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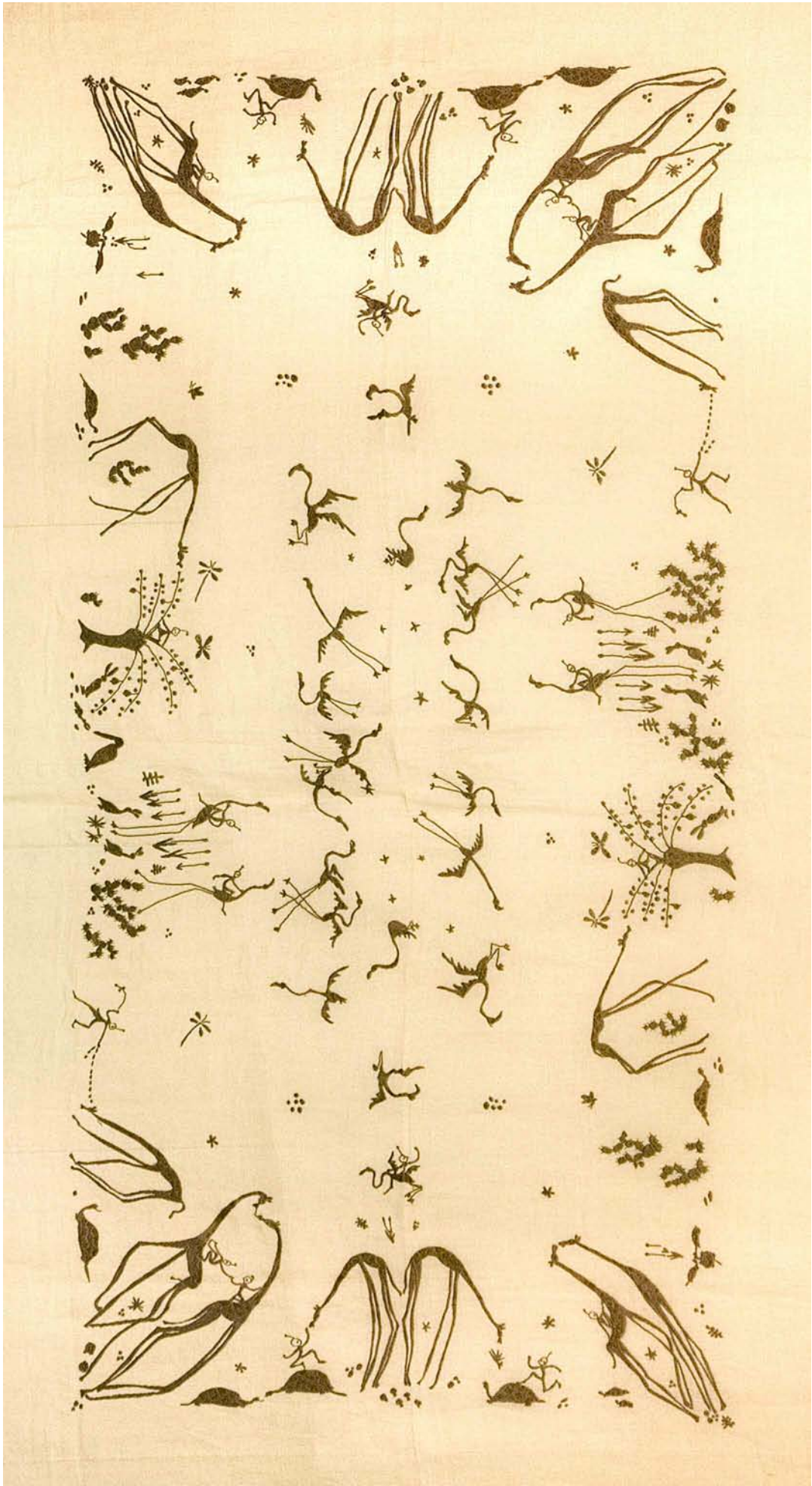
**Seed and Spirit of Modernism**

An exploration through textiles

by

Esther Fitzgerald  
and Amy Hibbert

Photographed by Horst Kolo



## Foreword

When I started this project I had a rather general view of early modernism; I knew what a Bauhaus chair looked like; who Joseph Hoffman was and what Ben Nicholson represented. I had read Virginia Woolf, struggled with Proust and knew the difference between Jung and Freud.

For years when we exhibited Pre Columbian, African and Asian textiles, the comment would be, 'how surprisingly modern'. I thought I knew what they meant and glowed a little, for in the last twenty years it has been difficult to surprise without being sensational. I thought that the shock of the old was far more stimulating than the "Shock of the New". My view of the commercially-made product was not high.

Between the wars, however; the involvement of artists and designers - committed to the improvement of their society after the devastation of war - was exciting, diverse and controversial. Socialisms and industrialisation were hand in hand. New liberties for women and a slow awareness of racial injustice were coming to the surface. The Victorians and Edwardians were more out of influence and favour than the Egyptians. The polymath was influential.

In the twenties Johannes Itten commenced his Bauhaus classes with breathing exercises; Florence Hodgkin's family was at the heart of the organic movement; Nancy Nicholson was on the road giving advice on contraception; Ashley Havinden was one of the pioneers of the advertising agency; Josephine Baker was highlighting racial injustice. While Ottoline Morrel was giving away her family inheritance for the sake of art, Picasso was asking us to look at familiar forms for a new beauty. In 1928, Francis Bacon was designing furniture, carpets and interiors. This was a time when art and industry merged, whether from idealism or survival. These people were not only modern and alternative in their day but would also qualify as such in ours.

In Paul Nash's essay "The Meaning of Modern" (1932) he quotes Clive Bell's definition of Modern as 'to find meaning'. I hope that in looking at the textiles that are presented here, one will be able to judge, in some way, whether or not these artists and craftsmen succeeded in expressing this definition within their time.

I hope, also, that you may enjoy a glimpse at this period as much as we did while researching it.

Esther Fitzgerald  
Hampstead  
November 2007

## Wiener Werkstätte

At the turn of the century many Viennese designers decided that they wanted to move away from the flowing lines of Jugendstil and Art Nouveau and into more geometric designs. In 1903 they formed the Wiener Werkstätte (Vienna Workshops) - a designers' cooperative under the direction of the noted architect and designer Josef Hoffmann. Founded on the principles of the Arts and Crafts movement, the Wiener Werkstätte strove to provide a range of well-designed, often handmade products for a sophisticated audience and could supply everything from an architectural setting to the smallest decorative accessory. Outside manufacturers often produced designs that the Wiener Werkstätte was unable to make in their own studios. The renown of the workshops was such that by the early 1920s they had opened branches in Paris, Zurich and New York.

Otto Prutscher was a prominent member of the Wiener Werkstätte and a former student of Hoffmann. He was very successful from an early age, exhibiting at the Secession at the age of just twenty-two and winning awards across Europe. Prutscher was primarily an architect and interior designer who was committed to holistic designs, involving himself in all aspects of a commission.

This piece is part of one of his projects. Its linear design represents a particularly advanced take on the new geometry.

Studio Magazine in February, 1906 (Pg 37) states that, *'Everywhere he shows a genial spirit and ample power both of conception and execution, coupled with a feeling for true beauty'*.

References -

Volker, Angela 'Textiles of the Wiener Werkstätte, 1910 - 1932', New York, 1994, Pp. 21 - 23.

Levetus, A.S, 'The Studio Year Book of Decorative Art', London 1911, Pp. 227, 233 - 234.

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1. Set of three embroidered panels,  
Wiener Werkstätte,  
Attributed to Otto Prutscher.  
Crewel on satinised cotton/wool mix,  
Architectural hanging in strong yellow.  
Vienna  
1910  
104 x 24.5 inches  
2.64 x 0.61 m.

Expert consulted - Angela Volker, Head of the Dept of Textiles. Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Vienna. (MAC).

### Embroidery Appraisal - Katie Pirson

Mustard coloured cotton-wool blend fabric with a lustrous sheen to the surface of the fabric hanging with a cotton sateen backing. The embroidery is worked in fine two-ply crewel wool except for the green and blue block elements in the design which are worked in a cotton thread, producing a contrasting texture to the wool embroidered areas. The entire piece is worked in stem stitch, using single rows to produce fine details, working solid rows following the flow of the shape to fill large areas, and worked in diagonal rows in a thick silk floss to fill blue and green blocks, thus emphasising the sheen in the silk thread.



## Glasgow School

This piece is typical of the influential Glasgow school with its simple, repetitive floral design and the use of interesting colour combinations - such as indigo and peach.

Ann Macbeth was a central member of the Glasgow School, becoming head of the textile department in 1908. Like Newberry and other members of the department, she was a strong feminist and created embroidered banners for the rallies of the Women's Social and Political Union. Her work is similar in design to that of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, a fellow member of the school, who also used stylised flowers and interesting colours. She was very successful in her work and won many prizes, such as a silver medal in the Turin International Exhibition of Decorative Arts (1902).

Macbeth is significant for her educational programme, designed to encourage children to create individual and original pieces. She established these ideas and techniques within her book, *Educational Needlecraft* (1911), with which she travelled across Britain giving lectures and instigating summer school programmes.

Similar pieces:

Halton, E.G, 'British Embroidery', 'Studio Yearbook of Decorative Art: 1911', London, Pg 112 - 125.

References -

Taylor, J, 'Studio Magazine: May - August, 1910', London, 124 - 134.

Howard, Constance, 'Twentieth Century Embroidery', Manchester, 1981, Pp. 54 - 55.

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2. Glasgow School,  
Indigo Cotton Curtain with Appliqué border;  
Attributed to Ann Macbeth.  
Circa 1910  
86 x 71 inches.  
2.18 x 1.81 m.

### **Embroidery Appraisal - Katie Pirson**

Fine periwinkle blue linen base with a creamy yellow linen border. Embellished with floral motifs around the edge of the central panel made of appliquéd linen. The appliquéd motifs are worked in white, green and creamy yellow linen. These have been cut out from their main linen and applied to the blue linen background using a buttonhole stitch in a matching coloured cotton thread. Surrounding these main motifs is a border of smaller elements, also appliquéd with buttonhole. Additional decoration in the border is provided by an open buttonhole stitch worked in scallops and circles. Details in the main appliqués elements and in the border are worked in stem stitch in a twisted cotton thread.





*"Mere colour unspoiled by meaning  
and unallied with definite form can  
speak to the soul in a thousand  
different ways." Oscar Wilde*

## Colour

The most important personality during the first phase of the Bauhaus was the painter and art theorist Johannes Itten. He was the backbone of Bauhaus education, (See biography page 57).

Johannes Itten's colour theories drew from various sources, becoming integral to the work of many within the Bauhaus school and beyond. It built upon the earlier colour wheel of Adolf Hölzel but also drew from the work of Leonardo da Vinci and Isaac Newton. Itten's theory progressed from the simple twelve hue colour wheel that had been used before and introduced the colour star. This star was a much more complex way of viewing colour and allowed him to study the shades from every angle; including philosophic, religious, psychic, psychological and physical. He suggested that colour was so connected to emotion that certain combinations could dramatically affect one's mood. He also argued that each individual would experience 'harmony' between colours differently and so he encouraged his Bauhaus students to develop their own palettes of colour.

*He said, 'He who wishes to become a master of colour must see, feel and experience each individual colour in its endless combinations with all other colours.'*

This colour theory is taught widely within art schools today.

In 1922, Kandinsky, Klee and Itten each came to teach in the Bauhaus. Colour philosophy was one unifying theme and another was the fact that all three teachers had issues with the regimental teaching methods taught at the Bauhaus, which they regarded as suppressive of the individual.

*Paul Klee: 'Colour possesses me. It will always possess me. That is the meaning of this happy hour; colour and I are one. I am a painter.' (1906)*

*Kandinsky: 'Colour is the keyboard, the eyes are the hammers, the soul the piano with many strings, the artist the hand that plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations of the soul.' Kandinsky, 'Concerning the Spiritual in Art.' (1912)*

*John Ruskin: 'The purest and most thoughtful of minds are those who love colour the most.' (1853)*

References -

Jager, Christian, 'Wassily Kandinsky', London, 2003.

Partsch, Susanna, 'Paul Klee', London, 1992.

Droste, Magdalena, 'Bauhaus', London, 2006.

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Hand Woven Lowans

From Palembang, Sumatra, Indonesia.

