Interwoven: A Tradition of Textiles
Exhibition Label Text Information for Volunteers

On View: June 6, 2026- January 3, 2027

To better equip volunteers in answering questions and promoting the upcoming exhibition, *Interwoven: A Tradition of Textiles*, which opens to the public in the Adirondack building on Saturday, June 6, 2026, this document is provided in advance of the exhibition opening. It includes the text visitors will read in the exhibition and information pertaining to the exhibition displays. Minor edits may be made to the exhibition text featured in this document. The thumbnail images in this document are not featured on the labels, unless otherwise noted.

Donor Panel

Interwoven: A Tradition of Textiles

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Introduction Panel

(Image on label)

Interwoven: A Tradition of Textiles


(Image on label)

Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan
Marjorie Post holds up a textile at Tregaron, her first estate in Washington, DC, ca. 1950.

Interwoven: A Tradition of Textiles is Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens' first exhibition dedicated entirely to exploring the textile collection of its founder, Marjorie Merriweather Post (1887–1973). Significant textiles—as well as rarely seen and previously overlooked pieces—from Hillwood's collection are juxtaposed with selected works by contemporary artists.

As a collector, Post valued the expert artisanship that went into making beautiful works of art, and she understood that equally fastidious care was needed to conserve them. She brought the same collecting and curatorial approach to her textiles, whether clothing or accessories, table or bed linens, furniture coverings, or home decor.

Post's passion for textiles evolved and expanded over the course of her life, culminating in the impressive collection at Hillwood. Born during the late nineteenth century, Post learned her practice of preserving family and heirloom textiles thanks to her mother, Ella Letitia Merriweather Post. Post's interest in Western European decorative arts led to her amassing French tapestries and scores of valuable handmade lace, which she strove to maintain and document. Post's fascination with imperial Russian art and associated textiles flourished during her short but impactful stay in Moscow in 1937, when her then husband, Joseph Davies, was the second US ambassador to the Soviet Union. She acquired textiles connected to significant world events as well as to her personal interests.

Post's sustainable practices of mending, reworking, and reusing textiles—even valuable ones— are an uncannily modern and inspiring reminder to find beauty and purpose in this ubiquitous material, which has its origins in ancient times.

Unless otherwise noted, objects on display were bequeathed to Hillwood by Marjorie Post in 1973. All images and archival documents are from Hillwood's Archives and Special Collections unless otherwise cited.

- Photography without flash is welcome.

Section Panel

(Image on label)

WORKS IN PROGRESS
Although notorious for their fragility and ephemerality, many of the textiles in Hillwood's collection have survived for at least one hundred years. During their long lives, most have been repaired, either by professional conservators since Hillwood opened as a public museum in 1977, or by earlier stewards seeking to preserve the objects' artistry. Many of the examples in this exhibition have been partially or fully deconstructed and reassembled, treasured for what they were and reimagined as something else.

Case Panel


Embroidered fragments
Probably France, late 1600s–1700s
Silk satin, silk embroidery, paper
(F2025.65)

These densely embroidered fragments of vessels overflowing with fruit were cut from the longer embroidered panels on view nearby, probably by a member of Post's staff.

Sewing case with scissors and thimble
France, early 1800s
Leather, gold, silk satin, silk velvet: case
Gold, steel: scissors, thimble
(11.112.1–3)

Crochet hook
Fabergé (Russian, 1842–1918)
Henrik Immanuel Wigström (Finnish, 1862–1923), workmaster
St. Petersburg, 1908–17
Gold, enamel, tortoiseshell, diamonds, amethyst
(11.85)

Famed jeweler Fabergé's luxurious offerings included this crochet hook made from tortoiseshell as well as knitting needles and thimbles for its illustrious clientele, which included Russia's imperial family.

Embroidered pendant
Russia, mid- to late 1800s
Silk plain weave, silk embroidery
(43.69)

This oval-shaped needlepoint of a bustling mid-nineteenth-century scene was likely intended to become a brooch or a pendant. It was found within Marjorie Post's prized Roentgen desk (currently in the mansion's French drawing room), alongside a note in her own hand: "very fine needle work & photo Grand Duchess." This small work may have been made by Grand Duchess Tatiana Nikolaevna (1897–1918) of Russia, the second daughter of Emperor Nicholas II and an accomplished stitcher. Though the costumes depicted in the scene recall the full crinoline gowns of the 1850s, the Baroque-style buildings conjure the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. Perhaps Tatiana embroidered her home based on a historical engraving or print.

(Image on label)

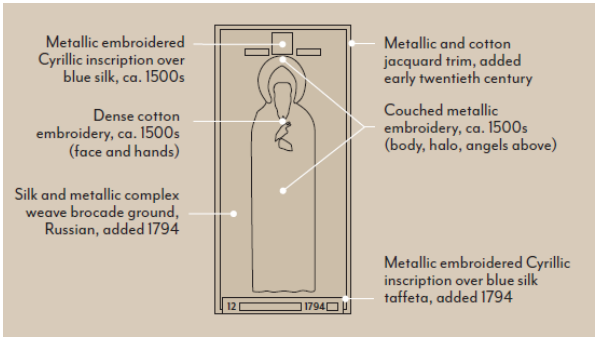
Grand Duchess Tatiana Nikolaevna, ca. 1915.

Case Panel

Sarcophagus cover
Embroidered figure and Cyrillic inscriptions: Russia, ca. 1550
Silk, metal-wrapped thread, linen, silk taffeta
Complex weave brocade ground: Russia, 1794
Silk, linen, metallic threads
Gift of Madame Augusto Rosso, 1968 (43.53)

This sarcophagus cover honors a fifteenth-century saintly Russian monk, Sabbatius of Tver. The dense metallic and silk embroidery constituting the figure dates to the mid-1500s, around the time when Sabbatius was canonized. The saint's face and beard are rendered from concentrated satin stitches. His headdress, halo, and robes are filled with long stitches laid over other dense areas of threadwork (as a base) held together with smaller, perpendicular stitches in a style called laid and couching. Russian embroiderers were skilled at layering the threadwork to create different patterns and textures. Artichokes surmounted in vines made from metallic threads and silk chenille yarns decorate the patterned brocade, which dates to 1794. It is a plain weave with supplementary weft, or horizontal threads, added to achieve the design.

