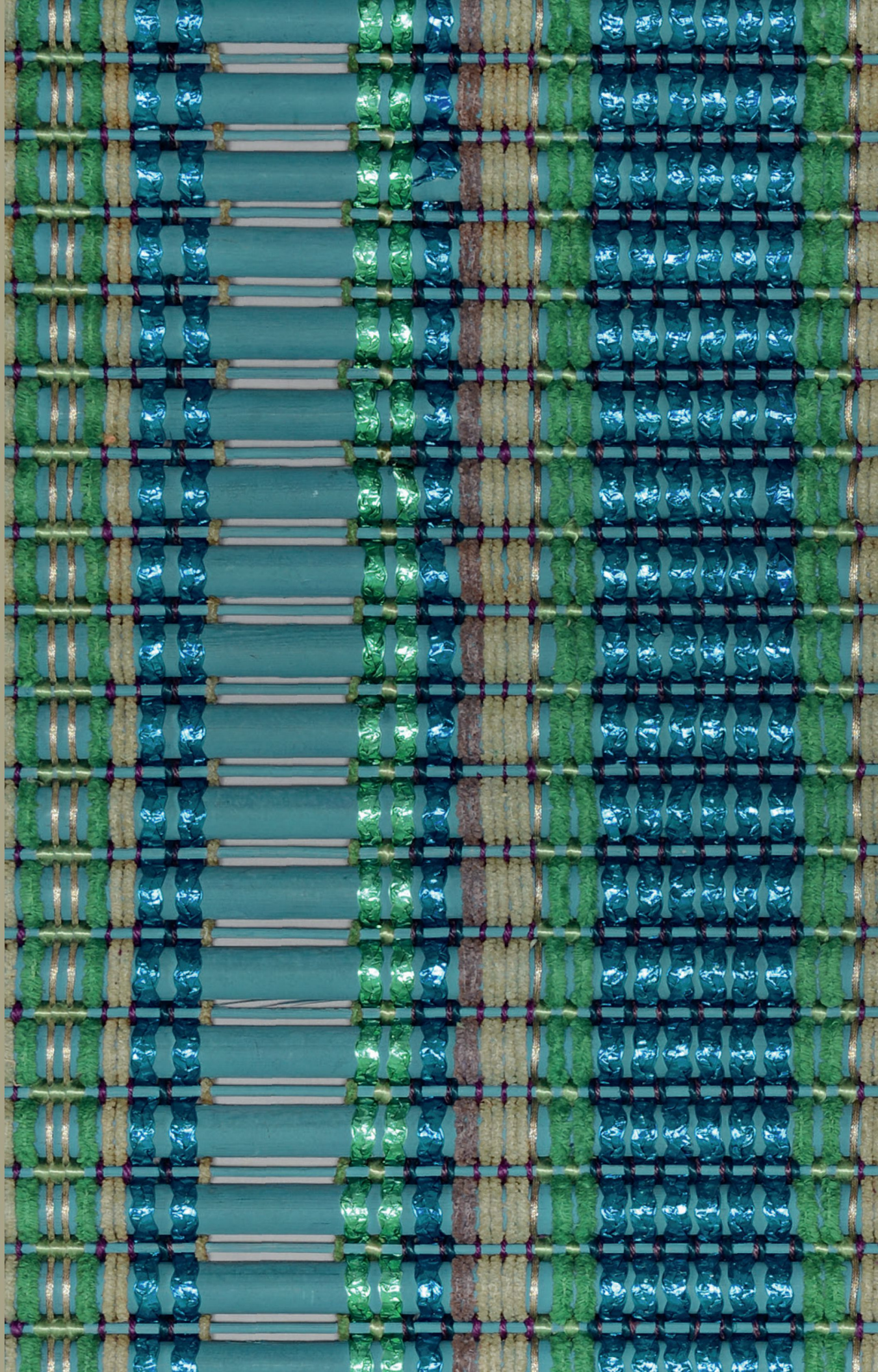


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*LES GIROFLÉES*  
BLOCK-PRINTED LINEN CURTAINS BY ATELIER MARTINE  
French, ca. 1923

One day, not so long ago, in one of the famous shopping streets in Paris, the eye of the passer-by was caught by a length of upholstery silk hung in the brand new windows of a brand new, gold-and-white store. The silk was of dark navy blue, over which plain background were scattered, at regular intervals, large, red field poppies—poppies so red, so unusual, though redness is their normal attribute, that they seemed to cry, "Look further. There is something behind this." And those who had the curiosity to enter, discovered that there was.

*Vogue*, July 1, 1912

This is how *Vogue* described the shop of Paul Poiret's interior decorating firm Martine, which opened the previous year on the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré. Instantly recognizable for its distinctive mixture of orientalist, neoclassical, and European folk motifs, Martine was the first such endeavor by a couturier. As this quote makes clear, the firm's textiles, described by one critic in 1914 as "barbaric," were its principal means of diffusing its radically primitive design philosophy.

Poiret began to envision the atelier after visiting decorative arts exhibitions and schools around Europe in 1910. "I had seen the *herr professors* of Berlin and Vienna torturing the brains of their pupils to make them fit into a new mould like an iron corselet," he later wrote. For the man who had freed women from actual corsets five years before, "this sort of disciplining of minds [was] absolutely criminal."

He therefore recruited untrained girls of about twelve from the working-class districts of Paris to attend his new school, named after his second daughter, and brought his troupe of naïfs to conservatories, zoos, and the countryside to paint watercolors with "untamed naturalness." From these, Poiret chose the designs best suited to reproduction. Eventually, Martine consisted of three branches: the *école*, where the girls created their designs; the atelier, where products such as textiles, carpets, glassware, and bibelots were manufactured; and the *maison*, the retail shop. It was a huge success: only one year after opening, the enterprise was earning three million francs per month, ultimately opening branches around France, as well as in London and Vienna. Its textiles were also available from retailers in Germany and America, such as Chambord Inc., in New York. Well into the 1920s, its aesthetic still shocked; in 1925, *Art et Décoration* noted that Martine remained the most "audacious" school of decoration in Paris.

