



THE TEXTILE MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 12, 2010

Media Contact: Cyndi Bohlin, Communications and Marketing Manager
(202) 667-0441, ext. 78 or cbohlin@textilemuseum.org

MID-CENTURY DESIGN SHOWCASED IN UPCOMING EXHIBIT

Art by the Yard: Women Design Mid-Century Britain opens at The Textile Museum May 15, 2010

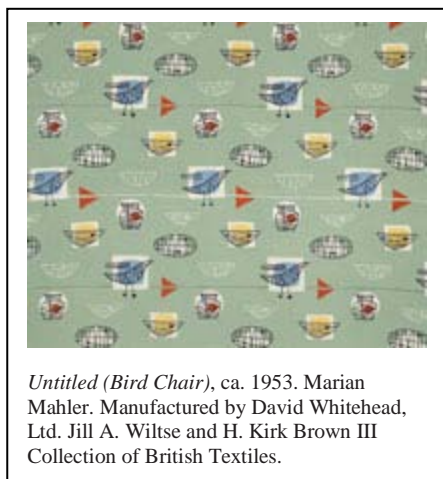
May 12, 2010, Washington, D.C. — Inspired by modernist painters, textile designer **Lucienne Day** (1917-2010) transformed the post-war British home and made stylish design available for all with her affordable patterned fabrics. The upcoming Textile Museum exhibition *Art by the Yard: Women Design Mid-Century Britain* celebrates the work of Day and two of her contemporary female British designers: **Jacqueline Groag** (1903-1985) and **Marian Mahler** (1911-1983). Turning their backs on the austerity of the wartime era, Day, Groag, and Mahler helped pioneer a colorful and playful mid-century aesthetic, forever transforming the interior design industry. *Art by the Yard: Women Design Mid-Century Britain* is on view at The Textile Museum May 15 – September 12, 2010.



Calyx, 1951. Lucienne Day. Manufactured by Heal Fabrics. Jill A. Wiltse and H. Kirk Brown III Collection of British Textiles.

About the Exhibition

Featuring more than 50 colorful textiles drawn from the private Jill A. Wiltse and H. Kirk Brown III Collection of British Textiles, as well as select pieces of mid-century furniture, *Art by the Yard* is the first exhibit of its kind in Washington, D.C. Magazines from the era featuring advertisements and profiles of these celebrity designers add context to the pieces on display. Noted as “full of imaginative fabrics by women who deserve more recognition” by *Washington Post* art critic Blake Gopnik, the exhibition opens in a year when high quality design on a limited budget is especially relevant.



Untitled (Bird Chair), ca. 1953. Marian Mahler. Manufactured by David Whitehead, Ltd. Jill A. Wiltse and H. Kirk Brown III Collection of British Textiles.

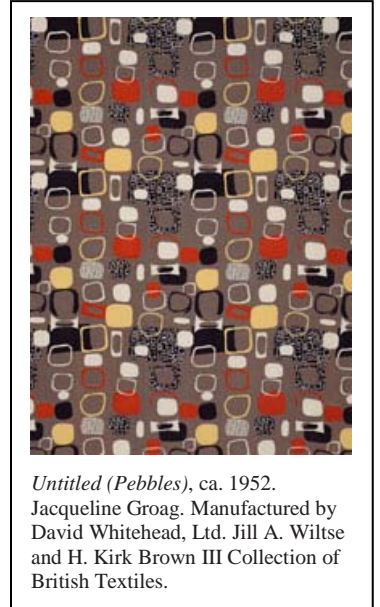
The majority of the pieces in the exhibit were created by Lucienne Day, one of Britain’s most prolific and successful female designers. Her patterns, used for wallpapers, fabrics and tea towels, contributed to a distinctive 1950s and ‘60s aesthetic. Yet her sophisticated color choices and inventive references to nature remain surprisingly fresh. In 2005 Converse launched a shoe with her design *Magnetic* (1957), featured in the Textile Museum exhibition. Day, who passed away January 30, 2010, launched her career at the 1951 Festival of Britain. Her furnishing fabric *Calyx*, with its floating forms and bright colors, resonated with consumers and launched her international career. Along with her

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husband, furniture designer **Robin Day**, Lucienne believed in modern design’s transformative power to shape a better world and sought to create beautiful, useful objects accessible to all. Britain’s answer to American designer-duo Charles and Ray Eames, the Days became the poster couple for young and stylish homeowners.

