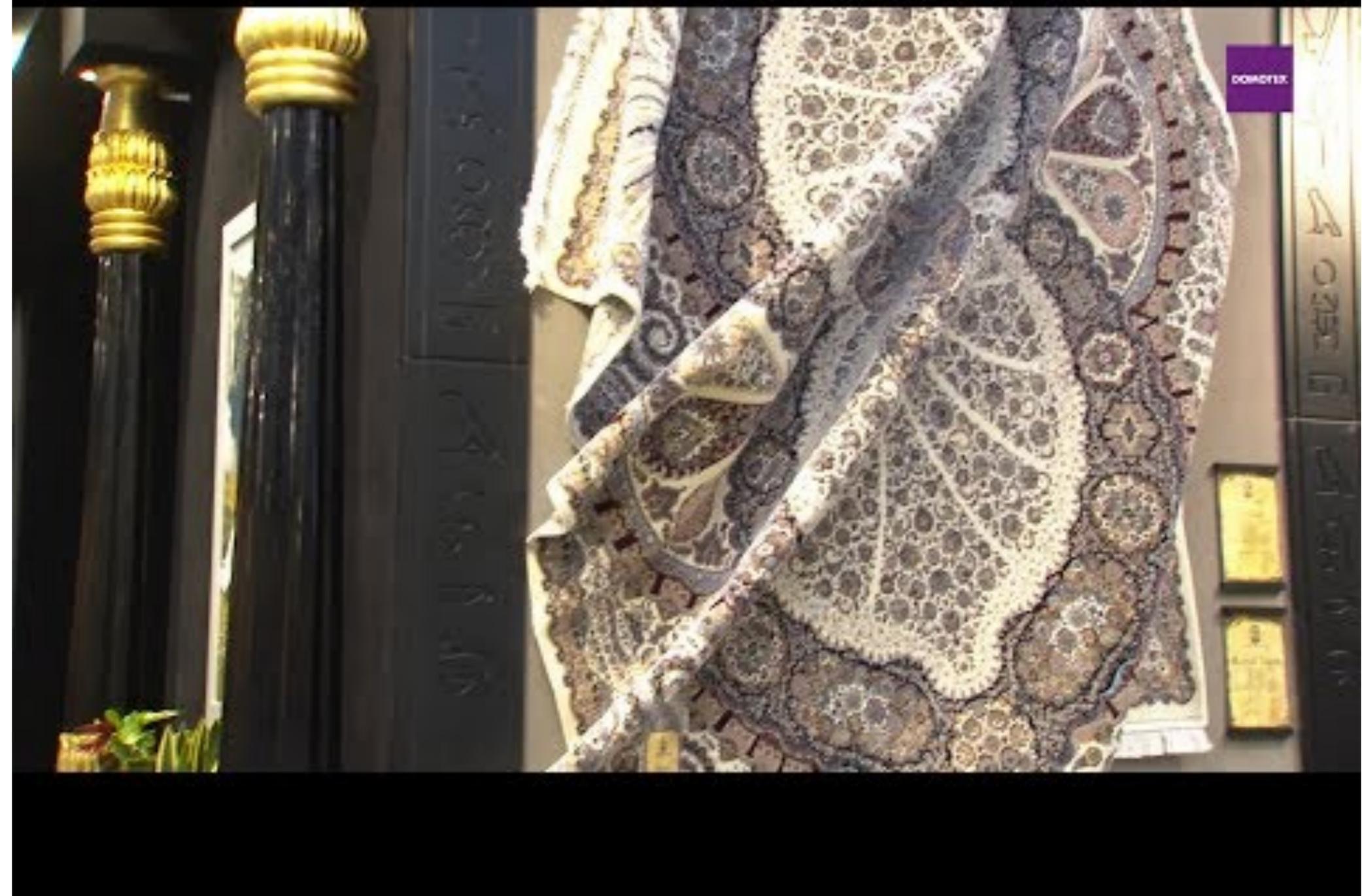
14.02.18

ONE GIANT STEP: DOMOTEX 2018

BRAND STORY BY DOMINIC LUTYENS

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

With a new, user-friendly concept and a creative, trend-focused supporting programme, this year's edition of DOMOTEX fascinated both visitors and exhibitors.



