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Pattern Research Project

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## Pattern Research Project: An Investigation of The Pattern And Printing Process - Fruit Tree

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Fruit Tree



# Culture

Alexander Girard had many trades; architect, interior designer, furniture designer, and textile designer. He had a passion for many things, but his greatest passion was folk art. The pattern, Fruit Tree, was printed on cotton, inspired by the Mexican folk art of the Tree of Life. Throughout different cultures, the art made by local people tends to be formed of simple shapes and bright colors. He used this concept in many textiles he designed. Girard had a collection of over 100,000 pieces of folk art that he drew inspiration from. This pattern reflects the cross between an American modernist movement and the Mexican folk art. Combining these cultures created a beautiful textile that is now used across the world in wall coverings, furniture, and even suitcases. Typically, folk artists are self-taught and make art by hand that also has a dual use. Within these pieces there is a bold use of color, a sense of pattern, and reflects Christianity. The Tree of Life is a symbolic form meaning different things within the science world and the religious world. This pattern has reflective evolution of organisms set by Darwin but also refers to eternal life as seen in religious texts. Through Girard's textile, he evokes the folk-art feeling in color and the recurring Tree of Life motif using shapes relatable to the area his inspiration derived from unifying it into a work of art.



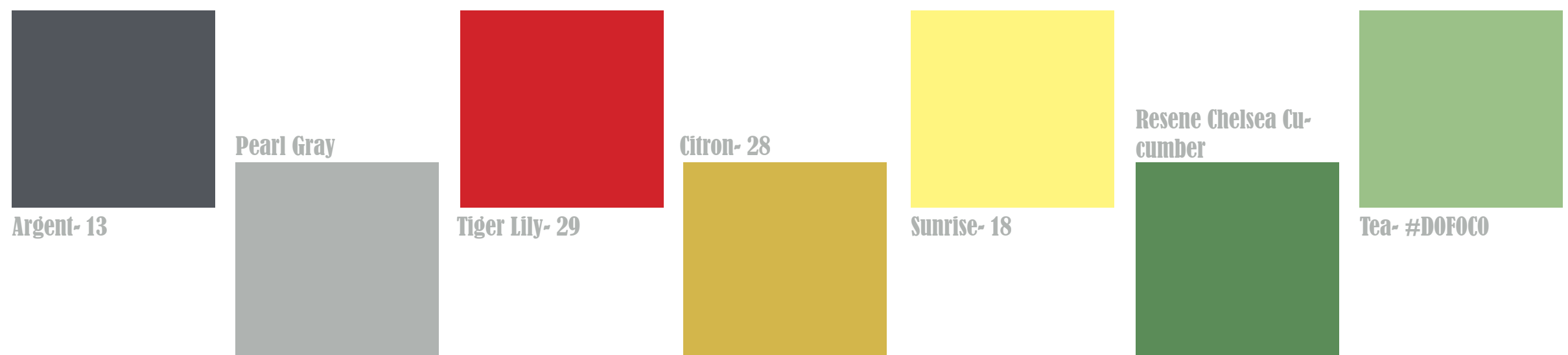
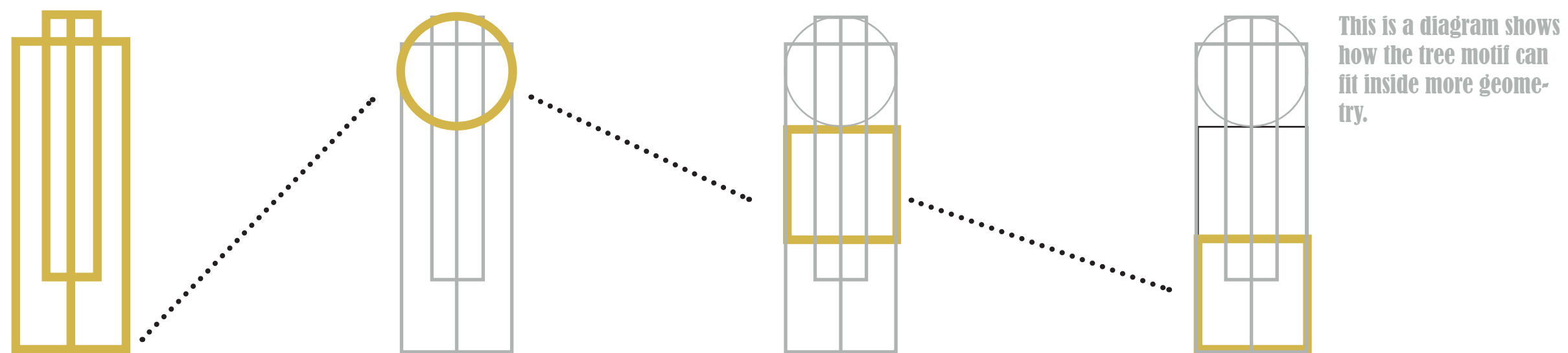
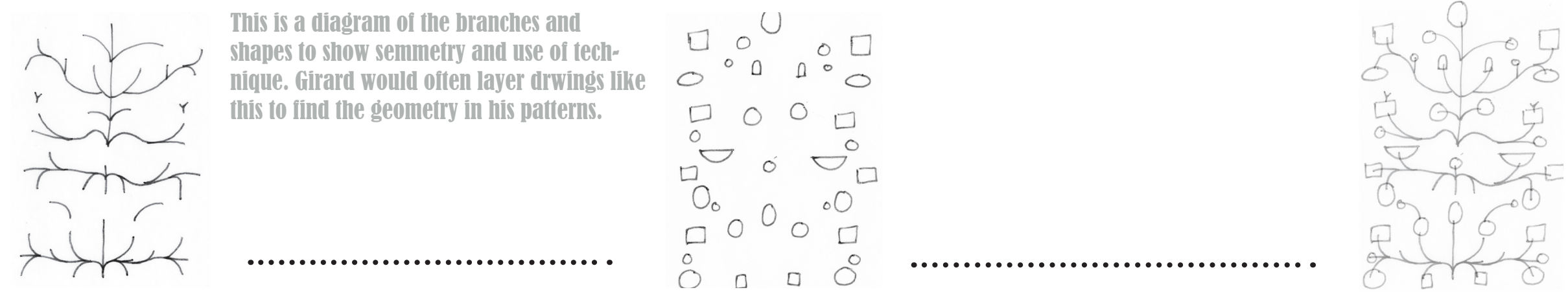
2. The image on the left is a folk art sculpture of the biblical fruit tree in Alexander Girard's collection of folk art.



