

Modern and Contemporary Galleries (Dec-Jun C&T Rotation),
December 22, 2014-June 1, 2015

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

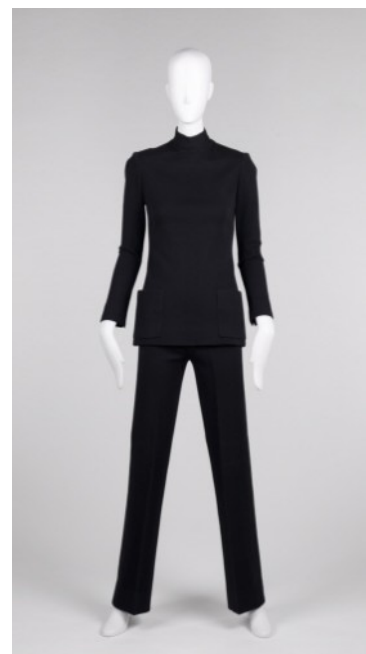
Magda Polivanov, designer
American, b. Russia, 1909-1985
Mardi Gras Dress and Bolero Ensemble, ca. 1936
Cotton; plain weave, hand woodblock printed
Gift of Miss Margaret Evans 1987.053.2

This cheerful, featherlight sundress and bolero jacket were made at the height of cruise-liner travel, during the interwar period. Intended for leisure and vacationing, the ensemble features a wide-shouldered bolero jacket that delicately rests on the dress's halterstraps. The abundant natural forms were printed by hand using natural dyes and a woodblock technique derived from centuries-old Indian methods.

After narrowly escaping the Bolshevik Revolution at age 13, designer Magda Polivanov immigrated to America. Polivanov credited the geometric pattern of frost on her prison window in Russia as her lifesaving inspiration to pursue art, specifically pattern making, later in life.

Norman Norell, designer
American, 1900-1972
Woman's Trouser Suit, 1972
Machine-knit wool
Gift of David W. Scudder 1992.091.8

Devoid of frills and nearly militaristic, this minimal suit means business. The crisp lines and large pockets indicate that it was made for a woman with no time for flourishes or ornaments. The jacket's full, stately silhouette with a short upright collar references a style named after the first prime minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru. Ironically Nehru never wore a Nehru jacket; what is referred to as a Nehru jacket is a shortened, simplified version of the sherwani, a traditional Indian garment. Indian-inspired clothing became widely popular in America after the Beatles featured Indian instruments on their 1967 album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.



RISD MUSEUM

French

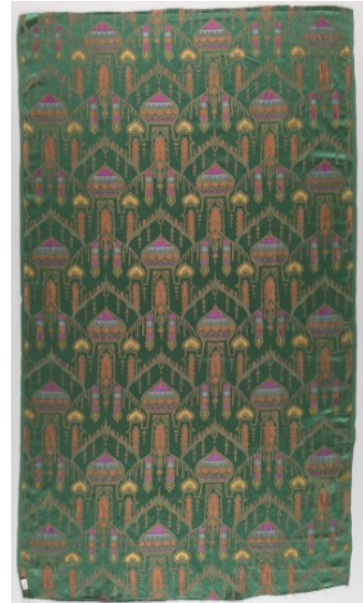
Apparel Textile Length, 1915 - 1918

Silk jacquard weave

Gift of Edward Cella 1999.7.8

This playful textiles abstracts Russian architecture by flattening the distinctive onion-dome form into a simple graphic shape. Repetitive patterning gives a sense of depth, creating a fantastical landscape of infinite domes.

Due to the widespread success of the *Ballets Russes*, the lusciously costumed Russian ballet company, Russian tastes and culture became popular in the early 20th century in France, where this textile was made. Interest also spread to America; the fabric was found in the Providence dressmaking shop of the Tirocchi sisters.



