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## Javanesque Effects: Appropriation of Batik and Its Transformations in Modern Textiles

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American batik practice emerged in the early twentieth century, based in both traditional techniques from Java and those filtered through modern design movements, especially Arts and Crafts. Since its practice permitted individual creativity in the face of mass industrialization occurring in modernity, hand-made batik reflected the modernist credo to “bring art into life,” a quality integral to its embrace by the Arts and Crafts movement. There was egalitarian endorsement from artisans, individual practitioners, and consumers, across geography, social milieu, and skill levels. Batik filtered throughout America from school art projects for novices to fine art of technical virtuosity (fig.1).<sup>1</sup>

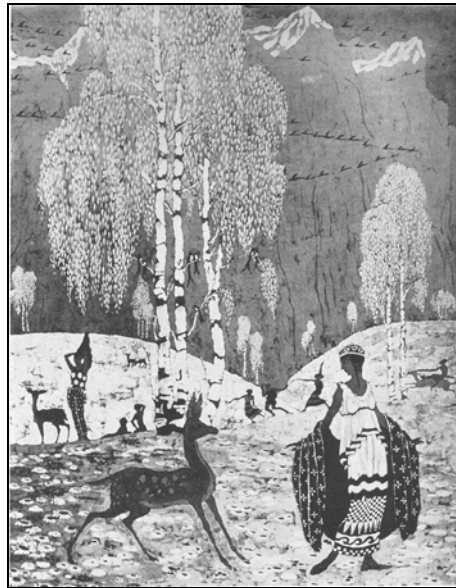


Figure 1. Spring by Pieter Mijer and Bertram C. Hartman, c. 1918, batik on silk.  
Reprinted from Gertrude Clayton Lewis, *First Lessons in Batik*, (Chicago: Prang Co., 1920), 53.

Department stores and commercial fabric companies picked up the popular taste for batik in the 1910s in a commercial transformation described by Nicola Shilliam as movement from a bohemian practice, centered in the Greenwich Village artistic

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<sup>1</sup> This research draws on Nicola J. Shilliam’s research in “Emerging Identity: American Textile Artists on the Early Twentieth Century,” in *Early Modern Textiles: From Arts and Crafts to Art Deco*, 28-44, eds. Marianne Carlano and Nicola J. Shilliam (Boston, MA: Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 1993), and “From Bohemian to Bourgeois: American Batik in the Early Twentieth Century,” in *Contact, Crossover, Continuity*, Proceedings of the Fourth Biennial Symposium of the Textile Society of America, Inc., (Textile Society of America, Inc. 1995), 253-63; and on Lauren Whitley’s research on M. D. C. Crawford, “Morris de Camp Crawford and American Textile Design, 1916-1921” (Master’s Thesis. S. U. N. Y. Fashion Institute of Technology, 1994); and on my research in Abby Lillethun, “Batik in America: Javanese to Javanesque, 1893 to 1937” (Ph. D dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2002).

community, into a bourgeois fashion.<sup>2</sup> Another transformation took place, one that I describe as moving from Javanese to Javanesque. Two elements extracted from the tradition of fine Javanese batik prevailed over all others in American popular and commercial batiks. First, the subtle veining or crackle in quality handmade batik, the result of dye depositing on the fabric through cracks in the wax resist, was amplified into nearly omnipresent and often dominant crackle. Second, the clearly delineated line resulting from the drawn line of hot wax flowing from the *canting* (a Javanese tool for dispensing hot wax from a small reservoir through small spout) and a sign of a skilled hand in a fine batik, was imitated. Thus, two intrinsic signs of fine batik handcraft – faint cracks in the resist and flowing lines – eventually stood-in for the entire batik process in American commercial batiks. The traditional fabric preparation, design planning, and time consuming processes of repeated waxing, dyeing, and wax removal were not required, nor were they emulated. As long as webbed veining or crackle was present, or lines resembling drawn wax discernable, fabric designs were “like” batik – they were “Javanesque.”