Mid to late 19th Century

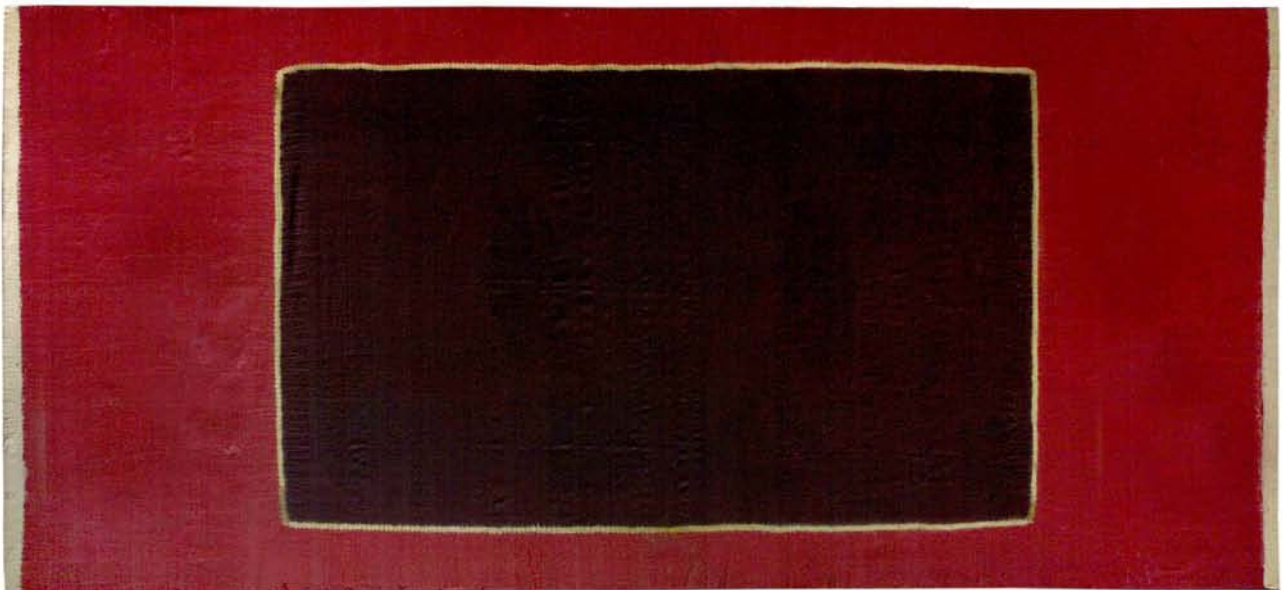
Indigenous handwoven silk,

resist dyed with 'tritik' process.

3. Orange - 31 x 77 inches. (0.79 m x 1.96 m)

4. Green - 32 x 79 inches. (0.81 m x 2.01 m)

5. Purple - 33 x 75 inches. (0.84 m x 1.91 m)



## Studio Martine

Paul Poiret, fashion designer and businessman, interestingly saw himself primarily as an artist and an educator. Influenced by the Bauhaus and Wiener Werkstätte, he set out to create a comparable movement in France. He commissioned his friend Raul Dufy to create designs for textiles. As part of this enterprise, he began L'Ecole De Martine. The role of the Martines (students) was to create fresh and interesting fabric designs for his clothes and interiors.

Poiret, although inspired by Wiener Werkstätte and Bauhaus, was strongly against the regimentation of the training. Poiret was staunchly in favour of encouraging personal expression and individuality. Thus, he never dictated to his Martines but instead left them to draw freely and independently - arranging excursions to provide inspiration. On Poiret's regular visits to the school he chose his favourite designs, (often rewarding the students with prizes) transferring these directly onto block print fabrics. He opened a shop at number 15 Baker Street, London in 1920.

Famous people regularly visited Studio Martine. Gabriele d'Annunzio (poet and writer) describes Studio Martine as *'the world's fifth season'*.

Henri Matisse - feeling at all times at home around fabrics - visited the Martine workshop often to cut out textiles for his theatrical commissions onto their large work tables. He was very proud of the work he produced there.

(See Cat No. 8 for piece by Alice Nattare who was a student with L'Ecole de Martine.)

References -

Dumas, Ann, 'Matisse: His Art and his Textiles', London, 2004, pg 17.

Deslandres, Yvonne, 'Poiret', London, 1987, pp. 13 - 24, 259 - 285.

Kerry, Sue, 'Twentieth Century Textiles', London, 2007.

Bowman, Sara and Molinare, Michel, 'A Fashion for Extravagance', New York, 1985, Pp. 18 - 45.

Volker, Angela 'Textiles of the Wiener Werkstätte, 1910 - 1932', New York, 1994, Pg. 202 - 207.

Powers, Alan, 'Modern Block Printed Textiles', London, 1992, Pg. 26 - 28.

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6. Hand block printed cotton velvet

From Poiret's Studio Martine.

This design fulfils the Poiret brief very successfully, illustrating innocent freedom and optimism in its drawing.

Circa 1914

Similar to a piece dated 1914, illustrated within '1900 - 1910s Decorative Arts', Taschen, pg 538.

43 x 25 inches.

1.09 x 0.64 m.



## Omega workshops

'Maud' is one of only six designs for Omega Workshops.

The designers were Duncan Grant, Roger Fry, Frederick Etchells and Vanessa Bell.

The private view and opening party for 'Omega' took place on 8th July 1913.

Names for the half-dozen printed linens were supposedly given by the German Ambassador's wife, Princess Lichnowsky, at the opening party. They were 'White', 'Maud' (named after Lady Cunard), 'Mechtilde' (named after herself), 'Amenophis', 'Margery' and 'Pamela' (the last two named after Fry's sister and daughter).

There is a cushion covered in 'Maud' depicted in Roger Fry's 1917 portrait of Nina Hamnett.

Provenance:

Florence Hodgkin cousin (by marriage) of Roger Fry and Grandmother to Sir John Eliot Gardiner (Conductor) and Howard Hodgkin (Painter). [Florence was Irish eccentric and the 14th child of 14th child.] By inheritance to Ralph and Marabel Gardner.

Similar piece published:

Mendes, Valerie, 'The Victoria and Albert Museum's Textile Collection: British Textiles from 1900 to 1937', Victoria and Albert Museum, London 1992, pg, 20, Illustrated, pg, .39.

Literature:

Ancombe, Isabelle, 'Omega and After, Bloomsbury and the Decorative Arts', Thames and Hudson, London, 1981, p.28.

For Roger Fry's 1917 portrait of Nina Hamnett, see 'Omega Workshops, 1913-1919', London : Crafts Council, 1983. p. 91

Hints to Marabel by Florence Hodgkin pub John Lane the Bodley Head, 1934.

Roger Fry

1900, Fry taught art history at the Slade. University College London.

1906, he was appointed Curator of Painting, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

1906, "discovered" the art of Paul Cézanne, beginning the shift in his scholarly interests away from the Italian Old Masters and towards modern French art.

1910, Fry organised the exhibition 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists' (a term which he coined) at the Grafton Galleries, London, supported by Ottoline Morrell.

Reputedly, Fry left the Met following their outrage at his suggestion that they purchase some impressionist paintings. Fry followed this exhibition with a second.

In 1913 he founded the Omega Workshops, a design workshop whose members included Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, Frederick Etchells, Wyndham Lewis, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Henri Doucet, Nina Hamnett, Paul Nash and Edward Wadsworth. In 1933, he was made the Slade Professor at Cambridge.

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7. A printed linen panel entitled 'Maud',

Attributed to Roger Fry.

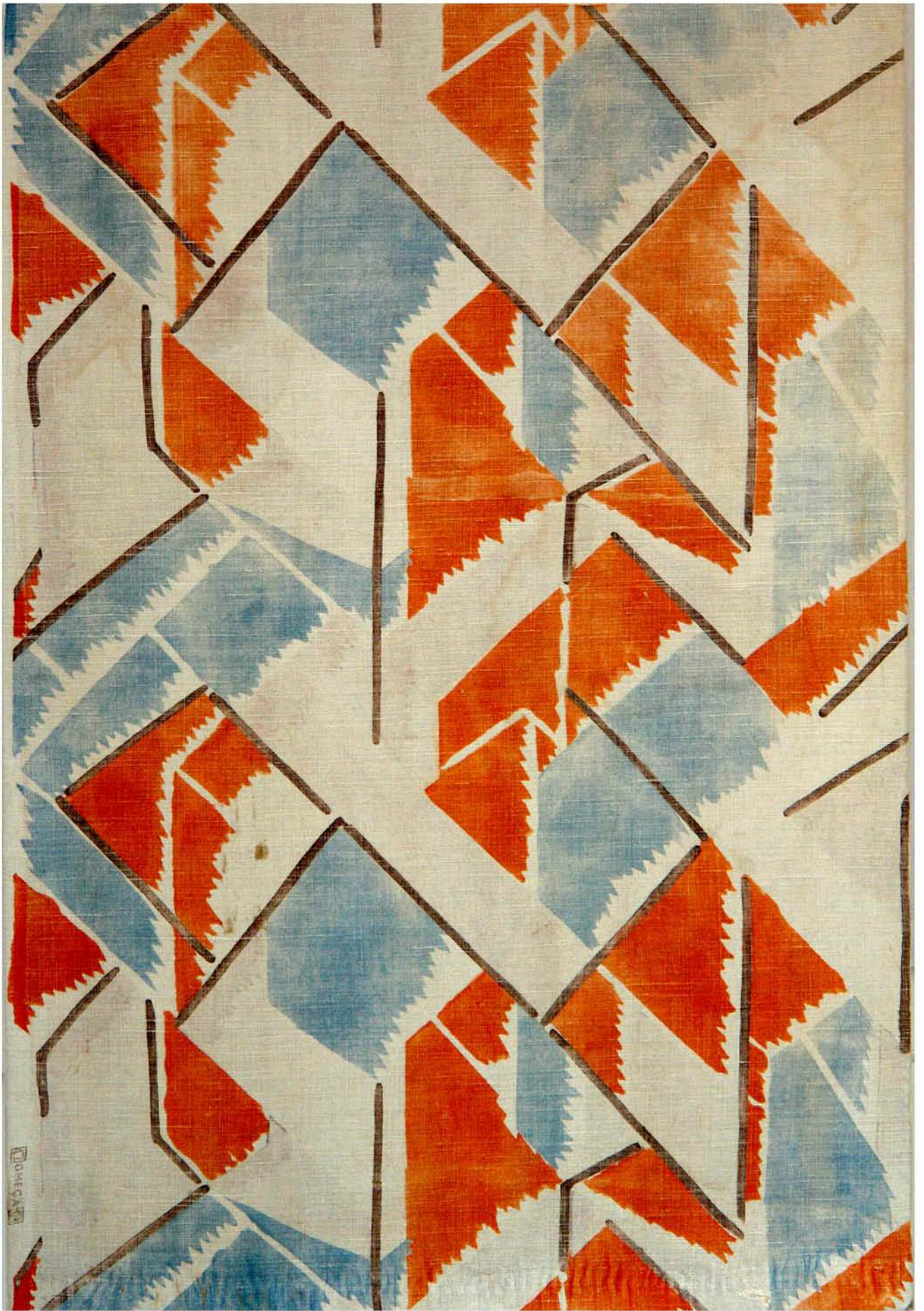
Manufactured by Besselièvre at Maromme Rouen,

For Omega workshops,

('Omega' printed on selvedge).

1913

37 x 32 inches 0.94 x 0.66 m.



DOMESTIC

### **Alice Nattare (nee Ruty), 1925**

This embroidery has many influences current to the art of the time, while also straddling the current major decorative movements. The inspiration for this project came during the research of this textile.

There are three definite sections to this embroidery. To the left the abstract and romantic; the centre a naïve, Ballet Russe inspired, rural scene and to the right a surreal dream sequence with a silvery moon and circling birds.

The artist Alice Nattare was found by a friend of Poiret chalking sketches onto the pavement in Paris. She was then taken into L'Ecole Martine (see cat no 6.). Paul Poiret was a natural educator; taking his students to museums and trips into the country for stimulation. Alice Nattare was a natural and talented student. In a letter from Poiret to Ruty, posted from Lisieux towards the end of the First World War, he commissions the Martines to design; *'Try to imagine what sort of carpets the soldiers will want in their rooms when they come home: nothing that will remind them of war, but something very cheerful with a tricolour effect, with or without stripes...I hope you will win the first prize again just as you always used to.'*

In 1922 Alice Nattare was sent on sabbatical to the Bauhaus in Weimar, where she studied with Paul Klee and Kandinsky. It is recorded that she did not like the formality of the training, but was much excited by the art seen in Germany.

It is speculated that this embroidery was an apprenticed piece from the Bauhaus period or a celebration piece on her return to Paris. In the foreground of the piece the young girl is wearing a skirt embroidered with roses stylized in the same manner as Poiret's label. After the closure of Martine in 1929, Nattare began to work for Studio Matrisse, under the direction of Maurice Dufrene. She remained in close contact with Poiret until the end of his life.

#### References,

Deslandres, Yvonne, 'Poiret', London, 1987, pp. 13 - 24.

Bowman, Sara and Molinare, Michel, 'A Fashion for Extravagance', New York, 1985, Pp. 18 - 45, 146.

Hardy, Alain - Rene, 'Art Deco Textiles', London, 2003, Pp. 16, 106.

Le Studio: D'Arts Decoratifs', April 1926, p98.

Expert Consulted - Sue Kerry

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### **8. Embroidery Appraisal - by Katie Pirson**

Village scene worked on a painted cotton background with areas of applied painted silk. Embroidered with a mixture of cotton perle, stranded cotton, fine wool and orange core silver Japanese thread. Stitches have been worked in layers to produce a detailed level of textures. The wealth of stitches used in the piece include satin stitch, long and short, aid work, encroaching satin, French knots, couching, block shading, split stitch, buttonhole and filled trellis work. The tree areas on either side of the scene are mainly worked in satin, long and short and encroaching satin, with details worked on top of this foundation to illustrate direction and texture in the foliage.

