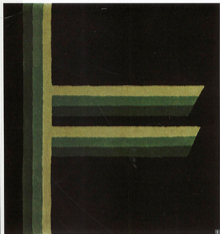


# Textiles



**1 ROWAN OM series**  
2020 Irish wool, non-toxic dyes, natural latex 360 x 360cm

**2 SUAIMHNEAS Insula series** (Embossed artwork)  
2018 Irish wool, silk, non-toxic dyes, natural latex 360 x 360cm

**3 CLAIRE MCGOVERN**

**4 AKAAD FADD F**  
Insula series (Embossed artwork)  
2019 Irish wool, non-toxic dyes, natural latex 360 x 360cm

**5 MODERNITY Trinity series** 2020 Irish wool, non-toxic dyes, natural latex 360 x 360cm  
Custom sizes made upon request



## RHYME STUDIO

**S**elf-taught designer Claire McGovern of Rhyme Studio may be living and working in New York, but she is an Irish woman at heart. Two years ago, she launched a series of rugs made from the finest hand-spun Irish wool, inspired by the artistic lexicon of Insular Irish Celtic art.

The ancient style reached its apogee in the 8th and 9th centuries, seeing the amalgamation of the Irish curvilinear style with interlaces and zoomorphs from southern England.

By introducing, in a contemporaneous context, an Irish hybrid that is unique, McGovern has created a collection evocative of Ireland's past and identity. She is intrigued by early Irish history as "it relates to a cultural identity before the arrival of the Vikings or the Normans to Ireland and, most importantly, before the loss of the Irish language, which changed everything. That period between 600-800 AD gave rise to an incredible period of artistry that was extinguished with the arrival of the Vikings."

Rhyme Studio is based in Brooklyn. All the wool comes from Ireland. Irish wool is a natural, durable fibre, which yields a soft textured, high-quality yarn. The studio marries old and new—traditional hand-woven techniques and contemporary hand-drawn designs. The wool is processed and spun in the 7th century mill of Kerry Woolen Mills, just outside of Kilarney. From there it travels on to Cushendale Mill in Killybeg, where it is hand dyed using natural dyes and spun on to the skein. The yarns are delivered to Rhyme's studio in rural Ireland, where they are tufted meticulously to exact specifications by the hands of master craftsmen.

The forms of Rhyme Studio's Insula series of rugs echo ancient Irish metalwork and manuscripts. Foinse and Suaimhneas (Fig 2) display simplified triskele forms, while zoomorphic features appear in Suaimhneas, Fadd Fadd (Fig 4), Crol and Inis. Fadd Fadd displays non-matched confronting birds and ribbon-like extensions. Crol uses the head of a beast common to illuminated manuscripts, especially the *Book of Kells*.



Earlier this year, McGovern launched two new collections of rugs, the OM and the Trinity series. The OM series derives from the ancient Ogham alphabet, used to write the early Irish language. Known for monumental inscriptions on standing stones, its history dates back to at least the 3rd or 4th century AD. Trees figured largely in the naming of the Ogham letters. Originally, eight letters were named after trees—birch, alder, willow, oak, hazel, pine, ash and yew. Their selection gives us clues as to the importance of these trees in early Irish society.

The titles for some of Rhyme Studio's OM collection reflect this twinning: *Birch, Rowan* (Fig 1), *Alder and Willow*. For McGovern, "this 'tree alphabet' brings one closer to the natural world while also creating a perfect carpet design that can spell just about any word."

The second collection, the geometric Trinity series, focuses on the multi-layered symbol of the triangle. A triangle pointing downward symbolises masculinity, while one looking upward represents femininity. Three of the designs are inspired by the spiral of Theodorus, which is composed of right triangles, placed edge to edge. These designs are painstakingly created using sixteen subtle shades. A fourth design series, *Modernity*, made its debut in September.

These exciting designs in breath-taking colours are inspired by Kasimir Malevich and another talented Irish woman, Eileen Gray. ■

Jennifer Goff is Curator of Furniture, Music and the Eileen Gray collection at the National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Dublin.



THE STUDIO MARRIES OLD AND NEW—TRADITIONAL HAND-WOVEN TECHNIQUES AND CONTEMPORARY HAND-DRAWN DESIGNS