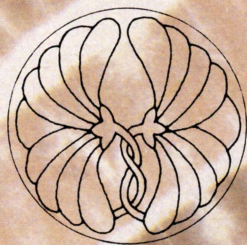
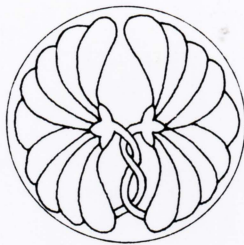


THE ARSENAL EXHIBITION - NEW YORK



MAYA ROMANOFF



maya romanoff
fabric impressionist

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DESIGN - DONALD YOSHIDA

Cover: NEW STRIPES Canvas

AN APPRECIATION
Jack Lenor Larsen

The fabrics of Maya Romanoff and his former wife Rebecca Romanoff are indeed spectacular. They cover an enormous range of scale, color and technique. Materials range from heavy cowhides to diaphanous silks to canvas sufficiently sturdy for floor coverings to cloths sufficiently soft and flowing to be cloths for apparel.

Much of this work is one-of-a-kind — that is, unique pieces done for a particular location or commission. Maya Romanoff has worked as well in the even more extraordinary achievement of setting styles of handcrafted resist fabrics consistent over long yardages and repeatable at will.

In working with fold dyes and palangi resists they have not only learned from the great textile traditions of Asia and Africa, but gone beyond them in areas not explored by traditional peoples. Whereas indigo, and occasionally soga brown are the traditional palette of fold dyes, the Romanoffs' color ranges from brilliant to delicate tints.

Their concern with the relationship of these fabrics to architecture and occasionally to a total environment is another separation of the Romanoffs from other artists working in this craft medium. In these respects, this exhibition is a milestone in Art Fabric history. The scale is spectacular and their vision courageous. I expect that with time and adaptation of simple technology their work will grow in size and range and availability.

Jack Lenor Larsen

Gordon J. Davis, Commissioner of Parks and Recreation of the City of New York, presents a major exhibition by Maya Romanoff, with Rebecca Romanoff at the Arsenal.



FOREWARD
Albert Hadley

SLEEPING LIZARD
Quilted Canvas 64" x 60"

Maya Romanoff. The name conjurs an exotic brand of magic. The man amplifies through his artistry all those qualities that are reflective of a joyous celebration of life.

In June, 1971, Maya and his former wife Rebecca appeared in the offices of Parish-Hadley, Inc. (then small reception rooms opening directly onto East Sixty-ninth Street in New York). They were as fresh and vital as the day and a particular air of creativity and well-being attended them. Their appearance piqued curiosity.

Together they unrolled textiles of great variety and beauty — cottons, linens, silks, some soft leathers and a variety of velvets. Some were rich and heavy, others gossamer thin. Each was more beautiful than the other, and each was a work of art. Their quality and design were amazing. As one after the other of these were unfolded before us here were



DUCKS RISING
Canvas 64" x 60"

glowing jewel colors, colors of fire, water, air and earth . . . and yes, a rainbow! It was as though a modern Merlin had appeared before us to unfurl age-old techniques of textile design translated with utmost sensitivity and loveliness into what appeared to be an art form totally new, one which struck our own imaginations with delight.

Finally, the magic show ended and these two fascinating young artists left us. They were as one with the day, their time and place. Maya and Rebecca were of course spectacular in their presence, not to go unnoticed and not to be forgotten.

Since then, Maya Romanoff, headquartered in a vast studio on Chicago's north side, has spent his time designing and producing, drawing inspiration and vitality from the rich sources of the world's artistic cultures. His accomplishments merit the acclaim he has

