

CORA GINSBURG The Fabric of Flowers





TITI HALLE
CORA GINSBURG LLC



SUMMER 2022
The Fabric of Flowers
Gardens in the Home & on the Body, ca. 1650–1970



by appointment

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1

SILK-EMBROIDERED ALTAR FRONTAL

Italian, the embroidery mid- to late 17th century, 32 x 83 in.

Birds fly between and perch atop enormous scrolling acanthus vines with a profusion roses, peonies, and tulips at full bloom with outstretched, curling petals on this embroidered *paliotto* or altar frontal. The dynamic composition strongly recalls designs by Giovanni Alfonso Samarco, an embroidery and lace designer active in Bari in the second quarter of the seventeenth century whose drawings are now in the Palazzo Davanzati, Florence. Worked entirely in satin and long-and-short stitches using polychrome silk floss or *bavella* couched to a coarse linen surface, the motifs were then delineated with a cord of twisted brown silk, providing high contrast against the canary yellow ground couched in yellow threads to create a diaper pattern.

The embroidery was shortened and remade into its current configuration as an altar frontal, probably some time in the eighteenth or early nineteenth century. This is evident from the seam near the center and the abruptly cut motifs at the left. Moreover, the rotation of the birds indicates that the panel was not initially intended to hang horizontally. In its current orientation, the roses—the only identifiably Catholic element—move from flanking elements along the sides to visual prominence at top and bottom. The original verticality of the design was likely suited to a more profane context, perhaps as a pilaster cover in a palatial home which, when fashions changed, was donated to the church (see also p. 13).

Provenance: Dalva Brothers, Inc., New York







2 SILK-EMBROIDERED BORDER FROM A BEDCOVER

Greek Ottoman (Epirus), mid- to late 17th century, 11 x 83 in.

Worked in split stitch on homespun linen much like Turkish hangings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this bedcover border from Epirus in Greece also features the typically Ottoman motifs of tripartite tulips and serrated hyacinth sprays. These early embroideries from Epirus tended to resemble mainland Turkish examples more closely in their motifs and techniques than any other Greek kendimata (embroidered handiwork). This was almost certainly the result of the region's extended control under the Ottomans from the early 15th century. The hyacinth-flanked tulips and seed pods blossoming from tulip heads dominate the composition. In Ottoman culture, the tulip was considered the most sacred flower and its representation evoked connotations of holiness, love, and powerful apotropaia. Likewise, hyacinths denoted divine and romantic love.



Epirote embroiderers adapted these forms from Turkish textiles and decorative arts entering Greece where, in the context of a bedcover made for a newlywed couple, such symbolism would not have been coincidental. This rare, large fragment formed part of a ceremonial bedcover. A bride-to-be as well as her female family and friends spent many hours working on these elaborate textiles as part of her trousseau and in preparation for her entrance into the groom's home.

Complete bedcovers with remarkably similar border motifs of tulips and hyacinths are preserved in the Textile Museum, George Washington University, Washington, D.C. (81.70, acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1926), and the collection of Roderick Taylor.

Provenance: Dalva Brothers, Inc., New York

3 **JARDINIÈRE VELVET CURTAIN**

Italian (probably Genoa), ca. 1700, 79 x 44 in.

From the mid-seventeenth through the eighteenth century, Genoa was renowned for its sumptuous *jardinière* (literally, gardener) furnishing silk velvets that graced the walls, windows, and seating furniture of grand salons in the palaces and residences of Europe's elite. As wall coverings, they extended over the entire surface or were set within a framework of boiseries. Employing the most expensive fiber in a time-consuming weave structure, known as *ciselé*, with cut and uncut pile on a satin ground, these prestigious textiles created impressively luxuriant interiors and proclaimed wealth and status.

Although these velvets are characterized by an efflorescence of large-scale stately floral and foliate forms primarily in shades of red, green, and yellow, their designs demonstrate a seemingly endless variation in vegetal motifs. In this curtain comprising two joined panels, densely filled flowering baskets, scrolling brackets, and oversized feathery leaves in deep green, red, and apricot on a white ground reverse with slight changes in the design along the vertical composition. The two heights of velvet add a rich textural effect to the naturalistic motifs and the pile and satin ground would have reflected light differently.

An almost identical Italian silk dated about 1700 is on the cover of *Europäische Seidengewebe des 13.-18. Jahrhunderts* (cat. 464). The velvet in the lower border is identical to a seventeenth-century Italian fragment in the Metropolitan Museum (2002.494.189).









4 GOLD-BROCADED SILK (*KINRAN*)

Japanese (Nishijin, Kyoto), ca. 1700, 67.5 x 13.75 in.

Beginning in the Song dynasty (960–1279), luxurious Chinese textiles were imported into Japan, including *kinran*, so called for their brocaded wefts of gold (*kin*). These silks were highly prized, initially having been used by Buddhist priests as *kesa* (master's vestments) and later becoming part of the elite ritual of chanoyu or the tea ceremony. In the late sixteenth century, the Nishijin textile manufacturing district of Kyoto began producing a local equivalent to Chinese *kinran*.

Among the most recognizable motifs that appear on early Japanese *kinran* is the lotus, a symbol of purity in addition to the seat of the Buddha, and peonies, auspicious tokens of good fortune that were also introduced to Japan via China. This panel features offset rows of both flowers encircled by foliate vines, against a deep purple satin ground, the glimmer owing to the wefts of applied gold leaf over paper strips. The full loom width suggests that this panel may have been used as an *ohi* or Buddhist stole, or as an obi in a secular context, where another meaning of peonies, as a symbol of erotic love, might have held significance.

