

Be Fashion Forward, Not Fashion Forged

By Henry North

Love that new design you just bought from the Marimekko vendor on the corner? Are you sure it was really a Marimekko original?

Marimekko is one of the most well-known names in the pattern and textile industries worldwide, and this is in part thanks to the brilliant works done by Maija Isola, a Finnish designer who worked for Marimekko for over forty years of her lifetime. Isola designed an astounding 500 works of textile art for the company, yet only a couple of her designs are iconic enough that anyone can identify them as an Isola print. Some people have taken advantage of this fact and have begun creating a string of illegal forgeries of Isola's lesser known designs.



There have been numerous reports of consumers purchasing costly imitations of Isola designs and only discovering that they have been duped a couple of days later when the fabric has begun to unravel and show signs of poor craftsmanship. This has made it more difficult to obtain actual products with Isola's designs from Marimekko, unless you are absolutely sure that you are purchasing from their website. Even shopping at their stores outside Helsinki, Finland is problematic because the forgeries have managed to slip into the supply line at these locations.

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After a bit of research, here are a few tips that we suggest you follow in order to ensure you are getting the quality textiles you deserve:



Check the Name

On the selvedge of the fabric where the manufacturing information is printed, some of the fakes have the moniker of “Mayo Eeslah” as the designer instead of Maija Isola. Even though this should be an obvious tell of whether you can trust you are getting the real deal or not, some people have still fallen for it.



Know Your Fabrics

Marimekko fabrics are 100% cotton. While this may be a more difficult characteristic for some to analyze, the current forgeries have been known to be made using a cheap polyester blend.



Take Measurements

All Marimekko fabrics are sold by the yard or the repeat at a width ranging from 54 to 56” wide. For the time being, try to avoid purchasing anything that is thinner or wider than this.



Avoid Buying “Secondhand”

All current records of official Marimekko-related businesses do not include street vendors or any other type of individual sellers, so be very wary of anyone who claims to have Isola prints for purchase. Also be careful buying things you find at thrift stores and from yard sales, because someone may be trying to pawn off a known fake. This is also a message to secondhand store owners to be careful what you let into your inventory.

Please be on the lookout and report it if you see any suspicious sales activity going on in your community. Officials are hard at work trying to crack down on this crime spree and apprehend all of those who are involved.