ANNI ALBERS
11 October 2018 – 27 January 2018

LARGE PRINT GUIDE

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ROOM 1
INTRODUCTION

Anni Albers (1899–1994) was among the leading innovators of twentieth-century modernist abstraction, committed to uniting the ancient craft of weaving with the language of modern art. As an artist, designer, teacher and writer, she transformed the way weaving could be understood as a medium for art, design and architecture.

Albers was introduced to hand-weaving at the Bauhaus, a radical art school in Weimar, Germany. Throughout her career Albers explored the possibilities of weaving as a modernist medium, but one also deeply rooted in highly sophisticated and ancient textile traditions from around the world. In her later years, Albers took up printmaking, but continued to explore textile related concerns such as pattern, line, knotting and texture.

Annelise Else Frieda Fleischmann was born in Berlin on 12 June 1899 to a middle class family. She was encouraged to study drawing and painting and in 1922 became a student at the Bauhaus. Here she met the artist Josef Albers and the couple married in 1925. In 1933 they emigrated to the US after the rise of Nazism in Germany forced the Bauhaus to close. The Alberses both became teachers at the experimental Black Mountain College in North Carolina. In 1950, following Josef’s appointment at Yale University,
they moved to New Haven, Connecticut where Anni Albers continued to make her work and reflect on weaving’s relationship to the modern world, especially to architecture.

Anni Albers was the first weaver to have a significant solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1949. She has been a hugely influential figure for generations of artists and designers. This exhibition explores the many-sided nature of her practice, examining her engagement with both the history and potential future of weaving, and the works on paper and writings through which she developed her ideas about textiles.
12 Shaft Counter March Loom
c.1950s

This handloom is similar to those used by Anni Albers and her fellow students at the Bauhaus weaving workshop. The basic structure of the loom dates back thousands of years. The warp yarns (the vertical threads in a piece of cloth) are threaded through wires attached to the twelve shafts supported by the loom. When the weaver presses down on a treadle (one of the peddles at the bottom of the loom), some of the shafts rise and others fall. This creates a gap between the alternating warp threads. The weaver passes the weft (the horizontal threads in a piece of cloth) through this gap using a device called the shuttle. Then the weaver ‘beats’ down the weft using a wooden batten, so that the woven thread sits aligned with the rest of the weaving.

Louise Renae Anderson
X72919
Wallhanging
Original 1927 (lost), re-woven by Gunta Stölzl in 1964
Cotton and silk
Neues Museum Nuremberg
On loan from the City of Nuremberg
X67320

Wallhanging
1924
Cotton and silk
The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.12.1
X65968
Bauhaus Weavers

Top row (left to right): Lisbeth Oestreich, Gertrud Preiswerk, Léna Bergner, Grete Reichardt
Bottom row (left to right): Lotte Beese, Anni Albers, Ljuba Monastirsky, Rosa Berger, Gunta Stölzl, Otti Berger, Kurt Wanke

1927

Photo: T. Lux Feininger. Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin
A START: WEAVING AT THE BAUHAUS

‘One of the outstanding characteristics of the Bauhaus has been, to my mind, an unprejudiced attitude toward materials and their inherent capacities.’

The Bauhaus art school in Weimar was founded in 1919 by the architect Walter Gropius, who wanted to create a school that brought together sculpture, painting, arts and crafts. After a general preliminary course students chose a specialised workshop. Weaving was a popular class for women, and – despite the ideals of equality at the Bauhaus – it soon became known as the ‘Women’s Workshop’. Anni Albers said that she ‘went into weaving unenthusiastically, as merely the least objectionable choice’, but ‘gradually threads caught my imagination’.

Students in the weaving workshop produced independent artistic works as well as designs for industrial manufacture. Albers and her colleagues created wall hangings, which she later referred to as ‘amazing objects, striking in their newness of conception in regard to use of colour and compositional elements’. The weaving workshop developed its own distinctive language, making use of the grid structure of weaving, and placing the haptic or tactile at the heart of the modernist project. A number of lost wall hangings by
Anni Albers were later re-woven by Gunta Stölzl who was Master of Craft in the weaving workshop from 1927 to 1931.

Anni Albers’s designs for machine production included her diploma piece, a sound-proof material commissioned to cover the walls of an auditorium.
Clockwise from wall text

Design for a 1926 unexecuted wallhanging
Date unknown

Gouache with pencil on reprographic paper

The Joseph and Anni Albers Foundation 1994.10.2
X72410

Gunta Stölzl 1897–1983
Design for a hanging
1927

Watercolour, pencil, ink and gouache

Victoria and Albert Museum, London
X67703
Gunta Stölz 1897–1983

Wallhanging
1964

Silk

Gunta Stölzl was the first female Bauhaus Master when she became head of the Bauhaus weaving workshop in 1926 until 1931. Stölzl designed and produced this weaving in 1964, at the same time as she was commissioned by Anni Albers to reconstruct the black, white and grey wallhanging seen in the previous room. Using the same warp and yarns for each piece, Stölzl experimented with the composition and pattern of the new wallhanging while determining how to re-weave the original work by Albers.

Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg
X65525
Gunta Stölzl 1897–1983

**Design for a hanging**

c.1927

Watercolour, pencil, ink and gouache

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

X67704
Léna Meyer-Bergner 1906–1981

**Watercolor designs for weaving**

Date unknown

2 works on paper, watercolour

Meyer-Bergner was one of Anni Albers’s fellow students in the Bauhaus weaving workshop and produced several designs for weavings. These two examples in watercolour on paper are designs for carpets. It is not known if the carpets were ever produced, however, the designs reflect the linear grid constructions and experiments typical of the Bauhaus at the time, but using Meyer-Bergner’s distinctive colour combinations.

 Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, California
X71648, X71650
Paul Klee 1879–1940

**Measured Fields**
1929

Watercolour and pencil on paper, mounted on cardboard

Anni Albers had taken Paul Klee’s class on colour theory at the Bauhaus, yet she said she was more influenced by his paintings than his teachings. Albers’s notes from his classes, displayed nearby, show how she followed his exercises in composition and tonal variation. But it was the way Klee mixed together layers of watercolour on paper that had the most impact on Albers’s own designs.

Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf
X71234

**Sample of material**
Date unknown

Silk

Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum,
Gift of Anni Albers
X69234
Sample of wall covering
c.1928

Jute, twisted paper, and cellophane in basket weave

Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum,
Gift of Anni Albers
X69237

Sample of wall covering
c.1929

Cellophane and cotton

Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum,
Gift of Anni Albers
X69238
Wall-covering material for the auditorium of the Bundesschule des Allgemeinen Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes in Bernau, Germany 1929/1999

Cotton, raffia and chenille

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1999.13.1 X70699
WALL COVERING FOR AN AUDITORIUM

When Hannes Meyer, the second director of the Bauhaus, designed the ADGB Trade Union School in Bernau near Berlin, he commissioned Anni Albers to design a wall covering for the auditorium. The samples of the original and a reproduction of the textile are displayed here. The black and white threads on the front were interwoven with transparent cellophane, which has a metallic appearance that reflected the artificial light in the windowless auditorium. On the back of the weaving, Albers used chenille to produce a velvet-like surface that muffles sound. Albers received her Bauhaus diploma for this design in 1930. The architect Philip Johnson, who recommended her to Black Mountain College in the US, said this woven textile was her ‘passport to America’.