The pair to this panel is on view in [A Durable Thread: The Silk Road from China to America](#), August 29–December 2, 2022, at the William Paterson University Galleries in the Ben Shahn Center for the Visual Arts, Wayne, NJ.







5 BROCADED SILK COPE

French, the silk possibly Tours, ca. 1760, 54 x 112 in.

The cleric who wore this flamboyant bubblegum-pink cope to celebrate the liturgy undoubtedly commanded the attention of worshippers. Donating castoff textiles worn for fashionable dress to churches to be used for ecclesiastical vestments was a long-established custom in Catholic Europe for female parishioners, and this pink brocaded silk (possibly woven in Tours) had certainly once been part of a woman's gown. Traces of the long box pleats characteristic of the *robe à la française* are visible in the straight orphrey panels, trimmed with silver galloon, the brilliance of the brocaded patterning standing in for the embroidery which often decorated this portion of the vestment.

Roses in various forms and colors—including several improbable shades of blue—dominate the pattern of the silk, which is a tour de force of the weaver's art in this period. Indeed, in addition to the floral elements, the textile features several trompe l'oeil effects evoking other textile components of a fashionable woman's toilette, such as ribbons, lace, and artificial flowers. The taffeta ground is woven with an ombré warp stripe, echoed in two different forms of tobine or supplementary warp-patterned stripes that suggest ribbons: a serpentine column formed from parallel bars of silvery white silk, and a serrated stripe in shades of blue, green, black, and yellow. Around the latter, twisted ropes of lace and scalloped ribbon appear to be tied together with tiny pink rose blossoms, while icy-blue stems of white roses (their blossoms formed from overtwisted *frisé* threads to create texture) climb up the former, punctuated by sprigs of more blue and red roses. In Catholic tradition, roses had strong symbolic resonance, being associated with the Virgin Mary as well as several saints, making this utterly secular silk an appropriate transfer to sacred usage.





6

BLOCK-PRINTED *SIAMOISE* WAISTCOAT

French, ca. 1770

This unusual sleeved waistcoat is made from a fabric known in the eighteenth century as *siamoise*, woven with a linen warp and a cotton weft. Initially made from a mixture of silk and cotton, *siamoises* imitated the slubbed silks worn by the embassy of Siam during its visit to the court of Louis XIV at Versailles in 1686. In England and France, mixing linen with cotton was a way of skirting the regulations against the importation and production of 100-percent-cotton fabrics from India put in place in the early eighteenth century as a means of protecting native textile industries. The first major center for the manufacture of block-printed *siamoises* in France was Orange, near the southern end of the Rhone; according to Roland de la Platière's *L'art du fabricant de velours et de coton* (1780), these fabrics were also known generally as toiles d'Orange. Lancashire and Rouen later became well known for their production of *siamoises*.

Because these fibers took dye differently, *siamoise* is an unusual choice for the block-printed flowered pattern that emulates contemporary woven silks, though the printer achieved a remarkably harmonious result in this case. Interlacing vines sprouting flowers and berries form a lattice enclosing detached sprigs of stylized peonies, executed in a limited palette of red and yellow, set off by an uncommon striped field. The most striking aspect is the blue ground, achieved by plunging the material in an indigo dye bath. On this particular fabric, the floral motifs were printed first. These were then blocked with a resist paste before being vat dyed to produce the blue ground. The resist appears to have been somewhat hastily applied by hand rather than printed with a block, perhaps indicating that the blue was added to an already completed white-ground floral *siamoise* to appeal to a particular market, or to prolong the novelty of last-season's print. For the wearer, the deep tone may also have lent the fabric an added air of masculinity.

Made of breathable and washable fibers—the lining is a plain indigo-dyed *siamoise* as well—this waistcoat would have been ideally suited for informal or country wear during the warm months. The cuffless sleeves, made from the same show fabric as the body of the garment and finished with an intriguing inside-out button closure at the wrists, suggest that it was meant to be worn on its own, rather than with a coordinating jacket, though a matching dressing gown or banyan would also have been appropriate.

Provenance: The Mark Wallis Collection, Surrey, UK

We thank Dr. Philip Sykas for his assistance with this entry.







