
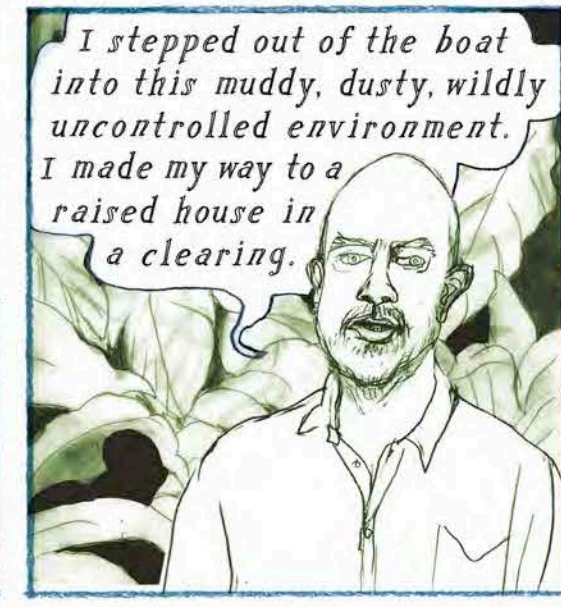


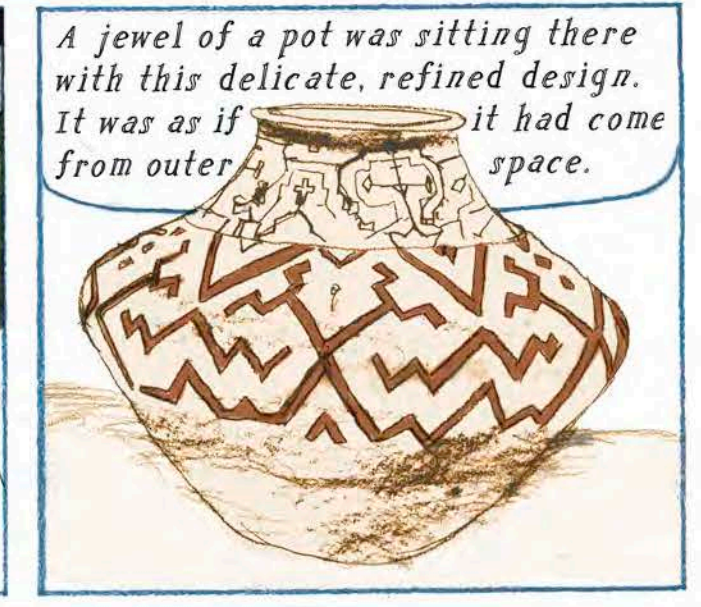
PETER KOEPKE, PATTERN KEEPER



There was a first pattern. Peter Koepke came upon it upriver where the Shipibo-Conibo people live in the Amazon.



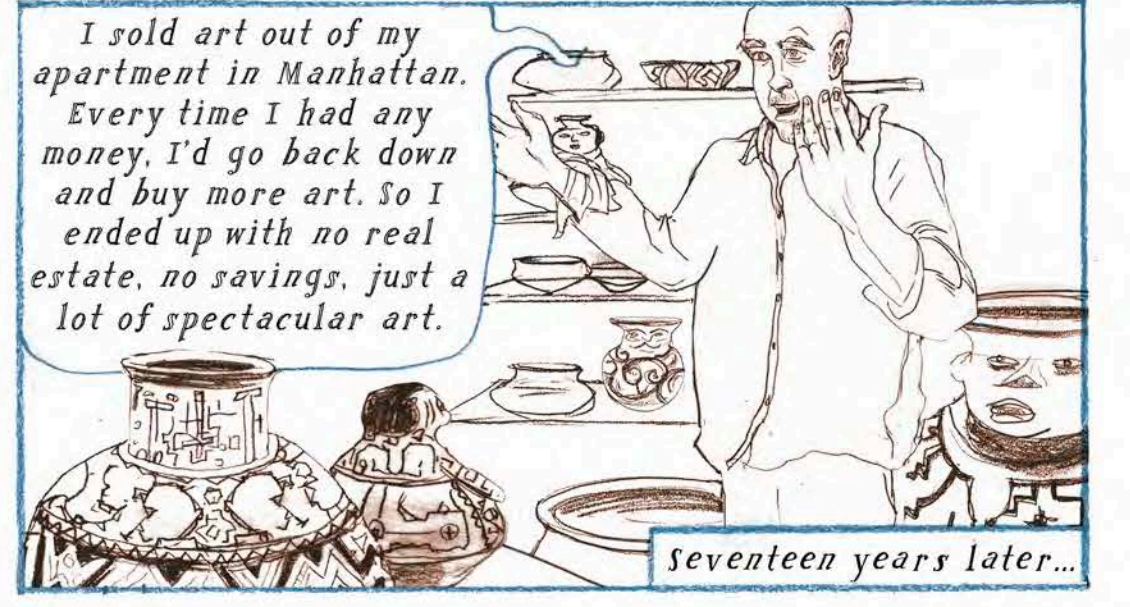
I stepped out of the boat into this muddy, dusty, wildly uncontrolled environment. I made my way to a raised house in a clearing.



