



# Growing Up Weese

— By Marcia Weese on September 26, 2016

Her parents are architect Harry Weese and pioneering design shop founder Kitty Baldwin. Born into a coterie of mid-century modern architecture and design icons—Alvar Aalto, Eero Saarinen, and Charles and Ray Eames among them—artist and interior designer Marcia Weese carries on family tradition by designing modern rugs and creating fine art prints in her studio in the Colorado mountains.



Artist and designer Marcia Weese

I grew up on the near north side of Chicago near the lake. The endless horizon line, burning coal, bus fumes, beach sand, roller skates, sirens, frozen waves, thunderstorms, pigeons, dandelions ... Life in the inner city was complemented by summers in the country forty miles west. Crickets, lightning bugs, oaks, jays, owls, leaves, slugs, snake grass, otters, bluegills, cabbage butterflies, algae, sumacs, worms, Queen Anne's lace, garter snakes, rabbits, clover, flies, bullfrogs ... I was lucky to dwell in both worlds. And each winter we spent the Christmas holiday in Aspen, and I fell in love with the Rocky Mountains, too. Streams, Indian paintbrush,

marmots, boulders, puffballs, eagles, gentians, boiled wool, marzipan, scree fields, cumulus clouds, ravens, purple snow shadows, ermine, the smell of wet dirt...

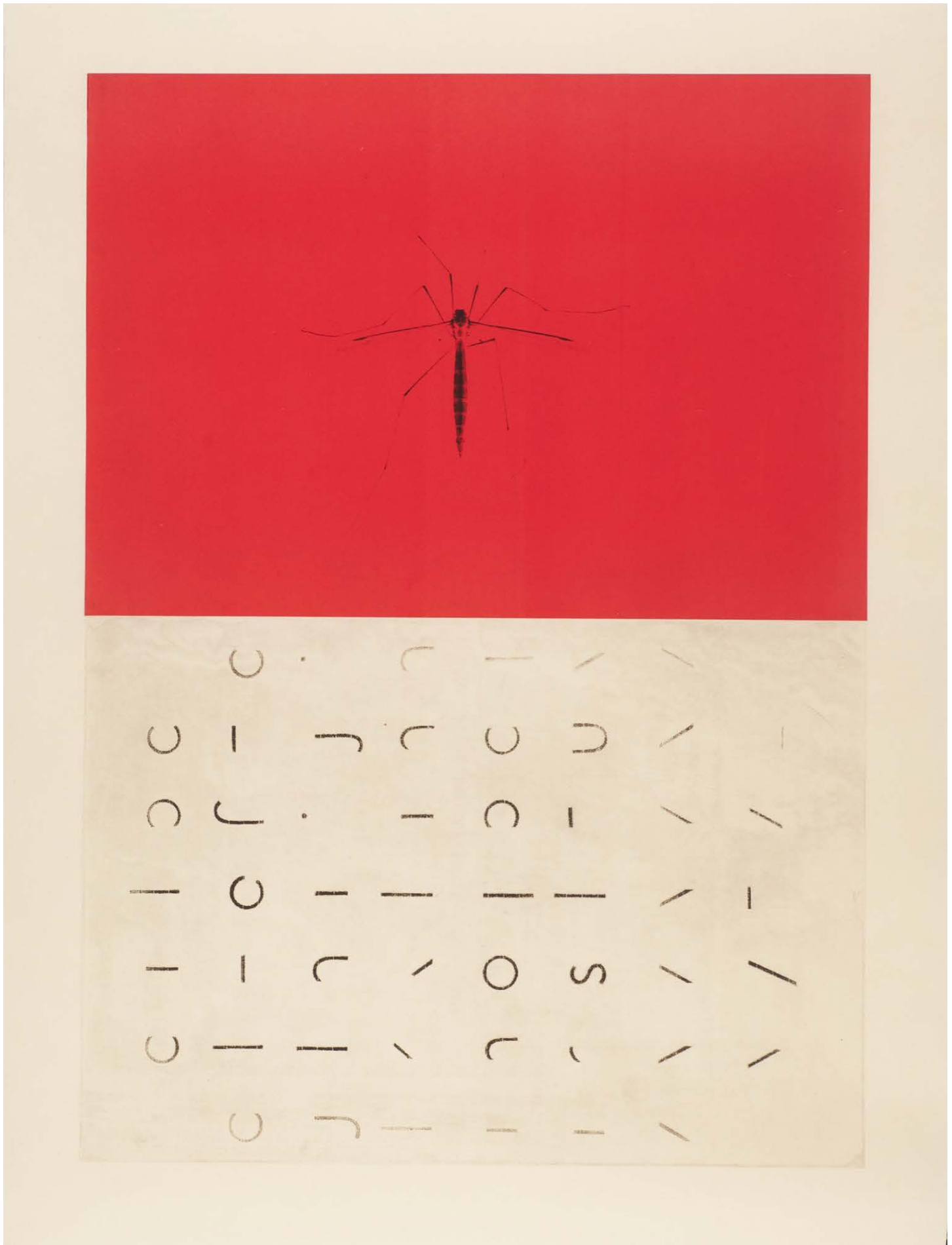
The natural world has always been an oasis for me—a sanctuary, a place in which to marvel and explore. I borrow imagery from natural forms, weather patterns, textures, to bring a sense of balance to my world. My content often comes from the mystery and magnificence of nature—the perfect designer.