DOMOTEX

Best of DOMOTEX 2018

DOMOTEX, the world's leading trade fair for carpets and floorcoverings, held in Hanover and organised by Deutsche Messe, returned last January in a fresh, new guise that attracted a record-breaking 1,615 exhibitors as well as more than 45,000 visitors.

This year, DOMOTEX boasted a new, more user-friendly exhibition layout, and presented immersive displays exploring its keynote theme, 'Unique Youiverse'. This centred on a major, contemporary trend for individualisation, which reflects a desire among designers and consumers to create unique products in our increasingly globalised world of homogeneous design.





1. Distressed-looking stains give parquet patterns a contemporary twist (Swisskrono), 2. Photographically printed flooring convincingly mimics wood (Beaulieu International Group). 3. Wineo's Purline Bioboden flooring made of castor oil (Windmüller)

The trend makes commercial sense, too, says Hossein Rezvani, carpet designer and owner of Hossein Rezvani Design: 'Customised carpets are popular everywhere. As evidenced by statistics, they account for one half of all global sales... Against a background of growing uniformity, they will become increasingly important.'

The overarching Unique Youniverse theme reinforced the fair's reputation for innovation and for identifying future design and lifestyle trends. Exhibitors and young designers and artists had free rein to explore the topic of individuality at Framing Trends, a special installation in Hall 9, the epicentre of the fair. 'Its fresh approach gave rise to lots of new ideas and made DOMOTEX more attractive than ever,' says Dr. Andreas Gruchow from Deutsche Messe's Managing Board.

1. Flooring simulating decorative inlaid stone can be created using the latest technology (Objectflor); 2. At the Flooring Spaces display, Konstantin Landuris in collaboration with Classen showcased digitally printed marble-like flooring (Landuris)

One area of Framing Trends was its NuThinkers zone, where design students from universities in Mainz, Hanover and Saarland, fledgling designers and dynamic start-ups showcased experimental ideas. Students from the University of Hanover presented their Innovative Flooring project, based on the use of renewable materials or inspired by plants and animals, while those from the University of Applied Sciences, Mainz unveiled Individual Motion Space, an app allowing users to design personalised virtual spaces, then translate them into physical spaces using digital technology. Finally, Saarland University's students displayed ideas for modular, eco-friendly carpets that enable users to create their own design, using a combination of traditional weaving and 3D printing.

Indeed, there was a strong interactive dimension to DOMOTEX this year. Another attraction at Framing Trends was its Art Day Workshops, held by Canadian firm Creative Matters, which invited participants to decorate paper with watercolours, wax crayons and charcoal to produce truly personal designs.

Also in Hall 9 was the kaleidoscopic, immersive environment, Endless Uniqueness – a room lined with square mirrors on to which visitors could mount floorcovering samples in different configurations, then see myriad reflections of themselves surrounded by personalised products.

1. Jutta Werner exhibited her Nomad handwoven carpets made of upcycled, lustrous sweet wrappers (Ivo von Renner); 2. Art Resource's Blue Star design interprets a traditional design in a modern way (Deutsche Messe)

A programme of stimulating talks, featuring such eminent speakers as Werner Aisslinger and Chris Middleton of cutting-edge, Berlin-based architecture practice Kinzo, was very well-received. Another speaker, Holly Becker, founder of high-profile design blog Decor8, talked about how DOMOTEX exhibitors could dramatically raise their profiles by collaborating with influential bloggers. She also put forward her predictions for tomorrow's top trends.



Trends and Innovations at DOMOTEX 2018

DOMOTEX drew attention to other, major new trends. These included flooring and laminates bearing convincingly realistic, photographically printed motifs; sustainable cork-based designs; flooring applied to walls, as Beaulieu International Group has done by transferring the iconic black and white photo of steelworkers perched on a girder high above New York – thought to have been taken by Charles C. Ebbetts – on to a carpet in two shades of grey, and wood patterns with surfaces that feel hand-crafted and appealingly textured. Also on-trend are pastels, since light, airy tones make our increasingly small homes look larger, as well as modular carpet tiles that can be reconfigured in countless ways, a fine example being designer Sebastian Wrong’s collection for Fletco.

Overall, the high turnout of visitors to DOMOTEX signalled that its new incarnation was a resounding success.

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