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LES INSECTES
SILK LAMPAS BY PAUL FOLLOT
WOVEN BY TASSINARI & CHATEL
French (Lyon), designed ca. 1909, woven 1910–12

Insects proved an almost endless source of inspiration for artists and designers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, from the naturalism of Japanese woodcuts they collected to the whimsical entomology of Jules-Auguste Habert Dys and Maurice Pillard Verneuil (see p. 9). When Paul Follot (1877–1941) designed *Les Insectes*, a silk lampas woven by the Lyonnais firm Tassinari & Chatel, in about 1909, he capitalized on the ornamental aptitude of arthropods and modernized the motif in a strikingly novel way. Although perhaps not immediately noticeable, stag beetles march in profile and frontally atop abstracted foliage, surmounted by a fan-like architectural motif. *Les Insectes'* organic geometry is a prime example of Follot's early transition from high Art Nouveau to the classic Art Deco for which he is best known, particularly during his time as head decorator for Pomone, the Bon Marché department store's decorating workshop, and the London firm Waring & Gillow in the 1920s.

Follot was already a household name in artistic circles, as a designer for Julius Meier-Graefe's La Maison Moderne in Paris, founding member of the Société des Artistes Décorateurs in 1903, and medal winner at the 1900 Paris World's Fair. His innate decorating sensibility probably came from his father, Félix, a third-generation wallpaper manufacturer and member of the Council of the Union des Arts Décoratifs. In the 1890s, Paul joined the *L'Art dans tout* movement and studied under Art Nouveau leader Eugène Grasset. From about 1904, when he established his own decorating business, he regularly participated in the annual Salon des Artistes Décorateurs, the Salon d'Automne, and other international expositions including in St. Louis (1904), Brussels (1910), and Turin (1911).

At the 1910 Brussels World's Fair, Follot debuted *Les Insectes* in his *Petit salon de dames*, covering a maple-wood settee with marquetry identical to motifs on this silk: two stag beetles flanking a geometric fan. Follot's silks produced by Tassinari, as well as Cornille Frères, were as important a design element as the seats and walls they covered, and the Brussels salon was unified by the complementary colors of the upholstery and woodwork, the cool lavender of the lampas enhancing the settee's warm maple, ebony, amaranth, and mother-of-pearl inlays. One critic noted in *L'Art décoratif*, in 1910: the "harmony of colors [are] so gentle as to not tire the mind nor oppose dreaming"; another, in *Art et décoration* the same year, praised Follot's draperies as successfully softening his furniture. Of Follot's Turin installation, Louvre curator Raymond Koechlin wrote in *Exposition internationale des industries et du travail de Turin 1911* that the "textiles by Messieurs Chatel and Tassinari, but designed by him [Follot], delicately harmonize with and add value to the furniture," a value that also translated in their cost, which sometimes surpassed that of Follot's furniture.

Although *Les Insectes* was initially produced in accord with specific furniture, Follot believed in decorative versatility and stressed nonuniformity, using the fabric in two other public exhibitions. At the 1911 Salon d'Automne, in his music room, *Les Insectes* covered another model of the stag beetle settee, as well as the piano stool and lemonwood-veneered chairs (a chair with original upholstery from Follot's Paris residence and showroom was sold in 2011). In 1912 at the VII Salon des Artistes Décorateurs, it appeared on the Louis XVI-inspired gilt settee and side chairs in his acclaimed oval boudoir.

By 1913, tastes were changing, set in motion by the new angular decors that eschewed organicism like Follot's. Verneuil himself complained in *Art et décoration*, in January 1913, that Follot's textiles were too heavy in ornamentation and lacked elegance, while Maurice Dufrené, an important influence on the young Follot, wrote in that same magazine, in July 1913, that "as rich, refined, and interesting as his silks are, they don't adapt well as chair covers." Perhaps unsurprisingly, he ceased using *Les Insectes* in his interiors in favor of more modernist-inspired florals and, after the war, purely geometric motifs.

Despite the contemporaneous critiques of fellow *décorateurs*, Follot's designs of the early 1910s are today regarded as Art Deco pioneers, prescient in their luxe materiality and elegant abstraction. *Les Insectes* encapsulates in silk this important though fleeting moment in the designer's career, before he completely abandoned the aesthetic of his Art Nouveau training.

The gouache design for *Les Insectes* is in the collection of the Musée d'Orsay (RF MO ODO 2014 1 6).

71" H x 45 ½" W

SILK CREPE CHIFFON EVENING GOWN
CALLOT SOEURS
French (Paris), probably Fall/Winter 1928

Without them, without what they taught me, I would have continued making Fords. It is because of them that I have been able to make Rolls Royces.

—Madeleine Vionnet, *L'Aurore*, June 22, 1966

A single panel of crepe chiffon, hung from a central point at the bust, wound around the body on the perfect bias in a continuous ribbon, culminating in a dramatic, spectacularly impractical train: this is the dressmaking gauntlet thrown down by the house of Callot Soeurs. At once romantic, orientalist, and utterly *moderne*, this gown is a near platonic précis of the firm's trademark design vocabulary, with an emphasis on sumptuous textiles showcased in deceptively simple drapery, loosely oriental inspiration, and the discreet use of lace. Almost certainly created in 1928, it was one of the first floor-length evening dresses seen in half a decade, and anticipates the sinuous silhouette of the 1930s—a silhouette spearheaded by the Callot sisters' ablest protégée, Madeleine Vionnet.

Founded in 1895 at 24, rue Taitbout, the house of Callot Soeurs originally comprised Marie, Marthe, Regina, and Joséphine, daughters of painter, *antiquaire*, and design instructor Jean-Baptiste Callot and his wife Eugénie, a lace maker. In the 1870s, Jean-Baptiste opened a shop selling laces and *frivolités* under the name of his eldest daughter, who briefly worked for the couture house of Raudnitz. By 1900, Callot Soeurs had two hundred workers and sales worth two million French francs. The following year, after a successful showing at the Exposition Universelle, their workforce had tripled, striving to fulfill the orders of particularly avid clients, especially American. In 1914, the house moved to 9-11, avenue Matignon, where the sisters enjoyed their most fruitful years. Marcel Proust considered Callot Soeurs one of the few true artistic talents among the haute couture. In *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleur* (1919), the painter Elstir declares, "There is a such an immense difference between a toilette from Callot and one from any other couturier," to which Albertine, the narrator's chic mistress, responds, "Only, alas, that which costs three hundred francs elsewhere costs two thousand there."

Always the main creative force within the house, Marie, who became Madame Gerber, took full control in 1920, following Marthe's death and Regina's retirement (their youngest sister Josephine died in 1897). To take advantage of the opulence of the lavish brocaded and embroidered silks she preferred, Gerber tended to drape textiles in a straightforward manner, gaining a reputation for simplicity, which nonetheless disguised a great ingenuity of cut. Never a dressmaker in the conventional sense, Madame Gerber draped on a live model and relied on her head *modeliste* (toile maker) to create the final pattern. From 1901 to 1906, this was Vionnet, who adopted this model of working for herself.

This dress was almost certainly part of the seminal Fall/Winter 1928 collection, which included several evening gowns with trailing, asymmetrical trains, and was one of the first supervised by Marie's son Pierre following her death in late 1927. "The train means something," stated *Vogue* in its October 13, 1928, issue, adding, "And it means that if you have a home, a pocketbook, and your wits about you in this modern life, you will know, with these great dressmakers, the time and the place for these dresses with trains." Callot, which had periodically advocated trained silhouettes since the 1910s, was the leader among a group of couturiers who dropped hems to the floor that fall—a full year before Jean Patou's more famous hemline adjustment—in a revolutionary move the magazine labeled the "modern princesse line." Gone were puffs, loops, and drapery—severe slimness and elimination were the latest signs of modernity. Trains were signifiers of "the return to elegance," as the feminine ideal shifted from the flapper to the more mature figure of the hostess. "The fact that these extravagant clothes can only be worn for formal private evenings in houses means that women are entertaining more and more at home," *Vogue* concluded.

The uneven surface of the flattened gold-and-silver lamé yarns brocaded throughout the chiffon, printed with a pattern of vaguely Chinese peonies, throws off light in multiple directions, no doubt creating a scintillating spectacle as the wearer moved. With no closures and a built-in slip (secured imperceptibly at the bust), she had only to step in, fasten her jewelry, and go—though not very far, as the long train precluded advancing beyond the confines of her own dining or ball room. The train can, however, also be draped over the shoulder *à la sari*, a further gestural allusion to the East.