Small textile workshops in late medieval Russia were sponsored by the nobility in a display of religious piety. Most estate-based workshops engaged skilled—and likely enslaved—serfs, working for free.



(Illustration on label)

Metallic embroidered Cyrillic inscription over blue silk, ca. 1500s

Dense cotton embroidery, ca. 1500s (face and hands)

Silk and metallic complex weave brocade ground, Russian, added 1794

Metallic and cotton jacquard trim, added early twentieth century

Couched metallic embroidery, ca. 1500s (body, halo, angels above)

Metallic embroidered Cyrillic inscription over blue silk taffeta, added 1794

Case Panel

Vestment
Russia, 1600s–1700s
Silk velvet, cotton cord, gold- and silver-wrapped silk thread, pearls, paste stones: collar
Cotton plain weave, linen plain weave: lining
Silk and metal brocade: external fabric
(44.7)

This vestment, once worn by a member of the Russian Orthodox clergy, has a confluence of prestigious French- or Russian-made blue-and-yellow silk brocades with metal-wrapped thread accents and a splendid, hand-embroidered silk velvet collar. Its interior lining and hem are of humble, though no less impressive, materials. The rich blue derives from the indigo plant, whose leaves are fermented to produce a powder that is then alkalized, traditionally with wood ash or even urine. The indigo plain-woven cotton here was also handwoven and hand-spun into yarns, as was the block-printed coarse linen dyed red from madder, with a scrolling floral and vegetal pattern seen along the hem.

A small, intriguing triangle of knotted, shibori-style resist print on one patch of the indigo-dyed cotton opens the possibility that this portion of the lining originated in Japan and entered Russia indirectly via Chinese and Dutch intermediaries, or that the garment was relined and reassembled during the nineteenth century, when Japanese-Russian trade became more direct.

Section Panel

(Image on label)

TEXTILES AND INTERIOR DESIGN
Interior design trends among affluent collectors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries dictated that antique, handworked textiles be incorporated into home decor as table covers, wall hangings, folding screens, upholstery, and more. Fine and decorative art dealers acquired historical bed hangings, altar frontals, tapestries, and other large-scale textiles to reimagine for contemporary homes. Along with the examples here, photographs of Marjorie Post's homes reveal that her New York apartment and her first Palm Beach winter home, Hogarcito, prominently featured antique textiles and tapestries.

Textiles were also focal points of portraiture hung throughout the walls of homes, like this eighteenth-century French example from Hillwood's front entry hall.




(Images on label)

Photographed by Megan J. Martinelli
Details of embroidered birds seen on the French wall hanging. Stipple marks, the pencil scratches made to guide the design placement, are visible in areas where the thread has worn away.

Mural: Hillwood's French drawing room, with its Beauvais tapestry and pair of settees covered by Gobelins tapestries. Photographed by Erik Kvalsvik

Panel on Wall


(Image on label)

Hogarcito, Volume 1, ca. 1926–27, Box 53, Post Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan
A large-scale tapestry and a small, embellished valance are some of the decorative textiles in this photograph, ca. 1926, of Hogarcito, Marjorie Post's first home in Palm Beach, from 1921 until 1927.

Panel on Wall


(Image on label)

This photo of the entry hall of Post's New York apartment at 2 East 92nd Street, which she occupied in 1924–41, shows an array of textiles, including an antique embroidered altar frontal, luxury French carpets, a settee covered in eighteenth-century Gobelins tapestry, and the lower edge of a Beauvais tapestry designed by François Boucher. The latter two are in Hillwood's French drawing room today.

Object Label Panel

Portrait of Pierre Hercule de Chastenet, comte de Puységur (1694–1759)
Nicolas de Largillière (French, 1656–1746)
Paris, 1726
Oil on canvas, gilded wood
Museum purchase made possible by Ellen MacNeille Charles in memory of Eleanor Close Barzin (2018.1)

Louis XIV's reign (1643–1715) is intrinsically linked to the rise of the luxury textile industry in France. This magnificent portrait, completed by Nicolas de Largillière, First Painter to the King, represents the conspicuous consumption of fine local textiles among France's aristocracy. Its subject, Pierre Hercule de Chastenet, a thirty-three-year-old member of the prominent Puységur family, commissioned this as well as a companion portrait of his bride from the esteemed French portraitist.

Although little is known of the count's life, much can be gleaned from the swaths of textiles enfolding him. Notice the fine linen lace punctuating his cravat and sleeves. French royal lace-making workshops were championed by the king's economic minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–1683), in a demonstrated effort to curb foreign spending on luxurious items. The fiery gold-and-orange brocade lining of the count's full green velvet outer wrap narrowly eclipses its plush silk velvet exterior and spangle-embroidered brown coat worn beneath. Brocade was among the most expensive textiles that French merchants offered at the time. Complex brocade weaves incorporated fragile precious metallic threads, making such textiles especially costly.

Object Label Panel

Wall hanging
Probably France, late 1600s–1700s with late 1800s–early 1900s additions and modifications
Silk satin, silk embroidery, linen plain weave, metal-wrapped cord and twill, wool twill, silk damask
(43.21)

This wall hanging once was placed in the mansion near the steps leading to Marjorie Post's bedroom suite. Completed in a late seventeenth-century European embroidery style known as needle painting (which echoed the delicacy of brushwork in satin stich embroidery, slightly padded with plain weave linen beneath), the design features swirling, feather-like acanthus leaves in a format known as rinceaux. Birds, frilly peonies, and butterflies surround a central motif of a golden basket brimming with blooms. At the top, an embroidered rod with blue acanthus leaves suggests a textile hanging within the design.


(Image on label)

Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan
Wall hanging seen around 1915 in Marjorie Post's first residence in New York, her Park Avenue apartment.