Created in 1923, the textile from which this pair of curtains is made was possibly called *Les Giroflées* (Wallflowers), though the common four-petaled variety does not appear. Instead, stylized primroses, daisies, tulips, and ranunculus form a tapestry of painterly style evoking a cascade of blooms or an aerial view of a garden path. Each curtain consists of one full width of linen, block-printed with hues of pink, fuchsia, brown, beige, red, yellow, purple, and green. Layering colors (brown over yellow, pink over purple) creates an even more complex array of tonalities, while areas left undyed form white daisies.

*Les Giroflées* was a favorite textile for Poiret, who used it for curtains and screens at his Biarritz branch (see Palmer White, *Poiret*, 1971, p. 147; and Yvonne Deslandres, *Poiret*, 1986, p. 298 (erroneously dated to 1919)) and at his showrooms on the Champs-Élysées, opened in 1925 (see *Paul Poiret et Nicole Groult: Maîtres de la mode art déco*, 1986, cat. 110). A printed velvet version was featured in *Les arts de la maison* (vol. 1, 1923, pl. xviii), and the following year, the periodical included a color plate of a Martine bedroom decorated with a floor cushion in this fabric (vol. 2, 1924, pl. xxiv). In 1927, Poiret chose this fabric for the walls, beds, and furniture in cabins on the steamship *Île-de-France*.

Unusually, these curtains survive in their original configuration, with large wooden rings at the top for hanging and a simple cotton lining. This affords a rare opportunity to appreciate a Martine soft furnishing as intended. No pieces in public collections are known.

105" L x 46" W (each)





*MASKROS (DANDELION) AND CIKORIA (CHICORY)*  
 TAPESTRY-WOVEN WOOL PANELS  
 BY MÅRTA MÅÅS-FJETTERSTRÖM  
 Swedish, designed in 1928, woven after 1942

These small-scale works designed by the textile artist Märta Måås-Fjetterström (1874–1941) join together strands of Swedish heritage that are at once culturally universal and particular to the artist’s imaginative approach to science. Måås-Fjetterström is probably best known for her large tapestries and carpets with scintillating patterns of “Oriental” inspiration. However, diminutive pieces such as these allowed for focused contemplation of singular subjects akin to naturalists’ field sketches, yet approached with a modernist’s penchant for abstraction.

Drawing on the historical significance of eighteenth-century Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus’s contributions to plant taxonomy that were still dominant in the nineteenth century, Måås-Fjetterström picked species for her tapestries and wove them almost as specimens. *Dandelion* and *Chicory* are straightforward titles for real plant varieties (both plants from the same family, and both cultivated and appreciated for their bitter greens), but Måås-Fjetterström frees them from naturalistic portrayal. Both motifs were plucked, as it were, from a larger composition titled *Juniblommer* (June Blooms) designed in 1928. Solitary floral-motif weavings by Måås-Fjetterström are commonly called *blom-lapp* (flower patch) in Swedish.

Måås-Fjetterström revered the Flemish roots of Swedish tapestry, a tradition dating back to 1540 when King Gustav Vasa commissioned tapestries for the royal palace from weavers brought in from Flanders. These *millefleur* tapestries inspired adaptations by local artisans, albeit scaled to more modest production; in their subsequent adoption by weavers at home, the more painterly aspects disappeared in favor of stylization. Måås-Fjetterström thus interpreted the magnificence of royal tapestries through the intimate scale and reductivist tendencies of Swedish domestic weavers.

A unifying feature of Måås-Fjetterström’s *blom-lapp* (primarily woven in the interlocking method, which results in smooth joins between different colored wefts) is the dark grounds filled with gentle striations: variegated earthen browns, with purple, grey, and umber tonalities. Another signature device is the contrasting meander border, accented with the thinnest of cerise lines woven in the direction of the tapestry and also “inserted” as extensions of the wefts in the warp direction, almost as supplementary patterning warps. Beyond these defining conventions, Måås-Fjetterström let each subject present its unique characteristics.

In *Dandelion*, flowering stalks rise out of stepped abstractions of the plant’s jagged leaves. Two phases are represented, each in a charmingly simplified manner: tall, golden dandelions burst with crenellated petals, while shorter stalks display fluffy seed-globes ready for the slightest breeze to disperse them. The slit tapestry technique employed in the petaled flowerheads creates clear horizontal demarcations emphasizing the notched pattern. Tiny diamonds and a solitary square-within-a-square motif enliven the interstices. There is an inherent rhythm in the repetitive zigzag lines in the foliage, and an eye-catching color—soft but bright fuchsia—is used to delineate the leaves’ diagonal spines and the flowers’ stalks. Måås-Fjetterström’s use of “eccentric” weaving (so-called because the wefts are not woven at right angles to the warps) in these diagonals demonstrates her interest in non-European traditions, as this technique is most frequently seen in ancient South American and Egyptian Coptic tapestries. *Chicory* emphasizes verticality with blooms set in a staggered arrangement sprouting from a baseline of small, interconnected mounds. The two tall stalks feature triangular eaves supporting horizontal blossoms with serrated, blue petals, characteristic of this plant also known as “blue dandelion.” Three columns of tri-color lozenges—each with its own irregular, organic positioning—accentuate the stalks’ orientation and recall motifs that proliferated in Måås-Fjetterström’s carpet designs.

Måås-Fjetterström left a legacy of approximately seven hundred original designs, along with working instructions. Her studio was threatened with closure after her death, but Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf intervened, and in 1942 the firm was incorporated with protégée Barbro Nilsson as artistic director. Pieces woven after this time bear the distinguishing mark “AB MMF.” To this day, her workshop (located in Båstad since 1919) recreates her designs by special order. Måås-Fjetterström’s weavings are found in Swedish museum collections including the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, and the Röhsska Museum, Gothenburg, as well as the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, and the Art Institute of Chicago.