LA MOISSON
BLOCK-PRINTED COTTON BY RAOUL DUFY
FOR BIANCHINI-FÉRIER
French (Lyon), ca. 1919

In 1910, Raoul Dufy (1877–1953) debuted a series of woodcuts for Guillaume Apollinaire's *Le Bestiaire ou cortège d'Orphée*. The prints irrevocably altered the artist's path, leading to Dufy's most famous and fruitful partnerships, as textile designer for couturier Paul Poiret and for the firm of Bianchini-Férier. Impressed with Dufy's 1912 products for Poiret's textile printing workshop, *La Petite Usine*, Charles Bianchini signed Dufy to a contract that lasted until 1928, during which time Poiret remained a faithful client.

In 1918, Dufy presented compositions for furnishing silks and the first *toiles de Tournon*, printed cottons and linens so-called for the location of Bianchini's printing and dyeing facilities. These were released commercially in 1920, and shown at the following year's Salon des Artistes Décorateurs. Bianchini himself promoted the *toiles* by furnishing his country house with one, *La Chasse*.

Gertrude Stein later, in a 1949 *Harper's Bazaar*, recalled Dufy's furnishing fabrics as a "shock of pleasure" after World War I. Poiret, who had already been using them for his Atelier Martine projects, reflected that they would "one day in the history of decorative art, be placed alongside the *dessins* of Philippe de [Lasalle] or those of Oberkampf." In fact, art historians and critics immediately hailed them as rivaling the eighteenth-century printing masters, while opening novel industrial paths for artist-decorators. For Guillaume Janneau, director of the Mobilier national and state manufactories including Beauvais and Aubusson—with which Dufy also worked—the *toiles de Tournon* were as modern as *toiles de Jouy*, *indiennes*, and painted cottons had been in the eighteenth century. Henri Clouzot, director of the Musée Galliéra, had shown Dufy antique cottons at the Bibliothèque Forney and saw in his designs the spirit of early popular prints combined with "the most rare and perfect example of accord between decorator and industry" as he wrote in *Art et décoration* in July 1920.

Of the six figural *toiles de Tournon*, only *La Moisson* and *Le Tennis* were new compositions not based on previous woodcuts. The energy of *La Moisson*'s line work, as the farmer zigzags across the field and the wheat sways, is strikingly Cubist. In this respect, it was as much a work of art as it was design. "Anecdotal scenes like rowing, tennis or an episode in rustic life, create on one's walls a series of small fixed tableaux so harmoniously disposed that the eye never tires," wrote one critic in 1928, pointedly referring to *Le Tennis* and *La Moisson*.

In a 1923 article, Janneau called *La Moisson* "not inferior to the most perfect masterpieces of decorative art that the past has left us . . . There is not one failure, not one hole in this composition that is dense and full without a heaviness, peaceful and silent without restraint; these are subtleties but these subtleties are all art." Clouzot declared in his *Art et décoration* article that it was his favorite of Dufy's textile designs:

I especially like *Le Moissonneur*, where the threshing machine, dragged by a little black horse, beats down the rows of grain, moving the walls of wheat and blending into the pile of sheaves so that it is nothing more than a stain in the entanglement of straw. With its rustic driver, it plunges into the rows of grain. Then it reappears several inches above in the opposite direction. This little machine winding through the immense field of cut hay creates an original and charming effect. The *toile* vibrates; it quivers. It is the most extraordinary play of structure [*jeu de fond*] I know.

While Dufy's designs of this period have garnered much attention, less known is their later influence. His *toiles de Tournon* enjoyed a vogue in the postwar period, when abstraction had otherwise captivated France (see Yves Cuvelier, p. 18). In 1951, two years before his death, a retrospective of his work for Bianchini was shown at the International Textile Exhibition in Lille. In 1954, the French manufacturer Corot reissued several *toiles de Tournon*, used in interiors by designers like Jean Royère. The following year, the American firm D. B. Fuller & Co. capitalized on Dufy's harvest scenes, issuing a licensed pattern called *Les Moissons*.

Panels of *La Moisson* in other colorways are in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago (1924.611); Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum (1934-14-1); Indianapolis Museum of Art (27.126); Metropolitan Museum of Art (23.116); and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris (25985 [7651]).

53 ½" H x 47 ¼" W





ART DECO WOVEN FURNISHING FABRIC
French, ca. 1925

The dynamic interplay of geometric shapes and strong colors characteristic of the Art Deco idiom appears in full fashion on this woven furnishing fabric. In all areas of mid-1920s and 1930s art and design—from domestic and commercial interiors, to painting and sculpture, to typography—the fast pace of city life, with its constant advances, promoted a desire among early adopters for aspects of daily life to convey a sense of speed. Having witnessed the technological shifts of the 1920s, industrial designer Egmont Arens stated that the frenetic pace of modern life “rules out all that is too slow, or too cumbersome.” The creator of this fabric appears to have also been influenced by the impact of early twentieth-century modernity on designs for living in that exciting time.

This heavy, double-faced weave features vertical yellow and green bands overlaid with diamonds, circles, and parallelograms. Stylistically the fabric’s geometric forms, along with its bold coloration, relate to patterns seen in designer Maurice Pillard Verneuil’s *Kaléidoscope: Ornaments*, published by Éditions Albert Lévy, in 1926, a folio of pochoirs containing eighty-seven motifs in twenty plates, all featuring geometrics in vibrant colors. Many of Verneuil’s exuberant patterns, in particular ones on plates 10 (lower) and 15 (upper right), exhibit as prominent elements the same vertical orientation of polygons and circles as is seen in this cotton.

Born in France in 1888, Verneuil witnessed and participated in, like other artists and designers of his generation, significant progressions in styles as the influences of modernity were experienced—from the late nineteenth century through World War I, to the culmination of Art Deco as it was presented at the 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris. Verneuil’s career paralleled that of, and likely influenced, the trends. He looked to the natural world of plants and animals, to Japan, and to geometry for ways to ornament daily life in tiles, wallpapers, and textiles. His work spanned from art nouveau and Japonisme, when he published *La Plante et ses applications ornementales* (1896) and *Étoffes Japonaises tissées et brochées*, ca. 1910, to his later involvement with the Exposition, for which he compiled and wrote the introduction to *Étoffes & tapis étrangers*. In it he proposed that “among the various ornamental techniques of which the products we were showing at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs, in 1925, it was the fabrics, perhaps, that put the public most at the heart of judging and differentiating the character of the ornamental genius of each country represented.” The publication of *Kaléidoscope*, with its quintessential Art Deco designs, was a high point of Verneuil’s career.

In the progression of styles from the late nineteenth century into the first decades of the twentieth, a through line can be seen relating to the use of geometry as a prominent reference. Prewar decorative arts, including textiles, reflect many influences, from Cubist elements in paintings and sculpture to the abstractions and attention to forms found in Bauhaus and Wiener Werkstätte designs. In the interwar period, grids, overlapping lines and squares, and off-kilter compositions prominently appear. The eighty-seven patterns presented in *Kaléidoscope*, along with the textile seen here, reflect the peak of the Art Deco imprint that relies on dynamic juxtapositions of geometric forms and daring colors to create energetic tension.

The frequent crossovers between art/design and craft/industry during this period led to a high level of sophistication in fabrics, particularly for interiors, both domestic and commercial. A closely related woven cotton, now in a private collection, with its clear inspiration from *Kaléidoscope*, was almost certainly produced by the same French manufacturer. The aesthetic appeal of both textiles, with their prior use as curtains, placed geometric kineticism within the context of modern life in the late 1920s and 1930s wherever they may have been situated—perhaps hanging in a chic apartment or decorating the barroom of a fast moving train.

104” H x 49 ½” W

DYNASTY
PRINTED RAYON BY LUDWIG BEBELMANS
FOR WESLEY SIMPSON CUSTOM FABRICS, INC.
American (New York), 1944

“\$780,000,000 worth of design ideas . . . free” was the proclamation advanced in the inaugural 1946 issue of *American Fabrics*. The vast sum referred to the valuable artworks and artifacts—spanning millennia, civilizations, and continents—found within American museums, and the magazine urged textile designers to tap into these repositories for inspiration. A fabric designed by Franco-Hungarian artist Marcel Vertès for the Wesley Simpson Custom Fabrics firm was presented as a case study “of how one great designer utilized the world’s great art to create a scintillating pattern” and highlighted a press-worthy textile and fashion display the previous year at the Metropolitan Museum of Art titled *American Fashions and Fabrics*.