Image credit: The interior of the Federal School building © Hannes-Meyer-Archiv, Deutsches Architekturmuseum, Frankfurt am Main
Large vitrine, left to right

Decorator fabric sample, Bauhaus Dessau

c.1929

Silk, cotton and rayon

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 2002.13.1
X67050

Wall-covering material for the auditorium of the Bundesschule des Allgemeinen Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes in Bernau, Germany

1929

Cellophane, cotton and chenille

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.15.17
X71224
Top to bottom

Notebooks from Paul Klee’s Classes
(area of multiplication)
1930

Facsimile. Exhibition copy

Copyright: VG Bild-Kunst Bonn
Bauhaus Archive Berlin, photo: Markus Hawlik
X72794

Notebooks from Paul Klee’s Classes (Reflection/Rotation)
c.1930

Facsimile. Exhibition copy

Copyright: VG Bild-Kunst Bonn.
Bauhaus Archive Berlin, photo: Markus Hawlik
X72793
Katja Rose (life dates not known)

**Notebooks from Paul Klee’s Classes (Design for a typewriter pattern from typewriter types)**

1932

Photograph, digital print on paper. Exhibition copy

Copyright: Hannes Rose, Munich
Bauhaus Archive Berlin
X72795–6

**Unidentified students, Bauhaus**

**Fabric/weaving swatches**

Dates unknown

Mixed material on paper

Students at the Bauhaus weaving workshop produced these woven swatches to explore weave structures and colour. Diagrams helped the students to set up the warp and the weave patterns on the loom. The samples they produced were attached to the diagrams for future reference. These foundational exercises were integral to the understanding of the weaving process and allowed for important experimentation. Albers would also have produced samples
such as these when learning to weave and continued to produce samples throughout her career.

Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, California
X71653–8

Unknown Photographer
Silk Curtains for Theatercafe, Dessau by Anni Albers
c.1928

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper, mounted on paper

Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Gift of Anni Albers
X69236
Unknown Photographer

Photograph of Textile

Date unknown

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper, mounted on paper

Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Gift of Anni Albers
X69235
Wall above small vitrine
Top row, left to right

Iwao Yamawaki 1898–1987
**Untitled (Interior, Bauhaus, Dessau)**
1930–2

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Purchased with funds provided by the Asia Pacific Acquisitions Committee 2010
P79895

Lucia Moholy 1894–1989
**Bauhaus Building, Dessau, view from the vestibule window looking toward the workshop wing**
1926

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Purchased 2011
P79915
Bottom row, left to right

Iwao Yamawaki 1898–1987

*Cafeteria after lunch, Bauhaus, Dessau*

1930–2, printed later

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Purchased with funds provided by the Asia Pacific Acquisitions Committee 2010
P79894

Lucia Moholy 1894–1989

*Bauhaus Building, Dessau*

1925–6

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Purchased 2011
P79916
Small vitrine

Iwao Yamawaki 1898–1987

Modern Architecture Series # 7

Bauhaus People

1954

Private collection, Paris

X53820
Michiko Yamawaki born 1910

**Bauhaus and the tea ceremony**

1945

Yamawaki Michiko and her husband Iwao were students at the Bauhaus from 1930–32. Michiko was a member of the weaving workshop and was taught by Anni Albers and Gunta Stölzl. After they returned to Japan, the couple produced these books which document their experiences at the school. Many western Bauhaus artists and teachers were already influenced by Japanese art and culture. Following the closure of the Bauhaus in Dessau, the Yamawakis promoted Bauhaus teachings to their peers in Japan. They became members of staff at the New Architecture and Design College in Ginza, later known as the Japanese Bauhaus.

Private collection, Paris

X53821
**Black White Yellow**

Original 1926 (lost), re-woven by Gunta Stölzl in 1965

Cotton and silk

This is one of three versions of ‘Wallhanging’ (1926) re-woven by Gunta Stölzl in the 1960s under Anni Albers’s direction. The original is lost and probably destroyed in the Second World War. Albers used only three different coloured yarns for the design: black, white and yellow. The multiple colours that appear are the result of the optical mix of these coloured threads. Shiny silk is used with cotton, producing a complex texture that allows some colours such as the yellow to appear brighter than others. Another edition of the re-weaving can be seen towards the end of the exhibition.

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Everfast Fabrics Inc. and Edward C. Moore Jr. Gift, 1969 X65523
Design for a wallhanging
1926

Gouache and pencil on paper

The Museum of Modern Art, New York,
Gift of the designer, 1951
X66091

Design for a silk tapestry
1925

Watercolor and gouache over graphite on wove paper

Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum,
Gift of Anni Albers
X68012
Preliminary design for a wallhanging
1926

Gouache and pencil on paper

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of the designer, 1951
X66090
Design for a wallhanging
1926

Gouache on paper

The notations on these drawings were used by Anni Albers to calculate the number and colours of warp threads they would need to set up the loom. These methodical and grid-like designs were painted in watercolour in four or more different tones and were exercises in colour theory. When produced as large-scale weavings, only three colours of thread would be used: red, white and black. The mid-pink and grey colours would be made using a red weft on a white warp.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York,
Gift of the designer, 1951
X66068
Design for a tapestry
1925

Watercolour and gouache over graphite on wove paper

Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum,
Gift of Anni Albers
X68013

Design for a wallhanging
1925

Gouache on paper

Museum of Modern Art, New York,
Gift of the designer, 1951
X64721
BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

‘I tried to put my students at the point of zero. I tried to have them imagine, let’s say, that they are in a desert in Peru, no clothing, no nothing… So what do you do? You wear the skin of some kind of animal maybe to protect yourself from too much sun or maybe the wind occasionally. And you want a roof over something and so on. And how do you gradually come to realize what a textile can be? And we start at that point.’

In 1933 the Nazis forced the Bauhaus school to close. Anni and Josef Albers were offered teaching positions at the newly founded, progressive art school Black Mountain College in North Carolina, US, following a recommendation from the architect Philip Johnson. Set in a rural environment, Black Mountain College encouraged experimental teaching methods and communal living. Artists, dancers, mathematicians, sociologists and architects formed an unusual creative and intellectual community.

Anni Albers established a weaving workshop at the college. Her teaching practice encouraged students to increase their understanding of materials and textures. Using everyday materials and inventive methods, Albers explored the
possibilities of ‘weaving’ simple patterns and textures without using a loom but using found materials. She also introduced her students to simple back-strap looms, which she had seen on her travels to South America. As well as teaching, at Black Mountain College Albers began to make what she called ‘pictorial weavings’ – hand-woven pieces that were made as artworks to be hung on the wall, not fabrics for everyday use.
Clockwise from wall text

City
1949

Linen and cotton

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 2003.12.1
X65973
Untitled
1941

Rayon, linen, cotton, wool and jute

This work is thought to be one of the first weavings Albers produced as a pictorial form to be framed and displayed on a wall. In the process of weaving, Albers incorporated a wide edge of plain weave around the central grid composition, like a mount for a photograph or fine art print. In subsequent weavings, Albers leaves out the plain woven border, instead allowing the composition to cover the entire woven surface.

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 2012.12.1
X65970
La Luz I
1947

Linen and metallic thread

In La Luz I, Anni Albers used linen and metal threads to create the impression of shifting light as well as texture. La Luz I is one of only a few works in which she used representational elements. The cross shape seems to radiate light that appears immaterial, while the tactile qualities of the weave are still clearly visible. Albers combined thicker and thinner threads in subtle hues with metallic yarn, creating effects that may seem to belong to painting, but here they are grounded in the art of weaving.

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.12.2
X65972

Las Cruces I
1947

Gouache on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.7
X67695
Small vitrine

Woven Bag
c.1935–9

Cotton and linen

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 2009.12.1
X65969

Black Mountain College Work Camp
Pamphlet
1941

Collection of Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center
X70886
Lore Kadden Lindenfeld 1921–2010  
**Woven Sample: 8 Harness Group Weaving**  
1945–8

Wool

*Collection of Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center*  
X70885

Lolita Georgia (life dates unknown)  
**Weaving Class Notebook**  
1935

Notebook

*Collection of Black Mountain College + Arts Center*  
X70884
Lore Kadden Lindenfeld 1921–2010

Notebook from Anni Albers’s weaving class at Black Mountain Collage
c.1945

Typewritten ink, coloured pencil and graph paper diagram on notebook paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.101
X70781, X72421–3
Albers produced these necklaces in collaboration with Alexander Reed, who had been a student and would become teacher at Black Mountain College. They were inspired by a trip to the ancient Mexican site of Monte Albán where they saw artefacts that combined precious materials, such as gold and jade, with found items like shells. On their return to the US, they searched hardware stores for new materials to experiment with, discovering beauty in everyday objects. Albers later said ‘the art of Monte Albán had given us the freedom to see things detached from their use, as pure materials, worth being turned into precious objects.’

