

AT: Welcome to the Infinite Women podcast. I'm your host, Allison Tyra. And today I'm joined by Imogen Dixon-Smith, the Kenneth E. Tyler curator of international prints and drawing at the National Gallery of Australia to talk about German-American printmaker and textile artist, Anni Albers. Now you've recently curated an exhibition called Anni and Joseph Albers, which is on display at the NGA until the 22nd of September 2024. So first, can you give us an introduction to her work?

IDS: So Anni Albers is best known as a pioneering modernist textile artist, but she was also an educator and she worked with printmaking later in her artistic career. Her textiles really paved a new direction for the medium, showing that a medium that was sort of once considered in the realm of craft could actually be elevated to the status of high art, so sitting alongside traditional mediums, such as painting and sculpture. It did take quite a while for this to kind of catch on, but this is really what she's known for. She was actually the first textile artist to hold a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1949. And she also published a number of seminal texts on weaving and design throughout her career. So she was a student of the famous Bauhaus school in Germany. And here she created experimental textiles with a real kind of rhythmic geometric compositions. So along with other members of the Bauhaus weaving workshop, she rejected this kind of tradition of Western textiles, where the subjects of these kind of large tapestries were often classical or historic scenes, and they were drawn as a cartoon or a sketch by an artist and then would be executed on the loom by a weaver. So instead, she would actually draw her inspiration from the process of constructing a weave on the loom and build up the designs of geometric arrangements that were characteristic of new languages of abstraction that were brewing around avant-garde circles at the time. So she starts to collide this process of making as well as artistry.

And she kind of fits into a general disavowal at the time towards decoration. So decoration was starting to be seen as superfluous, unnecessary, and distracting. So we can see this very kind of clean geometry in her work, especially of this time. I guess it's important to sort of explain how a weaving is made because this was so instrumental to the look of her weavings. So a weaving is made through the intersection of what we call the warp and the weft. So a loom is prepared with vertical threads, which are called the warp. And these are held in tension. And then a weft, a separate thread, is passed through the warp in an alternating fashion. So it runs over and under these vertical threads. And this creates an interlocking system that transforms into a plane of fabric. And this process was seen by Anni as a structural process, a type of construction or building process. And most importantly, these warps and wefts, they meet on a perpendicular angle. So it's this geometry that Anni is really drawing on for the graphic outcomes of her textiles. She also starts to experiment with threads of different properties. So cellophane, everything kind of was exploding at this time in terms of manufacturing and new materials. So she really actually embraces this. She starts to introduce these different properties into the weaving, but kind of stays very true to the process itself.

She moved to the United States in 1933 with her husband, artist Joseph Albers. And here she developed her textiles further. She starts to turn her sort of more artistic weavings into pictorial weavings. And these are really exquisite textiles that again exploited the materiality of different threads, but she's kind of built up more subtle designs in these later works than her Bauhaus

works, which, her Bauhaus looks are very punchy, very geometric sort of solid blocks of color. Whereas these later works, they're more subtle and you can see these forms appearing and receding and kind of these kind of shadowy forms. And you can see this proficiency in weaving getting stronger and stronger.

I think also the magic of Anni Albers' works really comes from this kind of dual appreciation to both craftsmanship and the industrial, which are often seen as the antithesis of one another. So we can actually kind of trace this back to her Bauhaus experience. So the school which is founded in 1919 by architect Walter Gropius starts with this goal of marrying art and craft. So the original brochure has a picture of a cathedral on it. And this was kind of this metaphor for bringing art and craft into the design of this whole creative project, being the cathedral. So stained glass windows, the actual physical building, designing the interior space, it's all this one project. So there's this real appreciation for craftsmanship that starts to come. But then later in the school, so in about 1923, there's new priorities. So they start to move to this mantra of art and technology, a new unity. So they start to look towards technology, manufacturing. And there's a number of reasons for this. Some are political, the government was applying increasing pressure on them to justify their funding. So they're looking to kind of create more connection with industry, make it manufacturers and move away from, a lot of the commissions in the early years were actually from private individuals. And that wasn't really the goal of the school. The goal of the school was to create these designs that were for the everyday, for the every person. So they're really starting to look to bring these kind of languages of technology into the school.

