

HERBERT BAYER WALL-TO-WALL

THE TAPESTRIES Herbert Bayer made for the boardrooms and offices of Atlantic Richfield Company and other clients will never overshadow his work in paint, graphics, photography, typography or sculpture. Made between 1961 and 1983, the Bayer tapestries collected in a new exhibition at The Aspen Institute constitute a footnote in

fabricated, and there are rumors of forgeries that were created as well.”

The tapestries — on view through next July — were likely made as functional decoration for offices, Ballinger said, doubling as sound absorbers. Many are alterations of existing works, including his “Gates” series.

His painted carpet study for a

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the Bauhaus artist and Aspen icon's career.

But, since the Institute last year began exclusively collecting Bayer — not accepting gifts or loans or work by other artists to solely preserve and study Bayer's output — highlighting such footnotes is a worthy endeavor. If nothing else, the show underscores how Bayer's signature aesthetic — geometric studies, vibrant colors — moved across media.

The seven pieces in the exhibition in the Paepcke Gallery, all on loan from private collectors, are instantly recognizable as Bayer designs.

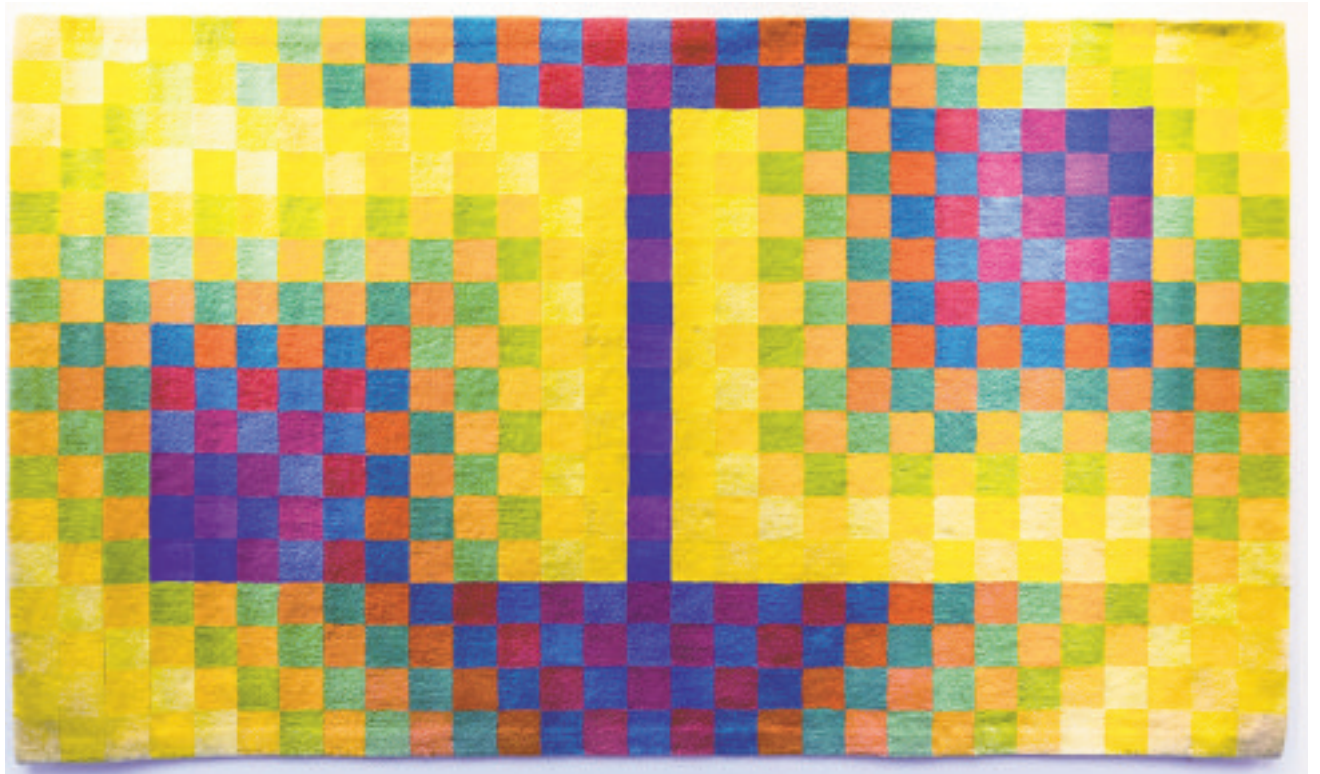
For Institute registrar Lissa Ballinger, the fascinating thing about them is the mystery of how and where Bayer made them, and what his thoughts were on working in the medium. Bayer left little information behind about this work, other than that he traveled to textile factories in Puerto Rico, Morocco and China to learn about the design and manufacture of tapestries.

“There is very little known about these tapestries, which is what makes them so interesting,” says Ballinger. “Bayer fastidiously annotated everything throughout his career, but not with this. . . He didn't have the same annotation, so we don't know how many were in the editions, we don't know where they were

chapel by Robert O. Anderson — who, along with Aspen city father Walter Paepcke, was Bayer's primary patron — offers a peak into Bayer's process. Bayer designed the wall-to-wall carpet in accordance with the peculiar shape of the New Mexico chapel, with intricate designs around where the baptismal font, altar and pews would go. Unfortunately, you



Untitled by Herbert Bayer, N.D.