Wesley Simpson’s involvement in this exhibition was transformational for the small textile converting company. Its namesake founder started the business around 1932 or 1933, a difficult venture to launch at the Great Depression’s peak, but Simpson’s confidence as a silk salesman had been practiced for a decade at Cheney Bros. where he was introduced to leaders in New York’s garment industry. In the 1940s, Simpson supplied wholesale “couture” fabrics to many of the highest-profile Seventh Avenue fashion houses, as well as yardage sold in department stores, a line linked to specific *Vogue* and *McCall’s* home-sewing patterns, square scarves, and furnishing fabrics (albeit for a brief year). One of Simpson’s early strokes of genius was to hire Vertès in 1943 as a freelance contributor to his line; soon after, he engaged Austro-Hungarian-born American artist Ludwig Bemelmans (1898–1962) to create patterns for the “Museum Prints” series.

Bemelmans’s *Dynasty* pattern (alternatively called *Pottery*) is part of this collection, which answered the call of the museum’s “art-meets-industry” design challenge. The exhibition project began early in 1944 when nine leading textile firms and their staff were invited to peruse the museum’s treasures—the selected artworks provided ample details which the artists distilled into distinctive, modern interpretations, simultaneously inspiring the nineteen fashion designers also asked to participate. Bemelmans gravitated to predynastic Egyptian pottery of the Late Naqada period (ca. 3500–3300 BCE), specifically, a large, buff-colored jar (20.2.10). Decorated with reddish-ochre figurative motifs, the artifact correlates to Bemelmans’s naïf, self-taught painting style—evident in his beloved *Madeline* book series first published in 1939. When compared with their source, his ibex motifs are remarkably verbatim, while curlicue-headed flamingos retain their arrangement in rows but their bodies are streamlined. One bird gingerly crosses its spindly legs, a charming and purely Bemelmans touch. The vegetal motifs with arching boughs are also lifted directly from this pottery genre, though they do not appear on the artwork cited as inspiration. They do, however, appear on a related, excavated piece in the Metropolitan’s collection (99.4.137), which Bemelmans may also have studied.

Dynasty was produced on ribbed cotton and a drapery, slubbed rayon “shantung,” as is this example manufactured by the North Carolina-based Enka firm, which promoted its innovative synthetic fibers for both military and fashionable purposes and proudly advertised Simpson as a client. The combination of spinach- and sage-green shades on an ivory ground (one of three documented colorways) lends a special freshness to Bemelmans’s contemporary twist on antiquity. Bemelmans’s original sketch for this pattern, preserved in a private collection, incorporated zigzag bands that were ultimately eschewed for production.

Claire McCardell of Townley Frocks, Inc. was the designer paired with Bemelmans’s print for two creations premiered in a “fashion promenade” in the central hall of the Metropolitan Museum on March 20, 1945. Each grouping of garments—five in total, encompassing thirty-four distinctive day and evening looks—was preceded by a slide show of the fabrics used and the artworks from which the designs were derived. Simpson’s textiles comprised the second group shown; McCardell led with a halter-neck, cummerbund-waisted dress, followed by a playsuit with “umbrella-shaped shorts under a sleeveless tunic coat.” This ensemble appears in *Women’s Wear Daily’s* dual feature “Museum Shows Design Advance Despite War/Designers Collaborate on Fabric, Fashion” from March 21, 1945. A Wesley Simpson advertisement in *Vogue*, from April 1945, shows a model wearing McCardell’s dress, accessorized with matching slip-on shoes; *Dynasty* was also prominently displayed in a “Museum Prints” advertisement in *Vogue’s* December 1945 issue.

Mounted fabrics and many of the “inspiration” artworks were exhibited, along with photographs of the finished garments, through May of 1945. To coincide with this singular project, Simpson donated a length of *Dynasty* (45.132.1a) to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as well as two notated exhibition preparatory cards with swatches stapled to them (45.132.1b and c).

78” H x 40” W



ZEROS AND FRACTIONS
 VAT-DYED COTTONS BY BERNARD RUDOFSKY FOR SCHIFFER PRINTS
 American (New York), 1949

Architect, theorist, curator, and critic: Austro-Hungarian-born Bernard Rudofsky (1905–1988) was greater than the sum of his intellectual parts. His abiding curiosity in—and consistent disdain for—architecture was nurtured through the accomplishment of two master’s degrees and a doctorate. Early projects brought him to Italy and Brazil; in 1941, the Museum of Modern Art invited Rudofsky to New York as the Brazilian winner of its Latin-American Industrial Design competition, and he remained a permanent resident. In the early 1940s, he served as associate editor and art director of *Pencil Points*, then held that position for *Interiors* magazine from 1946 to 1949. As he struggled to attain an architectural license in America, Rudofsky devoted considerably more time to organizing exhibitions for MoMA, including *Are Clothes Modern?* in 1944 (followed by the 1947 book) and his innovative design for *Textiles U.S.A.* in 1956. Lecturing kept Rudofsky traversing the globe, gathering material for publications along the way. Additionally, Rudofsky launched Bernardo Sandals in 1946, and even a short-lived modular fashion line.

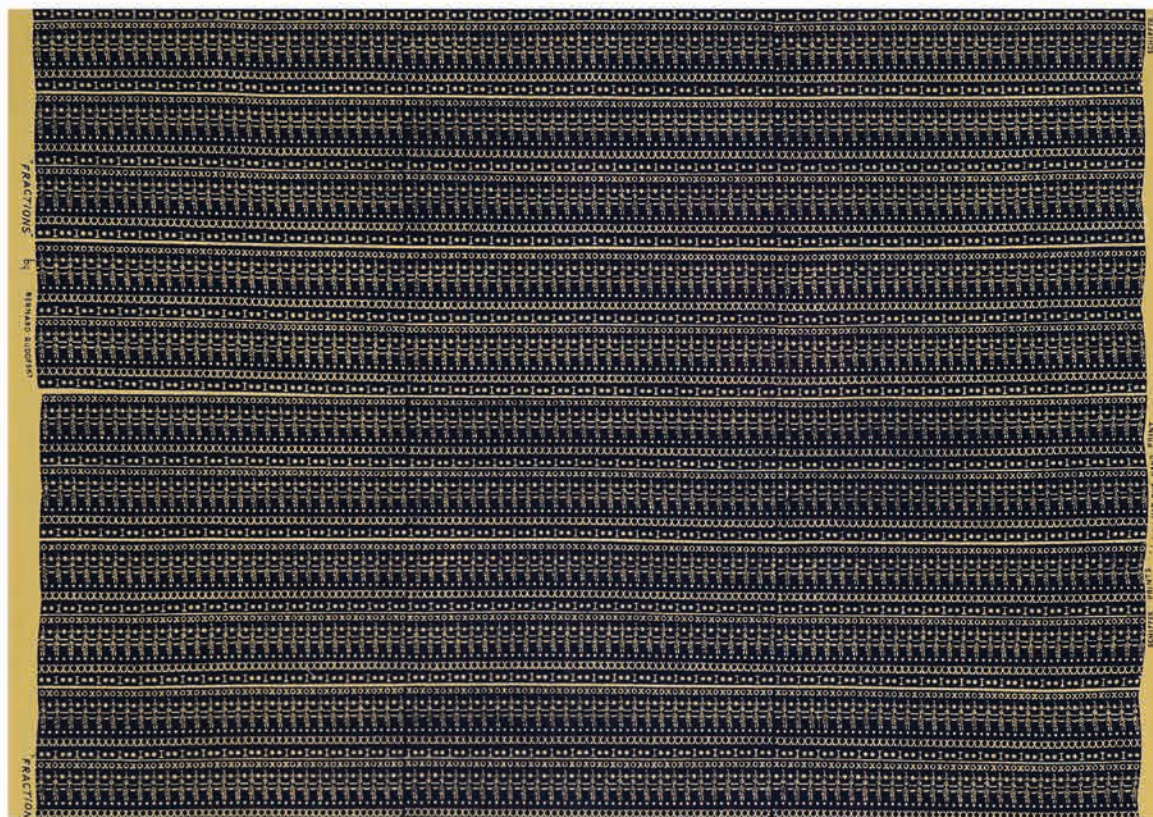
Rudofsky was an iconoclastic choice for the Schiffer Prints “Stimulus” furnishing fabrics collection. His cerebral musings on lifestyle made the question posed by the Mil-Art Co.—“What should draperies do in American homes?”—a provocative one to answer. Rudofsky’s ideas about cloth were surprisingly conservative—he disparaged Western practices of cutting and tailoring as wasteful, even barbaric. Traditional drapery, however, was consistent with his conceptual logic as no shaping is required, and the “Stimulus” pattern repeats were engineered to minimize waste in upholstering as well. Four of his patterns for the collection were hand drawn, but four were composed in a radical manner. As *The Philadelphia Inquirer* noted in 1949, “Rudofsky, who has spent more time at a typewriter than a drawing board, did the logical thing when he was asked to design some drapery fabrics. He sat down at his typewriter.”