Some areas of the painted silk have deteriorated and disintegrated, revealing the original painted background underneath.

The metal thread couching in the silver moon is unusual as the Japanese thread is not couched singularly but bricked in pairs.

The fine quality of the design and wealth of detail provides a new discovery every time the piece is viewed.





## Roses and Bluebells

The two floral motifs are both typical of this era. The bluebell was used a great deal within the work of Raoul Dufy and the Wiener Werkstätte. The rose can be seen in Poiret's dress designs and soon became the signature for his fashion labels. Many of the Glasgow school's designs used a similar rose motif.

### References

Volker, Angela 'Textiles of the Wiener Werkstätte, 1910 - 1932', New York, 1994, Pg. 202 - 207.

Generally seen in Samuels, Charlotte, 'Art Deco Textiles', London, 2003 and Powers, Alan, 'Modern Block Printed Textiles', London, 1992.

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9. A hand block printed cotton velvet  
with stylised rose and bluebell motifs.

Circa 1923

37 x 23.5 inches

0.94 x 0.60 m.

This piece is in very good condition and the colours have remained vibrant.

## Paul Follit

Paul Follit was one of the first Art Deco designers and helped to develop this style prior to the First World War. By 1925, the Art Deco movement was at its peak and Follit made a large contribution to the Paris Exposition. He became the Director of Design at the Pomone Studios of 'Au Bon Marche' in 1923 before moving to Wearing and Gillow in 1928. Later, in 1935 he received the commission for the interior of the Ocean Liner 'Normandie'.

This piece is block printed by hand. Follit refused to design for machine manufacture and instead promoted the creation of exclusive, unique and hand printed fabrics such as this.

### Illustrated in

Schoeser, Mary and Dejardin, Kathleen, 'French Textiles', Singapore, 1991, pg 174.

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10. Hand Blocked printed cotton velvet.

Designed by Paul Follit

Circa 1926

24 x 21 inches.

0.61 x 0.53 m.

Some fading.



*"I still feel that Posthumous fame is better than present comfort and ease."  
(Letter to Lady Ottoline Morrel, 10th February 1929.)*

### **Marion Stoll (1879- 1960)**

Marian Stoll was born and art educated in America. She moved to Europe and worked as an active part of the art community in Germany and Austria, before settling for some years in Oxford. She later moved to Paris and spent time in Greece. In 1931 she returned to the USA. In 1940 she was published in Time magazine.

While in Oxford, she became great friends with Lady Ottoline Morrel (See biography page 57) who introduced her to many influential people. The women wrote to each other for many years, with Morrel often supporting Stoll with money and introductions. The letters were affectionate, funny and erudite - containing discussions of Proust, Freud and Mrs Woolf, (not always flattering) and included many details of her working commissions.

Stoll was condemning of poor quality design, *'why do people appreciate the modern approach to all other crafts except embroidery?'*

At an exhibition held at the Oxford Arts club in 1925, a critic wrote, *'all of one's preconceived ideas about the purpose and function of needlework and all reflections on traditional embroidery took flight in the first glance around this amazing exhibition.'*

By the late 1920s she had gained success, exhibiting in Paris, New York, Chicago and Brussels, but she was still having to search for funding. In 1928, somewhat against her will, she completed designs for Nationale du Beauvais. (from letter to O.M. 30th April 1928)

Constance Howard writes of Marion Stoll in 'Embroidery in Great Britain to 1939'  
"An outstanding embroiderer, producing exciting and individual work which was appreciated in Germany but seems to have been a little avant garde for England..."

Having trained in Vienna, she developed an understanding for quality materials. Throughout her working life she only used fine and expensive wool dyed in Austria. This seems to have been a wise decision as the colours in her composition are as vibrant today as they were when dyed.

Clients included:

Siegfried Sassoon, Aldous Huxley, John Masefield, Lytton Strachey, Lady Gwendolen Churchill, Delphine Turner, Mrs Poole, Mrs Bishop, Mrs Harris, Lady Asquith, Lord Henry Bentick and The Duke of Portland.

Exhibited -

Walker Gallery, London in 1923.

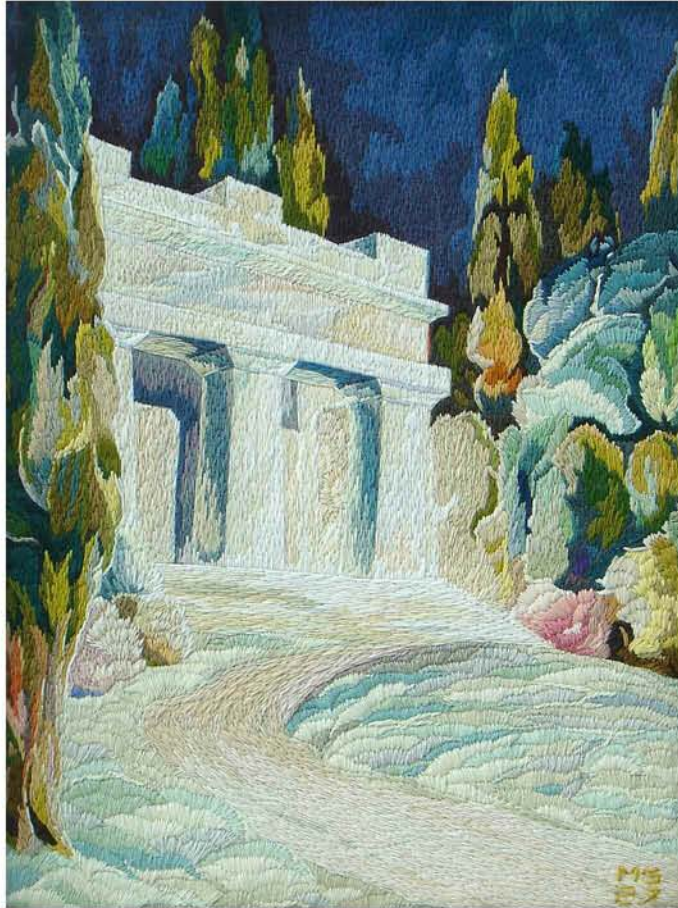
Oxford Arts Club, Oxford, November - December 1925.

Victoria and Albert Museum. 1932.

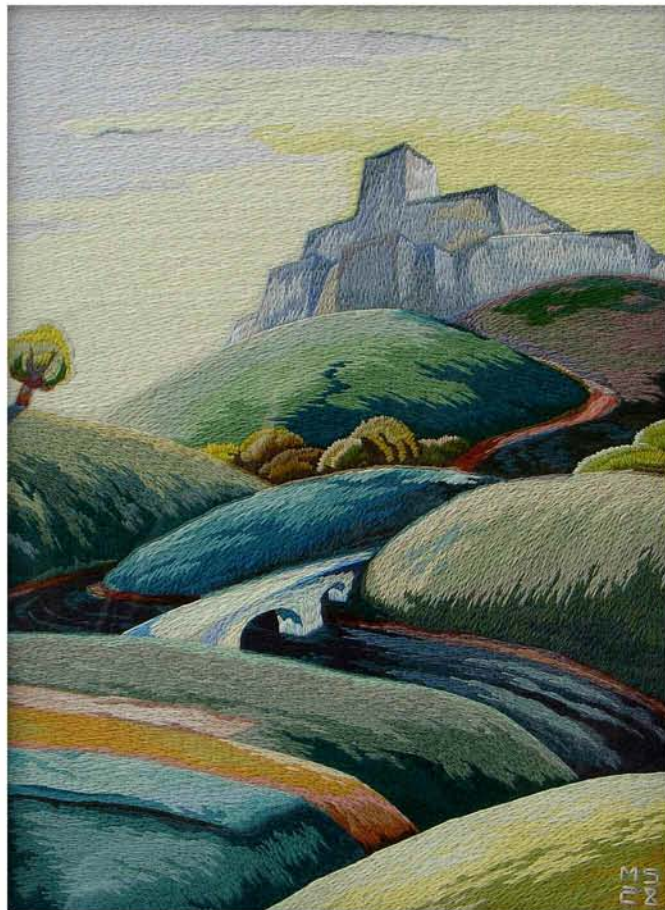
Museum Collections -

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston - accession numbers, 2001672 / 2001673 / 2003330 / 2003331

The article printed overleaf expresses her views.



Temple - 19.5 x 14.5 inches, 0.50 x 0.37 m



Hill - 23.5 x 17 inches, 0.60 x 0.43 m

Marian Stoll, 'The Studio', March 1927, pp.169 - 173.

### Modern Techniques in Embroidery

'Within recent years embroidery, in common with all the applied arts, has undergone a radical change, the new tendency being very striking in this field, as embroidery had been more profoundly debased and devitalised than perhaps any other art. It had sunk to the level of a mere exercise in manual dexterity, in which a corresponding mental activity was sadly lacking. This was the inevitable fate that attends an art from which the creative intelligence of man has completely withdrawn itself.

It may be noted that the present renaissance of embroidery is almost entirely due to the encouragement and the constructive criticism of men; and the indications are that, owing to their constantly increasing interest, the art will continue to flourish. Women are, in matters of art, usually extremely conservative - particularly so in the case of embroidery, which for a long time has scarcely been considered an art at all, but merely an agreeable pastime which could be practiced even by those totally lacking in artistic qualifications.

In modern work, before all an individual conception is exacted: copious adaptations will not do; the artist must have something personal to communicate. Originality in conception, design and colour is a sine qua non. A corrective against flights too wild will be found in an artist's consciousness that he is in duty bound to be a truthful expression of his own time, or a forerunner of better times to come. The older school is extremely solicitous about the 'limitations' of the needle, and preaches the moral danger of overstepping them: the modern school, indifferent to 'limitations', insists upon 'possibilities' - a more healthier conception, as encouraging exploration and discovery.

In colour-work, a very striking characteristic of the new embroidery is its radical simplification of stitchery. Its chief and the general effect is obtained by the simplest means. Complicated 'fancy' stitches are seldom, if ever, found in modern embroidery in colours: the needle is a means to an artistic end, not an end in itself...'

She is quoted in 'American Needlework' published by Coward Mccann, 1938.

"After having done a good deal of professional embroidery in Vienna and in England, I came to think I might be able to paint in wools. So I set out to test my hypothesis. For a long time now, I have felt that a needle with wool was just as respectable and legitimate a medium for serious painting as any other; and so I have deliberately gone after painters objectives, such as light effects, recession, volume, aerial perspective, atmospheric quality, texture etc. Of course as any painter feels, the further I go on, the more there is yet to learn; but at least it isn't the medium that limits me, for as wool as a painters medium really has infinite possibilities. Sometimes one finds prejudice against wool, owing to so much frightful rubbish whose vehicle it has been in the past; but as soon as anyone begins to use her eyes instead of her memory, it ought to become obvious that wool used in this way has possibilities far beyond certain much admired media - for instance, it is a hundred times more flexible than tapestry work, whose legitimacy has never been questioned. And it is tied to no formal stitch; its as free and supple as oils, aquarelle as pastel - what more could one ask? And it offers as wide a field for personality in technique as paint."

#### References -

Day, Lewis, 'The Art of Needle Work', Batsford Ltd, 1926 pg 95.

Koch, Alexander, 'Stickerien und Spitzen', Darmstadt, 1926.

Hogarth, Mary, 'Modern Embroidery', The Studio, 1933, pg 23.

Brown Harbeson, Georgiana, 'American Needlework: The History of Decorative Stitchery and Embroidery from the Late 16th to the 20th Century', New York, 1938, pg 185.

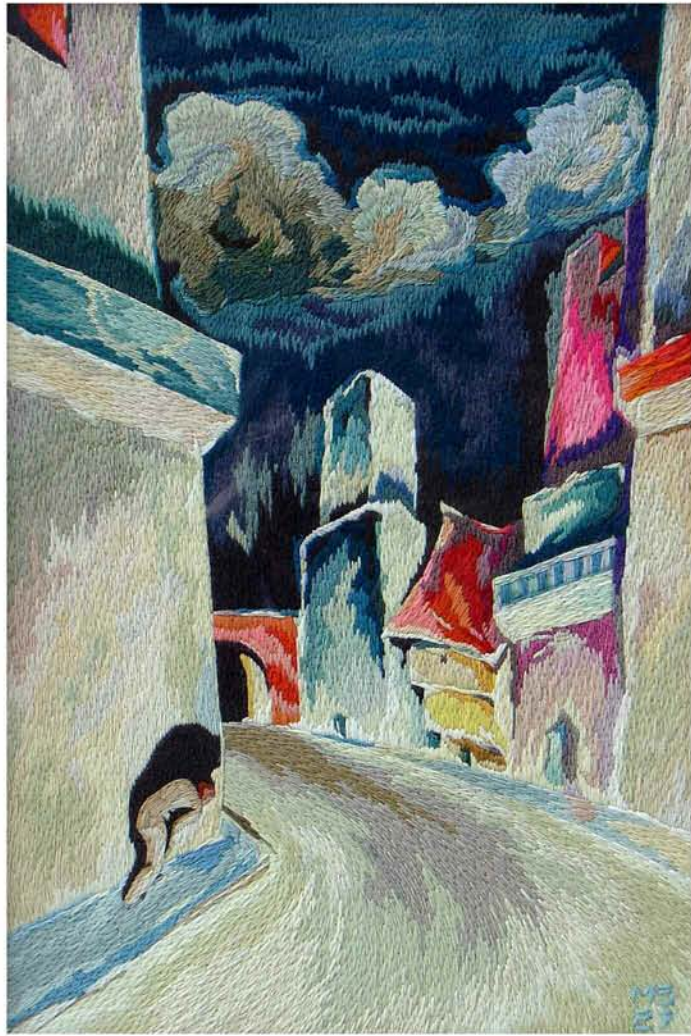
Howard, Constance, 'Embroidery in Great Britain: To 1939', Batsford Ltd, 1981, Pg 157.

