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DRESDEN WORK APRON  
English, dated 1728

At times in the history of dress, aprons, which have traditionally served as a utilitarian component of working-class clothing, were adopted as decorative accessories in the fashionable attire of wealthy women. During the eighteenth century, beautifully embroidered aprons in both silk satin and taffeta, as well as cotton examples such as this rare and exceptional Dresden work apron, clearly demonstrated their purely ornamental role.

With its graceful pattern, this apron would have been valued for its fine craftsmanship as well as the elegant impression it would present when worn. Curvilinear vines spring from three mounds at the lower edge. Each vine displays flowers, including stylized tulips, daisies and sunflowers, and four fanciful, long-tailed birds facing in opposite directions across their evenly spaced perches. The virtuosity of this Dresden work derives from the embroiderer's repertoire of various types of drawn work—each bird and flower is delineated by a different filling pattern. Also of note here is the embroiderer's repeated marking of her initials. At the apron's top edge, the letters "M" and "H" are stitched inside of flowers; below in the second row of birds, the embroiderer's monogram "MH" and the date of 1728 appear twice, once in a Hollie point medallion, showing the range of her needlework skills.

Other surviving examples of Dresden work aprons from early-eighteenth-century England point to the attention given to these garments. One example (in the collection of Colonial Williamsburg, G1991-525, a gift of Cora Ginsburg) depicts Adam and Eve; another, dated 1709 and illustrated in *The Magazine Antiques* in October 1928, Vol. XIV, No. 4 (frontispiece), shows in elaborate detail the day-to-day workings of an estate. A third known apron, dated 1713-14, has motifs very similar to the one here, signifying that the design was likely taken from one of the popular pattern books of the period.

Provenance: Ex-collection of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts.

33" H x 37" W



PANEL OF BIZARRE SILK SATIN  
Chinese Export for the European Market, ca. 1708–10

European silk designs of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries frequently combined elements of the Western vernacular with those of exotic import for graphic impact and fashionable novelty. “Bizarre” silks, in full flourish for a brief period from about 1700–10, were aptly named by modern textile historians. As a group, these designs are eccentric and imaginative amalgamations of Asian-inspired motifs and Baroque ornament. Though thoroughly Western in sensibility, Bizarre silks were sometimes woven in the East to suit the demands of the lucrative European export market. This unusual cobalt-blue silk satin—of Chinese manufacture with a distinctively Western pattern that references Oriental influences—hints at the complexities of design interchange between two geographical regions thousands of miles apart.

It is clear that a Western prototype existed for the Chinese satin, as the design relates in two significant ways to Continental and English silks made from the 1670s through 1710. Stripes decorated with foliate flourishes were a common feature of European textiles through the latter decades of the seventeenth century; in this example, the pattern is essentially two vertical stripes formed from a single, ornately-composed unit which merges seamlessly in an end-on-end repeat. This motif—a column capital and broken archway at top; a scrolled, bulbous shape resembling a vase at center; a curling ribbon and streamer-like bracket which unfurls into another column at the base, all embellished with leafy fronds and florals—also suggests a specific temporal and geographical context. Between 1706 and 1708, James Leman (1688–1745), a weaver of Huguenot descent who worked in the silk manufacturing area of Spitalfields, London, produced a group of drawings that signaled a new phase in Bizarre silk design. In departure from the truly fantastical motifs which dominated silks of 1700–05, Leman’s compositions featured recognizable architectural elements such as balustrades, fences and pergolas in combination with plants and flowers of disproportionate sizes. It may be that a drawing or silk designed by Leman served as the model for this Chinese version. There is, however, no mistaking this example for a Western creation as there are recognizably Asian touches throughout. In particular, the largest flowers at the column’s base are markedly Japanese in style; the cluster of scalloped tabs which fans out from the archway bears a striking resemblance to adornment found on Chinese costume and porcelain; and the curlicue tendrils and pendant tassels come from Chinese decorative vocabulary. A specific choice of material finally identifies China as the origin: gilded- and silvered-paper-wrapped silk threads used for discrete areas of metallic brocading. This type of thread is a Chinese invention and differs from European traditions which wrap pliable metal strips around a silk or linen core. The muted palette of soft peach, yellow, pale blue, and ivory was appropriately elegant and on-par with the most stylish European silks of the period.

A comparable emerald-green English damask of nearly identical design is in the Cora Ginsburg inventory. It is also found in the Abegg-Stiftung (Inv. #4490) and illustrated in the museum’s publication *18<sup>th</sup> Century Silks: The Industries of England and Northern Europe* (2000), p. 213, fig. 119. This damask, similarly patterned but not quite as finely drawn as the Chinese example, confirms that both attempt to copy a more detailed though as of yet unidentified European prototype.

44” H x 21.75” W



UNFINISHED EMBROIDERED PICTURE OF REBECCA AND ELIEZER AT THE WELL  
English, third quarter of the 17th c.

An extraordinary yet incomplete accomplishment, this embroidered satin picture highlights practices within a well-established seventeenth-century industry—that of professional embroiderers who decorated a variety of objects for elite clientele. Worked in polychrome silk and an assortment of metallic elements, this unfinished embroidery displays not only refined drawing and exquisite technical manipulation of materials, but also a special feature—the elaborate cartouche—all of which undisputedly classify this piece as a commercial product.

The print source for the central scene is an engraved plate from the *Thesaurus Sacrarum Historiarum Veteris Testamenti* (Dictionary of Sacred Stories from the Old Testament), published in Antwerp in 1585 by Gerard de Jode. Here, Eliezer, servant of Abraham, is depicted at the well with Rebecca—her hospitality in this encounter convinces Eliezer that she would be an ideal bride for his master’s son, Isaac. Eliezer kneels and drinks from the jar offered to him by Rebecca; at left is the well, embellished with mica and elongated silk purl ripples for an aquatic effect, and at right, Eliezer’s thirsty camels await refreshment. As in the engraving, both figures are dressed in classically inspired garb—however, this interpretation was updated with contemporizing details like fashionable coiffures and square-toed shoes. The richness and texture of their attire is due to the extensive use of couching. Rebecca’s gown is crafted from twisted silk threads mingled with silver strip couched with silver wire; Eliezer’s tabbed tunic makes judicious use of yellow and blue silk to couch gold- and silver-wrapped threads, respectively, each color chosen to enhance the metallic tones. His cloak—approximating a brocaded silk—masterfully combines a backdrop of couched silver metallic-wrapped threads with over-embroidered tent stitch floral motifs. Sensitive details such as the figures’ subtle expressions and the choice of Ceylon stitch, which resembles knit, for their stockings enliven this tender scene.

The unfinished state of this picture allows a rare glimpse into the progress of the embroidery. Focal points—the biblical vignette and the symbolic stag, unicorn, leopard, and lion—were attended to first using French knots, brick, long-and-short satin, couching, split, and speckling stitches. Small insect motifs, which bring whimsy to an otherwise formal arrangement, were likely worked as an intermediary step before the decorative floral vases and sprigs, which were saved for last and may have been reserved for slip appliqués. Complexity of stitches and range of materials also dictated which areas required serious concentration therefore the key areas of the composition were allotted the most lavish resources and time. Precisely drawn in black ink against a smooth ivory satin ground, the unworked motifs reveal the assured control of a practiced hand. Applying liquid pigment to an absorbent surface required expertise; for this reason, kits of ready-drawn fabric panels were available for purchase at professional establishments. If the foundation was acquired this way, an unfinished piece of domestic embroidery would show similarly fine-lined designs—however, the overall quality of this picture exempts any possibility that it was made in an amateur context.

A defining characteristic of professional work which further underscores this conclusion is the abundant use of metal. These reflective materials—delicate metallic-wrapped silk thread, broad and narrow metal coil, hammered wire, and purl—play off the lustrous ground. In particular, the ornate framing device is almost entirely composed of metallic components. Silk-wrapped purl in shades of green was couched following the leafy contours; the petal-lobes were formed from segments of blue, red and peach silk purl laid in a basket-weave pattern over gilded metal strips for extra brilliance. Thick coils of flat silver strip delineate the curling motifs and the frame is punctuated with gold-tone bosses of plain and spiraling coil called checked purl. Entwined with foliate flourishes, the prominent cartouche relates to a group of embroidered pictures with strikingly similar embellished oval frames. One of these compositions, found in Blair Castle, Perthshire, is signed in the lower margin: Jo. Nelham, Suger Lofe, Grayfriars, Newgate Market. John Nelham (d. 1694), a respected professional embroiderer and member of the Broderer’s Company, had a shop at this location between 1654 and 1666—whether or not he was responsible for crafting the entire output of oval-frame pictures cannot be determined, but it is reasonable to suggest that this particular theme originated in his professional sphere.