So she spans both these periods. She was a relatively early student of the Bauhaus. And you can see through her approach to weaving that she takes on appreciation of both these kind of ends of the school. So the early years of the weaving workshop, they sometimes referred to as expressionistic and they were more guided by the handmade processes. So there was a local artisan, Helen Werner, who actually supervised the workshop and it's interesting the way that some of these artists talk about the Bauhaus because this overall rejection of traditional processes often sometimes comes across as very ardent. So she describes this woman as a very inefficient old lady and the needlework type and has sort of referred to this era as dabbling in a romantic handicraft, but it's kind of interesting because she still really appreciated the actual firsthand, I mean, it was essential to her whole practice, the connection of the artist to the making process. So, whilst these kind of rhetorics continue to persist throughout the 20th century with Bauhaus artists reflecting on their time at the school, you can see that it actually was incredibly formative.

AT: When we're talking about Bauhaus shaping her, my understanding is that she didn't even want to work in textiles in the first place. And she was sort of shunted into that department because she was a woman. My understanding is the only woman master at the school was Gunta Stölzl in that department. So there's even a quote about, "in my case, it was the threads that caught me really against my will to work with threads seemed sissy to me. I wanted something to be conquered, but circumstances held me to threads and they won me over." So it's interesting, this gendered nature that we see with textiles specifically in different situations.

IDS: Yeah, certainly. So that is correct, Anni, and a lot of the other women that were attending the school were kind of funneled into the weaving workshop. It's actually interesting, Anni was initially turned down to attend the Bauhaus. She was pretty set, I think, on entering the glass workshop. She talks about some of the other work. There wasn't the sort of full gamut of workshops in the very beginning, like, architecture wasn't a workshop yet. Photography wasn't a workshop. A lot of them were actually quite physical. So it was metalwork, wall painting. And had some health issues as a child. So she kind of knew her limitations physically and knew that she couldn't enter some of those, but I think she was quite interested in the glass workshop, whether that was because Joseph was the one and only master in it at the time. But anyway, she was assigned to the weaving workshop and Joseph assisted her with her second round of tests and she was admitted. But I think this gendered issue that the Bauhaus had, and it's interesting because again, going back to that rhetoric of the school, it painted itself even at the time is very progressive and very equal. And it was allowing women to enter, but the actual reality of how that was applied was not as equal as you would think. So I guess they had large numbers at the school. But as you mentioned, there was only ever one woman master and most of them were working in a particular workshop.

But I think it's really important to, to remember, even though that they were assigned to this specific workshop, this specific context, they were still the same women that applied and that took up this call that the Bauhaus was putting out. So, they had ambitions beyond, how Anni says, beyond this being relegated to working with women's handicraft, which possibly they could have just done at home. They were still the same women with the same ambitions and they entered the school wanting to contribute in the same way that the men wanted to. So they wanted to contribute to this experimental environment. And just because they were placed in this specific context, it didn't stop them from being the same type of people that they were. So the way that Anni reflects on this circumstance that she was in, she actually really just works within the limitations that she's been placed in as fertile ground for innovation. And that's something that she takes with her throughout her entire practice. We see that later when she takes up printmaking that she really wants the limitations and the things that she can exploit with each printmaking process. That's where she draws her inspiration from. She doesn't just take her designs to the printmaker and says, "this is what I want to make." She says, "tell me about this process and and what's its limitations? What's the great things about it? And how can we work with that?" So that stays with her throughout her practice?