*Maskaros*: 15” H x 13.5” W  
*Cikoria*: 16.5” H x 16.5” W

*TERRA VISTA*  
PAIR OF SCREEN-PRINTED LINEN PANELS  
BY ELENHANK DESIGNERS, INC.  
American, 1976

How does one translate the imagery and movement of the natural world into a medium suitable for both bedroom and office? This was a central concern for artist Eleanor Kluck (b. 1919) and her husband, architect Henry Kluck (1922–2007), collectively known as Elenhank Designers, Inc., the company name being a portmanteau of their nicknames.

Established in 1948, Elenhank first operated out of the Klucks' Chicago apartment. There, they printed custom fabrics for architects and decorators from linoleum blocks designed and made by Eleanor, whose training was in painting. These so-called "random print" textiles featured block-printed designs on lengths of fabric that could be matched up in various configurations to create an endless array of patterns. After the company's early and rapid success, they incorporated and relocated to a larger facility. By the end of the 1950s, they moved from printing with blocks to screen-printing, which enabled faster production and was better suited to uniform, large-scale designs. This innovation spurred the introduction of what would become their hallmark: the "mural print," the term used by the couple for designs that extended across two or more entire widths of fabric, producing a contiguous, horizontally oriented pattern. With this format, the Klucks could take advantage of the inherent dynamism of the textile medium to craft an object that would represent the rhythms and constant motions of nature. One of Elenhank's first mural prints was entitled *Rhythm* (1972), an abstracted homage to the movement of sound.

First produced in 1976 and later advertised as part of the firm's "Pastoral Collection," *Terra Vista* reflects the serene landscape of Indiana, where the couple resided from the 1960s. The midwestern panorama so well known to Eleanor and Henry provided the perfect setting for the conception of Elenhank's experimental textiles. Henry had designed the family home, an open-plan cabin with sliding glass doors on all sides, with this in mind, and by the mid-1970s, the couple quite literally brought the surrounding forest seen through their windows into their creative practice. A 1975 newspaper article described one of Elenhank's mural prints as the answer to finding a "design and pattern motif that would complement both the outdoors and the expanding popularity of greenery indoors."

*Terra Vista's* rolling hills, forested acres, and even the rich soil, rendered as an almost aqueous formation, are printed in snowy white and rich beige tones with earthy sienna accents on linen. While these elements repeat across both panels, two additional screens were used to create the asymmetrical geological layer just below the highest peaks that soar toward the rippling clouds. On the left side, a craggy hill appears, while on the right, a low valley dips behind the trees. This seemingly subtle distinction between the two adjacent panels cleverly forms a graphic horizontality that adds complexity. A promotional tear sheet from about 1978 illustrates *Terra Vista* as both a flat wallcovering, a use of the pattern that draws attention to the panorama, and as a drapery, where folds give dimension and fluidity to the fabric. The muted palette of this colorway evokes the sensation of walking through the Indiana countryside on a bright but cloudy day. *Terra Vista's* composition brings together the undulating motion and abstract topography of the firm's earlier pieces from the 1970s, such as *Rhythm* and *Terrain* (see *Cora Ginsburg Catalogue 2011–2012*), with the landscape motif that became so central to the couple's design ethos.

Examples of *Terra Vista* in other colorways are in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago (1985.738a-b), the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum (1985-84-21-a,b), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1987.372.15), and the Philadelphia Museum of Art (2011-32-3a,b). The pen, ink, and gouache designs for each screen are preserved in the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum.

Provenance: Eleanor and Henry Kluck family archive

101" H x 94" W



BLOCK-PRINTED PORTIERES WITH CARVED LINOLEUM BLOCKS  
 American, ca. 1935–40

At the turn of the twentieth century, the highly regarded American painter and teacher Stephen Douglas Volk (1856–1935) and his wife, Marion Larrabee Volk (1859–1925), built a summer home on Kezar Lake in Center Lovell, Maine, which they named Hewn Oaks. At the time Volk and his family were living in New York, but he and Marion were drawn to the rugged beauty of western Maine. The Volks named their house for the imposing beams cut from local oak trees that were used in its construction and purposefully left exposed in its interior. Until about 1912, Hewn Oaks was also an active artists' colony in which Marion, the Volks' son Wendell (1884–1953), and their daughter Marion (1888–1973) played important roles. Working with women from the immediate area, the three produced hand-spun, dyed, and woven wool rugs with patterns inspired by Native American designs, sold under the name Sabatos Rugs. Wendell, an accomplished wood-carver, created furniture for the house and established the short-lived Hewn Beam Press that published pamphlets and a newsletter. Among many of the Volks' friends who participated in the artistic community at Hewn Oaks were the painters J. Alden Weir, Frank W. Benson, and Childe Hassam, and the Swedish wood-carver Karl von Rydingsvard.

In the mid-1930s, following the deaths of his parents, Wendell and his wife, Jessie McCoig Volk (1904–2005), acquired the Hewn Oaks property (and later used the spelling Hewnoaks). Jessie, an artist in her own right, painted the ceilings of the cottages on the Hewn Oaks property with stylized animals and foliage and created her own block-printed textiles. She also taught the technique to young, unmarried men as part of the Civilian Conservation Corps' effort that operated between 1933 and 1942. These impressive portieres likely represent a husband-and-wife collaboration from around 1935—Wendell probably carved the linoleum blocks while Jessie did the printing. A photograph of the large living room with its exposed beams and posts shows the portieres in situ from the back, at either side of a wide opening dividing this central space into two areas.

Filling most of the off-white, plain-weave cotton field are alternating rows of medallions: one set of these encloses serpentine stems with pendant buds, while the other encloses highly stylized leafy trees within elaborately patterned borders. Across the lower edge is a fanciful landscape with pine trees and a distant mountain range, punctuated by two pairs of tall, shaggy trees. At the base of paired tree trunks sprouting spiky foliage and flanked by large abstracted flowers, two snails meet, their antennae almost touching. Foliage continues along each side of the portieres and a series of crown-like motifs completes the frame at the top. Although the topography surrounding Hewn Oaks, with its views of the White Mountains, may have inspired this landscape, its fairy-tale aspect is enhanced by the soft, transparent shades of brown, blue-green, green, lavender, pink, and red. The portieres are lined in a lightweight orange silk, also printed with rows of medallions—including the two used on the front and the crown motifs, as well as a third, larger medallion.

