

The Peninsula
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THE PENINSULA

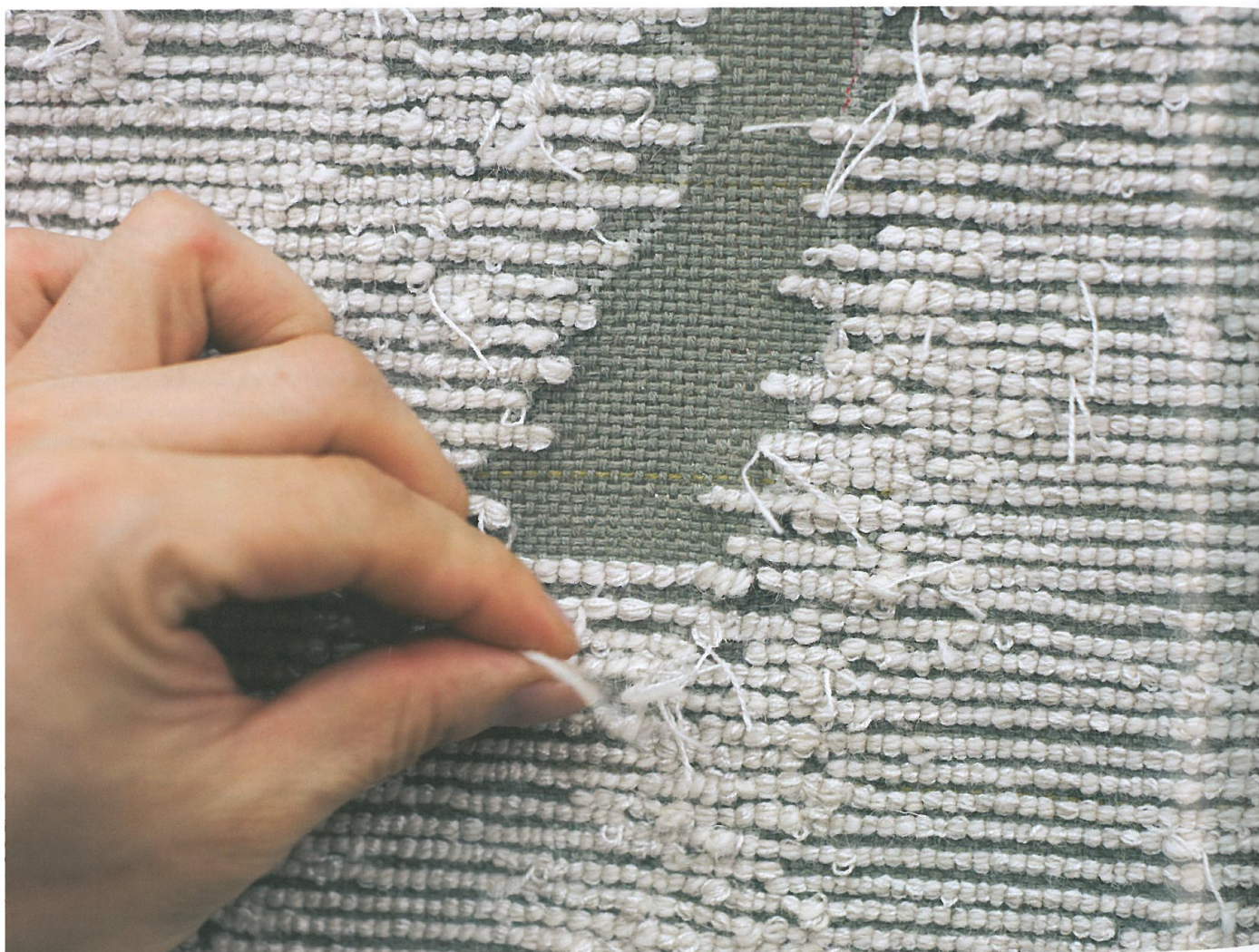
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ORIENTAL

Inspiration

TEXT: MARION PEGUET IMAGES: COURTESY OF TAI PING





Tai Ping recently unveiled 'Chinoiseries', a new collection designed by Ramy Fischler. Having just entirely redesigned Tai Ping's Paris flagship store, Fischler continues his trajectory, with the development of a subtle collection of rugs and carpets inspired by 18th Century Chinoiserie, thereby recalling how much China served as a creative model for France.

By entrusting the design of the space and furniture for its new European flagship store to Belgian-born Ramy Fischler, the luxury Chinese brand Tai Ping has, once again, demonstrated its flair for innovation and exceptional *savoir-faire*. The young designer, who dared to incorporate über contemporary pieces and rugs into the 18th Century style of Hôtel de Livry, follows up with a crossover collection of handmade carpets and rugs featuring a whole new realm of designs, and whose origins can be found in the ancient work entitled '*Livres de desseins chinois*' (Books of Chinese Designs) by Jean-Antoine Fraisse.

Fraisse's presentation of Chinoiserie motifs inspired Fischler to highlight the extent to which France was, at one time, fascinated by Chinese artistic productions from the 17th and 18th Centuries. But beyond the nod to Tai Ping's Chinese origins, Fischler also reminds us through this collection and new showroom concept, that Chinoiserie once was a paragon of inspiration for France.