Gardiner Troy, Virginia, 'The Modernist Textile', Hampshire, 2006, Pg. 110.

Rayner, Ruth, 'The Studio Magazine', Jan 1924, Pg 18.

Waterhouse, Ellis, 'The Studio Magazine', September 1927, Pg 168-173.

Letters of correspondence between Lady O. Morrell and Mrs M. Stoll, 1923-1935, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, University of Texas.



21 x 14 inches, 0,54 x 0,36 m



14 x 19,5 inches, 0,35 x 0,5 m

## Footprints

The Footprints workshop was set up in 1925 by Gwen Pike and Elspeth Little in Durham Wharf, Hammersmith and supported by Celandine Kennington the wealthy second wife of the artist Eric Kennington. Gwen Pike had previously worked with Claude Lovat Fraser of Fraser, Trevelyan and Wilkinson who was behind most of the block printing enterprises of the time. The name, Footprints, was chosen because of the foot pressure used to create most of the block prints.

The workshop became the longest-lasting block printing enterprise of the 1920s and continued, despite the break up of the Pike-Little partnership until after the war. Joyce Clissold arrived in 1927 and continued Footprints when Pike and Little split. At its height, Footprints had two central London shops and represented artists Paul Nash, Eric Kennington and Marion Dorn.

Footprints used a much wider colour range than Barron and Larcher.

Block printed fabric was very much the desire of the Avant-garde and influential. These fabrics were exclusive and expensive with the average price of hand printed fabrics, at 12 shillings per yard, while manufacturers such as Warners could produce printed textiles for 6 shillings per yard. Clients included Deitmar Blow, the architect to the Duke of Westminster, and the stylish and fashionable decorator Syrie Maugham. (See back for further information on block printing.)

Reference -

Powers, Alan, 'Modern Block Printed Textiles', London, 1992. pp. 46-7, 61.

Tanner, Robin, 'Phyllis Barron 1890-1964 Dorothy Larcher 1884-1952 A record of their block-printed textiles: Volume One', Pg 23.

The archives of both Footprints and Barron and Larcher are useful resources to obtain further information: The Textiles Collection: University College for the Creative Arts at Farnham, <http://www.ucreative.ac.uk>

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15. Block print with ships and bird design.

Cotton gauze block print.

For Footprints. Possibly designed by Paul Nash

Circa 1925

41.5 x 63 inches.

1.06 m x 1.6 m.





### **Modern Textiles, Beauchamp Place**

Reco Capey was a designer and chief instructor of design at the Royal College of Art from 1924 - 1935. He influenced many - creating bold, eye catching designs; often of angular floral motifs such as these.

Studio Magazine (May, 1926) suggested that his teachings at the Royal College would 'produce important results' among his students.

The magazine also noted that, '*His patterns are the expression of very definite convictions and exhibit rhythmic qualities, with a bold handling of shapes and masses...and essentially modern in spirit and outlook.*'

Modern Textiles, of Beauchamp Place was established by Elspeth Little on leaving Footprints. Modern Textiles was well known for selling avant garde block prints, weaving, embroideries and pottery, including the work of Bernard Leach, Marion Dorn, Michael Cardew, Eric Kennington, Phyllis Barron and Dorothea Larcher. Famous decorators, including Syrie Maugham, were regular customers.

Modern Textiles exhibited internationally in the 1920's and was a strong influence on the avant-garde look of the time.

References -

Powers, Alan, 'Modern Block Printed Textiles', London, 1992. Pg. 58.

Wainwright, Shirley, 'Modern Printed Textiles', Studio Magazine: November; 1926, Pg. 394 - 400.

S.B.W, 'The Work of Reco Capey', Studio Magazine: May, 1926, Pg. 259 - 263.

Studio Magazine: July, 1926, Pp. 120 - 121.

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16. Professionally embroidered and designed with brightly coloured, abstract floral design in silk on linen.

Loosely attributed to Reco Capey but definitely inspired by him, for Modern Textiles.

1926 - 1930,

23 x 23 inches.

0.59 x 0.59 m

#### **Embroidery Appraisal by Katie Pirson**

Hand constructed European cushion cover of fine, densely woven natural coloured linen. Embroidery worked in various coloured twisted cotton threads. The border surrounding the cushion is worked in buttonhole triangles, using a repeated colour order. The central design is worked in satin stitch, and rows of encroaching satin, with the direction of the stitch following the natural flow of the shape being filled, producing a pleasing flow to the design. The quality of the design, embroidery, materials suggest that the piece is professionally designed and made.



## Influences

The influences on design during this period were many and varied including;

1922, The discovery of Tutankhamen's tombs.

1906 / 1922, Colonial exhibitions in Marseilles and Wembley.

1930, The pre Columbian Exhibition in Paris.

The popularity of Chinese and Japanese art from both imports and their inclusion within museum collections.

African art and Ballets Russe.



17. Egyptian Curtain

Circa 1923

Cotton Madras,

Woven in Scotland with brocaded cotton

104 x 44 inches.

2.64 x 1.02 m.

Expert consulted - Mary Scheoser



18. Tunic

Art Deco tunic

Design very much influenced by China

Brocaded Silk

French

1920s

This tunic uses the combination of bold colours and a black background, often seen within Art Deco pieces. The tunic is unusually woven to shape. The design on the lower edge of the tunic fuses strong Chinese influence and a clear Art Deco manner.

19. Bakuba People

Velvet

Cut Pile Embroidery

Early 20th Century

Zaire

Embroidered on a raffia panel, using a variety of geometrical motifs which are developed freehand, without pre-conception.

These cloths were costly possessions, serving as a means of payment, bridal price or gift and were laid with other things as burial objects.

17 x 20 inches.

0.43 x 0.51 m.

20. Pre Columbian Inspired Machine Embroidery

Wool on cotton.

France

Group of three

Two circular - 19cm (7.5 inches) in diameter

One strip - 58cm (23 inches) in length

Machine embroidery was very popular during this period, mostly using the Schiffli machine. This type of embroidery became more and more in demand as the 1920s continued into the thirties.

Ghislaine Wood' notes that *'During the 1930s, the passion for things African was replaced by a growing fascination with Native American and pre - Columbian art.'*

A rare example of machine embroideries in browns and oranges. These were direct copies of pre Columbian art, seen during the 1928 pre Columbian art exhibit in Paris, Les Arts Anciens de L'Amérique, organised by the Museum of Decorative Art, Palais Louvre.

References -

'Wood, Ghislaine, 'The Exotic', in 'Art Deco: Victoria and Albert Museum', London, 2003, pg 137.

'Twentieth Century Embroidery in Great Britain to 1939', Constance Howard, London 1981.

'The Modernist Textile', Virginia G Troy, Hampshire, 2006.



### **St Edmundsbury Weavers designed by Alec Hunter.**

Alec Hunter was the son of Edmund Hunter, founder of St Edmundsbury Weavers (Letchworth), a company who specialised in hand woven textiles. Alec worked with his father from 1919 until 1927. On leaving St Edmundsbury Weavers he joined the experimental weaving workshop of Edinburgh Weavers, a pioneering division of Morton Sundour. Here he developed technical skills enabling artists to develop and refine their designs for mass production.

Hunter agreed with Ethel Mairet when she suggested that all craftsmen should hand produce their own work slowly and adventurously, without economical aims. This, of course, was not realistic as it eliminated most of the market. Part of the socialist dream was that all people should come into daily contact with good design.

Warners were attempting to combine artist designed work with a more commercial market. Hunter's great success with Edinburgh Weavers made him prize for Warner's whom he joined in 1932 as a designer, becoming Director in 1943 and remaining there for the rest of his career.

Ethel Mairet - pioneering natural hand dyer and weaver - suggests,  
*'The way to beauty is not by the broad and easy road; it is along difficult and adventurous paths. Every piece of craftwork should be an adventure. It cannot be an adventure if commerce steps in. ...It may be objected that life is not long enough; but the handicrafts are out to create more life, not out to produce quantity nor to save time.'* Mairet, Ethel, 'A Book on Vegetable Dyes', Hampshire, 1916.

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21. Hand woven wool  
Selvedge to selvedge  
For St Edmundsbury Weavers  
England  
1926  
84 x 90 inches.  
2.14 x 2.29 m.

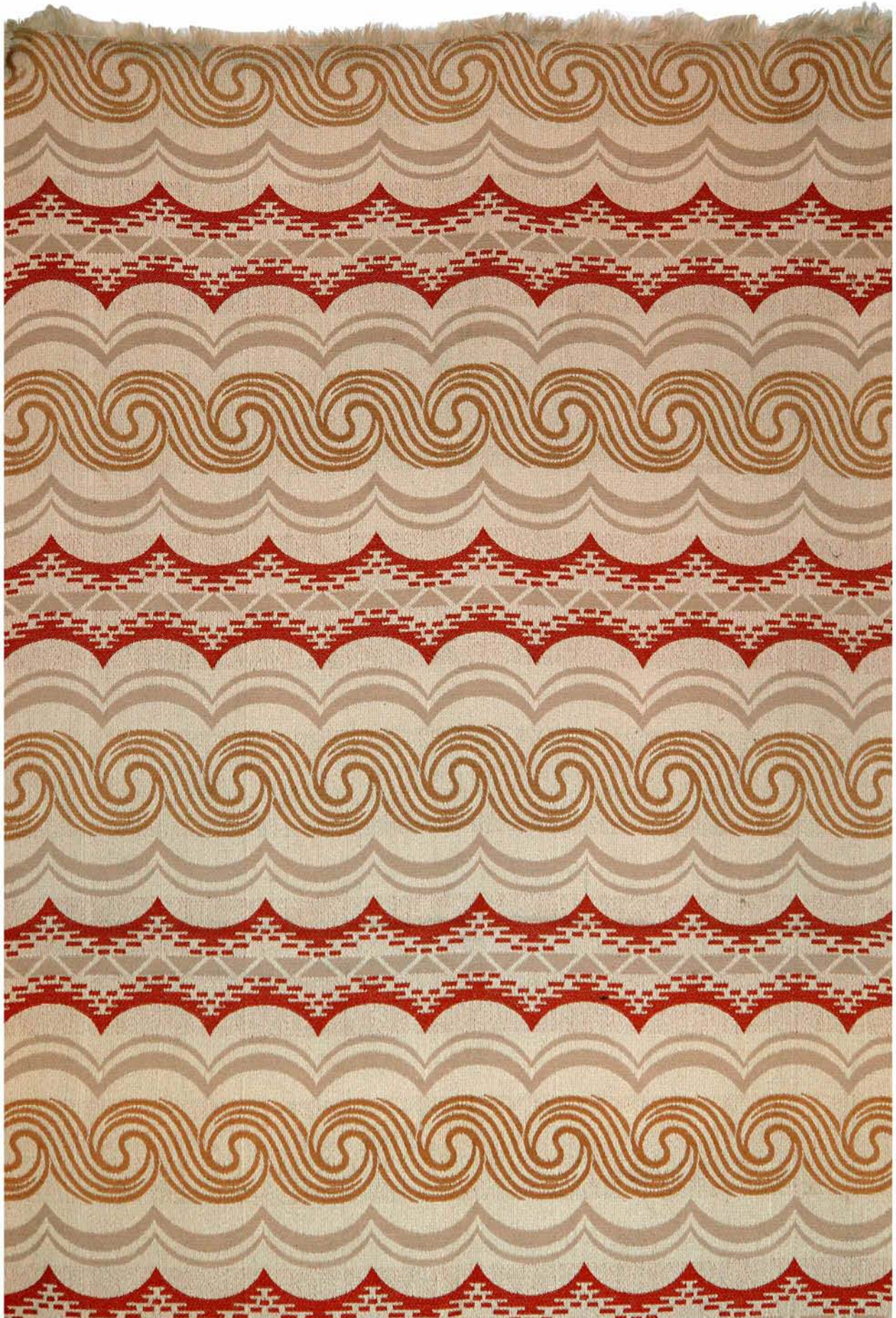
Expert Consulted - Mary Scheoser

#### NOTE

We have other weavings from this genre by Marianne Straub who was chief designer for woven textiles at Warners after the Second World War, who subsequently worked on hand weavings for Ethel Mairet.

See [www.estherfitzgerald.com](http://www.estherfitzgerald.com).





### **Afro Canadian Quilt**

This quilt is very reminiscent of the appliqués of the Bakuba people of Zaire, this free open puzzle of a design reminded me of the very early paintings of Mondrian and has been included here for its spirit of modernity.

The piece is constructed using basic techniques, the ground fabric is cotton seed sacking and patched with scraps of mostly wool clothing.