Yellow with Squares by Herbert Bayer, 1980.

can't road trip to see the realized carpet — Bayer's design was rejected for a simpler one.

Using the key and map, available in the gallery, you can take a self-directed walking tour of 15 more Bayer tapestries hanging around the campus (the Institute's regular, free guided tours of Bayer's work onsite are also a must for Aspenites). Bayer is everywhere, of course, around the campus — but you (or at least I) tend to overlook the tapestry works when I'm out there for an event or hustling around a festival.

Once you spend some time looking at them, though, they sort of become the focal point of a room.

I'd always been curious about the one in the Paepcke Auditorium lobby — "Star" from 1983 — after spending considerable time staring at it while waiting in line at book signings there. Steps away you'll find two more, "Ordered Amassment" from 1973 and "Polychrome" from 1976.

Downstairs, by the bathrooms, is the curious "White Moon on green," from 1961 — a more figurative work than most of Bayer's — featuring a nest under a gibbous moon. Across campus, in Plato's Restaurant, is a 1954 untitled tapestry, depicting something like a red sun reflecting in a body of water.

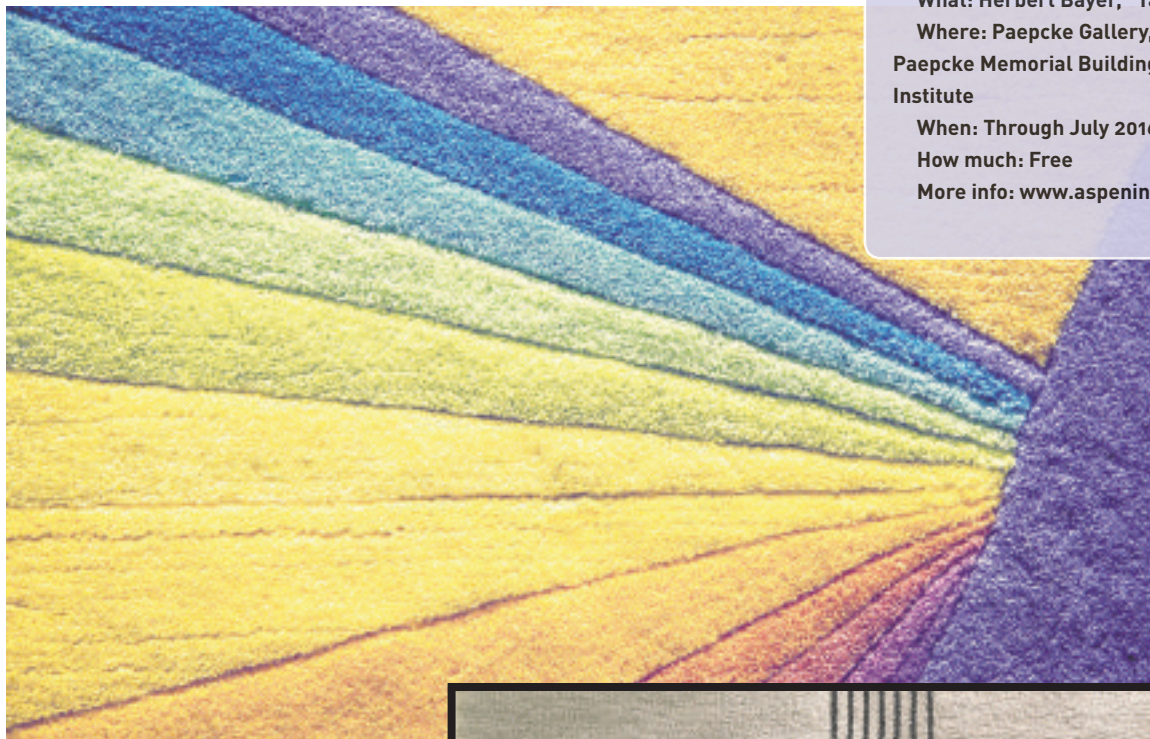
The Kaufman Room in the Doerr-Hosier Center has three of the most compelling tapestries out there, including two from the "Gates" series.

The Institute's main Bayer exhibition, the career-spanning retrospective in the Doerr-Hosier Center's Resnick Gallery, is still the best intro to his work on the campus. But hopefully the tapestry is the first of many shows illuminating some lesser-known aspects of his expansive career.

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IF YOU GO...

What: Herbert Bayer, "Tapestries"
Where: Paepcke Gallery, Walter Paepcke Memorial Building, Aspen Institute
When: Through July 2016
How much: Free
More info: www.aspeninstitute.org



ABOVE: Close detail of Chromatic Composition by Herbert Bayer, 1976.
 RIGHT: Jason tapestry by Herbert Bayer, 1961
 BELOW: Chromatic Gates series by Herbert Bayer, 1970.