Deconstructed textile panels
Probably France, late 1600s–1700s
Silk satin, silk embroidery, linen plain weave, cotton twill, silk braid passementeries
(F2025.65)

Embroidered exotic birds recur on this set of narrow panels. The embroidered urns filled with fruit were cut out of one of the panels and are on view nearby. On both panels, the original, scalloped hem was folded over and stitched with a sewing machine. Coordinating passementeries—multicolored silk braid and fringe—were added, along with the golden cotton twill backing. These panels were likely once part of a set of hangings to surround a luxuriously appointed bed.

Section Panel

THE QUEEN OF FLOWERS
Even a quick stroll through the mansion highlights Marjorie Post's taste for textiles that revive and reference fine traditions, techniques, patterns, and motifs from Western Europe's rich design history. Post's pair of pumps (purchased as a young woman while abroad with her family) sport a classic curved Louis heel (named for the reign of Louis XIV and his favorite footwear) and floral brocade. The upholstery in her bedroom suite in the mansion references the silk lampas employed to reupholster rooms at Versailles used by Madame du Barry (1743–1793), the last official mistress of Louis XV (r. 1715–74). These items, among others nearby, show how Post pursued revival styles that suited her nostalgic taste and offset her collection of historic treasures.

Evening pumps
Joseph Box, Ltd. (British, 1808–1953)
London, 1900s
Silk brocade, leather, rhinestones
(49.89.1–2)

Wall Panel

Lace flounce
Probably France or Belgium, 1800s
Linen needle lace
(45.3)

(Image on label)

Doily of needlepoint lace with a figure and environment similar to the flounce, published in a 1905 catalog of Belgian handmade lace from the 1800s.

This impressive 123-inch circular needle lace is intended to have been used as a flounce, a wide strip of fabric to be sewn along the edge of a garment or even a piece of furniture for decoration. A continuous set of repeating motifs, which include dancing figures, celestial scenes, birds, pergolas, armor, and fleurs-de-lis, circles the material and recalls the iconography of the French court of Louis XIV (r. 1643–1715).

Eight other large-scale flounces with identical motifs exist in museums across the world and are recorded as dating to the time of Louis XIV. While impressive for their scale of handworked lace, it is unlikely that this panel and the other eight are all extant examples from late seventeenth-century France. In fact, radiocarbon dating analysis undertaken by Hillwood indicates that this piece actually dates to the 1800s. As further support for that later date, several examples of similar needle lace were made in Belgian workshops during France's Second Empire (1852–70), a time when the Baroque architecture, interiors, and fashion of Louis XIV's reign experienced a revival.

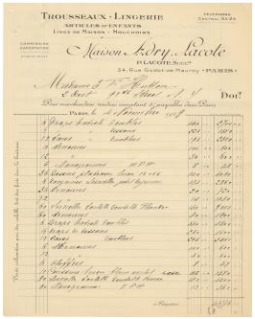
This flounce probably entered Marjorie Post's collection during the 1920s. It is likely that Post and many of her lace-collecting peers were charmed into believing that the flounce was original to the time of Louis XIV.

Wall Panel

On wall at right:
Capelet
Maison Adry, P. Lacote (French, early to mid-1900s)
Paris, ca. 1930
Silk chiffon
(F2025.62)

Marjorie Post could have wrapped herself in this adjustable, delicate printed silk chiffon capelet, or short cape, during evenings or mornings at home when she wished to cover up. Invoices indicate that, in addition to this piece, Post ordered fine embroidered sheets, lace pillow covers, baby dresses and bibs, furniture covers, and more from a small Parisian shop, Maison Adry (later known as P. Lacote, or Adry-Lacote), located in the 9th arrondissement.

Infant clothes, such as bibs, gowns, and blankets, were often offered for sale alongside other household linens, handkerchiefs, and even women's nightgowns because they featured similar decorative elements on the same textiles. Hand embroidery, drawn threadwork, cutwork, and lace trim adorned these soft and lightweight plain weave cotton or silk items.


TROUSSEAUX - LINGERIE

Maison Adry - Lacote

(Image on label)

A November 4, 1929, invoice from Adry-Lacote, addressed to Marjorie Post, then known as Mrs. E. F. Hutton during her marriage to the financier.

(Image on label)

© RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY
Madame du Barry's apartments at Versailles.

In case at right:
Roll of a fabric for Marjorie Post's bedroom
Purchased via McMillen, Inc., New York
France, 1970
Silk lampas
(Surplus fabric roll)

To complement the exceptional examples of eighteenth-century furniture and upholstery seen in her bedroom suite in the mansion, Marjorie Post's pink bed is stylized after formal beds reserved for royalty. Naturally, the upholstery on the headboard, footboard, and cover (as well as on two armchairs from 1780 in her bedroom) is a French silk lampas, a type of woven fabric associated with the luxury market, in a historical pattern known as *la reine des fleurs*, the queen of flowers. This same textile, from the Lyon silk manufacturer Tassinari et Chatel, upholsters the bedroom furniture in the Versailles apartments of Louis XV's last official mistress, Madame du Barry.


(Image on label)

Photographed by Erik Kvalsvik
Marjorie Post's "queen of flowers" lampas bedding at Hillwood.

Section Panel


(Image on label)

A STITCHED FAMILY TREE
Many upper- or even middle-class American women during much of the nineteenth century, and continuing into the early twentieth, considered stitching, sewing, and other forms of needlecraft to be productive and engaging pastimes. Completed pieces were safeguarded and handed down, often across generations. Marjorie Post's mother, Ella, practiced embroidery and tatting, a lace-making technique creating knots and loops in a chain with a single needle.

(Image on label)

Embroidery transfer design originally found in Ella's portable writing desk.

Preserved at Hillwood is Ella's portable writing desk, which features a gold plaque inscribed "Ella from Charlie," referring to Post's father, the entrepreneur Charles William "C. W." Post (1854–1914). Within its velvet-lined interior were found several thin sheets of embroidery transfer paper printed with floral designs. These papers could be positioned onto fabric to guide stitches. They were included in preassembled kits or in catalogs and magazines. Two of Ella's embroidered table mats are on display here, likely completed with the guidance of an embroidery transfer like the one in the nearby image.