Flora Collection by Marcia Weese

**“My content often comes from the mystery and magnificence of nature—the perfect designer.”**

Trained as a sculptor, I was attracted to site-specific work that often incorporated architectural elements. Printmaking was a natural antithesis to the rigor of planning and making sculpture, and as I look back, I have devoted most of my artistic life to works on paper. The ephemeral quality and the spontaneity speak to me. I am enchanted by the casual impermanence of a work on paper. And I am attracted to the minimal aesthetic, where I feel most comfortable. Less is more in my world.



Hawk Alphabet by Marcia Weese

## **“I am enchanted by the casual impermanence of a work on paper.”**

As children, we would get the nod from mother that our father was coming home and it was time to “clear the decks.” All toys would be scooped up and hidden away so he could walk into a clean and serene environment. To this day, clutter confuses me and divesting is actually something I enjoy.

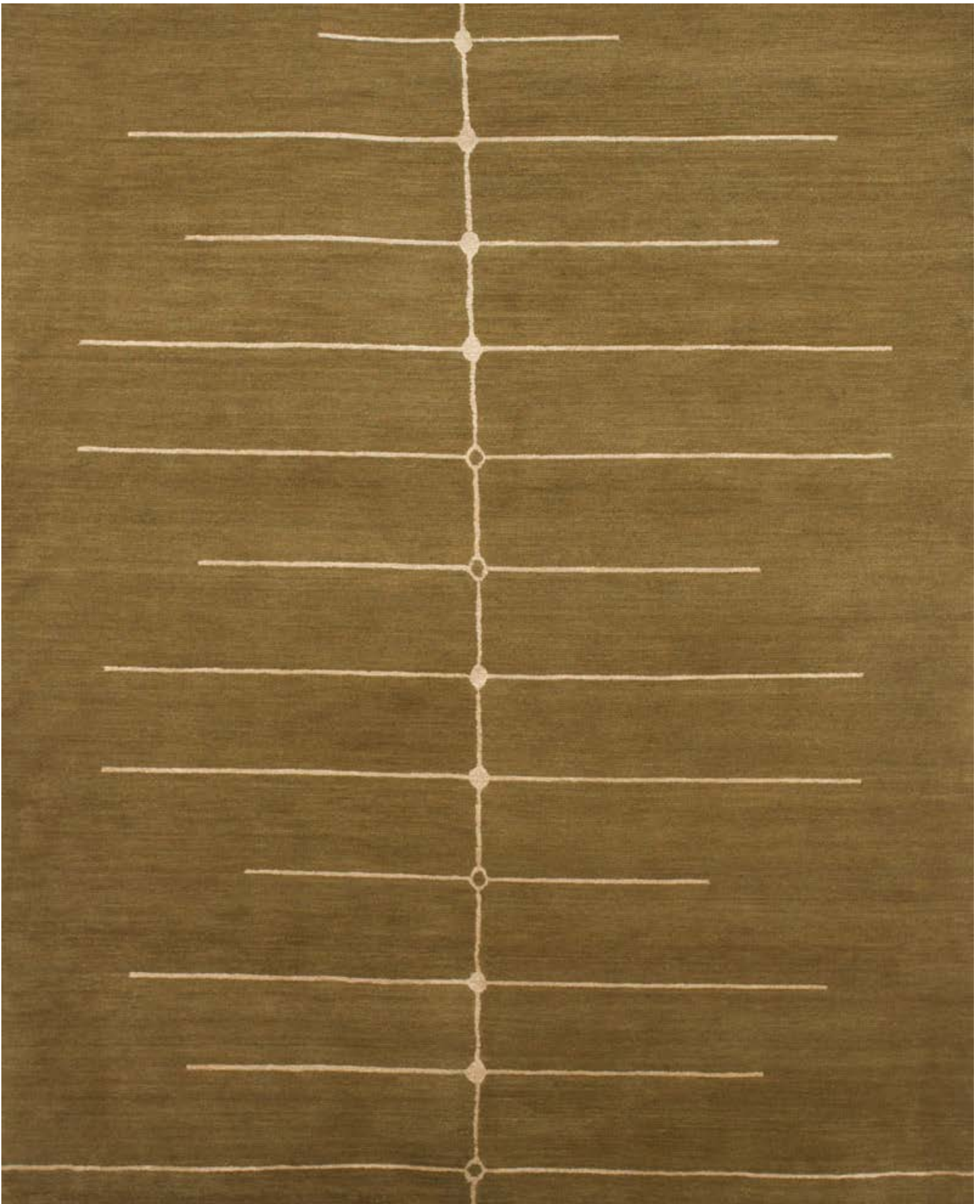
I moved to New York after art school to become the famous artist that is expected of all Bennington graduates. That was a nine-year lesson in humility and how to survive amid intense turmoil and fierce competition. I learned how to discern the excellent from the mediocre in art and design. I danced, made sculpture, painted, and longed for the horizon line. I found myself walking down the streets in Manhattan looking up at the rooftops. There, the sky silhouetted another cityscape of water turrets, parapets, and fire escapes. After nine years in New York, “Manhattanism” (i.e., “New York is the only place to live”), had gotten a problematic stronghold on me, so I escaped and returned to Chicago where I could breathe again. I loved walking along the lakeshore with the density of the city to the west and open water to the east.





TUNDRA rug / Prairie Collection by Marcia Weese

I continued making art but asked my mother to teach me the ins and outs of the interior design profession so I could more readily support myself. She taught me well, and I have worked collaboratively with architects and clients across the country over a number of decades. As an interior designer with a classical modern bent, I was always searching for the quintessential modern rug to harmonize the room. I only found beige, beige, and beige or super graphic patterns that looked like bad paintings. Serendipitously, I was introduced to a family of Tibetan sisters, who knew the rug trade and had cousins in the business in Asia. This was a happy union, and for the past fifteen years I have worked directly with Tibetans who weave rug collections to my design in Nepal. Recalling visuals of growing up on the edge of Lake Michigan and the Midwestern prairie, to hiking the crags of the Rocky Mountains, my designs stem directly from my intersections with the natural world. The patterns and color palettes present an assemblage of modern but timeless rugs.



STEM rug from Marcia Weese's Prairie Collection

**“As an interior designer with a classical modern**

**bent, I was always searching for the quintessential modern rug to harmonize the room.”**

When I eventually grew tired of Chicago’s pink skies at night and ached to see the milky way, I moved west to the Rockies.



