

HOME & GARDEN



Studio K Floor Mats

This graphically pleasing floor mat is easier to clean than a rug and just as eye-catching.

HOT STUFF *By Laura Thomas*

Decor for the floor — a designer goes to the mat

Kathleen Nelson's floor mats are as beautiful as rugs but much more durable, making them ideal for the kitchen.

"You just mop and sweep them," she says.

A graphic designer, whose business was hit hard after 9/11, Nelson was considering other ways to make a living when an idea landed in her lap.

A vinyl floor mat she had made to cover a worn floor in her home

received so many compliments, she started selling them. Combining her design skills with her painting abilities, she now creates custom-designed floor mats — a contemporary version of traditional floor cloths — through her Studio K Floor Mats in Santa Rosa.

She turns flooring vinyl upside down and paints on the felted surface underneath with gesso and then acrylic paints.

Designs are painted over faux,

crackle and glaze finishes to add depth. The mat can be cut to fit any floor configuration.

Coated with a water-based polyurethane, the mats are durable and, since they are painted upside down, curl toward the floor over time, staying flat.

"I have done them for dentists' office, where chairs roll over them," Nelson said.

Most of her clients rely on her to come up with a design, which

can be suggested by paint or fabric colors in the room. She also works long distance, sending samples and color swatches by mail and design templates by e-mail.

Floor mats cost \$17 to \$25 per square foot for custom designs. She has started a line of digital patterns that costs \$130 to \$600.

To view the mats and for more information, go to studiokfloormats.com. (707) 575-8459.

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