Remarkably, the blocks for the three medallions and the two mirror-image landscape blocks, all with traces of color, survive with the portieres. For the landscape, it may be that the pale colors were printed first, the blocks then wiped clean, and the dark, outline colors applied subsequently. Alternatively, the outline color may have been printed first, making it easier to see where to place the paler colors after cleaning the blocks. In either case, printing the following colors would have required careful registration and may have involved tape or pins to guide the application of the block.

In keeping with the artists' colony established thirty years before, Wendell and Jessie Volk opened the property's cottages to summer tourists, and their promotional brochure highlighted the "unusual distinction" of the cabins in which guests would experience "a quiet, artistic atmosphere." These striking portieres thus represent a continued expression of the Volk family's commitment to handicrafts in the decoration of their beloved Maine home.

86" H x 94" W (each)





PRINTED LINEN DEPICTING DIANA THE HUNTRESS  
ATTRIBUTED TO THOMAS LAMB  
American, ca. 1930

Thomas Lamb (1896–1988) is recognized today for his illustrations for children’s books and toys that stemmed from his monthly column “Kiddyland” in *Good Housekeeping*, as well as for ergonomic designs in plastics, particularly handles. Following a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1948, Lamb acquired the moniker “The Handle Man.” But it was during his time as a textile designer that Lamb first undertook the design ideas that influenced his later postwar industrial production.

Lamb studied at the Art Students’ League and opened a textile design studio in New York City in the mid-1910s, producing furnishing textiles for major American department stores such as Lord & Taylor, Macy’s, and Saks Fifth Avenue. His printed fabrics frequently appeared in the pages of American interior decorating publications like *Arts and Decoration*. He continued designing textiles into the 1940s, working with firms including the DuPont Rayon Company and the Kempner Linen Corporation. Although the manufacturer of this textile is not known, another version in printed rayon suggests a connection to DuPont.

This textile, which depicts the goddess Diana in the throes of the hunt, speaks to both aesthetic and commercial concerns in America in the 1920s and 1930s. The image of the Roman goddess Diana pervaded the arts of the period due to the revival of neoclassicism, especially in the aftermath of the 1925 *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris. Moreover, in the decades before the Great Depression and during America’s rise to the status of a world superpower, the story of Diana served as an allegory for commerce and the hunt for profit as exemplified by the goddess’s frequent appearance in sculpture and reliefs on civic architecture.

On a bright undyed linen surface, the dark masses of Diana and the jumping antelope and dogs transform into a stylized web of abstracted, rhythmic lines. Diana’s body catches the eye by presenting the only element not shown in silhouette: the drapery with its deeply rendered folds that cascades over her breast and balloons behind her. Glancing over her right shoulder at the prey just pierced by her arrow, Diana leaps forward with one knee raised, her left arm still poised after the release of the bow. Male and female antelope, alert to the impending attack, scamper ahead, chased by the streamlined bodies of greyhounds. Thick, calligraphic lines ending in stylized foliage and volutes both frame and intersect the figural elements, connecting these various motifs across the nineteen-inch repeat.

The simultaneous flatness and dynamism recall Art Deco ironwork, especially that of William Hunt Diederich and Edgar Brandt, in which foreground and background are collapsed into a single layer. Although reduced to schematic silhouettes, the figures give the impression of constant motion. Diederich’s bronze Diana with a hound from about 1925 similarly holds her bow and gazes backward, but most obvious among Lamb’s influences is the sculptor Paul Manship. Indeed, Lamb’s likeness in linen reads as a near mirror image of Manship’s iconic bronze of the goddess first designed in 1921 (versions are in the National Gallery of Art and Smithsonian American Art Museum). Lamb’s textile, an exemplar of unfettered Art Deco aesthetics, cleverly represents a moment in American history in which revivalism, modernism, mass production, consumerism, and art all comingled.

Lengths of this textile are in the collections of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum (2003-7-2) and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2003.309). A fragment of another printed linen by Lamb is preserved at the Indianapolis Museum of Art (47.180).

148” H x 35.75” W





FIVE SAMPLES FOR WINDOW COVERINGS  
 BY DOROTHY LIEBES  
 American, ca. 1952–1960

Bold experimentation and improvisation define the output of textile and industrial designer Dorothy Liebes (1897–1972). Liebes’s role in shaping the character of midcentury interior design and architecture in America was significant, and her success is a tribute to both her acute design skills and her keen entrepreneurial sensibility. Her unwavering commitment to the “Good Design” movement, paired with an understanding of the importance of industrial production in the postwar era and her willingness to comply with manufacturers emulating her distinctive style—dubbed the “Liebes look”—meant that her designs were known far and wide.

Born in Santa Rosa, California, Liebes began weaving in 1930 after studying at the University of California, Berkeley, and in Paris under the renowned weaver Paul Rodier (1867–1946). She opened her first professional studio in San Francisco in the late 1930s, where she began to experiment with nontraditional materials, utilizing, in her words, “everything I could lay between a warp.” A 1947 article in *Life* praised her inventive mélange of natural materials like cotton, silk, leather, and wood combined with synthetics such as cellophane, Orlon (an early form of acrylic made by DuPont), and Lurex, a new plastic-coated aluminum foil of which she was an early proponent. These weavings were produced without commerciality in mind, due to a request from her then-husband, Leon Liebes, that her textiles not compete with those sold at his department store. Although the marriage ended, Liebes kept her married name and continued to develop the signature style that would eventually bring her commercial success.