One of the earliest opportunities for Americans to observe batik process was in 1893, on the Midway Plaisance at the World’s Columbian Exposition in the Java Village. While the Midway enjoyed popularity among those who could be in Chicago, the presence of Javanese batik artisans there did not initiate the spread of batik practice in American. Instead, it flowed from the infrastructure of the Arts and Crafts movement approximately fourteen years later. Design reform movements of Europe influenced parallel developments in America and the influence of artists of the *Nieuwe Kunst*, the Dutch design movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that drew on Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts, was fundamental to the spread of batik in America. In 1890, B. W. Wiernik and his student Carel Adolph Lion Cachet discovered the batiks in the *Ethnografische Museum* in Leyden. In 1893, Cachet saw the batiks of the *Koloniale Museum* in Haarlem. Soon Cachet and his friend Gerrit W. Dijsselhof began to interpolate and interpret Javanese batik process by analyzing the ethnographic collections and experimenting, especially in the laboratory of the architect H. Berlage.<sup>3</sup> Not only did Dutch artists immerse themselves in Indonesian artifacts as source material, they could observe Javanese batik artisans working at colonial expositions in the Netherlands where the arts and crafts of Java, especially batik, featured prominently. In the early years of the twentieth century, Christiaan Lebeau (who was introduced to batik by Cachet) and his coterie developed the Haarlem Technique during time spent in the *Koloniale Museum* in association with the architect H. P. Baanders, and in the laboratory of the *Nederlandsch Handels Matschappij* (The Dutch Trading Society). Founded on observation of Javanese artifacts, the Haarlem technique was similar to Javanese technique, but developed dye and wax resist formulas based on materials available in the Netherlands.

The first directions for batik in America in 1907 flowed directly from the *Nieuwe Kunst* batik projects. Dutch batik artist Theo Neuhuys, who began batik under Cachet and then worked with Lebeau, authored a two-part article in *Keramic Studio*, a magazine

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<sup>2</sup> Shilliam, “From Bohemian,” 253-63.

<sup>3</sup> On the history of Dutch batik see: Lillethun, “Batik in America,” 29-68 and Maria Wronska Friend, “Javanese Batik for European Artists – Experiments at the Koloniaal Laboratorium in Haarlem,” in *Batik – Drawn In Wax*, 106-123, ed. Itie van Hout (Amsterdam: Royal Tropical institute, 2001).

edited and co-founded by Adelaide Alsop Robineau that served Arts and Crafts artisans and art educators.<sup>4</sup> Here Neuhuys presented the Haarlem Technique for batik, including the suggestion that batik enthusiasts avoid excessive crackle. In 1909, two years after Neuhuys' articles, Charles E. Pellew's batik directions appeared in *The Craftsman*, published by Gustave Stickley, the acknowledged leader of the American Arts and Crafts movement.<sup>5</sup> Pellew, an English-American chemist knowledgeable about dyes, taught dyeing and fabric decorating techniques including batik, at Teachers College, Columbia University, in Manhattan. He also exhibited his works with the National Association of Craftsmen, an Arts and Crafts association headquartered at the National Arts Club on Gramercy Park.<sup>6</sup> After completing their education at Teachers College, many women who studied textile design with Pellew then passed on their batik skills in teaching jobs across the nation in high schools, normal schools, and land-grant university home economics programs. Pellew's batik teaching can be observed in a batik silk purse made by Mary C. Whitlock who studied with Pellew at Teacher's College (fig. 2).<sup>7</sup>



Figure 2. Batik purse by Mary Whitlock, made while attending Teachers College, Columbia University sometime between 1907 and 1920. The Historic Textiles and Costume Collection, Department of Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design, University of Rhode Island.

By 1911 batik was part of the design curriculum in the University of Wisconsin's home economics design program.<sup>8</sup> Four batik dresses made by students in 1921 document inclusion of batik in the curriculum. They also display decorative lines and forms based

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<sup>4</sup> Theo Neuhuys, "The Batik (part1)," *Keramic Studio* 9, no.1, May 1907, pp. 20-1, 24 and "The Batik, (part 2)," *Keramic Studio* 9, no.2, June 1907, pp. 43-5. The articles were reprinted in *Keramic Studio/Design* in 1919/20.