Zeros and *Fractions* contrast the simplicity and complexity of this approach. Rudofsky referred to these as “edited,” not designed, a style that stemmed from typed dinner menus he embellished with “a profusion of stars, full stops, fractions and percentage marks.” *Zeros* is pared down to three symbols: the titular number, the letter “o,” and the period. On a pale tan field of textured cotton, rows of these navy-blue characters stretch into horizontal bands underscored by a thick, golden line. The larger-than-life-size scale and twenty-seven-inch repeat magnifies the pattern’s humble origins. *Fractions* is more compressed, emphasizing the decorative possibilities of typeface. In August 1949, *Arts & Architecture* viewed *Fractions*’ overall effect as “surprisingly Provincial-looking,” while another journalist found it “reminiscent of Egyptian wall painting.” From a distance, the pattern is textural; up close, there are neatly assembled rows of letters stacked with the namesake motifs, adorned with hyphens, quotation marks, periods, and peppered with asterisks. What appears to be an ochre-yellow pattern is actually the opposite: the print is black, with the “negative” pattern screened in bands onto the dyed cotton plain weave.

As much time as Rudofsky spent in museums, he wasted no sentiment on their role in his work for Schiffer Prints, noting: “I don’t believe you have to go to art museums to get inspiration for design . . . I think you can work with the things that surround you all the time.” Ever the critic, Rudofsky detested the commonplace floral fabrics that persisted commercially, yet was demure enough to suggest that “it’s better to leave the artistic stuff to Matisse, Moore, and Dalí. So I designed these. . . . And I still think that writing words with the typewriter is nothing but a lack of imagination.”

A panel of *Zeros* is in the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum (2015-19-4); panels of *Fractions* are at the Cooper Hewitt (1991-101-1) and also at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (D85.130.1). Rudofsky kept a personal archive of his “Stimulus” fabrics, including these two (now preserved in the Bernard Rudofsky papers, Getty Research Institute). Additional “typewritten” textile designs, reproduced alongside *Fractions* in the article, “Stoffe dattiloscritto di Rudofsky,” from *Domus* in January 1950, are also found there. Most are photo-negative prints, and some are overlaid with colored cellophane to simulate the finished textiles. However, the pattern for *Fractions*—on white paper with black type layered under cellophane—appears to be Rudofsky’s original typed sample, as faint punches on the paper’s reverse confirm his typewriter’s marks.

Zeros: 90” H x 46” W
Fractions: 48” H x 48” W



ANIMALPHABET, 1954
ABACUS, 1949

SCREEN-PRINTED LINEN BY PAUL RAND FOR L. ANTON MAIX FABRICS
American (New York)

In the immediate postwar period, it was observed that textiles suitable for modernist interiors were scarce. This “problem” was short lived as artists, architects, graphic designers, and entrepreneurs jumped into the fray to remedy the situation. Larry Maix (1915–1999) was a driving force in this invigorated marketplace; having worked for Knoll, and conceptualized the Schiffer Prints “Stimulus” line for Mil-Art Co. (see p. 13), he began producing textiles under the name L. Anton Maix around 1948. His 1949 “Campagna” collection, built on the “big name” strategy and launched in 1950, included modern design stalwarts Alvin Lustig, Serge Chermayeff, and Jens Risom. However, Paul Rand (1914–1996) was arguably the most acclaimed figure in Maix’s stable at the debut.

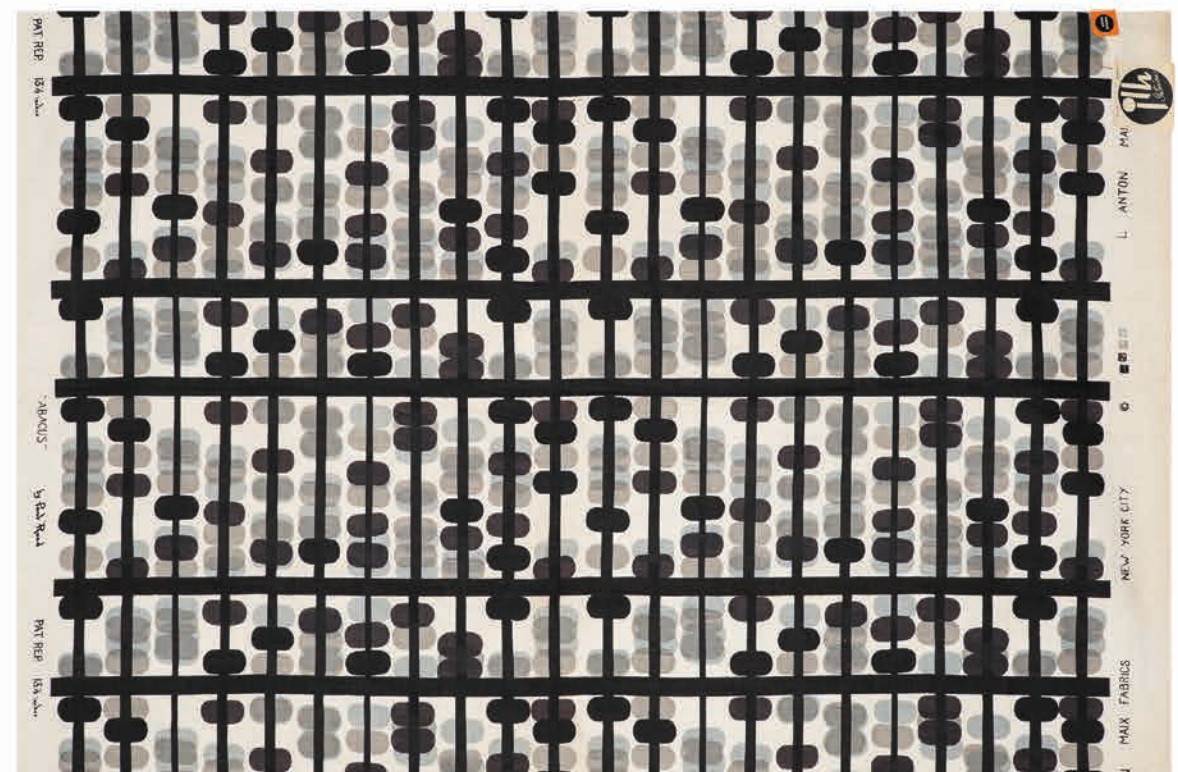
The umbrella of commercial art strains to fit Rand’s giant stature in the field. Ideologically aligned with the Bauhaus, he studied at the Art Students League in New York and began his career in graphic design in 1934. Rand quickly rose to art directorships at *Apparel Arts* and *Esquire*, and gained renown for striking book covers and witty advertisements for wide-ranging products. Most enduringly, Rand molded the visual brand identities for major corporations like IBM, UPS, and ABC. He taught graphic design at Yale from 1956 to 1993, continuing his prolific work into the 1990s. Rand’s sensibilities—“disarmingly simple when done, but obviously took a lot of thinking”—made him a natural fit for Maix’s mission.

Abacus is the most widely published and exhibited of the “Campagna” group. It was highlighted in the *New York Times*, on April 22, 1950, as sharing the design originally used for the dust jacket of Rand’s 1946 monograph, *Thoughts on Design*. Both were adapted from his 1943 photogram—an image made by placing objects directly onto the surface of light-sensitive photographic paper. This four-color print, which approximates the gray-scale book cover, depicts beads sliding on rods, bounded by beams. The resulting black grid disguises the short thirteen-and-a-half-inch repeat, while a fifth color, created when the sheer flinty-blue and mid-tone charcoal dyes overlap, further enlivens the pattern. In addition to being illustrated in *Current Design* (Autumn 1950), *American Fabrics* (Winter 1951–52), William Hennessey’s *Modern Furnishings for the Home* (1952), and *Furniture Forum* (Spring 1956), the Museum of Modern Art chose *Abacus* for its 1950 *Good Design* exhibition, and it was included again in the fifth anniversary *Good Design* exhibition in 1955. In 1951, *Abacus* was shown in the American exhibition at the IX Triennale in Milan, and the 1956 exhibitions *Designed to Live With*, at the Ringling Museum in Sarasota, Florida, and *Design By the Yard: Textile Printing from 800 to 1965*, at the Cooper Union Museum for the Arts of Decoration. In advising consumers on drapery choices, Larry Maix asked in 1951: “Do you think you will look well with this design for a background? . . . And does it suit your personality?” Rand must have felt *Abacus* reflected his aesthetics as he chose it for his home: documented in a 1953 *Esquire* editorial, *Abacus* appears as a room divider and as lively armchair upholstery.