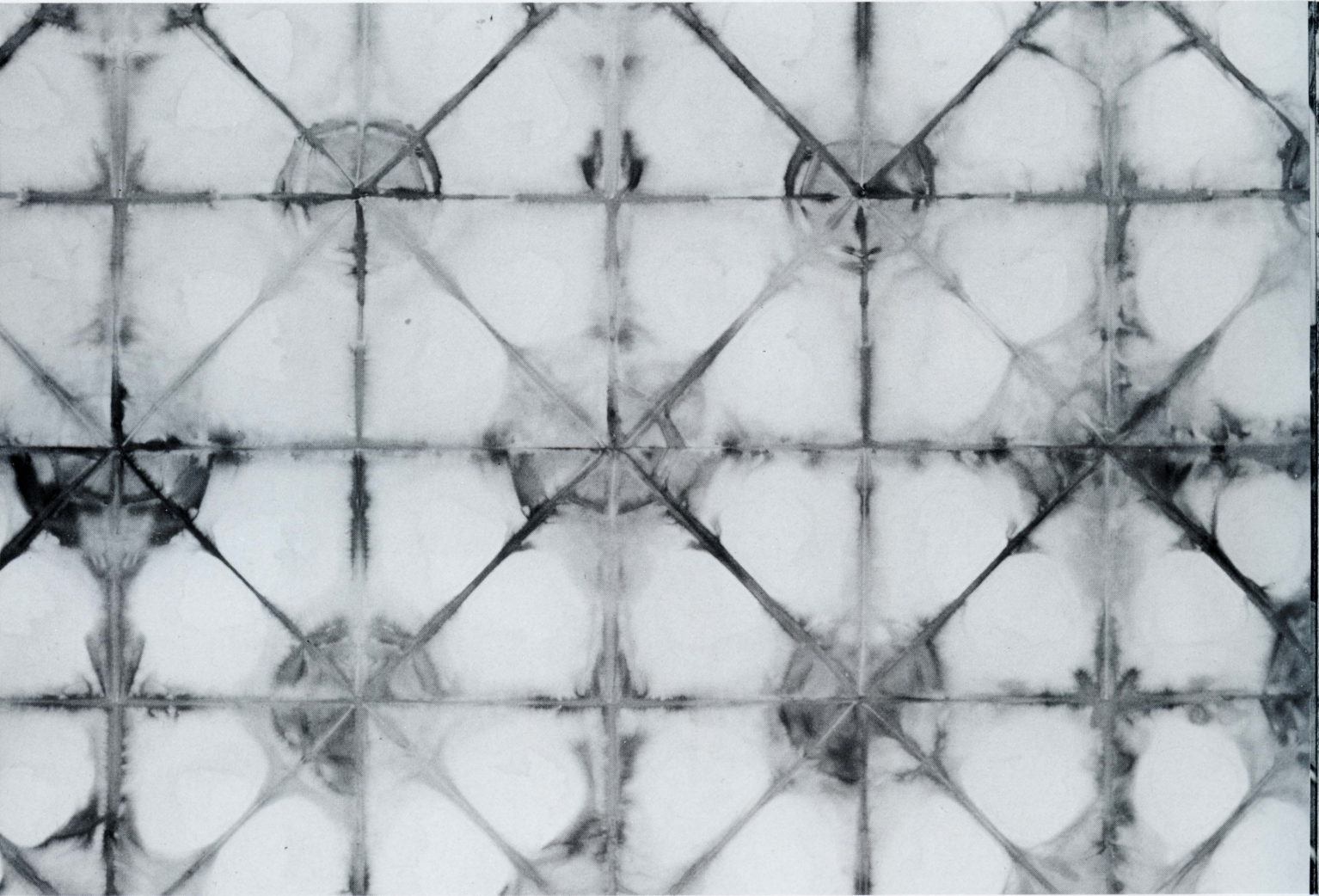
received as an artist of the highest calibre by museums in many parts of the world.

In New York alone, his influence has been keenly felt. As he continues to work and produce, he supports the creative imagination of other artists and designers, supplying a dynamic art form to be integrated into designs and concepts that can only flower because of his unique talent.

To know Maya Romanoff is a rich experience both as artist and friend. To work with him, to communicate and to produce with him is a form of shared artistic expression that is a privilege.

New York 1979

Albert Hadley
Parish-Hadley, Inc.



SNOWFLAKE
Canvas Yardage

SLEEPING LIZARD
Quilted Canvas 84" x 80"

MULTIPLES

INTRODUCTION

Maya Romanoff

Most of the pieces in the show will be one-of-a-kind. But they are also prototypes and experiments in the development of the proper techniques to be multiplied each into two-of-a-kind or several- or many-.

I've tried to put the same spontaneity and life into the yardage we do by the thousands as I put into the very first piece. Life and beauty are the only two rules.



To this end, every tool is acceptable. A jig dyer or a power-loom is as worthy a tool as a water-color brush or hand-loom. No tool is bad which makes lively and beautiful work. Technique and vision are united like two souls in love. Every piece is an evolution of these interacting forces.

Our exhibition is broad. It includes a fabric environment. Dimensional, with no flat surfaces. It's so easy to shape fabric. And as with the leather hangings and upholstered furniture, the play between the fabric shapes and the surface decoration makes something new.

The outdoor piece uses shape and surface plus the wind and elements to make a monumental kinetic tapestry. The principal components are the canopy about thirty feet above the entrance and three panels on either side of the entry hanging from the top of the turret. There are 3000 square feet of fabric involved.

