

# Vera: The Art and Life of an Icon

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Legendary designer and artist Vera Neumann (1907-1993) believed in art's ability to inspire and enrich lives. An innovator and one of the most successful female entrepreneurs of her time, Vera built her company on a radical philosophy: fine art should be accessible to everyone, not just a select few. Known for her iconic images of cheerful flowers, trendy geometrics, and vibrant ladybugs, she believed people should surround themselves with beauty.

For the first time, *Vera: The Art and Life of an Icon*, tells her inspiring story through the art and designs she created. In this volume, richly illustrated with Vera's original sketches, paintings, and photographs of her worldwide travels, readers are introduced to the amazing woman behind the dynamic designs that continue to inspire and influence art, design, and fashion.

Susan Seid is the owner of The Vera Company, based in Atlanta, Georgia. She graduated from the Fashion Institute of Technology and has held various executive positions in the retail and direct marketing industries.

Jen Renzi has written for publications including the New York Times Magazine, Wallpaper, and Condé Nast Traveler. Previously a senior editor at House & Garden and Interior Design magazines, she is also the author of *The Art of Tile*.

Seid, owner of the Vera Company, and Renzi, a former senior editor at Interior Design, attempt to create a thorough portrait of Vera Neumann's (1907-1993) personal and professional life as one of the most influential designers and entrepreneurs of the late 20th century. Readers looking for a serious art historical perspective will wince at the colorful prints and forced attempt at contextualizing their significance, but Neumann herself conceived of her work as a commercial endeavor above all. Famous for scarves and sportswear that became a multimillion-dollar franchise in the '60s, Neumann was always keen on cross-marketing her brand identity to include a range of household products (carried by chic Anthropologie as well as department stores). However, at the core of Neumann's marketing strategy was translating trends in contemporary art to the mass

market and introducing her own interpretations of exotic locales such as India and Africa. She was one of the first designers to create a successful lifestyle brand, bridging gaps between fashion, interior design, and celebrity culture. Although the book offers a light and visually appealing read, Neumann's work is probably best appreciated on table linens rather than the printed page.

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