Animalphabet shares the simplicity of concept and execution that characterize Rand’s oeuvre. In a stark palette of ebony and cobalt on ivory Belgian linen, Rand devised a playful ecosystem of avian and feline motifs composed of bits of letters and numbers; tiny white “eyes” animate each creature. “A type stencil caught my eye in Paris,” he explained in his 1955 article, “Ideas about Ideas,” in *Industrial Design*; this font inspired cover titles for *Direction* magazine in the late 1930s and 1940s, and defined his El Producto cigar advertisements. The fragmented stencil letters allowed Rand to use only the middle curve of the uppercase “S” to form a sinuous bird, while plump crescents derived from partial alphanumeric provide duck and swan bodies; their craning necks utilize apostrophe forms plucked from flourishes in the number “5” stencil. Various elements from this number are also recombined into diminutive black cats. Only a single, unadulterated stencil appears: a stork-like “1” perching on serif feet.

This panel of *Abacus* has an Ohio-based decorator’s showroom tag and MoMA’s “Good Design” tag guaranteeing “this article corresponds in every particular to the one chosen by The Museum of Modern Art” attached to it. *Abacus* is found in the collections of MoMA (500.1975); the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum (2003-7-1 and 2000-7-1); and the Art Institute of Chicago (1992.1214). As ubiquitously celebrated as *Abacus* was, *Animalphabet* is a rarity, only known to be illustrated in *Industrial Design* and not identified in museum collections to date.

Animalphabet: 35” H x 52” W
Abacus: 35” H x 54” W



BLACK NARCISSUS DANCE DRESS BY JAMES GALANOS
OF WARP-PRINTED ALEOUTIENNE TAFFETA BY SUZANNE KIENTZ
FOR STARON, PRINTED BY BIANCHINI-FÉRIER
American (Los Angeles), Fall/Winter 1957

Philadelphia-born James Galanos (1924–2016), the son of Greek immigrant parents, was the closest the American ready-to-wear industry came to rivaling the French haute couture in the postwar period. “You either have it or you don’t,” he told *Women’s Wear Daily* in 2002, and from an early age Galanos fought to realize his demanding vision of sartorial perfection. Two semesters at the Traphagen School of Fashion in Manhattan, in 1942, constituted his only formal training, followed by brief jobs at Hattie Carnegie in New York, with Columbia Pictures’ Jean Louis in Los Angeles, and with Robert Piguet in Paris. In 1952, with Louis’s help, he founded Galanos Originals in Los Angeles, and was, after a decade of persistence, finally an overnight sensation at age twenty-eight. In 1954, he received both the Coty American Fashion Critics’ Award (alongside Charles James), and the Neiman Marcus Award; in 1958, soon after this dress was created, he was inducted into Coty’s Hall of Fame.

Early in his career, Galanos gained acclaim for his inventive patterning and fine fabrics, acquiring the sobriquet “America’s Dior.” “I never really cared about doing things *en masse*. I always wanted to do the most expensive, the most elegant, clothes, for a very special public,” he later recalled. Galanos insisted on draping directly on a live model, and all dresses available for sale were individually made on a mannequin just as he had created the original sample, using traditional fabric manipulation techniques such as *calage* (steaming and pressing to shape), each requiring at least one week to prepare. Hiring European craftspeople, Galanos prided himself on his garments’ “hidden details”: “What we do here, they just don’t do on Seventh Avenue, because they no longer take the time or have the know-how.”

Seventh Avenue could also not hope to replicate Galanos’s fabrics, which he chose from the same European mills that supplied the haute couture. Dubbed *Black Narcissus*, this dress, styled with long black gloves and ample net petticoats, appeared as look no. 158 in Galanos’s Fall 1957 collection. It is crafted from a warp-printed taffeta *Aleoutienne* (with a pure silk warp and *dupione*, or slubbed, weft) from Staron, supplier to Dior, Balenciaga, Fath, Grès, and Givenchy. Headquartered in Saint-Étienne, France’s passementerie capital in the Loire, Staron began as a ribbon weaving firm in 1867, but shifted focus to dress silks following World War II. Paris-based Suzanne Kientz designed this technically elaborate pattern, which required eleven separate screens (one for each color) to print on the warp threads, which were held together with a temporary weft, later removed and the warps remounted to be woven permanently. In October 1957, *New Yorker* fashion critic Lois Long highlighted such lavish “winter prints” including “a variety of full-skirted, short-sleeved dance dresses in warp-printed taffeta” from Galanos. The silk contributed to the dress’s enormous retail cost of \$359.75, roughly \$3,500 today. At 420 francs to the dollar, this is exactly the same price (150,000 francs) of an afternoon or cocktail dress from the same season by the world’s most expensive couturier, and Galanos’s idol, Cristóbal Balenciaga.

In fact, Balenciaga chose the same fabric in a direct print—not warp printed—for look number 147 in his February 1957 haute couture collection, ordered, appropriately, by noted horticulturalist Rachel “Bunny” Mellon (Museo Balenciaga, Guetaria; 2014.18). Maggy Rouff also used the same fabric for an afternoon dress called *Jardin Anglais* in her Spring 1957 collection.

Galanos’s “great contribution to fashion,” according to *Women’s Wear Daily* publisher and editor in chief John Fairchild, was his intellectual approach, “his passion for finding new seams and new ways to put a dress together.” In this dress, that intellectualism takes the form of subtle historical allusions, such as the bifurcated waist, with a deep, boned point at the proper right rising to a complete horizontal at the left. Nearly nine yards of silk are gathered with tiny knife pleats to this seam, one continuous arc that neatly materializes the historical trajectory of the waistline from about 1840 to 1860. The bouffant skirt quotes eighteenth-century, 1840s, and 1920s *robe de style* silhouettes simultaneously. Each of these eras—as well as the late 1950s—emphasized an elongated, dropped waist and voluminous hips. As one advertisement for California department store I. Magnin noted of this model, Galanos “gives a woman the hand-span waist, the voluminous skirt that makes her look her most fragile, most glamorous.” Further nods to the 1840s include the wide, high sweetheart neckline and short “jockey” sleeves. Similar dresses from his Spring 1957 collection are in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (1965-182-14) and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2007.280).

The original sketch for this dress is in the Galanos Archives at the Fox Historic Costume Collection, Drexel University, Philadelphia, and the silk is no. 40220 B2 in the Staron archives at the Musée d’Art et d’Industrie, Saint-Étienne.



SCREEN-PRINTED FABRICS BY YVES CUVELIER
French, ca. 1954–56

The vibrant, saturated hues and vigorously graphic patterns of these textiles by Yves Cuvelier (1913–2005) reflect his training as a painter for whom color and form were primary and interdependent. In a 1965 interview with *La Revue d'ameublement*, he emphasized his deep attraction to “color for and in and of itself.” Active in the decades following World War II, Cuvelier produced highly regarded furnishing fabrics for modernist interiors, collaborating with well-known architects and industrial designers, including Mathieu Matégot, Jean Lesage, Jacques Dumond, André Renou, Jean-Pierre Génisset, and the ceramicist Georges Jouve, whose work he collected.

Born in 1913 in the northern French town of Haubourdin, Cuvelier entered the *École des beaux-arts* in Lille in 1929, where he studied fine art. Three years later, he briefly attended the *École des beaux-arts* in Paris. After an extended trip to Morocco and military service, Cuvelier re-entered the *École des beaux-arts* in 1936, under the tutelage of Charles-François-Prospér Guérin, who he later credited as having had a profound impact on his artistic development. A prize-winning student whose work was shown in exhibitions at the Tuileries, Cuvelier’s wider circle in the prewar years included leading architects Albert Laprade, Léon Bazin, and Robert Mallet-Stevens. During the war, Cuvelier made a living from his painting and participated in the *Salon de l’Imagerie Française*, held at the *Musée des Arts Décoratifs*.

