



Janis Provisor and Brad Davis in their New York showroom, Fort Street Studio

On the Floor

RUGS WE LOVE

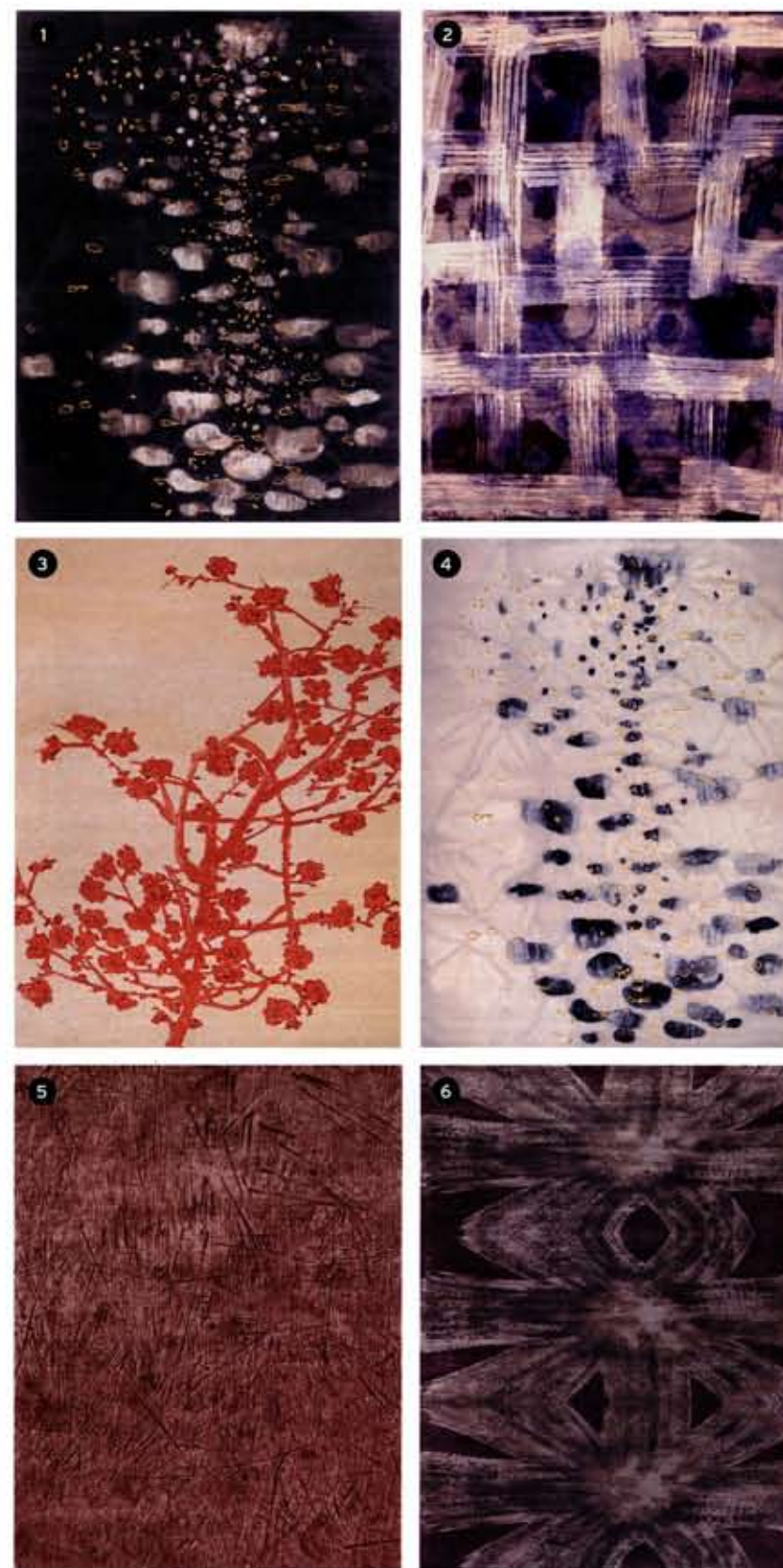
They say a change is as good as a rest. A sabbatical in China offered New York artists and Fort Street Studio founders Janis Provisor and Brad Davis just that, reports **HELEN WYBREW-BOND**

The economic dip of the early 1990s led Janis Provisor and Brad Davis away from the New York art scene to China. It was, says Provisor, "a huge life change. We went for an adventure and something grew out of it that neither of us could have imagined." They left the US with 11 suitcases and their young son. After six months they decided to stay. "We were the only artists doing this, living in Hong Kong, no expatriate package, but we were so excited about the possibility of making things." They were trying to make a rug for themselves, and they knew exactly what they wanted. "We wanted something that

looked soft and watery. We were clear that we weren't making art; we wanted to make something that worked with interior design. We didn't want a traditional carpet and the modern designs at the time were rather graphic." The advantage was that they were living in a part of China where the silk industry was located, although there were significant obstacles to starting a business, particularly designing custom hand-knotted silk carpets (not least because of the 70 factories that had once woven silk carpets, only a couple were still in operation). "It was a huge challenge trying to figure out something that

would work," says Provisor, "and to find a way to communicate what we needed." It took the pair two and a half years to produce a finished product. Approximately 75% of Fort Street Studio rugs are bespoke in sizing and colour. They take 22 to 28 weeks from initial sketches to shipping, so they need to be considered early in any interior project. The duo do all the creative work and oversee the weaving in China. So what happened to the suitcases and the sabbatical? "We watched the country change before our eyes, and we came back nine years later with a 40ft container." Oh, and with a unique business too.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JULIAN DUFORT



1. Glimmering Twilight
2. Plaid Blue
3. Plum Cinnabar

4. Glimmering Dawn
5. Scratchpad Sienna
6. Sign Night



TASTEMAKERS
Han Feng
FASHION DESIGNER
hanfeng.com

Favorite object in your home?
I have several furniture pieces from Austrian designer **Josef Hoffmann**. He was very much inspired by designs from the Ming dynasty, even though his works don't appear overtly Asian. Each item manages to feel modern even though they were designed more than 100 years ago.

Most practical?
I use candles everywhere. I have a large assortment of candlesticks and **bronze bird candleholders** I designed for my own line, Han Feng Furnishings.

Home, real or fictional, where you would most like to live?
The home of artist **Michele Oka Doner**. She is an extraordinary sculptor whose work is inspired by nature. She's so creative, and her home is an extension of her work.

Go-to hostess gift?
Lately I've been giving one of my signature pearl necklaces to the ladies. They're versatile and personal. For a host, I'll often bring a white porcelain bowl, which I buy in Jingdezhen, China's porcelain capital.