Anni Albers 1899–1994  
Alexander Reed (dates unknown)  
**Necklace**  
c.1940  

Plastic rings on black grosgrain ribbon

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 2006.14.6  
X67133
Anni Albers 1899–1994
Alexander Reed (dates unknown)
**Necklace**
c.1940

Bobby pins on metal-plated chain (gold)

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 2006.14.8
X67691

Anni Albers 1899–1994
Alexander Reed (dates unknown)
**Necklace**
c.1940/88

Reconstruction of the original by Mary Emma Harris
Eye hooks and pearl beads on thread

X67131
Anni Albers 1899–1994
Alexander Reed (dates unknown)

**Necklace**
c.1940

Aluminium strainer, paper clips and chain

X67103

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Anni Albers 1899–1994
Alexander Reed (dates unknown)

**Necklace**
c.1940

Bobby pins on metal-plated chain (silver)

X67130
Anni Albers 1899–1994
Alexander Reed (dates unknown)

**Necklace**
c.1940

Aluminium washers and red grosgrain ribbon

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.14.21
X71510

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Anni Albers 1899–1994
Alexander Reed (dates unknown)

**Necklace**
c.1940/1988

Reconstruction of the original by Mary Emma Harris
Corks and bobby pins on thread

X67132
Ruth Asawa 1926–2013

**BMC Stamp (SF.019)**

c.1950

Ink on newsprint

Ruth Asawa was one of Joseph Albers’s students at Black Mountain College. While on duty in the laundry room of the college, she produced a number of these stamp drawings. Applying the rubber stamps used to mark the laundry tickets, she created a series of inventive patterned studies. ‘BMC’ are the initials of the art school. Asawa produced a texture that has similarities to a textile, much like the experimentation with everyday materials encouraged by Anni Albers in her classes.

The Asawa Family Collection, Courtesy David Zwirner, New York/London/Hong Kong

X71706
With Verticals
1946

Cotton and linen

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 2004.12.1
X65971
ROOM 4
ANCIENT WRITING

‘The textiles of ancient Peru are to my mind the most imaginative textile inventions in existence. Their language was textile and it was a most articulate language… It lasted until the conquest in the 16th century. Until that time they had no written language, at least not in the sense we think of as a form of writing.’

Anni Albers made a number of works that reveal her interest in the relationship between text and textile. She understood that pre-Columbian textiles served a communicative purpose, especially in ancient Peru, where there was no written language. As a young student in Berlin Albers had regularly visited the Museum of Ethnology and its collection of Peruvian textile art. After emigrating to the US, the Alberses made frequent trips to Mexico and also travelled to Peru, Cuba and Chile. There, she was finally able to handle and even to purchase textile samples like those she had seen in the museum. The black and gold weaving she titled Ancient Writing was made the year after her first visit to Mexico in 1935.

Ancient Writing was the first in a series of pictorial weavings whose titles refer explicitly to texts and coded or ciphered
character languages. **Haiku** 1961, **Code** 1962 and **Epitaph** 1968 can be seen in Room 8.
Clockwise from wall text

**Ancient Writing**
1936

Cotton and rayon

Although shown here horizontally to preserve the fabric, **Ancient Writing** is intended to be hung vertically. The text-like, abstract blocks of alternating colour and texture appear to float over the dark ground of the middle area. Albers incorporated an additional surface thread, known as a floating weft, into the weaving process to create these additional forms. This technique, known as brocading, allowed Albers the freedom to improvise with the threads during the more rigid process of basic weaving.

Smithsonian American Art Museum. Gift of John Young X64734
Two
1952

Linen, cotton and rayon

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1996.12.3
X65978

Red Meander
1954

Linen and cotton

Private collection
X71585
Pictographic
1953

Cotton and chenille

Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, Stanley and Madalyn Rosen Fund, Dr. and Mrs. George Kamperman Fund, Octavia W. Bates Fund, Emma S. Fechimer Fund, and William C. Yawkey Fund
X64699

Vitrine
Left to right

Scroll Design
1960

Gouache on graph paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.19
X67121
Untitled
c.1980

Pen on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.216
X67693

Untitled
c.1981

Felt-tipped pen on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 2011.10.2
X69669

Untitled
c.1980

Pencil and pen on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.245
X67694
Untitled
c.1981

Felt-tipped pen on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 2011.10.3
X67696

Josef Albers 1888–1976
Siegfried Fleischmann, Anni Albers, Toni Fleischmann with two vendors, Teotihuacán, Mexico
1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1976.7.1448
X69740
Josef Albers 1888–1976

Anni Albers, Mitla, Mexico

1936–7

Photograph, gelatin silver contact print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1976.7.1161

X71028

Josef Albers 1888–1976

Anni Albers in Mexico

Date unknown

Photograph, gelatin silver contact print

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1976.7.1162

X71594
Josef Albers 1888–1976

**Tampu Machay, Sacsayhuamán, Peru**
Date unknown

Photographs, gelatin silver prints on paper mounted on cardboard

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1976.7.437
X69739

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Josef Albers 1888–1976

**Machu Picchu, Peru**
1953

Photographs, gelatin silver prints on paper mounted on cardboard

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1976.7.536
X69738
Josef Albers 1888–1976
Monte Albán, Oaxaca, Mexico
Date unknown

Photographs, gelatin silver prints and found postcards mounted on cardboard

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1976.7.539
X71591
ROOM 5
PICTORIAL WEAVINGS

‘To let threads be articulate again and find a form for themselves to no other end than their own orchestration, not to be sat on, walked on, only to be looked at, is the raison d’être of my pictorial weavings.’

Anni Albers distinguished between the textiles she designed for architecture or interiors, and her smaller ‘pictorial weavings’. These works explore what Albers described as ‘a form of weaving that is pictorial in character, in contrast to pattern weaving, which deals with repeats of contrasting areas’. In essence, they are artworks that have been made with the materials and processes of weaving.

Albers made many of her pictorial weavings in the 1950s in her house in New Haven, Connecticut. She used a small handloom to create these pieces, several of which incorporate a technique known as leno or gauze weave, where the vertical warp threads twist over each other around the horizontal weft threads. Some works, such as Development in Rose I and II, both 1952, may have been made on the same continuous warp threads, as companion pieces. But since they have been exposed to different conditions, the coloured threads have faded differently over time.
Anti-clockwise from wall text

Black-White-Gold I
1950
Cotton, Lurex and jute

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1996.12.1
X65974

Development in Rose I
1952
Linen

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1996.12.2
X65975
Development in Rose II
1952

Linen

The Art Institute of Chicago, Restricted gift of Laurance H. Armour, Jr. and Margot B. Armour Family Foundation, 1970.345
X64693

Open Letter
1958

Cotton

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.12.4
X65980
Play of Squares
1955

Wool and linen

Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, New Hampshire.
Museum Purchase: Currier Funds. 1956.3
X64698

Tikal
1958

Cotton

Museum of Arts and Design, New York, gift of the Johnson Wax Company, through the American Craft Council, 1979
X64707
Northwesterly
1957

Cotton, rayon and acrylic

The Art Institute of Chicago, Maurice D. Galleher Endowment, 1970.346
X66069

Thickly Settled
1957

Cotton and jute

Yale University Art Gallery, Director’s Purchase Fund
X64735
Variations on a Theme
1958

Cotton, linen and plastic

This pictorial weaving shows how Albers experimented with different traditional weaving methods and materials. Here we can see how she has used the leno weave, a technique of gathering a number of vertical warp threads and crossing them around the weft to achieve a twisted form. For the warp she has used a rigid plastic rod, which gives the leno weave extra strength while also adding a new texture to the piece. Albers wove two layers of warp at the same time, producing a double cloth. This allowed her to use leno weave across the top layer, revealing the warp threads of the bottom layer.