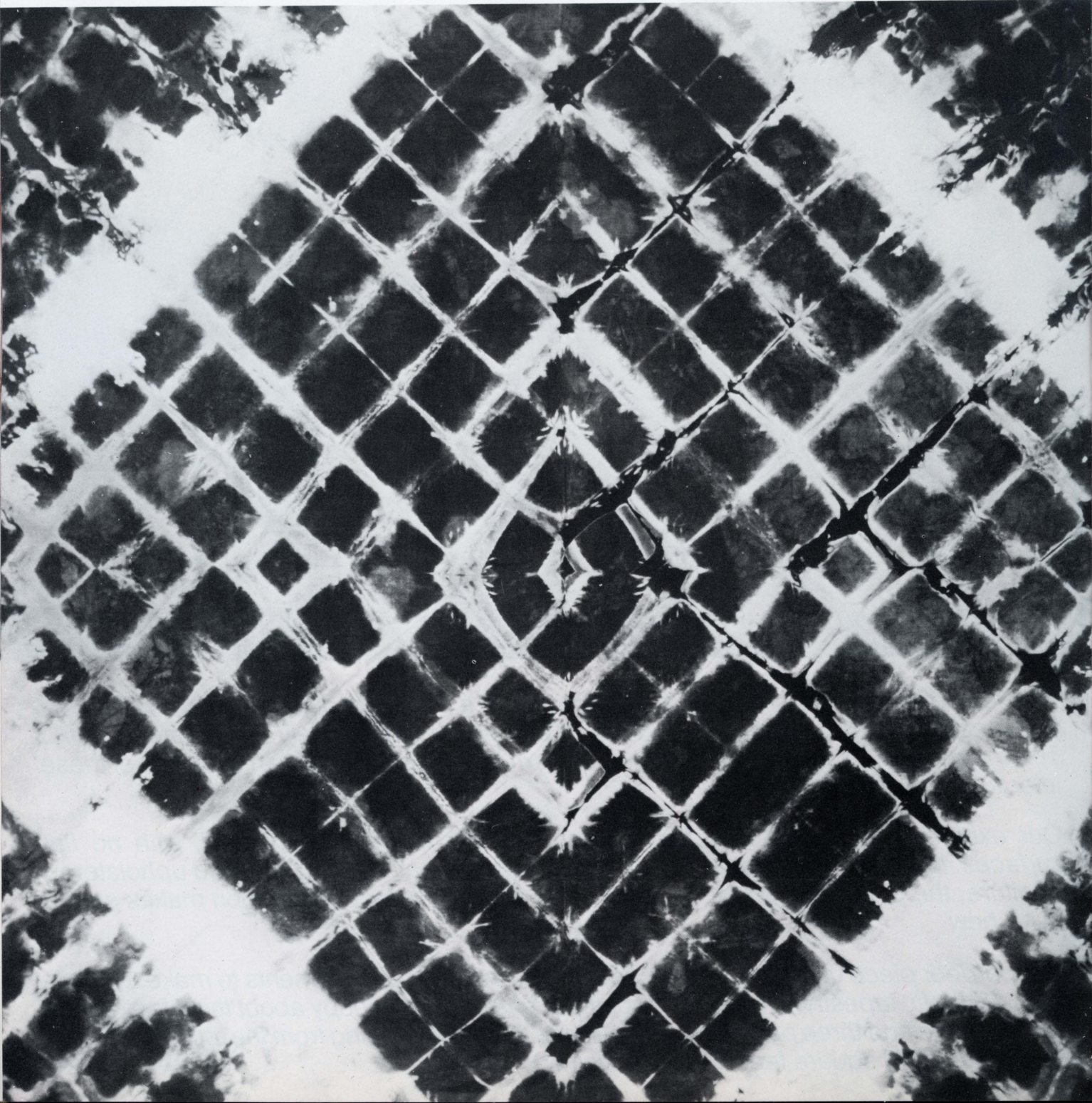
Because of the weight of the pieces, the movement will be relatively slow and deep, like a long ocean wave. A new set of dye combinations will make the piece change color with the changing colors of autumn. It begins as one piece and ends as another. It moves in space and time. It's a "Kimono".

In the spirit of joyful Japanese dress, please have a wonderful time.

