

MATERIAL : TEXTILE

MESSUMS WILTSHIRE

Cover:
At Sea, 2012
Synthetic hair extensions
(on two panels)
152 x 244cm
Photo: Michal Jurewicz

Inside cover:
Henrik Vibskov
Onion Farm, 2018
Installation with metal pipes,
synthetic socks, plastic brushes
and LED strips
Photo: Andy Stagg

Material : Textile



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CREATIVITY, HISTORY AND PROCESS

9 March - 28 April 2019

Messums Wiltshire, Barn and Long Gallery

Curated by Catherine Milner and Hannah Hooks

Preview: Friday 8 March 2019

Common Threads, 26 - 28 April 2019

Full details on page 78

Messums Wiltshire, Place Farm, Court Street, Tisbury, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP3 6LW

www.messumswiltshire.com

Common Threads

Textiles embody all the dimensions of art; colour, innovation and talent and although the common perception of them is as furnishings for the human body or home, this exhibition seeks to highlight how a new generation of transgressive artists are using them as a radical means of expression.

Tapestry is a particular area of focus, standing as it does as the material of popes and princes and one of the earliest and most widely accessible ways of story-telling. Raphael's enormous tapestries lining the walls of the Sistine Chapel are amongst the greatest treasures of Renaissance art just as the tapestries Louis XIV commissioned for Versailles are one of the most glorious achievements of French culture. Jacobean houses were thronged with tapestries, not only because they insulated drafty hallways but because, depending on how they were hung and how they were viewed, their perspective and colours changed as you moved about a room.

Now, a new band of artists including Goshka Macuga, Laure Prouvost and the late Francesca Lowe have discovered the power of this historic form of image-making to tell new stories. Made by hand from wool and other materials, their cosiness is part of their powerfulness - familiar and almost homely in substance they are contrastingly full of grandeur in scale and concept. These artists have given this antique art form a further twist by working in idioms which are utterly contemporary, referencing 21st century technology, cinemas, cameras and eco-politics. Macuga's work, which is made to be seen through 3-D spectacles, features a hunt in the forest by night – alluding perhaps to the Unicorn tapestries or Uccello's painting of that name. However, their cast of characters - an eerie collection of people dressed as animals seen against a backdrop of a tower of Babel - seem to be a thinly veiled allusion to the new 'beasts' ransacking the forest; us. Similarly, Laure Prouvost's *You Could Hear This Image* that looks like a 1950s snapshot of a jazz musician on a Los Angeles freeway, transforms tapestry into a giant nostalgia-laden, faded photograph in the same way that Francesca Lowe's 2008 tapestry *Trump* references the darkness of Old Master paintings seen through the prism of an H-bomb.

Wool, in less tightly worsted form, appears in a series of woolly jumpers by Freddie Robins that play on the idea of the countryside being an idyll of roaring fires and garden fetes. Called *Someone else's dream* Robins has subverted the twee images she found on a series of 1970s and 1980s pullovers sourced from charity shops to recount the darker aspects of country life. Thus instead of roses around the door of a thatched cottage it is depicted going up in flames; in another scene, a red Toytown car has veered off its grey dotted road and pranged into a tree. Des Hughes is also worthy of mention for his updating of the cross-stitch sampler. His immaculately embroidered rendering of a pair of Calvin Klein underpants or Adidas tennis socks wryly honours the much-loved past time of bored Victorian ladies.

Throughout many periods in history and in many cultures, cloth and clothing has been seen as the pre-eminent art form, particularly amongst nomadic tribes. The 19th century tiger saddlecloth from Tibet in our exhibition that comes from the collection of the late Oliver Hoare, is a portable gem designed to distinguish the man who sat on it as much as his horse underneath. Equally, the pre-Columbian, Inca and Wari tunics, dating from 800-1600 AD whose geometric designs, rich in tone as well as substance, inspired Bauhaus artists like Josef Albers, Paul Klee and a host of abstract expressionist painters in New York in the 1950s. These were worn by their makers for spiritual protection as much as for adornment; the essence of the cloth lay inside it rather than on its surface. Even today, an Indian woman leaves a flaw in the weaving of a blanket to let the soul out.

The artist John Piper is one of many in this show, who, in the 1950s took to designing cloth not only as a fresh artistic challenge but a way of democratising their art. Piper was particularly fond of tapestry, designing a number of impressive works, including most notably one for Chichester Cathedral's High Altar.

'We look at life from the back side of the tapestry' he once said. 'And most of the time, what we see is loose threads, tangled knots and the like. But occasionally, God's light shines through the tapestry and we get a glimpse of the larger design with God weaving together the darks and lights of existence'.

If not an insight into the darks and lights of existence, we hope that this exhibition does at least draw together some of our common threads.