But I think also it's important to note that Anni really sees weaving as this structural and even architectural process. So, the act of weaving itself on a loom, it's this complex spatial proposition. So, you're preparing a loom, you're preparing the weft, and then the process of weaving is physical in itself. It's quite a long expanse that you're working across this machine, especially for the bigger pieces that they're creating. And they approach their work in a similar fashion to the architects of the school. So they're working to a brief of the commissions. So they're thinking about the best materials and the best techniques to apply to produce a tactile outcome that fit the brief. So they're really working within the same context of the school that materiality and process really needs to fit the design of the object. And then they have to construct it and they give it structure much in the same way that a building is constructed. A really great example of the commission that she made that gave her her diploma for the

Bauhaus. So she was commissioned by the director of the Bauhaus at the time, Hannes Meyer, to create a wall hanging for the ADGB Trade Union School in Bernau. And this was the school that he had designed himself and he designed this auditorium. And once it was built, they realized that it had this terrible echo. And obviously that's not very useful for an auditorium, the minute someone speaks, they can hear their voice back. So he needed a textile that could try and reduce this echo. I think also the mess hall of the school was next door, so it was just going to be really loud. And Anni had to take on this problem. And Meyer had also only put windows on one side of the auditorium. So there was also this concern that they needed to disperse light throughout the space in order for it to be usable. So Anni takes on this project and she thinks, "well, traditionally velvet is the obvious choice for a textile to absorb sound." But she thinks, "oh, this would need to be dark because otherwise it'll just show the dirt of hands touching it as students come through." So she thinks, "how can I make a light material that is also sound-absorbing?" And she actually had recently visited Italy and she'd bought a beret in Italy that had cellophane in it and she was really taken by this new material for its light-reflecting quality. So she thinks, "how can I combine this with the velvet to make a textile that's both sound-absorbing, as well as light-reflecting, as well as can have a light to look." So she makes this beautiful sample that's then produced on a mass scale to cover the walls of the auditorium. In an interview later in life, she calls it a piece of textile engineering. So you can see this language of architecture and engineering coming into the way that she talks about her own textiles. But interestingly, the camera lens manufacturer Zeiss actually studied this textile for its innovation in light reflections. So this work that she was doing was both beautiful and incredibly functional and incredibly well thought-through.

AT: It is fascinating that as we're talking about the disparity between art and craft and how part of the point of Bauhaus was to elevate craft to be considered on the same level as "high art," it seems a bit ironic that what we're talking about here is functionality. Is it purely decorative or is it also something that is meant to be functional? Is it a bowl that you're going to use in the kitchen or a sculpture that you put on a shelf? And the reason I say that's ironic is that it seems like as you're describing the problem-solving that she had to go through to make this a functional object as well as something that would work aesthetically, that seems a lot harder than just making something that you're going to put on a wall that doesn't have to be functional.

IDS: Yeah, definitely. And I think it's the multiplicity of concerns that she really takes in when making her art, that's really interesting because the outcome is always so refined and it's, this language of abstraction and it's interesting that there's all these things that she's pulling together and the outcome that she makes is so simple. I think that's just one of the great beauties of her work is that there's just this refinement and, streamlined approach I think the way that her and her husband saw art, it wasn't considered something to entertain. It wasn't considered for them something even, when they moved to the US later in their life, but also some of the kind of movements happening in Germany even at the same time, a lot of that is about the artist's psyche and art being an expression of the artist's psyche, of society's psyche at the time, German expressionism or later abstract expressionism that's also taking off while they're in America. They really reject this and they just don't see that as the point of art. They really see

art as something that's just meant to make people reflect on the way that we experience the world. So it's meant to be affecting in a personal sense, it's just meant to make us really, I mean, Joseph says it's meant to make us open our eyes. So it's meant to just make us stop and really see these interesting visual phenomena that is possible to create within the mediums that they're working.

AT: Well, that raises an interesting question about the fact that this exhibition is not just Anni, it's not just Joseph, it's the two of them together. So I'm assuming that, two artists who live and work together were probably influencing each other's work.