7

BLOCK-PRINTED *SIAMOISE* BEDHANGINGS

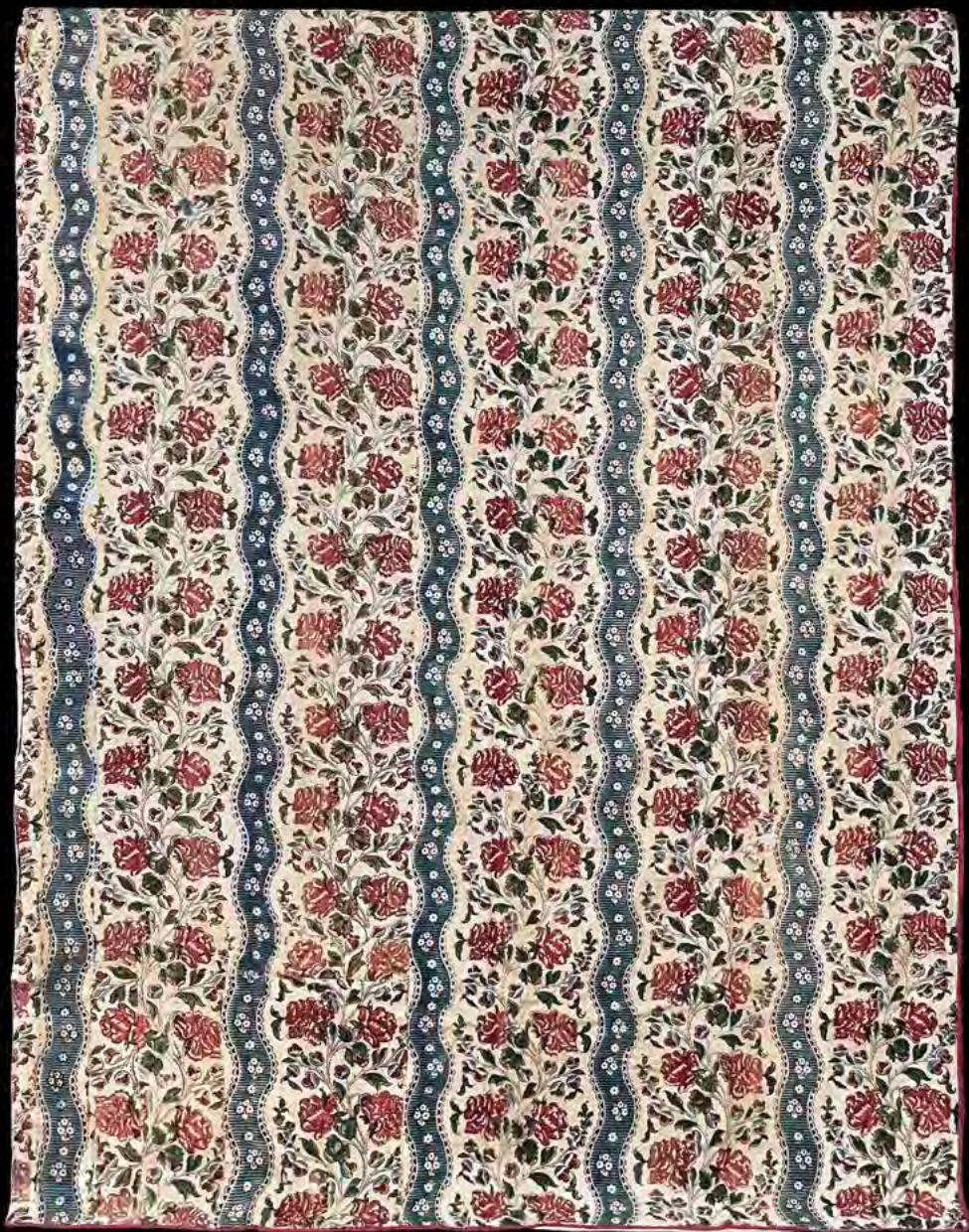
Oberkampf Manufactory
French (Jouy-en-Josas), 1760–62,
Curtains 65 x 101 in. each, valances 78.5–81 x 21.5 in. each

This bed set, comprising four wide curtains and two valances, is an unusually early and nearly complete record of the work of the celebrated German-born textile printer Christophe-Philippe Oberkampf (1738–1815). Printed on a mixed cotton-linen ground rather than the fine pure cotton toiles for which he would become best known, the design is one of the earliest documented as having been produced at the factory he set up in Jouy-et-Josas, ten miles from Paris, in 1760.

With its undulating rose branches and serpentine ribbons, the design clings to the last vestiges of the high Rococo style while also suggesting the transition toward full-blown neoclassicism's symmetry and angularity. Columns of massive red garden roses bloom from a thorny continuous stem, alternating with bands of horizontally-striped ribbons featuring tiny florals that imitate woven silks. The diminutive repeat achieves the effect of a much larger-scaled pattern, ideal for an expanse of fabric for curtains. Oberkampf has used just three colors—blue, pink, and yellow in addition to the blocked outlines—overlaid to create a broader palette that animates the green leaves and purplish-brown buds.

The printing and the weave allow us to accurately date the set to before 1762. The *chef de pièce* for this design, preserved at the Musée de la Toile de Jouy, indicates that this cotton-linen was printed in the first two years of the Oberkampf Manufactory's existence. At that time, Oberkampf also typically acquired the plain-woven mixed fabric of linen warp and cotton weft, known as a *siamoise*, from Normandy. The use of *siamoise* suggests that this bed set was probably destined for use in the summers at a wealthier provincial residence.

Lengths of this fabric are at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum (1986-84-2-a/d) and the Musée de la Toile de Jouy.





8

BLOCK-PRINTED COTTON JACKET (*PIERROT*)

French, ca. 1785

Creators of the “chinoiserie” style in the second half of the eighteenth century strayed far from botanical reality to invent ever more fantastical floral forms, the imagined vegetation of a dreamlike east. On this woman’s jacket, made of a fine block-printed French *indienne*, undulating stems improbably sprout a multiplicity of divergent flowers and fruits that defy conventional description. In vibrant shades of blue, red, purple, and yellow, flame-like shapes and composite blossoms allude to the style popularized by designer Jean-Baptiste Pillement (1728–1808) in several sets of ornamental engravings published from the 1750s through the 1790s.

