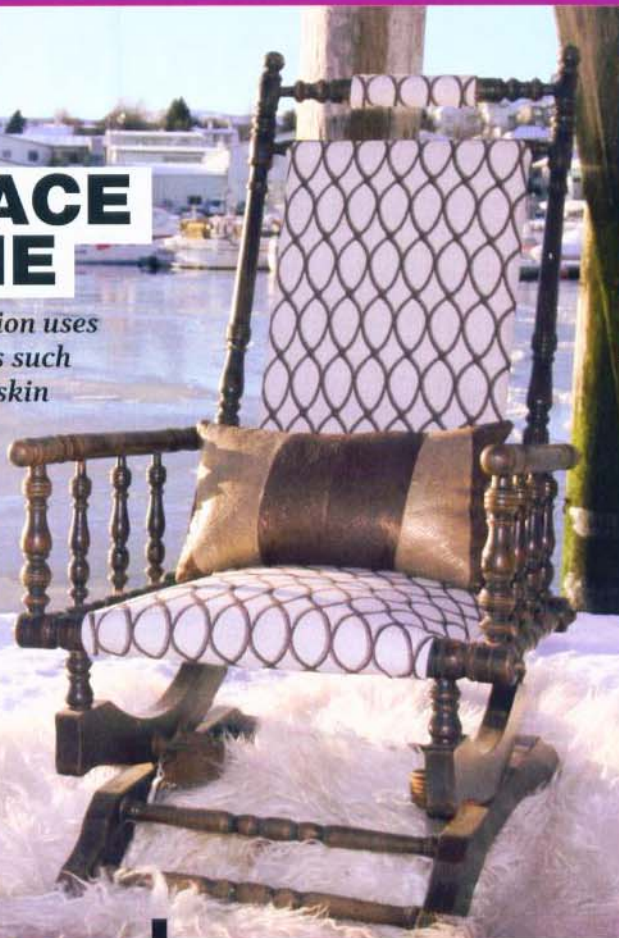


THERE'S SNOW PLACE LIKE HOME

Ragna Erwin's Arctic collection uses uniquely Icelandic materials such as fish leather and reindeer skin



NORTHERN LIGHTS
Erwin's Arctic collection of leather, rugs and textiles is produced using eco-friendly methods and captures the beauty of her homeland

Harbour this month. Twenty years ago she founded the Chase Erwin fabric house, which is renowned for its sophisticated silks. However, she has always wanted to create fabrics from traditional Icelandic materials that capture the beauty of her homeland.

Erwin started work on the Arctic collection about two years ago, long before Iceland's financial collapse. She says her aim was to 'work with materials from Iceland. This has not been easy because although there are plenty of creative designers in Iceland, it is a cottage industry and there is very little manufacturing.'

She adds: 'Where possible we aim to use environmentally friendly fabrics and production methods.' Erwin's new range includes sheep and reindeer skin and even fish leather.

'We are offering the skins of salmon caught in the icy waters north of Iceland,' she explains. 'The skins are treated in a small fishing village using a unique method. Normally the skins would be a waste product but they are tanned using hydroelectric power and natural thermal water. Each skin is then carefully hand strung after tanning and treated to enhance its texture.'

The fish leather is available in colours ranging from silver and blues to delicate purples. Sheepskin rugs are tanned in the same eco-friendly way and come in a variety of sizes.

Erwin adds: 'Working with the Arctic collection has brought me closer to home. I'm working with small family companies in small communities, which throws up exciting ideas for textiles and luxury interior products. I hope we are increasing employment in areas where it is desperately needed.' www.arctic-designs.com

Iceland, adrift in the ocean on the very edge of Europe, with its harsh climate and surreal scenery, has always had an air of mystery. Then, last year, it suddenly gained notoriety as one of the most high-profile victims of the economic downturn.

So it is intriguing to discover enterprising individuals whose ideas could not only boost the country's fortunes but also revive old skills and use new materials in an eco-friendly way.

Ragna Erwin is hoping to do just this with her Arctic fabric collection. It was launched at Maison et Objet in Paris in January and will be on show during London Design Week at Chelsea



PEOPLE & MOVERS

SHH promotes Rene Dekker; Martinez moves up at Vorwerk; Arts Foundation Awards recognise interior architect

Quartz surfacing specialist **Cosentino Group** has named **Christophe Gontier** area manager for France, the UK and Ireland. Gontier was previously the firm's UK managing director but will now oversee the 34th Cosentino affiliate office.

The Arts Foundation Awards, which support promising artists, included interior architecture as a category for the first time this year.

Simon Fujiwara, an architecture graduate from Cambridge who then studied art in Frankfurt, has been awarded a prize of £10,000 in recognition of his unique sense of space.



German carpet manufacturer **Vorwerk** has appointed **Roberto Martinez** domestic and international sales director. He was previously the company's export director and has more than 15 years of international sales experience.

SHH recently appointed **Brendan Heath** and



Rene Dekker associates to the management team. Both have worked for the architecture and design agency for several years, Heath as a senior interior designer and Dekker as the head of the residential interiors team.



Knightsbridge Furniture has announced that **James Wright** will be developing the Design at Knightsbridge portfolio of seating and furniture for the hotel and leisure market. He has 25 years' experience in the contract furnishing industry.