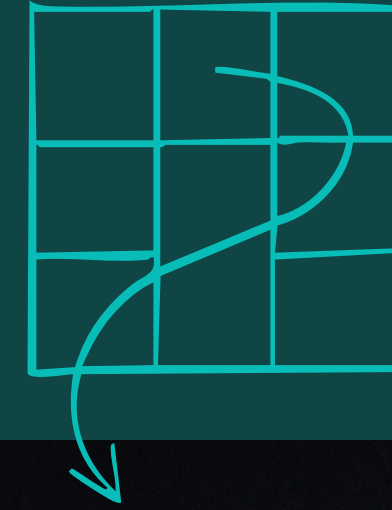




MADE FOR DESIGNERS

*A Toolkit for Creativity
& Inspiration*



FUEL YOUR CREATIVE FIRE

Creativity isn't always easy to spark—even in a world full of inspiration. Deadlines. Client demands. Project research. We know it's a lot. And that staying creative can be a challenge.

To help, we asked Interface's design experts to share how they keep ideas flowing: what unlocks their creativity and how they stay inspired.

This guide distills their insights into practical tips you can revisit anytime—for fresh perspective and unexpected inspiration.

So, dig in. Find what excites you. We can't wait to see what you create.



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WILD INSPIRATION SOURCES

Form. Color. Composition. Pattern. As designers, we're trained to spot these elements around us. Sometimes the perfect combo just clicks, and the ideas start flowing.

Our designers find inspiration in the wildest places. Here are a few that surprised us in the best way:



Gravel on an old road. What did it show me? The path of travel, and the familiarity of a well-worn path.

– Lindsey Foster,
Custom Project Designer, USA



The last sip of coffee that didn't get finished. It creates a beautiful texture in the mug—something many of us see every morning.

– Liselotte Flu,
Concept Designer, Netherlands



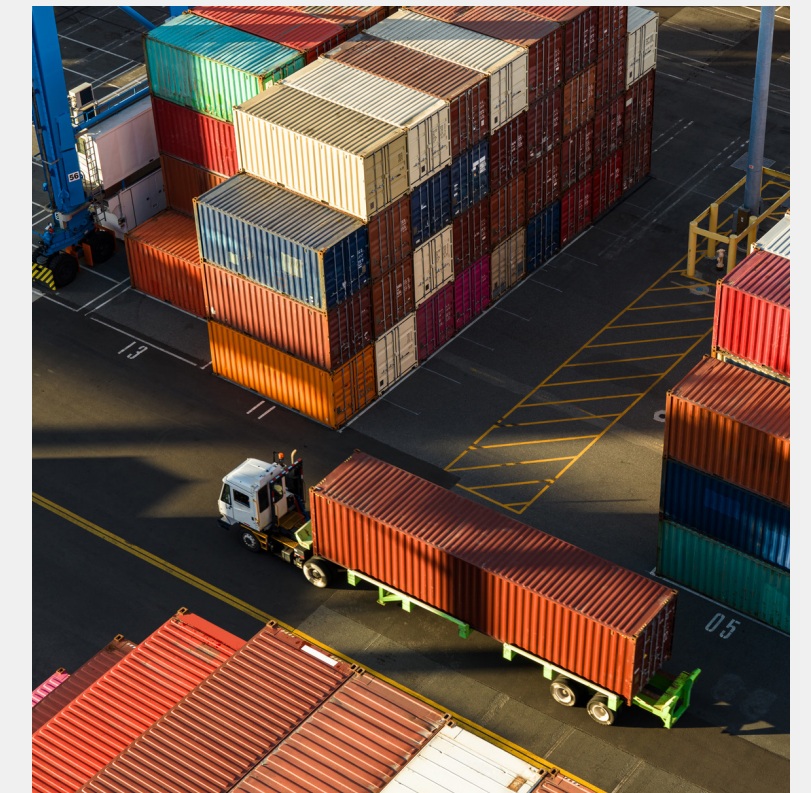
Amusement parks... a very commercialized concept that's full of excitement, unexpected shapes, and more.

– Rikki Kong,
Concept Designer, China



Insects. What started as an unlikely inspiration became one of my go-to sources because of their imperfect patterns and unique color combinations.

– Courtney Walker,
Lead Studio Designer, USA



Containers from freight ships— they're very common, and I was drawn to the colors they usually come in.

– Anne Wagemaker,
Concept Designer, Netherlands



An old, rusted factory wall.

The textures, colors, and decay told such a strong story of gritty, industrial design.

– James Drake,
Graphic Designer, United Kingdom



Crackled weathered lines in tarmac. It's a naturally occurring pattern and I find myself looking to mimic it in designs.

– Beth Cragg,
Designer, United Kingdom



I've always had a fascination with walls, and they've often been a starting point for textures, color palettes, and composition in my creative processes. I'm especially drawn to surfaces that show age and history like old stone and crumbling plaster covered in moss and vines, vintage wallpaper and peeling paint, and even layers of graffiti and weathered posters. There's something compelling about the way time tells a story.

