

electra eggleston

William Eggleston was a famous photographer since his daughter Andra was born, but a little more than two years ago, during a visit with her dad at his midtown Memphis apartment, she discovered something new about him. She began to look through drawings and doodles the photographer had been making throughout his career. She went through scraps of paper tucked away in notebooks, address books with doodles in the margins — anything she could find with something interesting in it. His drawings, while much lesser known than his photographs and generally made with a Sharpie, watercolors or oil pastels, were profoundly beautiful in ways Andra had not expected: “I was trying to find him in something other than a photograph,” she explains. “I told my husband, ‘I’m going to go see my dad once a month. Is that cool?’”

Growing up with a famous — and famously eccentric — father was a catalyst for Andra’s own creative undertakings, and emboldened her to take risks in her own career. The Memphis-born, Nashville-

based designer and former actress studied textiles at the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising in L.A., and saw promise in designing prints based on her father’s abstract, colorful drawings.

When she found something she liked, she played with the scale of the drawings and experimented with different colorways until she found a combination that was just right. Under the kind of close examination required to deconstruct and arrange the drawings in that fashion, Andra was surprised to discover all sorts of similarities between her father’s photographs and the drawings he was creating at the same time. He never intended for these drawings to be seen by anyone other than himself, so finding works with a location or even a date marked on it was extremely difficult. Andra eventually found a drawing that her father made with the word “Havana” scrawled on its back, and when she compared it to photographs she found in his archives from a recent visit to Havana, she saw that he shot photos with similar lines and color patterns on the same trip. It was like finding the

Rosetta Stone. At that point, Andra says, she called her husband again. “I’m going every week!” she told him.

Two years later, Andra and her partner Anja Lademann debuted the inaugural collection of electra eggleston — 15 prints based on five of William’s original drawings. Andra chose the tongue-in-cheek business name based on a story her mother told her about her birth. When she was born, William said he wanted to name her Electra, but Andra’s mother refused. The line of textiles, Andra says, is like a rebirth, and it definitely connected the father and daughter in ways Andra had not expected. The two bonded over the collaboration as if Andra had learned to speak in her father’s language.

The prints are digitally printed in North Carolina using nonsynthetic materials such as cotton and Belgian linen. In a print design titled Berlin, a primary-colored graffiti-inspired pattern looks like a tamed Vasily Kandinsky’s *Composition VII (1913)*. Used to upholster a modernist chair at Wilder, a boutique in

Nashville’s Germantown neighborhood, the print is as bold and colorful as a tightly arranged Josef Frank design, but its Southern roots — not to mention William Eggleston’s storied career as the father of contemporary color photography — make it even more of a hit. The same print also comes in three monochromatic colorways — one in deep indigos, one in hues of pink, one in muted violets.

They are the kinds of textiles that beg to be lived in. “I like to use things,” Andra says. That is something she and her father have in common — if someone handed him an original drawing by Picasso, Andra says she could imagine him taping it on the wall so he could see it all the time, or using a piece of chewing gum to make sure it stayed put. electra eggleston is a luxury textile line, to be sure, but it is also, by its very nature, a functional kind of art. And perhaps its greatest function was the relationship between William and Andra Eggleston — something it intensified from the very start.



electra eggleston Berlin Mitte Upholstered Chairs. Photo by Mackenzie Maroney for Wilder.



Josh Elrod, Andra Eggleston, and Ivy Elrod at WILDER, 2015. Photo by Mackenzie Maroney for Wilder.