When Cuvelier turned to textile design in the immediate postwar period to contribute to the rebuilding of French industry and to support his young family, his first creations were intended as murals. He soon realized that these would not be commercially successful in the then-precarious market, and he began to produce yardage with repeating patterns. Essentially a one-man operation, Cuvelier established his first studio and office in his family’s home in Paris, where he undertook the hand-screen printing, marketing, and distribution of his designs in limited runs. Initially, he produced both furnishing and dress fabrics, selling the latter to the couture houses of Jacques Fath and Nina Ricci, among others, before focusing exclusively on furnishing textiles. Between 1949 and 1956, Cuvelier also taught drawing and painting at the *École nationale des beaux-arts* in Nancy. Around this time, he formed a close association with two leading chemists at the prominent French dyestuff company, Francolor, who introduced the designer to the latest discoveries in textile printing. In the same 1965 interview, Cuvelier detailed his preoccupation with achieving the exact shades of color he envisioned, concocted from a perfect “mayonnaise” of pigments and synthetic resin.

These three designs exemplify Cuvelier’s sophisticated handling of color and geometric abstraction, as well as his interest in fabrics as mural decoration. *Alcazar*, with its dense chevron pattern of red, green, and black on white, and the untitled black-and-white composition, which plays with positive/negative spaces created by irregular grids, were both produced as furnishing textiles on cotton twill. *Fontainebleau*, however, has no repeat and was hung like a painting when it was shown at the time it was manufactured, complete with Cuvelier’s signature at lower right. The brilliant, jagged lapis and emerald pieces bordered with white, in various sizes and shapes against gleaming black, suggest a stained-glass puzzle. Using three screens the size of the entire design, one for each color, Cuvelier probably printed the blue first, followed by green, and finally black. Attuned to the effects of different weave structures and fibers on his designs, Cuvelier chose a heavyweight cotton-and-rayon satin for *Fontainebleau*—a blend he favored and one that enhances the panel’s luminosity.

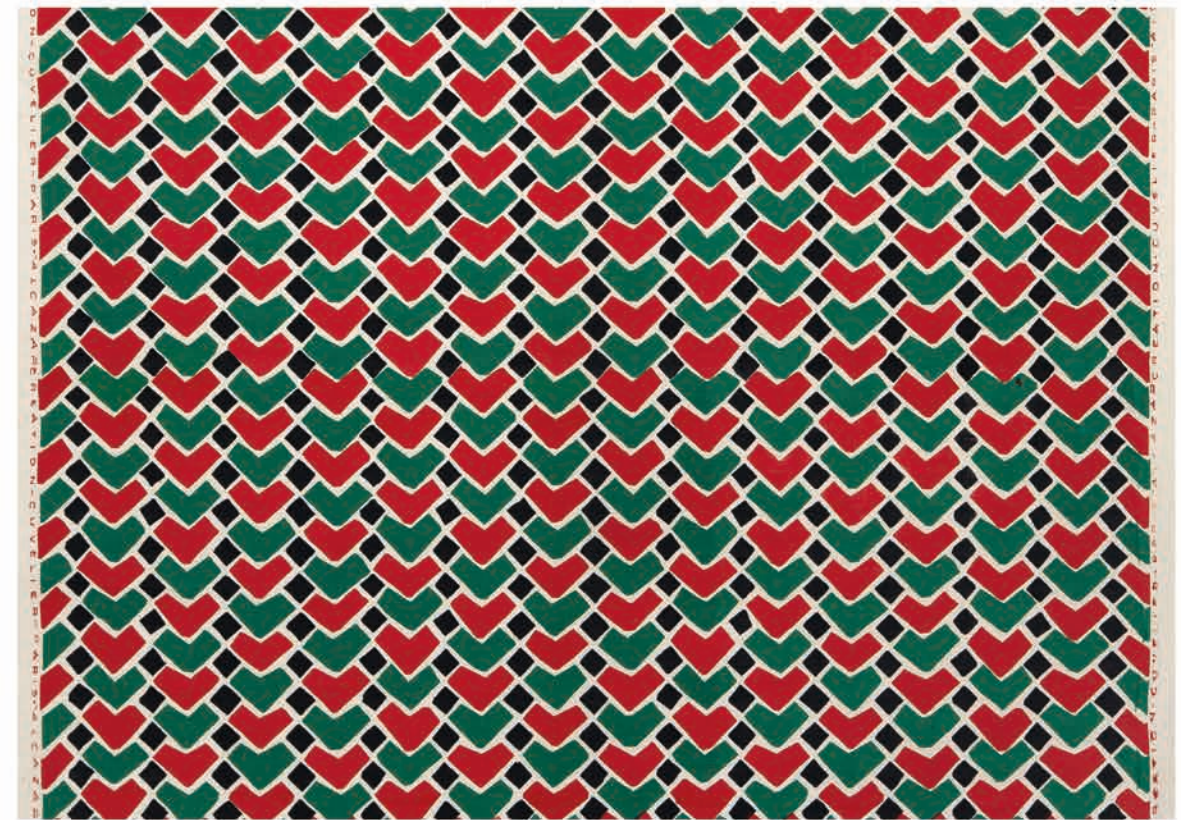
Interior architect and designer Jacques Hitier utilized *Alcazar* as curtains and a sofa cushion at the *Salon des Artistes Décorateurs* in 1954 as seen illustrated in *L’Art du logis moderne et ancien* that year. The *Revue d’ameublement* interview illustrates numerous Cuvelier textiles from the 1950s and 1960s, including *Fontainebleau* and another mural, *Collioure*, both of which were exhibited at the *Salon des Artistes Décorateurs*; his furnishing fabrics *Cariola* and *Rocamadour*, which were incorporated into domestic interior displays at the *Salon des Arts Ménagers*; and *Ariane*, shown at the *Nationale des Beaux-Arts* in 1957.

In 1961, Cuvelier moved from his family’s residence to new premises near the upscale *Place Vendôme*, where he remained until 1974. As his business expanded, he worked with printers in eastern France, Normandy, and Lyon; however, he maintained his studio where he created designs and executed prototypes. Between 1974 and 1980—the last six years of his career—Cuvelier was based at the *Centre International du Textile* in Paris.