– Lexi Hare,
Studio Designer, USA



That moment when you take off on a plane and reach the right altitude where you can relax, I love to observe the topography below—where land and water meet to form stunning shapes, tones, and textures.

– Naveen Borkar,
Senior Studio Designer, India



The shadows on the sidewalk make unexpected shapes and movement that we can learn a lot from.

– Sarah Mullinax,
Visual Merchandising &
Photography Manager, USA



You'd never guess... the patterns formed on some bubbles when washing the dishes. We can always find a new way of looking at things we experience every day.

– Emily Robinson,
Designer, United Kingdom

CREATIVITY LOVES CONSTRAINTS



Complete design freedom sounds great, in theory. But limits can push us to think bigger. They force new ideas. And bold solutions.

Here's how to use them to your advantage:

- 1. Stay open to new ideas.** Start with the brief (always) but look for inspiration in unlikely places.
- 2. Follow your gut.** Consider what the building, interior, or client tells you—then, pull out the colors, shapes, and patterns that feel right.
- 3. Consult with your client.** Share early ideas to gain alignment upfront and cut down on revisions.
- 4. Remember the limits.** If products or colors are pre-selected, draw from them and create design options that dial up or down the creativity.
- 5. Embrace the story.** Every project has one. Find it and explore what it means to you. That's where the best ideas start.
- 6. Explore more.** Don't stop at one sketch. Keep the brief in mind and let the ideas flow.



“Client briefs rarely capture the full picture, which is why I approach each project with a broader perspective. I look beyond initial briefs, exploring mood boards, the overall space, and how different finishes and colors interact. By doing this, I'm able to design a better way: one that is both future-focused and visually impactful.”

– Zoe Angeles, Concept Designer, Australia

TRENDS IN MOTION

Trends evolve. That's their whole thing. But how do you keep up and get ahead?

You build an inspiration archive, of course.

Getting started is easy. The real test? Maintaining a process that works best for you. Here's how.



FIND YOUR FAVORITE PLACE TO TRACK TRENDS

Inspiration looks different for everyone. Be intentional about monitoring the channels that feel right for you. You can start with:



A&D INDUSTRY

Tradeshows, A&D Magazines, and Market Reports.

Our designers recommend:

- [Clerkenwell Design Week](#)
- [Milan Design Week](#)
- [NeoCon®](#)
- [Copenhagen's '3 Days of Design'](#)
- [Design Miami®](#)
- [Dezeen®](#)
- [Design Milk®](#)
- [Interior Design®](#)
- [ELLE Decor®](#)
- [Sight Unseen](#)
- [FIND DESIGN](#)
- [designboom®](#)
- [Singapore Design Week](#)
- [Tokyo Design Week](#)
- [Bangkok Design Week](#)



SOCIAL CHANNELS

Instagram®, Pinterest®, YouTube®, and more.

Our designers follow:

- [WGSN®](#)
- [Yellowtrace](#)
- [Lidewij Edelkoort](#)
- [Architectural Digest®](#)
- [Pantone®](#)
- [Vogue](#)
- [Raw Color](#)
- [Colossal](#)
- [The Local Project](#)
- [Modern House](#)



MULTIMEDIA SOURCES

Magazines, Podcasts, TV Shows, or Movies.

Our designers recommend:

- [RuPaul's Drag Race®](#)
- [Project Runway®](#)
- [Documentaries](#)
- [TED Talks®](#)
- [Super Creative Podcast](#)
- [99% Invisible Podcast®](#)
- [Magic Lessons Podcast](#)
- [Creative Pep Talk Podcast](#)
- [Clever Podcast](#)



LIFE AROUND YOU

Nature, Hotels, Restaurants, or Cities.

Our designers find time to explore:

- Science
- Art Exhibits
- Fashion Shows
- Architecture
- Antique Shops
- Furniture
- Fabric Stores
- Their Own Neighborhood

CAPTURE YOUR INSPIRATION IN REAL-TIME

What's the best way to capture your favorite trends? Well, that's up to you. Here are a few ideas:

- Use that phone! Out and about? Take a photo.
- Scrolling social media? Grab a screenshot.
- Sketch it out if a photo isn't enough.
- Record a voice memo to remind yourself why something caught your eye.

ORGANIZE YOUR INSPO (OR RISK LOSING IT!)

Inspiration is useless if you can't find it later. Creating a dedicated "Inspo" folder helps, but go further and organize by:

- Category: Think materials, color palettes, lighting, textures, and patterns.
- Project Type: It could be hospitality, workplace, healthcare, or retail.
- Mood/Theme: For example, mid-century, biophilic, or neutral.

"I keep an old school accordion file of physical printouts, tear sheets, material samples, trends, and visuals that catch my eye. If I start to see the same motif or mood pop up in a few different places, that signals to me that it's something worth tracking. And I start to ask myself what it means for us. Should we integrate into a product? Inspiration board?"

