

THE ITALIAN JOB



She arrived in Italy with an eye toward making it in the fashion industry, but her language skills needed work. Ten months as an au pair, she figured, ought to be a sufficient crash course. Elisabeth Cook may not have realized it at the time, but armed with little more than an entrepreneurial spirit and shiny new degrees in economics and business administration, the Colorado native had chosen a difficult path. No matter. She had a passion for

design and manufacturing, and the unwavering belief that if she could make it in the fashion industry, she could make it anywhere.

Spoiler alert: Cook did succeed in the fashion industry, working first in Milan before spending eight years in product development and production in the world-famous leather factories of the Marche region. Now, more than a decade after first setting foot in Italy, she's ready to pull back the curtain on her newest venture: Dedalo.



Colorado native Elisabeth Cook spent more than a decade working in the factories and offices of Italy's vaunted fashion industry. Now she's back with a luxury hair-on-hide rug that can be anything you want it to be.

words by: [Andrea Clark Mason](#)



an upscale interior decor company whose first product, a custom hair-on-hide area rug, is versatile enough to function as upholstery or wall hanging and can be made in any size, shape, pattern, or color. "I checked off enough of those entrepreneurial boxes," said Cook of the transition from fashion to interiors, "that I was ready to do my own thing."

With Dedalo, she's able to call upon many of the skills she learned toiling in Italian factories, where she made shoes for the catwalk: locating components, matching materials, and ensuring the proper blend of style and structural stability. Her craftsman approach complements her passion for product design. Dedalo offers 105 signature colors that Cook herself created, and if that's not sufficient, she can accommodate custom colors as well. The potential variations are dizzying, and the entire process brings the fashion-forward, sexy design style of the haute couture fashion world to a different medium—which, according to Cook, is exactly the point. "Anything that can be done in graphics can be done on the rugs," she said, citing examples as diverse as graffiti and marble. "I think they're a direct reflection

LEFT: Cook's passion for interior design melded perfectly with her desire to bring the unique colors and style from the high-fashion runway world of Italy to her new interior décor company, Dedalo.



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AFTER EVERYTHING IS CUT, AN ARTISANAL, HAND-PIECED TECHNIQUE IS DEPLOYED, WHICH COOK SPENT A YEAR-AND-A-HALF REFINING AND ANOTHER FOUR MONTHS TEACHING TO WORKERS.



of the client, and they're as unique as the clients and designers who choose them."

The design of these hair-on-hide rugs begins from a graphical concept, created in CAD (Computer-Aided Design), which is what makes unique curvatures like ribbons and painted-

looking brushstrokes possible. The Italian-tanned cowhide is of French origin, and the remaining materials are certified as waste products before use. The tannery leaves the hair on, and dyes the hide. After everything is cut, an artisanal, hand-pieced technique is deployed, which Cook

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Cook physically controlled and continually adjusted her system to develop the specific, rigorous industrial and artisanal processes that would be used in her factory. This Ritz pattern features taupe, sea foam, flame, and truffle; Before founding Dedalo, Cook sourced and constructed shoes for the catwalk, which taught her lessons about materials and craftsmanship. Her Momentum pattern is shown here in cream, beige, taupe, sea mist, and sea foam; Working for nearly a decade in the factories of Italy's fashion world, Cook acquired finishing techniques like hand brushing—an artisanal aspect of hand craftsmanship.

spent a year-and-a-half refining and another four months teaching to workers. Because this technique uses no glue or stitches,

it is a complicated, time-intensive process that results in a one-of-a-kind, luxury-level product.

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This June, Dedalo began showcasing and selling their rugs through TOWN showrooms in Colorado, Arizona, Wyoming, New Mexico, Utah, and Montana.

Although the development and production takes place in Italy, Cook made a conscious choice to launch the brand right here in her home state. Of the link between Colorado and Italy, she said, "They're two cultures that kind of mix and move between each other." She hasn't given up her primary

residence in Italy, but she plans to remain stateside for most of the next three years as Dedalo continues to build a following in the local market. After that, other U.S. cities are on the horizon: Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. And eventually, with the rollout of new products and new techniques,



Cook has visions of taking her brand worldwide.

From Colorado to Italy and back again, Elisabeth Cook is doing her own thing . . . and she's doing it very well.



ABOVE: Transitioning from the world of fashion to the world of interior decor, Cook sought to create luxury products that called upon her existing skill set, allowing her to use similar techniques and materials and employ her extensive Italian network. This Ritz pattern features taupe, sea foam, flame, and truffle.



COOK MADE A CONSCIOUS CHOICE TO LAUNCH THE BRAND RIGHT HERE IN HER HOME STATE.

BEHIND: Looking to add to the nearly endless possibilities for patterns and colors they already enjoy, Dedalo is exploring the world of 3-D graphics. For now, however, there are still plenty of custom options to choose from. This Momentum pattern is beige, cream, taupe, sea mist, and sea foam..