These five samples for window coverings typify Liebes’s signature aesthetic, juxtaposing stark industrial products like Lurex with velvety chenilles in vivid hues to create a unique tactile and visual energy. Produced in New York, where Liebes relocated in 1948, they exemplify the transitional nature of this period, which was marked by her move from handweaving to a strong interest in mass production. Four of the samples with half-round wooden slats date to between 1952 and 1953. By the end of the 1950s, she fully embraced industrial fabrication, focusing on designing for the marketplace and consulting for various corporations, including Goodall Fabrics and Sears. One piece, worked in white, yellow, and silver with narrower wooden slats, dates to about 1960, when she was already well established as a decorating force.

“Weaving is not meant to stand alone. It is always related to architecture,” Liebes once noted, expressing the importance of designs like these five samples in a fully conceived architectural scheme. From the 1930s, she worked alongside architects and industrial designers such as Donald Deskey. In 1951, she received the commission to outfit the United Nations Delegates Dining Room; an example of the room divider she designed for this occasion is preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1973.129.7). Throughout the 1950s, Frank Lloyd Wright also used her work in his commissions.

By this time, she was a household name in department stores, publications, museums, and expositions. Known as “the mother of the twentieth-century palette,” Liebes helped redefine American industrial textile production with her post-impressionistic understanding of color (she credited van Gogh and the Fauvists as two of her main influences). Her designs were featured in a myriad of exhibitions, including the Museum of Modern Art’s important “Good Design” series between 1944 and 1956. She was also the subject of retrospectives at the Brooklyn Museum in 1943 and at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts (today the Museum of Arts and Design) in 1970, two years before her death. Most recently, her work was presented in *Pathmakers: Women in Art, Craft and Design, Midcentury and Today* at the Museum of Arts and Design and the National Museum of Woman in the Arts (2015–2016).

Her textiles are preserved in several museums including the Art Institute of Chicago, the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Arts and Design, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Saint Louis Art Museum.

Provenance: Dorothy Liebes archives

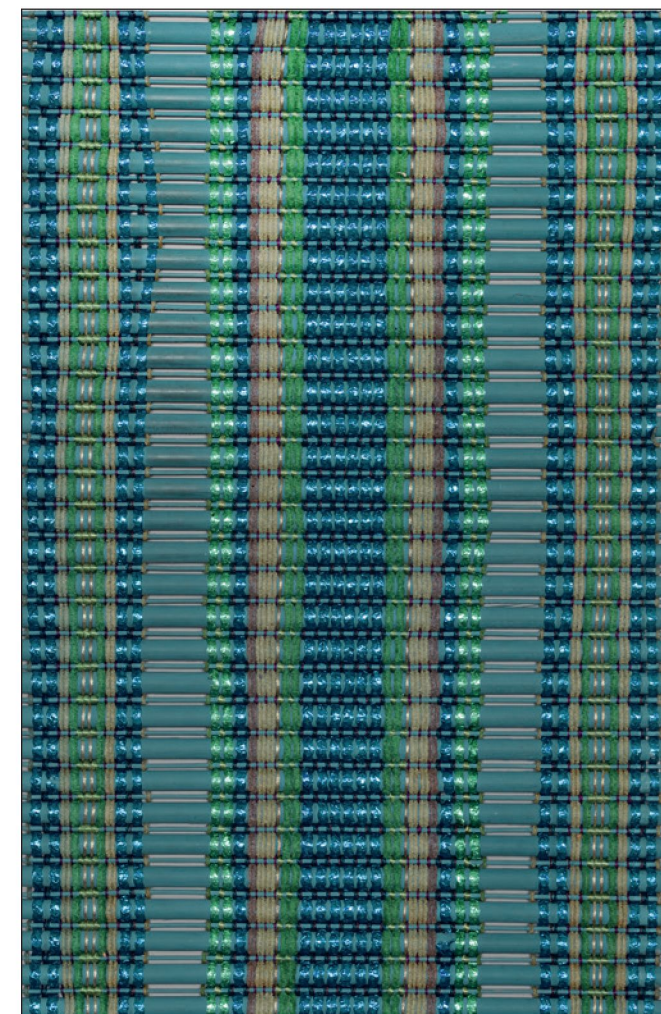
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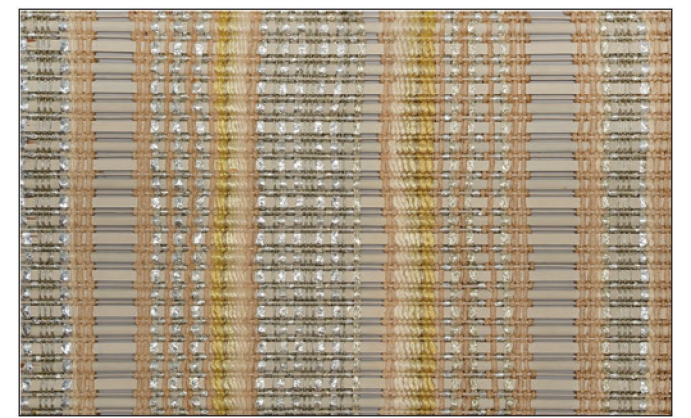
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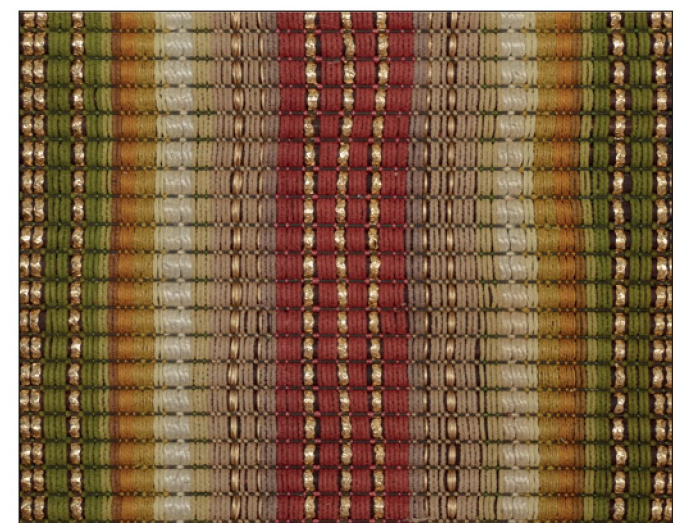
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BLOCK-PRINTED LINEN THEATER CURTAIN PANEL  
BY STROHEIM & ROMANN  
American, 1929