From the collection of Katherine E. Dreier and Theodore Dreier Jr
X64737
**Dotted**
1959

**Wool**

Albers employs another ancient technique in this pictorial weaving that gathers yarn in twists and knots to create bobbles across the surface of the work. Using seven different coloured yarns, dots emerge from the cream-coloured background to become an important formal element for the work’s abstract composition. These forms continue to appear in later pictorial weavings, including Haiku 1961, Code 1962 and Sunny 1965, shown in room 8.

Museum of Fine Arts Boston.
The Daphne Farago Collection 2012.1317
X68683
Opposite wall

**Untitled**

1950

Cotton and bast

*Courtesy Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas*

X65542

**Red and Blue Layers**

1954

Cotton

*The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1998.12.1*

X65979
South of the Border
1958

Cotton and wool

The Baltimore Museum of Art: Decorative Arts Fund, and Contemporary Crafts Fund; BMA 1959.91
X64694

Pasture
1958

Cotton

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Edward C. Moore Jr. Gift, 1969.69.135
X64706
ROOM 6
THE PLIABLE PLANE

‘The essentially structural principles that relate the work of building and weaving could form the basis of a new understanding between the architect and the inventive weaver. New uses of fabrics and new fabrics could result from a collaboration; and textiles, so often no more than an afterthought in planning, might take a place again as a contributing thought.’

In her essay ‘The Pliable Plane’, Anni Albers explores the relationship between textiles and architecture, examining its early beginnings and proposing a future where textiles become integral to architectural design. She even imagines a museum where ‘textile panels instead of rigid ones … provide for the many subdivisions and backgrounds it needs. Such fabric walls could have varying degrees of transparency or be opaque, even light-reflecting’.

Albers worked on many architectural commissions, collaborating with modernist architects and designers. In 1944 she designed a drapery fabric with light-reflecting qualities for the Rockefeller Guest House in Manhattan, New York. In 1949, when Walter Gropius built student dormitories at the Harvard Graduate Center, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, he asked Albers to create the textile design for the rooms.
Several room dividers Albers designed and made in the late 1940s are shown here. These woven pieces – likely prototypes for larger works – are portable architectural interventions that can be seen as a kind of experiment in modern living.
Maze
Designed for Sunar Textiles
1979

Acid-etched polyester and cotton

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.13.32
X67063

Dinah
Designed for S-Collection Textiles
c.1982–3

Cotton

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.13.39
X67069
Melfi
Designed for S-Collection Textiles
c.1982–3

Cotton

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.13.37
X67067
Albers began making prints in 1963 soon after she had given up weaving on a handloom. Collaborating with local print-making workshops, she experimented with a variation of techniques to achieve different textures. Here, she has used an embossing technique but without any ink, creating a sculptural surface on the white paper. The triangulated pattern of this series of prints continues to reflect her interest in the designs of pre-Columbian artefacts and textiles. Albers titled the series ‘Mountainous’ after the prints were made, noticing how they evoke a mountain landscape, like that of the ancient sites she had visited numerous times in Mexico.
These rugs were produced in collaboration with the weaver Inge Brouard Brown. They were designed using a new fibre made of corn protein and named after the manufacturer, the Virginia-Caroline Chemical Corporation of Richmond. The fibre was promoted for having special qualities such as being as warm as wool, soft as silk and more durable than cotton. Anni Albers designed the triangular pattern, which was then replicated in a pile weave, creating tufts like those often used in a rug or carpet. The works were reproduced in Albers’s seminal publication On Weaving.
Centre of room

Dividing curtain for Harvard Graduate Center double bedroom
1949

Linen and cotton

Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum.
Gift of Anni Albers, 1967-55-1
X70751

Bedspread for Harvard Graduate Center
1950

Linen and cotton

Courtesy of Cranbrook Art Museum
X68511
In 1950, Albers was commissioned by the architect Philip Johnson to make the draperies for the Rockefeller Guest House – a narrow townhouse Johnson designed for the Rockefeller family near their own mansion in Manhattan, New York. The house was filled with artworks from their collection. Albers produced a woven fabric that demonstrated her understanding of the interactive relationship between textiles, glass and light. The building was designed with large walls of glass on either side of an inner courtyard, making a series of transparent layers for light to transfer through the building. Referring to the commission in 1958, she recalled how the curtaining looked like a sack of potatoes in daylight, and then would transform at night, shot through as it was with metallic thread. The building was intended as a space for entertaining, allowing the curtain to act as a central feature during evening events.
Vitrine

Drapery material designed for Philip Johnson’s Rockefeller guest house, New York
1944

Chenille and copper thread

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.13.20
X68754

Rockefeller III Guest House, New York, NY: publicity packet
1950

Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, California
X71662
In 1951, the architect and furniture designer Florence Knoll invited Albers to collaborate with the Knoll Textile Department to produce new fabrics. Albers consulted on a number of innovative fabrics for the company over a 30-year period. She developed several open-weave casement fabrics such as Rail, Track and Lattice as coverings for modernist glass windows. The linen gauze of these textiles filtered light while also allowing air to circulate. Later, Albers developed the popular Eclat design with Knoll, a geometric pattern animated by parallelogram forms that was used for everyday furnishing, and is still in production today. The design was initially intended to be woven, however samples produced
at the time were not able to replicate the sharpness of the design and were screen-printed instead in twelve assorted colour ways. As technology developed, the fabric design was revisited and is now manufactured as an entirely woven textile.

**Vitrine**

**Textile Sample**
Date unknown

Cotton

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation 1994.15.55
X68878
Lattice
Designed for Knoll Textiles
1958

Linen casement material

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.13.3
X70694

Track
Designed for Knoll Textiles
1958

Linen casement material

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.13.1
X70691
Eclat samples
Designed for Knoll Textiles
1974

Silkscreen on cotton and linen

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation,
X67052, X67056, X67058–61
Notes on Eclat samples
c.1974

Textile samples on paper

Courtesy of Knoll Textiles Archive
X71040

Eclat J
Designed for Knoll Textiles
1977

Cotton and linen

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.13.5
X67062
Untitled
c.1974

Pencil on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.268
X68753

Centre of room

Free-hanging room divider
1949

Jute

Free-hanging room divider
c.1949

Jute and Lurex

Gift of the designer, 1960
X64731, X66104
Free-hanging room divider
c.1948

Walnut lath, dowels, and waxed-cotton harness-maker’s thread

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Gift of Anni Albers, 1970.75.78
X64705

These room dividers are Albers’s most experimental proposal for the way that weaving can define and transform a space, acting as movable partitions that stand away from the walls. These examples were produced for her 1949 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and were likely to be prototypes that could be adapted for larger spaces. Made with Lurex, a yarn with a metallic appearance, as well as jute and other natural fibres, the dividers reflect light as well as allowing light to filter through the loose structures of the weave. In another divider, rigid wooden laths and dowels are woven together with strong harness-maker’s thread that is commonly used in book-binding.
Drapery material woven for Rena Rosenthal’s Madison Avenue store
c.1935

Cotton, cellophane and rayon

Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum,
Gift of Anni Albers, 1967-55-2
X70747

Textile
1947

Cotton and silk

Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum.
Gift of Anni Albers, 1967-55-5
X70749
Vitrine in centre of room

Sample of dividing curtain for double bedroom in Harvard Graduate Center
1949

Cotton and bast

Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum,
Gift of Anni Albers, 1953-208-2
X70748
Shortly after her exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Albers was invited by Walter Gropius to design textiles for the student dormitories at the Harvard Law Faculty Graduate Center. Gropius, the founder and the first director of the Bauhaus, left Germany in 1934 and became Head of Architecture at the Harvard Graduate Design School in 1937. Gropius designed the building for the Law Faculty students and commissioned Albers to create ‘gentlemanly’ designs for the (then all-male) accommodation. Albers created checked designs in three different colours for the bedspreads and designed a room divider fabric to allow privacy for the student roommates. The designs were fundamental in the utilitarian scheme that aimed to maximise a small space for multiple functions, to sleep, socialise and work. During the day, the room divider curtain could be drawn back and the beds became divans for extra seating.
ROOM 7
‘Our world goes to pieces; we have to rebuild our world … We learn courage from art work. We have to go where no one was before us. We are alone and we are responsible for our actions. Our solitariness takes on religious character: this is a matter of my conscience and me.’