By Catherine Milner
Curatorial Director, Messums Wiltshire

Woven Histories

Textiles Ancient and Modern

In 1965, Anni Albers’ book, *On Weaving*, was finally published. A magisterial volume, long in the writing, it was dedicated not to its author’s tutors at the Bauhaus, where she had learned to weave in the 1920s, but to masters dead two thousand years before. *On Weaving*, Albers noted on the book’s title page, was for “for my great teachers, the weavers of ancient Peru”.¹

Fleeing Nazi Germany for the United States in 1933, Albers and her husband, Josef, had made their first visit to Latin America two years later. A dozen more trips would follow in the next thirty years – first to Cuba, then Mexico, then to Chile and Peru. What the Albers found there was not just history but modernity. In the anonymity of Pre-Columbian art, in its ceaseless iterations of forms, they saw the dreams of the Bauhaus brought preemptively to life. “Mexico is truly the promised land of abstract art,” they enthused in a letter to their friend, Wassily Kandinsky, himself an exile in Paris. “For here it is already 1000s of years old. And still very much alive.”²

Anni Albers was not the first modernist to sense contemporaneity in so-called primitive textiles, nor to see their potential as works of art. In 1884, Vincent van Gogh had spent six months feverishly sketching the weavers of Nuenen – men who wove flax on cottage looms, as their forefathers had done for centuries. In part, Van Gogh’s fascination was with the shapes the men made while working, their spider-like postures. But he was also struck by the alchemy of the loom: the way “a shade of grey is woven from red, blue, yellow, off white and black threads, all in a jumble”; how the “effet produit of the pattern becomes harmonious at a distance”.³ This magic he compared to “blending the strokes of a brush”.⁴ In a self portrait made a few months later, his own brushwork appears newly woven, its colours built up of threaded dabs of contrasting hues; a mark-making that would come to define Van Gogh’s late, great style.

For Anni Albers, as for Van Gogh, there was no distinction between ancient and modern, weaving and print-making, craft and art. Her designs for Knoll furnishing fabrics were no different in making or status from the works she called her “pictorial weavings”, which, as she said, “headed towards” paintings. The sole variance lay in their use. A piece like *Red Meander*, in this show, wasn’t a pastiche of Pre-Columbian textile art, it was Pre-Columbian textile art. Utilitarian to her fingertips, Albers gathered ancient fabric samples and tweezered them apart, the better to weave as ancient Peruvians had woven.

For Louise Bourgeois, old cloth had a more personal resonance. The daughter of a tapestry restorer, Bourgeois unpicked her own history through the history of her fabrics. Her only rug (or rug project), *Has the Day Invaded the Night?* (2009), was made in Morocco by traditional Berber weavers – the kind of piece the artist might have helped her father repair as a child in Paris. “As a young girl, I would draw in the missing parts of the tapestry that needed to be re-woven,” Bourgeois recalled, alive to her own symbolism.⁵ Using history as warp and weft, the rug’s titular legend, spelled out in graphic black on off-white, made its first appearance as an entry in Bourgeois’ diary in 1995. Changing medium and year, it next appeared in 1999 as a lithograph.

For Henry Moore, too, textiles were a place of reinvention. In 1948, he won the International Sculpture Prize at the Venice Biennale, his work shown in the British Pavilion alongside that of JMW Turner. Back at home, his newly-finished stone sculpture, *Three Standing Figures*, was erected in Battersea Park. In the midst of all this, Moore found time to make *Two Standing Figures* – not in stone this time, but as a five-colour silk screen on Irish linen. As a print, the scale was monumental – sculptural, perhaps: the two titular cloth figures were each two metres tall, the same height as the three Battersea stone figures. In *Two Standing Figures*, you can see Moore mining his own history as a maker, thinking in linen in a way that he couldn’t in stone or bronze: modelling in colour, playing with illusory depth. It is a sculpture that happens to be flat, importantly like, and just as importantly unlike, his three-dimensional work. “If it were just ... a colour reproduction I wouldn’t be interested,” Moore wrote. “It is because of the translation from one medium to another ... that you get a surprise.”

In our own postmodern day, history itself has changed. No longer linear and Hegelian, it is now a mash-up of time and culture. And yet it remains a point of reference for textile artists; a subject and a material. If Albers found her art in Andean tradition and Bourgeois in her own knotted psyche, Alan Belcher finds his in an eternal present. Belcher’s *Dog Chew Rag* simultaneously mines Native American tribal patterns and mass-produced Chinese consumer goods; it was designed on a computer in Canada and woven by artisans in Nepal. Not for nothing is *Dog Chew Rag* circular. This is history woven as Ouroboros, eating its own tail. For Christian Newby, meanwhile, the past is typological. Industrial carpet guns make industrial carpets: they are not instruments for drawing with. In Newby’s hands, though, they become so. His *Glassy-EyedCult/Escorial/JulioFlores/TheSpinners* breaks all the rules by being drawn in carpet-tufting and hung from the ceiling; by being both a work of art and a room-divider. In her 1949 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York – the first ever at MoMA of the work of a textile artist – Anni Albers hung her pictorial weavings from room dividers which she herself had woven. It is a strange echo. History repeats itself, said Conrad, but the special call of an art which has passed away is never reproduced.⁶ Was he right?

By Charles Darwent
Charles Darwent’s *Josef Albers: Life and Work* is published by Thames & Hudson

1 Anni Albers, *On Weaving*, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown CT (1965).

2 Letter, Anni and Josef Albers to Wassily Kandinsky, 22 August 1936; archives, Musée national d’art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

3 Letter, Vincent van Gogh to Theo van Gogh, 30 April 1885; in *The Complete Letters of Vincent van Gogh*, Thames & Hudson, London (1999).