<sup>5</sup> Charles E. Pellew, "Batik or the Wax Resist Process," *The Craftsman*, May 1909, pp. 232-35.

<sup>6</sup> See *New York Society of Craftsmen, Yearbook, 1908/9 and 1915/16*, and *National Society of Craftsmen Yearbook, 1908-09* (New York: National Society of Craftsmen, 1908), n.p; and Maude E. Woodruff, "The Eight Annual Exhibition of the National Society of Craftsmen," *Art and Progress* 6, no. 3, January 1915, p. 94.

<sup>7</sup> Whitlock eventually became chairman of the University of Rhode Island Home Economics Department, now the Textiles, Fashion Merchandising, and Design Department.

<sup>8</sup> Abby L. Marlatt, "A Study of the Subject of Textiles as it is Presented in Higher Institutions," *Journal of Home Economics* 3, No. 3 (June 1911): 219.

on Arts and Crafts aesthetics of conventionalized design (fig. 3). Crackle is also visible in the dress on the left. Pellew had published *Dyes and Dyeing* in 1913 based on the series of textile articles he had written for the *The Craftsman*. (It was reprinted in 1918.) The publication of batik instructions in national magazines, beginning with *Keramic Studio* in 1907, and Pellew's influence as an author and as an educator, fostered batik at a grass roots level from 1907 forward.



Figure 3. Four batik dresses made by students of the University of Wisconsin, 1921. Iconographic Collection of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, file #3396.

Batik manuals and instructions in publications proliferated. Including those discussed here, at least fifty appeared between 1907 and 1936. Since the public had very limited access to traditional batik artifacts in America, book length manuals often provided a cursory history of Javanese batik. Re-drawings and photographs of motifs and patterns and sketches of women applying wax with a *canting* allowed the reader to feel connected to the hallowed tradition, the refined skills, and the exceptional quality of the work of Javanese artisans as described by the authors.<sup>9</sup> The inclusion of a historical component in the manuals supported another important tenet of the Arts and Crafts movement. Linking the modern artisan or craft worker to tradition was deemed to maintain continuity across space and time.<sup>10</sup> Many manual authors however, also invoked a hegemonic imperative, encouraging Americans to improve and make their own what the Javanese had practiced and perfected over hundreds of years.

Two more influences stemming from the greater Arts and Crafts movement took part in the spread of batik practice in American. One was the promotion of batik by a taste leader; the other was the publication of a manual devoted entirely to batik by a Dutch immigrant. Mabel Tuke Priestman, author of *Artistic Homes* (1910), advocated Arts and Crafts ideals for home decorating. In 1907, the same year that Neuhuys' batik instructions appeared, Priestman reviewed the work of Agethe Wegerif Gravestein and a batik studio in Apeldoorn that she managed called *Batikkunst* (Batik Art).<sup>11</sup> In order to

<sup>9</sup> Examples can be found in Walter Davis Baker and Ida Strawn Baker, *Batik and Other Dyeing* (Chicago: Atkinson, Mentzer & Co, 1920).

<sup>10</sup> See Diane Ayers, Timothy Hansen, Beth Ann McPherson and Tommy Arthur McPherson II, *American Arts and Crafts Textiles* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 2002) for a comprehensive analysis of the sources, definitions, and ideologies surrounding the broad range of American Arts and Crafts textiles.

<sup>11</sup> See Mabel Tuke Priestman, "The Craft of Batik Making," *International Studio* 32, no. 127, 1907, pp. 87-91 and "The Revival of a Primitive Form of Batik," *The Craftsman* 11, no. 6, 1907, pp. 784-90.

produce multiples of large designs on furnishing fabrics, Gravestein's *Batikkunst* artisans stenciled the resist onto the fabric (fig. 4).



Figure 4. Batik items made at Batikkunst in Apeldoorn, The Netherlands. Reprinted from Mabel Tuke Priestman, "The Craft of Batik Making," *International Studio* 32, no. 127, 1907, p. 88.