In the mid-1950s Anni Albers was invited to design an ark covering for a Jewish temple in Dallas, Texas. The ark houses the temple’s Torah scrolls. This was the first in a series of religious commissions she undertook, despite declaring that she had never set foot in a synagogue since the age of eight.

**Six Prayers** 1966–7 is Anni Albers’s most ambitious pictorial weaving. In 1965 she was commissioned by the Jewish Museum, New York to create a memorial to the six million Jews who had been killed in the Holocaust. Albers was from a Jewish family, though she had been baptised as a Protestant and saw herself as Jewish only ‘in the Hitler sense’. Albers was undoubtedly intrigued by the commission. It was an opportunity to make an architectural intervention using textile and to consider the form and function of the Torah scrolls with their Hebrew script. The six sombre, contemplative panels of **Six Prayers** represent the six million
Jews. Albers said of the work: ‘I used the threads themselves as a sculptor or painter uses his medium to produce a scriptural effect which would bring to mind sacred texts.’
Anti-clockwise from wall text

Life magazine
25 February 1957, Vol. 42, No. 8
1957

Private collection
X72812

Study for Temple Emanu-El
Ark Panels
1957

Foil and metallic thread on card

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.95
X67120
Study for Har Tzeon Panel (IV)
1967

Felt-tipped pen with paint and pencil on graph paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.93
X67126

Study for Har Tzeon Panel (II)
1967

Felt-tipped pen and pencil on graph paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.91
X67124
Study for Six Prayers II
1965–6

Cotton, linen, bast, Lurex and metallic thread

Weatherspoon Art Museum, The University of North Carolina Greensboro, USA
X68110

Six Prayers
1966–7

Cotton, linen, bast and silver thread

The Jewish Museum, New York,
Gift of the Albert A. List Family, JM 149-72.1-6
X64701
ROOM 8
THE EVENT OF A THREAD

‘Weaving is an example of a craft which is many sided. Besides surface qualities, such as rough and smooth, dull and shiny, hard and soft, it also includes colour, and, as the dominating element, texture… Like any craft, it may end in producing useful objects, or it may rise to the level of art.’

Albers studied the material qualities of yarns, as well as different ways of working with them. Combining yarns and techniques, she was able to create complex, multi-faceted pieces, rich in texture. Using a floating weft technique and brocade weaving (adding surface threads to a basic weave), she was able to integrate additional threads as free lines. She could ‘draw’ with these threads into the structure of her pictorial weavings.

In the mid-1940s Albers began to explore knots. She was probably influenced by the German mathematician and knot theorist Max Wilhelm Dehn, who joined Black Mountain College in 1945 and became a friend of the Alberses. Though not a painter, in 1947 Anni Albers began to sketch and paint entangled, linear structures. She may have revisited these drawings when she produced a number of scroll-like works with celtic-style knots in the late 1950s and the Line Involvements print series she created in the 1960s. Whether
using paint, pencil or yarn, Albers’s works reflect her often quoted statement: ‘The thoughts … can, I believe, be traced back to the event of a thread.’
Clockwise from wall text

Drawing for a knot
1948

Gouache on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.8
X67118

Knot drawing
Date unknown

Ink and pencil on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 2007.10.1
X67155
Drawing for a knot
1947

Pencil on tracing paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.6
X67079

Drawing for a knot
1947

Pencil on vellum

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.5
X67078
Anni Albers 1899–1994

**Untitled I**
1964

Screenprint on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.1 1.3
X71019

**Study for a Nylon Rug**
1959

Gouache on photostat photographic paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.12
X71020
Under Way
1963

Cotton, linen and wool

X64700
Intersecting
1962

Cotton and rayon

In this pictorial weaving Albers has chosen only four colours of thread to make a plain weave background. On top, she has used a floating weft to brocade additional threads that meander and at moments cross over each other. The orange, white and blue of these threads sometimes barely stand out against the threads used in the warp and weft, but contrast in other places. Using the same warp, Albers produced a textile sample that is displayed nearby, perhaps intended as a sample for potential textile manufacturers. This shows how Albers bridged the distinction between weaving as art and weaving for everyday use.

Josef Albers Museum Quadrat Bottrop
X64702
Drawing for a Rug II
1959

Ink and pencil on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.13
X71021

Drawing for a Rug II
1959

Gouache on photostat photographic paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.17
X68747

Drawing for a Rug II
1959

Gouache on photostat photographic paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.16
X68746
Design
c.1955

Gouache on photostat photographic paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.9
X67119

Knot
1947

Gouache on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.3
X67076

Knot 3
1947

Watercolour on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.4
X67077
Knot 2
1947

Gouache on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1947.10.1
X67074

Epitaph
1968

Cotton, jute and Lurex

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 2005.12.1
X65977

Code
1962

Cotton, hemp and metallic thread

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.12.5
X65976
**Haiku**
1961

Cotton, hemp, metallic thread and wool

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.12.6
X65981

**Sunny**
1965

Cotton and linen

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Corcoran Collection (Gift of Olga Hirshhorn), 2015.19.4093
X64697
On low floor plinth

Rug
Executed by Gloria Finn Dale
1959

Nylon

Herbet F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University,
Gift of Laurel Vlock, Class of 1948, and Jim Vlock, Class of 1947, MBA 1948
X70782
ON WEAVING

‘One of the most ancient crafts, hand weaving is a method of forming a pliable plane of threads by interlacing them rectangularly. Invented in a pre-ceramic age, it has remained essentially unchanged to this day. Even the final mechanization of the craft through introduction of power machinery has not changed the basic principle of weaving.’

This room demonstrates how extensively Anni Albers explored the theory and practice of weaving. She published two influential books: in 1959, a short anthology of essays titled **On Designing**, and in 1965 the seminal book **On Weaving**. Serving as a kind of visual atlas, **On Weaving** explores the history of the last 4,000 years of weaving around the world, as well as examining technical aspects of the craft and the development of the loom. Albers dedicated the book to her ‘great teachers, the weavers of ancient Peru’, and stressed throughout the text how ancient techniques could continue to revitalise contemporary practice.

Much of the source material Albers gathered for **On Weaving** is shown here. Albers chose to include images of works by other artists such as Jean (Hans) Arp and Lenore Tawney, who was one of the first artists to become well known for her
‘fiber art’ in the 1960s. She also included images of many fragments of woven pieces from Africa and Asia as well as Europe and the Americas. Technical diagrams of various knotting techniques are featured, as well as ‘draft notation’ diagrams which show the weaver how to create the different weave structures and patterns.
First Vitrine
Top row

Anni Albers 1899–1994
Diagram for ‘Early Techniques of Thread Interlacing’
(chapter of On Weaving)
c.1965

Ink and pencil on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.78
X70646
Anni Albers 1899–1994

Diagrams for ‘Early Techniques of Thread Interlacing’
(chapter of On Weaving)
c.1965

Ink and pencil on paper
The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation,
1994.40.77, 79, 82, 80, 81
X70645, X70647, X70650, X70648, X70649

Bottom row

Fragment, Peru, Chancay
1100–1300

Wool

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.16.21
X69685
Sampler, Peru, Chimú
1100–1300

Cotton and wool

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.16.3
X69679

Fragment from garment
Late intermediate, 1000–1475 A.D.