It is very similar in feel to a Sonia Delauney piece of 1911, illustrated in Jacques Damase, 'Sonia Delauney: Fashion and Fabrics', London, 1991, pg 9.

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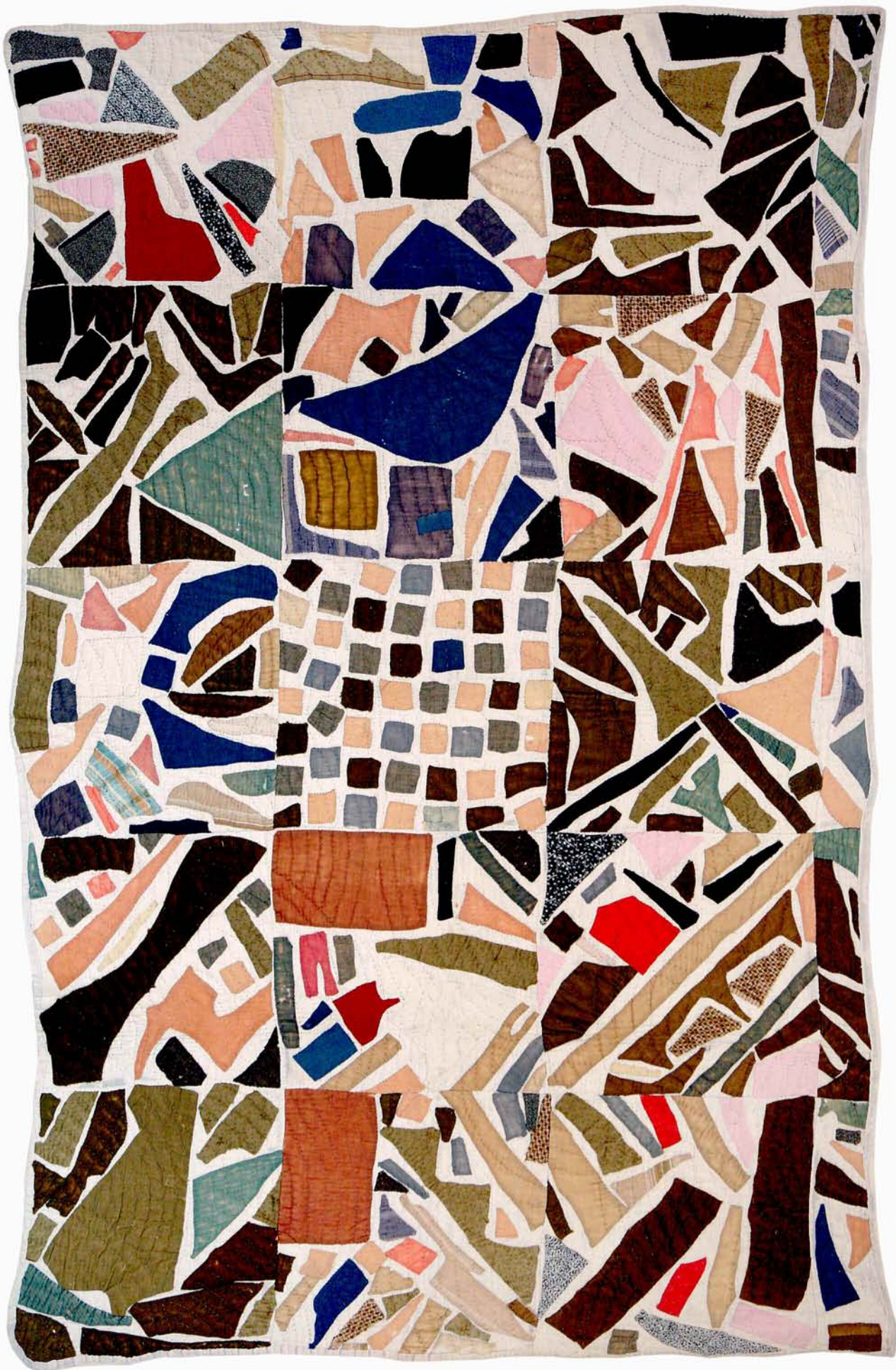
22. Cotton appliquéd quilt

1920s

African Canadian using cotton seed sacking and recycled household textiles.

50 × 80 inches.

2.07 × 2.03 m



## Boutique Italian in Rue Miromesnil, Paris

### Gallenga.

Maria Monica Gallenga (1880 -1944) was an artist, surrounded by thinking people of her day.

She was very much engaged in current cultural debates and at all times questioned the role of the decorative arts within art as a whole.

She married Peter Gallenga, a medical professor at the University in Rome. One of the first people to research cancer, he also helped her develop the technique of stencilling gold onto velvet.

In 1914 she began to design textiles.

In 1915 she visited the San Francisco Panama - Pacific exhibition.

In 1923 she won the Silver Medal in the Monza Design Exhibition.

In 1925 she designed and exhibited in the Italian Pavilion at Exposition Internationale des Arts Decorative et Industrial in Paris. Here she won the Grand Prix for stencilled textiles, more exceptional because the prominent Italian designer of the time was Mario Fortuny.

In 1928 she opened Boutique Italian in Rue Miromesnil in Paris.

It remained open until 1934.

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### 23. Linen Table cloth

with twelve napkins and place settings.

Embroidered in two grades of silver on fine peppermint green linen.

Depicting creatures of the night: owls, bats, cats, mice, fairies and elves encircled by an ouroboros.

Designed by Maria M. Gallenga for her shop in Rue Miromesnil, Paris 1928.

132 x 66 inches.

3.35 x 1.68 m

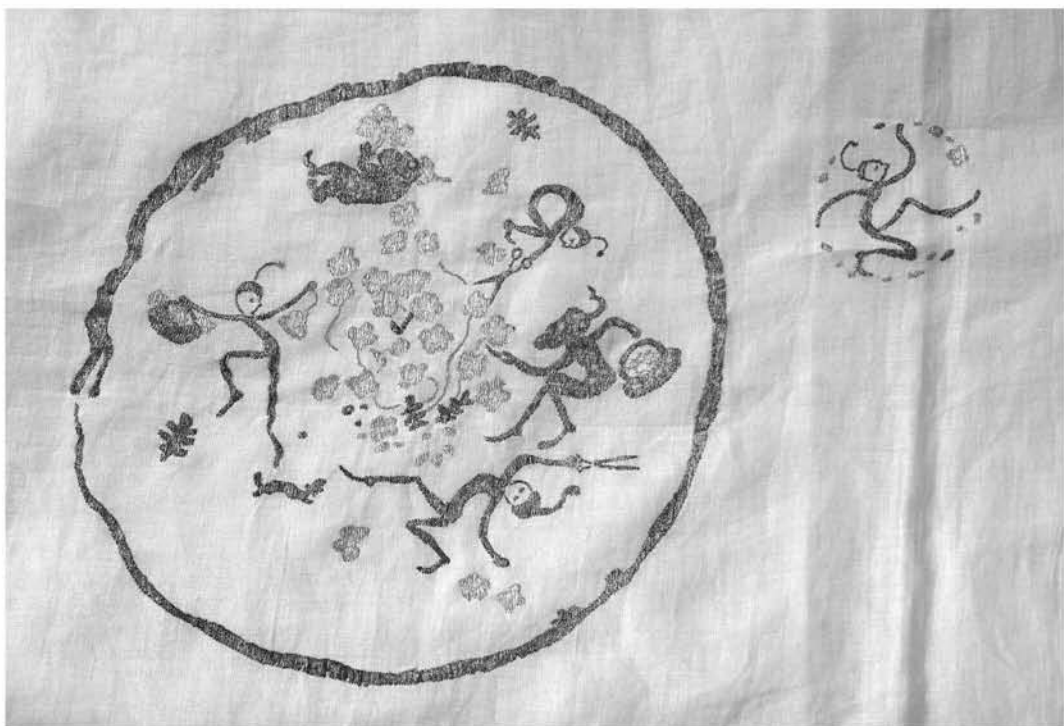
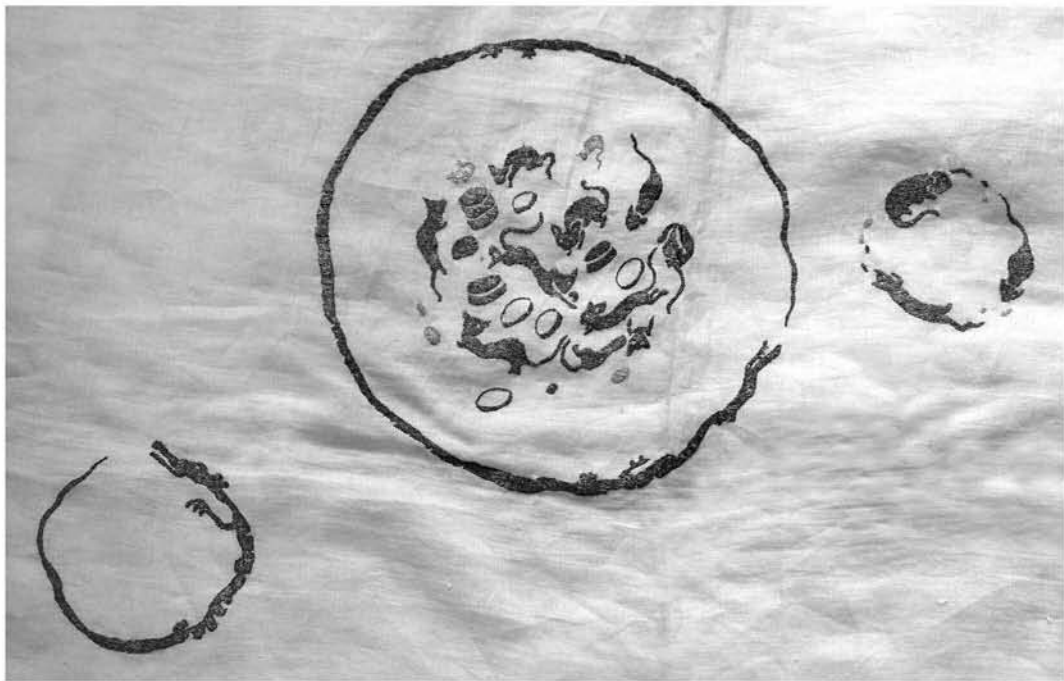
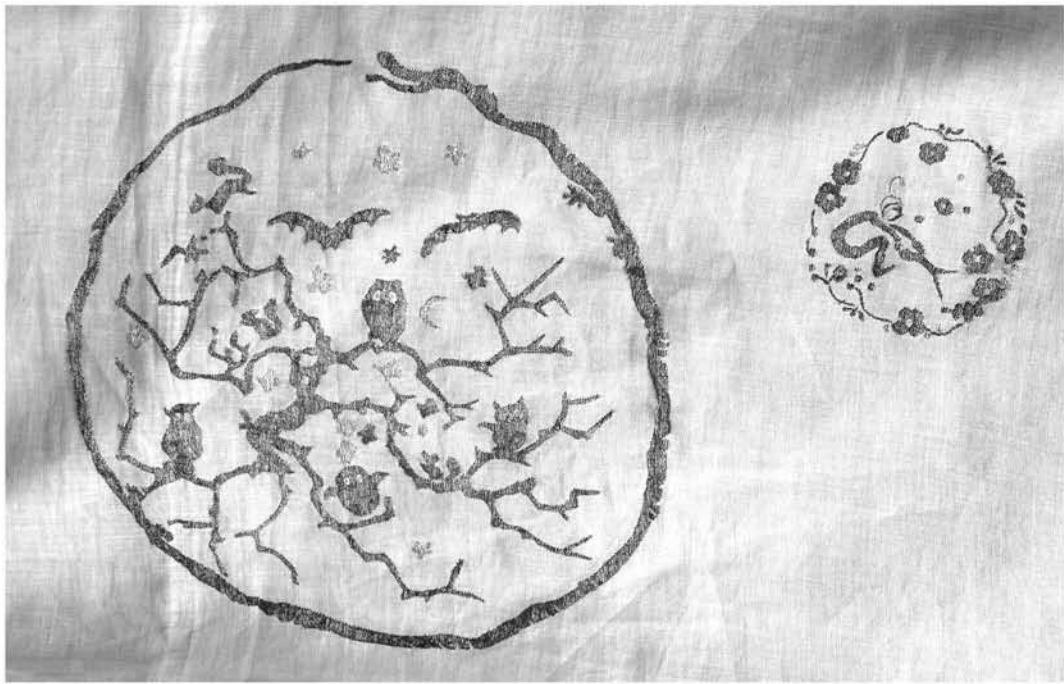
Similar piece: illustrated in Vogue, August 1929, pg 20

Philadelphia Museum of Art. Asc no. 2000-126-1

### Embroidery Appraisal by Katie Pirson

Peppermint green linen table cloth with 12 napkins and place settings. Embroidered with two grades of silver thread the motifs are worked in half satin stitch, so that a full stitch is worked only on the front, producing small horizontal stitches on the reverse of the piece. Details in the design, such as the stems of the foliage, are worked in a fine stem stitch. The piece is edged with a counted thread border; also worked in the silver thread, producing a secure rolled hem.





