

Textiles of the 20th Century™



January 2005

Image: Maharam_T20_000GroupShot_1.tif,
photography by Philippe Regard

press@maharam.com
Maharam 251 Park Avenue South NY, NY 10010
800.645.3943 maharam.com

Maharam is home to Textiles of the 20th Century™, an upholstery and window covering series dedicated to modern design. Particular attention has been paid to accurate documentation and detailed rendering of these timeless designs, while assuring that each is suitable for commercial application. Reflecting the resurgent popularity of mid-century modernism, Textiles of the 20th Century™ pays homage to the great multi-disciplinarians of the last century and brings their enduring work in textiles back to life.

ANNI ALBERS

Anni Albers developed a design vocabulary emphasizing precision and clarity as a student at the Bauhaus weaving workshop during the 1920s and 1930s. After the closure of the Bauhaus in 1933, she and her husband, designer and artist Josef Albers, relocated to the United States, where she became the first woman and weaver to have a solo exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in New York (1949). Albers' textile designs played with the relationship between shape, texture, line and form, and her explorations of the medium's possibilities produced important innovations in the design and fabrication of modern textiles.

Maharam worked with the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation to reissue two of the master weaver's most notable textiles, Chenille Stripe and Raffia Cord. Once again, Albers' vision can be touched, applied to upholstered furniture, and enjoyed as the artist intended: by those seeking a modern yet timeless alternative to available options in textiles.

GUNNAR AAGAARD ANDERSEN

Gunnar Aagaard Andersen was a pioneer of Danish modernism, and was known for experimental works in many disciplines from painting to furniture, sculpture, architecture, theatre and textiles. Andersen often stretched boundaries by working with unexpected media and materials. In 1953, he designed a chair using newspaper and wire that uncannily resembles Verner Panton's namesake Panton chair (1960). His Armchair (1964) was constructed from a large mass of polyurethane foam and has come to symbolize material exploration throughout the 1960s.

Andersen's analytical approach as a painter influenced his work in other disciplines, and the Maharam reissue of the design Letters reveals Andersen's fascination with the written form and with graphic and typological themes. Letters, originally produced in the mid-1950s, began with several collages based on curtailed typographical motifs of capital and lower case letters and numbers. By enlarging what was originally a small font size, the letters and numbers take on an intentionally abstract appearance, emphasized by a subtly jagged epingle construction.

CHARLES AND RAY EAMES

The husband and wife team Charles and Ray Eames firmly believed in Modernism as an agent of social change. Ray came to Modernism through painterly abstraction and Charles through his love of industrial production methods. To Charles and Ray, "good" design centered around function, materiality, and accessibility. The Eameses' sought to bring "the good life" to the general public by integrating high and low art forms, modern materials, and production technologies, as well as craft and design. They advocated mass production as the ideal way to spread low cost, high quality modern design to post-war America. Although visually reminiscent of the era in which they were designed, each Eames pattern projects the timelessness of the Eameses' design convictions.

The first release in Maharam's archival series, four Eames textiles—Dot Pattern, Small Dot Pattern, Circles, and Crosspatch—were originally designed for The Museum of Modern Art's "Competition for Printed Fabrics" in 1947. Working closely with Lucia Eames (Charles' daughter), the Maharam Design Studio interpreted the Eameses' original artwork into woven textiles. The resulting textiles remain true to the design

Textiles of the 20th Century™

duo's "Good Design" philosophy. Additionally, Maharam has introduced Dot Pattern Sheer, in both negative and positive burnout motifs, as a window covering.

ALEXANDER GIRARD

Noted as one of the 20th century's most influential modernist designers and architects, Alexander Girard also achieved prominence as director of Herman Miller's textile division from its formation in 1952 through the 1960s. His attention to tone, texture, and pattern translated into vivid fabrics that emphasized strong forms and bold colors. Other noteworthy projects include Girard's design of La Fonda del Sol restaurant (1959) and the "Good Design" exhibition at Museum of Modern Art in New York (1954).