– Katherine Cohen, Associate Creative Director, USA



UNLIKELY INSPO. WOW FLOORS.



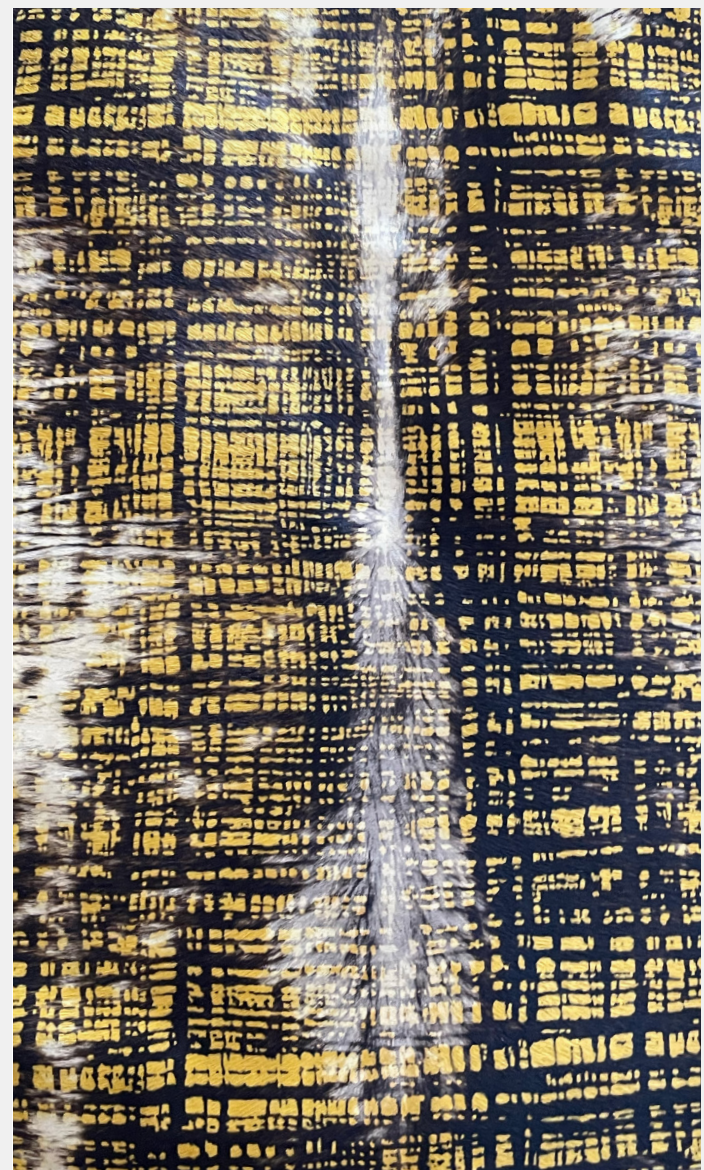
Ideas > Design > Product > Installation.

There's nothing like seeing an idea come to life, especially when it starts somewhere unexpected. These seven flooring designs prove that bold ideas can come from anywhere.