Case Panel

On wall:
Table mat embroidered by Marjorie Post's aunt
Mary Staley "Mollie" Post (American, 1860–1925)
ca. 1905
Cotton muslin, silk embroidery
(45.342)

On ledge:
Table mats embroidered by Marjorie Post's mother
Ella Letitia Merriweather Post (American, 1852–1912)
Late 1800s
Cotton muslin, silk embroidery
(45.341.1–2)

Portrait of Marjorie Merriweather Post
August Benziger (Swiss, 1867–1955)
New York, 1910s
Oil, wood
Gift of Eleanor Close Barzin, 1996 (51.238)

Marjorie Post herself executed some of the needlework seen here. In this 1910s portrait, she pauses in her knitting with a half-completed sock on her needles. During the First World War (1914–18), socially and financially well-established women supported the soldiers at war and showed their patriotism through their needlework. In 1917, Marjorie Post was honorary chairperson of her local Needlework Guild of America, which created a War Relief Department, one of many such organizations that provided knitted garments, bandages, and other necessities during the war. Apart from casting on (beginning a knitting project by looping yarn onto needles), Post also funded one of the largest Red Cross military hospitals of the First World War era, in Savenay, France, which had cared for more than thirty-five thousand by 1919.

(Image on label)

(Image on label)

Marjorie and Joe Davies at Topridge, undated, Box 54, Post Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan
Two views of Marjorie Post knitting at Topridge, 1920s and late 1940s.

On ledge:
Ella Post's handbag
Carl Hiess (Austrian, active 1880s–1920s)
Vienna, 1912
Silk moiré, gold, silk cord and tassels
(2025.22)

Needle case
Late 1800s
Warp-printed silk plain weave, silk moiré and satin ribbons, doeskin
(F2025.64)

Étuis and fittings
England, 1770s
Enamel on copper, gilt copper, metal, ivory
(15.162, 15.183)

While Marjorie Post and her family members might have kept their sewing tools in handbags, sewing boxes, or specially made needle cases like the one here, the collector in her also sought étuis. Étuis take their name from the French word *estuier*, meaning "to keep or hold." They are small, highly decorative containers with customized slots for various miniature personal items.

The examples here contain implements for managing one's hygiene, wardrobe, and amusement. Owners could use the combination tweezer and nail file or the toothpick and ear scoop to neaten one's appearance. Tiny scissors could snip stray threads, and bodkins took care of undone ribbons. Penknives, writing implements including ivory tablets and pencil holders, and even a tiny folding ruler and compass could assist other daily activities.

Doily
Marjorie Merriweather Post (American, 1887–1973)
ca. 1898
Linen, bobbin tape lace
(45.561)

Needlepoint pillow
Marjorie Merriweather Post (American, 1887–1973)
ca. 1930
Wool canvas work, fringe, silk damask
(43.50)

Hanging:
Marjorie Post's christening underdresses and coat
Probably United States, ca. 1887
Cotton muslin, merino wool, cotton embroidery and cutwork, mother-of-pearl buttons, cotton machine-made and bobbin lace
(2025.6, .8, .9)

E. B. Close's christening overcoat
Probably France, ca. 1882
Merino wool, silk satin, satin stitch embroidery, cotton Irish crochet lace
(2025.5)

On deck:

Marjorie Post's christening petticoat and blanket
Probably United States, ca. 1887
Wool, cotton embroidery, cotton bobbin lace insertions: petticoat
Wool, cotton embroidery, cotton crochet lace inserts and trim: blanket
(2025.7, .10)

E. B. Close's christening bib and blanket
Probably France, ca. 1882
Quilted cotton muslin, cotton embroidery and cutwork: bib
Merino wool, embroidered wool: blanket
(2025.2, .3)

These two christening sets were originally worn by Marjorie Post and her first husband, Edward Bennett "E. B." Close (1882–1955), respectively. Later, a combination of these ensembles was worn by their two daughters, Adelaide (1908–1998) and Eleanor (1909–2006). Post's mother, Ella, and Ella's sister-in-law Mary Post (known to Marjorie Post as Aunt Mollie) added decorative embellishments to these layettes. Typed tags attribute the tatting trim to Ella and some of the embroidery to Aunt Mollie, who also created the nearby hand-embroidered circular table mat with delicate pink satin stitched roses.
A christening—a baptismal ceremony in which a baby is made a member of the Christian Church—was an opportunity for parents to drape a child in beautiful textiles, the first heirloom set of linens to be passed along to their children.

(Image on label)

Photographed by Mark Finkenstaedt
Original tags attached to layette garments attributing decorative elements to Ella Post and Mollie Post.

Section Panel


(Image on label)

FORM AND FUNCTION
Marjorie Post's approach to the medium of textiles is not unlike other facets of her collection. She sought to gather a range of examples, took great care to preserve her textile collection, and enjoyed integrating

them into her lifestyle. For instance, Post incorporated pieces from her lace collection into her clothing and her daughter's for formal events, adding cuffs and collars just as the original lace makers had intended.

This section celebrates the distinctive ways that Hillwood's collection embodies Post's value of textiles, even reverence for them, from seeking out meticulously documented Flemish lace at auction, to attiring herself in a linen embroidered suit whose decoration she so admired that she snipped some away for use elsewhere. She covered armchairs in antique quilts, predating the 2020 quilt coat trend by nearly ninety years. Today's contemporary artists practicing some of these same techniques echo Post's vision.

Sub-Section Panel

(Image on label)

LACE
Lace, in all its highly decorative forms, was one of Marjorie Post's favorite textiles. The proliferation of lace throughout her home—from her wardrobe to her table linens, even her bed hangings and lampshades—indicates that Post treasured this delicate, valuable material and appreciated its ethereal beauty. Moreover, she sought lace experts to repair and clean her pieces, and she maintained a valuation inventory of her linens. For her table linens, she and her staff used leatherbound books that contained black-and-white images, dimensions, and repair notes, along with a designated number for each of her homes, including the more relaxed atmosphere of Camp Topridge.