IDS: I think it is impossible to say that they didn't influence each other. They had a very affectionate relationship. So there's a lot of couples of modernism that were very tumultuous, you think of Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera. But they met at the Bauhaus, Anni was very young, she was in her early 20s, and they were married until Joseph passed away. They moved country together. They had a very, very close bond, and I think this was on a very creative level as well as just a personal level. And if you look at the aesthetics of their work, it's most closely aligned when they're at the Bauhaus, and they're both working with these geometric languages of abstraction. Joseph's glass sculptures, and Anni's wall hangings do have some very graphic resonances, but if you look beyond the actual look of their work, the answer lies in this Bauhaus context again, and both of their commitment to its vision that design could transform modern life, so art was really something that was meant to transform us. And there's this beautiful quote that Anni has that "art is meant to make us breathe with a different kind of happiness," so it's really about just lifting us, and I hope that when you enter the space of the exhibition, their works have some similarities, have some differences, but I think they both actually just give you this lifting sense of optimism, and sometimes that's Joseph's use of color, sometimes that's Anni's use of form and line, and they're different ways that they approach this, but it's that real refinement that goes between them.

Throughout their lives and their careers, they really supported each other in their creative pursuits. First, Joseph helps Anni to get into the Bauhaus, but Anni, when they move to America, and they both take up teaching positions at Black Mountain College, Joseph doesn't speak a word of English, so Anni acts as a translator for him in the first couple of months. And actually Joseph often kind of defers to Anni on judgments, which is something that's been really nice to see, specifically in developing this exhibition. So the National Gallery's collection is built from the work they did with the master printer, Kenneth Tyler, in America. And they developed a really close relationship with Tyler, and in our archive, we have a number of transcripts of phone calls between Joseph, Anni, and Tyler, and what these transcripts show is, two things: it shows Joseph's appreciation for Anni's opinion, and it also shows Tyler's reverence for Anni as an artist. The transcripts predate Tyler working with Anni on prints, but there's a number of moments where he talks about documenting her textiles for her, as well as helping her to sell prints to institutions, and talking about different articles and journals that really shows his appreciation for Anni as an artist in her own right. And I think that also the way that Joseph, in these phone calls, at one point, he actually stops Tyler from talking and says, "oh, I just, before I forget, I need to tell Anni this," and turns to Anni and tells her. So there's just this constant

conversation between the two. When Joseph is discussing the amount of editions for his White Line Square series, he also tells Tyler that he always reserves the first edition of a print for Anni. And likewise, I think the director of the Anni and Joseph Albers Foundation, Nicholas Fox Weber, has told the story that there's actually quite a lot of red paintings of Joseph that aren't in collections, and the reason for this was that Anni saw red as the color of romance, and she saw these paintings as valentines to her, so you can see that there's just a very strong relationship and a very strong appreciation for each other as artists. Perhaps it's actually helpful that they did not work in the same medium, so other artist couples, like Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Jean Arp, or many other examples where they're actually working in the same medium. Instead, Anni has her own realm, she has made these strides in a specific medium and in a medium that she had to fight for as well, so I think that that's actually quite a way that helps to distinguish both of their artistic practices and perhaps lead to less clashes.

AT: I was thinking, as you were talking, the women who work in similar fields as and/or collaborate with their husbands, traditionally, often have been overlooked and not seen as equal partners or practitioners of equal acclaim, and especially in a context where, as you said, he was already a master at Bauhaus when she was struggling to get accepted there. So in a context like that, it would have been so easy for her to have fallen into that trap, but it's ironic that being pushed into the textiles when she wanted to work in glass, where he was also working, I have to wonder how different that might have ended up being in terms of, would we really know who she was or would she have become one of those overlooked wives?