Priestman, an arbiter of Arts and Crafts taste, also published batik instructions in her book *Handicrafts in the Home* (1910) where she recommended stenciling and gaining facility with a homemade batik tool. Dutchman Pieter Mijer immigrated to America 1909 after batik's introduction here. He eventually settled in Greenwich Village. While he claimed to have learned batik in Java where he lived as a young man, he pursued his education in the Netherlands during the ferment of the widely promoted Dutch artists' investigations into batik.<sup>12</sup> His exposure to batik in Java, the traditional center of batik art, and in Holland, the vortex of Western batik interpretations, provided Mijer with a perfect mix of exotic authenticity and modern authority. Mijer advertised his batik skills in Arts and Crafts publications and participated in exhibitions, both commercial and artistic. In 1919, Mijer published *Batiks and How to Make Them*, the most popular batik manual of the era (it received nine editions by 1931). The foundation of popular batik practice established by Neuhuys, Pellew, and Priestman based in the Arts and Crafts infrastructure across the nation, served as a springboard for Mijer's role as the leading batik authority in America, which was critical in batik developments in Greenwich Village and in the continued spread of batik in America after 1919.

As the artistic heart of America, New York hosted the majority of experimentation among artists using batik. Radical feminist, Arts and Crafts activist, and "textile worker" Ami Mali Hicks operated a studio in Greenwich Village. Hicks described outlining designs with wax lines and then "floating-in" dye solutions to the enclosed spaces. In this technique, evidence of the wax resist line remained as an outline in the fabric ground color.<sup>13</sup> Hicks advocated this technique in order to achieve clear, brilliant colors. Pieter

<sup>12</sup> "Studio and Furniture of Pieter Myer [sic]," *Good Furniture Magazine* 2, no.11, July 1918, pp. 44-53.

<sup>13</sup> Ami Mali Hicks, *The Craft of Hand-Made Rugs* (New York: McBride, Nast & Co., 1914), 230-1.

Mijer generally eschewed outlines though he sometimes used them. He preferred a multistage planed process, modeled on Javanese batik tradition and the Haarlem technique, of repeated wax and dye phases to produce muted colors based on an accumulation of hues. His art works, many made in collaboration with other artists, display technical complexity and mastery of technique (fig. 1). Although Hicks and Mijer disagreed on outlines and preference in dye vibrancy, each promoted hand-made process and suggested that practitioners avoid excessive crackle in order to emulate the finest techniques. Their exhortations were to be in vain.



Figure 5. Textile designs from the Second Annual Women's Wear Textile Design Contest, October 1917. Clockwise from lower left: First Prize, Marie Carr; upper left: Second Prize, Alice Hurd; upper right: Third Prize, Marguerite Zorach; lower right: special selection, Ilonka Karasz; center: special selection, Bessie Heathcote. Produced by H. R. Mallinson & Co. and displayed in the windows of B. Altman & Co. Reprinted from M. D. C. Crawford, *Silk Designs Win Recognition*, *Women's Wear*, 14 February, 1918, 2.

As the center of the American textile industry, New York was the location of the transfer of batik from artistic practice to commercial textile production.<sup>14</sup> By 1918, to capitalize on the emerging fashion for batik in apparel and accessories, American textile industrialists developed machine-made batik imitations. H. R. Mallinson & Co. referred to their fabrics as having “javanese effects,” a tag that promised connection to Javanese batik art, yet maintained distance from it by suggesting influence through the word “effect.”<sup>15</sup> In the avant-garde enclave of Greenwich Village, many artists created art works in batik and indeed batik works were exhibited in the historic exhibition titled *The First International Exhibition of Modern Art* in 1913 (commonly called *The Armory Show*). While pursuing their art, many artists, including ones outside New York, sought to augment their income through involvement in the Albert Blum Hand Decorated Textile Contest and the

<sup>14</sup> See: Shilliam, “Emerging Identity,” and “From Bohemian to Bourgeois”; Whitley, “Morris de Camp Crawford”; and Lillethun, “Batik in America.”