(Image on label)

Photograph by Krzysztof Blachnicki. Licensed under CC BY 4.0
Bobbin lace being worked on a pillow, Slovakia, 2017.

Lace techniques emerged in Renaissance Europe (1300s to 1500s) as a natural progression from several other methods of needlework embellishment. When lace first entered the marketplace of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it was prized as highly as jewelry and worn as indicators of high status, accenting garments.

Handmade lace is often simply classified into two distinct forms. Bobbin lace is where threads organized onto spools are woven and arranged on needles in a designated pattern atop a pillow. Needle lace employs a single needle and thread worked in buttonhole stitches, following a pattern on parchment paper pricked with the layout of the design.

Lace and the techniques used to make it vary over time, place, and type, making it a rigorously intimidating textile to study. Additionally, machine-made lace, which emerged during the nineteenth century, can be combined with handmade elements, further complicating scholarship.

In addition to bobbin and needle lace, several lacelike textiles are displayed in this exhibition. They include crochet laces, with the dimensional beauty of Irish crochet being greatly admired and seen in the nearby lingerie dresses, and knotted laces, which include macramé and tatting, creating an attractive lacelike look.

Case Panel

Length of lace with heart-shaped sprigs
France, 1700s
Linen point d'Alençon needle lace
(45.382)

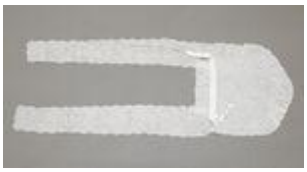
Bertha collar
Probably Belgium, mid- to late 1800s
Cotton duchesse bobbin lace with a point de gaze needle lace insertion
(45.314)

Handkerchief
Probably United States, 1905
Cotton muslin, embroidery and cutwork
(45.148)

Marjorie Post assembled her bridal trousseau in New York when she became engaged to her first husband, E. B. Close. This handkerchief is believed to be part of the items she purchased from one of the specialty linen shops to begin her married life. Though absent of proper lace, the handkerchief illustrates white work embroidery. This refers to the application of white decorative threads onto a white ground, emphasizing texture and subtlety.

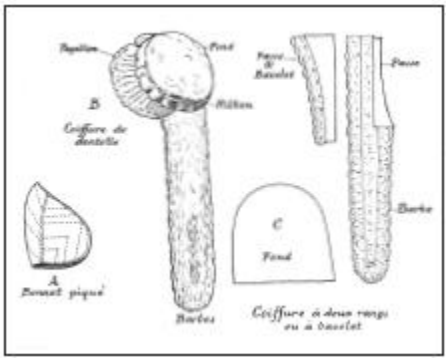
Handkerchief frame
Possibly France or Belgium, ca. 1805
Linen Mechlin bobbin lace
(45.209.2)

Cuff
Italy, 1600s
Linen Milanese needle lace with a guipure ground
(45.425.2)



Garniture for cap with lappets
Belgium, 1700s
Linen Binche bobbin lace
(45.82)

This handkerchief frame is ready to be added to a fine muslin ground as trim. The nearby garniture includes a piece for the back of the cap, long ties known as lappets to fasten or drape, and a ruffle to frame the face. The body of the hat would also have been a piece of gathered white linen or cotton muslin, to be added by the purchaser of this set, making it easier to launder the rest of the cap.



(Image on label)

"Lace Caps of the Eighteenth Century," *Bulletin of the Needle and Bobbin Club* 5, no. 2 (1921)
A 1771 diagram detailing how the cap garnitures would have been assembled.

Flounce

France, 1800s
Cotton point d'Alençon needle lace, horsehair support
(45.431)

Label Panel on Platform

Portrait of Marjorie Merriweather Post
Frank O. Salisbury (British, 1874–1962)
1942–46
Oil on canvas
(51.142)

Though the whereabouts of Post's portrait gown are unknown, her choice of a lace frill at the neckline demonstrates her well-documented appreciation for the textile.

(Image on label)

Marjorie Post in a photographic study for the Salisbury portrait seen here, 1942–46.

Table runner and napkin
Belgium, 1930s
Cotton rosaline bobbin lace: runner
Cotton muslin, needle lace monogram insertion, Flemish bobbin lace trim: napkin
Gift of Mrs. Augustus Riggs, 1974 (45.67.1, .39)


(Image on label)

A lace panel decorates the canopy of Marjorie Post's bed at the US embassy in Brussels, where she lived between 1938 and 1939.

Table lamp
Lamp base:
Edward F. Caldwell & Company (American, 1895–1959)
New York, 1900s
Bronze, pink quartz
Lampshade:
Probably Europe, late 1800s
Cotton point de Venise needle lace, silk organdy underlayer
(21.205)


(Image on label)

A lace tablecloth on Hillwood's breakfast room table, 1966. Hillwood's textile collection includes fifty-four lace tablecloths.


Lace specimens
Europe, 1600s–1800s
Assembled on silk satin, New York, 1900s
Needle and bobbin lace
(45.142.1–18)

Assemblages like this one were sold to early twentieth-century lace collectors, including Marjorie Post. Collectors could consult the illustrated 1874 guide *The Queen Lace Book* to identify their examples and for

guidance regarding display and storage. Hillwood's lace collection includes eleven other assemblages like this one.

Lingerie slip
Probably retailed in Paris, 1950s
Silk satin with embroidery and cutwork, mixed needle and bobbin lace
(F2026.1)

Manca Ahlin

Hanging:
The Bloom-ing Egg
Manca Ahlin (Slovenia, b. 1977)
Jute thread, epoxy resin
Courtesy of Manca Ahlin

Manca Ahlin is a professionally trained architect who merges this practice with her lace-making skills to create large-scale lace installations interacting harmoniously with the spaces around them, just as the lace makers of the past managed the scale and intricacy of design for a given end use, whether delicate trim on a sleeve or a neck ruff. Ahlin also emphasizes a community metaphor in her lace making: while the yarns of lace are diminutive and fragile, they are stronger and reinforced when joined together, creating something of beauty. Ahlin created the oversize egg with Hillwood's abundant collection of Russian Easter eggs in mind. Her small-scale eggs are on view in the mansion's Icon Room.

