



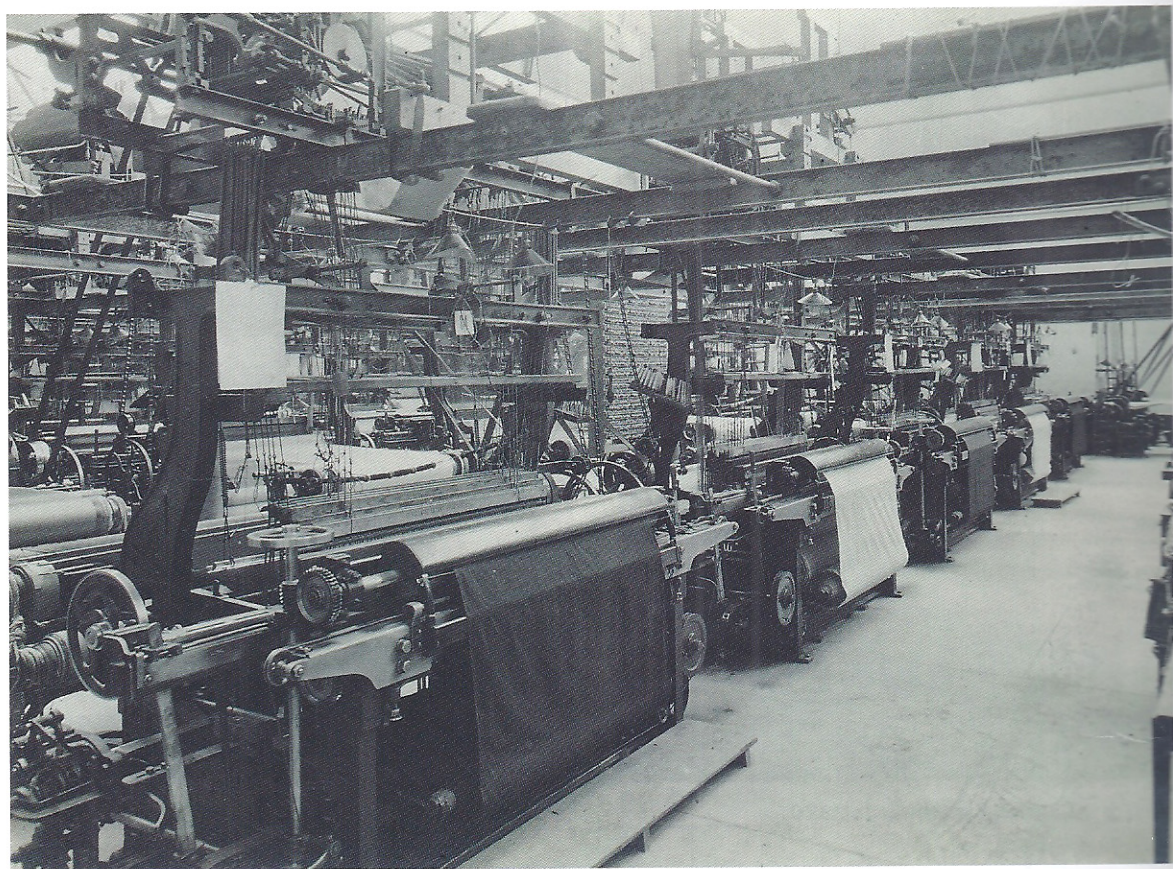
Charles Bianchini: lot 370



François Férier: lot 370

Two Centuries of Design: The Bianchini Férier Collection

The silk weaving house of Bianchini Férier was founded in Lyon on 23rd July 1888 by Francois Atuyer, Charles Bianchini and François Férier. In their first year they won a silver medal at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1889 – and thus embarked on a century of success. They opened offices in Paris, 1897; London and Brussels, 1902; New York, 1909. Atuyer died in 1912 and the firm changed its name to Bianchini Ferier. In 1912, Bianchini, the dynamic businessman gave the artist Raoul Dufy (1877-1953) – Paul Poiret's brilliant textile designer – a contract to design textiles for the company. The contract was to last until about 1928. Dufy produced 4,000 designs for the company of which some 500 are included in this sale. Dufy was a master of the whole process of design, from preliminary sketch to the perfected fabric. His annotated drawings explain many of the minutiae of textile of textile production. 'Mes dessins', he remarked, 'sont aussi des desseins, aucun d'eux n'est fait pour lui-meme.' In 1983 Bryan Robertson wrote of Dufy: 'I have said that a few other great artists helped to create a different way of seeing things in our century although I believe that Dufy from the example of his painting and



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drawing as well as from his own textile designs, has had the widest and the deepest influence in applied art.... But Dufy worked harder at various forms of applied art than any other serious painter in our century and his achievement in the field of decorative art can only be described as monumental. His work as a designer of fabrics, for example, is in my view unparalleled in the twentieth-century art.' Gertrude Stein summed up her feelings as follows: 'Raoul Dufy is pleasure'.

By 1910 Bianchini Fériet were also printing on silk and shortly after that the firm was producing printed cottons marketed under the name Toiles de Tournon. Initially designed as furnishing fabrics, they also came to be used for beachwear by Jacques Heim. Poiret too had used furnishing fabrics designed by Dufy as linings for teagowns.

Dufy's contract came to an end in 1928 but the firm prospered and continued making furnishing fabrics and luxury silks for the great fashion houses - Worth, Madeleine Vionnet, Callot Soeurs, Jeanne Lanvin, Paquin and Patou - They weathered the depression by serving the Prêt à Porter trade and designing gentlemen's ties. After the war they expanded their production of scarves for Hermes, Jacques Fath and for others. Throughout the sixties they produced imaginative designs for designers of the stature of: Givenchy, Balenciaga, Cardin, Chanel, Dior, Feraud, Laroche, Nina

Ricci, Yves Saint-Laurent and Sherrer. In 1992 the business became part of Tissages Bauman who run it still; but the archive remained with the previous owner.

A small part of the archive was disposed of in 1991 and Dufy designs have been sold at other times. For example his design for Les Patineurs is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. In 1999 Christie's negotiated the sale of the Grands Livres to the Musée Historique des Tissus in Lyon. This aroused considerable public interest. The archive consisted of 191 pattern books containing samples of some 25,000 textiles produced by Bianchini Fériér between 1889 and 1964. Such was the level of public interest that contributions towards their purchase came from the Ministère de Culture, Direction des Musées de France (Fonds du Patrimoine) Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles (Fonds Régional d'Acquisition pour les Musées de la région Rhône-Alpes), la Ville de Lyon, Département du Rhône, public subscription, La Société des amis des musées, and some forty other companies.

The present sale includes 19th century pattern books collected over the years as inspiration for the Bianchini Fériér design studio; the design library, including advertising artwork by Raoul Dufy; posters and a large collection of early drawings for decoration which include 18th century designs for upholstery and 19th century flower drawings. The greatest part of this unique collection however consists of the many thousand watercolour drawings prepared for Bianchini Fériér as part of the design process. Together these add up to a veritable history of 20th century design, from Art Nouveau to psychedelic abstraction.