Unfinished pieces are found in important collections. An incomplete mid-seventeenth century embroidered satin picture was purchased by Sir William Burrell in 1921 (Burrell Collection 29/311); a sheet of inked and partially worked cabinet panels, ca. 1660, is among the rare embroidered objects in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1998.541).

19.75” H x 24.25” W







BLACKWORK EMBROIDERED FOREHEAD CLOTH  
English, ca. 1600

This forehead cloth of delicate blackwork embroidery would have been worn by a woman as part of her at-home attire, with a matching coif of the same intricate floral pattern. By the 1580s, these cloths are known to have been worn around the brow and draped over the coif. They continued as accessories of female dress until the mid-seventeenth century.

Flowers encircled by scrolling vines appear frequently on English embroideries of the period and were used to decorate many types of garments both in monochrome and polychrome embroidery. Worked in fine black silk threads on a linen ground, the complex pattern posits individual flowers and leaves within irregularly placed curling tendrils entwined in a meandering arrangement. A rolled hem along the sides of the forehead cloth is decorated with parallel lines and voided circles. Running stitches worked inside the petals and leaves create a hatched effect—a technique in blackwork often linked to mimicking the printed engravings from which numerous needlework patterns derived. The more delicate scrolls found on blackwork of the sixteenth century are somewhat enlarged in scale on this example, prefiguring the transition to bold, curvilinear floral work which develops in the seventeenth century.

Blackwork embroidery is associated historically in England with Catherine of Aragon, the Spanish princess who came to England and married Henry VIII in 1509. This association accounts for the handwritten note passed down with this forehead cloth: "Work supposed to have been introduced by Catherine of Aragon." While blackwork was often referred to as Spanish work, English examples appear in inventories earlier than Catherine's arrival in the country. But the pared-down style of monochromatic embroidery favored by Catherine of Aragon had its influence on English women's taste as can be seen in contemporary portraits, particularly those by Hans Holbein (1497–1543), as well as on domestic textiles such as cushions and coverlets.

Provenance: Braddyll Family Collection, Conishead Priory, Cumbria.

8" H x 16.5" W

ROLLER-PRINTED COTTON, *LES QUATRE ÉLÉMENTS*, BY MARIE-BONAVENTURE  
LEBERT FOR HARTMANN ET FILS ASSOCIÉS DE SOEHNÉE ET CIE  
French (Munster), ca. 1810-18

The vogue for interiors and furnishings à l'antique that emerged in late-eighteenth-century France received renewed emphasis during the First Empire under Napoleon I. A wide range of subjects drawn from classical mythology appeared in various decorative arts media including printed textiles. Cottons featuring gods, goddesses, heroes, heroines, and allegorical figures complemented Greek- and Roman-inspired wall and window treatments, beds and seating furniture. At the same time, the growing use of engraved-roller printing expanded the availability and reduced the costs of these fabrics, sought after by a burgeoning middle- and working-class consumer market avid for the most up-to-date trends in décor.

In their desire to offer attractive patterns and keep up with changing tastes, manufacturers often commissioned designs from well-known artists. This striking roller-printed cotton with its graphic black-and-yellow palette was designed by Marie-Bonaventure Lebert (1759–1836), who trained in the circle of the influential neoclassical painter Joseph Vien (1716–1809). Lebert began designing for printed textiles when he moved to Alsace, working for Pierre Dollfus between 1784 and 1788; by 1796, he was the head designer for Soehnée l'Aîné et Cie (a precursor of Hartmann et Fils) in Munster. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, Alsace became an increasingly important center of the French printed cotton industry, and its leading manufacturers, including Hartmann, made significant contributions to innovations in dyeing and printing techniques.

The Four Elements was a popular theme during this period. In the creation of his design, Lebert may have been inspired by a much admired poem, "The Seasons" by James Thomson (1700–48), published in 1730 and subsequently translated into French, including a translation by the naturalist Jean-Philippe-François Deleuze (1753-1835) of 1806. Thomson used the four seasons and related universal principles including the elements and zodiacal signs to symbolize natural, rhythmic patterns, notably man's life cycle. Here, the Four Elements, personified by classical deities in swirling draperies, appear in alternating, slightly offset vignettes surrounded by clouds, on either side of a wide central band. This column is filled with repeating motifs such as trophies, a fiery urn flanked by salamanders, an eagle, entwined snakes, a basket with paired nets and pendant fish, and a lobster. On the left, holding a wheat sheaf, Saturn/Earth sits between a large cornucopia and a globe quartered with a horse, an elephant, a lion, and a bird representing the Four Continents (Europe, Asia, Africa and America, respectively); at his feet is a split pomegranate and behind him are fruit-laden trees. A pair of dolphins and a putto guide Amphitrite/Water in a scalloped shell through the waves, while another putto offers her a coral branch. On the right, Juno/Air makes her way over the clouds in a peacock-drawn chariot, also accompanied by two putti, one of whom presents her with a butterfly and another who tends to a pair of long-tailed birds. At his forge, Vulcan/Fire energetically hammers a shield to add to the already completed armor at his feet and, in the background, a bat hovers above two Cyclopes toiling at another forge. A narrow band along the right side of the panel features the signs of the zodiac. The hatched triangle-and-dot-patterned ground evokes the geometric simplicity associated with the classical design repertoire and disguises the characteristic shortness of engraved-roller repeats.

A number of surviving pen-and-ink-and-wash drawings in the collection of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum (1898-21-10a-c, 1898-21-11, 1898-21-12a, 1898-21-12b, 1898-21-13) illustrate the progression of Lebert's conception for *Les Quatre Éléments*. Although all include the above deities, the artist eventually dispensed with the elaborate framework enclosing them in his original scheme as well as some of the details; in the final version—in which the elements are identified by their Greek and Roman names—he enlarged their scale and made changes to their poses, the surrounding motifs and the decorative bands to emphasize their impact.

Probably produced in the late years of the First Empire or early years of the Bourbon Restoration, *Les Quatre Éléments* attests to the dominance of the imperial aesthetic that persisted under Louis XVIII. Panels of this cotton are found in the collections of the Musée de l'Impression sur Étoffes (858.127.1), the Allentown Art Museum (1979.3.1), the Art Institute of Chicago (1993.329), and the Philadelphia Museum of Art (1929-164-258).

60" H x 33.5" W



TAPESTRY-BOUND DEVOTIONAL BOOK WITH PLAITED BOOKMARK  
English, mid-17th century

SPEED, John. *The Genealogies Recorded in the Sacred Scriptures, According To Every Family and Tribe. With the line of our Sauour Iesvs Christ, obserued from Adam to the Blessed Virgin Mary.* [London?: F. Kingston, 1632].

*The Holy Bible, containing the Olde Testament and the New. Newly Translated Out of the Originall Tongues: and with the former translations diligently compared and revised: By his Majesties speciall commandment.* London: Robert Barker, 1617.

STERNHOLD, Thomas. *The Whole Book of Psalmes, Collected into English Meeter by Thomas Sternhold, Iohn Hopkins, and others, conferred with the Hebrew...* London: Printed for the Company of Stationers, 1617.

Private devotional books made in seventeenth-century England were often decorated with lavish covers befitting their contents. Though embossed leather was a handsome choice for book bindings, fine textiles were used since the eleventh century; during the Tudor and Stuart reigns, bibles and prayer books of the well-to-do were often bound in velvet or silk with sumptuous embroidery. Ornate textile bindings enclosing the Word of God emphasized the importance of the text within and their production and acquisition could be seen as acts of piety in themselves. This collection of religious works—a sacred genealogy, the Holy Bible and a book of Psalms—is resplendent in tapestry-woven covers. An extensive list of the Caygill family, handwritten in the endpapers, brings the provenance of this book to light, as does the plaited bookmark—signed and dated by Anne Hopkins, John Caygill senior’s first wife—which has descended with it.