Maharam offers ten Girard upholstery patterns: Checker (1965), Checker Split (1965), Double Triangles (1952), Facets (1952), Mikado (1954), Quatrefoil (1954), Jacobs Coat (1959), Toostripe (1965), Millerstripe (1973) and Names (1957). Many of the patterns emphasize strong geometries and the use of form to create visual movement, while others reflect the influence of Girard's travels to Mexico and India. In order to remain true to Girard's vision, the Maharam Design Studio developed 40 individual yarn colors, providing an exact match with the original warp stripe, while utilizing modern dyeing techniques to ensure adequate light fastness for contract use.

Maharam also offers three Girard Wallcovering patterns designed in 1952. Originally offered as silk-screened paper, the Maharam Design Studio re-engineered Alphabet, Circles and Roman Stripe as contract wallcoverings using an innovative non-PVC substrate constructed of cellulose and polyester.

CAMILLE GRAESER

Born in Carouge, Switzerland, Camille Graeser was raised in Stuttgart, Germany, where he attended the Royal Craft School, studying furniture and interior design. Influenced by the precursors of Bauhaus, Graeser opened his own studio and produced works across myriad fields, including furniture, graphics, packaging and window displays.

When the anti-modernist politics of 1930's Germany forced his return to Switzerland, Graeser struggled to find work as a designer and shifted his focus to painting and textile design. Now cited as a leading example of Swiss constructivism, Graeser worked alongside Max Bill and Richard Paul Lohse to promote art as an expression of systems and mechanical technique-free of representation and subjectivity. As with his paintings, the patterns he developed for textiles were literally measured and constructed. The skewed, irregular grid of Rhombus exemplifies the 3-D effects common among Graeser's early textile works.

JOSEF HOFFMANN

A founder of the Wiener Werkstätte, Josef Hoffmann is noted for his prescient shift away from the literal, representational patterns of the times, toward the abstracted, geometrical motifs of early modernism. Influenced by the Austrian Arts and Craft movement, the Wiener Werkstätte embraced simplicity, local materials and craft traditions in reaction against "useless" gingerbread ornamentation and industrial mass production.

Josef Hoffmann was one of the premier Viennese proponents of the Gesamtkunstwerk, a coordinated environment in which every object down to the last teaspoon was consciously designed to unify all facets of human life into one cohesive work of art. A gifted and prolific designer of architecture, furniture, utensils, clothing, posters, textiles, and wallpaper, Hoffmann was convinced of the social and spiritual benefits of harmonious living environments designed by a single creative mind. Around 1900, Hoffmann developed the geometrically refined signature style that he incorporated in designs for silver, furniture, carpets, linens, and lamps, as well as the offset diamond pattern of Design 7208. Never manufactured as a woven textile, Design 7208 retains the working name listed on the original drawing.

ARNE JACOBSEN

Arne Jacobsen dreamed of becoming a painter, but, upon his father's urgings, studied architecture at the Royal Danish Academy of Arts. In 1930, Jacobsen established his own studio. Best known for his furniture designs, Jacobsen is credited with the Ant (1952) and Seven (1955) iconic stacking chairs as well as the Swan and Egg Chairs (1956) created for the Royal SAS Hotel in Copenhagen. His innovations introduced a new kind of classic aesthetic with their simple beauty, organic structure and practical functionality.

Trapez was reissued in 2002 to mark the 100-year anniversary of Jacobsen's birth. Widely known for his architecture and industrial design, Jacobsen's textiles remain relatively unknown. His creations range from nature-inspired motifs to abstract and geometric patterns. Trapez, a trapezoidal pattern, was used by Jacobsen in 1957 for the Munkegårds School in Gentofte, Denmark.

Textiles of the 20th Century™

KOLOMAN MOSER

A founder of the Wiener Werkstätte, Koloman Moser is noted for his prescient shift away from the literal, representational patterns of the times, toward the abstracted, geometrical motifs of early modernism. Influenced by the Austrian Arts and Craft movement, the Wiener Werkstätte embraced simplicity, local materials and craft traditions in reaction against “useless” gingerbread ornamentation and industrial mass production.