## **Boutique Italian in Rue Miromesnil, Paris**

### **Gallenga.**

Maria Monica Gallenga (1880 -1944) was an artist, surrounded by thinking people of her day.

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She married Peter Gallenga, a medical professor at the University in Rome. One of the first people to research cancer; he also helped her develop the technique of stencilling gold onto velvet.

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In 1928 she opened Boutique Italian in Rue Miromesnil in Paris.

It remained open until 1934.

References -

Similar piece illustrated in advertisement for the shop in Vogue, August 1929, pg 20.

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24. Linen Table cloth with six napkins.

On light cream linen.

The drawing in this textile is truly delightful and pulsates with whimsy and activity.

The various animals are playful and full of character; creating humorous scenes and intriguing patterns.

The embroidery consists of a repetitive border of small animals and insects and a central symmetrical scene.

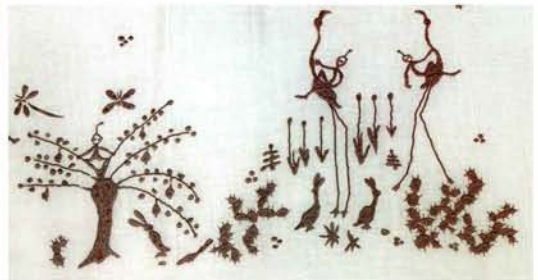
Designed by Maria M. Gallenga for her shop in Rue Miromesnil, Paris.

Circa 1928

106 x 66 inches, 2.69 x 1.86 m.

### **Embroidery Appraisal - Katie Pirson**

Fine light cream linen tablecloth embroidered with cotton. Design is worked in fawn coloured cotton with an ochre colour used for details and highlights. Motifs are stitched in half satin stitch, block shading stitch and trailing. A stitched buttonhole detail is worked around the hemmed edges.



Details of Gallenga

## Josephine Baker

In 1928, Les Galeries Lafayette filled their windows with Josephine Baker inspired fashion. Becker Fils, an avant-garde shop in Paris, operated in the 1920's - closing in 1928 - selling one-off designs with strong deco themes.

One of the period's most influential women was the singer and dancer Josephine Baker, whose performance in Revue Negra was truly electric. Despite her power, popularity and inspiration, few fine examples of her direct influence on fashion exist.

In 1927 she was the most photographed woman in the world. She received 1500 proposals of marriage.

Fashion Designers such as Vionet and Jean Patou offered her free and ever changing wardrobes. Paul Poiret, however, seems to have been a little more business like and famously sued her for an unpaid bill of 5000 francs. It emerged in court that over two years Josephine had spent 285,000 francs with him. The judge ruled that he was being somewhat unreasonable in his pursuit of the last 5000 francs and dismissed the case. This may not have been Poiret's own doing as he was in financial difficulties at the time and guided by a board of directors.

Her name was used to sell everything from cosmetics to alcohol. She must have been the first celebrity super brand!

Her lasting legacy is not for fashion or performance but as one of the most extraordinary fighters for human rights and racial tolerance in the 20th century.

References -

Wood, Ean, 'The Josephine Baker Story', London, 2000.

Abraham, John Kirby, 'In Search of Josephine Baker', New York, 2003.

Official Josephine Baker Website - <http://www.cmgworldwide.com/stars/baker/>.

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25. Waistcoat

Circa 1928

Embroidered on tightly woven raffia,

Lined in fine linen,

Labelled Becker Fils,

Excellent condition.





## Foxtons

Foxtons was well known for producing some of the best artist designed furnishings of the 1920s.

They commissioned artists such as Minnie Mcleish, Claude Lovat (of Footprints), Constance Irving and W. Herrman.

This example uses the original soft and muted colour combination, there is no fading. Art Deco Textiles has published this design in a colour way that was reproduced in 1966. Foxtons archives and records were destroyed during the Blitz.

References -

Samuels, Charlotte, 'Art Deco Textiles', London, 2003, pp. 23 and 123.

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26. Roller printed cotton furnishing fabric  
with abstract design that suggest machinery or architecture.

Designed by W. Herrman for William Foxtton, London.

Circa 1928

17 x 24 inches.

0.43 x 0.61 m.

## Eaton Rural Fabrics

Eaton Rural Fabrics began in 1922, although fabrics produced as early as 1919 by Harold Sanderson, at his Uxbridge site, used the name Eaton Rural Cretonnes. The company became Sandersons Fabrics in 1936. Thus there was a limited amount of material made under the label Eaton Rural Fabrics.

Designers included Mea Angerer, who trained at Wiener Werkstätte, and Minnie McLeish.

It was common practice for many companies to take designs from a range of sources and to adapt them for fabrics. This piece is adapted from a Sanderson wallpaper design of the period which in turn is very similar to design by Minnie McLeish.

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27. Roller printed cotton velvet.

Selvedge to selvedge

Design no. RG 178938.

For Eaton Rural Fabrics

Mid 1920s,

42.5 x 30.5 inches. 1.08 x 0.78 m.

Expert consulted - Michael Parry, Sanderson Archivist



## Allan Walton

Allan Walton was a painter, designer, decorator and architect. In 1932, he opened Allan Walton Textiles with his brother, Roger Walton.

Paul Nash writes in *The Listener*, 27th April, 1932,

*'For many years, would-be employers of designers [in England] have laboured under the odd superstition that artists with reputations as painters will not condescend to undertake commissions except for paintings.*

*It would be interesting to discover how this superstition arose; most manufacturers hold this today. I was led to ponder these things on first seeing an exhibition of Mr Allan Walton's textiles some weeks ago. Mr Walton is a painter and it is to painters rather than to craftsmen that he has applied for textile designs. Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell, Keith Baynes and Bernard Adeney form the nucleus of this experiment. That experiment has been completely successful within the limits imposed, and its limits are now being extended. The reason for its success, by no means only an aesthetic one, lies in the fact, I believe, that Mr Walton has faced his problem squarely and practically without any oblique high mindedness.*

*He first made certain of an appropriate and economical material and secured a block cutter able to interpret instead of copy the vagaries of a painter's technique... The result has been a number of excellent fabrics of original design which can be bought at a reasonable price... It is hoped this industry organised by an artist for artists will succeed where our 'business' men have not even attempted to fail.'*

References -

Jackson, Lesley, 'Twentieth Century Pattern Design', London, 2002, Pp. 86- 89.

Hayes Marshall, H. G, 'British Textiles Designers Today', London, 1939.

Causey, Andrew, 'Paul Nash: Writings on Art', London, 2000.

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### 28. Screen Printed Rayon.

For Allan Walton Textiles, possibly designed by T. Bradley or H J Bull.

Circa 1935

49 x 132 inches.

1.25 x 3.35 m.

### 29. Screen Printed Rayon.

For Allan Walton Textiles, possibly designed by T. Bradley or H J Bull.

Circa 1935

48 x 142 inches.

1.22 x 3.61 m.

At this early stage of screen printing, the screens used were small (10 inch repeat) and used in the same way as a block print.

Expert consulted - Mary Schoeser

Rayon is a transparent fibre made of processed cellulose. It was originally named 'artificial silk' or 'wood silk', but the name 'rayon' was created in 1924. Unlike nylon, rayon absorbs water.



## Eva Crofts

Eva Crofts was the Sister of Dame Laura Knight, the well known painter and writer of two autobiographies that vividly portrayed the girls' difficult and poverty stricken upbringing. Although never formally trained in textiles, having attended L'Ecole Des Beaux Arts in Paris, Crofts developed a distinctive and popular style that often used bold, primitive motifs - such as this one of leaves and branches - preferring to draw with a brush than a pencil, giving her designs an interesting freshness.

During this period she designed for Donald Bros, a well known company from Dundee that was at the height of its popularity by the 1930s. Along with the Old Bleached Linen Company, they produced many fabrics from coarse linen to fine cotton. The fabric used for this piece is known as 'Crash' and is a coarse linen which became a speciality of Donald Bros. The work of Crofts was especially suited to this fabric as, 'the rough texture of the cloth perfectly complements the earthy, primitive character of the pattern'.

Her work was exhibited at the Paris International Exhibition in 1937 and the Royal Academy. She also designed pottery for Clarice Cliff.

Similar example, illustrated in 'Twentieth Century Pattern Designs'.

References -

Jackson, Lesley, 'Twentieth Century Pattern Designs', Princeton, 2002, pg 79.

Hayes Marshall, H.G, 'British Textile Designers Today', London, 1939, Pp. 132 - 133.

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30. Screen printed on crash linen,  
with terracotta printed leaf motif.

Circa 1936

Designed by Eva Crofts

67 x 44 inches.

1.07 x 1.12 m.

Expert consulted - Mary Schoeser



## Health and Fitness

This piece is influenced by the popularity of health and fitness during this era. Following the First World War there was a UK Government sponsored drive to improve the health and fitness of the nation with Swimming pools - known as Lidos - and gyms springing up across the country and many businesses beginning to encourage fitness amongst their workers. The Women's League of Health and Beauty, founded by Ms Bagot Stack in 1930, had over 160 000 members by 1938.

References -

Forbes, Rosita, 'Women of All Lands', London, 1938, pp.200-202, 467 - 470.

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31. Roller printed gazed cotton,  
depicting sporting activities.

American.

Circa 1935

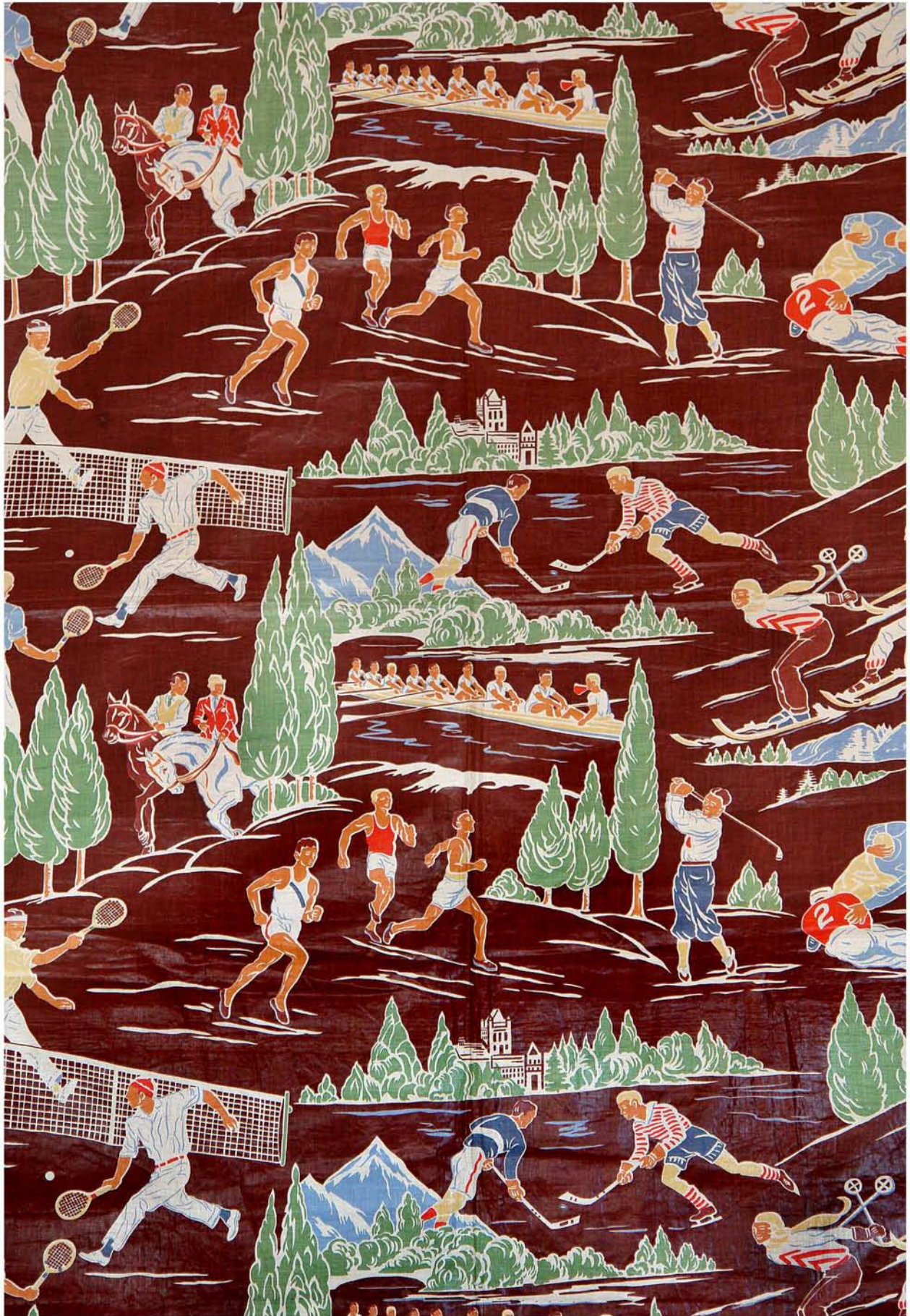
Selvedge to selvedge

47.5 x 35 inches.

1.21 x 0.89 m.







### Ashley Havinden (1903 - 1973)

Ashley Havinden was a designer, fortunate enough to work within a time when this label encompassed all areas of design.