Woven as a single piece using silver-wrapped and silk threads in a selective palette, the tapestry binding reflects the nature of the subject matter within. A climbing floral vine on the spine separates front and back panels, each showing Adam and Eve at the moment when she succumbed to the serpent and ate from the Tree of Knowledge (Genesis 3:6). Eve, with striated flowing hair, grasps the fateful apple in one hand and gestures to Adam, who raises his hand in return; each holds a large fig leaf to conceal their indecency. The tapestry was produced in one of many English workshops; its refined quality suggests that it was possibly made at the Sheldon manufactory, in Barcheston, Warwickshire. Because textile covers were not structurally integral, they were made separately for purchase and then fitted over books which had previously been sewn and laced into boards. Here, rich finishing details, including silver tape trim, match the elegance of the binding. Pairs of salmon-pink silk ribbons, now missing, were threaded through holes along the fore edges; ties were common on luxury books of the period 1530–1640 and persisted on religious books into the eighteenth century. Gilding and gaufering—a punched pattern technique which fell out of fashion in the 1650s and was usually coupled with embroidered bindings—impart an opulent veneer to the trimmed page edges. A comparable tapestry-bound early-seventeenth-century bible is found in the Victoria and Albert Museum (T.45-1954).

The exceptionally rare bookmark, comprising multicolored plaits worked on a loop attached to an embroidered roll, is an infrequent survival of literary paraphernalia. Made by Anne Hopkins herself for the occasion on which she came to own this book, the plaited strands are inscribed with personally significant biblical quotations from Colossians (“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord,” 3:18, and “Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them,” 3:19) as well as couplets from George Withers’ 1634 publication *A Collection of Emblemes* (“They after suffering shall be crowned/In whom a constant faith is found”; “Even as the smoke doth pass away/So shall all worldly pompe decay”; “Take wing my soul and mount up higher/For Earth fulfils not my desire”). The red strand at center separates the two sources and is marked: Anne Hopkins, Her Book, August [ ] 16[ ]6. A similar bookmark ca. 1620–50 is illustrated in *Domestic Needlework: Its Origins and Customs Throughout the Centuries*, George Saville Seligman and Talbot Hughes (1926), plate XVI, D.

Provenance: Caygill family, Halifax, West Yorkshire.

Book: 6.7" H x 4.75" W x 1.75" D

Bookmark: 9.5" H x 2.25" W







TAPESTRY-WOVEN REVERSIBLE "SUMMER-AND-WINTER" WOOL TURNOVER SHAWL  
Russian, ca. 1830s

During the first half of the nineteenth century, a fashionable woman's wardrobe was incomplete without an expensive shawl. Although Indian shawls remained highly prized and desirable throughout the period, the demand for these status-symbol accessories spurred imitations in both Europe and Russia. In the early 1800s—partly in response to the vast amounts of money spent by wealthy Russians on imported shawls—a number of landowners established workshops for domestic production. In addition to those that emulated Indian designs with flat, stylized flowers and *botehs*, a particular group of Russian shawls developed a distinctive, naturalistic aesthetic characterized by sophisticated shading of often recognizable floral and foliate motifs. Known as "summer-and-winter shawls" because they were worn throughout the year, both indoors and out, these luxury commodities were the prerogative of the uppermost echelons of Russian society. Featured at trade fairs such as those in St. Petersburg, they garnered extensive praise and numerous awards.

A rare surviving example of Russian serf-woven manufacture, this exceptionally beautiful shawl exhibits virtuosity of weaving and represents some of the most sumptuous textiles ever produced. Although this shawl is not attributed to a specific workshop, the superb fineness of the weaving, the elegant border design, the type and treatment of the motifs, and their clear-colored palette are all consistent with extant pieces from the leading manufactories of Nadezhda Appolonovna Merlina and Dimitri Kolokoltsov, located in Central Russia.

The ready availability of serf labor made possible an undertaking that was inordinately time consuming. Expensive raw materials, notably the soft fleece of Central Asian Kirghiz goats and saigas from the West Siberian steppes, as well as natural dyestuffs and pigments were obtained at fairs in Nizhniy Novgorod. Virtually all the work was done on the feudal estates: carding and spinning the gossamer yarns, dyeing them in a range of shades from jewel tones to subtle pastels and the lengthy, arduous process of weaving. Although both men and women were involved in shawl production, it was young women, generally between the ages of seventeen and twenty-seven, who created these tour-de-force textiles using small wooden bobbins rather than shuttles, each carrying a different colored thread. Executed in reversible plain weave dovetail tapestry, probably on horizontal or low-warp looms, the flawlessly identical double-sided borders required weaving the pattern wefts back into the fabric as well as darning in the warp ends. While the solid-colored ground was woven in one piece, usually in 2/2 twill (as in this piece), the borders were woven in sections and later almost invisibly joined and stitched to the field. This double-faced technique progressed at the painstakingly slow pace of a quarter of an inch a day; thus, a large shawl with complex border patterns employing thirty to sixty colors could take up to two years to complete. Not surprisingly, the shawls were exorbitantly priced, costing between 1,000 to 4,000 rubles and as much as 10,000 rubles—equivalent to the purchase sum of a substantial property.

In this example, the robin's egg blue ground perfectly sets off the exquisitely gradated, multi-hued flowers, leaves and twining stems that range from delicate rosy and pale pinks, mauve, blue, apricot, yellow, green, and cream to vivid red, salmon and chestnut; deep eggplant purple, brown, green, blue, and black provide contrast and depth. Typical of these shawls is the sequence of inner and outer borders separated by narrow "beaded" bands. Along the edges, weft threads extend from the diminutive half sprigs forming a fine fringe. The designation "turnover" refers to a square shawl that was folded into a triangle in which the two sides with wide borders and curved corner piece would have been arranged to conceal all but the narrow borders of the adjacent sides, lying underneath; this gave the impression that the wide borders continued on all four sides. When worn, the luxuriant pattern would have been displayed becomingly over the full upper sleeves and rounded skirts of the 1830s.

Changes in the fashionable female silhouette as well as economic and social factors resulted in the decline of "summer-and-winter" shawl production. There is little information about the designers and none at all about the weavers; however, the shawls themselves—each one with its unique pattern—stand as impressive testaments to the artistry and superior accomplishments of their anonymous creators.

Only nine complete, reversible tapestry-woven shawls and stoles are preserved in North American collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1971.136.60, 46.180, 1984.86.1, 1972.175, and 65.91.1); the Art Institute of Chicago (1928.796 and 1928.797); the Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta (C-6193); and the Philadelphia Museum of Art (1953-61-1). Examples are also found in the State History Museum, Moscow and the Hermitage, St. Petersburg.

54" H x 54" W



EMBROIDERED BEDCOVER  
English, ca. 1720s

Much of what is now considered quintessentially early-eighteenth-century English style was inspired by the Far East. Glamour and mystery enveloped imports from the Orient; merchants brought goods from China, India and other ports along their trade routes, which had the effect of merging distinct categories of Asian exports into those of a single, faraway land. Mughal and Chinese luxury wares—carved ivory and jewels, lacquer, porcelain, and textiles—were consistently decorated with abstract or realistic flowers, foliage and scrolling vines. By the late seventeenth century, these exotic plant forms were subsumed into English design vocabulary and became familiar motifs with Eastern overtones, which is abundantly evident in this superb coverlet.

A significant number of Queen Anne period embroidered bedcovers survive in excellent condition and with prominent similarities. As a group, these coverlets have in common the following characteristics: they share a distinctive, symmetrical format of central medallion, corner quarterings and bordered edges; whether polychromatic or monochromatic, their surfaces are quilted with yellow silk in elaborate patterns; and they exhibit such fine, uniform embroidery that they were undoubtedly produced in commercial workshops. Most coverlets of this type forgo the multiple layers which define a true quilt. In this example, however, three layers of fabric—two of linen, and an interlining of woven wool—are bound together in a repeating arrangement of diminutive flowers enclosed in concentric circles, linked together by leafy lobes. Overall, the composition and palette are indebted to “Bengalla quilts”—Indian floor or bed spreads imported to Europe in the seventeenth century which were worked in straw-colored *tussar* silk. Here, the embroidery was completed in a single, luminous shade of blonde silk; though subtle in coloration, the motifs exhibit sophisticated gradations owing to expert application of technique and the lustrous properties of the thread. The radiance of long-and-short satin stitch, especially when worked over areas of applied cord for a dimensional, padded effect, emphasizes the undulating contours of the design. Wavy-edged and studded with French knots, the corner pieces and medallion are crowned with imbricated petal mounds and embellished with abstract floral designs against a lattice backdrop. Garlands of flowering tendrils—formed from highly-twisted, couched threads for a unique textural contrast—integrate the horned, spiked-leaf mounds, flaming wheel-spoke motifs, and various vegetal ornaments which fill the main field in a combination of baroque and chinoiserie sensibilities.

