What made you decide to build a career as a carpet designer?
Carpet design matched all of my passions: painting, drawing, color, pattern, and functional art. Plus, I knew that my career choice was different from most, so it made me stand out from other designers.

Did you encounter difficulties when you were starting out?
When I started my business in 2009, one of the biggest challenges was designing colorful pictorial designs in a down economy. But my bold designs in vivid color stood out at a time when most designers were looking for soft palettes and subtle patterned carpets.

In your travels, do you recall particular highlights that may have inspired you or triggered an idea?
During my recent visit to Guatemala, I interviewed a weaving cooperative that consisted of 13 women workers. I learned about their weaving process, distribution, and the amount of time it takes to make one of their traditional tops called huipiles. It took up to six months to make a top. I also asked if I could grant them one wish what would it be? Like most creative people, the response was they love their work and want to preserve their culture. But they also want to sell more products through various distribution channels. At that moment, I thought about how I could help to make their wish come true. This knowledge gave me a higher appreciation for their art.

The carpets do reflect your references to different places. Perhaps you can take us through the thought process of how you encapsulated the vibe or spirit of a particular city.
My design process starts with a concept and about the experiences during my visit to that country. Then I begin to sketch and think about how to create a graphic yet modern shape to capture the essence of the culture. During my visit to Shanghai, I saw so many high-rise buildings. The idea was to abstract the city’s skyline into a geometric pattern. The Bangkok design depicts an aerial view of the floating markets in Thailand. I admired this unique form of business and created a carpet that celebrates the local’s entrepreneurial spirit. maleneb.com