<sup>15</sup> “Mallinson's Silks in Novel Musical Showing,” *American Silk Journal* 37, no.5 (May 1918): 48; “Fall Silk Successes,” *American Silk Journal* 37, no.7 (July 1918): 61; “Who's Who in Trade-marked Silk,” *American Silk Journal* 38, no.9 (September 1918): 68; “Modish Silks for Fall,” *American Silk Journal* 40, no.6 (June 1921): 45-6.



*Women's Wear* Design Contests.<sup>16</sup> For example, Marguerite Zorach, who exhibited paintings in *The Armory Show*, also made batik garments for her family and herself, and entered several of the textile design competitions, often with designs made in batik. In Java in 1910-11, Zorach had purchased *cantings*.<sup>17</sup> In 1917 H. R. Mallinson & Co. printed five winning designs and B. Altmans displayed them in its Manhattan windows (fig. 5).<sup>18</sup> Zorach's design (fig. 5, upper right) relies on the flowing line from the canting. Ilonka Karasz, another Greenwich Village artist, also made her winning design in batik (fig. 5, center) using all-over crackle. A collection of textile design commissioned by Cheney Brothers in 1919 was called *Ye Greenwich Village Prints*, a name that presumably referred to the bohemian center in New York where batik was worn, produced, and sold by local artisans and artists, such as Hicks, Mijer, Zorach, Karasz, and the collection designer Coulton Waugh.<sup>19</sup> Three designs from the *Ye Greenwich Village Prints* (figs. 6 and 7) refer to batik by employing printed crackle or veining as the unifying motif for motifs in repeat pattern grids. The designs also use lines reminiscent of the qualities of *canting* drawn lines in the compositions. The design of festive lanterns, banners, and dancers in costume, appeared in Palm Beach (fig. 8) as a beach cover up. In 1922 Mrs. F. Ashton de Peyeser "foiled the scorching rays of the Palm Beach sun by covering her conservative bathing suit with a unique cape" of the Cheney print.<sup>20</sup> Before her, in 1921, *Vogue* commented on the "picturesque figure" of Mrs. Norman de R. Whitehouse "wrapped in a batik bathing-cape, capped in a bandanna, and framed by a beach parasol."<sup>21</sup> Clearly, the Cheney print by Waugh was perceived and marketed as batik. H. R. Mallinson & Co. used the phrase "Javanese effects" to describe their designs on their Pussy Willow and Indestructible Voile silks.<sup>22</sup> "Tiger Rose," created for and named after a Broadway show in 1918, barely suggests batik through mottled crackle-like impressions over a floral design.<sup>23</sup> Another Mallinson javanese effect, also on Pussy Willow silk, is currently in a private collection (fig. 9). According to her niece, the original owner of this textile, who liked bold colors and beautiful textiles, wore the print of mixed Oriental motifs, birds, and butterflies as a caftan in 1919 in Greenwich Village. The print imitates the use of a *canting* in pervasive flowing lines that draw the motifs and

<sup>16</sup> These contests are discussed throughout Whitley, "M. D. C. Crawford," and Lillethun, "Batiks in America."

<sup>17</sup> On M. Zorach see Lillethun, "Batik in America," 93-104, and Hazel Clark, "The Textile Art of Marguerite Zorach," *Women's Art Journal* 16, no.1 (1995): 18-25.

<sup>18</sup> M. D. C. Crawford, "Silk Designs Win Recognition," *Women's Wear*, February 14, 1918, 2.

<sup>19</sup> Cheney Brothers, "Ye Greenwich Village Prints," in *Applied Art: A Collection of Designs Showing the Tendencies of American Industrial Art*, Herbert A. Martini, ed., Plates 6 and 33 (New York: F. K. Ferenz, 1919); M.D.C. Crawford, "Design Department," *Women's Wear*, 18 November 1919, in Brooklyn Museum Library, Culin Archival Collection, General Correspondence [1.4.005], 11/1919.