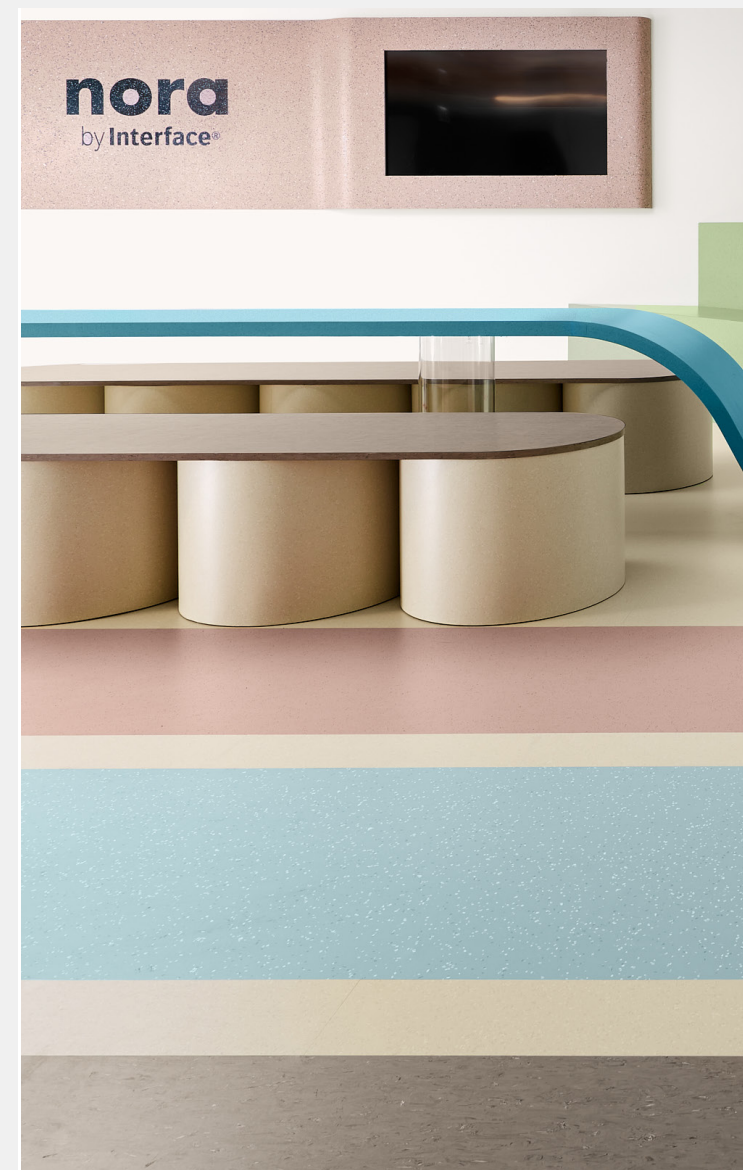
ARTISANS OF ALL KINDS

A stylized textile spotted online helped spark the idea for Heirloom™, our tatami-inspired LVT style in the Lasting Impressions™ collection. The result? A contemporary, woven aesthetic. Rich in depth, texture, and visual interest.



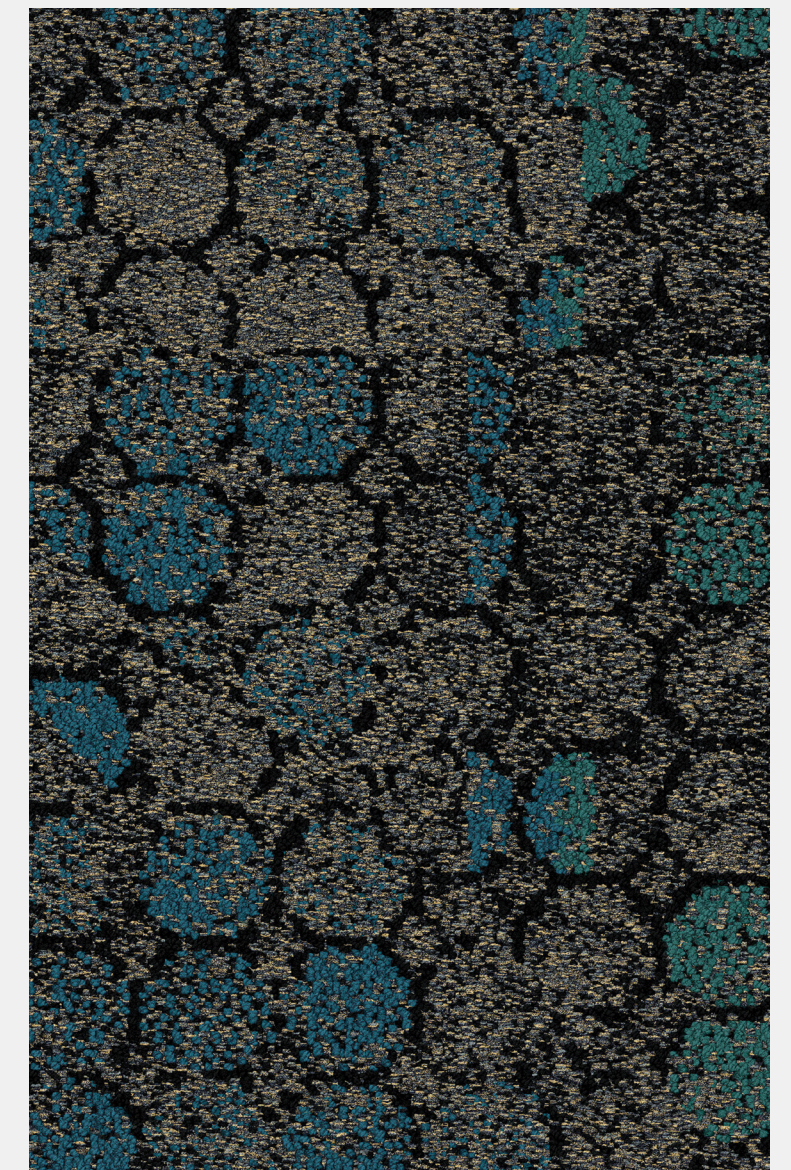
RUBBER EVERYWHERE

Inspired by playground elements, we created a nora® rubber playland during Chicago Design Week. The vibrant, high-performing space showed rubber can be functional and fun.



