

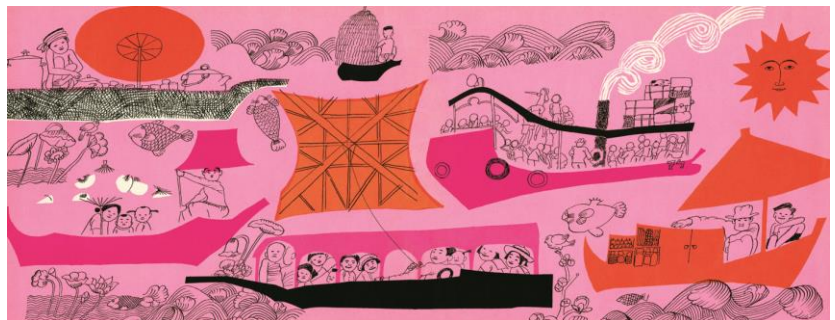


Jacqueline Ayer: Drawing on Thailand

House of Illustration
Until 22 October 2017

Ground-breaking 1960s illustrator, designer and entrepreneur

“Jacqueline Ayer was endlessly admired and respected. What is always difficult to understand is the degree to which she was able to change every culture she was embedded in, from editorial pages to clothing design, to fabrics and children’s books.” Milton Glaser



House of Illustration has opened the world’s first exhibition by ground-breaking 1960s illustrator Jacqueline Ayer. The exhibition coincides with the re-issue, for the first time in 60 years, of two of her celebrated picture books.

Jacqueline Ayer’s picture books were a remarkable addition to children’s literature in 1960s America and the UK. Documenting the back lanes of Bangkok, they brought a bold vision of Asian life to the western market at a time when it was unusual to see diverse cultures authentically portrayed.

Born in 1930s New York to Jamaican parents, Ayer was a childhood friend of Milton Glaser, colleague of Andy Warhol and fashion illustrator for Vogue.

In the early 1960s she also founded textile and garment company Design Thai, funded by Norman Rockefeller. Her reference book, *Oriental Costume*, features sketches drawn from her life in Thailand without the colonial overtones of previous records, and is still used by London College of Fashion today.

The exhibition features Ayer’s original picture book artworks, ephemera and Design Thai garments. Colin McKenzie, Director of House of Illustration, said: *“We are delighted to be exhibiting the pioneering work of*

Jacqueline Ayer, who did so much to highlight diverse cultures and authentically portray them in the western world. Her beautiful work deserves to be more widely known and celebrated."

For all exhibition information, images and interview requests please contact:

Amy Forshaw at House of Illustration on 020 3696 2028 or amy.forshaw@houseofillustration.org.uk

IMAGE CREDITS

Jacqueline Ayer / Nu Dang and His Kite © Jacqueline Ayer / Endpapers © Jacqueline Ayer

LISTINGS INFORMATION

Jacqueline Ayer: Drawing on Thailand

Until 22 October 2017

House of Illustration, 2 Granary Square, London N1C 4BH.

Open Tuesday-Sunday 10am-6pm. Closed Mondays.

Admission (one ticket gives admission to all three galleries) £8.25 inc gift aid. Other exhibitions currently on:

[Anime Architecture: Backgrounds of Japan](#)

[Quentin Blake: The Life of Birds](#)

020 3696 2020, houseofillustration.org.uk, [facebook.com/houseofillustration](https://www.facebook.com/houseofillustration), @illustrationHQ

NOTES TO EDITORS

Jacqueline Brandford Ayer (1930-2012) was born in New York to first generation Jamaican immigrants. She grew up with Milton Glaser in America's first interracial housing – a Trotskyite cooperative for garment workers in the Bronx. A meeting with Michel de Brunhoff and Christian Dior led to a position with *Vogue Paris* in the 1950s, after which she worked alongside Andy Warhol for New York's Bonwit Teller department store, as a staff artist specialising in 'young and gay' fashion. She also modelled, acted alongside Man Ray in Hans Richter's film *Dadascope* and illustrated for *US Vogue*, *The New York Times* and *Jardin des Modes*.

After moving to Thailand she wrote and illustrated five picture books, published by Harcourt, Brace & World (USA) and Collins (UK): *Nu Dang and His Kite* 1959; *A Wish For Little Sister* 1960; *The Paper-Flower Tree* 1962; *Princess September* 1969; *Little Silk* 1970. *Nu Dang and His Kite* and *The Paper-Flower Tree* will be re-issued by Enchanted Lion to coincide with the exhibition.

In the early 1960s Ayer founded Design Thai, funded by IBEC under Norman Rockefeller. Her first printed fabrics were inspired by ancient Thai designs from carvings, temples, porcelains and printed cloths in the vaults of the National Museum. Having opened a shop in Bangkok in 1962 and expanded to offer a line of ready-to-wear clothing, further branches followed in New York and Hong Kong. Ayer's reference book, *Oriental Costume*, features sketches from life without the Victorian colonial overtones of previous records, and is still used by London College of Fashion today.

House of Illustration is the UK's only public gallery and education space dedicated solely to illustration, with a creative programme of exhibitions, talks and events. Founded by Sir Quentin Blake it opened in July 2014 at the heart of the King's Cross regeneration area. It is the place to enjoy and learn about illustration in all its forms; from picture books to political cartoons, advertisements to animation and scientific drawings to fashion design. A registered charity, House of Illustration identifies and promotes new talent, commissions new work and has an learning programme for all ages delivered by professional illustrators. houseofillustration.org.uk.