<sup>20</sup> "An Unusual Number of Socially Prominent Guests Have Added to a Season of Gaiety Amid the Tropical Beauty of Palm Beach," *Vogue*, April 1922, p. 57.

<sup>21</sup> "Society Enjoys Palm Beach in a Diversity of Ways," *Vogue*, April 1921, p. 62.

<sup>22</sup> "Modish Silks for Fall," 45-6.

<sup>23</sup> See Madelyn Shaw, "American Silks From a Marketing Magician: H.R. Mallinson & Co." in *Silk Roads, Other Roads*, Proceedings of the Eighth Biennial Symposium of the Textile Society of America, Inc., CD, (Textile Society of America, 2003), for a history of H. R. Mallinson & Co. An image of "Tiger Rose," as Fig. 3, is in Shaw. "Tiger Rose" (#4143) and another H.R. Mallinson & Co. silk batik (#4145) are in the textile collection of the National Museum of American History of the Smithsonian Institution.



cut the color fields into sections. These and the crackle-like lines in the black areas underscore the appropriation of signature batik elements in the printed design.



Figure 6 (left). Design from the Cheney Brothers Ye Greenwich Village Prints, designed by Coulton Waugh. Reprinted from Herbert A. Martini, ed., *Applied Art: A Collection of Designs Showing the Tendencies of American Industrial Art*. (New York: F. K. Ferenz, 1919), Plate 6, detail.

Figure 7 (right). Design from the Cheney Brothers Ye Greenwich Village Prints, designed by Coulton Waugh. Reprinted from Herbert A. Martini, ed., *Applied Art: A Collection of Designs Showing the Tendencies of American Industrial Art*. (New York: F. K. Ferenz, 1919), Plate 33, detail.

Such American imitation batiks, created for a domestic market largely unfamiliar with the tradition and history of batik, bear no resemblance to European imitation batiks made for the Asian and African markets that utilize motifs specific to those markets and require an appearance more closely related to traditional techniques.<sup>24</sup> To Americans batik was an exotic, novel, and artistic method of decorating textiles. In the American mass market, there was no necessity for Cheney Brothers or H. R. Mallinson & Co. to create designs evocative of traditional batik designs. Instead, both companies used crackle, a motif that had no meaning to Americans except as an abstract pattern serving as the signature of batik, in their batik imitations.

<sup>24</sup> For research on the development and interpretation of batik for the African market see Christopher Steiner, "Another Image of Africa: Toward an Ethnohistory of European Cloth Marketed in West Africa, 1873-1960," *Ethnohistory* 32, no. 2 (1985): 91-110, and Karen E. Bickford, "What's in A Name: The Domestication of Factory Produced Wax Textiles in Côte d'Ivoire," in *Contact, Crossover, Continuity*, Proceedings of the Fourth Biennial Symposium of the Textile Society of America, Inc., (Textile Society of America, Inc. 1995), 39-44.



Figure 8. A Cheney Brothers batik textile design (fig. 7, bottom) in two beach capes: (left) Mrs. F. Ashton de Payser. Reprinted from *An Unusual Number of Socially Prominent Guests have Added to a Season of Gaiety Amid the Tropical Beauty of Palm Beach*, *Vogue*, April 1922, p. 57; (right) Mrs. Norman de R. Whitehouse. Reprinted from *Society Enjoys Palm Beach In a Diversity of Ways*, *Vogue*, April 1921, p. 62.