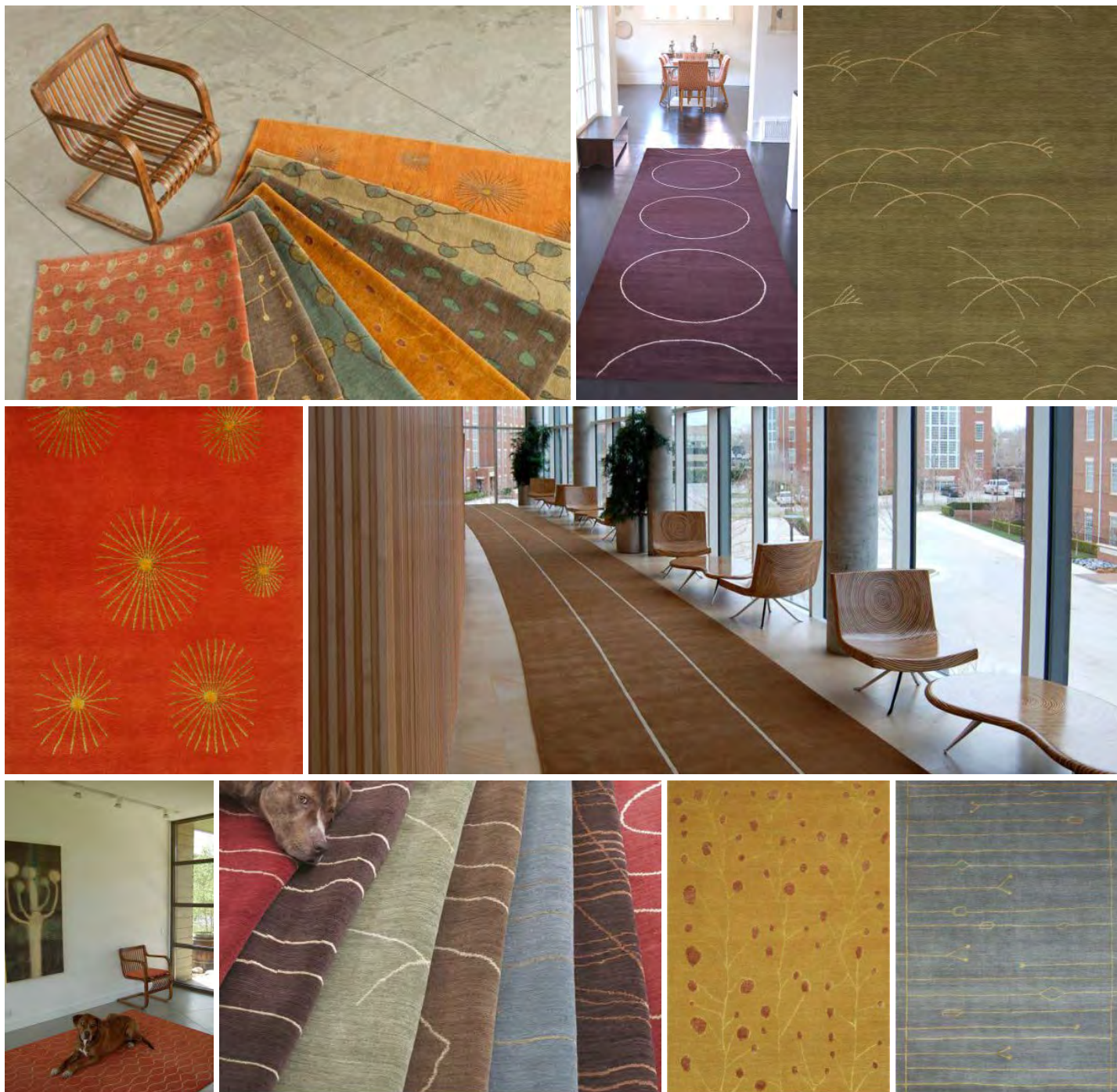
Marcia Weese in her studio in Carbondale, Colorado

Decades have passed, and the early modernists are still in vogue. Thankfully, this is beyond fickle fashion, which warms my heart as I feel I am surrounded by old friends and family. These days, when I encounter “everyday simple,” I pause and give thanks to my parents for teaching me that less is more. And I appreciate the efforts that are being made by those who are committed to good design and who are carrying on that noble tradition.



And I am ever grateful to have been handed the baton of creativity. It is an ongoing quest, one that continues to nourish, atop the peaks and in the valleys. Δ

**“Decades have passed, and the early modernists are still in vogue. Thankfully, this is beyond fickle fashion, which warms my heart as I feel I am surrounded by old friends and family.”**



Read *“How American Modernism Came to the Mountains”*—a memoir by Marcia Weese as the daughter to a power couple of early American modernism. Together with fellow members of Chicago’s design elite, Harry Weese and his wife, Kitty Baldwin, flocked to Aspen for ski and summer holidays, bringing modern design and architecture to the Mountain West with them.