4 Vincent van Gogh, *ibid*.

5 Adrian Searle, ‘*Louise Bourgeois: a web of emotions*’, Guardian, 1 June 2010.

6 Joseph Conrad, *The Mirror of the Sea* (1906).

Pre-Columbian Andean Textiles Wari and Inca Periods

Predating other medium such as ceramic, painting and architecture, textile arts in the South American Pre-Columbian period are widely regarded as the key to unlocking the ancient cultures of the Andes. Among many civilisations, the Wari (500 – 1000 AD) and the Inca (circa 1000 - 1400 AD) are considered the two most developed empires, in which a highly organised social structure enabled a full elaboration of the Andeans' textile refinement - one that blends together technical virtuosity and cosmological belief. A series of Wari and Inca textiles and feather headdresses from Paul Hughes Fine Arts featured in the exhibition are among the finest examples found from these periods. The Andeans' renderings of geometry and colour have greatly influenced artists such as Anni Albers whose work is included in the show.



This wall hanging showcases one of the most sophisticated techniques in the Andeans' ancient weaving: "Scaffold weave is one of the most unusual weaving techniques in the world and existed only in the Andean region of South America. The complexity of the woven textiles in this ancient world is still fascinating scholars, weavers and textile lovers today. Current day weavers in the Peruvian Highlands, particularly Pitumarca, still practice this ancient art." Paul Hughes

Many related examples of scaffold weave are held in the personal collection of Anni and Josef Albers, for whom they provided a lifetime of inspiration. The beauty of these tapestries' minimal aesthetics resonates with numerous modern attempts in abstract arts, from Anni Albers' 'Wall hanging series' (1930s)' to the American Abstract Expressionist Newman's 'Adam' (1951-52).

Feathers were a rare and valued commodity imported from the Amazonian basin and the journey taken to collect the bundles – that had been gathered by forest tribes - was not only arduous but fraught with danger. As such, feather pieces like those from the Nazca and Wari civilisations of ancient Peru, were worn as symbols of status and power, reserved for dignitaries, priests and warlords.

"From an aesthetic point of view, Andean feather works speak more eloquently for themselves than a thousand words. It should, however, be pointed out that their sacredness was not a function of their rarity but rather, by association with the Celestial messenger, the Condor - Eagle, the wearer shared the supernatural powers of this divine intercessor, guide of the souls to the mystical realm of light." Paul Hughes

Tunic Panel (with Stepped Motif)
Huari Culture
circa 800 AD
206 x 58cm

Image courtesy of Paul Hughes Fine Arts



Feather Headdress /Fan, Nazca,
circa 400AD
35 x 32 cm

Image courtesy of Paul Hughes Fine Arts



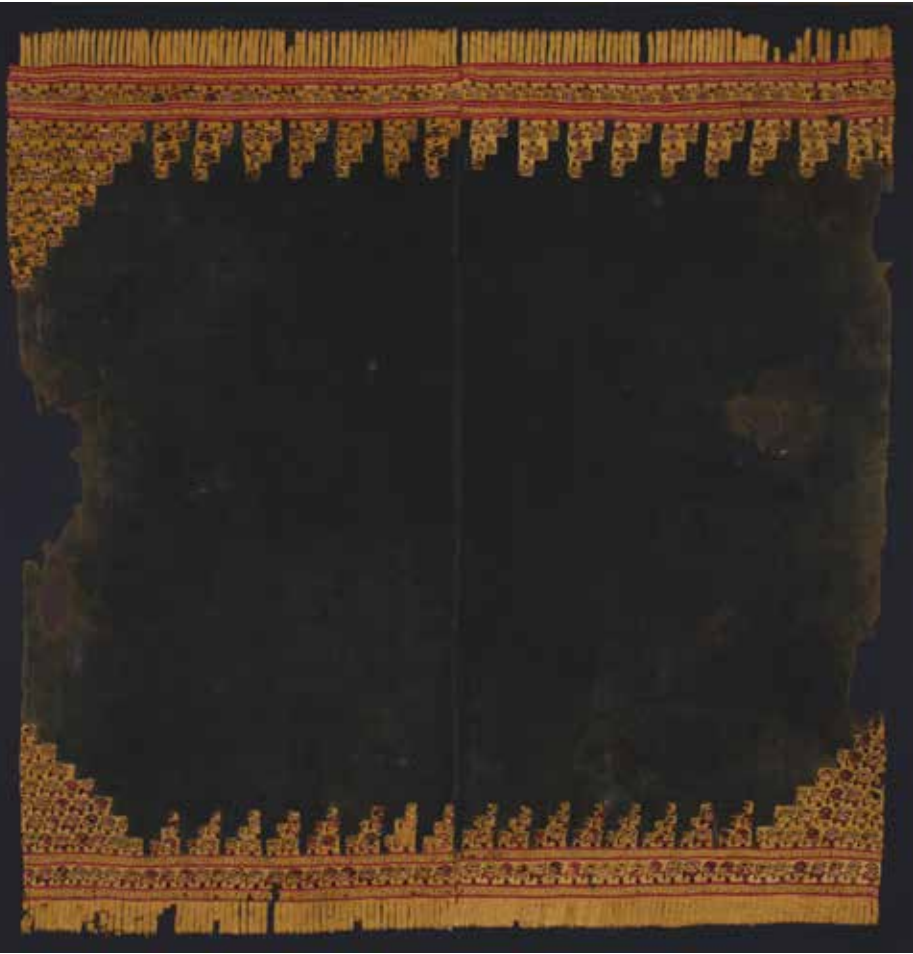
Inca Tunic (in Striped and Geometric Form)
circa 1400 AD
141 x 140cm

Image courtesy of Paul Hughes Fine Arts

The Incan aesthetic is as much about the skills employed in the making as it is about the finished article. Their finely worked and highly decorative textiles came to symbolise both wealth and status, and as fine cloth was used as both a tax and currency, the very best textiles were amongst the most prized of all possessions – more precious, even, than silver or gold.