IDS: Yeah, definitely. Also, it's interesting, actually, the story of them fleeing Germany to America in 1933, it's actually Anni that got them the ticket to America, so it's this interesting story of coincidences. But in 1933, Joseph and Anni are living in Berlin, the Bauhaus has closed from pressure from the Nazi government, and they're in this period of listlessness and very uncertain. Anni was of Jewish heritage, she actually wasn't a religious person, but obviously in Nazi Germany, doesn't matter, and she came from a very affluent and well-known Jewish family, the Alstein family, who were publishers. So I guess they saw the writing on the wall, really, and they knew that they need to get out, but anyway, this story goes that Philip Johnson, who was a young US architect, who had actually traveled to the Bauhaus earlier and had seen Anni's work at the Bauhaus and really admired it, he was in Berlin. And Anni ran into him in the street, and she invited him up to their apartment, she wanted to show him these new linoleum white floors that they had installed, because she knew that he would be very impressed by this, and she shows him some work in the apartment, and he's sort of reignited by excitement of her work, and he says, "would you like to come to the US?" And she says yes, and behind the scenes, he goes back to the US, he's actually recently been made the first director of the architecture department at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. And along with one of his colleagues, he pulls some strings, and they get an invitation for Joseph and Anni to become teachers at the new experimental school Black Mountain College in North Carolina, so that invitation comes through six weeks later. And Anni in an interview says that her and Joseph were sitting on the bed reading the letter, and the minute that they saw the word "experimental," they said, "we know that this is the place for us." So interestingly, Anni's reputation was also very strong, and

helped to continue their legacy to a whole new country. And I mentioned previously, she was the first textile artist to be given a solo exhibition at MoMA in 1949, and it actually wasn't until 1971 that Joseph was given a solo retrospective. So, there is no doubt that Joseph's work has been shown, infinitely more than Anni's, and there was really only this renewed interest in Anni at the early 20th century, and now I guess we are a lot more familiar with her work with some really big exhibitions by the Tate in London and Peggy Guggenheim Museum in Venice, but she wasn't in obscurity as much as other women possibly have been, that have had to be reignited. She has always been considered very instrumental in the field that she practiced in.

AT: I mean, she was also fighting against that larger “textiles are just craft” stigma when we're talking about big name museums putting on exhibitions of her work. So when we're talking about textiles, when did she start being influenced by pre-Columbian textiles? So my understanding is that we're talking about works that would have been pre-colonization in Latin and South America?

IDS: Yes, correct. So there's been some research done around whether she would have come across these textiles in Germany before moving to America, and it's highly likely. Obviously, as we're talking about project of colonialism, at the turn of the century, there was excavations happening in these places, and this material was being brought back to Europe. And so examples of pre-Columbian textiles were in museums in Berlin at the time, and definitely some of the masters of the weaving workshop, like Johannes Itten, drew quite, quite obviously graphically, I guess appropriated designs from pre-Columbian textiles in his own weavings. So these influences were definitely around, and also not just graphically, but on a technical level, Anni was incredibly interested in these textiles because they're actually some of the most complex textiles to ever have been produced and were produced non-mechanically, and this really interested Anni. So she was particularly interested in multi-weaves, which were an invention of pre-Columbian textiles, which are double or triple-weaves, which involved incorporation of multiple planes of fabric into the one textile, and this gives the weaver more control over the expression of different colors, or different layers of the weaving coming through.

AT: What does that mean, different planes? Because you've explained to us like warp and weft, so what are we adding on top of that? How does that work?

IDS: So it's multiple sets of warps, and then a single weft that ties them together, and so you can have multiple planes of color, and then the weaver has more control over when that color is seen on the front of the textile, on the back of the textile, through clever manipulation of these different planes.

AT: So it's more intricate and you can create more complexity.

IDS: Correct, yes, and this was a technique that she used in her Bauhaus wall hangings. There were these geometric compositions, so lots of different lines and areas of rectangular color. You can see that she uses this technique to bring different colors forward and push them back and

