

Furnishing fabric
Honeysuckle

William Morris
1876

Dekorationsstoff, Honeysuckle, 1876
Entwurf: William Morris
Herstellung: Morris & Co., London, GB
Material/Technik: Baumwolle, Indigo-
Ätzverfahren, Handdruck mit Holzmodeln
240 × 96.5 cm
Eigentum: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK



The designer, theorist, and socialist William Morris (1834-1896)—cofounder of the English Arts and Crafts movement—is considered one of the most important pioneers of modern applied arts. He understood his work as a designer, craftsman, and producer as an alternative to industrial production.

The new markets and sources of raw materials associated with English imperialism, along with the technological achievements of the era, led in the nineteenth century to increased demand and the rapid growth of mass-produced textiles. Precarious working conditions and poor-quality fabrics were the result. In 1861, William Morris and his comrades-in-arms founded the firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. (as of 1874, Morris & Co.) with the intention of creating products that met their demanding standards. Morris

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experimented with both new and historical, preindustrial methods and developed techniques such as indigo-discharge printing and printing fabrics with mineral dyes. These techniques allowed him to transfer intricate, often axisymmetric patterns onto fabrics precisely and in the desired quality. Morris achieved a spatial effect in naturalistic ornament by layering a dominant pattern over a smaller one. This can be seen, for example, in the furnishing fabric *Honeysuckle*, which Morris's daughter May once described as "the most truly Morrisian," and which the Liberty company still offers today in two different colorways. Although opulent pink tulips dominate the image, Morris decided to name the fabric after the supporting player, honeysuckle—since, after all, it was ultimately this flower that would dominate the bouquet with its enchanting fragrance! (Julia Klinner)
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