

cover

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COLOUR AND OPTIMISM FOR 2022

JAIPUR RUGS



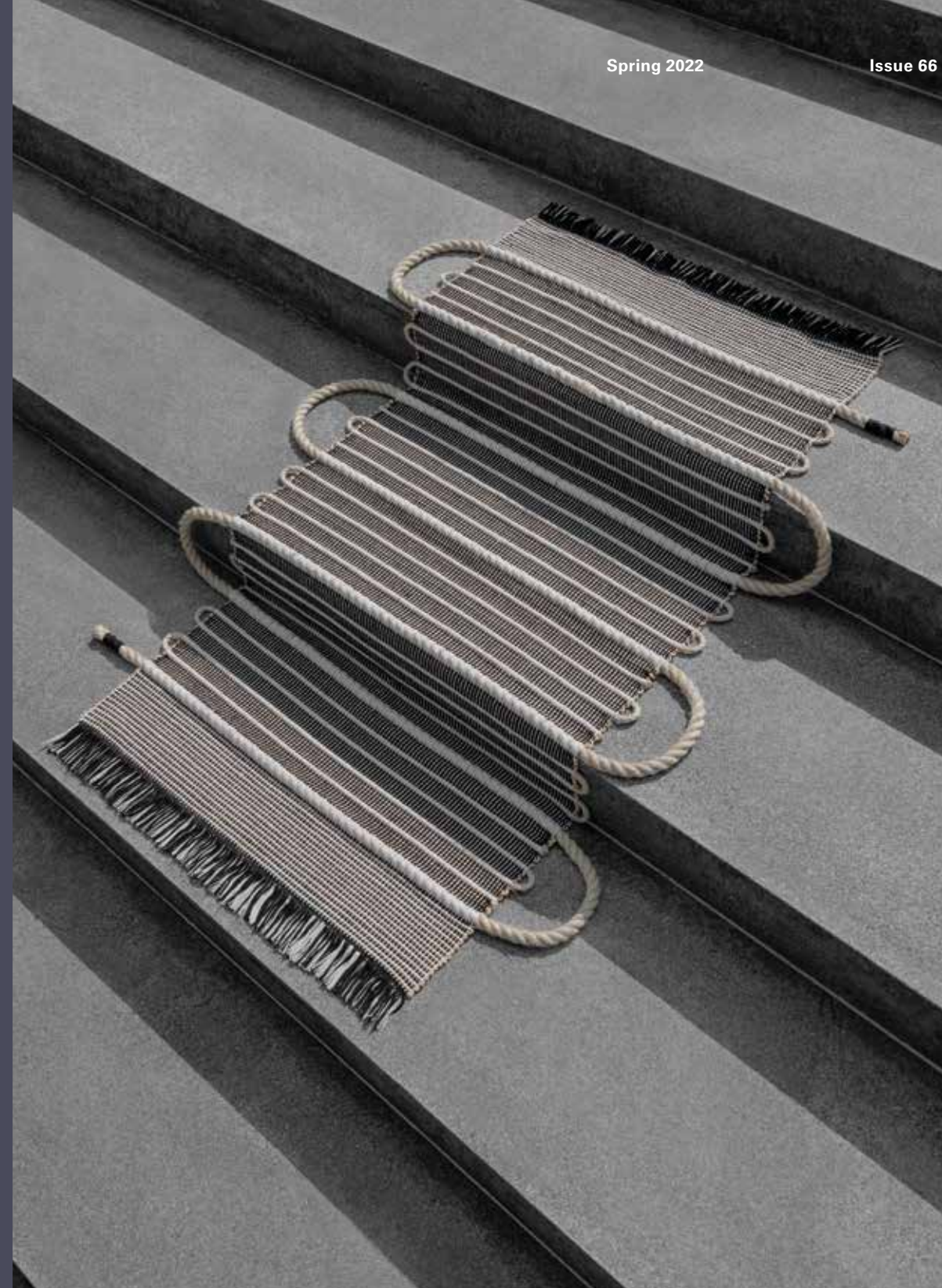
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Isabel Infante