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makes from wool felt



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Alpine Modern coloring page



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— July 16, 2016

## The Beauty of Use

Hidden in the Japan Alps, a Czech-born artist makes woodstoves that match the simplicity of Japanese interiors.



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## Fire / Wood

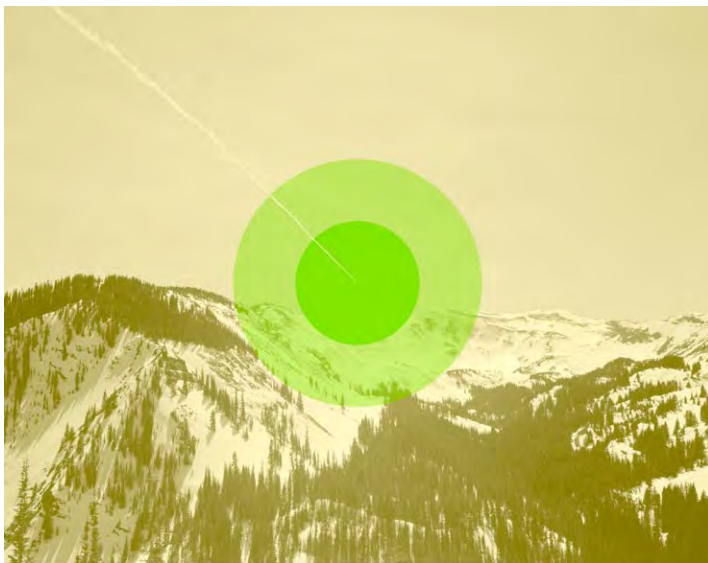
His Nordic German upbringing, traditional Swiss carpentry training, and the Bauhaus Manifesto deeply influence Canada-based designer and furniture-maker Nicolas Meyer as a craftsman and intellectual



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## Aspen Style: Designed for Legacy

Mountain homes in Aspen, Colorado, are built to stay in the family for generations



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Limited edition fine art prints by Jamie Kripke



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## The Tree-Hugging Woodworker

A portrait of California furniture-maker Sean Woolsey



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## The Creator of Whimsy

Danish architect and designer Hans Bølling talks with us about his iconic wooden figures, modern design and his wife and muse, Søs



— October 15, 2016

## Makers on Board

Born out of passion for the ride, handcrafted snowboards, splitboards, and skis by Vancouver Island's Kindred Snowboards feature marquetry artwork.



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## One Hundred Years of Swissness

A renovation of a 1912 chalet so beautiful it spawns an interior design company



— September 13, 2016

## The Tippy Brass Ballerina

A conversation with designer Eero Koivisto of Claesson Koivisto Rune about the accidental making of the dancing brass bowls



— August 9, 2016

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A conversation with the London-based creator of cashmere creatures and other wild things.



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## Dwell × Alpine Modern

We are incredibly excited to announce our partnership with Dwell



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## Beauty from the Lab

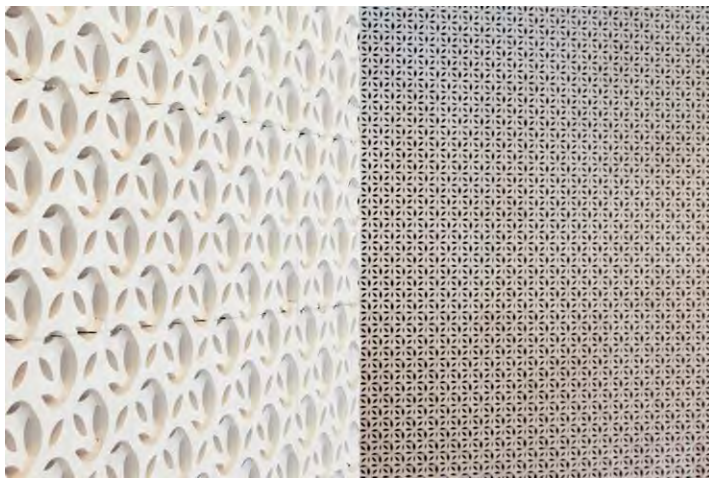
Minimalistic ceramic labware matches the simple beauty of designer pottery



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