The process of embroidery remains evident in this meticulously worked bedcover: quilting lines and main motifs were drawn using two separate inks, and in a specific order. First, the quilt pattern was created with red ink (most likely vermilion, a common pigment) and then embroidered—the color is visible beneath the backstitched lines, enriching the yellow tones much in the way red bole enhances gilding. Finally, the remaining design was drawn in black ink on the pre-quilted fabric and stitched. A remarkably similar monochrome coverlet in the Winterthur Museum collection (1968.48a), which has the illustrious English provenance of Ashburnham Place, was created with this very same method.



MAN'S SILK SATIN DAMASK BANYAN  
English, ca. 1760; the Spitalfields silk, ca. 1742–3

In the eighteenth century, affluent gentlemen often maintained an elegant appearance even within the privacy of their homes. In addition to loose, T-shaped garments based on Far Eastern models, semi-fitted gowns, derived from Indian forms and known as banyans, were also popular for undress. Both styles provided a welcome degree of comfort and warmth as well as the opportunity to display one's elite status through the use of fashionable silks, especially when meeting informally with friends or trades people. In "The Levée" from William Hogarth's series "A Rake's Progress" (1733), the artist satirizes the fashionable morning ritual of the newly rich young heir: dressed in a banyan with froggings and a turban-like cap, Tom Rakewell is attended by an assortment of visitors including his affected French dancing-master, his music teacher, a jockey, a poet, a tailor, and a gardener.

High-end dress fabrics such as that seen here were produced in Spitalfields, the center of the English silk-weaving industry. Although large-scale damasks were in vogue from the mid-1730s to the mid-1740s, the impressive 47-inch repeat of this example is particularly long. Foliate garlands connecting giant stylized flowers and curving leaves with lobed edges and filling patterns on thick, sinuous stems form a continuous, exotic-inflected design. While not perfectly matched—which would have been an injudicious use of an expensive silk—similar motifs are balanced on the front and back skirts, upper back and sleeves. The cut and shape of the banyan with its low standing collar, moderately large cuffs and side pleats, and side seams placed towards the back suggest a date of about 1760. There are no signs of alterations from an older garment and, although it is unusual to find a piece made up from a much earlier silk, damasks were perennial favorites throughout most of the century and the cost of these textiles ensured their use even if they were no longer in the height of fashion. The elaborate, matching passementerie froggings are essentially ornamental; a series of green silk cord loops on the inside left front fastened the closure on the right side. In many eighteenth-century portraits depicting men in undress gowns, they are often left open, displaying a rich waistcoat underneath. This banyan is lined throughout the body in green ribbed silk, while the sleeves are lined in both silk and natural linen. There are deep linen pockets at the side seams with shallow scalloped bands and decorative buttons; slits in the seams behind them allow for access to the breeches' pockets.

In its construction, frogging closure and use of an earlier silk, this banyan is similar to one reputedly worn by Lord Sheffield (1735–1821) in the collection of the Buckinghamshire County Museum, Aylesbury. In that example, although the brown damask with large-scale foliage dates to about 1738, the garment was made up between 1765 and 1780. The overblown pattern of this green banyan is also similar to a damask design on paper by Anna Maria Garthwaite dated 1743 in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum (T.391-1971), illustrated in Natalie Rothstein's *Silk Designs of the Eighteenth Century* (1990), p. 46.





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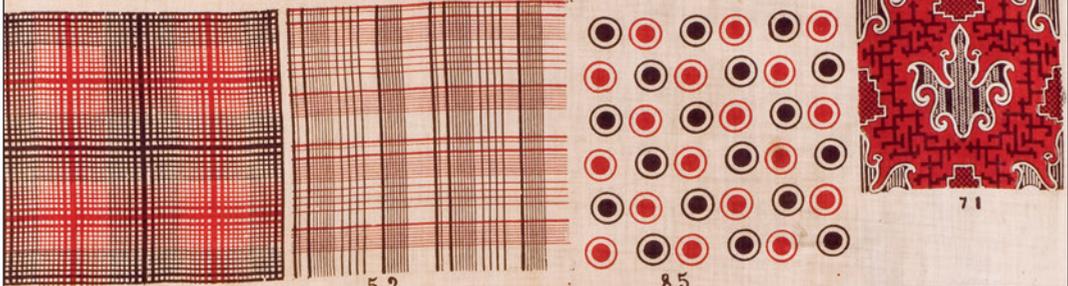


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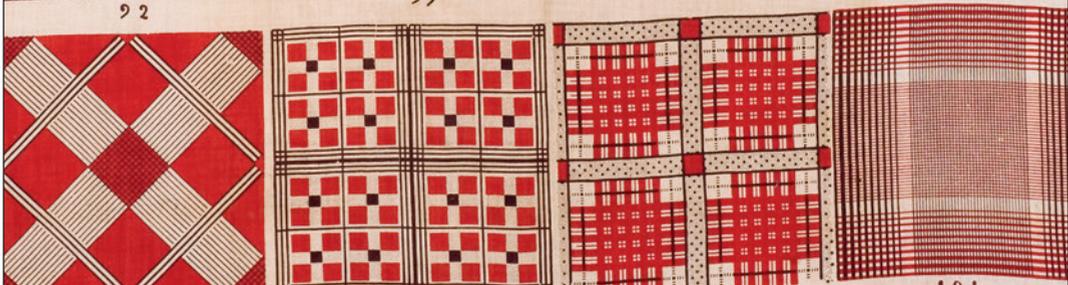


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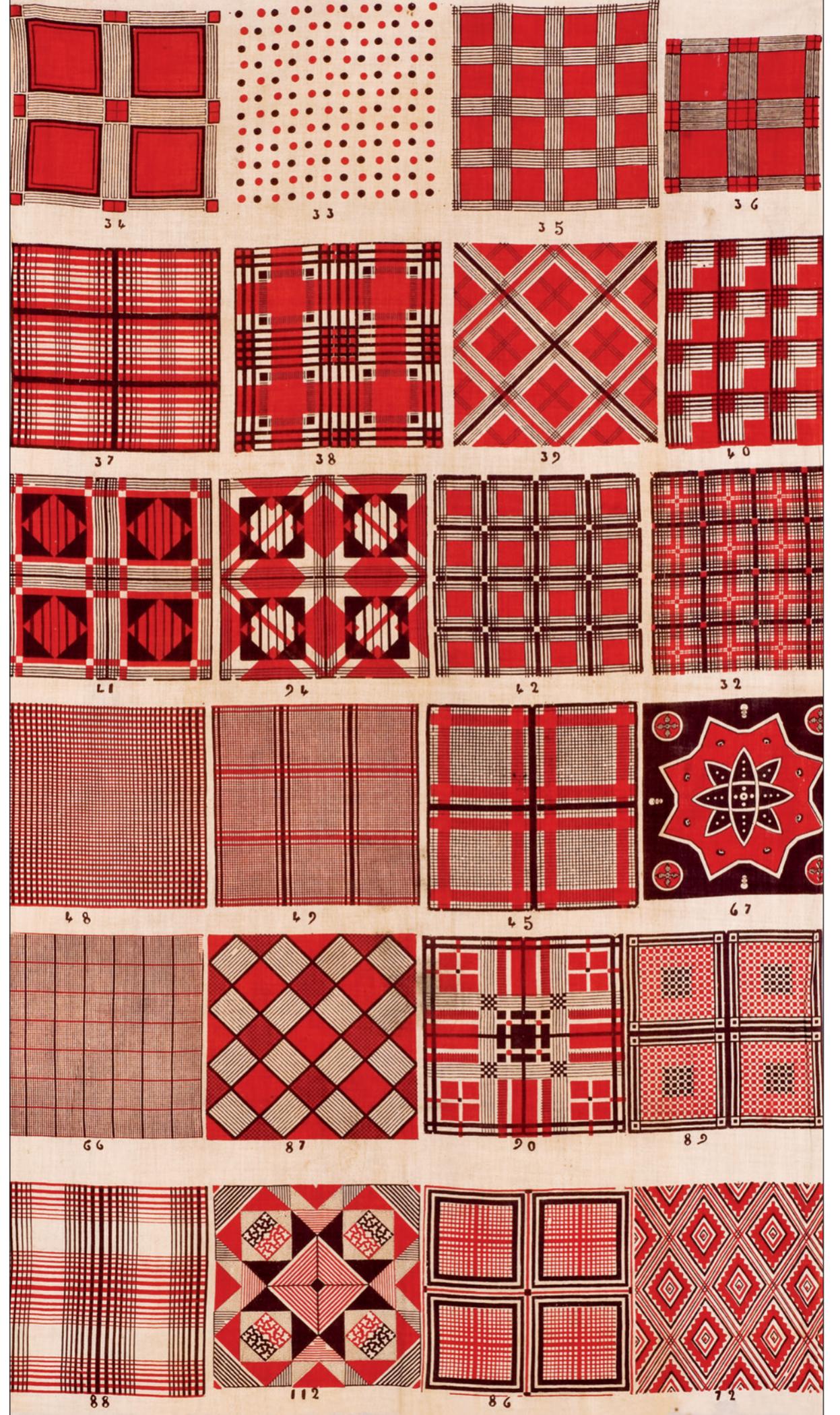