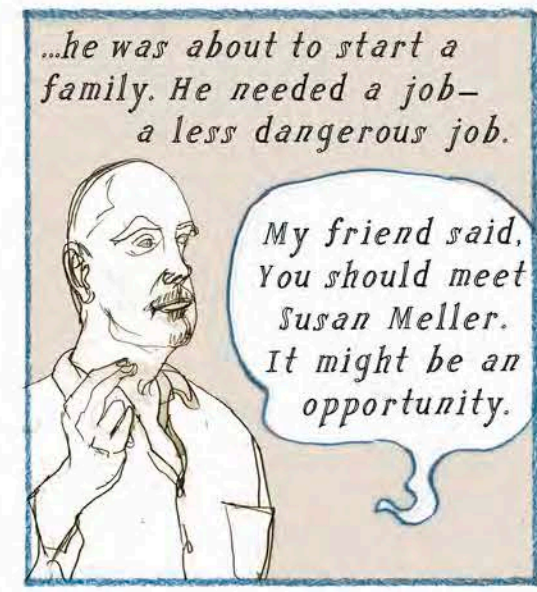
A jewel of a pot was sitting there with this delicate, refined design. It was as if it had come from outer space.



The pattern imprinted on his retina...and changed the trajectory of his life. He co-founded a gallery...
...then became a dealer of exclusively Amazonian art.



I sold art out of my apartment in Manhattan. Every time I had any money, I'd go back down and buy more art. So I ended up with no real estate, no savings, just a lot of spectacular art.
Seventeen years later...



...he was about to start a family. He needed a job—a less dangerous job.
My friend said, You should meet Susan Meller. It might be an opportunity.



The Mellers had turned their large textile collection into the Design Library. They licensed textile designs to fashion houses and home goods companies to use on a dress or a couch or wallpaper. Essentially, the job was selling patterns.



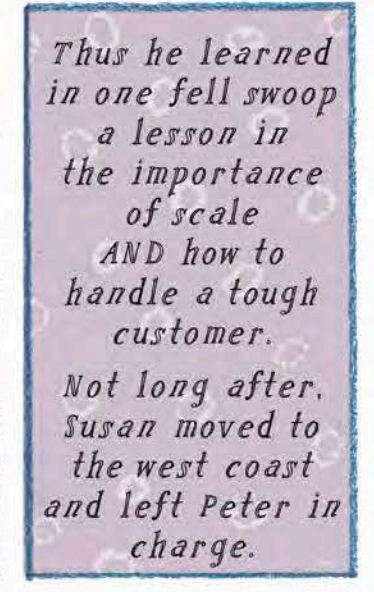
Suddenly Indiana Jones was living in a world of chintz, jacquard, kasuri, devoré, and toile de jouy.



It was not without peril. Early on, an executive from a large lingerie company asked to see the Design Library's most beautiful florals. Peter brought her exactly what she'd asked for.




PETER/ What are you showing me? We're talking bras and panties here.



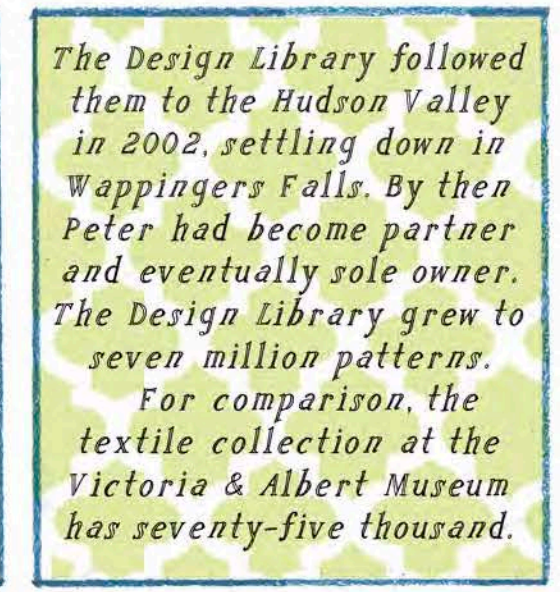
Thus he learned in one fell swoop a lesson in the importance of scale AND how to handle a tough customer. Not long after, Susan moved to the west coast and left Peter in charge.