Cotton and wool

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.16.113
X72412

Fragment, Peru, Chimú
Late intermediate, 1000–1475 A.D.

Cotton

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.16.63
X72411
Lace, Peru, Chancay
1100–1300

Cotton

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.48
X69688

Tapestry fragment, Peru, Chimú
1100–1300

Wool

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.16.9
X69684
Nancy Newhall 1908–1974

Anni Albers holding a Mexican miniature
1948

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1976.28.547
X70203

Tapestry, a deity, Tiahuanaco, Peru, Huari
600–1000

Wool

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.16.6
X69680
Panel fragment, Peru, Chimú
1100–1300

Cotton

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.16.107
X69690

Bag, Salta, northern Argentina
Date unknown

Bast

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.16.24
X69687

Tunic panel, Peru, Huari
500–1000

Cotton and wool

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.16.106
X69689
Junius Bouton Bird 1907–1982
*Paracas Fabrics and Nazca Needlework,*
3rd Century B.C. – 3rd Century A.D.

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.50.33
X70063

Raoul d’Harcourt 1879–1971
*Textiles of Ancient Peru and their Techniques*
University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1962

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.50.32
X70062
On wall

**Serape, Queretaro, Mexico**
c.1850–1950

Cotton

Yale University Art Gallery, The Harriet Engelhardt Memorial Collection, Gift of Mrs. Paul Moore
X69723

Second vitrine
Top row

**Anni Albers 1899–1994**

**Typewriter Study**
Date unknown

Typed ink on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.18.11
X68774
Anni Albers 1899–1994

Typewriter Studies
Date unknown

Typed ink on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.18.6, 7, 4, 5
X68763, X68766, X68758, X68760

Study made with corn kernels
Study made with twisted paper
Study made with grass
Study made with metal shavings

4 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.46, 45, 43, 44
X69970, X69969, X69967, X69968
Arrangements made by nature as contrast to arrangement made by design, Charles Eames

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.47 X69971

Bottom row

Anni Albers 1899–1994

Studies made by puncturing paper
Dates unknown

Pinpricks on paper mounted on board

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.18.8–10 X68767, X68768, X68771
Anni Albers 1899–1994

Study in textile appearance through imitation in corrugated paper

Date unknown

Ink and gouache on corrugated paper mounted on cardboard

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.18.2 X68756
Anni Albers 1899–1994

**Study in textile appearance through imitation in corrugated paper**

Date unknown

Ink and gouache on corrugated paper mounted on cardboard

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.18.3
X68757

Anni Albers 1899–1994

**Study of effect of construction of weave**

Date unknown

Newspaper, string and fibre study mounted on cardboard

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.18.1
X68755
Marguerite Porter Davison
*A Handweaver’s Pattern Book*
Schlechter, Allentown, PA, 1944

Private collection
X71741

Lenore Tawney 1907–2007
*That Enters From the End Into the Beginning*
1964

Ink on paper

Presented by the Lenore G. Tawney Foundation
(Tate Americas Foundation) 2016
L03879
Lenore Tawney 1907–2007

**From Its Center**
1964

Ink on paper
Presented by the Lenore G. Tawney Foundation
(Tate Americas Foundation) 2016
L03876

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**Suspended**

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Lenore Tawney 1907–2007

**Lekythos**
1962

Linen, brass and acrylic

Presented by the Lenore G. Tawney Foundation
(Tate Americas Foundation) 2016
L03875
Third vitrine

Top row
Left to right

Sheila Hicks born 1934
Twill (Mexico)
1956–7

Wool

Purchased with funds provided by the Tate Americas Foundation (Latin American Acquisitions Committee) 2014
T14128
Sheila Hicks born 1934

Tacna-Arica

c.1957

Vicuña and cotton

Purchased with funds provided by the Tate Americas Foundation (Latin American Acquisitions Committee) 2014

T14127
Josef Albers 1888–1976

**Untitled Abstraction V**
c.1945

Graphite and gouache on paper

Presented by The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
in honour of Achim Borchardt-Hume 2006
T12205


**Lace, Mexico**
c.1965

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.85
X70640
Chiapas inlaid technique, Mexico

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.84
X70638

Detail of partition material, Anni Albers, 1949

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.52
X69976

Partition material, Anni Albers, 1949

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.53
X69977
Study in twining, Nina Pattek, 1965

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.50
X69974

Lace, ancient Peru

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.48
X69972

Detail of screen in looping technique,
Dorothy Cavalier Yanik, 1962

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.51
X69975
Jean (Hans) Arp 1886–1966
woven by Sophie Taeuber-Arp 1889–1943
A Measure of a Fairy Tale
1917/1926
Wool
Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck
X70061

Anni Albers 1899–1994
Tissu, Plate 17 in Tapis et tissus by Sonia Delaunay
published by Editions d’Art Charles Moreau, 1929
Pochoir print on paper
Smithsonian Libraries; Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Library
X70758
Leipzig, 1926

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1976.50.183
X69982

Anni Albers 1899–1994
Work with Material: Black Mountain College Bulletin, Series 1, No.5
November 1938

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation,
Anni Albers Papers, 28.4
X70661

‘Weaving, Hand’ by Anni Albers in Encyclopædia Britannica, ed. Harry S. Ashmore
University of Virginia, VA, 1963

Private collection
X69813
'Fabric, the Pliable Plane' by Anni Albers in Craft Horizons, Vol. 18, No. 4
July/August 1959

Private collection
X72709

Irene Emery 1900–1981
The Primary Structures of Fabrics: An Illustrated Classification
The Textile Museum, Washington DC, 1966

Private collection
X72710

Gottfried Semper 1803–1879
Textile Art in its Own Right and in Relation to Architecture
Verlag für Kunst und Wissenschaft, Frankfurt 1860

Private Collection
X69978
Gustaf Hermann Oelsner
Samuel Sherman Dale
A Handbook of Weaves
The Macmillan company, New York, 1915

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 2008.50.2803
X70064

Christiaan Nooteboom 1906–1967
Weaving Techniques of the Lesser Sunda Islands
E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1948

Private collection
X69980
Vitrine in centre of room
Clockwise, starting from vitrine opposite wall text

Earliest known representation of a loom.
Predynastic Egyptian pottery, c.3400 B.C.

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.40
X69930

Loom from Bougainville Island

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.41
X69931
Okinawa loom, Japan

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.54
X69935

Greek warp-weight loom, from an Athenian lekythos, c.560 B.C.

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.42
X69932

A Chinese draw-loom

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.36
X69937
Wall Hanging, Jacquard weaving.
Anni Albers, 1925

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.55
X69941

A modern weaving room. One man (in center of photograph) is supervising the weaving of the looms shown here - in some cases as many as one hundred looms

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.35
X69938

A medieval loom. From the Ypres Book of Trades, c.1310

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.37
X69936
Peruvian weavers at work on back-strap loom, from a Mochiapottery vessel, 600–1000 A.D.