(Image on label)

Opya Studios


(Image on label)

Courtesy of the artist
Artist Manca Ahlin working in her studio.

Sub-Section Panel


(Image on label)

EMBROIDERY
Embroidery encompasses a vast variety of stitches with a needle and thread as surface decoration and offers the added benefit of occasionally strengthening a textile. Embroidery is a particularly forgiving form of decoration; it can hide tears or stains. Embroidery has been found in archaeological textiles dating to 3000–2500 BCE across the Middle East and Asia.

The oldest examples of embroidery in Hillwood's collection include the Russian sarcophagus cover displayed in this exhibition, which dates to about 1550. As with her lace collection, Marjorie Post collected embroidered pieces for display as well as incorporating them into her daily life. Embroidery customizes many of her personal linens with her monogram and decorates countless examples of her apparel and accessories.


(Image on label)

Photographed by Megan J. Martinelli
Detail of a late 1950s cocktail napkin featuring Marjorie Post's monogram at the time of her marriage to Herbert May (1958–64).


(Image on label)

Photograph by Cecilia Narrett
Artist Sophia Narrett working in her studio.

Label Rail Panel


Deconstructed afternoon suit
Probably Paris, 1912
Linen plain weave, cotton embroidery, linen needle lace
(48.16.1–2)

Marjorie Post must have been especially fond of this linen day suit, whose ornamentation was harvested for another use once she was through wearing it. The centuries-old practice of preserving and recycling favorite textiles and garments because of their inherent handmade value and beauty is one worth emulating today, as the world contends with tons of textile waste generated globally each year.


Eleanor Close's dress
United States, 1914
Cotton muslin, cotton cutwork, bobbin and crocheted lace
(2025.13)


Afternoon dress

Purchased in New York, 1905
Cotton lawn, embroidery, cotton crocheted lace, cotton cording
(48.18)

As a young woman, Marjorie Post enjoyed wearing lingerie dresses like this one. These dresses are often made from the same fine cotton muslin or lawn used in infant garments and trimmed with similarly impressive handwork techniques like cotton crochet and whitework embroidery. These dresses here were a nod to those in fashion at the turn of the previous century and were preferred for semiformal summertime events.


On wall:
Square panels
Eastern Europe, 1900s
Cotton plain weave, cotton satin stitch embroidery
Gift of Dina Merrill Robertson, 1977 (43.48, .49)

Marjorie Post's youngest daughter, Nedenia Hutton, later known as Dina Merrill (1923–2017), visited her in the Soviet Union in 1937 and acquired these geometric, colorful embroidered panels, suitable to be incorporated into a garment, or even used as pillow covers. Determination of their precise origin demands further research.

On stand:
Altar cloth (*vozdukh*)
After Viktor Mikhailovich Vasnetsov (Russian, 1848–1926), painter
Russia, ca. 1899
Silk, embroidery, stones, pearls
(43.7)

This altar cloth belongs to a set presented by Russia's dowager empress Maria Feodorovna to the Imperial Horse Guards Regiment in 1899. Its elaborate embroidery was made by women, possibly the talented embroiderers of the imperial family or the court.

Towel (*rushnyk*)
Ukraine, probably 1800s
Linen plain weave ground with colorful cross stitch embroidery
(43.18)

This decorative towel, which is associated with religious rituals and life events, was likely handwoven at home, as was the careful addition of crossed embroidery stitches.

Afternoon dress
D. V. McGrath (American, active 1900s)
New York, 1908
Silk faille, silk taffeta, silk tulle, linen and cotton lace, silk embroidery, cotton cords, jet beads
(48.27)

Label Rail Panel

SOPHIA NARRETT
Sophia Narrett revises the ancient medium of embroidery, so often associated with delicacy and femininity, for her verdant twenty-first-century worlds, full of layered plant life and encompassing figures on introspective and surreal journeys, incorporating themes of love and desire. Originally a painter, Narrett initially embraced embroidery for its formal qualities and later came to appreciate the way its history helped shape her narratives. Both of the works on view feature tulips, a symbol of love that Narrett has returned to throughout her practice.

In Narrett's images, gardens are sites of fantasy, theatricality, and connection. Flower beds, at once carefully choreographed trails and dreamlike sprawls of nature, echo and frame the interactions between her figures. Her approach resonates with the sense of possibility Marjorie Post cultivated in Hillwood's own gardens. The more personal embroidered objects in Hillwood's collection are parts of trousseaus, infant layettes, undergarments—parts of life hidden away. In Narrett's work, these unseen areas thrive.

At left:
Carried by Wonder
Sophia Narrett (American, b. 1987)
2022–23

Embroidery thread, fabric, aluminum, acrylic
Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin

At right:
Seven Circles
Sophia Narrett (American, b. 1987)
2022
Embroidery thread, fabric, aluminum, acrylic
Collection of Deborah Beckmann and Jacob Kotzubei


(Image on label)

Photographed by Meredith Jenks

Sub-Section Panel


(Image on label)

TAPESTRY AND NEEDLEPOINT
Like embroidery, the technique of tapestry weaving is ancient, and it can be used to decorate and tell stories. Images and patterns are rendered onto plain woven textiles by introducing various colorful yarns in the weft or horizontal face of the textile. Functional applications include garments and, later, upholstery. Large pictorial wall hangings from Europe insulated medieval castle walls and decorated palace walls from the Renaissance on.

Marjorie Post owned several eighteenth-century tapestries that decorated her homes, including the three Beauvais tapestries on permanent display in the mansion's French drawing room. Much of her cherished eighteenth-century French furniture is also upholstered in Beauvais tapestry, with some striking examples

originally commissioned for the court from Gobelins, the manufacturer responsible for supplying the textile directly to royals. Such prestigious, large-scale suppliers worked on massive looms, with a large team of artisans weaving.

The frenzy for tapestries in interiors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries led to the development of needlepoint, a compact, domestic textile practice that combines some of the principles of embroidery to replicate the painterly effects of large-scale woven tapestries. Needlepoint is worked on an open canvas with specific counted stitches in various colors. Cushions, upholstery, and accessories are common items featuring needlepoint.