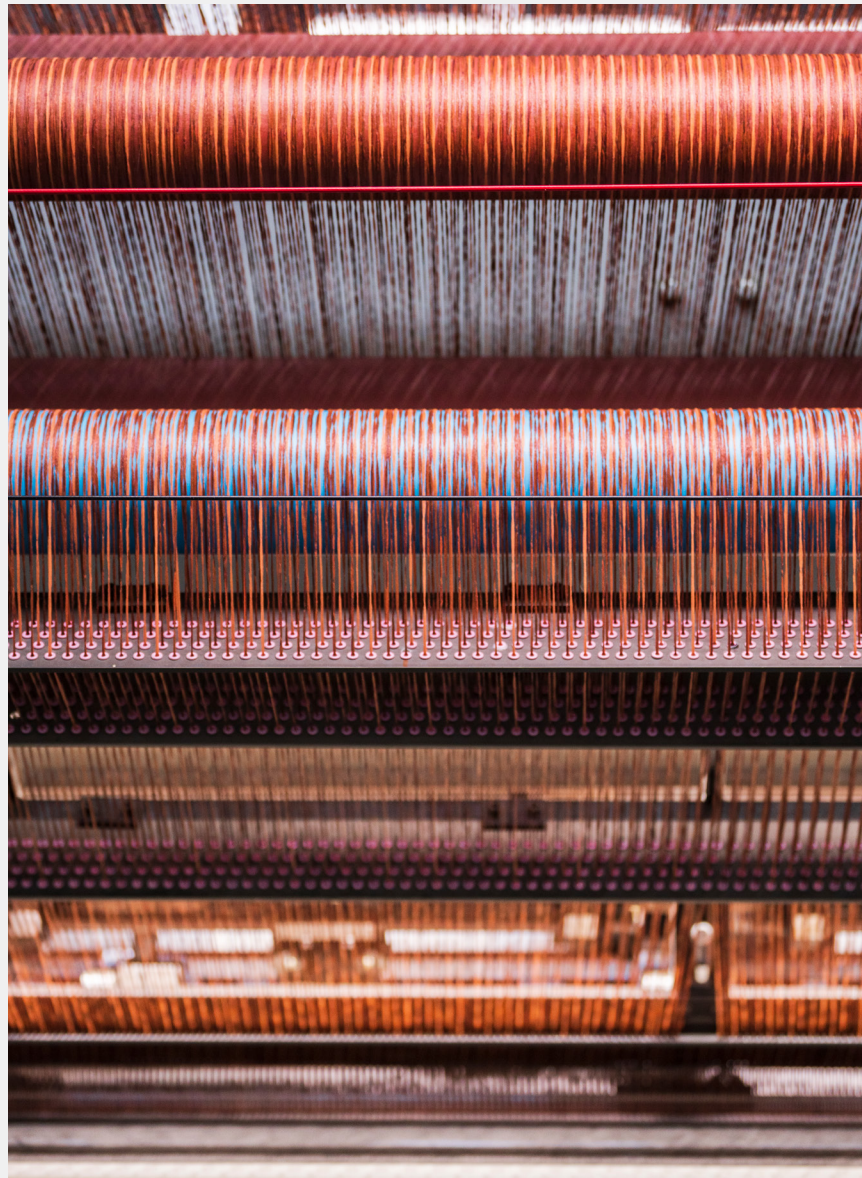
TO THE STREETS

Subway grates. Distressed pavement. Vault lights. Our NY+LON Streets™ collection channels the energy of New York and London. It captures the character of two iconic cities in one bold design.