As a teacher, artist, and craftsman, Koloman Moser had an immense influence on the tastes of his time. A graduate of Vienna School for Arts and Crafts, he later returned to the school as a professor and revolutionized the coursework. Like many members of the Wiener Werkstätte, Moser was an incredibly versatile artist. He began his career with graphics, fashion drawings, and book illustrations, but soon turned his creative eye to ceramics, furniture, jewelry, fabrics, and all aspects of interior design. The stylized daisies in Orakelblume illustrate Moser’s penchant for juxtaposing geometric shapes with whimsical motifs.

GEORGE NELSON

Architect, writer, and designer, George Nelson brought a European sensibility to American mid-century modern design. He espoused a rigorous interpretation of modernist aesthetics through a series of influential writings and a wide range of design projects, including the Ball Clock (1950), Marshmallow Sofa (1956), and the Sherman Fairchild Townhouse in New York (1941).

Maharam has reissued two patterns of the only textiles designed by George Nelson: Pavement and China Shop. Originally designed in 1950 and produced by Schiffer Prints, the textiles reflect Nelson’s commitment to applying modern design principles to a variety of media.

VERNER PANTON

In the 1950s and 1960s, Verner Pantan emerged as one of Denmark’s most celebrated post-war furniture and textile designers. He chose metal and plastics as his preferred media over wood, an expression of his belief that designers should employ the most advanced technology available. Decades after their introductions, Pantan’s 1968 all plastic cantilevered chair (known as the Pantan Chair) and other groundbreaking pieces, continue to influence modern furniture design.

Maharam has reissued three of Pantan’s famously dazzling geometric patterns that modernized textile design. These patterns are living canvases, op-art surfaces that project all the visual energy of a Vasarely print. With Geometri (1960), Optik (1965) and Unisol (1965), a new generation of design aficionados can experience the brilliant geometries that brought an unprecedented sense of movement to interior textiles, giving new meaning to the term “architectural fabrics.” Working with Marianne Pantan, Verner Pantan’s widow, Maharam has updated fiber content and construction to make Pantan’s work suitable for a wide range of commercial applications. The fabrics have lost none of the high-resolution clarity or vivid color that Pantan originally envisioned. Maharam has also introduced Geometri Sheer, a window covering comprised of a burnout motif of Pantan’s original design.

DAGOBERT PECHE

Although he hoped to become a painter, Dagobert Peche was trained as an architect. A penchant for imaginary, less than functional forms, combined with a depressed economy following the First World War, influenced Peche’s entrance into the applied arts. After a chance meeting with Joseph Hoffman, Peche joined the Wiener Werkstätte, a progressive alliance of decorative artists and craftsmen that embraced simplicity, local materials and craft traditions in reaction against “useless” gingerbread ornamentation and industrial mass production.

Peche preferred to work with direct stylizations of realistic forms, and as a result, the same motifs—bouquets, vines, grapes, butterflies, and cornucopia—repeat throughout his work. Blumen (1913) perfectly illustrates both his exaggerated style and the design zeitgeist of the time; modern geometric patterns are juxtaposed with traditional botanical design to create a fanciful twist on a familiar theme. An extremely prolific designer, Peche applied his unique decorative language across a vast array of media, including interior and textile design, furniture, fashion, ceramics, glass, metalwork, jewelry and wallpaper, before his untimely death at the age of thirty-six.

GIO PONTI

Gio Ponti, a leading modernist of the 20th century, is well-known for his iconic Pirelli Tower in Milan and the enduring Superleggera Chair for Cassina in 1957. His work encompassed a broad and prolific spectrum of architecture and design. New materials used in austere,

Textiles of the 20th Century™

yet classic proportions are signature details of Ponti's work. As founder and editor of Domus magazine, Ponti had a major influence on the proliferation of the modernist approach after World War II, in Italy, and beyond.

Maharam has reissued *I Morosi alla Finestra*, or "The Lovers at the Window," a fabric designed by Ponti in 1930. "*I Morosi alla Finestra*" is a charming interpretation of how windows connect inside and outside spaces. The fabric was originally designed as a silk drapery in a 90 cm width. Maharam has reissued the design in 54" width in a silk construction true to this fabric's origins, suitable for either window covering or light upholstery.

New York-based Maharam offers a comprehensive collection of textiles for seating, walls, window covering, systems and healthcare applications.