Maya Romanoff

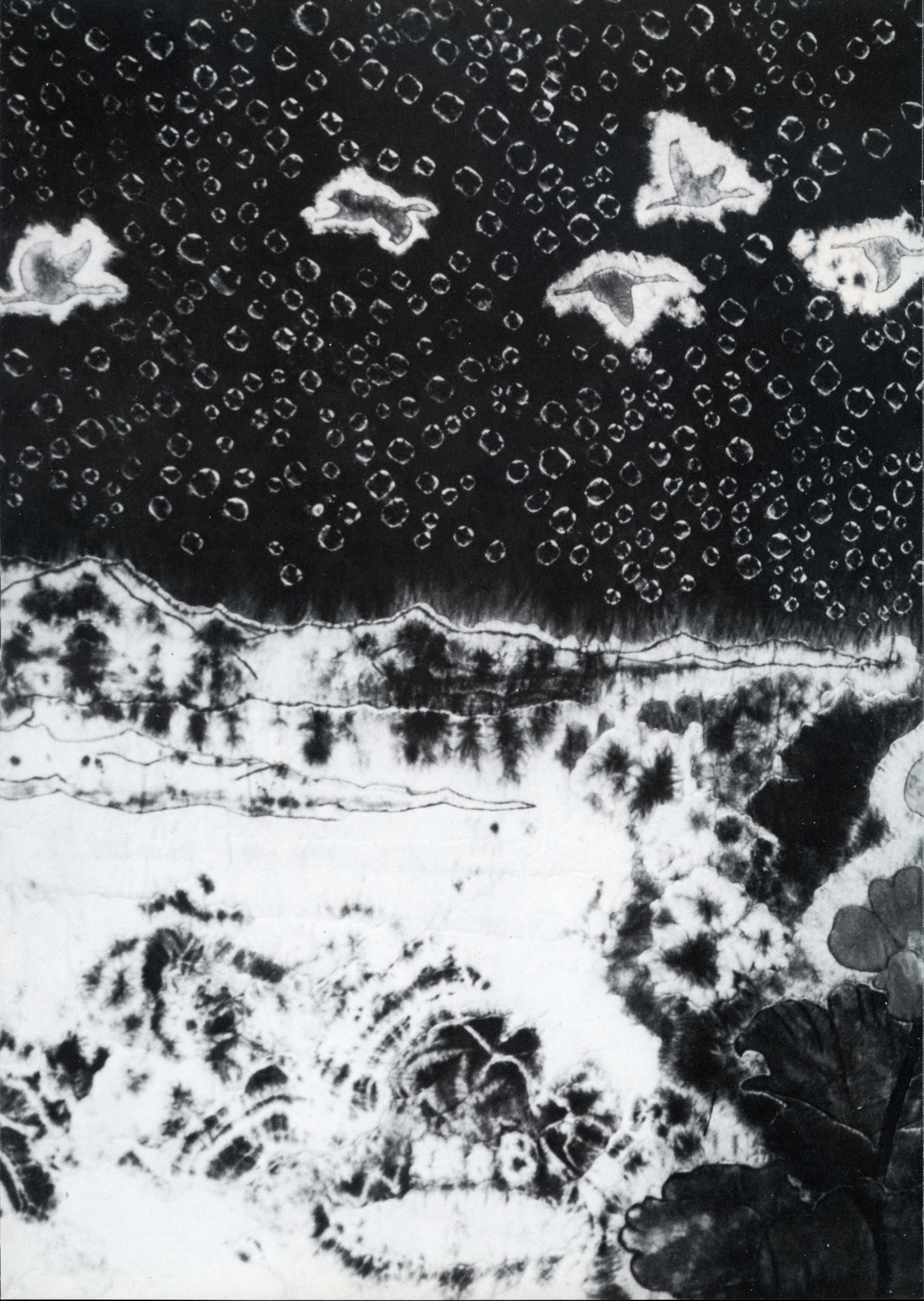
INDIGO DIAMOND

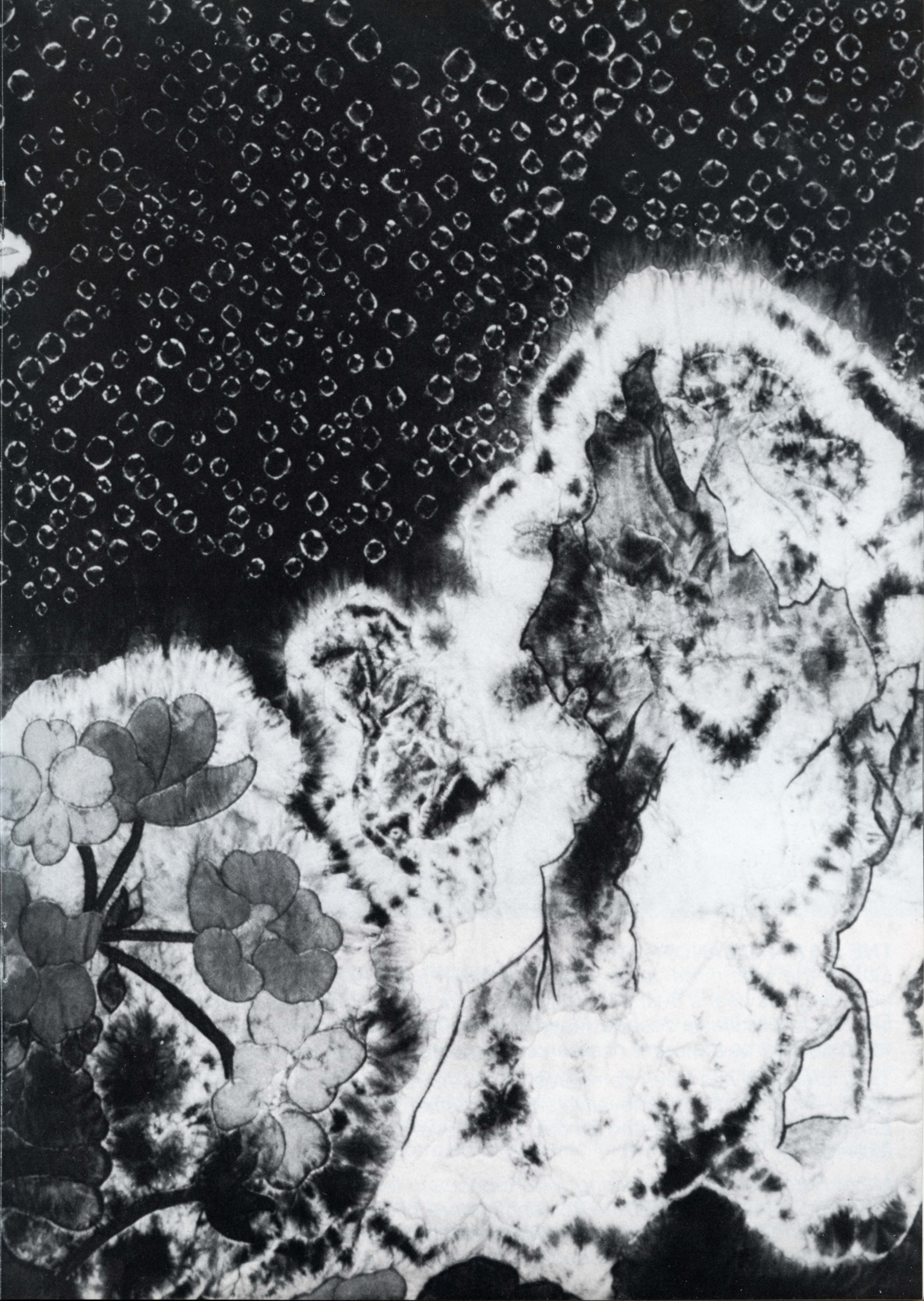
Thai Silk
72" x 72"



DESERT ROOT
Tussah Yardage
Best Contemporary Fabric Design
(Resources Council 1978-79)







WHAT SINBAD SAW
(shown on previous pages)
Quilted Velvet 120" x 96"
Collection of M. Pierre Hefner