Vera Maxwell, designer

American, 1901-1995

Dress, ca. 1968

Silk plain weave, screenprinted

Gift of Edith N. Rathbun 2000.106.3

This unrestricted dress flows freely, falling over the body. While the dress presents a simple silhouette, the printed pink, lime, and orange beams of color create a continuous swirling movement. Mimicking the effects of hallucinogenic drugs by heightening color, texture, and line, psychedelic prints such as this one epitomize at the Smithsonian Institution, this dress is stylistically light years apart from the thick, structured Rosie the Riveter coverall Maxwell was known for earlier in her career.



RISD MUSEUM

Claire McCardell, designer

American, 1905-1958

Claire McCardell Clothes by Townley, manufacturer

American, est. 1940

"Popover" Dress, ca.1956

Cotton plain weave, screenprinted

Gift of Mary L. Peterson in memory of Thora Magnussen Buckley,
Conservator at The RISD Museum, 1950-1972 2006.82.7

This dress wraps around the body to create a layered neckline similar to that of a Japanese kimono. McCardell's original "Popover" dress from 1942 was gray, sold for \$6.95, and came with a large pocket for a matching oven mitt. This less-utilitarian version produced 14 years later is made in a vibrant red-orange fabric inspired by Indian bandana prints.

Claire McCardell created clothes for practical working women, and they responded heartily, making her designs so popular that they were sold in more than 700 department stores. In 1990, 37 years after her death, *Life* magazine named her one of the 100 most important Americans of the 20th century.



Manish Arora

Indian, b. 1972

Dress, 2008

Synthetic-yarn plain weave with laser-cut PVC applique, metallic trim, and sequin and bead embellishment

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2009.21.1

This playful tent-like dress resembles a magician's cloak, floating around the wearer. The palms on the dress's checkerboard background represent the hamsa symbol, which protects and defends the wearer. Combining this ancient image with contemporary laser-cut PVC and traditional Indian beading and embroidery techniques, Arora contrasts elements from differing time periods, and his use of faded metallic trim with neon embellishments mimics his struggle with "traditional" versus "new" India. Arora exalts "loud" women, and almost always uses Indian beadwork and neon colors in his collections.



RISD MUSEUM

POLLACK & Associates, manufacturer
American
Matthias Pliessnig
Pollack Studio, designer
American
Odalisque (Citron Colorway), Makers Collection Fall 2013
Silk and acrylic jacquard weave
Gift of POLLACK 2014.4.7.1

Reminiscent of leaves, wood grain, and the cell structures of plants, this rolling oval pattern is inspired by trees, woodworking, and an ancient pattern called ogee, often found in Indian fabric designs and Middle Eastern architecture. Mattias Pliessnig (RISD BFA 2003, Furniture Design) is one of five artists Pollack collaborated with to create fabrics with layered meanings for their Makers collection. Three different traditional techniques were used in this textile, making a whole new weave. By the time the fabric was finished, more than 60 pairs of hands contributed to it.



Japanese
Apparel fabric, early 1920s
Silk- and metallic paper-wrapped threads in a compound weave with continuous supplementary weft patterning
Gift of Miss Teiko Sasaki 54.157

This two-paneled textile depicts long-necked birds nuzzling each other amongst fern-like plants. Sinewy, burnt red outlines guide the eye over the birds and across the panels, adding a sense of motion to a moment caught in time. The naturalistic subject and animated lines indicate that this maybe an early piece of French art deco produced in Japan. Note the influence of Japanese art deco in the bold geometry and composed harmony of the Frank Lloyd Wright desk below. He and other American designers collected and were inspired by Japanese prints.



RISD MUSEUM

Jessie Franklin Turner, designer
American, 1881-1956
Tea Gown, ca. 1935
Silk satin weave with silk embroidery
Anonymous gift 56.012

This straight, loose-fitting tea gown would have been worn for semiformal private functions. The center panel of embroidery and fuchsia-colored sash gave the impression of a robed dress, and the fit combined with the short sleeves tone down the luxurious silk to create a more casual gown.

Considered somewhat intimate, tea-gowns were often worn by hostesses in their own homes. In response to full schedules of social events, the American elite began inviting guests to tea in the early 20th century as a less formal--and less costly-- alternative to hosting a dinner.