"Inca weavers were technically the most accomplished the Americas had ever seen and, with up to 120 wefts per centimeter, the best fabrics were considered the most precious gifts of all. As a result, when the Spanish arrived in the early 16th century, it was textiles and not metal goods, which were given in welcoming these visitors from another world." Paul Hughes

Pre-Columbian Andean Textiles Wari and Inca Periods



*Inca Tunic (with Golden Border), Inca Culture,
circa 1400 AD,
126 x 132cm*

Image courtesy of Paul Hughes Fine Arts

This playfully designed tapestry has an edge made of numerous animatic birds. The bird motif, one that is commonly seen in cultures such as Chimu and Chancay, has been integrated into the symbolism of Inca. Birds were believed to be descendants of the common ancestors of the Andeans, thus tapestries like this symbolised both the power of flight possessed by birds and the noble lineage of Andean rulers. That said, the motif here is expressed in a more structured and repetitive manner, revealing the Inca's predilection to a more geometric and straightforward design.

Compared to their ancestors, Incan artists favoured superbly woven tapestries and textiles embellished with appliqué feathers, gold and metal. The central iconography of feather motifs is meticulously rendered in this piece. Its layout, namely the 'Tocapu' (a row of small squares or rectangles), reveals The Inca's predilection for order and reason.



*Tunic Panel, Inca Culture
circa 1400 AD
144 x 72cm*

Image courtesy of Paul Hughes Fine Arts

19th Century Tibetan



*Tibetan Saddle Rug, circa1880
105 x 80cm*

Image courtesy of Oliver Hoare Ltd

The words of William Blake..."Tyger Tyger burning bright in the forests of the night"... come to mind with this exceptional and rare Tibetan saddle rug. In other examples of saddle rugs from this region none have such depth of indigo or dynamic flow of the tiger winding through the bamboo. A long journey from Tibet to Kathmandu in the late 1970s brought this rug to the eye of the legendary John Kasmin who was visiting Nepal and found this in the house of a dealer. Through Kasmin it reached the hands of the late Oliver Hoare and was part of his personal collection for many years. Only recently has this rug been released to the wider world, once more this tiger roams.

Most saddle rugs of this region are marked by the four cuts to allow the saddle harness straps through. This unusually does not and suggests that this possession was highly prized by its owner and kept as too fine to use under a saddle. The piece dates from the late nineteenth century as the orange dye of the tiger's fur was not used until after the late 1800s.

Anni Albers

Anni Albers (1899 - 1994) is considered to be the most influential textile artist of the twentieth century, as well as being a designer, printmaker and educator. Born in Berlin, she studied painting under German Impressionist Martin Brandenburg and after attending the Kunstgewerbeschule in Hamburg for two months in 1920, she enrolled at the Bauhaus in 1922 where she was famously assigned to the Weaving Workshop. Albers made textiles her key form of expression, approaching the discipline with relentless experimentation. She inspired and was inspired by her artist contemporaries, among them her teacher, Paul Klee, and her husband, Josef Albers. During her time at Black Mountain College, California – where she and Josef founded the art department - she began to collect Pre-Columbian art and textiles, a source of inspiration that would inform her work from that point onwards.

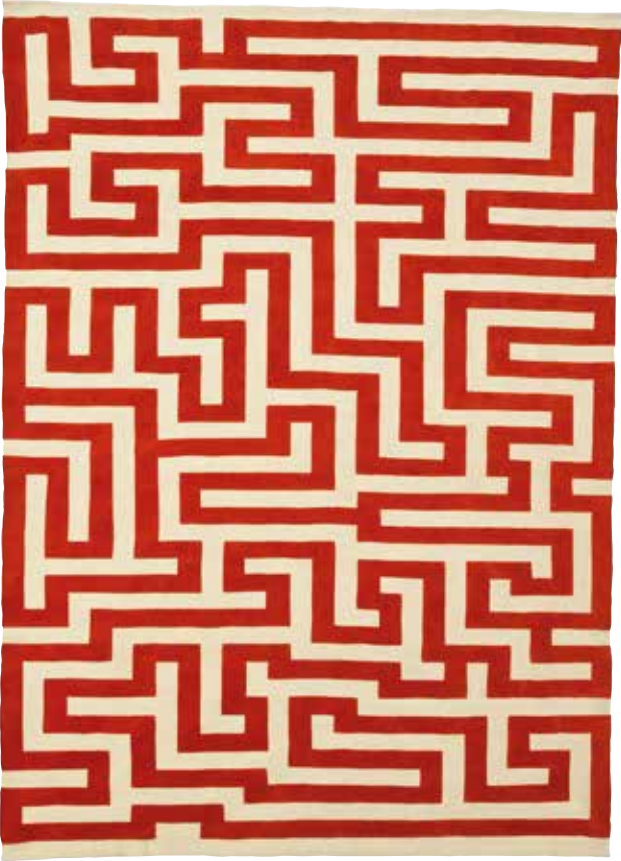
In 1949, she became the first designer to have a one-person show at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, a show that later toured to 26 venues and her seminal book *On Weaving*, published in 1965, helped to establish design studies as an area of academic and aesthetic enquiry.