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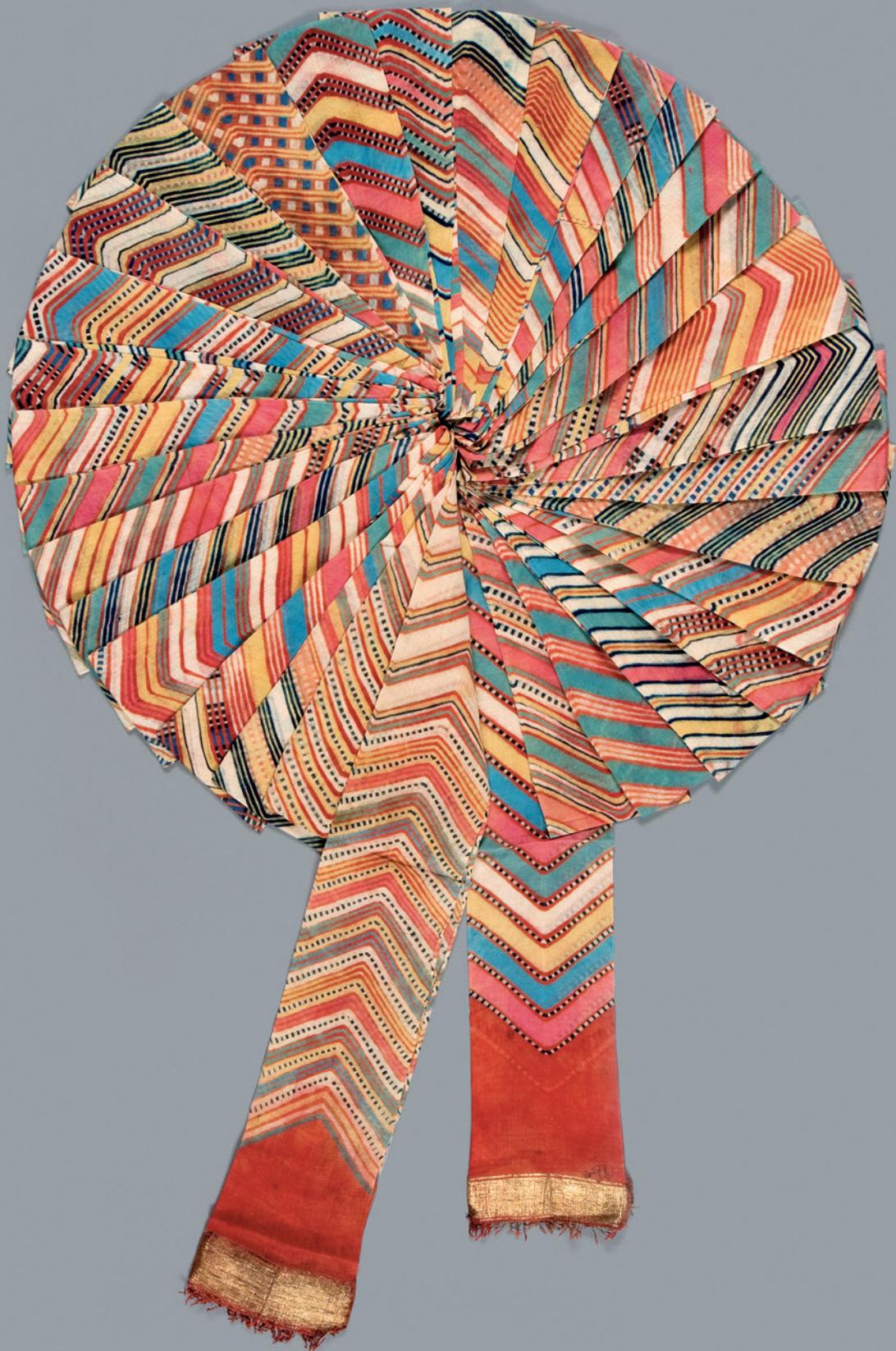
SALESMAN'S SAMPLE OF BLOCK-PRINTED FOULARD DESIGNS  
French (probably Rouen), mid-19th c.

Eastern textiles captivated European merchants and consumers alike since their trade began on a significant scale in the sixteenth century. The indelibility of Indian chintz was a technical feat that had not yet been mastered in Europe, thus the imported fabrics commanded high prices and inevitably prompted imitations. Recognition of the commercial possibilities for comparable, yet locally produced, goods prompted seventeenth-century French entrepreneurs to establish the first workshop in Marseilles which attempted to reproduce Indian fabrics. These early *indiennes* were crude, but as French textile manufacturers made strides in printing and dyeing towards the end of the eighteenth century, competition with imports also increased. By the nineteenth century, as demonstrated by this salesman's compendium of foulard designs, a market for durable, economical printed cottons had been firmly established as an alternative to foreign goods.

Rouen, an important industrial city and trade *entrepôt* on the Seine, had been involved in textile printing since its introduction there in 1763. As a result of advances in textile technology in the Napoleonic era, the factories of Rouen were able to capitalize on the burgeoning market for less expensive, mass-produced printed cottons. By the 1850s, Rouen was particularly known for pictorial or floral foulards, though geometric motifs such as those seen here were also popular. Cut into two pieces from one length and now rejoined, this sample panel with fifty-two neckerchief designs would have been used by a factory representative for several purposes. A continuous panel must have been a useful merchandizing tool because many patterns could be shown to a client at a single glance; or, because of the compact format, it could have been sent to distant clients to aid in placing orders. Much in the way that a stitched sampler served as a pattern reference for an embroiderer, examples like this might have been printed for company archives. Individual numbers for each unique design made ordering or reprinting multiple foulards an easy undertaking. Inspired by Indian *bandhannas*—tie-dyed scarves primarily made for export to Europe and America—these diminutive foulard samples average eight inches square for the majority of designs. They exploit a simple formula: two colors against an unbleached cotton background in graphic combinations. Each foulard required no more than two carved wood-blocks, one for the rich red shade, another for dark brown. Both colors were conveniently achieved with the same dyestuff—madder plant, an herbaceous member of the coffee family—and two distinct mineral mordants, alum and iron. The blocks were prepared with mordant solutions and impressed on the cotton's surface; the designs printed with alum turned red in the dyebath, while those done with iron yielded brown. Overlapping areas resulted in an intermediary shade of russet. Variations on linear patterns—grids, squares, stripes, rectangles, crosses, checks, and diamonds, some with assorted dots and curvilinear motifs—recalled exotic *bandhanna* motifs and simplified production without sacrificing their appeal. Keeping manufacturing time, labor and material investments to a minimum meant that market prices could be set low enough to attract the type of customer who sought garments which were hard-wearing and color-fast after frequent washing.

As artifacts of industry, textile production samplers are relatively rare, partially because they were often cut up and placed in swatch books. A comparable block-printed example, ca. 1760–70 and trademarked as the product of a company in Rouen, is illustrated in Dilys E. Blum, *The Fine Art of Textiles: The Collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (1997), p. 38, no. 55 (1937-11-2).