I was overwhelmed, but I was motivated.



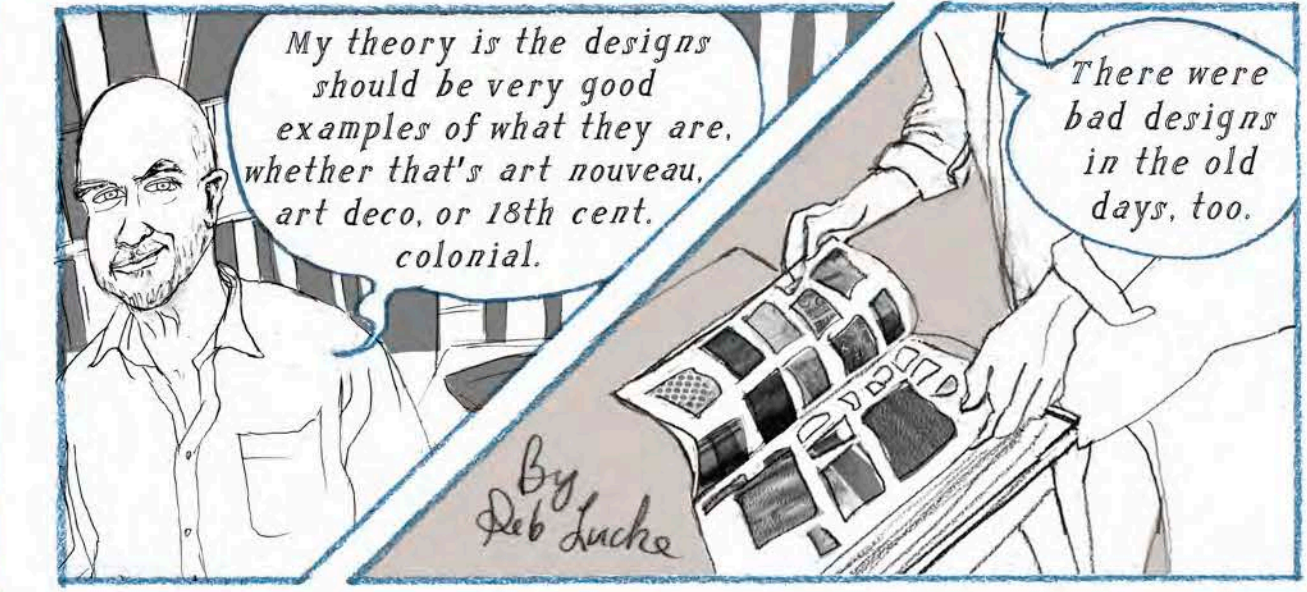
The Koepkes moved to Cold Spring in 1992 and raised their children here.



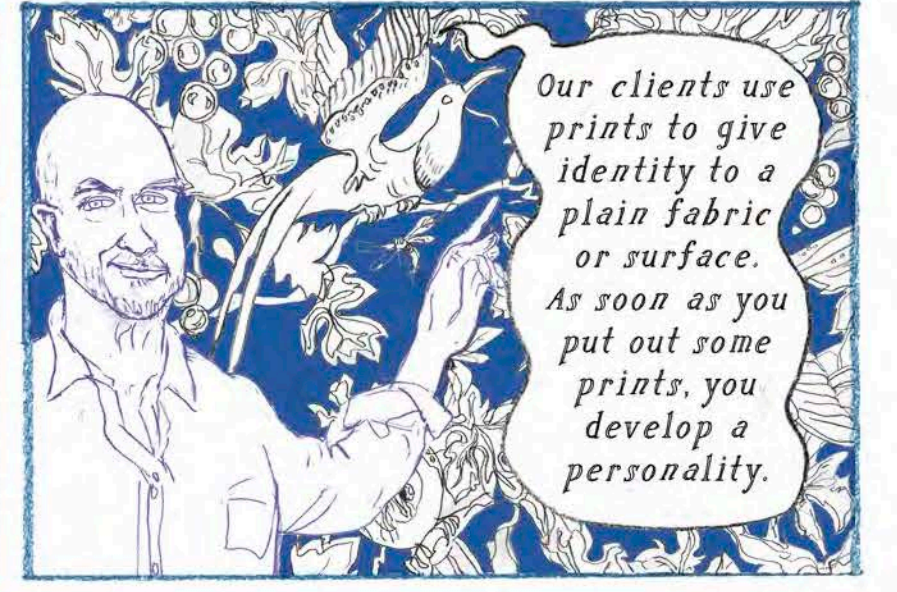
The Design Library followed them to the Hudson Valley in 2002, settling down in Wappingers Falls. By then Peter had become partner and eventually sole owner. The Design Library grew to seven million patterns. For comparison, the textile collection at the Victoria & Albert Museum has seventy-five thousand.