3. The image on the right is the Candelabrum, a candle holder and also a motif of the fruit tree in Girard's collection.

# Color and design

This textile, made in 1961, was heavily influenced by the 1960's op art, color and geometry movement. As Girard started to build the pattern, he played with multiple iterations beginning with shapes and geometry, then studies shadows, then colors, and finally develops different iterations of his final studies put together. In this iteration of the motif the colors used are grays, red, yellows, and greens. During this time period these colors were very prominent. The op art movement brought symmetry and color to inspire an illusion of movement or three dimensions. The branches on top of the fruit imply dimension through layering and they lead the eye around to every fruit (the shapes) and implies a vertical linear pattern gridding for the repetition. Using different shapes and color that correlate and enhance the drawing and the design that goes into the motif makes it clear when this pattern was created.



# Alexander Girard Fruit Tree



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# Production

Girard used his architectural background and geometric studies to create beautiful patterns and textiles for drapery, furniture and more. This pattern was originally rinted on a fabric made from cotton, mohair, and rayon, some of the oldest materials used, woven together to form one material. Cotton is picked and spun into thread or string then used to weave. Mohair is the wool off of an angora goat which are originally from the mountains of Tibet. Rayon is a material made of a wood pulp. All of the materials are organic and resemble the folk art which uses local, organic materials. Girard developed his pattern by printing it on the mixed cloth of cotton, mohair, and rayon.