He often collaborated with Edinburgh Weavers; especially on a popular range of 'Constructivist fabrics' that included the work of Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth. The head of Edinburgh Weavers, Alistair Morton, oversaw these pieces and believed in aiding designers in translating their ideas into weavings for mass production.

Havinden also had a varied career before becoming involved in textiles design, including designing electric fires and lamp shades. He began his working life at Crawfords, the advertising firm, and moved up through the company to become director.

Alongside this working life, he took a keen interest in art - taking lessons from Henry Moore. His art work was exhibited at the Lund Humphries Gallery (1937) and the London Gallery (1937).

He visited Europe often and became interested in the developments of the Bauhaus school, later collaborating with Moholy-Nagy in London. During the war, he met many European refugee artists such as Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer, becoming involved in a softer, calmer form of modernism - producing rugs and textiles of cool colours and painterly lines.

Havinden's fabrics were exhibited at the Paris and San Francisco exhibitions (1937 and 39). He has been described as a '*kind of modernist renaissance man.*'

Illustrated -

Photograph of 1936 in Boydell, Christine, 'The Architect of Floors', London, 1996, pg. 108.

References -

Hayes Marshall, H.G, 'British Textile Designers Today', London, 1939, Pp. 132 - 133.

Hollis, Richard, 'Advertising and the Artists: Ashley Havinden', National Galleries of Scotland, 1999.

Rayner, Geoffrey, 'Artists' Textiles in Britain', Suffolk, 2003, Pg 17.

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32. Twill woven in wool  
with vertical supplementary wefts.

Circa 1936

Designed by Ashley Havinden

43 x 44 inches.

1.09 x 1.12 m.

Illustrated -

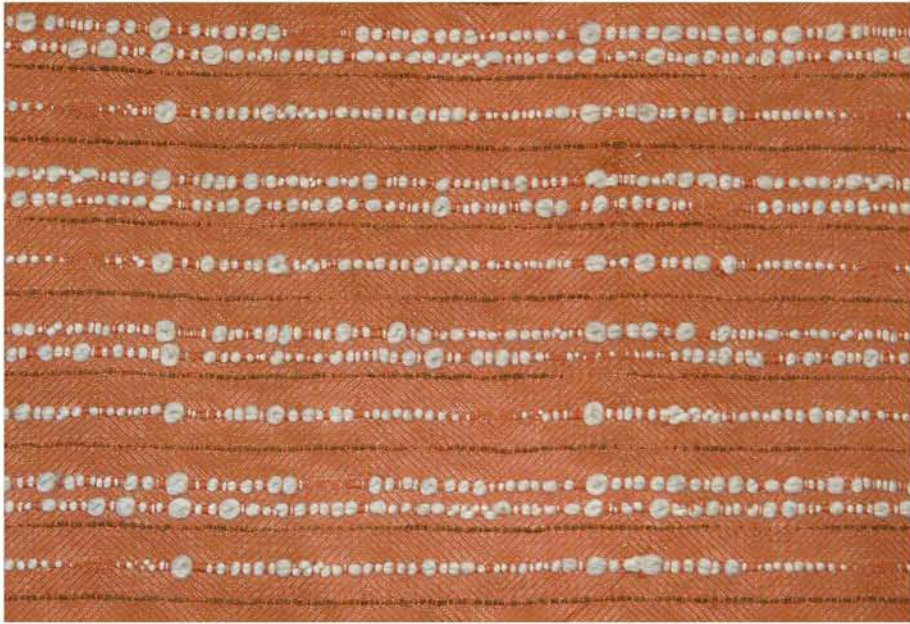
In a photograph of 1936 in 'The Architect of Floors', by Chritine Boydell London, 1996, pg. 108.

33. Tabby weave in wool  
with vertical and horizontal  
supplementary wefts

Circa 1936

Designed by Ashley Havinden

72 x 42 inches. 1.83 x 1.07 m.



### **Marion Dorn (1896-1964)**

Born in America before moving to Britain in 1922 and marrying graphic designer, Edward McKnight Kauffer. Arguably the most 'talented and gifted' designer working in Britain during the 1930s.

Having trained as a painter, she began designing batiks and furnishings fabrics that were sold through the avant-garde London shop, Modern Textiles. From 1926 she moved into designing rugs and collaborated often with Wilton Royal Carpet Factory.

She established her own company in 1934 which had a dual existence of creating designs for mass produced fabrics and creating unique rugs and fabrics. Her work was featured in all of the major British design exhibitions and typifies the Industrial Art movement.

Dorn moved on to create complete commissions and diversified her designs into furnishing and printed textiles, which were produced by Edinburgh Weavers, Warners, Old Bleach Linen Co. and Listers and Co. These designs were always conceived as architectural elements within a larger interior and so this affected the scale, colour and design of each piece. Natural motifs - such as shells, leaves and birds - were used although these were always stylised and rhythmic rather than realist. As her work progressed, the designs became larger and more architectural in look.

Her woven designers for Warners used few colours and patterns, preferring to focus on texture through varied weavings and fringed effects.

She moved to the United States at the outbreak of World War Two and died in Tangiers in 1964.

Textiles -

'In the great majority of middle class houses throughout the country (textiles) provide the dominant interest.'

Wainwright, Shirley, 'Modern Printed Textiles', Studio Magazine: November, 1926, Pg. 394 - 400.

References -

Jackson, Lesley, 'Twentieth Century Pattern Design', London, 2002, Pp. 86- 89.

Boydell, Christine, 'The Architect of Floors', London, 1996.

Hayes Marshall, H.G, 'British Textile Designers Today', London, 1939, Pp. 132 - 133.

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**34.** Twill woven rayon and linen and hand tufted chenille.

88 x 80 inches, 2.24 x 2.03 m (whole hanging) 1937

**35.** Twill woven rayon and linen and hand tufted chenille.

88 X 20 inches, 2.24 x 0.53 m (panel) 1937

**36.** Twill woven rayon and linen and hand tufted chenille.

88 x 43 inches, 2.24 x 1.09 m (central panel) 1937

**37.** Twill woven rayon and linen and hand tufted chenille.

88 x 20 inches, 2.24 x 0.53 m (panel) 1937

Expert consulted - Mary Schoeser



### **The H. G. Hayes Marshall Prize**

This design is one of several selected by H G Hayes Marshall from over 100 designs submitted by young students of the London Central College. As with Studio Martine and the Footprints studio, this use of children marked an attempt by these manufacturers to give their textiles a naivety and a freshness that machines and convention had not allowed.

This design was screen printed at Warners for Fortnum and Mason.

Warners was founded by Benjamin Warner.

The company was known for the high quality of the fabrics produced and for employing some of the most well known designers of fashion and furnishings in London.

H G Hayes Marshall

Interior designer and managing director of Fortnum and Mason. Hugely influential figure of the day, who in 1939 compiled the who's who of the freelance design world in the UK.

References -

Hayes Marshall, H.G, 'British Textile Designers Today', London, 1939.

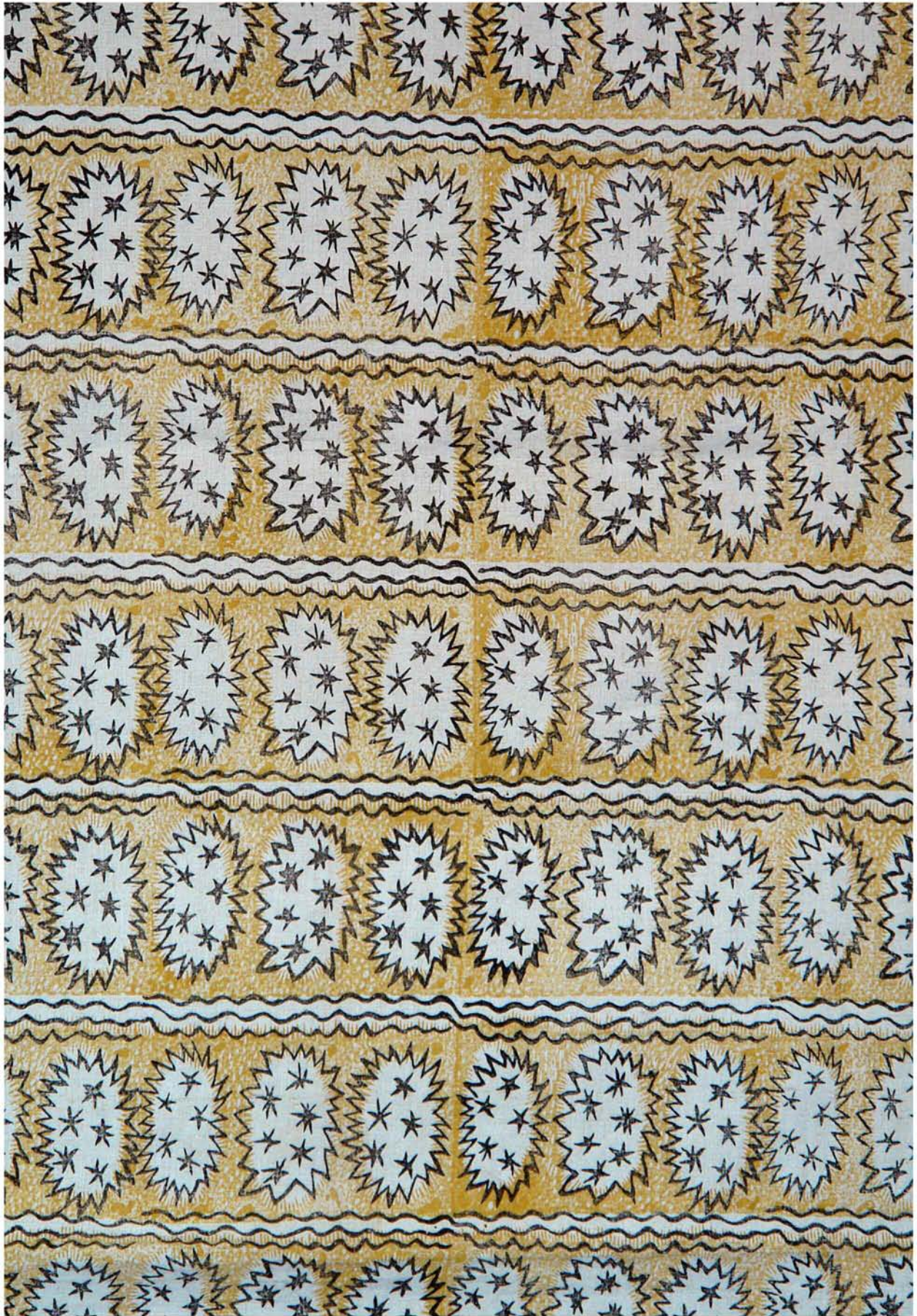
Samuels, Charlotte, 'Art Deco Textiles', London, 2003, pg 143.

Scheoser, Mary, 'English and American Textiles', London, 1989, pg 192.

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38. Hand block printed linen  
with repetitive yellow star design  
For Warners for Fortnum and Mason.  
1937  
51 x 50 inches.  
1.30 x 1.27 m.

Expert consulted - Mary Scheoser



## Nancy Nicholson

Nancy Nicholson (1899 - 1977), the sister of Ben Nicholson (artist) and married to Robert Graves (writer).

In 1929, after the break up of her marriage, she opened Poulk Prints in Wiltshire. The shop produced hand printed fabrics. She was a staunch feminist and travelled the local area providing women with advice on contraception while the topic was still taboo. Nancy was involved in typography, printing and textile design and manufacture. Her work was a rather small scale enterprise but often included creating interior designs. She moved her business into Motcomb Street, London in the 1940s and chose to maintain the business on a small scale, being staunchly protective of her designs, refusing to sell to large businesses such as Peter Jones.

This block print is an inspiration piece, for Nicholson's commission for the interior of the Provost's house at Oriel College, Oxford. Nicholson's ideas reflect the medieval style of the building - from its woodwork through to its textiles - and she studied medieval art especially for this commission.

Her work was exhibited at the Victoria and Albert museum in 1977.