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.39 X69933

Back-strap loom (diagram) of the type used in Peru

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.38 X69934
Josef Albers 1888–1976

Anni Albers and local weavers, Santo Thomas, Oax./Coyotepec, Mexico
1956

Photographs, gelatin silver prints on paper mounted on cardboard

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1976.7.578
X69727

Hand loom, Mexico

c.1930

Wood, cotton and wool

Yale University Art Gallery, The Harriet Engelhardt Memorial Collection, Gift of Mrs. Paul Moore
X69724
Chancay textile, large fragment, Peru
900–1430

Cotton

On loan from the Trustees of the British Museum
X67748

Kuba cloth, Congo
1900–1949

Embroidered raffia

Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
Given by the late John Compton.
X68038
Egyptian tapestry fragment, probably from the cuff of a tunic
c.300–600

Linen and wool

Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
Given by A.F. Kendrick Esq
X68037

Coptic tapestry medallion, Egypt
Date unknown

Wool and linen

On loan from the Trustees of the British Museum.
Donated by E.T. Rogers, 1883
X67761
Ainu Sword Belt, Japan
Date unknown

Bark cloth

On loan from the Trustees of the British Museum.
Donated by Dr. John Anderson, 1885
X67751

Anni Albers 1899–1994

Diagram showing draft notation (plain weave)
c.1965

Ink and pencil on gridded paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.17
X69942
Anni Albers 1899–1994

Diagram showing draft notation (warp twill)
c.1965

Ink and pencil on gridded paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.18
X69943

Anni Albers 1899–1994

Diagram showing draft notation (weft satin 5-leaf)
c.1965

Ink and pencil on gridded paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.19
X69944
Anni Albers 1899–1994

Diagrams for ‘The Fundamental Constructions’ (chapter of On Weaving)  
c.1965

Black masking tape and pencil on gridded paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation,  
1994.40.20, 1994.40.56  
X69945, X69949

Anni Albers 1899–1994

Diagrams for ‘Modified and Composite Weaves’ (chapter of On Weaving)  
c.1965

Black masking tape and pencil on gridded paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation,  
1994.40.21–3, 58, 60, 65–8, 72  
X69946–8, X69950–6
Painted effigy cloth, Peru, central coast, Chancay
1100–1300
Cotton

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.16.23
X69686

Letter from George Kubler to Anni Albers
6 March 1956

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.88
X72416

Letter from Anni Albers to Anne Hewlett Fuller
and Richard Buckmister Fuller
22 August 1959

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.95
X72418
Letter from György Kepes to Anni Albers  
17 September 1956

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.91  
X72417

Letter from Richard Buckminster Fuller to Sybil Wilson  
30 September 1959

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.94  
X71666

Letter from György Kepes to Anni Albers  
28 January 1960

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.90  
X70659
Letter from George Kubler to Anni Albers
28 December 1959

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.89
X70658

Telegram from Paul Scheiwkher to Anni Albers
6 April 1965

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.99
X70657

Letter from Richard Buckminster Fuller to Anni Albers
12 April 1976

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.96
X72419
Letter from Richard Buckminster Fuller to Anni Albers
15 June 1976

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.40.97
X72420

Books in centre vitrine

Anni Albers 1899–1994
On Designing

Private collection
X71794

Anni Albers 1899–1994
On Designing

Private collection
X69812
Anni Albers 1899–1994

On Weaving
Wesleyan University Press, Middletown CT, 1965

Private collection
X69810

Anni Albers 1899–1994

On Weaving
Wesleyan University Press, Middletown CT, 1965

Private collection
X69811
ROOM 10
‘...circumstances held me to threads and they won me over. I learned to listen to them and to speak their language... And with the listening came gradually a longing for a freedom beyond their range and that led me to another medium, graphics. Threads were no longer as before three-dimensional; only their resemblance appeared drawn or printed on paper. What I learned in handling threads, I now used in the printing process.’

After giving up the physically demanding task of weaving at the loom, printmaking became Anni Albers’s new means of artistic expression. As with weaving, Albers allowed the printing process to guide her, stating: ‘What I’m trying to get across is that material is a means of communication. That listening to it, not dominating it makes us truly active, that is: to be active, be passive.’ Printing allowed Albers to pursue her interest in colour, texture, pattern, surface qualities and other aspects of ‘textile language’, translating those concerns onto paper. She used simple grids and rows of triangles to create a wide variety of effects that reveal the influence of the pre-Columbian textiles and artefacts she collected and studied.
Though Anni Albers kept very few sketchbooks, she did produce hundreds of textile samples throughout her career, which she carefully labelled and archived. The yarns, patterns, weaves and techniques of these samples served as both ‘sketches’ and as an archive of Albers’s ideas. Grouped together, they could be seen as a miniature retrospective of her woven works.
Clockwise from wall text

**Red Meander I**
1969–70

Screenprint on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.11.13
X67137

**Study for TR I**
c.1969
Gouache on blueprint paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.33
X67153
TR I
1970

Lithograph print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.11.19
X67138

Triadic Dr. I
1968

Ink and pencil on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 2014.10.1
X69664

Study for TR III
1969

Gouache on blueprint paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.34
X69665
Clockwise from top left

**Trial proof for TR III**
1970

Blind embossed print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.11.21.a
X69674

**Trial proof for TR III**
1970

Zinc plate embossing on silkscreen print on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.11.21.b
X69675
TR III
1969–70

Screenprint on paper

Presented by the American Fund for the Tate Gallery, courtesy of Melinda Shearer Maddock 2017
P14776

Trial proof for TR III
1970

Zinc plate embossing on metallic laminate on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.11.21.d
X69676
Study for Triadic II
1969

Gouache on blueprint paper

Private collection, Nottingham
X67798

TR II
1970

Screenprint on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.11.20
X69673

Study for DO I
1973

Gouache on diazotype photographic paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.42
X69666
Study for Do V
1973

Gouache on diazotype photographic paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.48
X69668

Study for DO II
1973

Gouache on diazotype photographic paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.43
X69667

Colour Study (blue and reds)
1970

Gouache on blueprint paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.37
X67148
Study in Red Stripes
1969
Gouache on blueprint paper
The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.31
X67128

Study for Triangulated Intaglio III
1976
Ink and pencil on graph paper
The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.68
X68750

DR XIV
1974
Ink on paper
The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.51
X68749
Albers was invited by the Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta to produce a large wall hanging to hang in the bar of his new hotel in Mexico City, the Camino Real, opened in 1968. Several other artists were commissioned, including Alexander Calder and Mathias Goeritz, who made a gold mural for one of the stairways, as well as the dramatic sculptural wall in the forecourt. The preparatory drawings for Anni Albers’s work show stages in the design but are based on a schematic template she had first began to develop in the 1930s and had carried through to her later prints. The arrangement of small triangular units that then contribute to larger triangles are reminiscent of the textiles and Zapotec architecture she had seen at Mitla, Mexico. The combination of ancient patterns with the modernity of a hotel designed especially for the Olympic Games, held in Mexico in 1968, informs Anni Albers’s large-scale work. Although she never saw her wall hanging in situ, it was recorded by the architectural photographer Armando Salas Portugal.
Armando Salas Portugal 1916–1995

Fountain at Camino Real Entrance
1968, printed 2018

Photograph, digital print on paper

Courtesy of Fundación Armando Salas Portugal
X72687

Armando Salas Portugal 1916–1995

Salon at Camino Real
1968, printed 2018

Photograph, digital print on paper

Courtesy of Fundación Armando Salas Portugal
X71341
Armando Salas Portugal 1916–1995

**Salon at Camino Real**
1968, printed 2018

Photograph, digital print on paper

Courtesy of Fundación Armando Salas Portugal
X71342

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**Camino Real**
1969

Screenprint on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.11.6
X67136
**Untitled**  
c.1967

Pencil on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.243  
X70676

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**Untitled**  
c.1967

Pen and gouache on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.244  
X70677

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**Study for Camino Real**  
c.1967

Gouache on blueprint paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.21  
X67698
Study for Camino Real
1967

Gouache on graph paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.10.22
X67123

Black White Yellow
Original 1926 (lost), re-woven by Gunta Stölzl in 1967

Cotton and silk

This wallhanging is one of three editions based on an original piece designed by Anni Albers in 1926. Another version is displayed in room 2. Many of the early wall hangings produced by Albers at the Bauhaus were lost, including the original of this piece, so she made the decision in the 1960s to remake them. She commissioned her former colleague, Gunta Stölzl, who had been head of the Bauhaus weaving workshop, to re-weave the work.