The John Wanamaker department store in New York was the third commercial entity very involved in the batik craze.<sup>25</sup> Wanamaker enjoyed collaboration between a fabric merchandiser and Greenwich Village batik artist Pieter Mijer. In 1914, Charles A. Frutchey, the silk buyer at John Wanamaker in New York, "discovered" Pieter Mijer and began commissioning fabrics for the store to sell.<sup>26</sup> In 1916, Frutchey commissioned Mijer to create a series titled the *Shakespeare Silks* for Wanamaker's observation of the New York City Shakespeare Tercentenary. It was a showpiece series consisting of twenty-five five-yard-long panels of silk satin depicting the flowers mentioned in Shakespeare's plays and their accompanying quotes. Unfortunately, the panels have not been located, but they were described as having "craquele of the sheerest web and veining."<sup>27</sup> In 1917 Frutchey mounted an exhibit of tie-dye by Mijer. Later in December, 1917, Frutchey again expanded Mijer's Wanamaker offerings. Already showing silk and velvet yardage in tie-dye and batik, items that would appeal to a more limited budget or as gifts were added.<sup>28</sup> In early 1918, Frutchey mounted the "Silk Rotunda" in the John Wanamaker Store featuring Mijer's *Shakespeare Silks*, batiks, and tie-dye, and adding Japanese tie-dye and commercial imitation batiks. A list of fabrics offered by Wanamaker included eighteen batik designs each on silk georgette and voile at \$3 yard and "Batik satin crackle, plain colors only, \$2.85; Batik pongee crackle, hand made, 12 color combinations, \$3.00; Batik originals, hand made, \$5 to \$100 each."<sup>29</sup> In August 1919, the Smithsonian Institution purchased two batik silks and four Shibori or tie-dye pieces from Wanamaker. The two batik silks, called Batik Satin Crackle and Batik Pongee Crackle,

<sup>25</sup> Whitley, "Morris de Camp Crawford," 53.

<sup>26</sup> "Wanamaker Shows Batik Motives on Various Favorite Weaves of Silk – Successful Productions," *Women's Wear*, 6 March 1918, 9.

<sup>27</sup> "Shakespeare Silks in Batik Effects," *American Silk Journal* 35, no. 5 (June 1916):30.

<sup>28</sup> M. D. C. Crawford, "Batik Department to be Permanent," *Women's Wear*, 7 December, 1917, 1, 14.

<sup>29</sup> "Wanamaker Shows Batik," 9.

are described as “Javanese batik work design reproduced in printed effect,” and “showing a Javanese batik work design reproduced in an (sic) hand printed effect,” respectively.<sup>30</sup> The only motif in these two Wanamaker batiks is crackle. Examination revealed the crackle patterns are not repeat prints, but were achieved by coating the textile with a resist, manipulating the resist to cause breaks or cracks in the resist, and then dyeing the textiles. A field of finely webbed crackle plays over the entire fabric samples. Batik Satin Crackle uses one dye color – navy blue on a natural ground – and one round of the resist process. Batik Pongee Crackle uses two dye colors – a rust and a green on cream ground – requiring two rounds of the resist process. Because the Smithsonian collected these samples at exactly the time that Mijer was making batiks for Wanamaker, Mijer probably made these batik crackle textiles. Production of all-over crackle as batik appears contrary to Mijer’s published position on crackle since he advised against overt crackle. Yet, it is also possible that providing speedily produced saleable products such as these to Frutchey was an economically viable adjunct to Mijer’s public image as the maker of complex and time consuming batik art works.



Figure 9. H. R. Mallinson & Co. batik design on Pussy Willow silk. Private Collection.

The use of crackle as the signature element in both printed imitation batiks and the Wanamaker batik yardage demonstrates the perception of the element as indicative of batik. In America neither the muted color values caused by over dyeing, nor Javanese design elements or motifs were adopted as indicative of batik. Instead, it was the distinctive *canting* line of flowing liquid wax and the crackle effect, two new elements in the American design vocabulary were perceived as indications of batik. Crackle, the more obvious and unique element of the technique, provided an abstract quality that linked batik to newly emerging modernist art styles. Crackle is hermetic. It references only itself as an indication of the batik process and has no figurative or symbolic meaning. Once a subtle signature of fine batik, the amplification of crackle into an especially prominent motif in American batik marked the completion of the transformation of batik in America, where batik traveled from Javanese to Javanesque.

<sup>30</sup> These remarks are from the National Museum of American History of the Smithsonian Institution accession notes for #'s T3903 and T3905, batik satin Crackle and Batik Pongee Crackle, respectively.