In the late 1920s, spurred by the success of the moving picture industry and the continued popularity of vaudeville, America experienced a wave of theater construction. Often decorated in an optimistically ostentatious manner, mixing high Art Deco with references from historical styles like French baroque or Empire, these theaters have suffered greatly over the course of the twentieth century and rarely survive with their original features intact. This arresting panel was produced in 1929 by the New York upholstery firm of Stroheim & Romann for use as a theater curtain and is a testament to the original appearance of these important community spaces, whose draperies were central to the character of their décor.

Founded in 1910 by Salo Stroheim and Salo Romann, the firm of Stroheim & Romann is still active today under the name Stroheim. Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, it was one of the most successful wholesalers of upholstery textiles in New York, and continually grew. In 1912, it opened a large headquarters at 242 Fourth Avenue (now Park Avenue South), at the corner of 20th Street. By 1922, the company had moved to the newly constructed Heckscher Building at 57th Street and Fifth Ave., a favorite for antique dealers and interior designers throughout the decade. Stroheim & Romann began there with six New York showrooms, but quickly expanded to ten within months to meet demand. While the business did offer products for private homes, it catered primarily to the needs of public buildings, with distributors in Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco.

A rendering of this theater curtain can be found in *Decorative Draperies & Upholstery*, first published in 1929 by Edward Thorne and Henry W. Frohne, editors of *Good Furniture* magazine (pl. 63). Block-printed in brown, golden yellow, teal, and black on a heavy linen, this full selvage-width panel, with a 99-inch repeat, was intended to be cut out and applied on a green rep base fabric to form a continuous band of exaggerated palmettes and stylized anthemions. Six panels would have been necessary to cover the full stage width, each surmounted by another half panel. Thorne and Frohne suggested this "modernistic curtain" for a small auditorium, and recommended setting it off with plaster or terracotta walls accented by multicolored glazed tiles. Two narrow side curtains in the same style, trimmed with fringe and tassels, would have flanked the main drape. Brown seating upholstery and carpeting, they noted, was selected to ensure that the bright green curtain remained the focal point of the decoration.

A number of theaters were constructed in New York around this date, including the Paramount (1926), the Roxy (1927), the Beacon (1928), RKO's Keith Theater (1929), and "Loew's Wonder Theaters" located in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, Manhattan, and Jersey City (1929). However, most of these have either been demolished, reconstructed, or have more elaborate prosceniums than required for Thorne's and Frohne's rendering, making it impossible to identify the original setting for which this panel was intended. That this piece was never in fact made into a theater curtain has undoubtedly ensured its remarkable survival. An identical panel is in the collection of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, a gift of Stroheim & Romann employee Ross Smith (1962-101-1).

96" H x 61" W

*HARVEST TIME*  
PRINTED COTTON AND RAYON BY ROCKWELL KENT  
American, ca. 1950

The work of Rockwell Kent (1882–1971), a versatile American artist known for his paintings, pen-and-ink drawings, lithographs, woodcuts, and engravings, reveals his profound reverence for rural landscapes and wilderness. Trained as an architect at Columbia University, he took up painting toward the end of his degree and studied under William Merritt Chase at Shinnecock Hills School, Robert Henri at the New York School of Art, and Kenneth Hayes Miller at the Art Students League. A social progressive who was politically active, Kent firmly believed that America's vast areas of untamed nature contributed to the nation's unique character. His early paintings, exhibited in the first decade of the twentieth century, depict dramatic views of Mount Monadnock in New Hampshire and Monhegan Island in Maine. Also a writer, Kent published several travel memoirs that document his explorations of Alaska, the Arctic, and Greenland. Kent acquired impressive draftsmanship through his architectural training, and his skills as a carpenter enabled him to create the deliberate, controlled lines of his woodcuts that elicit a powerful emotional charge.

In the postwar years, many American textile manufacturers sought out leading artists to produce designs for the mass market—a strategy intended to capitalize on consumers' increasing exposure to, and familiarity with, contemporary art. In 1950, Charles Bloom's New York-based firm Bloomcraft commissioned designs from Kent for their Saison "Happily Married" Fabrics that were advertised in *House and Garden* in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In addition to *Harvest Time*, Bloomcraft put three other Kent designs into production: *Deer Season*, *Waves of Grain*, and *Pine Tree*. Although many furnishing fabrics from this period are screen printed, Kent's designs for Bloomcraft were printed with photoengraved copper rollers, characterized by crisp lines and short repeats.

*Harvest Time* depicts Asgaard, the Adirondack farm owned by Kent and his wife, Frances, which figures prominently in his book, *This Is My Own* (1940). Oversized sheaves of green wheat stand atop small individual islands and dominate the distant background with a white steepled church and a cluster of white farm buildings set among thickly foliated red trees. At the left side of each sheaf, a trio of chicks eagerly awaits their mother's return as she swoops toward the nest with food in her beak. Another bird flies between the sheaves, heading upward into the sky. A testament to his "paradise," as he described Asgaard, *Harvest Time* conveys the sense of tranquility and well being that Kent associated with a connection to nature's beauty and the inevitability of life's cycles marked by seasonal changes. Several of the motifs may symbolize the climate of peace and prosperity that followed in the years after World War II: the skyward bird representing the Christian dove, the sheaves of wheat, plenty, and the chicks, rebirth. With its strong graphic statement, *Harvest Time* shares the pared-down simplicity of Kent's drawings and prints.

Kent's original gouache drawings for this line—including *Harvest Time*—are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1976.536.19). The final version of *Harvest Time*, printed on a cotton/rayon plain weave with a slubbed texture, differs in a few details from the artist's drawing: he substituted single birds for the pairs that appear in the gouache and added the church and birds' nest.