Victoria and Albert Museum, London
X65524
Vitrine in centre of room
Clockwise from corner nearest to wall text

Horsehair, gimp and thread
Horsehair, chenille, and thread mounted on cardboard

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68829, X68831

Horsehair, chenille and thread

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68833

Cotton mounted on cardboard

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68887, X68888
Cotton mounted on cardboard

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68879, X68880

Cotton mounted on cardboard

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68884, X68885, X68886

Cotton and linen mounted on cardboard

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68882, X68883

Cotton and metallic thread mounted on cardboard

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68853
Cotton and metallic thread

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68852

Cotton and bast

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68837

Linen and cotton

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Gift of Anni Albers, 1970. 1970.75.30
X66087
Top to bottom

Linen and raffia

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68847

Linen and jute

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68844

Cotton

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X69663
Cotton

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Anni Albers, 1970. 1970.75.77
X66086

Cotton, cellophane and cotton gimp

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68840

Unknown fibre and cellulose

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68839

Unknown fibre and cellulose

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68838
Linen
The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68871

Linen
The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68870

Synthetic
Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Gift of Anni Albers, 1970. 1970.75.26
X66074
Top to bottom

Hemp and silk

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68867

Hemp and silk

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68868

Synthetic fiber

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68851
Cotton and linen

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Anni Albers, 1970. 1970.75.75
X66085

Cotton and linen

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Anni Albers, 1970. 1970.75.29
X66075

Jute and cotton

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Anni Albers, 1970. 1970.75.73
X66083
Cotton

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Anni Albers, 1970. 1970.75.72
X66082

Cotton and linen

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Anni Albers, 1970. 1970.75.71
X66081

Cotton and synthetic

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Anni Albers, 1970. 1970.75.70
X66080
Linen, cotton and synthetic fibre

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68872

Cotton or synthetic, metal foil

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Gift of Anni Albers, 1970. 1970.75.21
X66077

Linen

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Gift of Anni Albers, 1970. 1970.75.22
X66073
Linen, metallic thread

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Anni Albers, 1970. 1970.75.26
X66072

Handwoven sample for a wall covering

C.1945

Linen, cellophane and paper

Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum. Museum purchase through gift of Mrs. John Innes Kane; 1948-85-2
X70750

Linen and cotton

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68869
Handwoven sample for a wall covering
c.1945

Cotton, linen and metallic thread

Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum.
Museum purchase through gift of Mrs. John Innes Kane;
1948-85-7
X70755

Linen and cotton

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68841

Linen and cotton

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68842
Hemp and silk
The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68866

Linen mounted on paper
The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68876, X68877

Jute and cotton
Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Gift of Anni Albers, 1970. 1970.75.74
X66084

Cotton and synthetic
Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Gift of Anni Albers, 1970. 1970.75.69
X66079
Cotton and cellophane

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Anni Albers, 1970 1970.75.56
X66070

Cotton and cellophane

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Anni Albers, 1970 1970.75.57
X66078

Cotton mounted on cardboard

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68884, X68885, X68886
Cotton

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68836

Linen
c.1960

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Gift of Anni Albers, 1970.75.16
X66071

Linen and raffia

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68847

Linen, jute and metallic thread

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68845
Cotton, wool and metallic thread mounted on cardboard

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68825

Cotton, rayon and metallic thread mounted on cardboard

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68826

Saran and nylon

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68892

Saran and nylon mounted on cardboard

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68889, X68890, X68891
Horsehair, chenille and thread

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68827, X68828

Linen mounted on cardboard

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68873, X68874, X68875

Horsehair, chenille and thread

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68834

Cotton

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68881
Cotton and gimp

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68854

Cotton and gimp

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation
X68865
TACTILE SENSIBILITY

‘If a sculptor deals mainly with volume, an architect with space, a painter with colour, then a weaver deals primarily with tactile effects.’

Though Anni Albers was in favour of modern design and production, she held a strong belief that technology increasingly dulls our awareness of the tactile, or haptic, as it replaces the need to make things with our hands. Her essay ‘Tactile Sensibility’ begins: ‘All progress, so it seems, is coupled to regression elsewhere. We have advanced in general, for instance, in regard to verbal articulation… But we certainly have grown increasingly insensitive in our perception by touch, the tactile sense… For too long we have made too little use of the medium of tactility.’

Tactile copies of Albers’s studies exploring surface texture (such as those displayed in rooms 3 and 9) are presented on the shelves, as well as three-dimensional interpretations of her Line Involvement prints. Samples of the types of yarn she used are hanging in skeins and have also been made up into touchable swatches by weaver Louise Anderson, inspired by Albers’s work.

Anni Albers made many of her pictorial weavings on the eightharness Structo Artcraft handloom exhibited here.
The technique of setting up a handloom is a complex interaction of hand and eye, which requires patience and concentration. The adjacent film by Simon Barker shows contemporary weaver Ismini Samanidou working at this loom during her residency at the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation in Connecticut.
In this film, the artist and weaver Ismini Samanidou sets up the warp, adjusts the tension and weaves a length of textile on the loom that was owned by Anni Albers. The film was produced at the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany, Connecticut whilst Samanidou was artist in residence. Samanidou repaired the loom to working order and used the loom to make a new weaving. This same loom is shown nearby and is thought have been one of the looms on which Albers made many of her pictorial weavings and textile samples from c.1950 onwards.
Anni Albers’s eight-harness Structo- Artcraft 750 loom
Date unknown

Wood and metal

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 1994.80.1
X67705
Sample wall

Yarn samples, left to right:

- Synthetic raffia
- Metallic Lurex
- Rayon
- Metallic Lurex
- Nylon
- Unknown Metallic
- Ribbon tape, synthetic
- Spun silk
- Silk flammer
- Mercerised cotton
- Cotton chenille
- Natural raffia
- Waxed linen
- Jute
- Hemp linen
- Swedish linen
- Swaledale wool
- Moquette wool
- British wool
- Acylic
Tables, left to right

**Hand-woven textile samples**
Made by Louise Renae Anderson, textile practioner

Hand woven, doubled faced, mercerised cotton, cotton chenille and rayon

Hand woven, mercerised cotton, moquette wool and rayon

Hand woven, mercerised cotton and wools

Hand woven, waxed linen

Hand woven, twills and plainweave, mercerised cotton, linens and hemp

Hand woven, twill, mercerised cotton, half bleached and unbleached linen

Hand woven, double cloth, mercerised cotton

Hand woven, double cloth, mercerised cotton

Hand woven (with weft inlay), mercerised cotton, jute, raffia and paper yarn inlay
Anni Albers’s teaching exercises
Remade by Fritz Horstmann,
The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation

Anni and Josef Albers both used exercises designed to examine the surface qualities of materials with their students at Black Mountain College. Anni Albers’s studies used materials such as twisted paper or corn kernels, arranged vertically and horizontally, to create a ‘tactile blueprint’ of how the textures in a weaving might appear. These exercises are recreated here, for visitors to touch.

Line Involvement: a three-dimensional interpretation
Made by Fritz Horstmann,
The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation

In the 1950s and 60s, Anni Albers sketched, painted and made prints of entangled, knot-like structures. Some of these works can be seen in Room 8. Here, visitors can touch a three-dimensional recreation of similar prints. Albers continued to explore textile-related concerns, such as the use of floating wefts, in her printed works.