

Furnishing fabric
(untitled)

Henry van de Velde
1906



Dekorationsstoff, 1906
Entwurf: Henry van de Velde
Herstellung: vermutlich Hagener Textilindustrie AG, DE
Material/Technik: Baumwolle, bedruckt
23.5 × 13.5 cm
Eigentum: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK

The influential Art Nouveau artist Henry van de Velde (1863–1957) apparently considered this multicolored print fabric a good representative of his work in textiles, as in 1912–13 he presented it in the United States as part of the traveling exhibition *German Applied Arts*. From 1900, van de Velde devoted his attention to interior decoration, including home textiles that were designed to accompany his furniture, carpets, and decorative objects.

In contrast to woven fabrics such as jacquards, whose appeal comes from complex patterns of alternating flat passages and areas in slight relief, print fabrics like this one derive their interest from the design itself rather than the fabrication technique. Designed in 1906, this printed calico is a dense, smooth pre-woven furnishing fabric. Available in various colorways, the fabric was probably made by Hagener Textilindustrie AG using the roller printing process. The pattern of alternating ornamental circle motifs betrays Indonesian influences and was inspired by the aesthetics of Javanese batik, especially the Ceplok motif. Van de Velde's reduced ornament, whether printed or woven, proposed a deliberate contrast to the

organic plant motifs that dominated contemporary tastes. Hermann Muthesius, founder of the German Werkbund, called the Belgian designer the “father of the nonrepresentational pattern.” Inspired by observing ocean waves, van de Velde embraced the power of line itself, which would become a formal leitmotif of his design approach. His home textiles embody this approach with their symmetrical patterns, rhythmic arrangements, and carefully modulated color schemes. (Franziska Müller-Reissmann)

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