Although Kent's collaboration with Bloomcraft occurred ten years after the publication of *This Is My Own*, the words of this "farmer-artist" that appear on the flap copy could easily refer to this later venture: "I think of all the arts as by-products of life . . . My art, and that means the pictures and books, will always be no more than an expression of my interest in living."

Panels of *Harvest Time* in other colorways are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1995.295.1), the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2001.652), the Philadelphia Museum of Art (1972-211-1), and the Dallas Museum of Art (2001.318).

75.5" H x 45.75" W





KEYS  
PRINTED HAIRCLOTH  
American, ca. 1949

BY RUTH ADLER SCHNEE

Over the course of her half-century career, Ruth Adler Schneé's numerous awards acknowledge her significant contributions to modern design in the United States. As a designer of interiors and furnishing textiles, Schneé has collaborated with preeminent architects—including Frank Lloyd Wright, Philip Johnson, and Eero Saarinen—and her wide-ranging commissions encompass residential, commercial, and civic projects.

Born in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1923, to intellectual and artistic Jewish parents, Schneé's creative talents were encouraged by her parents when she was a young girl. From the early 1930s, the Adlers' lives were increasingly impacted by the rise of National Socialism and in 1939, the family immigrated to the United States, settling in Detroit. Schneé first attended Cass Technical High School, taking classes in drawing, fashion illustration, and pattern making. After graduating in 1942, she received a scholarship to the Rhode Island School of Design where she changed her focus from fashion illustration to interior architecture. Before embarking on a fellowship for a Master's Degree at Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1945, Schneé worked for Raymond Loewy, one of the leading midcentury industrial designers. In 1948, she married Edward Schneé who became her business partner and collaborator. Between 1949 and 1977, Adler-Schneé, the retail establishment of this formidable husband-and-wife team, was instrumental in promoting modernist glassware, ceramics, furniture, and textiles by European and American designers to Detroit residents.

These two furnishing textiles date to the early years of Schneé's involvement with fabric production. While working on an architectural project at Cranbrook, she realized her dissatisfaction with the drapery materials that were currently on the market and set out to design and make her own. The positive response to her abstract-patterned curtains led to the opening of her own silk-screen printing studio in 1947 and the following year, she and Edward founded Adler-Schneé to produce her textiles. Schneé has always considered the sculptural quality of drapery fabrics, stating in 1953: "Textile design should achieve maximum possible flexibility in scale, color and texture to permit widest possible use, and care should be exercised in selection of appropriate design elements to meet specific problems."



LAZY LEAVES  
PRINTED COTTON AND RAYON  
American, ca. 1953

BY RUTH ADLER SCHNEE

Schneé's modernist sensibility embraces strong colors and whimsical yet sophisticated patterns, often—as seen in both *Keys* and *Lazy Leaves*—inspired by everyday objects and by the world around her. Printed on haircloth, a mixture of mohair and cotton, *Keys* features rhythmic vertical and horizontal groupings of large, abstracted interlocking geometric forms in shades of rust and green on a variegated oatmeal ground. Haircloth was an early favorite of Schneé's for its availability and affordability in the immediate postwar years, as well as for its textural effects and the overlapping colors that could be achieved with transparent dyes on its matte surface. In *Lazy Leaves*, large-scale flattened foliage, with elongated wedge-shaped stems in complementary shades of red and green on a white ground, float gently down the length of the panel; fine lines surrounding some of the leaves echo their highly reductive shapes. In contrast to *Keys*, *Lazy Leaves* is printed on a cotton/rayon ground fabric with a slightly slubbed, shiny surface. At the time that she created these two fabrics, Schneé was regularly participating in museum exhibitions and trade shows, and her work appeared in design publications including *Everyday Art Quarterly*, *Arts and Architecture*, *Decorative Art in Modern Interiors*, and *Modern Furnishings for the Home*. *Keys* was published in the Winter 1949 issue of *Furniture Forum* (section 4, p. 3).

Still active, Schneé is currently under contract to Knoll to produce textile designs. A 2012 documentary, *The Radiant Sun: Designer Ruth Adler Schneé* celebrates her prodigious career, and she was one of the featured designers in the 2015 exhibition, *Designing Home: Jews and Midcentury Modernism* at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York. Panels of both *Keys* and *Lazy Leaves* are in the Art Institute of Chicago (1985.661 and 1985.663); a panel of *Keys* is also in the Victoria & Albert Museum (CIRC. 499-1954). Other leading institutions with examples of Adler-Schneé textiles include the Henry Ford Museum, Cranbrook Art Museum, and the Detroit Institute of Arts.

*Keys*: 64" H x 54" W  
*Lazy Leaves*: 45" H x 68.75" W



BLOCK-PRINTED GLAZED COTTON BY SERGE POLIAKOFF  
French, 1946

A refugee of the Russian Revolution in 1917, Serge Poliakoff (1900–1969) settled in Paris in 1923. In 1929, while earning a living as a musician, he fostered his artistic education by studying in French academies. Poliakoff relocated to London in 1935 to attend the Slade School of Art, where he delved into abstract painting with keen interest in layering and isolating color. Poliakoff's subsequent return to Paris crystallized his nascent style via encounters with fellow Russian abstractionists Wassily Kandinsky and André Lansky, as well as Simultaneists Sonia and Robert Delaunay, who were decisive in steering him to embrace the spiritual and emotive potentials of color.

Poliakoff met French entrepreneur Jean Bauret in 1945. With his brothers, Bauret ran the furnishing fabrics company *Société industrielle de la Lys*, with a factory in northern France and offices and a showroom in Paris. Bauret predicted that after years of intense wartime privation, consumers desired new and "modern" products. He subscribed to a commercially open-minded philosophy in which "fine artists" should participate in "applied" pursuits. In the postwar milieu of painters, musicians, and poets, Bauret began to collect artworks and commission textile patterns—the leading supplier from this cadre was Poliakoff. Of the more than fifty gouache designs Poliakoff made as textile maquettes, Bauret chose only five—those which were closest in spirit to Poliakoff's paintings of 1946, which feature interlocking angular lines at play, forming *cloisons* filled with intensely saturated colors.

