

Stephanie Odegard - Biography

Since founding her company in 1987, Stephanie Odegard has produced and imported collections of uniquely designed carpets that have revolutionized the United States market. By combining time-revered techniques with contemporary European aesthetics and the highest standards of quality, she has transformed ancient textile art forms and traditional artisanal crafts of developing countries into commercially viable industries capable of raising standards of living for thousands of people.

Prior to founding Odegard Inc., Stephanie Odegard worked as a buyer at Dayton Hudson, owned her own business in the textile arts field, followed by twelve years abroad--first serving in The Peace Corps and then for The World Bank, the United Nations and the governments of Nepal, Jamaica and the South Pacific islands as a marketing consultant for exports from cottage and small-scale industry.

In the mid-1980's when she traveled to Nepal on assignment for the World Bank, she worked particularly as consultant to the emerging carpet industry being developed by Tibetan refugees with whom she lived and worked until 1986. After helping to stabilize the Tibetan wool market and having developed relationships with the most reliable suppliers, she formed her own company later in New York to import her specially produced carpets and designs into the States. Her lifelong interest and expertise in design, product development and technical aspects of the textile and other traditional industries combined with her merchandising experience uniquely qualified her to build the international success of Odegard, Inc.

The hallmark of Odegard® designs is Stephanie Odegard's sophisticated and subtle use of color in carpets made of hand-carded, hand-spun, hand-knotted Himalayan wool. Integrity of the raw materials is paramount. Inspiration comes from sources as varied as Venetian fabrics of Mariano Fortuny, traditional Tibetan motifs such as tiger pelts and Buddhist symbols, ornate ironwork filigree, architecture and the antique textile collections at The Art Institute of Chicago. Many of Odegard's distinctive designs draw inspiration directly from nature--from the shapes of tropical leaves and grasses to the vibrant colors of a Himalayan sunset.

As handmade products of distinctive cultural heritage, Odegard rugs are valuable contemporary works of art in the great tradition of collecting textiles. Stephanie Odegard also designs and markets carpets and home furnishing accessories from other countries where she is able to adapt traditional craft techniques to create products of quality and beauty. In addition, her import company sells and markets both Fortuny lamps and lighting sculptures designed by artists and executed entirely by hand using silk and other natural materials.

In all her products, Stephanie Odegard requires strict adherence to social responsibility in countries where production takes place. She is a Director of RugMark®, a carpet industry foundation, for which Odegard, Inc. is its largest U.S. contributor. The foundation maintains the only recognized certification program to insure that carpets are made free of child labor; its funds are used for education and welfare of the children. All Odegard® carpets bear the RugMark® label.

Stephanie has garnered numerous accolades and awards that acknowledge both her design talents and her commitment to social progress and philanthropic accountability, including the 2006 Mountain Institute Award for ***Excellence in Sustaining Mountain Livelihoods***, the Editors Award for Best of Show ***Carpet and Flooring*** at the 2006 18th annual International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF, taking first prize in three categories at the Domotex 2006 Carpet Design Awards: "Best liked by Visitors", "Best Modern Design Collection" and "Best Design over 250 Euros/psm", the 2004 Aid to Artisans Award for Innovation in Craft, being named a 2004 "Giant of Design" by House Beautiful Magazine, being named the number two carpet brand by House & Garden's "Best on the Best" Survey in 2004 and 2005, Legacy Award finalist for the 2004 WOW Award presented by WithIt (Women in the Home Industries Today), the 2002 Elle Deco International Design Award for Floor Covering and the National Peace Corps Association 2001 Business Symposium Award for Entrepreneurship. She serves, as a member of the Director's Circle of the National Peace Corps Association, and is on the board of The Alpha Workshops, and The Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust.

Odegard, Inc. has always developed its own designs that may be custom ordered by interior design professionals for both corporate and residential clientele. Stephanie Odegard also works with architects, designers and curators who wish to commission unique carpet designs special public spaces. Recent commissions include Restaurant Daniel and The Chambers Hotel project with David Rockwell--both in New York City, The J.P. Getty Museum in Los Angeles and The Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C.

Call 800 670-8836 or info@odegardinc.com for information about Odegard showrooms & representatives.