

## Interview with Alfredo Häberli on the new Edition 2018 of the +plus Collection

Grüezi from Langenthal

During this year's Salone del Mobile, Ruckstuhl is presenting the Edition 2018 of the +plus collection that was created together with Alfredo Häberli. With a newly developed and innovative printing technology for textiles, wool felt carpets have been decorated with the designer's colorful graphics. Thanks to this surprising combination of materials, refreshingly fashionable carpet creations have emerged that lend a modern touch to every room.

We look forward to presenting you the new collection in our showroom during the Salone del Mobile. You can find us in the center of Milan in the Via Cerva 23 – only one street behind and just a few steps away from the showrooms of Cassina and B&B Italia. On Thursday, April 6th, Alfredo Häberli will present the new collection personally from 6pm, accompanied by drinks and finger food.

Come visit us and get inspired. Should you already want to find out more about the new carpet creations, please read the following interview with Alfredo Häberli. He explains why he is so enthusiastic about the material felt, and how the new carpet collection from Ruckstuhl came to be created.

Wishing you a pleasant read,  
Your Ruckstuhl Team

**Ruckstuhl: This is your third carpet collection in collaboration with Ruckstuhl – and here once again you are working with felt. You also explored the possibilities of felt in your diploma project. What is it about this material that gets you excited?**

Alfredo Häberli: I got my diploma back in 1991, and since then the material felt has lost nothing of its fascination for me. I am particularly impressed by the antiquity of the technique (dating from 3000 BC) – and there are even people who suggest that it predates any kind of weaving. I feel motivated to continue using this historic material today, and like combining it with new ideas.

**R: In your first two collections you showed how it is possible, with the help of various connection options, to combine 1.80 meter wide felt strips into larger rugs. Apart from that, you used a modern technology to cut patterns into the felt carpets. What ideas are you pursuing in this new collection?**

AH: We have used wool felt exclusively. This necessarily has limited dimensions in terms of length and breadth. Shaping it so it can cover a wider area is always a challenge. Apart from this issue, the collection uses color printing as an additional design element for the first time.

**R: Where did you get the idea of making a new carpet collection with Ruckstuhl?**

AH: We had been wanting to create a new edition in partnership with Ruckstuhl for some time, and had actually talked about the idea on repeated occasions. One day Ruckstuhl came up with the possibility, and the germ of the idea, of printing on felt. The first trials were made using a prototype machine at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts. Later on Ruckstuhl themselves invested in a printing machine of this kind, with which we were able to try out and finally create the motifs for the collection.

**R: This was already your third collaboration. So I guess the work must have run on oiled wheels.**

AH: You can certainly say that. It was like a game of ping-pong – initial ideas and preliminary trials, second ideas and further trials. It's a matter of trial and error, solving problems and looking for answers – a constant back and forth between my studio and the Ruckstuhl firm.

**R: What kind of hurdles did you have to overcome in the development and realization of the collection?**

AH: It was disappointing to be faced with the fact that the colors did not have the same luminosity on felt as on traditional base materials. Many colors just came out extremely dark – practically black, in fact. We had to change the colors and mix them differently, so that they would show well when they were dry.

But the biggest difficulty was to find a technique that would meet all the requirements of a carpet that gets walked on. There's a lot of wear on a rug that is being used.

But as I was saying – the crucial steps, if you want to be successful in discovering new territory, are the trials, the subsequent adjustments and the search for something new. The important thing is never to lose sight of the overarching idea. Then you can eventually find a path that takes you to where you want to be.

**R: Can you sum up the collection in a few sentences?**

AH: The basis of the collection is the material felt, on which patterns have been printed using a new printing technique. This gave rise to half a dozen different motifs.

**R: How many products or designs are there, and how do they differ?**

AH: With the different designs, the aim was to apply the technique in different ways and demonstrate the variety of design possibilities. There will be four designs, differing from one another playfully, visually, conceptually and in color terms.

**R: Do the different designs have names?**

AH: We call them GRID, LINES and FLUID LINES – straightforward names, simply describing the patterns.

**R: Will the color be capable of coping with daily wear and tear, and succeed in lasting as long as the felt rug itself?**

AH: Of course the color fastness was something we tested. And as you rightly say, the felt will also last a long time, because it's practically indestructible.

**R: What kind of setting do you picture the carpets of the new collection in – who would you like to see using them?**

AH: Well, if I can give my dreams free rein, then in the Villa Malaparte on Capri, at the Centre Le Corbusier in Zurich, in César Manrique's Mirador del Rio restaurant on Lanzarote or at the former studio of Constantin Brancusi.

In real terms, they would be more likely to feature in the transitional zone from the bedroom to the living room, or from a passage to the lobby – either in the private or in the public sector.

But the dream is what matters most to me...

#### *Alfredo Häberli*

*Alfredo Häberli, born in Buenos Aires in 1964, is an internationally renowned designer who lives in Zurich. Under the name of Alfredo Häberli Design Development, his studio specializes in combining traditional designs with innovation, and energy with joie de vivre. The holder of a diploma in industrial design, Mr. Häberli works with internationally known companies like Alias, Moroso, Kvadrat, Iittala, BMW and Camper, and has already received numerous awards for his striking ideas.*

#### *Ruckstuhl*

*The Swiss family firm Ruckstuhl is a carpet manufacturing enterprise founded in Langenthal in 1881. It specializes in natural fiber carpets and rugs for the contract sector. Our guiding ideal of "Nature becomes culture" aptly reflects our convictions in relation to sustainability, natural fibers and design.*