have these more complex relationships between the front and the back of the textile. She's definitely on a technical level inspired by Peruvian textiles, but also when the Albers move to America, they actually are now geographically closer to this area, and they start to have a real engagement with the area. So they actually travel to Mexico over 13 times, and they also visit Peru and Chile, and they actually spend like long periods of time in these places, like it's not just a week here and there. It was a long drive down there, and they meet artists in Mexico, and they really involve themselves and engage with artists there, contemporary artists there, but they're also incredibly inspired by just the rich way that art has always been incorporated into everyday in South and Central America, so it speaks to a lot of the things that they that were inspired by at the Bauhaus, they see that reflected that art is everywhere in these countries. So it's in the architecture, it's in the clothing, it's in objects, and so they're just completely blown away by their visits. And you can see they do actually amass a bit of a collection of textile fragments and sculptures that they bring back to America, and you can start to see graphically that different motifs start to appear in their work, especially motifs that reflect the architecture of ancient sites, such as Monte Albán that they visited, that was being excavated at the time. So these countries were going through a renewed interest in their own history, which also led to these excavations, and we start to see, even in Anni's prints, so her Mountainous series, they're these beautiful, inkless embossings. It's made just simply by a plate that has a design on it that's impressed onto the page, and it's this simplicity of actually just the shadow of that impression that brings the imagery forward. And there's this really nice resonance between the way that pre-Columbian architecture was designed, that actually controlled the way that shadow falls on the building, as the light passes across the sky, so there's some very complex resonances between these influences, as I mentioned both on a graphic level as well as a really technical level.

AT: I am curious, as a curator, what do you think is the difference between appropriation, which as you mentioned, there were European artists at the time appropriating colonized civilizations' art, versus what Anni was doing as influence? So I guess what's the difference between appropriation and respectful influence?

IDS: It is a fine line, and I think that it's always important to remember that even a level of influence of these cultures involves the project of colonialism, like she wouldn't have had access to some of this material if this pillaging legacy of colonialism didn't exist. So I think it's always important to keep that in mind, but I guess the way that she approached this material I think was quite different to the primitivism of some Modernists, so I think there's kind of like an attitudinal issue.

AT: Well, just the fact that you've got some folks over here calling basically duplicating this work "primitive" as a whole movement, whereas it sounds like she really respected the skill and the technique of this, and that's what she was wanting to work with.

IDS: Correct, so she admired these artisans and I don't want to say that she's completely right in what she does, but I do think that there is merit to the way that both Anni and Joseph approached this area. I think that they did have a real engagement with its artisans and a real



appreciation for their culture. And I think that one of the interesting things to note is that the way that they saw the art of Central and South America was this continuity that went from the ancient to the contemporary, which is actually a very different language to the way that other Modernists have approached ancient or primitive art where they see it as existing in the past, and then something that it's for them to visit and to rediscover and to take as their own language, whereas I think that Albus actually always saw this continuity of culture from the ancient that still existed when they went to visit, and I think that that appreciation for a culture that's still living is actually something that we're still trying to apply in Australia now. We're trying to move away from those languages of historicising what is actually a culture that has existed for thousands and thousands of years and is still existing and still thriving, and I think that that's one of the better things that the Albers did in their engagement with this art.

AT: Well you could also make the argument that when we're talking about elevating craft to high art, there was also a need to elevate Indigenous art to be on the same level as like Renaissance paintings.

IDS: Yeah, and Anni was actually involved in a commission in Mexico that spoke to this sense of reviving and celebrating Indigenous art of the area, so she was commissioned to make a textile, Camino Real, for a hotel at the same time as preparing for the Olympics. And so they really wanted to show off Indigenous and local art. Obviously Anni is not a part of that, but there were also local artists that were part of this project as well, so it's interesting the way that their art was appreciated in the country as well as not just taken back to their own country and had no reciprocal engagement. It's also interesting, Anni in her writing, she likes to perform these thought experiments, and she has one where she thinks how a Peruvian weaver would, what they would think if they came across a modern textile, and she says a Peruvian weaver would be astounded by the speed at which textiles can now be made, and they'd be astounded by the insane variety of materials we can now work with, and they'd be blown away by the fact that textiles can be made so cheaply and so quickly. But she says when they actually would look at the textile, they wouldn't see anything they hadn't seen before, in fact she says that they could actually provide some suggestions, and so there she's talking about the technique, and she says that actually there's been no advancements in the technique of weaving since these artisans were working. And in fact they actually had conquered it more, and a lot of that knowledge has been lost. So you do really see this real appreciation for the skill and the craftsmanship, and she does try to engage with this in a real way, and apply this to her work, but she's not creating exact copies, she's taking the fundamentals, and then building on that to create something that really is her own.