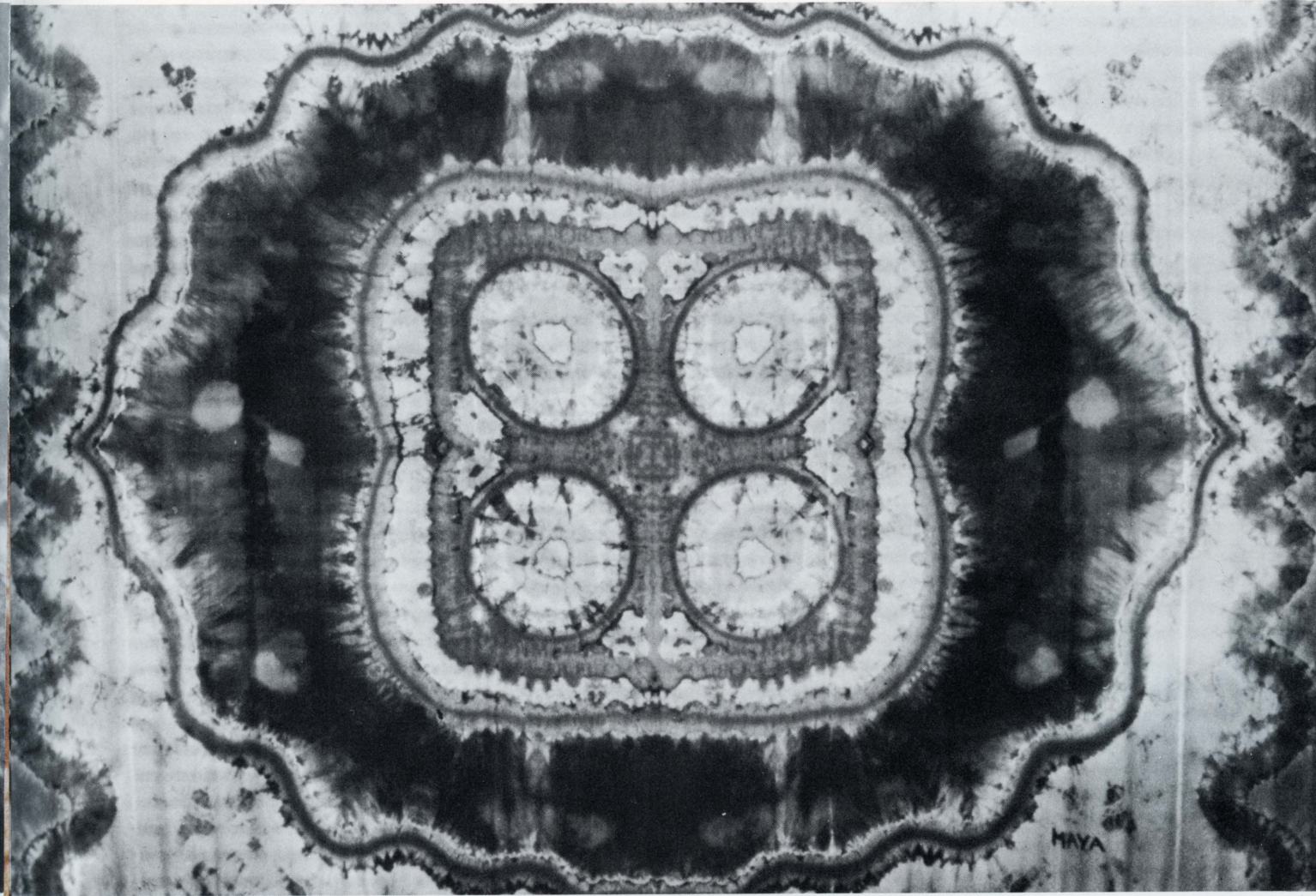
THE MAYA ROMANOFF STORY

During the past three years, Maya Romanoff has won five national design awards — including this year's Best Contemporary Floor-covering and Best Contemporary Fabric Design. In less than a decade, Maya Romanoff and his former wife Rebecca have breathed fresh life into the world of art and design through their textiles.

Their creativity has been compared to the Impressionists and — perhaps more to the point — with the set of innovative artist-craftsmen characterized by Christo, Jack Lenor Larsen, Charles Eames and others. They have each helped create a new medium of expression.

Maya Romanoff began working with Rebecca in textiles and dye ten years ago. While travelling in the late 1960s, the Romanoffs were influenced by the artistic energy evident in North and West Africa where art was a usable part of daily life. From the beginning, the Romanoffs rooted their work deeply in function. For them art has always been environ-

MANDALA
Silk 180" x 84"
Collection of Crane Communications Co.



ment, to live in, to use. They began by designing clothing and fabric, and in 1971 they brought their first collection to New York. They came knowing no one in the city.

As one critic put it, they took New York by storm. The appeal of their work was its total approach, blending new shapes with completely new visual surfaces and the combination of genuine artistic vision with wide commercial appeal. Almost simultaneously, they appeared in major department stores across the country, such as I. Magnin and Henri Bendel, and in the Museum of Contemporary Craft, in New York. The Museum of Contemporary Craft show, sponsored by the Smithsonian Institute, travelled to museums around the world.

In one week the Romanoffs were asked to design the first contemporary fabric environment, two fashion fabric collections, two lines of upholstery fabric, wallpaper, rugs and to exhibit in a museum.

It was as if, through their work, the magnificent potential of fabric and dye were glimpsed. Everyone seemed hungry for this new world the Romanoffs were opening. They were among the first to bring simple, unstructured clothing, whose movement came from their fabric, into real fashion. But at this time, the Romanoffs ended the department store sales of their clothing and withdrew from New York. Within two years, Rebecca Romanoff retired from art almost completely.