Select designs by Mahler and Groag are featured in *Art by the Yard* along with Lucienne Day’s work. Groag, originally from Czechoslovakia, is considered one of Britain’s most versatile designers. Her bold patterns were used for fabrics (both for the home and dress), furniture, wallpaper, and even in subway and airplane design. Mahler is renowned for her whimsical designs, with motifs ranging from birds to abstract forms. Her affordable textiles were seen in fashionable homes throughout Britain and complemented contemporary decorating styles.

As Britain’s design industry was regaining momentum, Lucienne Day, Jacqueline Groag and Marian Mahler dared to offer a fresh approach to textile design in an era dominated by male professional artists. Believing that “good design” should be available for everyone, their products shaped the national aesthetic and continue to offer artistic inspiration and delight today.



Art by the Yard: Women Design Mid-Century Britain is curated by Shanna Shelby (Curator, Jill A. Wiltse and H. Kirk Brown III Collection of British Textiles) and coordinated by Lee Talbot (Associate Curator, The Textile Museum).

Related Programs

The Textile Museum will offer a full slate of exhibition-related programs in conjunction with *Art by the Yard*, including lectures by visiting scholars **Jennifer Harris**, deputy director of the Whitworth Art Gallery at the University of Manchester, England, **Dr. Pat Kirkham**, professor at the Bard Graduate Center for the Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design and Culture, and **Titi Halle**, owner and director of Cora Ginsburg LLC, a New York gallery.

Two complementary workshops – one on silk screening and one on digital textile design – will be offered during the summer months. Look forward to period films such as *The Best of Everything* (screening in June) and a mid-century themed **PM @ The TM** after-hours party later in the summer. For family audiences, the museum will present the annual **Celebration of Textiles** festival the first weekend in June and monthly **Arts for Families** programs each month thereafter with mid-century games, patterning activities and other hands-on projects. For details on Textile Museum programs, visit www.textilemuseum.org or call 202-667-0441.

The opening of the exhibit also coincides with the presentation of a new documentary produced by Design Onscreen—The Initiative for Architecture and Design: “**Contemporary Days: Robin and Lucienne Day Design the UK,**” premiering Saturday, May 15 at 7:30 p.m. at the National Geographic Museum’s Grovesnor Auditorium. A question and answer session with Director Murray Grigor and Cinematographer Hamid Shams will follow the screening. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.designonscreen.org.

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About The Textile Museum

Established in 1925 by collector George Hewitt Myers, The Textile Museum is dedicated to expanding public awareness and appreciation – locally, nationally and internationally – of the artistic merit and cultural importance of the world’s textiles. The museum presents changing exhibitions of historical textiles from its 18,000-piece collection and other holdings as well as contemporary fiber art, complemented by a range of public programs for all ages.

The Textile Museum is located at 2320 S Street, NW, in Washington, D.C.’s Embassy Row, and housed in two historic buildings: the founder’s family home – designed in 1913 by John Russell Pope – and an adjacent building designed in 1908. These former residences provide a warm, intimate setting for the museum’s acclaimed shop, galleries, research library and program spaces. The museum also boasts lovely gardens, designed by Rose Greely, Washington’s first licensed female architect. Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Sunday 1-5 p.m. The suggested donation for admission is \$5 for non-members. For more information, visit www.textilemuseum.org or call (202) 667-0441.

For more information or images, please contact Cyndi Bohlin at (202) 667-0441, ext. 78, or by e-mail at cbohlin@textilemuseum.org or visit www.textilemuseum.org/about/pressroom.htm.

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