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Clothing designers walk into homes with stylish rugs

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You admired hip designer Nanette Lepore's peacock-patterned dresses, but they were so three years ago. Now you can resurrect the pattern for your floor.

Lepore has joined a growing list of fashion designers - Calvin Klein and Liz Claiborne (with Nourison), Oscar de la Renta (with Elson & co.), Vivienne Westwood, Paul Smith, Diane Von Furstenberg, Lulu Guinness (with The RUG Company) - all translating their passion for fashion design to floor coverings.

Lepore recently introduced a bold-patterned area rug with her peacock design for the Doris Leslie Blau carpet gallery in New York. The gallery also in early March unveiled two nautical-inspired rugs designed by Tommy Hilfiger (one blue with white anchors, the other navy with a red chain-link pattern).

In a phone interview, Lepore said she was approached by the carpet folks and is happy she did the project, especially since she now has one of her rugs in her own living room.

"The way it transformed my living room with color and a bold pattern, it would be fun to do more of that," the designer said. In fact, she's considering designing another rug for her pool table area that the public may see in stores some day.

What do those in the world of interior design think about fashionistas stepping in?

"I believe good design is good design and a good designer is a good designer," said Thom Filicia, best known as the design expert on the television series "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy."

Filicia, who has also designed for celebrity clients including Jennifer Lopez and Marc Antony through his New York firm, Thom Filicia Inc., said the important thing in interior design is understanding people's lifestyles, something fashion designers do well.

"A good designer can transcend from the area they are focused on into other areas and do it very successfully," Filicia said.

But would he recommend consumers start buying area rugs based on what's in their wardrobes?

Filicia said he wouldn't go that far. Still, he has a new show on the Style Network called "Dress My Nest" in which he uses fashion as a springboard to help folks figure out interiors.

"I do think there's a relationship. Saying you want to match your house to your clothes is too literal, but clothes do indicate your point of view, your aesthetic," he said.

"Young and hip or traditional or conservative, you can tell when you see someone," Filicia added.