In 1971, dyeing as an artistic or design medium was considered, at best, a fad. For Maya Romanoff, however, his first experience dyeing and shaping fabric was very like an awakening. It was the discovery of his life's work. Both he and Rebecca had only just entered a tremendously creative river. There was much to explore and to attempt. They



INDIGO SUNLIT SEA
Canvas Yardage

probed the nature and art of dyeing and the uses of textiles. They discovered the ways to take the life and beauty of one piece and one length and put them into thousands. Textiles — for tapestries, for furniture, walls, floors and ultimately, total interior environments.

From the work started by the Romanoffs together, and now continued by Maya Romanoff, come some of the most beautiful fabrics in the world. He has been initiating styles, establishing trends and discovering innovative techniques that have helped constitute a new movement in fabric design.

In 1971, the first room size work was jointly commissioned by HOUSE AND GARDEN magazine and Mrs. Elita Mallers Murphy of Chicago. It was a whole world built of cloth



DARK WHEAT PLAID
Canvas Yardage

GARDEN ROOM
Velvet, Silk, Canvas
Collection of Elita Murphy



and dye. Out of this work also came the first contemporary "FloorCloths". Maya Romanoff introduced the concept of directionally designed floor-covering, now widely used. Fabric wall-covering once was rare and never environmental in concept. Now fabric competes with wall paper as a popular wall-covering. The coordination of wall, floor-covering and upholstery into a single whole is now very common. Contemporary quilting for interior use and fine art pieces, the growing popularity of canvas as high fashion interior fabric, patterned and dyed leather and suede — all owe much to the Romanoffs' pioneer and innovative work.

Maya and Rebecca Romanoff have taken fabric and dye to express their moving artistic visions. Maya Romanoff has entered into important relationships with some of the foremost designers and architects of our time. With them, he has tested solutions in the real, material world, discovered new problems and therefore new solutions, new potentials. Albert Hadley and Jack Lenor Larsen, along with Richard Himmel and George Hinds,

CHINA GARDEN WITH RIBBON
Wall-to-Wall "FloorCloths"
Best Technological Innovation
in the Home Furnishings Industry
(Resources Council 1976-77)
Collection of Sandra Marsh, Chicago



have been the most persistently encouraging. More importantly, perhaps, they pose the toughest questions.

The contemporary medium of painted and dyed fabrics in both the fine art world and the home furnishings industry owes much of its existence and vitality to the Romanoffs' work. The marriage of artistic vision and industrial technology at the heart of Maya Romanoff's work makes it moving and at the same time seminal. He continues to expand the boundaries of and to energize the medium he has done so much to create.

Jack Larsen has said: "Of all those who have investigated the ancient techniques, Maya Romanoff is the only one who has taken them to their post-industrial implications."

CHINA GARDEN WITH RIBBON
"Wall-to-Wall" FloorCloths
Best Technological Innovation
by the Home Furnishings Industry
(Resources Council 1975-77)
Professor of Garden Marsh, Chicago

GARDEN ROOM
Wool Veneer
Wool Silk Canvas

INDIGO CRYSTAL WITH PLAID BORDER
FloorCloth
Best Contemporary Floor Covering
(Resources Council 1978-79)



Pieces have been lent from the collections of Pierre Hefner, Geneva, Switzerland; Davis, Miner and Barnhill, Chicago; Baker, Knapp & Tubbs, Philadelphia, and the Buddhist Temple of Chicago.

Furniture in the Exhibition has been provided by Henredon Furniture Co., Atelier International, Inc. and Dunbar, Inc.

The Exhibition is dedicated with deep thanks to Bess Latham, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Romanoff, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. George, Elita Murphy, Bob Romanoff, Jeanne, Pat, Vandana, Ramona and Bill.

EXHIBITIONS

Romanoff's textiles have been exhibited at
The Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
Fairtree Gallery, New York City
Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York City
Northwestern University, Chicago
Chicago Historical Society
National Gallery, Australia
City Gallery, Hong Kong
National Museum, Malaysia
Lawrence Art Center, Kansas
Richard Himmel Design Pavilion, Chicago
Oak Lawn Design Center, Dallas
The Arsenal, New York City

COLLECTIONS

Jack Lenor Larsen
Mr. and Mrs. Lockland Phillips
Dustin Hoffman
Albert Hadley
Julie Christie
Richard Himmel
Baker, Knapp & Tubbs, Inc.
Henredon, Inc.
Dunbar, Inc.
Johns Island Beach Club
Mimi's, Atlanta
Sharon Harris Hart