The maker carefully mirrored the pattern across the center back seam, offsetting the natural dynamism of the pattern by producing an eye-catching locus of taut symmetry, counterbalanced by the ruffled tail and peplum with godets into which the body of the jacket directly flows. A tantalizing remnant of what appears to be a *chef de pièce* or printer’s mark is just visible at the proper left shoulder, though its incomplete nature precludes an identification of the textile’s manufacturer. The printer was undoubtedly skilled, however, as the colors have remained vivid, particularly the typically fugitive yellows, here likely achieved by means of quercitron bark, which by the late eighteenth century had overtaken weld as the favored golden dyestuff.



9

MOIRÉ SILK ROBE À LA FRANÇAISE

Continental, ca. 1775–80; the silk, ca. 1760–65

The subtly shimmering quality of this ivory silk robe à la française is created by the combination of a moiré ribbed ground and satin-weave motifs. A finishing technique, whereby the fabric is folded lengthwise and subjected to intense pressure, produces the “watered” effect. Diderot’s *Encyclopédie* (1751–72) illustrates this procedure as it was done in the eighteenth century. The folded fabric was wound onto copper or wooden rollers that were placed on a marble slab directly beneath a large piece of masonry that was moved back and forth by a water wheel. The ribs of the ground, alternately flattened or left in relief by the pressure, reflect light differently, resulting in the irregular ripples of a true—rather than a mechanically produced—moiré.

The diaper-patterned serpentine bands interspersed with floral bouquets and bowknots date the silk to just after the mid-century when meandering designs were in vogue. The gown was subsequently altered around 1775–80 to update the shape of the bodice front and sleeves. These kinds of fashionable changes were common practice in the eighteenth century when figured silks represented a substantial expenditure and were highly valued luxury commodities. The undiminished beauty of this lustrous silk with its creamy tone-on-tone effect still perfectly imparts a sophisticated elegance associated with elite dressing in this period. The open robe is complemented by a petticoat of an almost identical moiré damask.

Provenance: Ex-collection Baron Armand Van Zuylen (1838–1896), Liège.

10

SILK-AND-METAL-EMBROIDERED FICHU

Continental, mid-18th century

Fichus (triangular or folded square coverings for the upper body) were a mainstay of women's wardrobes in the eighteenth century, especially for daywear. Among affluent consumers, these finely embroidered white linen or cotton accessories provided both modesty and an elegant touch to the toilette. Densely embroidered with stylized florals, foliage, and pomegranate-like motifs on a dark green sheer silk ground, this impressive fichu was undoubtedly intended for evening, and its gold and silver threads would have sparkled in candlelight. The heavy outlines of the main motifs are worked in satin stitch; the fillings are executed in basket stitch; and buttonhole stitches finish the gently scalloped lower edge. Touches of red, pink, plum, and blue silk add colorful accents to the metallic elements.

Women often embroidered their own whitework fichus, but the amount of metallic thread in this superb and rare surviving example and the perfect regularity of the stitches indicate the hand of a professional. Sewing with these threads required a high level of skill so as not to strip the metal sheath from the silk core when passing it through the fabric. Satin stitch, a technique that creates a resemblance between the surface and underside designs, imparts a three-dimensional quality that emphasizes the rich appearance of this fichu. The extensive use of metallic threads and the luxuriant vegetal motifs are similar to those seen on women's embroidered and purely decorative silk aprons of the mid-eighteenth century (Victoria and Albert Museum, 733-1899; T.19-1940).





11
WOOL-EMBROIDERED PETTICOAT BORDER

American (New England), ca. 1760–80, 8 x 56 in.

In the eighteenth century, a lady's embroidered undergarments could serve as a canvas for personalization and experimentation. Surviving underpetticoats and borders that would have graced under petticoat hems, like this crewelwork fragment, showcase the imaginative compositions made by needlewomen in their own homes. Although entirely unique in its arabesque arrangement, this border features individual motifs typically associated with the embroidery traditions of mid- to late 18th-century New England: stylized, fanning carnations; pairs of symmetrical, serrated leaves; simplified grape clusters; and large, solid-colored buds running along an attenuated, curling vine.



Even along this narrow strip that might have only been glimpsed for a moment while in motion, the embroideress has displayed her skill, working the design in satin, stem, outline, running, fishbone, and chain stitches as well as bullion knots. While some petticoat borders reveal underdrawing on the ground fabric, no ink is here visible, suggesting that the maker created a drawn paper pattern, which she would have placed behind the slightly translucent plain-weave linen as a guide.

A petticoat with related embroidered motifs is in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (50.3175).





12 WOOL-EMBROIDERED WORKBAG PANEL

English, ca. 1710–20, 22.5 x 19 in.

Like the petticoat border on the previous page, workbags provided a surface on which domestic needleworkers could experiment and demonstrate their prowess, with the added benefit of holding within them all the related sewing implements belonging to a lady of gentility. In addition to showcasing its maker's skill, this workbag face, embroidered in crewel yarns on a creamy, twilled linen ground, bridges the worlds of her home life and dreams of more far-off locales suggested by a faintly chinoiserie-inspired design set in nature.

One popular workbag motif for girls and women, as evidenced by surviving examples, was the Tree of Life adapted from painted-and-dyed chintzes and embroideries imported from India, which ultimately derived from earlier Persian decorative arts. At once precisely rendered to mimic nature and entirely fanciful, the tree's branches give way to ripe fruits and blossoms, possibly including peonies, whose appearance would suggest a familiarity with some of the most valued objects entering Europe via the East India Companies: Japanese and Chinese porcelain. The rusted red-orange hues of the crewel yarns even recall the Arita-ware enamels imitated in the eighteenth century on English, French, and Dutch ceramics.

