



R & Company to Open First Solo Exhibition of Designer Evelyn Ackerman Outside of California, Featuring More Than 30 of Her Iconic Tapestries and Mosaics

Evelyn Ackerman: The Collection of Gary and Laura Maurer
January 12 – April 19, 2024



Evelyn Ackerman, *Hot Bird/Partridge/Bird*, 1957-1965, Three mosaic panels.
Photography by Logan Jackson, courtesy of R & Company.

On January 12, R & Company will open [*Evelyn Ackerman: The Collection of Gary and Laura Maurer*](#), the first solo exhibition focused on Ackerman’s vision and work outside of California. [*Evelyn Ackerman, along with her business partner and husband Jerome Ackerman*](#), played a pivotal role in melding the worlds of art, craft, and design, establishing a successful commercial enterprise that inspired industry insiders and reached a broad public. The upcoming exhibition, which coincides with the 100th anniversary of Evelyn Ackerman’s birth, features more

than 30 tapestries and mosaics designed by Evelyn and produced between 1957 and 1982, capturing her distinct embrace of both abstract and figural motifs. With this exhibition, R & Company continues its commitment to championing 20th century California women designers and growing new audiences for their significant work.

The works are drawn from the private collection of Gary and Laura Maurer, whose holdings of designs by Evelyn Ackerman are understood to be the largest ever assembled. The works in the exhibition have been authenticated by Laura Ackerman Shaw, the couple’s daughter, who represents the Estate of Evelyn and Jerome Ackerman. The selling exhibition will remain on view through April 19, 2024, at R & Company’s White Street location. Additionally, tapestries by Evelyn Ackerman from the Maurer Collection will be presented by the gallery at the upcoming edition of FOG Design + Art Fair.

The Ackermans first met and married in postwar Detroit. Inspired by the partnership of Charles and Ray Eames, they moved to Los Angeles and in 1956 co-founded ERA Industries, with a showroom in the city’s design district. The majority of the woven wool textiles and mosaics were designed by Evelyn—who made full-size drawings with detailed instructions color-keyed to yarn samples—and produced by a workshop of artisans in Mexico. A series of hand-hooked wool and rayon “tapestry rugs” were produced

in Osaka, Japan. Evelyn was inspired by modern and folk art movements and artists, creating works that included both abstract and figural elements. Her works featuring flowers, trees, animals, and people, like the “Campesina” textile (1969) included in the show, were particularly popular in the 1960s and drew clear connections to the visual vocabulary of folk art. As tastes have changed through time, her abstract works have garnered more interest and attention. The upcoming exhibition includes a broad selection of these objects, including the “Adhara Abstract” (1957) and “Pennants” (1958) mosaics and the “Moonscape” (1969) and “Composition” (1969) tapestries.

The Ackermans were influenced by the “Good Design” movement promoted by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in the mid-20th century, which espoused simple, modern, well-crafted, and affordable design for everyone. They developed close relationships with Los Angeles-based architects working on affordable modern housing and with interior designers, creating selections of works in a variety of colors that allowed for the establishment of easy but sophisticated design. Despite their commercial success and popularity in California—they were featured in every edition of the seminal *California Design* exhibitions (1954-1976)—their contributions to design and craft remain under-appreciated. In recent years, they were the subject of a retrospective at the Mingei International Museum, San Diego (2010) and included in LACMA's *California Design, 1930–1965: Living in a Modern Way* (2011-2012).

With R & Company's January exhibition, the gallery continues to bring to the fore Evelyn's work. The gallery first exhibited a tapestry by the designer in 2004. Over the years, R & Company has presented several exhibitions on California mid-century modern design, and in November 2022, the gallery borrowed Ackerman's textiles and original drawings from the Estate for its acclaimed exhibition [*Born Too Tall: California Women Designers, Postwar to Postmodern*](#).

"We have discovered a growing interest in Evelyn Ackerman's works among collectors and institutions. In 2023, two midwestern museums acquired her tapestries, marking the first time an institution east of the Mississippi added her work to their permanent collection," said James Zemaitis, R & Company's Director of Museum Relations and the organizer of *Evelyn Ackerman: The Collection of Gary and Laura Maurer*. "We are excited to present this collection, which has been assembled over several decades by Gary and Laura Maurer; to work with Laura Ackerman Shaw on its documentation; and to engage new audiences with Evelyn's distinct work, which deserves significantly greater study and understanding."

About Gary and Laura Maurer

Gary and Laura Maurer are collectors and philanthropists based in Chicago and Sedona. Over the years they have assembled several significant single-artist collections, most notably the designs of Russel Wright. They have made transformational donations of Wright's most important works as well as financial support to Manitoga: The Russel Wright Design Center. Based mostly at their home in Sedona, their collection of designs by Evelyn Ackerman is believed to be the largest ever assembled.

About R & Company

For over 20 years, R & Company has championed collectible design, advancing the contemporary marketplace and actively growing a global collector base and clientele. Its founders, Zesty Meyers and Evan Snyderman, are widely recognized for identifying rising talent, deepening scholarship about collectible design, and developing new avenues for growth in the industry. R & Company maintains two

dynamic spaces in New York: its expansive, inaugural space at 82 Franklin Street features a rotating display of interior environments highlighting gallery designers, while 64 White Street offers an active roster of solo and group exhibitions and includes a Library and Archive of more than 10,000 books, photographs, drawings, and other materials. The gallery is committed to nurturing and sustaining the markets and careers of both emerging and established designers, as well as to maintaining and expanding commercial and academic interest in historic design. Its roster of international designers includes Wendell Castle, Rogan Gregory, Greta Magnusson Grossman, Serban Ionescu, Hun-Chung Lee, Joyce Lin, Roberto Lugo, Richard Marquis, Jolie Ngo, Katie Stout, Johnny Swing, Studio Job, Joaquim Tenreiro, and Jeff Zimmerman, among many others. With its vision, passion, and expertise, R & Company serves as a critical platform for experiencing 20th and 21st-century objects and discovering innovative, rare, and significant design.

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For more information, please contact:

Alina Sumajin

Co-founder and Principal

PAVE Communications & Consulting

alina@paveconsult.com / 646-369-2050