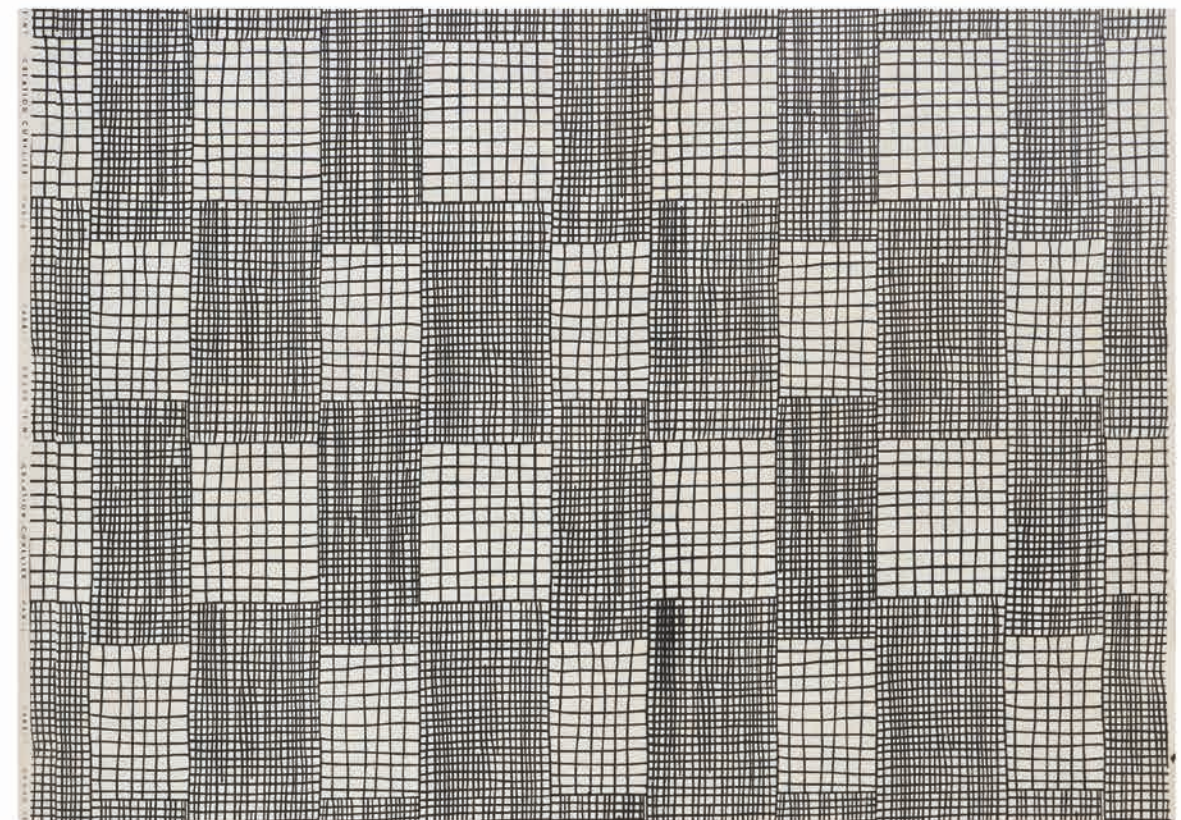
Fontainebleau: 69” H x 53 ¼” W

Alcazar: 137” H x 57” W

Untitled: 89 ¼” H x 55 ¼” W



Alcazar



Untitled



Fontainebleau

BOXED SET OF FABRIC SAMPLES
 BY ALEXANDER GIRARD FOR HERMAN MILLER
 American, 1952–73

Abstract beauty and fancy are meaningful and necessary in the existence of people deeply involved in living. These “necessities” . . . don’t belong in an art gallery or in some fantastic museum; they belong in the home. . . . Alexander Girard assembles a rainbow . . . into fabrics that can become necessary to creative persons “deeply involved in living.”

—Beverly E. Johnson, *The Los Angeles Times*, May 6, 1962

A precious repository of rich tones, textures, and patterns, this paper-covered Herman Miller presentation box—probably assembled for a company showroom or regional salesperson—contains a dizzying breadth of Alexander Girard’s output as sole designer for the company’s textile division. Girard (1907–1993) was hired in 1951 to “direct the fabric destinies” of their furnishings program. Over the course of his two-decade tenure, he synchronized soulful, folkloric tradition with modern urbanity, setting trends rather than following them. Girard’s cohesive vision ensured that his newest designs could be marketed as additions to the collection, underscoring the concept that patterns from his 1952 debut integrated seamlessly with later designs—all could be special ordered if not kept in stock.

Each sample is mounted on card stock, printed with the title, intended use (upholstery or drapery), colorway, width, and fiber content. The edges are pinked, and the card features an arched cutout that allows for inspection of the fabric’s opacity. The samples are linked in series by chains with Herman Miller hangtags. An occasional photo card is attached, showing how the pattern would appear when draped. In total, the box contains 262 large (4 ¾ inches by 6 inches) and 254 small (2 ¾ inches by 5 inches) individual samples—just over one hundred designs are represented.

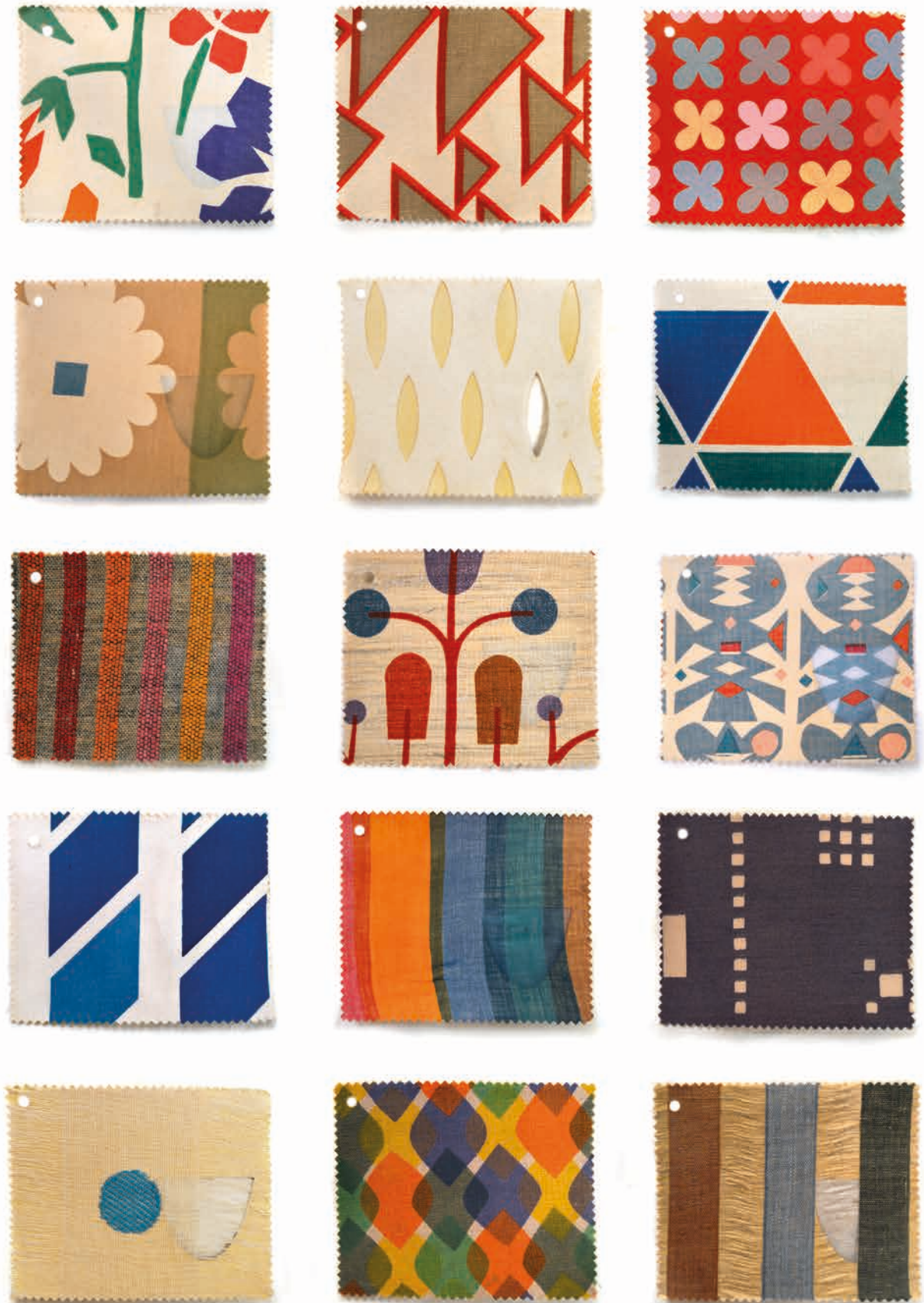
Girard’s fluid ability to move between printed and woven fabrics, and his playfulness in titling his work, are demonstrated repeatedly. *One Way* (1953), a dynamic pattern of triangles all pointing in a single direction, is a clever example, as is *Manhattan* (1958), a nighttime cityscape achieved through discharge printing. *Mikado* (1954), a graphic checkerboard with chrysanthemum motifs, presages 1960s “flower power” patterns and references Japanese aesthetics. Several patterns, such as *Millchecklet* and *Millozenge* (both 1961), incorporate prefixes paying tribute to the company, and striped designs sometimes bear evocative names including *Mogul* (1955), *Tent* (1961), and *Jacob’s Coat* (1955/1959).

Jack Lenor Larsen commented in *Design Quarterly*, in 1975, on Girard’s aptitude for woven cloth, despite having no training: “His endless variations on related stripes, checks and solids primarily within the confines of one weave, one yarn and one density prove his innovative prowess.” *Millmosaic* (1961) exemplifies Larsen’s assessment, highlighting Girard’s grasp of structure and inspired color play. The geometric double weave relies on two sets of warps and wefts, blending four colors: the “Violet & Terre Verte Dk.” colorway, for example, merges red and blue threads into purple, and vibrant orange and green into earthy ochre, resulting in a “shot” color-shifting effect.