This panel is particularly fine in its execution. The maker has, unusually, embroidered the design in a single-ply wool, unlike most surviving crewelwork of the period. This allows for more delicate linework, here primarily done in chainstitch and stem stitch, and crisper detail. Accents of buttonhole and seed stitches add visual interest to flower heads and fillers within leaves. Evidence of the original inked underdrawing is just visible in select areas, giving a glimpse into this domestic embroideress's process.

13 BROCADED DRESS SILKS

English (Spitalfields), ca. 1735 and ca. 1747–50,
45 x 19.5 in and 58 x 20.25 in.

Flowers were perennially favorite motifs in eighteenth-century European silks, although designers interpreted these forms in different ways from decade to decade. In the early years of the century, silk designers based in Spitalfields, London—the center of the English silk-weaving industry—frequently looked to Lyonnais manufactures that were considered the height of elegance for inspiration. This naturalistic brocaded silk with alternating pairs of polychrome stylized florals, foliate sprays, and pomegranate-like motifs on an ivory faille (ribbed) ground dating to about 1735 was influenced by the lush, three-dimensional silks that French designers introduced around 1733. An album of designs from the mid-1730s in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum includes the notation “French Patterns” (5974:7). The technique known as *points rentrés* that produced a shaded effect by overlapping wefts of similar hues enjoyed immediate and widespread success among consumers and, over the next several years, silk designs featured fruits and flowers of increasingly outsized proportions that highlighted their painterly qualities.

In contrast, the delicate flowering scrolls and small islands with fruit trees and florals of the silk woven about 10 to 15 years later display a rendering of these motifs that is associated with the quintessentially English idiom in silk design of the mid-century. The weaver employed continuous pattern weft floats to delineate the mauve-colored curvilinear elements and inserted brocading wefts in shades of crimson, coral, pink, plum, emerald and pale green, and yellow to create the island motifs and floral sprays. Similar branching forms appear in Spitalfields silks of the early to mid-1740s; however, rather than the plain-weave grounds that are typical of those dates, here the *cannelé* (warp-patterned) ground with narrow horizontal bands figured with small chevrons suggests the late 1740s or early 1750s (Victoria & Albert Museum CIRC.243-1959; T.161A-1959; 269-1891).







14 BROCADED SILK EVENING DRESS

English, ca. 1845–48, the silk Spitalfields, ca. 1742–45

In the 1840s, the eclectic revival styles that had dominated women's fashions since the turn of the century favored the modes and textiles of the mid-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Many women purchased new silks that were inspired by eighteenth-century designs. Others, who had access to family gowns from the period that had been passed down through generations, altered their antecedents' garments to conform to the contemporary silhouette. In this evening dress the bodice has been pieced to create the fashionably tight fit through the torso, but the skirt is made up from uncut lengths of fabric used in the original gown that were easily repurposed.

The off-the-shoulder neckline, short sleeves, long pointed waist, and full skirts evoke women's fashions of the 1660s, while the floral brocaded silk satin—preserved for a century for its inherent value—dates to the mid-1740s. Woven in Spitalfields, London, the silk illustrates the delicate naturalism described by textile historian Natalie Rothstein as “the essence of the English interpretation of Rococo in silk design.” The paired offset flowering branches disposed over an open ground are similar to several designs by the silk designer Anna Maria Garthwaite in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum between 1742 and 1745 (5981:19; 5981:10; 5981:8/A; 5984:5; 5983:5; T.264.1966).



