

MATERIALS

Private Life

Carnegie's Panorama privacy curtains use innovative manufacturing methods to offer better aesthetics and performance in health-care spaces.

By Avinash Rajagopal

In recent years, as part of the push toward personalized health care, hospitals have built more single-occupancy rooms. An unexpected casualty of this trend has been the formerly ubiquitous privacy curtain. "We saw a lot of designers saying, 'We're just going to take the privacy curtain out of the room,'" says Mary Holt, executive vice president of creative at textile firm Carnegie. However, health-care facilities soon began reintroducing curtains to satisfy nurses, who prefer that room doors stay ajar, and patients, who want privacy. So the humble curtain—typically a piece of synthetic fabric with a transparent mesh panel sewn within—is back in the spotlight. And Carnegie's Panorama collection, to be released at NeoCon, presents an innovative option.

"The product development started about a year ago," says textile designer Louise Russell, who worked on the collection with doctor-turned-photographer Henry Domka. Responding to research on nature-themed visuals' palliative effect on patients, Russell explored how Domka's photography could have the intended impact. "That's basically the premise behind biophilia: reconnecting in a spatial way to nature," she says.

Once the team developed the three designs—Mulberry, Prairie, and Menagerie—it hit upon an innovative material and printing method. "Instead of taking a woven fabric and then sewing it to the mesh, and then sewing in a header, it is all knit together in one continuous piece," Holt says. And dye-sublimation digital printing makes it possible to print the pattern directly on the mesh, creating a cohesive look for the curtain. "The thing that I love about it," Holt adds, "is that it uses 80 percent less water than a traditional dye technique and 50 percent less energy." ■



PROPERTIES

Thanks to its filament-yarn composition, the whole curtain can withstand frequent washings without fading or piling and retains its soft feel after repeated use.

APPLICATIONS

"This integral-mesh, digitally printed privacy curtain opens up opportunities for facilities and health-care institutions to have very different looks, and it's something that's simple to do," Holt says.

COMPOSITION

The curtains are made in one piece from upholstery-grade, flame-retardant polyester-filament yarn. This construction adds durability and keeps the mesh area seam-free.