(Image on label)

Photographed by Stan Rumbough
The actor Dina Merrill (1923–2017) was featured in a 1978 issue of McCall's Needlework & Crafts *with a needlepoint project. Merrill attributed her needlepoint skills to her mother, Marjorie Post.*

Label Rail Panel

Screen
Western Europe, late 1800s–early 1900s
Wool-and-silk tapestry, upholstered wood, brass
(41.12)

This nineteenth-century folding screen is upholstered in a scene inspired by earlier Flemish hunting and cornucopia tapestries from the sixteenth century. Marjorie Post used the screen in her formal dining rooms at the US embassy in Belgium, at Tregaron (her first estate in Washington, DC), and finally at Hillwood. The screen prevented drafts, obscured pantry activities, and set a traditional, bountiful feasting mood with its festive iconography of birds, fruits, and weapons.


(Image on label)

Photographed by Mark Finkenstaedt
The folding screen positioned in Hillwood's dining room to shield dinner guests from busy pantry operations.


Handbag
Austria, 1900–1950
Wool and silk petit point, silk satin, silver gilt
(49.14)


Handbag
Austria, 1900–1950
Wool petit point, silk satin, silver gilt
(49.11)

These handbags that Post purchased are done in petit point, a finer form of needlepoint on a small scale, using silks and soft wools.


Handbag
Austria, 1900–1950
Wool petit point, silver, paste stones
Gift of Mrs. Augustus Riggs, 1974 (49.12)

Evening purse
Cartier (French, 1847–present)
New York, ca. 1930
Gold, enamel, jade, onyx, wool needlework
(49.13)

Cartier offered exquisite little luxuries to clients during the early 1930s, including this unique wool needlework purse set in a lavish frame. Cartier was known to commission its fine needlepoints from workshops in Iran (then known as Persia).

Section Panel

(Image on label)

KASHMIRI SHAWLS
The Kashmiri shawl is a large, luxurious textile originally woven from the fleece of Himalayan mountain goats. The choicest examples incorporate the inner winter-grown fleece, which is exceptionally fine and soft. The original handweaving process is a twill or diagonal weave with added wefts to create colorful designs. A Himalayan valley in the northernmost region of the Indian subcontinent, Kashmir today is under both Indian and Pakistani rule. The shawls originating from this area date at least to the eleventh century and were primarily worn by men as indicators of honor and prestige. The shawl industry flourished when the region was under the rule of the Mughals, beginning in the sixteenth century. They are especially known for the drooping flower bud design, the *būtā*, which eventually evolved into the modern paisley design.

Emblematic of cultural exchange, and European hunger for new, beautiful textiles, Kashmiri shawls became increasingly popular in the West via trade, travel, exploration, and military campaigns. They complemented the flimsy, early nineteenth-century fine muslin dresses that European women wore to emulate Greek statues, and later they became decorative objects for the Victorian interior, as indicated by the settee from Hillwood's second-floor library seen nearby.

(Image on label)

Photographed by Alex Braun
Front view of Marjorie Post's late 1930s evening gown, printed with a design inspired by Kashmiri shawls.

Label Panel on Platform

On wall at left:
Portrait of a young woman
Probably Russia, 1830
Oil on canvas
(51.72)

This portrait is of an unknown woman in fashionable early nineteenth-century dress. She sports an ornate looping hairstyle called the Apollo knot and a striking blue shawl in the Kashmiri style draped around her shoulders. Marjorie Post acquired the painting while living in Moscow in 1937.

Shawl
France, 1880s
Wool twill weave ground with brocaded ends and trim
(F2025.67)

The Kashmiri shawl's rampant popularity inspired copies made in Europe, especially in France and Scotland, including the town of Paisley (another term for the stylized teardrop *būtā* flower design). Workshops could create even more elaborate designs than those originating from Kashmir with the 1820s spread of the jacquard loom, a machine that simplified complex pattern weaves.

On platform:
Evening dress
Bergdorf Goodman (American, 1899–present)
Probably France, 1937
Silk chiffon, silk georgette, silk charmeuse
(48.68.1–2)

(Image on label)

Marjorie Post (second from left) wearing this cream silk evening gown, printed with a design inspired by Kashmiri shawls, to festivities surrounding the London coronation of George VI, 1937.

Settee
Probably assembled in Europe, 1875–1900
Kashmir region, after 1850
Goat wool kani weave and embroidery: main upholstered body
France, late 1800s
Wool, silk brocade: top of back rest and side under arms
(33.65)

This settee is a unique example of upholstery celebrating the popularity of Kashmiri shawls for interiors during the late nineteenth century. It is composed of large portions of two or three mid- to late nineteenth-century Kashmiri shawls with French-made brocade panels on the exterior sides beneath each armrest and a strip along the top of the back rest. The settee is typically in the mansion's second-floor library, with a similar set on view in the first-floor library.

On wall at right:
Shawl
Kashmir region, after 1850
Goat wool kani weave and embroidery
(F2025.66)

Case Panel

Casters
Imperial Glass Manufactory (Russian, 1777–1917)
St. Petersburg, ca. 1840
Glass with transfer prints
(23.203.1–2)

Close-up of casters.

Teapot
Attributed to Gardner Porcelain Manufactory (Russian, 1766–1892)
ca. 1835
Porcelain
(25.42.1–2)

Miniature portrait
Europe, ca. 1835

Watercolor on ivory
(53.11)

At the height of its popularity, Kashmiri shawls were worn by subjects represented on decorative objects, such as this portrait miniature, and even on the nearby glassware.

Section Panel


(Image on label)

QUILTS
Quilts are composed of layers of textiles for warmth. Stitching over layers holds together the back textile; an insulating material like wool, silk, or, today, polyester batting; and a decorative top layer. They are household items, used for bedcovers, that have been elevated over time to celebrate their beauty, with quilting stitches becoming elaborate, forming patterns and designs. Quilts incorporating multiple textiles are early examples of textile recycling and inform researchers about textile history, apart from their aesthetic interest.