DRXVII

Produced in association with the Josef and Anni Albers foundation in Connecticut, DRXVII rug is taken from a series of designs that Albers produced in the 1960s and illustrates a recurring theme of linked triangles, some inverted to make asymmetrical patterns.

RED MEANDER

Produced in association with the Josef and Anni Albers foundation in Connecticut, Red Meadner is based on the much celebrated Linen and Cotton weaving that Albers produced in 1954 and shows echoes of her deep fascination with tribal and pre-Colombian weaving from Central and South America.

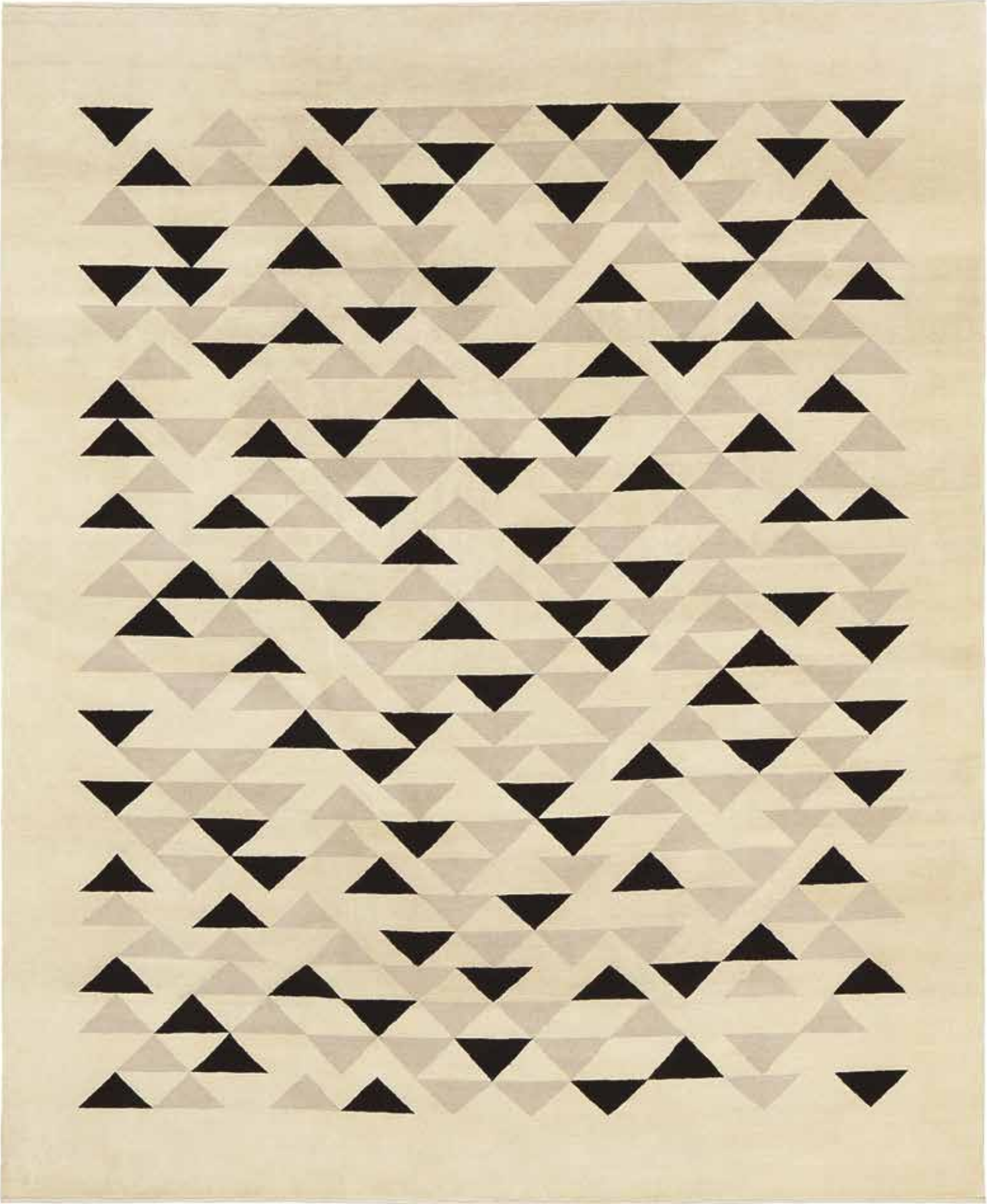


Red Meander, 2015
Aubusson weave with hand
knotted pile British Wool rug
213 × 305cm
Edition of 10