AT: I have to imagine that that hand weaver that she was a condescending jerk about back at Bauhaus, I'd like to imagine that she saw that as like, "what the hell?"

IDS: I think it's really interesting as well, in this thought experiment, the Andean weaver is a man, and I just think it's really interesting, whether that's just the way that you wrote at the time, or whether the weaver was a man in her eyes, or whether making it a man helps her argument

in a way for it to be art, I don't know, I just think it's really interesting.

AT: Especially given that she would have been surrounded by women weaving from basically her entire career, it's an interesting choice.

IDS: Yeah, exactly, I think it's really interesting, I don't know exactly what it means, but I guess we'll never know.

AT: Well, just to switch gears a bit, because obviously we've been talking a lot about textiles, which makes sense, because that is what she is best known for, but she also got into printmaking once she moved to the US, so how did this come out of that, I suppose?

IDS: Yeah, so she actually starts, she makes her first print in 1963, and going back to Joseph and her influence on each other, she's actually introduced to printmaking because Joseph is doing a residency at Tamarind lithography workshop in Los Angeles. And she describes herself as being the wife hanging around, and she's invited to make a print by June Wayne. And it's funny that she speaks of herself in that way, because it's hard not to see it as self-deprecating, or just having a bit of knowingness to it, that she was hanging around, but she was invited, they knew she was an artist, and she was invited to make a print. So she makes her first print there, and works that are actually quite different to a lot of her other work. She makes prints of threads, so of these knots, knotting threads, and they're quite pictorial, so quite a departure. And then she really likes the process, and she's really quite taken by printmaking.

She actually sees printmaking as a less fraught space for her to work in. So she says that when an artwork is made on paper, it's considered art, and when it's made with threads, it's not considered art. So she later in life just likes this area where she has this new easy recognition as creating art, and she says with her printmaking, she had the longed-for pat on the shoulder, so she really takes to the medium. She really strives to understand each printmaking process that she works with, so this is quite different to the way that Joseph approached printmaking, where he worked quite closely with glass printers to kind of directly translate his paintings into the print medium, which took a lot of problem solving and very interesting technical advancements. But he didn't necessarily engage with the process very much, it's often the master printer that is coming up with the process to have the outcome that he wants, whereas Anni really involves herself in understanding each process that she works with, and how she can exploit that to create works that represent the strengths of each process. So I think a really beautiful example of this is her *Meander* series, which are these very electric colorful works, but they're colorful works with this maze-like line that runs through them, and it's very easy to see this wandering line or meandering line as a nod to the threads of a weaving, but it also technically looks at screen printing and goes, "how can I use this to make something really interesting?" So actually the work, it looks like it has four different users, four different screens in its printing, so it has these wandering lines of different colors wandering across each other, so it looks like it's built up with four different screens. But in fact she actually only uses one stencil, and she prints a base color, and she uses one stencil and she rotates it, she offsets it, and she uses the translucency of ink. So she uses the same color, but printed on top of one another in

these different arrangements, so rotating it, offsetting it, she builds up this sense of three-dimensionality of, in the same way that a weaving is three-dimensional in the way that the warp and weft goes over one another, so she really understands the process and how these inks will interact with each other to create these beautiful works. They're really, really beautiful.

AT: You've brought up multiple times that she almost seems to approach art processes like an engineer.

IDS: I think that would be a way that she would see her own work. She is really a problem-solver, and if you think of engineering, you can then think design, and then you then think of her beginnings, and you think she approaches art, not art as a problem to be solved, but she approaches the pieces that come together to make art, so the material and the process. She approaches this as something that needs to be understood and needs to fit together in a way that makes sense. There's not really an idea of chance, it's just very thought through and it's very considered.

AT: Join us next time on the Infinite Women podcast and remember well-behaved women rarely make history.