In the 18th Century, Chinoiserie was considered an exotic style. Textiles, spices, and porcelain objects arriving from China via the Silk Road were the cause of immense wonderment among Westerners, and stimulated their imagination. Studied and copied, these objects inspired passionate research, namely to unearth the secret of the porcelain recipe: a mixture of kaolin and clay. Little by little, the creators of these Oriental marvels adapted their shapes and patterns to Western tastes, resulting in striking combinations where monkeys and dragons delicately

mingled with cows and sheep, creating very rich cultural hybrids. These were marvels both in the East and the West.

For Fischler, Chinese living rooms, Japanese prints, and India-inspired textiles have contributed to the overall evolution of know-how, born of collective learning from others near and far away. That is how he wanted to celebrate this period, a symbol of a hybrid of cultures, of creative and generative re-appropriation. While engaged in a thorough study of a magnificent collection of drawings by Fraisse inspired by China, India, and Japan, he discovered incredibly aesthetic details that anticipated American Abstract Expressionism by almost two centuries. Noting that in the 18th Century, the Cartesian vision of space specific to the Age of Enlightenment had been sidelined by that featured in the prints of the times, he decided to use that as the keystone of this project. Enlarging some of the very specific areas of the landscapes, Fischler created a semi-abstract pattern diffused throughout the carpets of the new Tai Ping space. Owing to the artisan's know-how, these carpets, which include traditional Axminster weaving techniques and the ultra precise handtuft process, to allow visitors to explore the magnificent graphic gems of this Chinoiserie.

Elegantly linking past with present, the new collection comprises 10 indoor and outdoor carpets and rugs with mineral-inspired designs evoking stone, rock, and pebbles; aquatic designs suggesting the undulating waves of waters or the depths of oceans, and finally, some nebulous forms, which guide one's eyes skyward or to the ground.

Bringing this universe of air, water and stone to sheer perfection are muted tones and pastel colors which merge into infinitely subtle layers of pink, green, blue and white. Delicate wool and silk exhibit simplicity, lending themselves to traditional Tai Ping techniques such as rug sculpting and carving.





The emblematic collection, loosely inspired by its country of origin, is like a cross-cultural perspective between East and West, residing in perfect harmony within the very French, 18th Century Hôtel de Livry in Paris where in June 2012, Tai Ping opened its newest and most ambitious flagship space.

Working with Fischler, Tai Ping has created a space that is as innovative as it is exquisite, as welcoming as its design studio and consultants are skilled. With future flagships planned for London and Shanghai, the Hôtel de Livry marks an ambitious new phase in the company's evolution. "The combination of Tai Ping's wholly-owned mills and our unbelievably adept workforce who realise our designs with exquisite craftsmanship and attention to detail are unsurpassed," comments Catherine Vergez, Tai Ping's Managing Director, EMEA. "The opening of our newly-renovated European flagship celebrates our commitment to offering our clients the best in quality and service."

Fischler, who spent nine years working for designer Patrick Jouin prior to setting up his own studio, spent a year's residency at the French Academy's Villa Medici in Rome thinking about the nature of the '*lieu d'accueil*' - a versatile French term which literally translates as 'place of welcome'. For Fischler, the notion of 'welcoming' is an essential element to his work for Tai Ping.

Fischler's priority has been to think of the users of Tai Ping's new space; designers and individual clients who might be, "curious, inspired, sensitive, but also demanding, indecisive, worried. They come with their projects, their desires, their doubts. The framework, the space where the work, exchange and discovery takes place, is the space of a successful collaboration," he explains.

The new space is not just dedicated to showing off Tai Ping's rugs, but to creating an inspiring working environment, where designers can collaborate with Tai Ping's team of experts. Fischler has spent a lot of time considering and developing physical and digital tools to aid that process. A specially developed web-based digital interface, also accessible by iPhone and iPad, allows designers to follow their projects from a distance and will enable the creation of complete presentation files - a new resource to assemble files during and after a project is completed.



Tai Ping also celebrates its archives, and clients can view not only previous projects, but also see some of the stages in that creative process, such as the designers' sketches and references. Under Fischler's inspired direction, the Hôtel de Livry is becoming an exciting catalyst for design innovation - a welcoming environment that nurtures inspiration, discovery and experimentation.

Fischler talks of the importance of marrying the concrete with the abstract, asserting that, "theory must be somewhere in the project," for it to be meaningful. His desire is to "always have one foot in research," and with each new assignment, "finding time for reflection" is a priority. Fischler values working on a broad variety of projects. In particular he appreciates combining large and small assignments and finding the

connections between them that underline his belief in serendipitous strokes of luck that perhaps aren't ultimately all that coincidental. He thrives on diverse briefs and talks of a "desire not to be boxed in, to be open to new universes and ideas." For his interior commissions he prefers to liaise directly with French artisans and manufacturers to develop items unique to that space. He likes to draw on history and craftspeople to create work that is contemporary and to strengthen the ties between old and new.

"We are at an exciting moment in the history of Tai Ping," comments James Kaplan, CEO of Tai Ping Carpets International Limited. "Our market presence and revenue continues to grow and we are at the forefront of design and manufacturing, catering to a clientele that demands we be ahead of the curve. But we are very much rooted in the culture in which we originated, where quality and tradition are prized above all else. We are taking the best of that history and moving forward as an innovative luxury brand."