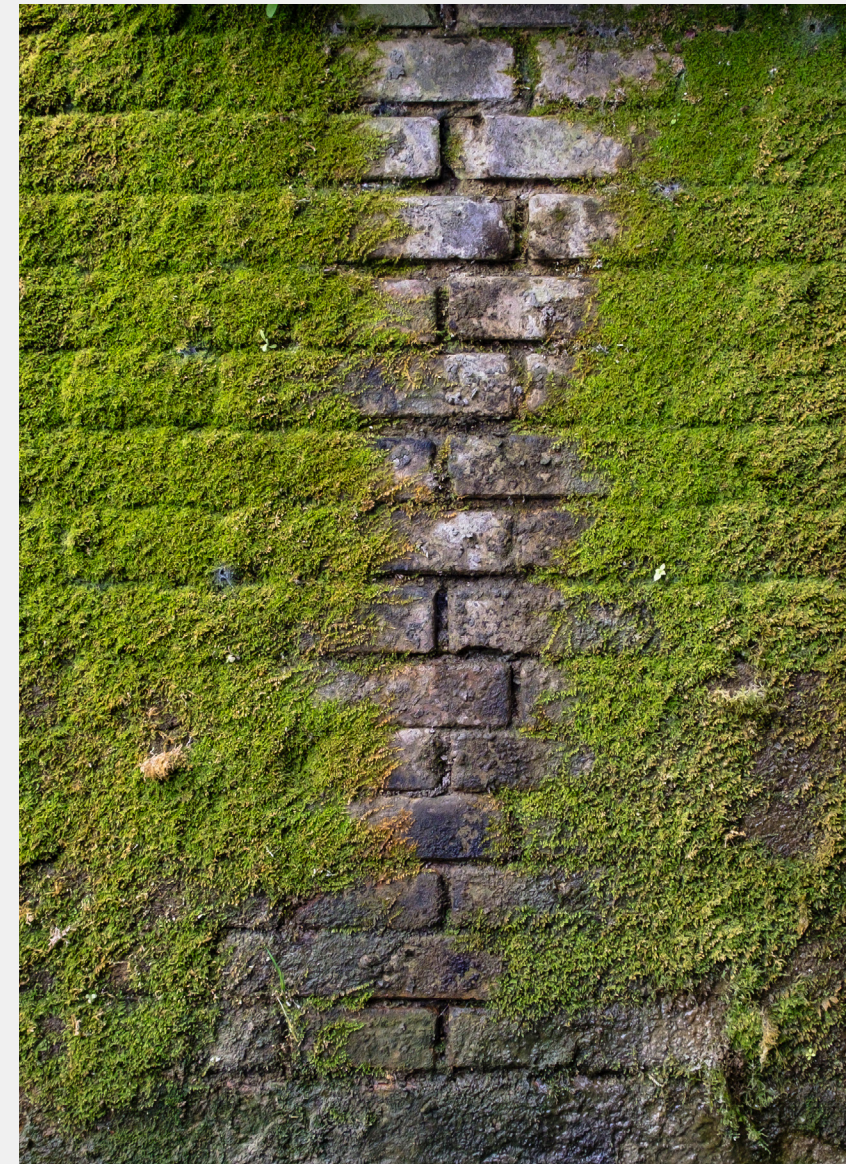
WOVEN TO ITS CORE

We can even find magic in our own manufacturing. Transitions between yarn colors contributed to the design of World Woven™. This woolen, handcrafted aesthetic is a favorite of designers.



WHERE CITIES MEET NATURE

Moss along a sidewalk. Lichen on a stone wall. Urban Retreat™ explores when the beauty of nature meets sophisticated cityscapes. It brings the outdoors in.



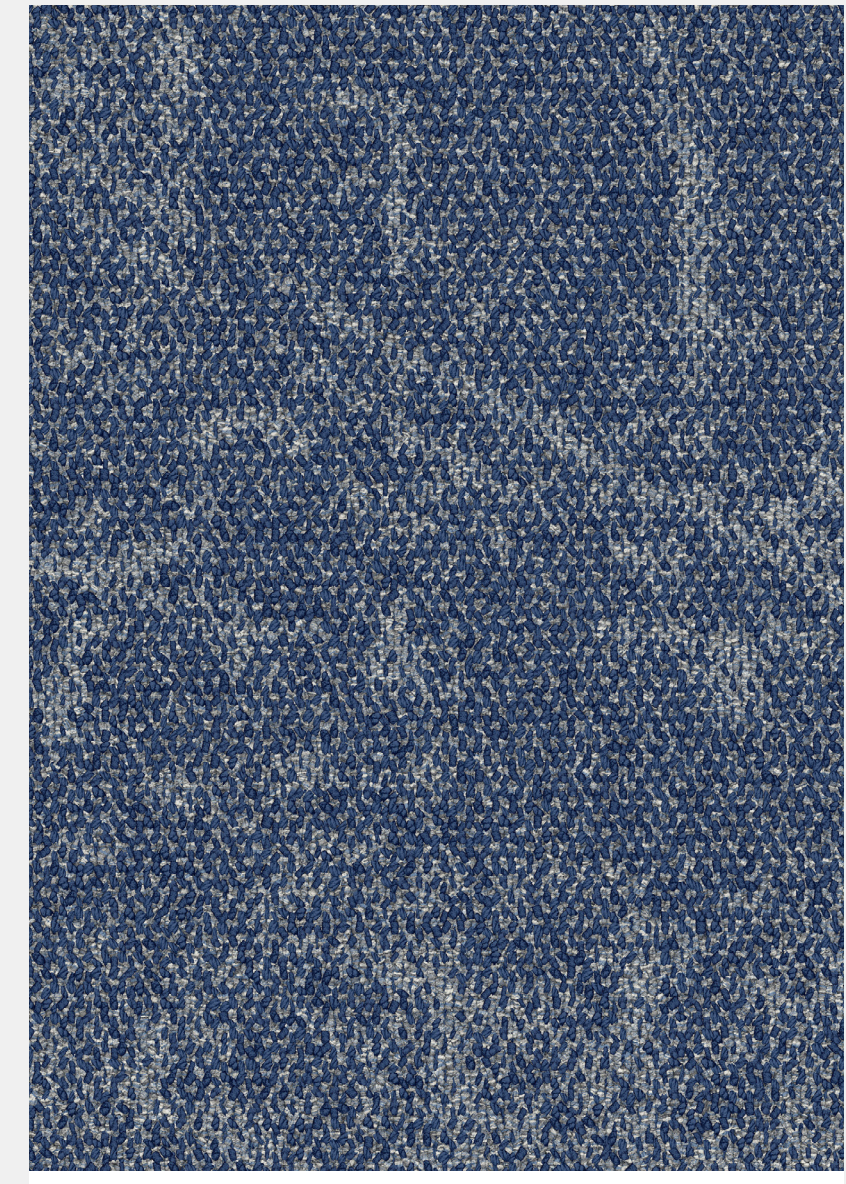
TRASH → TREASURE

Net Effect™ draws from the ocean—its hues, motion, and need for preservation. Made with 100% recycled nylon, including reclaimed fishing nets, it repurposes marine waste into a masterpiece.