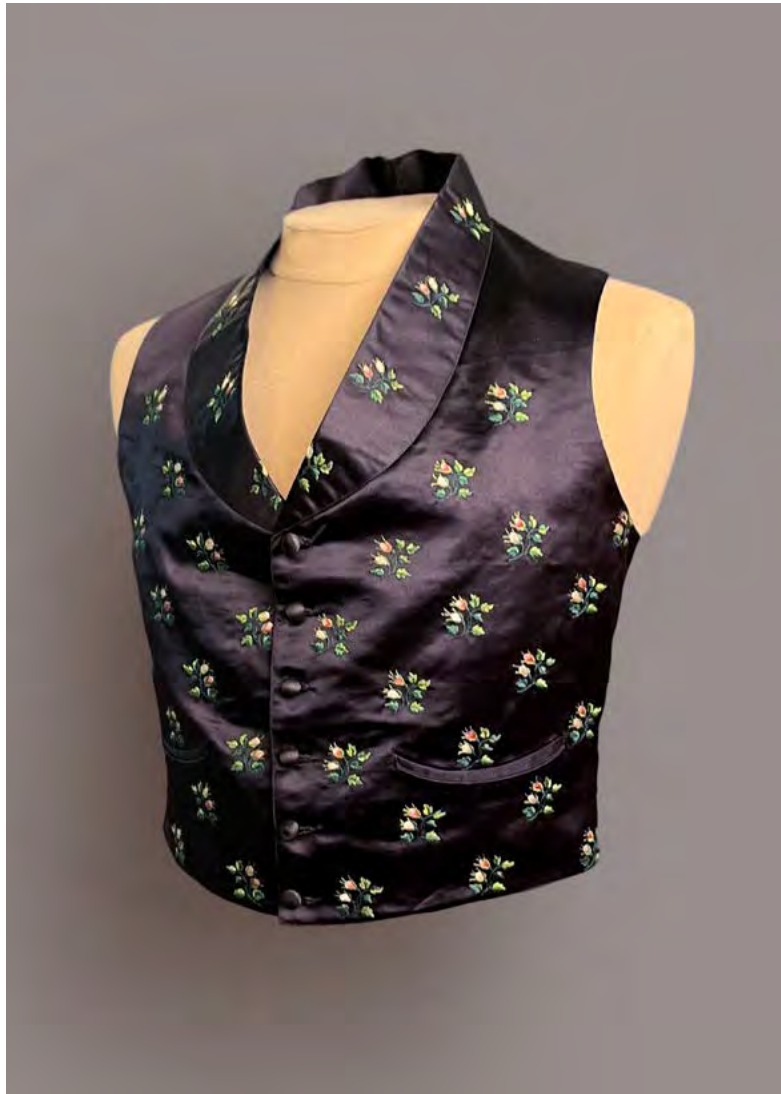




15 SILK-EMBROIDERED WAISTCOATS

English (?), ca. 1840 and ca. 1860

By the mid-nineteenth century, while most of men's dress had sobered into a uniform of unbroken black, waistcoats remained the single stronghold of color and pattern in the male wardrobe. On this pair of waistcoats, black satin serves as the backdrop for colorful embroidery, ensuring that they would coordinate with the otherwise dark elements of the wearer's apparel. The earlier example features various blooms worked in satin stitch trailing over the collar, pocket slits, and fronts. These include pansies and forget-



me-nots, two of the most recognizably symbolic blossoms in the Victorian semiotic system known as the “language of flowers.” Both pansies—in French, *pensées*, a homonym for “thoughts”—and the unambiguously named blue forget-me-nots represented the sentimental act of remembering or longing for a loved one. The color scheme of the later waistcoat is more restricted, with identical sprigs of budding roses spread evenly across the wearer’s breast, creating an almost geometric pattern out of floral elements.



16 TWO-PIECE BLOCK-PRINTED COTTON DRESS

American, ca. 1872–75

Although fashion plates of the 1870s rarely illustrate cotton dresses with lively prints, these were nonetheless widely worn, especially during the summer months. For visits to popular seaside resorts and leisurely games of croquet, women availed themselves of a wide variety of colorful chintzes and muslins, among other cool, lightweight fabrics that had the advantage of being washable. In August 1871, *Harper's Bazar* advised readers that, "For morning dresses for the present season where white is not worn, we would particularly recommend printed muslin batiste and cambric."

This sheer block-printed cotton voile with its alternating black and white vertical stripes with an all-over pattern of trailing floral and foliate vines in shades of red, pink, green, blue, and pale yellow was perfectly suited to an understated daytime toilette for warm weather. Perhaps made by the wearer herself, the two front panels of the jacket bodice are lightly darted along one of the black stripes and the skirt is constructed from gores and one selvage width at the center back. The softly gathered ruffles at the cuffs and jacket hem and the bias skirt flounces would have fluttered in a breeze, like delicate petals.

Cotton summer dresses were often starched to maintain their fashionable shape. In Anthony Trollope's novel, *Can You Forgive Her?* (1864-65), Kate Vavasor admonishes Mr. Cheesacre, the begrudging host of a beach picnic, for faulting the young women in attendance "in their best hats and freshest muslins" who decline to fish: "You can't suppose that any girl will like to be drenched with sea-water when she has taken so much trouble with her starch."





17
LES LYS D'EAU AND L'IRIS D'EAU
ROLLER-PRINTED COTTONS

Paul Ranson and Félix Aubert for Scheurer Lauth et Cie
French (Thann, Haut-Rhin), 1895–98, 27 x 30.125 in. each

These exuberant cotton samples, designed by the artists Paul Ranson and Félix Aubert and manufactured by the Alsatian textile firm Scheurer Lauth et Cie, exemplify the Art Nouveau's reclamation of the Rococo style as an essential part of avant-garde fine art in fin-de-siècle Paris.

In Ranson's *Les Lys d'Eau*, blooming water lilies dance like flickering balls of fire on a rippling aquatic surface. Ranson is best remembered as a key member of Les Nabis, the Paris-based artistic group whose looked beyond the period's prevailing Impressionism towards a new modern art that incorporated Symbolism, mysticism, and esotericism. *Les Lys d'Eau* is Ranson's only known textile design, the result of his collaboration with architect Henry van de Velde to appropriately outfit the dealer Siegfried Bing's Maison de l'Art Nouveau in Paris. Van de Velde also used the fabric in an interior in Dresden.

Trios of symmetrical yellow and blue irises undulate in *Iris d'Eau* by the textile and lace designer Félix Aubert. As a founding member of Les Cinq and the Arts dans Tout movement, Aubert was a major proponent of marrying the fine and decorative arts as well espousing truth to materials and form following function. In 1898, the Groupe des Six (the next iteration of Les Cinq) chose *Iris d'Eau* to cover the walls of the Galerie des Artistes Modernes. The fabric was first produced by Scheurer in coordination with the Parisian firm Pilon et Cie in 1897.