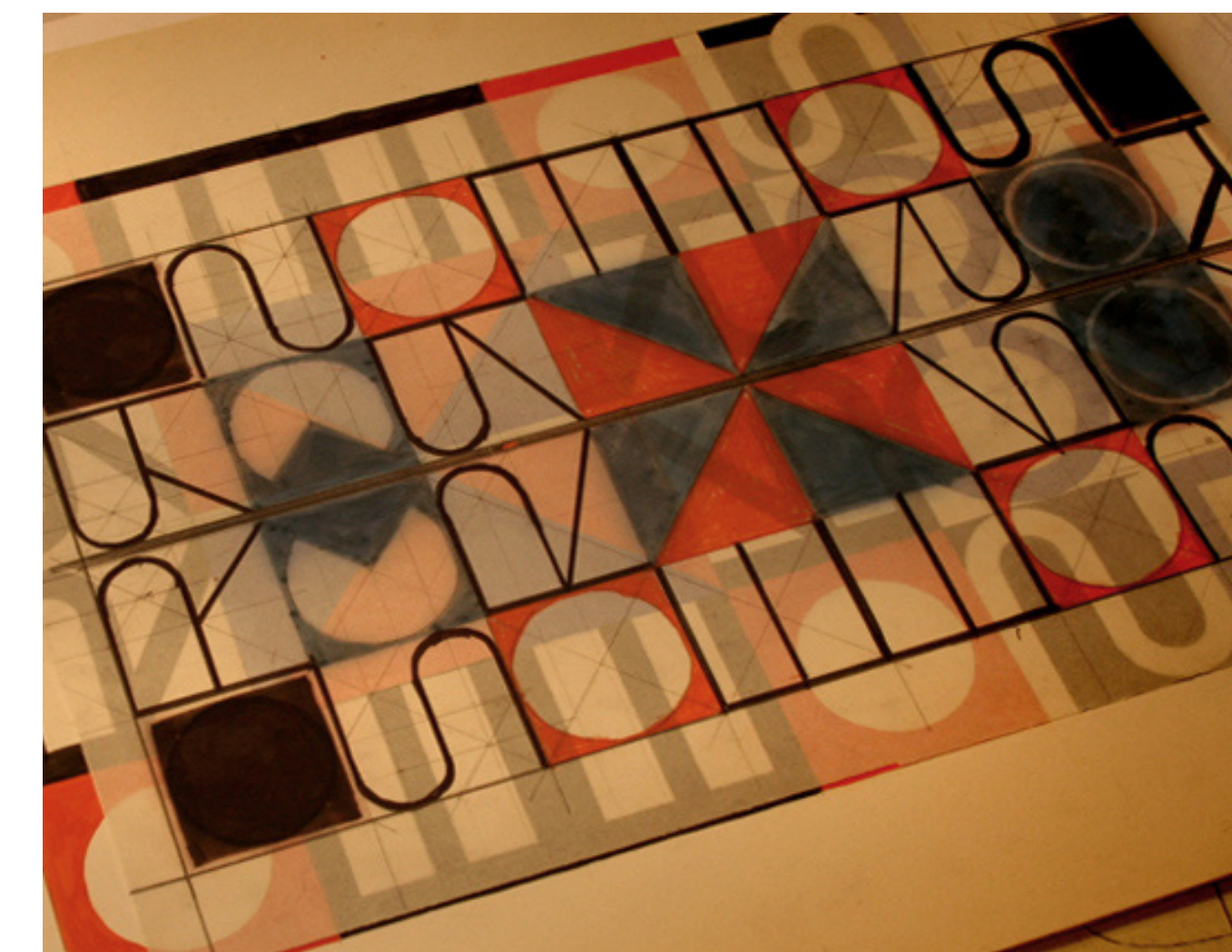


4. The image above is a tree where rayon comes from.  
5. The image to the left is cotton.  
6. The image to the right is an angora goat.



# Uses & Purposes

Alexander Girard was known for his geometric patterns and textiles among other things. He started with fabrics and evolved into wallpapers and moved even further to designing fabrics, pillows, neckties, furniture, and dinnerware . Girard had very strict usage for his patterns. He stated “Wall paper should be one of 2 things. Either it should be a mural, or it should be merely a textured background on which to hang pictures and decorative objects” (Girard 486). He believed that the textiles should evoke feeling and should be a freeing experience to express ones personality. Girard is against using realistic images for curtains and wallpapers because he feels the pattern should evoke a feeling instead of being a mural to look at. He also studied how patterns would react in a bundle like it would be in a curtain. Someone said, “Mr. Girard believed wallpaper should produce a feeling of texture or ‘change of pace’ on a wall without being obvious” (Girard 886). I think this is true because off how he produces his patterns. The geometry is very apparent so most objects or images he depicts are unique and beautiful. Girard also wanted to evoke a certain type of feeling though his textiles to the modern class. Tom Ross explains Girard's work as “it makes you feel that there are still bigger riches in the future”. He produced this patterns and decor with good taste and modernity for the postwar modern consumers. This pattern is still used by the modern consumer through its timelessness. Today it is used as wallcoverings, pillows, suitcases, and more.



7. The image to the left is one of Girard's sketches showing how he layers his work and finds geometries to play with.



8. The image to the right is Girard's pattern on a suitcase only found in Japan.