117" H x 33.5" W



## TIE-DYED LAHARIA TURBAN CLOTH Indian (Rajasthan), ca. 1860s

Rajasthan, India's westernmost state, is frequently described as a place of contradiction. The desert region is marked by periods of drought and famine—and yet Rajasthan is renowned as one of the most lively, colorful places in India, not for luxuriance in the landscape but for the Rajasthanis' vibrant attire. Privileged men and women of Rajput society have long worn garments of sheer cotton with exuberant designs; prized above all was the multihued and astonishingly complex *laharia* type of tie-dyed cotton, as this exceptional *pagri*—a man's turban cloth—so impressively demonstrates.

When the Mughal fashion for portraiture took hold in the seventeenth century, Rajput nobility had their likenesses painted wearing flamboyantly-patterned *laharia* turbans. By the latter decades of the nineteenth century, the art of *laharia* dyeing reached its pinnacle. From the Sanskrit for wave, *laharia* wrap-resist is a many-stepped process and requires sophisticated handling of both dye and cloth. Folding the *pagri* into four or more accordion pleats width-wise, rolling it diagonally and wrapping it tightly with thread at precise intervals before dyeing produces a dazzling array of symmetrical zigzag (*gandadar*) formations. Untied portions accept dye whereas bound sections resist it; because the dyes must permeate the compressed layers, only the finest cotton mull is used. Successive steepings in natural dye baths are responsible for a spectrum of brilliant colors—*kasumal*, from safflower petals, yields rich reds and pinks; *haldi*, turmeric mixed with buttermilk, results in yellow; and indigo, called *nila* or *gali*, produces shades of blue that can combine with yellow for green hues. When untied, re-rolled from the opposite diagonal and bound again, an additional effect—*mothara*, from the Hindi word for lentil—appears, characterized by small checks. As proof that a *laharia* turban was genuine and not a printed replica, *pagri* were sold with their ties still in place; an end was unraveled to display the pattern to a client.

For festive or holy occasions, the most powerful Rajasthanis—Maharajas and members of the wealthy Marwari merchant class—swathed their heads in resplendent *laharia pagri*. The most marvelous turbans were characterized by two distinctive features: a series of repeatedly changing designs which morph seamlessly into the next, and the use of five colors known as *panchranga*. Between its gold-brocaded tips, this splendid *pagri* has a staggering fifty-seven pattern changes; thirteen types of zigzag motifs repeat identically or in variations, and seven patterns are unique and appear only once each. A graphic, argyle-like formation of criss-crossed, overlapping yellow, blue, red, and white chevrons is the most unusual motif seen here. The palette of brick red, salmon, pale gold, turquoise, sea-foam green, royal blue, blackest-blue, and white expands the *panchranga* rainbow. Though Indian textiles were historically esteemed for their color-fastness, the most prestigious *laharia* turbans were made with fugitive dyes. When the colors gradually faded—hastened by downpours as they were typically worn during monsoon season—the *pagri* was given once again to a master-dyer to be refreshed. This would seem unnecessary if permanent dyes were used; however, it only added to their fashionable cachet as this practice was reserved for the elite who could commission updates as necessary.

By the turn of the twentieth century, printed imitations, synthetic dyes and increasing interest in Western style led to the decline of *laharia* craft. Today, these magnificent turbans occasionally resurface at traditional festivals, but the best nineteenth-century *laharia pagri* are treasured as family heirlooms or found in museums. A similarly intricate turban, now in three pieces (5735a, b and c), was acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1862.

53' L x 7" W



BLOCK-PRINTED COTTON MEZZARO  
Italian, ca. 1832

Made in Genoa in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, *mezzari*—large squares of block-printed cotton—were often worn by Italian women as shawls or voluminous head-coverings, fastened to the crown with silver hairpins or clasps. A variety of media from the period, including hand-colored engravings, oil paintings and ceramic figurines, confirm that such oversized textiles which would seem more appropriately suited to wall hangings were in fact draped over the head and gathered around the body. Hinting at an exotic origin for this use, the word itself is likely derived from the Arabic *mizar*, meaning “to cover.” This luxuriant *mezzaro* combines the charm of a rustic, hillside scene with the elegance of a flourishing tree. Referred to as *mezzaro delle rose* (of the roses) or, alternately, *mezzaro dell’albero dei funghi* (tree of mushrooms, so-called because of a tiny grouping of toadstools which sprout discretely at the lower left corner of the hill), the richly colored design features a naturalistic tree bearing a profusion of rose blossoms, its trunk entwined with ripe bunches of grapes. Other lush blooms—hydrangea, dahlias and chrysanthemums—grow from the rocky mound, populated with diminutive cattle and goats. The abundantly flowering tree and saturated color palette of reds, purples, green, ochre yellow, azure blue, golden browns, and black take their inspiration from the East. The Tree of Life motif, derived from Indian and Persian sources, was a popular theme in decorative European textile traditions because of its beauty and symbolic associations.

Though eighteenth-century Genoese *mezzari* were without doubt based on Indian palampores, nineteenth-century examples were less oriental in their overall aesthetics. The centralized composition and enclosing borders of this *mezzaro* suggest an Indian prototype, yet the rendering of the flowers, the pastoral details, the craggy outcropping supported by a mound of tulips and cabbage roses, and the opulent grape clusters seem distinctly Italian. Although various sources have attributed this particular *mezzaro* design to Manifattura Fratelli Speich, one of the leading *mezzaro* producers, it may have been printed by Luigi Testori at Sampierdarena, an industrial port city in the region of Genoa. A preparatory drawing for the *mezzaro delle rose* was amongst several in a folder donated to the Civic Collection of Genoa by Edoardo Testori, an heir to the business, in 1927. A drawing for the border seen here—a single repeating motif of a twisting, knobby tree with a perching parrot and floral festoons—is dated 1832 and is in the Prints and Drawings collection of the Palazzo Rosso, a Genovese historic palace museum.

Examples of the *mezzaro delle rose* and its border are illustrated in *Margherita Bellezza Rosina and Marzia Cataldi Gallo, Cotoni Stampati e Mezzari dalle Indie all’Europa* (1993), p. 46, fig. 34 and p. 139, fig. 126; it is also illustrated in *I Mezzari tra Oriente e Occidente* (1988), p. 67, pl. VII and p. 96, figs. 63 and 64.

104" H x 104" W







LACE AND APPLIQUÉ TUNIC  
Probably French, ca. 1910–11

The lace revival that occurred in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century found expression in both reproductions of antique models and designs that reflected the influence of Art Nouveau. France and Austria led the renewed interest in lace making and artists and designers in both countries brought an entirely modern aesthetic to this medium. A number of leading French artists, including Félix Aubert (1866–1940), Ker-Xavier Roussel (1867–1944), Maurice Dufrene (1876–1955), and Mathurin Méheut (1882–1958), created patterns for lace. At the Paris exposition of 1900, examples of lace accessories and trimmings produced at the School of Arts and Crafts in Vienna were widely admired for their innovation and sophistication and awarded a *grand prix*. The *Dentelle de France*, a national society, was founded in 1905 to foster interest in lace and to encourage the education of those in the industry; as part of its mission, the society sponsored exhibitions of both antique and contemporary lace. In many of their issues between 1898 and 1910, the periodicals *Art Décoratif* and *Art et Décoration* featured the new style of both Austrian and French laces.

On the front of this delicate tunic, the centrally placed bird with outstretched wings and extended tail surrounded by flowering orange branches reflects the profound interest in nature and stylization of forms that characterize Art Nouveau sensibility. The planar quality of the composition with its bold, simplified motifs and the juxtaposition of solid and void areas are enhanced by appliqué on lace: glossy, couched linen threads delineate the outlines and details of the sheer, matte linen elements against a fine diamond-net ground. The design is made to shape with the luxuriant plant motifs placed symmetrically along the side and center back seams, creating a flowing, rhythmic pattern around the body.