BREAK THE ICE

Ice Breaker™ takes its cue from the fractured geometry of frozen water. Each tile reflects the randomness of cracked ice. This pattern variety makes every installation naturally unique.



LITTLE HABITS. BIG IDEAS.

A lot of times, you don't find inspiration—it finds you. But creativity? That's something you can build into your day. These eight micro-habits help our designers stay curious, energized, and open to ideas.



Go outside. Forget your phone. Don't listen to music. Take a few minutes to be in nature. Reset your brain. See what it tells you.



Put pen to paper. Take five minutes to sketch or write. It can be as simple as describing or drawing what's around you.



Change your perspective. If you can, move to a different working space. Break up your time and see things from a new angle.



Share what you're working on. And do it often. Listen to feedback from your peers and continue to refine.

“I always keep a set of design heuristics cards in our studio for a creative jumpstart. In school, we used these cards to ‘design on command,’ understanding that design is the merging of art and business, and we’ll be expected to deliver ideas even when inspiration is hard to come by. The cards go through a variety of exercises—things like: change the scale, flip it upside down, utilize the opposite surface, etc. They can help push a design forward and get you thinking out of the box.”

– Jacob Martinson, Design Studio Manager, Americas, USA



Embrace the wrong idea. Sometimes, we know an idea isn’t 100% the one. That’s okay. You can still see it through and find out what it tells you.



End your day with excitement. Take a moment to consider what’s exciting you and how it can influence your work.



Opt for specificity. Go beyond ‘pretty’ and ‘beautiful’ when you’re drawn to something—take it further. What emotions does it evoke? How do you feel?



Play around a little before you refine. Collect ideas loosely. Explore references that don’t quite make sense. You can edit later.

FASHION AT WORK

90%

of our designers' said fashion was a go-to source for inspiration.

Culture. Couture. Creativity. Fashion's influence runs deep, especially in interiors.

From showrooms to flooring collections, fashion continues to shape the way we design. Our teams don't just follow trends, they translate them.

Watching runway shows. Following iconic brands on social media. Tuning into Project Runway. What starts on the runway often ends up in our designs. Sometimes, we make sure of it.





GUCCI, GRASS, AND GROUNDING

Our Chicago showroom gets a refresh every year for Chicago Design Week. In 2022, we drew inspiration from a Gucci® runway show lined with prairie grass to spotlight new nature-inspired flooring designs. Through a cohesive, biophilic-inspired showroom theme—Nature Works—we created our very own runway moment with a winding path that wended its way through an immersive, story-driven experience. Textures, sounds, scents, and visuals all played a role in the celebration of nature.



FROM ON DISPLAY TO ON THE FLOOR

Worn, distressed planks at Alexander McQueen's Savage Beauty exhibit at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. That's what inspired our first skinny plank carpet tile design. The exhibit paired the weathered wood with romantic, feminine fashion. And that surprising mix of textures excited our designers enough that it became the blueprint for our innovative carpet tile format.