Fragments of *Les Lys d'Eau* in various colorways are in the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest (7366, 7687, 7778, 7779, 9002, 52.1639.1). Lengths of *Iris d'Eau* are in the Allentown Art Museum (2005.023.000), Cotsen Textile Traces Study Collection (T-2409), Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (2008.34), Landesmuseum Stuttgart (GT 6516), Metropolitan Museum of Art (2005.33), Textilmuseum Krefeld (06458), and Wadsworth Atheneum.

Provenance: Scheurer Lauth et Cie archive





18

LITHOGRAPHIC PAPER FAN

Paul Poiret and the Atelier Martine
French, ca. 1915–20, 8.875 x 14.875 in.

Couturier Paul Poiret is also remembered as the first in his profession to venture into the world of designer fragrance. In 1911, at the height of his sartorial fame, he sought out the Laboratoires Midy to learn the fundamentals of distillation and, that same year, opened his perfumery Les Parfums de Rosine, named for his eldest daughter, adjacent to his Atelier Martine on the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré. In addition to his innovative development of non-floral scents, Poiret exploited the power of advertising by hiring well-known illustrators, creating custom glassware, and designing and producing elaborate packaging. This paper fan advertisement features a floral composition from the Atelier Martine, who were also responsible for the design of the glass bottles.

The time and money that Poiret had invested into his perfume endeavor initially paid off. Even during France's difficult economic recovery following World War I, Les Parfums de Rosine saw international success and, according to Poiret in his autobiography, an offer from François Coty to purchase the business. By the mid-1920s, however, financial hardship struck. With his *maison* and decorating enterprise failing and his marriage ending in a bitter divorce, he finally sold Les Parfums de Rosine to the Société Centrale de la Parfumerie Française in 1930. Although the business continued into the post-World War II period, the pared-down production and marketing would never again come close to Poiret's pageantry.

The survival of this fan from the collection of Poiret's ex-wife Denise Boulet reveals that his former muse's commitment to solidifying his legacy in the decades following his demise extended even to ephemera. Still after one hundred years, the paper leaves retain an alluring, fruity scent, offering us a hint of his "new aesthetic," in Poiret's own words, in perfume.

Ex.-collection Denise Boulet Poiret

19

MASKROS AND CIKORIA TAPESTRY WEAVINGS

Märta Måås-Fjetterström

Swedish, designed 1928, woven after 1942, 15 x 13.5 in. and 16.5 x 16.5 in.

Drawing on the Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus's contributions to plant taxonomy that were still dominant in the nineteenth century, textile artist Märta Måås-Fjetterström (1874–1941) picked species for her tapestries and wove them almost as specimens. *Maskros* (Dandelion) and *Cikoria* (Chicory) were plucked, as it were, from a larger composition titled *Junibloomer* (June Blooms) designed in 1928. In *Maskros*, flowering stalks rise out of stepped abstractions of the plant's jagged leaves. Two phases are represented: tall, golden dandelions burst with crenellated petals, while shorter stalks display fluffy seed-globes ready for the slightest breeze to disperse them. *Cikoria* emphasizes verticality with blooms set in a staggered arrangement sprouting from a baseline of small, interconnected mounds.

Several techniques are here combined to create a harmony unique to Måås-Fjetterström's work. These include slit and interlocking weaving, as well as a framing device of thin lines woven in the direction of the tapestry and inserted as extensions of the wefts in the warp direction. Her use of "eccentric" weaving (so called because the wefts are not woven at right angles to the warps) in the diagonally oriented elements also demonstrates her interest in ancient South American and Coptic tapestries.

After Måås-Fjetterström's death in 1941, Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf intervened to ensure the studio's continuation, and the firm was incorporated in 1942. Pieces woven after this time bear the distinguishing mark "AB MMF."







20

PUTKINOTKO SCREEN-PRINTED COTTON CURTAIN

Maija Isola for Marimekko
Finnish, 1957, 78.75 x 53 in.

Designed by Maija Isola for Marimekko's *Luonto* (Nature) collection begun in 1957, *Putkinotko* resembles a process akin to photograms, where plants are laid on photo-sensitive paper. In fact, Isola's inspiration for *Putkinotko* is more personal: the plant pressings made by her daughter Kristina, then eleven years old. The pattern uses two cleverly arranged color screens to create the bold, overlapping silhouettes of long stalks of wild angelica, a relative of Queen Anne's lace, which stretch upward in a seemingly endless vertical repeat. The design and title are references to Finland's picturesque wilderness and author Joel Lehtonen's classic two-part novel of the same name (1919–20), the story of one day in the life of a family of poor farmers living in a remote area of eastern Finland, and its well-known film adaptation released just three years before Isola's design.

Like so many of Isola's fabrics, *Putkinotko* has become an icon of her prolific tenure as head designer at Marimekko. The pattern remains in production today, having been reintroduced into their repertoire in 2001. A length in a different colorway is in the V&A Museum (T.239-1990).



21

LES ALTHÉAS BLOCK-PRINTED SILK

Raoul Dufy for Bianchini-Férier
French (Lyon), ca. 1918, 41 x 36.625 in.

Painter Raoul Dufy (1877–1953) pioneered the concept of the artist textile in his early collaborations with couturier Paul Poiret and his sixteen-year career with the Lyonnais textile firm Bianchini-Férier. Between 1912 and 1928, Dufy produced an astonishing four thousand textile designs for Bianchini. Manifest in these drawings is Dufy's unique understanding of how to simultaneously compose fine art and design functional fabrics for furnishing and dress.