(Image on label)

Stephen Pitkin/ Pitkin Studio, Courtesy Souls Grown Deep
Gee's Bend, Alabama, quilter Mary Margaret Pettway sewing a quilt, 2019.

Wall Panel


Baltimore album-style quilt set
Maryland, 1800s–1900s
Cotton, linen, silk, wool
(45.665.3–4)

Marjorie Post covered some of the guest beds in cabins aboard her yacht, the *Hussar V* (renamed later *Sea Cloud*), with appliquéd Baltimore album-style quilts, known in the Middle Atlantic and Chesapeake

regions for their colorful, signed or stamped squares, and with complementary pillow shams (possibly made later). Community-forward creations that often were presented as gifts from the mid-nineteenth century on, their use is one of the many ways Post welcomed guests with exceptional textiles.

(Image on label)

Baltimore album-style quilt sets on cabin beds onboard Sea Cloud*, ca. 1923.*

Log cabin quilt fragment and upholstered chair
United States, late 1800s (quilt) and early 1900s (chair)
Cotton, wool (quilt), wood (chair)
(45.666.2, 33.167)

Marjorie Post upholstered a set of chairs at her Adirondack summer home, Camp Topridge, in log cabin quilts, a traditional quilt block pattern employing rectangular textile strips surrounding a square placed at the center. Incredibly, this fragment from the process survives in Hillwood's textile collection.

Section Panel

(Image on Label)

COMMEMORATIVE TEXTILES
Any textile that is treasured and perseveres can be commemorative, though the textiles here commemorate specific moments in history—with the final example, a custom hand-painted silk scarf, celebrating the life of Marjorie Post.


(Image on label)

Marjorie Post in the Icon Room at Tregaron, her former Washington estate, early 1950s. A nineteenth-century tapestry representing the provinces of imperial Russia is behind her. The textile remains in Hillwood's collection today, and is currently off view for conservation reasons.

Wall Panel

Souvenir coronation scarf
Danilov Manufactory (Russia, 1800s–1900s)
Moscow, 1896
Printed cotton
Gift of Julian Hudson, 2016 (2016.8)

Russia's final emperor, Nicholas II, ascended the throne in 1894, with the formal coronation taking place in 1896 and related events lasting several weeks. On one of those days, the public traditionally assembled on a large field for a planned celebration. The festivities turned deadly when misinformation regarding the availability of free commemorative souvenirs led to a stampede among the massive crowd. Tragically, at least thirteen hundred people were killed over the availability of an enameled cup (one of which is also in Hillwood's collection) and a printed cotton scarf like the one seen here.

Wall Panel

Handkerchief
Italy, 1870s
Linen plain weave with cotton embroidery, cotton filet lace insertions
(45.2)

This meticulously embroidered handkerchief commemorates the Risorgimento (Italian for "rising again"), a nineteenth-century movement for Italian political unification that culminated in the establishment of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861. Historic Roman landmarks and the inclusion of a battle scene on one side indicate

that this textile commemorated the final phase—the 1870 capture of Rome and its designation as the capital.

Wall Panel

Panels representing the First World War
Association des Toiles de Rambouillet (French, active early 1900s)
A. Boigrain (French, active 1900s), designer
Rambouillet, France, 1917
Block-printed cotton, wooden frame, Masonite backing
(45.92)

This assemblage of six different block-printed cotton panels largely commemorates the cultural significance of the Franco-Russian Alliance, an alliance formed by agreements in 1891–94 and severed in 1917. These panels were originally displayed in one of the cabins at Marjorie Post's summer home, Camp Topridge. Post might have received it to commemorate her funding of a hospital in France during the First World War.

(Image on label)

The panels framed above a cabin fireplace at Camp Topridge, Marjorie Post's property in the Adirondacks (the woman is unidentified), 1969.

Wall Panel

George VI coronation textile panel
Warner & Sons (British, 1870–1990)
Braintree, United Kingdom, 1937
Silk and gold metallic brocatelle
(45.7)

Although Marjorie Post's collecting interest in the Russian imperial family may be well-known, she was also interested in the British royal family. She was in London for every coronation held in the twentieth century, beginning with Edward VII's in 1902. This souvenir panel is reputed to have been from the hangings ornamenting Westminster Abbey for the coronation of George VI in 1937. It was made by Warner & Sons, a luxury textile firm that began working with Queen Victoria in the 1880s and supplied all coronation textiles through Queen Elizabeth's coronation in 1953.

Wall Panel

Coronation scarves
Jacqmar (British, 1932–present)
London, 1953
Printed silk
(45.8, 45.9.1)

Marjorie Post and her daughter Dina Merrill, who was just three years younger than Queen Elizabeth II, were in London in 1953 to celebrate the queen's landmark coronation, the first to be televised. Post acquired three of the souvenir silk scarves produced by the firm of Jacqmar, which was overseen by the textile firm and department store Liberty. The yellow scarf depicts the queen's heraldic beasts. Post's collection of ceramic heraldic beast figures is displayed in the mansion in the second-floor library.


The Coronation Procession
of
HER MAJESTY
QUEEN ELIZABETH II
2nd June 1953.
Admit bearer to:
The Canning Club's Outdoor Stand.
1, Hamilton Place, S.W.1.
Entrance via Hamilton Place.
Floor Ground
Row A
Stand/Standard 2
Seat/Standing No. 2

(Image on label)

A ticket to Queen Elizabeth II's coronation procession found in the scrapbook of Post's daughter Dina Merrill, ca. 1953.

Wall Panel

"Marjorie" scarf
Billi Cheatwood (American, 1914–1997)
Los Angeles, 1940s–1950s
Hand-painted silk
(2014.10.21)

The Chicago-born designer Billi Cheatwood had a shop on Wilshire Boulevard in Beverly Hills, where she sold evening gloves (even supplying some to Marilyn Monroe for her iconic roles in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* [1953] and *The Seven Year Itch* [1955]), dealt in rare books, and apparently created custom, hand-painted silk scarves. While it is unclear if this personalized scarf made for Marjorie Post was a result of a commission or a fan art gift, Cheatwood has included many poignant references to Post's lifestyle.