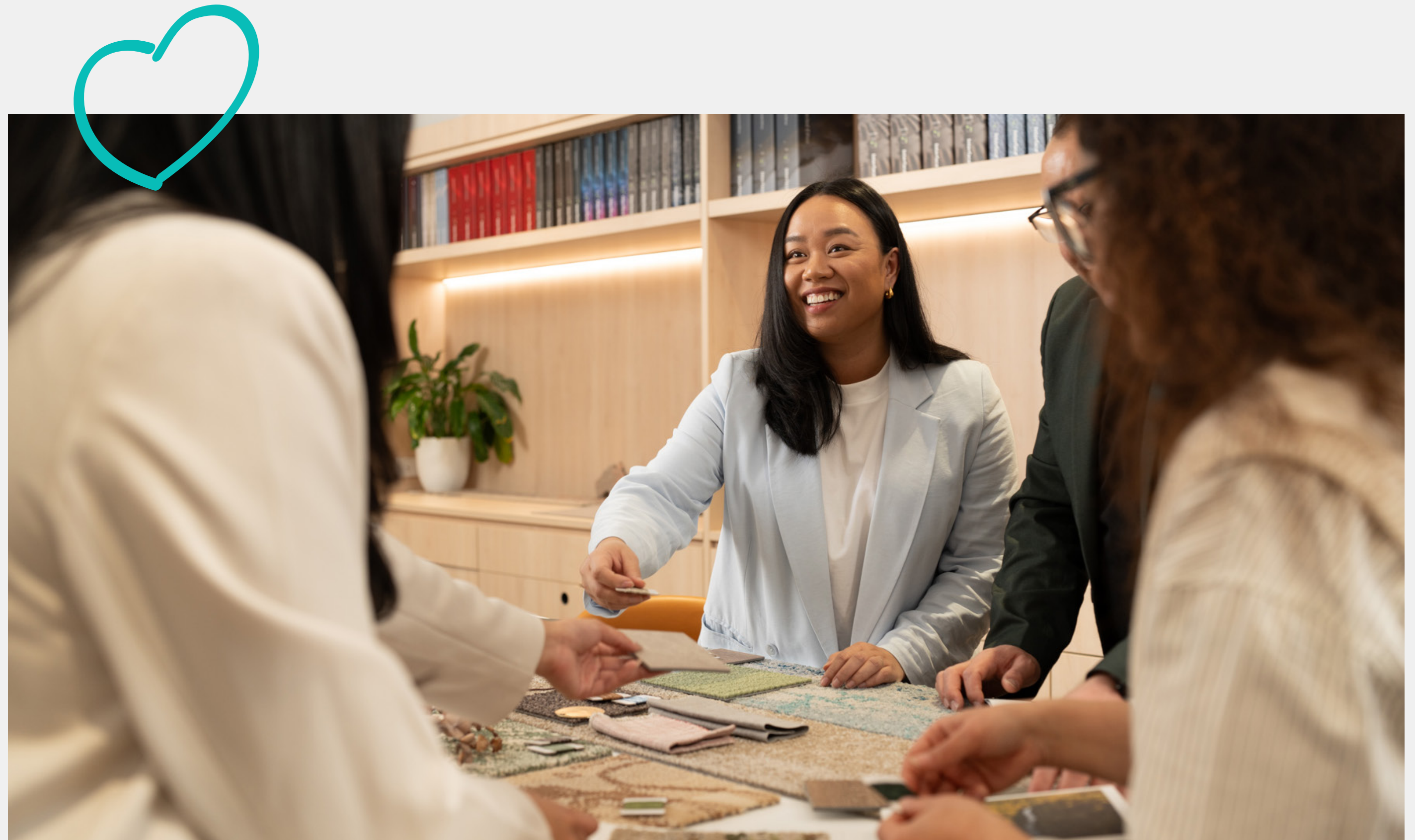


MADE FROM THEN, FOR NOW

Tailored, crisp, and sharp—that's 1950s fashion. And it's also our Dressed Lines™ carpet tile collection. Our designers saw mid-century looks having a moment, especially in streetwear. Dressed Lines plays into this, with a fresh take on timeless designs. Think sophisticated, small-scale, and high-contrast patterns that showcase the versatility and drama of dress fabric.

JOY INSIDE EVERY DESIGN

Good design does more than solve problems. It excites us, connects us, and activates creativity. When you design from a place of joy, your work feels warmer, more intentional, and personal.



WHY JOY MATTERS

Being a designer is fun, but it's easy to forget sometimes. Tapping into joy may help you remember it more often. Designing in the wrong headspace can feel close to impossible. But a positive mindset opens the door to creative thinking.



DISCOVER YOUR JOY

Finding joy is different for everyone. Often, your personal life is a great place to start. Our designers suggest:

- **Draw from your experiences.** Think of your hobbies, travel, or favorite art forms as jumping off points for new ideas.
- **Get outside.** Experience nature or just observe the world around you to refresh your perspective.
- **Explore other creative outlets.** Attend concerts, theater, or other artistic showcases to ignite your imagination.



STAY CURIOUS

Approach the world with curiosity and excitement. It's a gateway to joy, and to finding new sources of inspiration. Unsure where to start? We have some ideas:

- **Embrace childlike wonder.** Ask questions, follow what excites you, and be okay with dead ends.
- **Try new things.** Step outside of your comfort zone. Seize opportunities to learn and grow.
- **Refine, refine, refine.** Treat early versions as experiments. Share your work often, listen openly, and spend time iterating.



PROTECT YOUR JOY

Some days, creativity feels out of reach. That's okay. Don't force it. Reconnect with what makes you happy and return to your work when ready.

- **Avoid burnout.** Take a break when needed. If it's starting to feel like work, you've probably been looking at something for too long.
- **Don't compare yourself to others.** Stay true to your voice. Comparison kills creativity and compromises authenticity.
- **Prioritize yourself.** Rest, reset, and refocus. Creativity comes more easily when you feel your best.

MORE CREATING, MORE EXPLORING.

We can chase creativity, but we usually find it when it's part of our daily rhythm. It grows when we give it time, care, and curiosity.

Keep collecting inspiration. Keep experimenting with design. Keep sharing your unique perspective. That's how creativity thrives.

To develop this guide, we consulted our own Interface design experts from around the globe. Their insights, experiences, and perspectives helped shape this resource. And we appreciate their suggestions for rethinking inspiration, building creative habits, and approaching design in fresh ways.

Now, we challenge you to try out one new practice or habit shared. See how it inspires you.

What will be your next great spark?

