

ALEXANDRA KEHAYOGLOU

INTRODUCTION

Alexandra Kehayoglou is a 39-year-old artist born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She creates mostly large-scale textile pieces using a handtuft technique. She uses skills passed down to her from her Greek family to make unique art that plays with colour and texture.

Kehayoglou produces her artwork using excess materials from factories and uses her talent to create art that brings attention to important issues such as deforestation and the devastating impacts of climate change. The inspiration for her work is the beauty of nature, especially around her home country of Argentina. She enjoys travelling around Argentina to explore the landscapes and find new areas that she can base her work off. Most of her rugs depict real places in the world and many are produced almost life sized so that she can capture the detail of the landscapes in her work. Many of her installations have been open to the public to touch for themselves or walk through and be a part of which gives her work an aspect of interactivity.



Image of Alexandra Kehayoglou in front of 'No Longer Creek' for a Designer Box article

HANDTUFT TECHNIQUE

The handtuft technique has been passed down generations in Alexandra Kehayoglou family to make rugs for the family business. She adapted this method to create rugs that can be hung on the wall and spread onto the floor to make a beautiful yet powerful statement in a room. Kehayoglou produces her work stitch by stitch on a vertical frame. This is a very lengthy process which requires a precise and careful approach to making her rugs. She works with a team of 8 to 10 people to bring her ideas to life.



Images of 'No Longer Creek' from Alexandra Kehayoglou's website

NO LONGER CREEK

No Longer Creek (2016) depicts Raggio Creek in Argentina, which has been dramatically changed by climate change. The beautiful green landscape has been.

Overall, I really like this piece as the handtuft technique creates a full and densely packed effect. In my opinion, this piece has a very peaceful and calm mood to it. I think this is due to the Natural landscape shown. I think that the birds-eye view perspective of the piece works well to gain a sense of the creek. I like that she used different lengths and colours of wool to create texture in the grass part of the rug.

One thing that I would change about this piece is the colouring of the river. The real Santa Cruz river that this piece was based on has naturally bright blue waters (shown below). I think using a brighter shade of blue would give a nice contrast between the land and the river, while maintaining a natural and realistic overall final product.



An image of the real 'No Longer Creek' (Santa Cruz River – Argentina)

EDUCATION AND CAREER

Alexandra Kehayoglou went to art school in Argentina to learn more about creating art and being an artist. She graduated in 2008 and began her career. She tried many other mediums before making carpets such as photography and painting, but when she discovered carpets she found that she could "*reproduce a world*".

Alexandra Kehayoglou's studio and career is a "*dream come true*" to her and she loves her job. Her work has been featured in Paris Fashion Week where a fifty-foot-long rug made by Kehayoglou in collaboration with Dries Van Noten – a Belgian designer – was used as the catwalk.

WHY DID I CHOOSE ALEXANDRA KEHAYOGLOU?

I chose Alexandra Kehayoglou because when I first discovered her work, I was mesmerised by the scale of some of her pieces. I liked how much detail she included in her pieces through each stitch of her rugs; as well as her use of texture to create a very natural and semi-realistic look to her rugs. When I started reading into her further, I found that she used her artwork to generate awareness for environmental issues. She also makes work that she thinks is for a good cause, whether or not it is controversial. For example, 'Santa Cruz River' displays a river that was a proposed site for 2 hydroelectricity dams which could potentially cause irreversible damage to that area.



Image of an unfinished piece by Kehayoglou for a Freunde von Freunden article

I also like that Kehayoglou's pieces spread from the walls to the floor, which is different to most 'traditional' art which would be contained in a frame. This, paired with the fact that her work can be felt at exhibits, creates a very unique piece of art that is a full experience rather than just a picture in a frame.



Some pictures taking by/of Kehayoglou when researching for 'No Longer Creek' from her Instagram

WHAT I HAVE LEARNT

From my research, I have learnt about some of the process of making a piece of art from start to finish. In Alexandra Kehayoglou's case, she begins by doing her research. She visits the area that she is recreating as a rug with samples of wool that she could use and takes numerous photos and makes sketches. She then has to think about the composition of her work and make a plan – thinking about colour, texture and size. Kehayoglou then gathers materials and begins the long process of making the rug, making any necessary changes and working in a team. This has shown me that there is a lot more to being an artist than simply making the art, lots of planning, practice and admin goes into it as well.

Overall, I have really enjoyed learning about Alexandra Kehayoglou's work and life and it has allowed me to research what life as a modern-day artist could be like in depth. I really like that she has used her platform to raise awareness about important issues like deforestation. I think that she is a very inspiring person and I admire her passion and drive. I have also learnt that making art is often very time consuming but the end result is worth the time and making is learning and practicing your skills to improve; I think knowing this will make me a better artist.

RESOURCES I'VE USED

INFORMATION

- Her website - <https://alexandrakehayoglou.com/>
- Nazmiyal collection - <https://nazmiyalantiquerugs.com/blog/artist-alexandra-kehayoglou-natural-landscape-rugs/>
- Interview with Alexandra Kehayoglou - <https://nkim.no/en/hrt2019-new-land/alexandra-kehayoglou/interview-with-kehayoglou>
- Article by colossal - <https://www.thisiscolossal.com/2018/09/native-Argentinean-landscape-rugs-by-alexandra-kehayoglou/>
- New York times article - <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/09/t-magazine/alexandra-kehayoglou-profile.html>
- Her Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/alexandrakehayoglou/>
- Video produced by NGV - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFWdvCfDIJw>

IMAGES

- 'No Longer Creek' images - <https://alexandrakehayoglou.com/No-Longer-Creek>
- Alexandra image - <https://www.designerbox.com/en/blog/article/261/tendance-deco-alexandra-kehayougrou>
- Unfinished work image - <https://www.freundevonfreunden.com/workplaces/alexandra-kehayoglou/>
- Santa Cruz river image - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Santa Cruz River Argentina 2015.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Santa_Cruz_River_Argentina_2015.JPG)
- Kehayoglou's Instagram highlights of visiting Santa Cruz river - <https://www.instagram.com/stories/highlights/17867155984211593/>