Bauret's decision to reproduce the least figurative, boldest color abstractions as drapery-weight fabrics underscored his intentions to import Poliakoff's specific style into textile manufacturing, rather than requiring the painter to conform to criteria anathema to his oeuvre. Solidifying the artistic connection, Bauret asked Poliakoff for color samples in advance of production, as he anticipated difficulties in matching Poliakoff's personally mixed pigments with the manufactured brands available for textile printing. As with his *forme unique* artworks, color—not paint, not substrate—essentially became Poliakoff's medium. In this example, the scheme of complementary brilliant yellow and magenta-tinged purple, offset with two shades of black (one for the solid fields, another for the outlines), animates the repeating composition. Where the white fabric's ground is left untouched, a positive/negative effect emerges. A glazed finish, supplying subtle shifts in tone as light plays on the surface, augments the pattern's interlaced liveliness.

In a letter from August 1946, the artist's wife noted that Bauret desired only "textile and curtain designs . . . of the large arabesques and bright colored harliquinades." Bauret's choices, though coinciding with Poliakoff's trajectory, may have proved problematic for the painter who was trying to eschew pejorative connections with the "decorative." In a review of his works shown the same year Bauret produced Poliakoff's textiles, a critic praised "the success of Poliakoff: his paintings are full of pleasantly gaudy colors as a Boukhara or Samarkand rug." Poliakoff strove to go beyond mere color and pattern in search of more spiritual formal arrangements.

Though his involvement with Bauret was brief, Poliakoff's impact on textile design in the 1950s and 1960s is evident. His reach even extended so far as fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent, who in 1965 created not only his iconic "Mondrian" dress, but also a color-blocked sheath in homage to Poliakoff. The artist has recently been celebrated in a retrospective exhibition at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (*Serge Poliakoff: The Dream of Forms*, October 2013–February 2014). Examples of his textiles can be found in the Art Institute of Chicago (2003.101), the Musée de l'impression sur étoffes, Mulhouse, and in private collections. The gouache design for this particular textile was sold at a French auction in 2015.

108.5" H x 51" W

DELFINISK RÖRELSE PRINTED LINEN BY KARL AXEL PEHRSON  
Swedish, ca. 1954

The dynamic movement of this printed linen pattern originated not as a textile design, but as a painting by Swedish artist Karl Axel Pehrson (1921–2005). By the 1940s, Pehrson was known as a proponent of minimal colors and stark geometrics associated with midcentury ideas of abstraction. He had been among the group of artists included in *The Men of 1947*, an exhibition held at the Stockholm gallery Färg och Form that year to showcase artists working within the tenets of concretism.

It was at an exhibition of Pehrson's work in 1954 at Galerie Blanche in Stockholm that the artist's painting of *Delfinisk Rörelse* (Dolphin Movement) was seen by Astrid Sampe. A textile designer herself, Sampe had run NK Textilkammare, the textile studio at Nordiska Kompaniet (the renowned department store in Stockholm) since 1937. In 1954, Sampe began her "Signed Textile" project that sought to merge the artistic work of modernist painters, architects, and sculptors into the production of textiles for NK Textilkammare. Fabrics from this collection were promoted by having the artists' names prominently printed on the selvages. On the lookout for art, and artists, to include in her project, Sampe identified *Delfinisk Rörelse*, with its graphic lines and simple yet arresting two-color palette, as an ideal candidate. After Pehrson agreed to participate in "Signed Textiles," the task of translating Pehrson's painted motif into a repeat pattern suitable for textile printing fell to Inez Svensson, who recounted the difficulties of this task: Svensson made numerous photocopies of the painting in order to construct a repeat that was without visible joins, and that would meet Pehrson's approval. She succeeded on both accounts; *Delfinisk Rörelse* was produced and became a successful fabric in the "Signed Textile" series. The selvedge is marked: "Delfinisk Rörelse. Karl Axel Pehrson. Design Textilkammare. Made in Sweden. Handprinted."

In addition to Pehrson, Sampe's project came to include designs by Stig Lindberg, Sven Markelius, and Alvar Aalto, among others. The ambitions of NK Textilkammare were promoted internationally in the 1958 exhibition *Swedish Textiles Today*, circulated in the United States by the Smithsonian Institution. The exhibition included fabrics from NK Textilkammare, as well as three other Swedish firms, and presented the works of twenty-two designers. The accompanying exhibition catalogue lauds the sensitivity of Swedish design and its "attitude towards the objects that form our daily environment: an awareness of them, a desire to take care of them and keep them beautiful. . . . an attractive environment is essential to a well-integrated and active life." Textiles were a principal means of manifesting this enlightened design philosophy:

Extensive industrialization and traditional crafts exist side by side in Sweden in a manner that is entirely natural. This is particularly apparent in the field of textiles. Handwoven fabrics of the finest quality are still being produced on looms all over the country, and at the same time the textiles industry is in constant developments, with new production methods, new raw materials, and new aims.

The new aims manifested in Swedish textiles of the 1950s are apparent in *Delfinisk Rörelse*, which presents a large-scale, highly abstract design of overlapping dolphins against a wave-like background. While used primarily as a furnishing fabric, a bold, playful halter evening dress constructed from *Delfinisk Rörelse* can be seen in a promotional photograph for a 1955 fashion show. In keeping with the Swedish approach to design, modern fabrics in a well-integrated life infiltrated both the home, as curtains and upholstery fabric, as well as a woman's wardrobe.

Information on *Delfinisk Rörelse*, and the photograph of the dress, appear in Gisela Eronn, *Tidlösa mönster: textilkonst från 1950-talet*, 2003, pp. 136–39.

117" H x 51.5" W





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