Although it is not possible to attribute this tunic to a specific designer, the depiction of the bird is similar to drawings by Mathurin Méheut that appear in an article titled “Les Oiseaux” by the artist Maurice Pillard-Verneuil (1869–1942) in *Art et Décoration* in 1907. Méheut provided most of the illustrations including detailed studies of peacocks, falcons, magpies, owls, ducks, pigeons, and sparrows at rest and in flight. Additionally, he contributed a repeating pattern based on stylized falcons. Méheut’s images complement Verneuil’s assessment that artists should have a thorough understanding of natural forms in order to successfully translate them into decorative ornament. His belief that such an interpretation combines both the simplification of elements as well as capturing the models’ essence is evident in the rendering of the tunic’s motifs.

In contrast to the exaggerated S-curve of about 1900, the feminine silhouette of 1910 was straight and narrow. Fashion journals confirm the popularity of hip- and thigh-length tunics that accentuated this slim, high-waisted line as well as the extensive use of lace and openwork techniques such as *broderie anglaise*. The tunic was likely worn over a contrasting colored lightweight silk or linen under-dress to maximize the effect of its modern elegance.

BLACK SILK VELVET EVENING COAT DESIGNED BY CLAUDE SAINT-CYR,  
TAPESTRY SLEEVES DESIGNED BY JEAN PICART LE DOUX  
French, ca. 1950

This striking coat merges the world of French couture with the longstanding tradition of French tapestry weaving. Claude Saint-Cyr (1910–2002), whose real name was Simone Naudet, was a leading French milliner of the mid-twentieth century. She opened her own establishment in 1937 on the rue du Faubourg St.-Honoré and ran a successful business for decades onward. Saint-Cyr's hats were worn by stylish women worldwide and featured in leading fashion magazines.

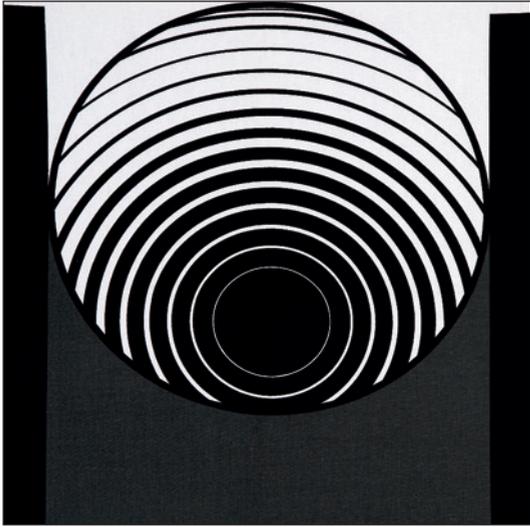
The unique inspiration for using tapestries in her designs came when artist Georges Martin (d. 1961), Saint-Cyr's husband, used tapestry to recover chairs in her salon. Saint-Cyr found the result so beautiful that it led to her "Tapisseries" line of hats in 1950. This idea was soon expanded with a collection of short jackets and coats; weavings which Saint-Cyr incorporated into her work were collaborations with France's leading tapestry designers, including Slavik, Jean Picart le Doux (1902–82) and her husband. The dramatic sleeves of this sweeping evening coat, in shades of golden yellow, ochre, brown, and black, were designed by Jean Picart le Doux and woven at the Aubusson firm of Ateliers Pinton.

In 1939, at the request of the French Ministry of Education, Jean Lurçat (1892–1966) was charged with revitalizing the Aubusson tapestry industry. Under Lurçat's direction, ateliers began producing tapestries of modern designs. In 1945, Lurçat, Picart le Doux and Marc Saint-Saëns (1903-1979) founded *L'Association des Peintres-Cartonniers de Tapisserie* to promote the tapestry revival and present tapestries as original works of art. Picart le Doux's style—bold yet also retaining elements of simplicity—exemplifies the modernist approach to tapestry designs of the mid-century. His tapestries display these characteristics to great effect with motifs such as the flame-like design found on both "Poème Végétal," a hanging in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution (T.14237), and the tapestry sleeves of the Saint-Cyr coat.

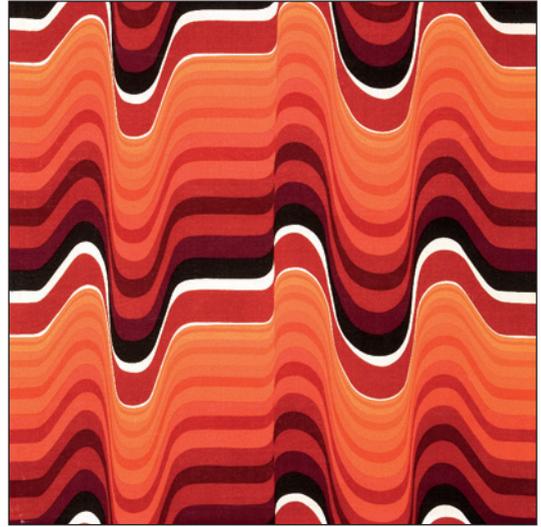
Twentieth-century design offers many innovative examples of partnerships between artists and designers from different disciplines. Claude Saint-Cyr's coat presents a highly successful testament to those creative endeavors which united many talents.

Provenance: From the personal wardrobe of Claude Saint-Cyr.