Image courtesy of Christopher Farr

DRXVII, 2015
Hand knotted, hand spun British
Wool rug,
244 × 335cm
Edition of 10

Image courtesy of Christopher Farr



Louise Bourgeois

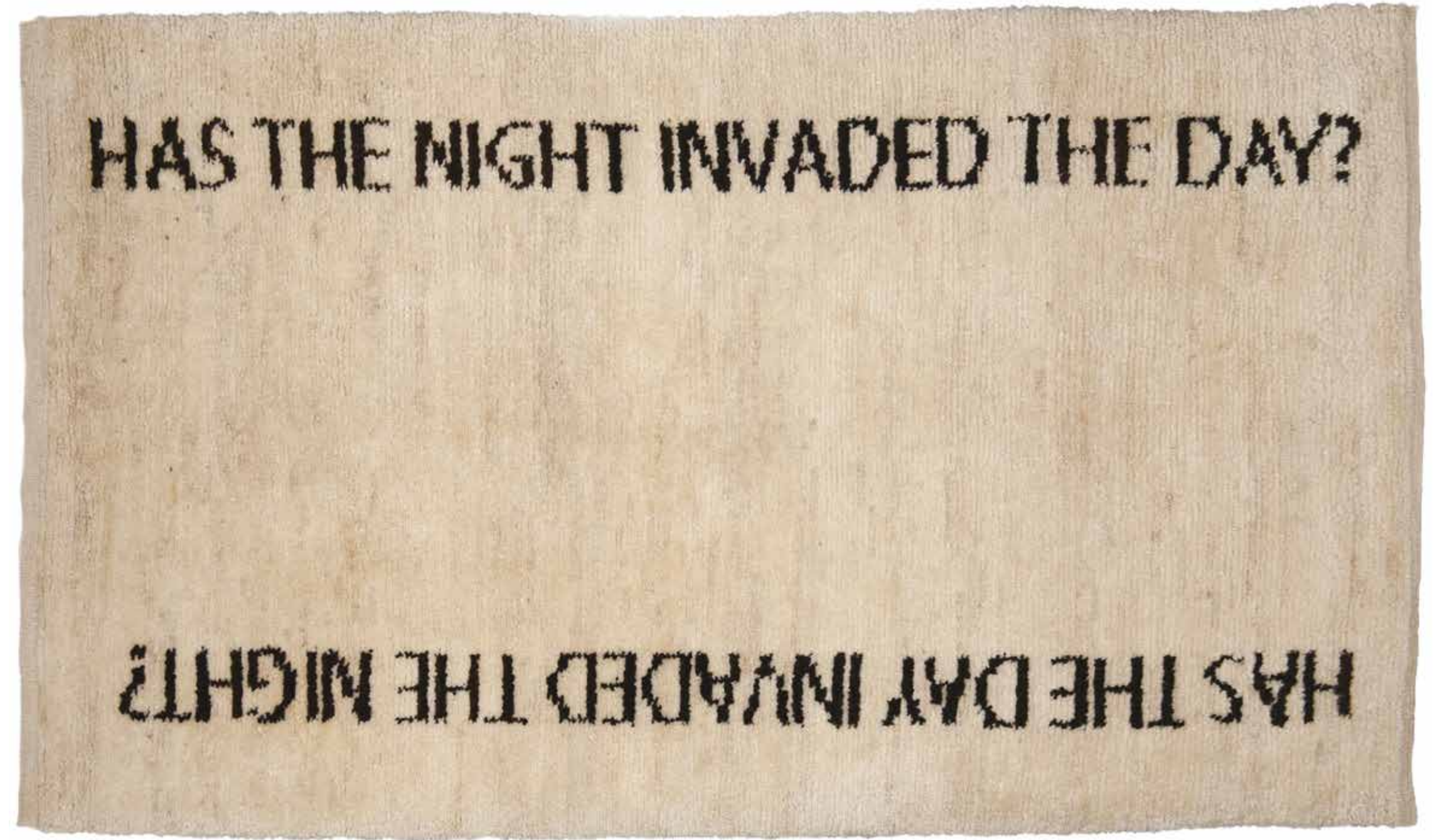
Louise Bourgeois (1911 – 2010) was a French-American artist, best known for her large-scale sculpture and installation. As a young woman Bourgeois assisted with her parents' tapestry-restoration business in Paris, making drawings to indicate to the weavers where repairs were to be made. Initially taking up the study of mathematics in 1932, she later abandoned it to study art.

Throughout her long career Bourgeois explored a variety of themes including domesticity, family, sexuality and the body, as well as death and the subconscious.

Her first retrospective was organised by the Museum of Modern Art, New York (1982–83) and her first European retrospective by the Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt, Germany (1989–91). Bourgeois was selected to be the American representative to the 1993 Venice Biennale and her work is in numerous public and private collections throughout the world.

HAS THE DAY INVADED THE NIGHT?

The inspiration for Louise Bourgeois' first and only rug was a diary entry dated February 7, 1995, when the artist wrote the phrase 'Has the day invaded the night? Has the night invaded the day?' in a loose script. For the project, Bourgeois wanted dark text embedded in a field of off-white natural wool fibers, hand-woven in Morocco's Atlas Mountains—a nod to the traditional Berber art from the Beni Ourain tribe.