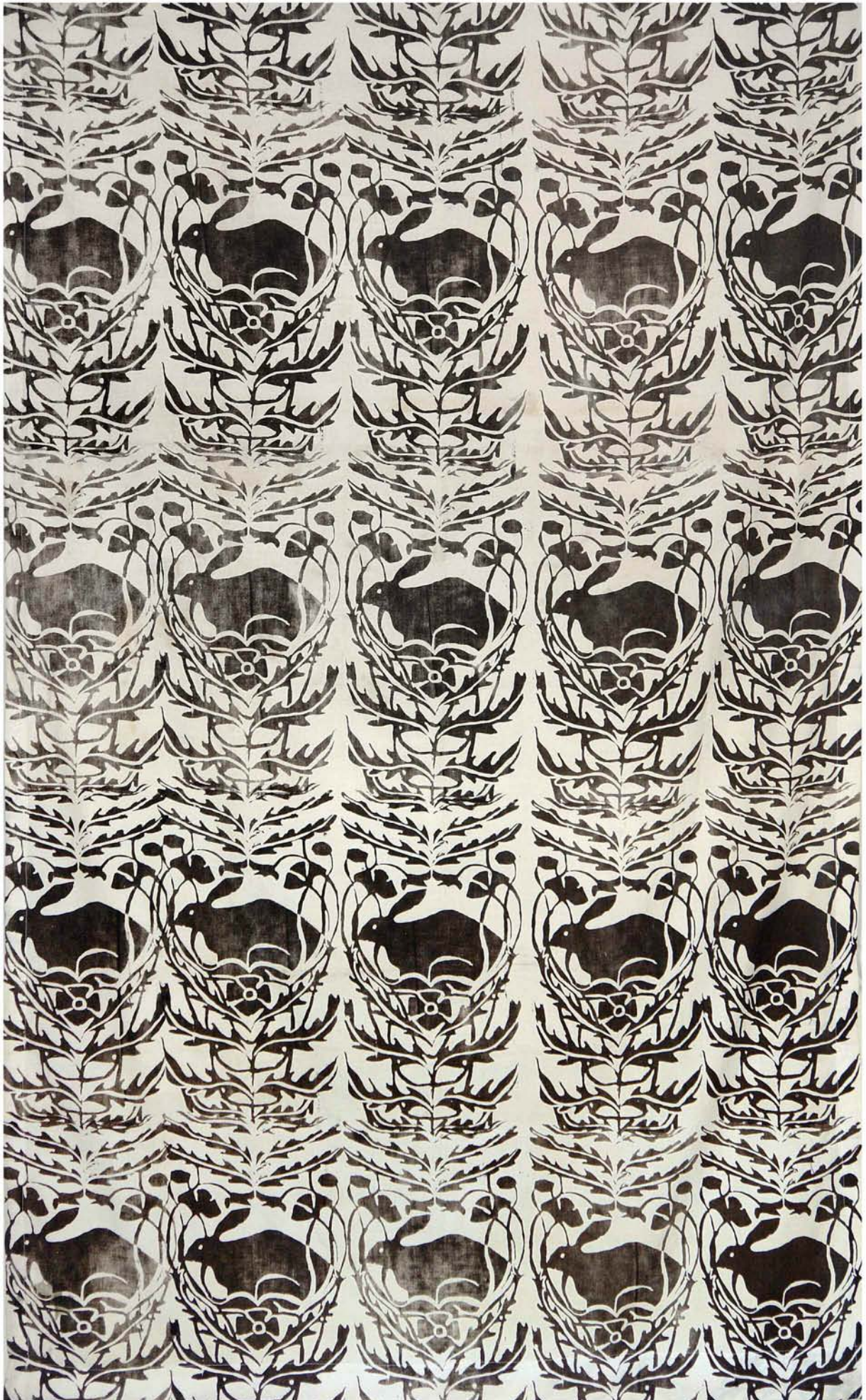
References -

Moore, Helena, 'The Nicholsons: A Story of Four People and their Designs', York City Art Gallery, 1988.  
Powers, Alan, 'Modern Block Printed Textiles', London, 1992, Pg. 46.

---

39. Hand block printed on cotton,  
depicting repetitive rabbit and floral motif.  
1939  
36 x 62 inches.  
0.92 x 1.58 m.





### **Building the world of Tomorrow**

This fabric depicts various architectural elements of the World Fair that took place in New York in 1939, as a celebration of 150 years since the inauguration of George Washington. It was major social, political and cultural event that contained numerous 'zones' of exhibits, exploring the future through themes such as; technology and industry; food and commerce and transportation. The 'Government zone' was truly international with over sixty countries being represented.

The sculptural piece illustrated within this piece is the Trylon and Perisphere which was designed by architects Harrison and Foulhoux .

Jeffrey Hart argues that,

*'(This piece could be seen as the) climax of High Modernism, perhaps its greatest architectural achievement.'*

(1939: The Lost World of the Fair: - book reviews National Review, July 31, 1995).

*'I think there are moments when you can see the world turning into what it will be. For me, the New York fair is such a moment.'*

The fair ultimately stood for HOPE.

References -

'The New York World's Fair in Pictures', New York, 1929.

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~1930s/DISPLAY/39wf/front.htm>

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40. 1939 World Fair,  
American Roller Printed Cotton.  
1939  
35 x 17 inches.  
0.89 x 0.43 m.



## Additional Information

### Wiener Werkstätte

A group of designers - including Josef Hoffman and Koloman Moser - who were brought together in 1903, at the peak of the Art Nouveau movement and aimed to move away from this style towards more modern designs. Important members of this workshop included; Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, Emilie Flöge, Max Lenz, Dagobert Peche, Oskar Kokoschka, and Otto Prutscher.

The school's designs were both exclusive and expensive. Hoffman once said, "Since it is not possible to work for the whole market, we will concentrate on those who can afford it."

The workshop believed that design schools should include practical classes on making art (rather than just designing it); fine and decorative art should be seen on equal footing; and fine arts, architectural arts and decorative arts should be unified.

Their fabrics were constructed by block printing and silk screening, using bold and simple repetitive designs; often floral or geometric.

Within their architectural projects, they aimed to make hand crafted objects to satisfy all elements of modern living. The Wiener Werkstätte was responsible for the Sanatorium at Purkersdorf, near Vienna (1904) and the Palais Stoclet in Brussels (1905-11). Not only were these buildings architecturally striking but every element within their walls was designed by the school - from furniture to curtains.

The first show room was opened in Vienna in 1907 and soon branches were established in Berlin, Zurich and New York - specialising in fabrics, lace and light fittings.

The school came to an end in 1932.

### Glasgow School

The Glasgow School of Art was begun in 1845 as one of the government sponsored schools of design. Glasgow was already a thriving and significant site of textile manufacture and design and so from the outset textiles were central to the school's programme. The school was moving steadily but the inclusion of Francis Newberry in 1885 was a real turning point and by the turn of the century the school was the most successful in Britain.

The School's premises, commissioned in 1906, was a masterpiece of architecture and design by Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Although Mackintosh was successful across mainland Europe at the time, his talents were not recognised in the same way within Britain. He designed furniture and interiors for the school and his textiles designs can be seen to be similar to those of the Glasgow school's resident designers - using stylised flowers and simple border motifs.

He worked in Glasgow from 1897 to 1905 and was very busy during these years before moving to London and then back to Europe.

The school produced fresh and clean designs that moved away from the ornate and traditional patterns of the 19th century. Textiles classes were begun by Jessie Rowat in 1889 and she was influential in her encouragement of creativity and individuality, breaking away from the insistence on precise techniques being the most important element to the creation of a successful piece.

The school lost some of its momentum in the years following the First World War.

### The Bauhaus

The Bauhaus was established in 1918 under the leadership of Walter Gropius. The philosophy behind the school was that the arts should be united, rather than isolated from one another, and that art and industry should work hand in hand.

Gropius believed that artists should be thoroughly trained as craftsmen, and that a rigorous curriculum was necessary to a student's success. He saw no real distinction between art and craftsmanship and believed that however talented, an artist must be taught the correct methods and practices.

He suggested that, 'It is a fundamental requirement of all artistic creativity that every student undergo a thorough training in the workshops.'

Some within the Bauhaus did not agree with Gropius' leadership. Johannes Itten, a very influential member of the school during its initial years, was much more experimental and progressive in his teaching methods; encouraging students to explore subjectivity in colour and method. He looked at the spiritual and emotional within art as well as the scientific and practical. His teachings were integral to the success of many within the Bauhaus - such as Klee, who used Itten's colour theories within many of his paintings - but he left the Bauhaus in 1923 due to his differences with Gropius.

Similarly, Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky identified with Itten, organising 'free painting classes' and trying to move away from the functionality and heavily taught precedent set by Gropius.

## **Textiles within the Bauhaus**

The few women who were admitted to the Bauhaus were allowed to study within the textiles workshops and weaving classes that were established early in the school's history.

Weaving was a very technical endeavour and one that typified the Bauhaus' aims of combining art and industry. The students were not taught textiles history or traditional methods and so their designs had a free and experimental nature which would then be adapted to mass production.

## **Block Printing**

This was an important style and technique of this period. Despite the advances of the early 19th century, with techniques such as roller printing and the effects of industrialism, there was a reaction against this by many. Instead the textiles of this period can be seen to embody a primitivism and a concentration on naïveté and spontaneity, colour and character. There was also a desire to move away from the machinery that had been responsible for World War One.

These effects were achievable with the use of block printing, one of the oldest known methods of transferring a design onto fabric. Blocks could be cut roughly or flocked to create a sharper print - although many chose not to do so during this period - and pressure can be applied in varying degrees to create different prints. Barron and Larcher even used the assistance of local school girls to lend a further naïveté and 'rusticism' to the prints. Thus, unlike machine printing, the use of a hand printed block produced 'lively irregularities' and allowed for experimentation, letting the character of the designer come through in various ways. The lack of complex and expensive materials also meant that designers had a complete freedom and independence while retaining the regularity and discipline of the block.

The introduction of screen printing and faster techniques in the post war period meant that block printing was not used greatly after the war:

## **Short biographies of :**

### **Johannes Itten (1888-1967)**

Itten joined the Bauhaus in October 1919 teaching the preliminary course. His focus lay in the study of objects and materials, analysis of Old Masters and life drawing. He was aware of the newly established educational reform theory and was familiar with the artists of the avant-garde. In more practical terms this meant that he wanted his students to find their inner being and develop a well tuned personality. He started his class with breathing exercises and gymnastics and let his students decide whose work was the best. Nonetheless he was quite rightly described as the backbone of the Bauhaus. His 'Vorkurs', the preliminary course, was continued in a very similar style even after he left the institution. It is said that it was his passion for the development of the individual which eventually led to a fall out with Walter Gropius, the director of the Bauhaus. The latter was of the opinion that commercial work was essential to keep the school alive and Itten couldn't see this go hand in hand with individualism. Itten eventually founded his own school in Berlin in 1925.

### **Lady Ottoline Violet Anne Morrell (1873-1938)**

Ottoline Morrell was an influential and generous woman. She was an enabler, financial backer and keen supporter of many within the arts, including Henry Lamb, Marion Stoll (see ct no 11-14) and D H Lawrence. Married to politician, Phillip Morrel, she lived in Bloomsbury and kept a country home in Garsington, near Oxford from which she entertained artists, writers and philosophers. She was an engaging and intelligent hostess, being described by Augustus John - as mysterious and a compulsive listener. She had a very long and intense relationship with Bertram Russell.

Morrel had a sincere interest in contemporary art, becoming a founding member of the Contemporary Art Society that encouraged the work of young artists. She was Roger Fry's sole supporter of the controversial, Impressionist exhibition in 1910.

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## Afterword

This is by no means a complete survey of this era but rather a look at the Modernist period through textiles that we have discovered during the last few years.

Looking for textiles of this period in good condition is not an easy task. After the war, in the early twenties, production for textiles was varied and abundant. By 1923, with the recession, it became common practice to manufacture to order; therefore few textiles survive at source. Unlike pottery, textiles have not traditionally been collected and so much has been discarded as rubbish.

The avant-garde workshops of the time, had in many cases, attempted to rediscover an innocence, to connect to a inner quality of being. This had been very much buried with the harshness of the First World War and was much needed to equip them for the strange new journey into the mechanised century.

We were thrilled to discover Marion Stoll. Her letters to Ottoline Morrel illustrate her dedication and struggle for expression in her chosen art. She appears to have been a single woman in a world where few opportunities were available to her. She was, however, no feminist - she claimed that it was men, not women, that enabled her art to be looked at seriously. Her letters reflect her intelligence, humour, bravery and vulnerability. Her articles for Studio Magazine are uncompromising.

Alice Ntare (nee Ruddy) was the inspiration for this project. Her exquisite embroidery converted me to the period and back to that medium, although I think it unlikely that we will find such a work again.

This project was enormous fun and very stimulating. I now think of "modern" with a new appreciation. Recently at the Frieze art show in London, Clive Bell's definition came to mind and I speculated whether Contemporary art could be regarded as modern in any way at all!

At the time of going to press we have a number of Modernist pieces as yet un researched. We hope to have these on our website soon - [www.estherfitzgerald.com](http://www.estherfitzgerald.com).

During this project I have been offered advice, books, leads, contacts, ears, enthusiasm and support from many people but I would particularly like to thank Georgia Atienza of National Portrait Gallery, Dilys Blum (Philadelphia Art Museum), Holland Cotter, Oriel Curren (Victoria and Albert Museum), Shirley Day, Deborah Davis, Helen Dunstan, Sarah Galbraith, Adrian Goodman, (Grandson of Ottoline Morrel), Dr. Jennifer Harris (Whitworth Art Museum), Dr. Lynn Hulse (Royal School of Needlework), Sue Kerry, Pamela Parmel (Boston Fine Arts Museum), Katie Pirson (on loan from the Royal School of Needlework), Michael Perry (Sandersons), Paul Reeves, Clive Rogers, Harrie Schloss, Mary Schoeser (possibly the most erudite person in textile history), Molly Schwartzburg and the Harry Ransom Centre, University of Texas, Sandy Scott, Poppy Stothert, Lynn Szygenda (Embroiderers' Guild), Kerry Taylor, Barry Trice, Caroline Turner, Daniel Walker (The Washington Textile Museum), Andrew Weaving, Michael Whiteway, Junnaa Wroblewski and last but not least Amy Hibbert who has conscientiously and enthusiastically enabled this project to reach its conclusion.

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