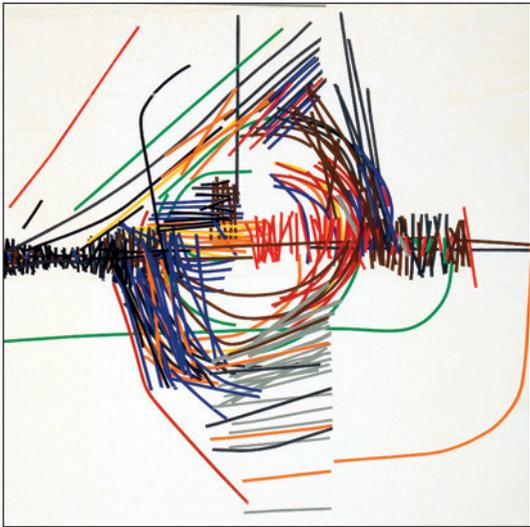




*Gyration*, Barbara Brown, 1971



*Frequency*, Barbara Brown, 1969



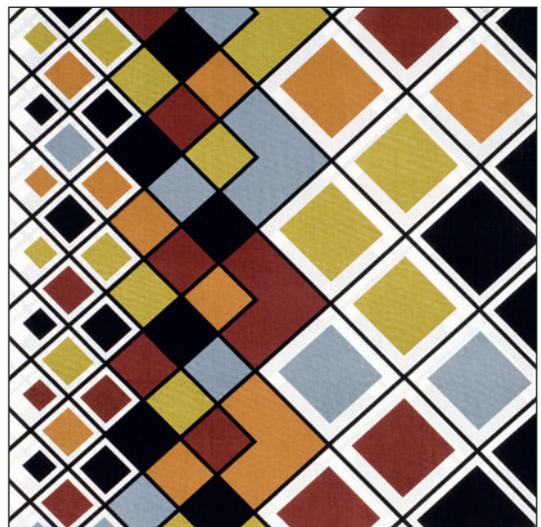
*Chiricahua*, John Plumb, ca. 1960-65



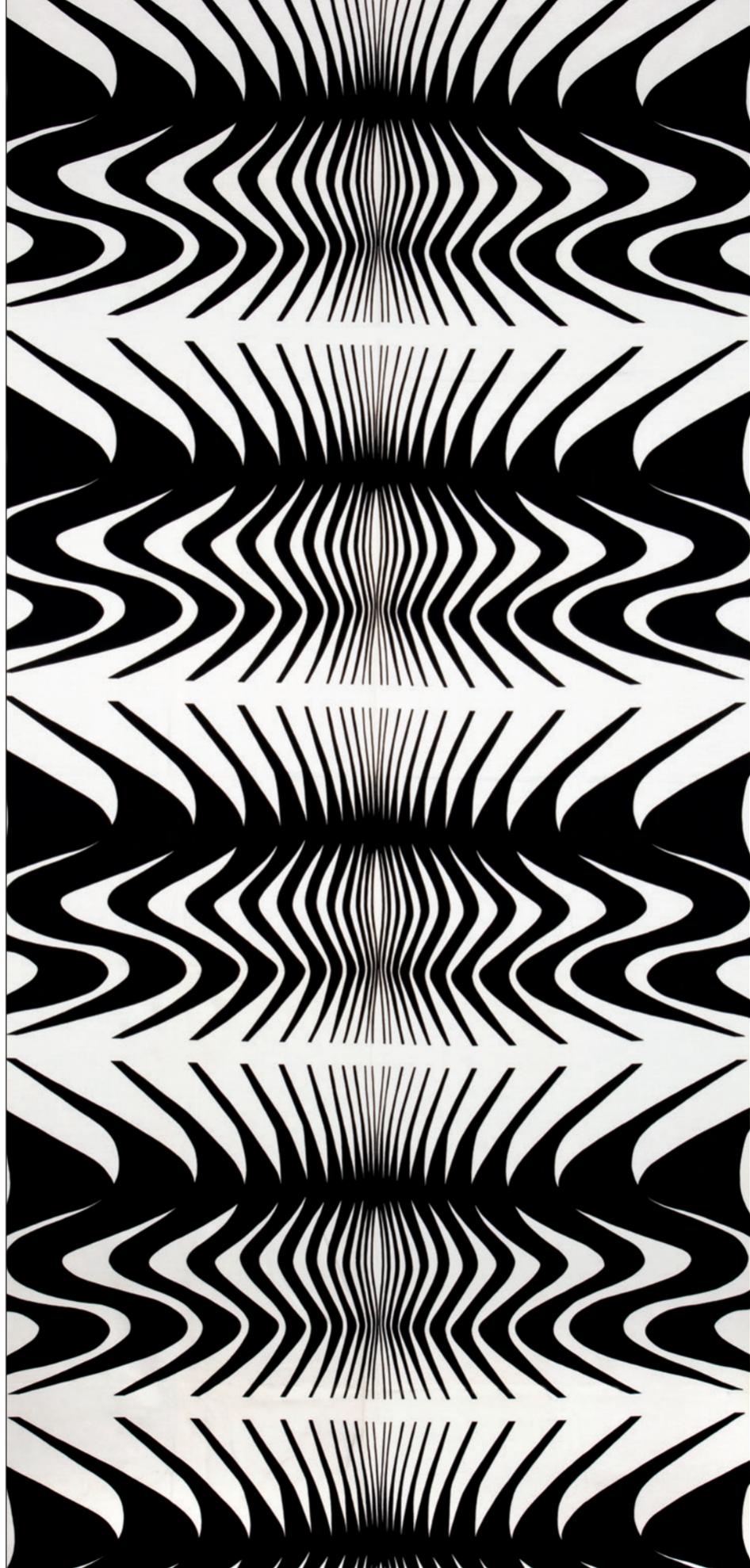
*Rhythm*, D Van Golden, ca. 1962-65



*Cascade*, Evelyn Redgrave, 1972



*Harlequin*, Evelyn Redgrave, ca. 1972



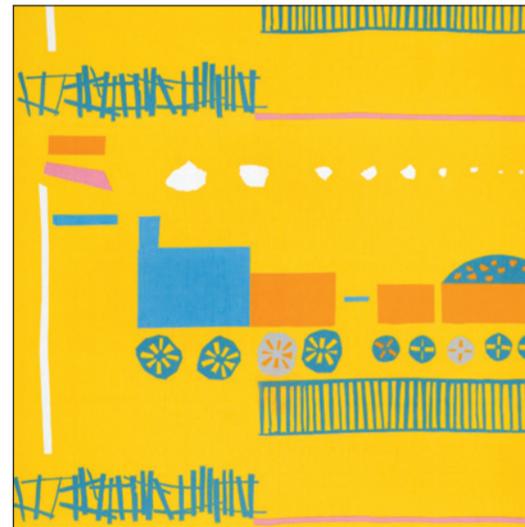
*Expansion*, Barbara Brown, 1966



*Sunflower*, Howard Carter, 1962



*Cottage Garden*, Mary White, ca. 1958-60



*Puffing Billy*, Doreen Dyall, ca. 1962



*Doll's House*, Doreen Dyall, 1962



*Untitled*, Zandra Rhodes, ca. 1965



*Top Brass*, Zandra Rhodes, 1964

## HEAL FABRICS LTD. SCREEN-PRINTED COTTONS British, 1962–72

The textile industry in postwar Britain enjoyed an enormous commercial and critical success, due in large part to the collaboration between the industry and avant-garde artists as well as up-and-coming young designers. Following the enforced inactivity of the war years, a surge of creativity characterized British pattern design especially for printed fabrics that were both influential and in demand internationally.

Among the leading producers of cutting-edge textiles was Heal Fabrics, founded in 1941 under the name Heal's Wholesale and Export as a subsidiary of Heal & Son, the well-known nineteenth-century London furniture and furnishings store. A converter rather than a manufacturer, Heal's acquired patterns from freelance designers which were then printed by commission. Already acknowledged as an innovator in the industry in the late 1940s, the company's reputation was firmly secured at the Festival of Britain in 1951 where it featured Lucienne Day's *Calyx*, a radical, abstract organic design that made a significant impact on what was referred to as the "Contemporary" style in the 1950s. By the 1960s, one third of Heal's production was sold overseas, and in 1964, in response to the enthusiastic reception of its fabrics in Germany, a subsidiary, Heal Textil, was established in Stuttgart.

The group of screen-printed cottons illustrated here is part of a large collection of Heal's textiles and promotional material that belonged to Evelyn Redgrave, who began designing for Heal's in 1969 while a student at Hornsey College of Art and became one of the firm's directors in 1974. Dating primarily from the early 1960s to the mid-1970s, the fabrics exemplify the inventive and dynamic patterns that characterized Heal's output during the period and the aesthetically diverse designers sought out by Tom Worthington, the company's visionary managing director from 1948 to 1971. Rather than choosing designs around a specific theme or in a particular style, Worthington drew on a large—up to eighty designers in the 1960s—and impressive roster of talent to create consistently unified annual collections that were frequently heralded in publications such as *The Ambassador* and *Design*. Each year, he viewed as many as 11,000 designs, eventually selecting about seventy to eighty; put into production in March, the collections were launched in November. In July 1965, *Design* credited Heal's furnishing fabrics with having had a "revolutionary affect on textiles in the middle of the century" and identified Worthington as "the most brilliant and dynamic impresario / converter in the business," who was responsible for discovering gifted young designers. Many of those whose work forms this collection were trained at leading art schools such as the Royal College of Art and Hornsey College of Art, and later went on to teach in these and other institutions.

The designers represented here include Redgrave, Barbara Brown, Doreen Dyall, Howard Carter, D. Van Golden, Mary White, and Zandra Rhodes, several of whom were cited in *Design* as contributing to Heal's prominence in the field. White's *Cottage Garden* (ca. 1958–60) displays the irregular arrangement of stylized natural motifs typical of "Contemporary" fabrics. Worthington's interest in translating modern art into textiles is evident in Carter's award-winning *Sunflower* (1962), based on one of his paintings and illustrating the popularity for monumental florals in the early 1960s; D. Van Golden's *Rhythm* (ca. 1962–65), promoted by Heal's at a trade fair with a model wearing a dress made of the fabric and standing in front of the painting; and John Plumb's *Chiricahua* (ca. 1960–65), also developed from a painting. The influence of Pop and Op Art is conveyed in Doreen Dyall's playful *Doll's House* (1962) and *Puffing Billy* (ca. 1962); Zandra Rhodes' whimsically irreverent *Top Brass* (1964); Barbara Brown's powerfully graphic *Expansion* (1966), *Frequency* (1969) and *Gyration* (1971); and the tonal gradations of Redgrave's *Cascade* (1972) and *Harlequin* (ca. 1972). These often large-scale abstract and geometric designs in bright colors and bold combinations were perfectly suited to the minimalism of contemporary architecture and interiors where they would have made a strong statement. The range of patterns attests to the flexibility of screen printing which allowed for a greater degree of experimentation and freedom than block or roller printing. Introduced in the 1930s, screen printing became widespread after the war and particularly with the development of mechanized flatbed printing in the 1960s.

The majority of the forty cottons in this collection were produced by Heal's; a few were manufactured by Tarian, a textile design firm established by Redgrave in 1977. In addition to the furnishing fabrics, Redgrave's archive includes press releases, black-and-white and color photographs of Heal's stands at trade fairs, information sheets on the designs, swatches, and tear sheets and reprints of articles from *The Ambassador* and *Household Textiles International*. Together these materials constitute an impressive record of Heal's importance in the history of twentieth-century British design.

Provenance: Ex-collection Evelyn Redgrave.



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