This length of block-printed silk in the pattern known as *Les Althéas* is an original document from the Bianchini archive. The hibiscus or rose of Sharon's blooms interlock in a dense mosaic of blues and pinks that fill the carefully delineated forms of nature. Through the equilibrium of shapes, calligraphic outlines, variations in saturations, the scale of the print, and the sheerness of the silk, Dufy maintained a delicate balance between artistry and fashion.

Lengths of *Les Althéas* in identical and different colorways are in the Kunstmuseum Den Haag (1002235) and Art Institute of Chicago (2004.939).

Provenance: Bianchini-Férier archive









22 **PETAL SCREEN-PRINTED COTTON**

Lucienne Day for Heal's
British, 1971, 56 x 50 in.

Lucienne Day created what is perhaps one of the most iconic mid-century fabrics, *Calyx*, which launched the English-Belgian designer into the spotlight at the Festival of Britain (1951) and solidified her early impact in textile and industrial design during what would be a fifty-year-long career, working on her own and in partnership with her husband, furniture designer and fellow Royal College of Art graduate Robin Day.

The triumph of *Calyx* led to a collaboration with Heal's Fabrics that would endure over the next two decades, with Day producing some four textile designs every year for the firm, many of which are considered among their most important. The present pattern, *Petal*, is one of the four designs from Day's penultimate series for Heal's in 1971 (she designed just one more textile, *Parkland*, for Heal's in 1974). Simplified flowers with pink, purple, peach, and tan petals appear to spin like pinwheels, radiating concentric, pointillistic bands that dissipate into the off-white ground.

Unwilling to acquiesce to consumer demands and trends, Lucienne Day formally left the field of industrial design in 1975. While *Petal* was her swansong in printed fabrics—and her last representational, rather than hard-lined, geometric, design—she continued to work with textiles as art, creating unique, strip-woven “silk mosaics” into the 1990s.

A length of *Petal* in an identical colorway is in the Minneapolis Institute of Art (98.150.20).

23

LES TULIPES SCREEN-PRINTED COTTON

Paule Marrot

French, 1938, 69.5 x 51.75

Despite a long and high-profile career and recent licensing agreements of her designs to Brunschwig & Fils, Anthropologie, and even Nike, which have brought her name to the attention of a new clientele, textile designer and artist Paule Marrot (1902–1987) remains a less-than-well-known figure in design history. In her lifetime, though, she was highly sought after by an international list of royals and socialites in Europe, North America, and Asia, and her collaborators included luxe designers like André Arbus and Jean Royère, Finnish furniture manufacturer Artek, and Renault automobiles. In 1951, she received the Légion d'honneur for her contributions, and an exhibition held at the Pavillon de Marsan in 1953–54 cemented her place among the great modern designers of France.

Marrot first showed her printed fabrics at the XV Salon des Artistes Décorateurs in 1924. The following year at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes, she won the gold medal for her textile designs. In 1928, the year she was awarded the Prix Blumenthal, her success led her to open her own premises at 34 rue Truffaut in Paris. Demand was such that, by 1932, she mechanized her printing process, working with the Manufacture Steiner in Ribeauvillé, Alsace.

Les Tulipes dates to this fruitful and successful artistic period. She debuted the design at the XXVIII Salon des Artistes Décorateurs in 1938 and its popularity continued into the mid-century period in the United States, where New York decorators Ruby Ross Wood and Billy Baldwin both used it in interiors in the 1940s. In the 1960s, when Brunschwig & Fils reissued the design, Jacqueline Kennedy planned a decor around it.



24

SVENSKA VÅRBLOMMOR SCREEN-PRINTED LINEN

Josef Frank for Svenskt Tenn
Swedish, 1944–45, 49 x 54 in.

Few twentieth-century designers mastered the boundary between sleek modernism and bold historicism like Jewish-Austrian architect Josef Frank (1885–1967). Although he worked within the modernist tradition, Frank fought against the austere functionalism of his contemporaries, who he believed had unjustly abandoned the previous centuries' architectural and decorative achievements. "Every modern house can be executed in any of the historical styles without diminishing its practicality," Frank wrote in his 1958 essay "Accidentism." Instead, he championed a design ethos that combined the usefulness and aesthetically pleasing aspects of historical design with those of the contemporary age to create timeless—and incidental and effortless, hence the essay's title—spaces for living. For Frank as a textile designer, that often meant finding inspiration in the past.

In *Svenska Vårblommor* (Swedish Spring Flowers), the simultaneous flattening and depth recall William Morris, millefleur tapestries, and eighteenth-century English crewelwork. Using a deceptively simple palette of just four colors, Frank manages to create a teeming garden of vibrant tulips, narcissi, fritillaries, hyacinths, crocuses, and other spring blooms, with overlapping inks producing tertiary hues and shades on petals and curling leaves.

A secular, assimilated Jew who was forced to emigrate to Sweden in 1933, Frank moved to New York in 1942 as war ravaged his birthplace of Vienna. *Svenska Vårblommor* was among the fifty designs Frank produced while in America, as a fiftieth birthday present to Estrid Ericson, founder of the Swedish department store Svenskt Tenn. Upon his return to Sweden in 1946, Frank continued supplying furniture, lighting, and textile designs for the company.

A length of *Svenska Vårblommor* is in the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm (NMK 80/1945, gift of Svenskt Tenn in 1945).







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