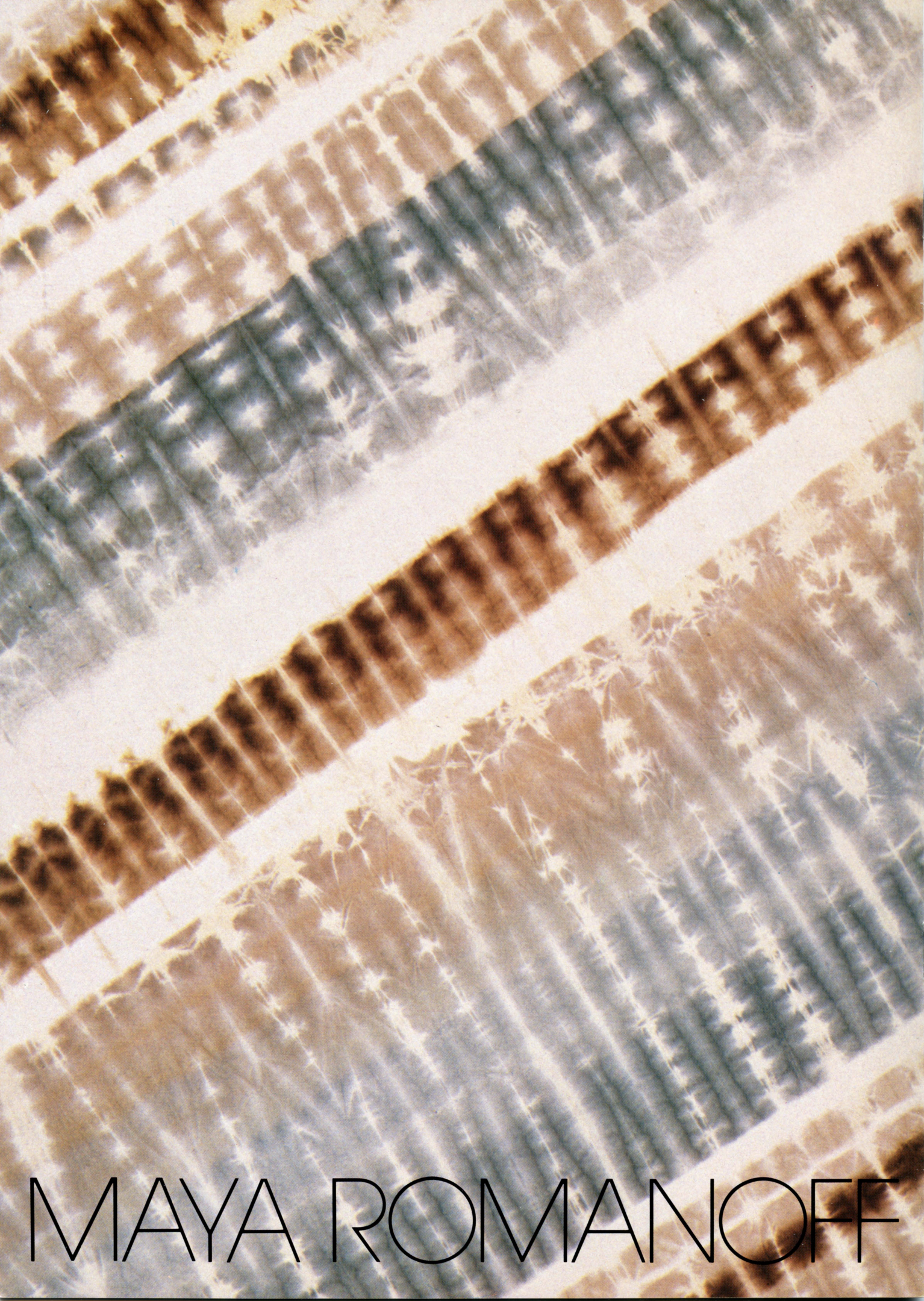
Minnie Riperton
Nicol Williamson
Four Season's Hotel, Toronto
Mimi's, Dallas
Israeli Embassy, Washington
Atelier International
Elita Mallers Murphy
Claire Zeisler
Paul Sand
Cheryl Tiegs

AWARDS

First Place - "Best Technological Innovation in the Home Furnishings Industry - 1976-77"
(Resources Council)
First Place - "Best Technological Innovation in the Home Furnishings Industry - 1977-78"
(Resources Council)
Commendation - "Best Contemporary Floor Covering Design - 1977-78"
(Resources Council)
First Place - "Best Contemporary Fabric Design - 1978-79" (Resources Council)
First Place - "Best Contemporary Floor Covering Design - 1978-79" (Resources Council)

MEMBERSHIPS

Senior Member, American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists
Illinois Representative, Surface Design Association



MAYA ROMANOFF