The designs that I seek are unstuck in time and space. They still look current.



My theory is the designs should be very good examples of what they are, whether that's art nouveau, art deco, or 18th cent. colonial.
By Deb Lucke



There were bad designs in the old days, too.
Our clients use prints to give identity to a plain fabric or surface. As soon as you put out some prints, you develop a personality.



The Design Library is business-to-business and by appointment only. Every day, designers from one of the four hundred companies the library works with visit in search of inspiration. Usually, the whole team comes with clear goals and a budget. Judging by the number of patterns licensed, ninety-eight percent find their next big idea.




Typically, a team will license 30-40 designs at \$500-\$550 apiece for a two-year period.



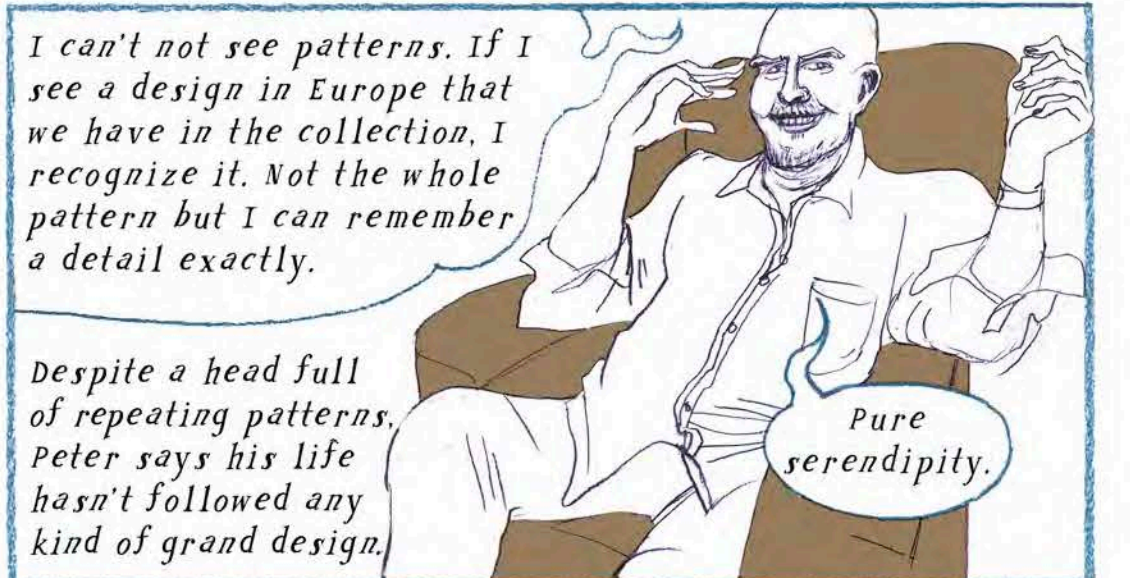
In one of the Design Library's antique sample books, Francisco Costa found the inspiration for Michelle Obama's famous chartreuse coat.



Pottery Barn found a traditional pattern they used in a fresh way.



Nike found a sixties geometric design from Studio Bianchini-Férier they adapted to their own aesthetic.



I can't not see patterns. If I see a design in Europe that we have in the collection, I recognize it. Not the whole pattern but I can remember a detail exactly.
Despite a head full of repeating patterns, Peter says his life hasn't followed any kind of grand design.
Pure serendipity.