



Chain Links

Molecular screen for the front door.

“I have never enjoyed science,” says Annie Kantor, founder of Modern Metal Designs, a decade-old Oakland-based laser-cut metal products company. **“But I could like organic chemistry,”** she muses.

A good thing, too. The former textile designer and custom studio head at textile firm Maharam was invited to create a see-through panel for the front door of a client whose biotech firm’s logo is based on a steroid molecule. The logo — four hexagons and double bond — lacks the pentagon of a typical steroid structure.

So, Kantor chose to further abstract her version. She drew on her inner scientist — and consulted her husband, a biologist at another biotech firm — and added a five-sided ring to the logo. It is not a true representation of a steroid’s chemical structure but symbolic.

The finished panel shields a translucent glass door. From inside, the diffused pattern takes on the hazy appearance of a molecular chain under a microscope.

It’s exactly what was asked for: a striking, decorative focal point at the entry.

As usual, Kantor was involved in the making. Her sketches were scanned into a textile design program, and vectorized before sheet metals met the laser cutter.

“Textile weaving is very mathematical,” Kantor observes. And, even cutaway patterns must hold together like a weave — no breaks, no floating islands. They repeat with the consistency of fabrics.

“I’m always trying to push it back toward textiles,” she laughs. **“Even though it’s metal.”** That’s not quite science — but it’s definitely a kind of alchemy. 🌐

modmetaldesigns.com



Kantor’s screen for a glass door, seen from outside and inside.