



ERASED HERITAGE

BACK TO THE ROOTS! THE “ERASED HERITAGE” COLLECTION PAYS HOMAGE TO THE TRADITIONAL ORIENTAL CARPET. FINDING INSPIRATION FROM OLD PATTERNS, TECHNIQUES, AND STANDARDS OF QUALITY, JAN KATH ALSO TURNS TO OLD MASTER WEAVERS TO BRING THESE DESIGNS BACK TO LIFE. KNOT BY KNOT, THEY HAND PRODUCE EGYPTIAN MAMLUKS, IRANIAN BIDJARS, AND TURKISH KONYAS USING THE ORIGINAL COLORS.

But the simple reproduction of old ideas is not the “JK” philosophy. The inclusion of the word “Erased” in the collection name is a clear indication that Kath incorporates his trademark alienation effects in these creations. A specially developed antique finishing technique makes it look as if new rugs have already been lying on the parlor floor of a manor house for years on end. “Just like every Bavarian village has its own traditional dress, every community, region, and cultural group in the East has developed a particular style of carpet. It’s fascinating how, over the centuries, different areas have developed such different signature features and styles,” explains Kath. “With the Erased Heritage collection, we are helping to make sure that these ideas survive into the modern age.” This is true not only for the patterns and materials used, but also for the unique method of production: while most carpet weav-

ers around the world read the pattern from a drawing, directions for pieces in the Erased Heritage collection are sung aloud. The loom master, head of the carpet weavers, sits with a drawing of the knotting instructions opposite the workers. From this position, he reads out commands such as “seven coral red”, “five garnet”, “two beige”, and so on. He then translates this information into a kind of chant and sings the next steps to those tying the knots in a rich, sonorous voice. “This unorthodox process is used by small family businesses,” notes Kath. “It’s extremely labor-intensive, and not at all straightforward to apply these old production methods to my designs. But the effort is definitely worthwhile. The results are carpets with a revolutionary look that combine old and new in a way that has never been done before.”