



Shop Talk Tracy Bulla

COMING OUT OF High Point, we've heard a lot about design competitions that offer student product designers the chance to see their design realized in a current collection. Not only does this bring a wealth of new talent and creativity to the industry, but also it (hopefully) encourages these rising stars in the design world to land permanently in the home industry upon graduation.



Full Circle by Denize Sofia Maaloe

The latest competition is a collaboration between rug vendor Warp & Weft and textile/surface design students at the Fashion Institute of Technology. After nearly a year in the making, two of the winning designs will be presented this month at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair in New York. Full Circle by Denize Sofia Maaloe claimed the first prize, while Charlotte Rodiere's Kaleidoscope celebrated second place. Following the show, the rugs will become a part of Warp & Weft's Designers' Studio Collection.

In addition to attracting top design talent, we also need to encourage the rest of the talent — the salespeople who will sell the designs, the retailers who will buy it, the interior designers who will create living spaces and the marketers who will promote the designs — to come and join us.

When I was in high school,

one of my first jobs was working in a local department store. At the time, I was interested in becoming a buyer. I had a truly wonderful boss who sat down and took the time to explain to me exactly what the job entailed including the pros and the cons; what kind of courses I would need to enroll in at university; and finally, what I could expect in an entry level position and the path toward creating a career.

As it turned out, I decided against being a buyer, but I did learn some very valuable things. First, I found I had a knack for



Kaleidoscope by Charlotte Rodiere

merchandising and creating store displays. Second, I was really good at shopping. Combined with my degree in journalism, this all led me — with a few twists and turns along the way — to the place where I am now.

Now that summer is just around the corner, can you be a mentor to a high school or college student? That could mean anything from setting aside an hour to explain what the industry is all about and the various job possibilities, or offering a part-time job or internship to a student to work in your store or design business, gaining real hands-on experience. Let's get the best and the brightest to join us in this great industry. ■

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LG-4,
Belgium Raw Silk Conversation Chair
by Serge de Troyer Collection,
NYIGF At Home exhibitor. © GLM 2012

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