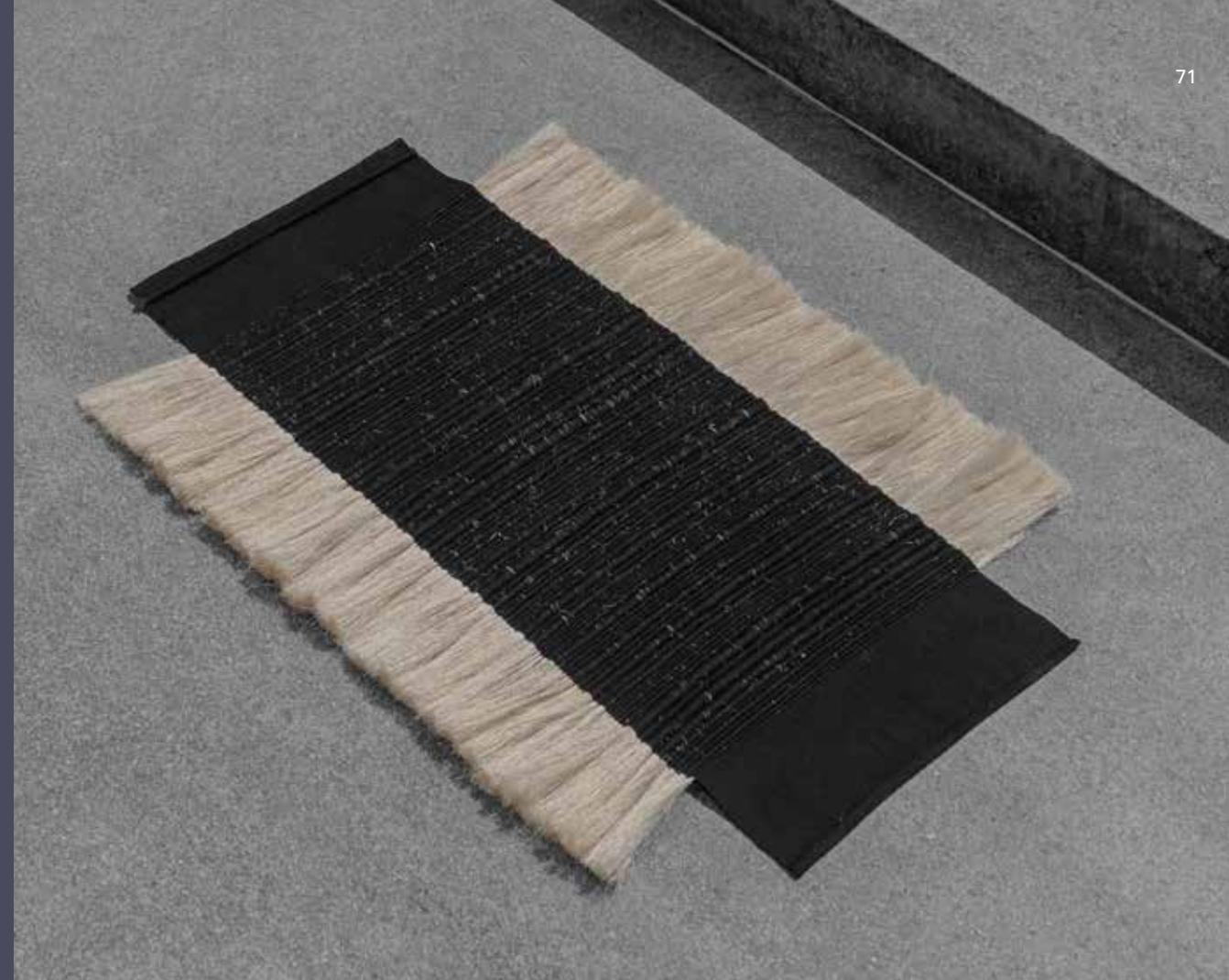
'I am very attracted to crafts because they are closely linked to the territory, to the local. Crafts respond to the materials that are in a certain place'



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A designer and illustrator from Chile, Isabel Infante attributes much of her love of textiles to her experience at Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Création Industrielle in Paris. 'On the one hand, I was fascinated by the geometry and mathematical logic involved in weaving on a loom and, at the same time, by the infinite possibilities, variables and effects depending on the materials, the weave structure, the thread density, the colour. Going mainly to perfect my French, I ended up learning a new language, that of the loom, and it fascinated me.'

Upon her return to Chile, Infante worked for several years as a home textile designer for retail companies, which led her to interact with factories in China and India. She kept her textile interest alive with courses and trips, during which she got to know the Andean textile industry in the Sacred Valley in Peru. In 2015, she went to study a master's degree in textiles in London and bought her first loom.

Infante's love of textiles converges with her love of nature. 'I am attracted to the diversity of nature and the immense supply of materials available. And this is also why I am very attracted to crafts because they are closely linked to the territory, to the local. Crafts respond to the materials that are in a certain place, specific to the needs of that area. The study of traditional or past practices can lead us to a more diverse and sustainable future.'

Living in Mexico the past few years has impacted her textile choices. 'When I arrived in Mexico I was coming from my master's in sustainable textiles. Then, arriving in Mexico, I was very struck by the diversity of natural fibres. I was even surprised to see cleaning products and brushes in the markets made of different

natural fibres. In Mexico, manufacturing with natural materials is part of the culture. I once read that there are several objects that have hardly changed their shape over time and that they continue to be used just as the Mexica or the Mayans did, such as baskets.'

Infante starts from exploring the possibilities of each material in relation to the technique. Her recent textile explorations come from her research on natural fibres present in Mexico. Palma, oyamel, bejuco, henequen, sansevieria, cotton, jipijapa and lechuguilla are some of the plants that skilled local hands transform into raw material to create objects that speak to us about territory and culture. Her initial material explorations in Mexico were done with vegetable dyes. Then her eyes turned to henequen (Yucatan sisal). 'When dyeing fibres of vegetable origin, they usually absorb less colour than those of animal origin, and with henequen I was surprised because it absorbs the colour deeply and also has a beautiful soft shine. So that's how I became enchanted with it. It has always been used as a "service" material for ropes or sacks, but without exploring its beauty.'

In the recent works she has potentialised the natural characteristics of fibres such as henequen, exposing the sinuous curves of the material at the edges. In *Coatl*, she explores the use of ropes in different thicknesses for the weft of the rug. She has worked in collaboration with weavers from Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca, giving a twist to the traditional tapestry technique.

Infante's dream of collaborating with carpet and textile companies is clearly a perfect next step. *Marcella Echavarría*
www.isabelinfante.com

01 *Coatl* (detail), rug featuring henequen rope, Isabel Infante

02 *Ki* (detail), rug made of henequen, Isabel Infante

03 *Coatl*, rug featuring henequen rope, Isabel Infante

04 *Ki*, rug made of henequen, Isabel Infante