As much as Johnson’s statement suggested less rarefied applications for Girard’s textiles, they were appreciated within contemporary museums and galleries, where “design for living” was best introduced to the public. The Museum of Modern Art’s 1956 exhibition *Textiles USA* highlighted eight Girard fabrics, two found here: *Circles* (1953) and *Superstripe* (1955). In 1956, *Triangles* (1953), *Cutout*, *Mikado*, *Rain*, and *Quatrefoil* (all from 1954) were displayed in *Design by the Yard: Textile Printing from 800 to 1956* at the Cooper Union Museum for the Arts of Decoration. Perhaps the ultimate gallery setting for his textiles was the Herman Miller Textiles and Objects Shop, launched by Girard in 1961 as a Manhattan showcase for his own work, as well as for fabrics and folk art he sourced on his peripatetic world excursions. Eleven textiles from this box were displayed there as drapes or scrims. One of these, *Perforated Pepitas* (1960), is an outlier—a favorite of Girard’s, it is neither printed nor woven, but polyester-rayon felt pierced with pumpkin-seed-shaped ogees. In 1963, *The Washington Post and Times-Herald* commented that the “peekaboo felt is tremendously effective hung in large areas where some visibility and a certain amount of opacity is required.” It could be juxtaposed over bright fabrics, and only came in white because the mixed fiber content took dye unevenly.

Girard’s textile work is in the Herman Miller Archives; the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum; and the Vitra Design Museum. Most recently, Girard’s career was documented by Susan Brown in “Alexander Girard, Textile Architect,” in *Alexander Girard: A Designer’s Universe* (2016). That many Girard designs are still being produced today affirms his timeless philosophy: “Good design derives from the wish to do just that.”

Samples: 4 ¾” H x 6” W and 5” H x 2 ¾” W each





SCREEN-PRINTED COTTON VELVET SAMPLES
 BY WOLF BAUER FOR KNOLL INTERNATIONAL LTD.
 German, designed 1967, printed 1969–72

“The excitement began in a Stuttgart studio.” So stated *Interiors* magazine in September 1969 when it introduced American readers to a seasoned European design talent. “There, surrounded by colorful creative confusion, designer Wolfgang Bauer conceived and created a fascinating interplay of textures, spaces and masses. His inspiration burst forth from his artistic conception of the natural beauty of a stone wall, of river rills, and of the relating rhythms of pattern, form and color. Knoll asked for it, and now Knoll’s got it in four new fabrics.”

The Bauer Print Collection, as it was known—*Delta*, *Fragment*, *Stones*, and *Collage* (not pictured; see *Cora Ginsburg 2010* catalogue)—was designed in 1967 by Wolf Bauer (b. 1939) and printed on lush velveteen in large- and small-scale repeats by the technically accomplished firm of Pausa AG in Mössingen, Germany. First available in Knoll’s European branches, the collection reached American showrooms by 1969.

An exercise in color theory, Bauer’s designs are a pragmatic application of late 1960s polychromatic abandon using a limited palette. The Day-Glo hues are at times complementary, at others so nuanced as to appear monochromatic from a distance. The cream screen of *Stones* mimics grout between densely packed black ovals; in the cobalt-and-violet colorway, though, the smooth rocks are almost imperceptible. *Delta*’s topography creates estuarial movement, both in stark ebony and ivory or an algae-green-and-cerulean blend. In this way, Bauer showed an aptitude and prescience for the coming chromatic zeitgeist, having designed these two years before Verner Pantone’s spectrum of printed cottons for Mira-X (see *Cora Ginsburg 2017* catalogue).

With the eye-popping, cut-and-paste effects of *Fragment* and *Collage*, Bauer reimaged Matisse’s cut-outs through Abstract Expressionist and Pop lenses. Under Austrian designer Leo Wollner at the Staatlichen Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Stuttgart, Bauer absorbed a design sensibility merging modern and contemporary art with functionalism and marketability. Bauer also followed in Wollner’s professional footsteps, working primarily in freelance textile design for firms like Form International (which retailed Knoll products in England), Fuggerhaus, Heal Fabrics (which maintained a Stuttgart branch), Inter, Kaufhof AG, Taunus Textildruck, and Weverij de Ploeg, as well as Pausa and Knoll—though other projects included porcelain, flatware, furniture, carpets, and even theater sets.

Bauer’s 1970 exhibition at the Design Center Stuttgart, *Kunst vom Fließband (Art from the Assembly Line)*, which featured *Collage*, *Delta*, and *Stones*, focused on his fabrics. In the catalogue, critic Ernst Josef Auer concluded that Bauer succeeded in making aesthetic decisions seem practical and necessary, marrying form and function via purely graphic means. That approach may underlie the success of this first Knoll collection, which remains Bauer’s key contribution to design history. *Industrial Design* magazine named the collection among 1969’s “Best Designs,” and *Decorative Art in Modern Interiors* showcased *Stones* in 1970. That same year, the collection was featured in the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry’s *Best Designs* exhibition and won the New York Industrial Award for Design Excellence.

Moreover, the collection is widely regarded as having resuscitated Knoll’s brand when the company needed it most. By the mid-1960s, Knoll had become constrained by the very aesthetic that had, for twenty years, made them the harbingers of fresh, corporate-minded modernism. Florence Knoll’s collaboration with Astrid Sampe at the NK Textilkammare had brought Scandinavian style, and Suzanne Huguenin, head of Knoll’s textile division until 1963, had enlisted German printers and designers. Still, the “Knoll look” seemed stagnant. Florence’s departure in 1965 marked a turning point. The following year, Robert Cadwallader, director of marketing (and later president), promoted the German-born Barbara Rodes—who since 1962 had worked for Knoll’s international textile division—to head the International Coordination office. Rodes attracted important designers, including Bauer, Wollner, and Wollner’s wife Gretl. Cadwallader also hired Massimo Vignelli, whose advertisements for Bauer’s line—in print and on promotional silk scarves, which both featured *Collage*—further popularized the designs.

These five samples and single length likely come from Knoll’s New York flagship. The samples each retain the paper label of the Park Avenue showroom, with handwritten notations giving yardage costs, ranging from \$26.50 to \$31.00 (equivalent to \$190.00 to \$222.00 today). Samples of these designs are in the KnollTextiles Archive, New York, and the Pausa Archive, Mössingen, Germany; a sample of *Stones* is in the collection of the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum (2011-21-1); and lengths of *Collage* are in the collections of the Cooper Hewitt (2011-6-1) and Die Neue Sammlung, Munich (1201/83).



Delta

141" H x 49" W



Delta

27" H x 27 ½" W



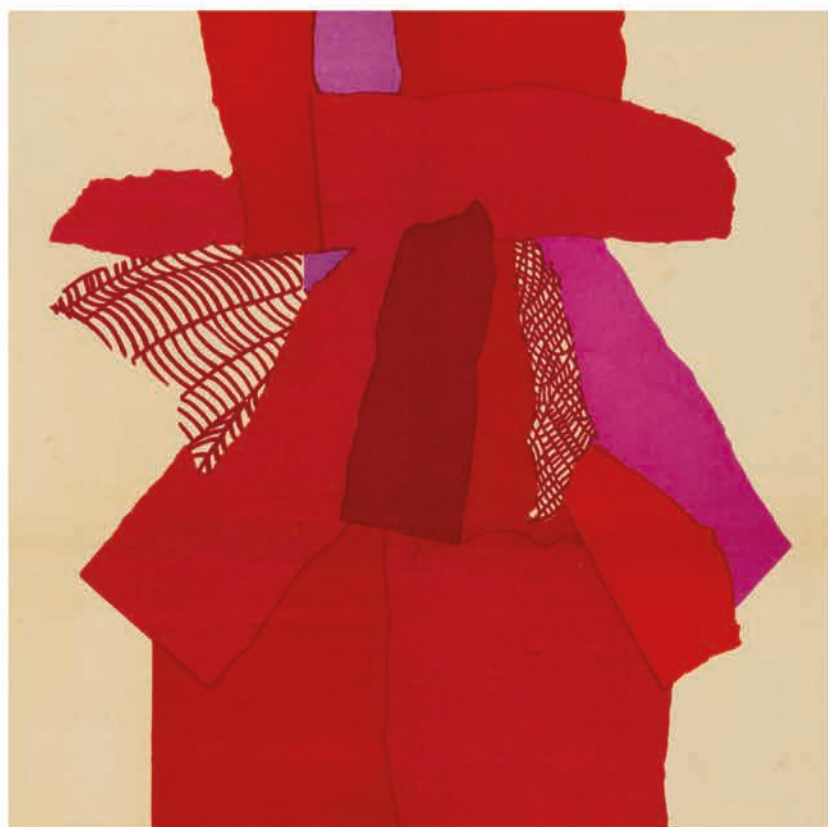
Delta

26" H x 23 1/2" W



Stones

26 1/2" H x 24" W



Fragment

26 1/4" H x 24 1/4" W



Stones

26 1/2" H x 24 1/2" W



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