

THE TRAILBLAZERS

Running Jan. 26 to 29, this year's Interior Design Show in Toronto promises an uncommon lineup of tastemakers, iconoclasts, game changers and gurus.

Want to hobnob with Italy's high priest of sexy? Denmark's latest boy wonder? Canada's queen of felt? **Globe Style** identifies the players who'll be on hand



THE MATERIAL GIRL

When Toronto's **KATHRYN WALTER** first started experimenting with industrial felt just over a decade ago, she created small pillows and desk organizers that quickly earned her a reputation as a designer of intimate housewares. Since then, though, Walter has dramatically expanded

her scope and repertoire, using the material to create monumental wall installations for residential and commercial clients including Calgary's Hotel Le Germain and Toronto's Gladstone Hotel. "I am inspired by visual art and cultural history," says the proprietor of FELT Studio, a

laboratory she founded in 2000 to study and explore industrial felt through art, architecture and design. "I discovered industrial felt, a modern material based on an ancient craft with an amazing range of uses, in art school. It's not only aesthetically rich; it's a vehicle for ideas." Currently

exploring the acoustic properties of felt through wave-like walls for home and studio use, Walter will be presenting a large-scale project combining the viable and the experimental at IDS12. That same weekend, another of her (heart) felt pieces will also be on display in Toronto's Regent Park as

part of the 40 Oaks project produced by Public Displays of Affection. "Felt has made its way into the mainstream in recent years, but I aim to show that it is more than just a material of the moment," Walter says. "I hope people view my work with a sense of wonder and a sense of humour." — DEIRDRE KELLY