

Altiplano by Sheila Hicks, 1966



September 2025

This September, Knoll Textiles introduces Altiplano by Sheila Hicks, 1966, one of three archival reissues this fall in recognition of Knoll's legacy at the forefront of textile design.

An artist revered for dynamic explorations of color and construction—often involving large-scale installations that challenge formal boundaries—Hicks has widely been credited with elevating the status of fiber art on an international stage. An introduction to Florence Knoll at the outset of Hicks' commercial career began a collaboration which was the first to bring the artist's foundational engagement with Andean weaving techniques to industry.

In the 1950s, Hicks became interested in textiles while studying painting and art history at Yale University under Josef Albers and George Kubler. She was intrigued by the medium's possibilities, specifically "the interlocking forms and colors in Peruvian textiles," and explored this interplay in an undergraduate thesis on pre-Incan techniques, including an ancient pattern that would later inform Altiplano's elemental check. While traveling through South America to further her artistic practice in Chile, Hicks met weavers in Peru employing the very techniques she had once studied. "I recognized the pattern from my research," says Hicks of the pre-Incan design. "When I saw it, it caught my attention. I saw it being made." After encountering the pattern throughout the Andes, Hicks had a suit made from a textile featuring the motif, which she would later wear to an initial meeting with Florence Knoll.

In the early 1960s, Hicks established a professional relationship with Knoll while expanding her weaving practice and living in rural Mexico. After sharing an initial concept with the company, Hicks developed the design for upholstery production, experimenting with the size of the yarns and the scale of the pattern to create an intricate appearance with "playful mistakes." Knoll Textiles formally introduced the textile as "Inca" in 1966. For the contemporary version, Hicks chose the new name, Altiplano, to reflect the Andean highland region where variations on the ancient check are still produced today.

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The reissued design—a timeless, mid-scale checker woven to form alternating sections of horizontal and vertical lines—reflects Knoll Textiles’ dedication to developing textiles in meaningful dialogue with their surroundings. The upholstery is produced according to current standards, with heathered yarns that are spun, woven, and pressed in a single location, thereby minimizing the environmental impact of standard textile production. Its updated palette brings to life Hick’s vision in colorways that emulate the naturally occurring colors of the Andes.

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About Sheila Hicks

Sheila Hicks (b. 1934, Unites States) is an artist whose extensive engagement with cross-cultural weaving practices has informed expansive explorations of form, color, and scale. Working over nearly seven decades, Hicks has continually challenged the bounds of artistic categorization while bringing work in textile to the center of the contemporary art world. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a recipient of the Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, her pieces are in the permanent collections of myriad institutions including the Art Institute of Chicago, the Centre Pompidou, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Museum of Modern Art. She lives and works from her studio in Paris.

About Knoll Textiles

Since its founding by Florence Knoll in 1947, Knoll Textiles has designed textiles for the contemporary interior. Honoring the pioneering architectural spirit in which Knoll Textiles began, the design studio is informed by traditional weaving, technical innovation, and collaboration. The collection includes the studio's own work along with collaborations with artists, designers, and architects including Anni Albers, Nick Cave, Rodarte, and Sheila Hicks. Knoll Textiles was the subject of a major retrospective at New York's Bard Graduate Center in 2011 and is included in the permanent collection of Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian National Design Museum.

For more information, contact press@maharam.com.

Specifications

Name	Introduction	Colors	Content
Altiplano	September 2025	9	76% Wool, 24% Nylon