*HAS THE DAY INVADED
THE NIGHT?, 2015
Hand Woven in the style of
Beni Ourain Berber Carpets
180 × 299cm
Edition of 12*

Image courtesy of Christopher Farr

Henry Moore

Henry Moore (1898 - 1986), born in Yorkshire and educated at Leeds School of Art and The Royal College of Art in London, is one of Britain's most celebrated sculptors and painters. In 1924 Moore was appointed a sculpture instructor at The Royal College. His first one-man exhibition opened at the Warren Gallery in 1928. In the 1930s there were three more one-man shows, all at the Leicester Galleries, London. As an Official War Artist, he produced a series of the London Underground in the 1941 Blitz which resonated with Zika Ascher and led to a major textile collaboration.

In 1946 he held his first major foreign retrospective exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in New York. His sculpture was prominent at the 1951 Festival of Britain and the Venice Biennale in 1952 and he received many important commissions in the late 50s and early 60s including sculpture for the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. The 1972 Florence Retrospective exhibition was the climax of his career with 289 works included and his legacy was insured with generous gifts to the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1974 and The Tate Gallery in 1978. Other gifts have included drawings to The British Museum, The Victoria and Albert Museum and The British Council in London. He designed textiles for Ascher Ltd, David Whitehead and worked on the vast West Deane Tapestries in the late 70s and early 80s.

TWO STANDING FIGURES

Commissioned by Ascher Ltd and first shown alongside Matisse's Océanie – Le Ciel & La Mer (also commissioned by Ascher) at the LeFevre Gallery in 1949, this monumental work by Henry Moore was originally produced at the height of the Second World War. The production of such large screen prints was an extremely time consuming and skilled process as separate colours and blocks were applied to the fabric and Ascher welcomed Moore to witness the entire production process. Ascher was determined to experiment with a return to the modern equivalent of medieval tapestries for the domestic interior by commissioning large wall panels from such well known artists and the task was a major test for his team; never before had they attempted to produce on such an epic scale. Moore would have to wait another 20 years for the West Deane Tapestries to see his work on such a vast scale but he never tired of the excitement of seeing his works translated into textiles:

'If it were just going to be a colour reproduction I wouldn't be interested. It is because of the translation from one medium to another and has to be different that you get a surprise. It is not like a bronze caster who has to produce an absolutely exact copy or it is thrown away... it is different, an interpretation and that to me is the excitement and the pleasure.'

Two Standing Figures, 1948 - 49
Serigraphy in five colours on Irish Linen
256 x 178cm
Edition 15 of 30
Ascher Ltd.

Image courtesy of Gray M.C.A.



William Crozier

Born in Glasgow William Crozier (1930 - 2011) was encouraged to paint at his school Marr College by an inspiring art teacher, well known and respected for his books on colour. Following art school in Glasgow, Crozier headed south and was exhibiting regularly at the ICA, Drian and Arthur Tooth Galleries. By 1964 the Arts Council held a show – 6 Young Painters – which included Peter Blake, David Hockney, Allen Jones, Dorothy Mead, Bridget Riley and a young William Crozier. After time spent living in Dublin where he became a key figure in the developing avant-garde, Crozier returned to England where his work was appreciated and where he embarked on a highly respected teaching career.

Solo exhibitions followed: ‘A passion for nature’ at The Bruton Street Gallery in 1995; a major retrospective in Cork in 2005; and a powerful exhibition at The Flowers Gallery in 2010. His work is held in many major public collections.

EASTER DAY

Originally a painting created specifically for a 1990 show at The Scottish Gallery, ‘Easter Day’ was chosen by William Crozier as an image he wanted to see as a tapestry. Early in 2009, Crozier had been asked by The Directors of Dovecot Studios to propose images for tapestries. So pleased was he with the result that he gave the Studios free hand to release an edition of each image. In ‘Easter Day’ Crozier’s signature bright palette and loose expression of the natural form works powerfully on this considerable scale of tapestry.



Easter Day, 2009
Tapestry woven by
Dovecot Studios
244 x 183cm

Image by courtesy of Dovecot Studios

Kurt Jackson

Kurt Jackson born 1961, Dorset, graduated from St Peter's College, Oxford with a degree in Zoology in 1983. While there, he spent most of his time painting and attending courses at Ruskin College of Art. On gaining his degree he travelled extensively and independently, painting wherever he went. He travelled to the Arctic alone and hitched across Africa with his wife, Caroline.

A dedication to and celebration of the environment is intrinsic to Jackson's art and a holistic involvement with his subjects provides the springboard for his formal innovations. His practice involves both plein air and studio work and embraces an extensive range of materials and techniques including mixed media, large canvases, print-making and sculpture. Over the past thirty years Jackson has exhibited extensively throughout the UK and Ireland and has been artist in residence on the Greenpeace ship 'Esperanza'.

GRANGEMOUTH AT NIGHT, SMOKING

Kurt Jackson's extraordinarily sympathetic paintings of the nature of Scotland, with enormous canvases painted en plein air (often in the rain) pinned down by boulders, form the basis for this rug developed in collaboration with Dovecot Studios.

A great campaigner for sustainable living, Jackson revels in the genuine wildness of the Scottish landscape. By contrast, his power of expression has writ scathingly with this image of the oil refinery and chemical works in Grangemouth on the river Forth. Diabolical flames belch an unnatural yellow smoke into the dark skies. It works ever more powerfully on this enormous rug where the most natural wools have been tufted into this remarkable image.



