

cover

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ROGER SELDEN FOR POST DESIGN

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MATERIAL FOCUS • ADAM HUNTER • RETHINKING THE RUG
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Flip-flop Dennames

Flip-flop is the name of a playful new collection of ceramics and rugs by American artist Roger Selden for Post Design (formerly Memphis). **Denna Jones** follows Selden's art career to discover the origins of these quirky 'flip flop' designs

01 *Brooklyn*, hand-knotted wool rug, Roger Selden for Post Design

02 *Dakota*, hand-knotted wool rug, Roger Selden for Post Design

03 *Brooklyn*, hand-knotted wool rug, Roger Selden for Post Design

The world of rugs is flip-flop flat in a new limited edition collection designed by artist and graphic designer Roger Selden. Created for Post Design—the commercial arm of internationally famous Italian design group Memphis founded in 1981 by Ettore Sottsass—Selden's 'flip-flop'

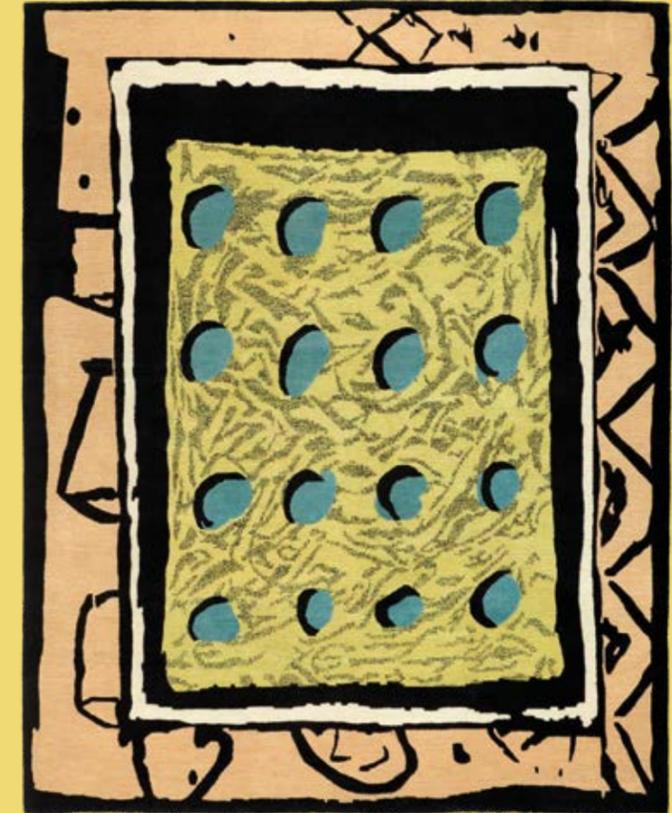
collection reveals a world where flat represents much more than just the two-dimensional reality of a rug.

Hand-knotted in Nepal, the patterns of the collection's eleven wool rugs reflect ideas from throughout Selden's career, and reveal affinity to the graphic quality and colours of 1980s Memphis design. The 'flatness' of Memphis design related directly to Euclidian geometry, while Selden's cartoonish world of untethered hearts, heads, spectacles, coffee cups and more seems akin to weirdly wonderful non-Euclidean geometry where space looks 'normal' at the local level (Selden's 'flip') but not so normal on the global level (Selden's 'flop').

Each rug is named after towns and locations in the US with the exception of *Milano* and *Munich*. Selden gives little away in his mini biography, but the rug *Brooklyn* may hold the key (literally) to the importance of his native New York. Born in Brooklyn in 1945, the field of Selden's *Brooklyn* rug resembles



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a *pietra dura* mosaic (Italy is Selden's adopted home of many years). The field of hearts includes a key shaft with a heart head. Does it represent Brooklyn as the key to Selden's heart? Less whimsically, his *Rio* rug features plank-like geometry where circles appear like giant nail heads in a timber floor.

Selden's love of opposing ideas is described in his book *My Notes for 1985* as 'rhythmic order and genial chaos'. The rug collection alludes to his 'playful game of tensions and contradictions' and includes geometry-related references. Selden's work often features smiling quadrilateral square heads. A nod perhaps to geometry-based satirical novella *Flatland: a Romance in Many Directions* (1884) where two-dimensional Mr A. Square visits the land of three dimensions? A century after the book's publication flat style influenced Memphis and infiltrated popular culture. Famous 1980s advertising character Fido Dido's jug eared triangle head often adorned the character's own t-shirt, a playful *mise en abyme* (copy of an image within itself) where the copy head is like a reduced version of one of Ettore Sottsass's jug-handled face vases.

Physicists believe we already live in a non-Euclidean world. For those unsure of what that world looks like, Roger Selden's fun flip-flop collection of 'free-floating anarchy' offers a futuristic peek inside.

www.rogerselden.com
www.memphis-milano.com