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## **Maria Kipp**

Maria Kipp (1900-1988) combined skills in handweaving and more formal textile design. In 1924, she emigrated to the U.S. from Munich, where she had studied at the Kunstgewerbeschule and become the first woman ever to attend the textile school in Muenchberg, Bavaria (founded 1854). Her study ranged from structural and practical considerations to the nitty-gritty of “calculation and marketing.”<sup>1</sup> She graduated as a textile engineer in 1923 and broke from precedent by establishing her own business after a friend gave her a handloom. She also married in that year, and she and her husband became involved with the religious philosophy of the prophet Zarathustra that was called the Mazdaznan Movement. In the period of runaway inflation and social unrest in Germany, they decided to leave.

Relocated to California, Kipp worked as a domestic and found side jobs painting architectural decorations and designing rugs to be hand-knotted in China. After she was able to bring her two looms to America, she established a workshop in Los Angeles and quickly gained commissions and a reputation for innovative handwoven furnishing fabrics. She did custom designs for decorators and architects, including such fellow émigrés as Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler. By 1928 her business was doing extremely well—she made draperies for the main council chambers at Los Angeles City Hall and curtains and upholstery for the San Francisco Stock Exchange—and her business moved to a bigger building. She divorced in 1931 and remarried in 1933. Her later work included home interiors for Hollywood stars and handwoven textiles for major hotels and clubs as well as the Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City, department stores and Air Force One. She retired in 1977.