Grangemouth at night, smoking, 2016
Tapestry woven by Dovecot Studios
185 x 215cm
Edition 4 of 7

Image courtesy of Dovecot Studios

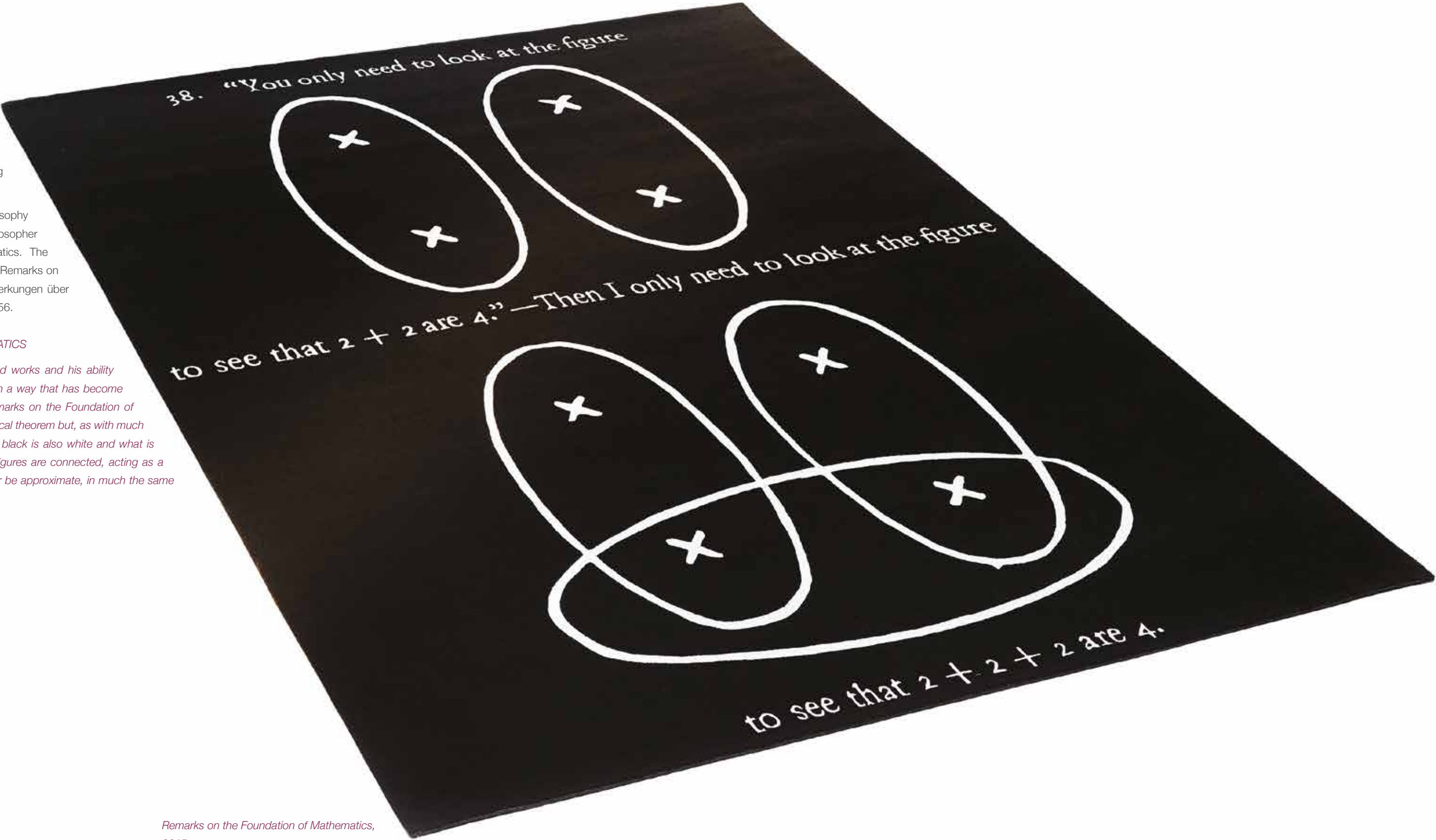
Joseph Kosuth

Born in 1945, Joseph Kosuth is an American artist known as a pioneer of conceptual and installation art, which began to emerge in the mid-1960s. As a conceptual artist, Kosuth strips art of personal emotion, focusing on objects as language and meaning.

Often referencing psychoanalysis and the philosophy of language, Kosuth's carpet refers to the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy of mathematics. The carpet is in fact named after Wittgenstein's book Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics (German: Bemerkungen über die Grundlagen der Mathematik), published in 1956.

REMARKS ON THE FOUNDATION OF MATHEMATICS

Joseph Kosuth is known for his language-based works and his ability to work seamlessly with word, sign and object in a way that has become iconic. His tribute to Ludwig Wittgenstein – Remarks on the Foundation of Mathematics – appears at first to be a mathematical theorem but, as with much of his work, nothing is straight forward: What is black is also white and what is four, could also be six, depending on how the figures are connected, acting as a testament to the notion that figures can only ever be approximate, in much the same way as emotions.



Remarks on the Foundation of Mathematics,
2015
100% Tibetan wool,
hand knotted in Nepal
200 x 300cm
Edition 6 + 3AP

Image courtesy of Equator Production

Emilia & Ilya Kabakov

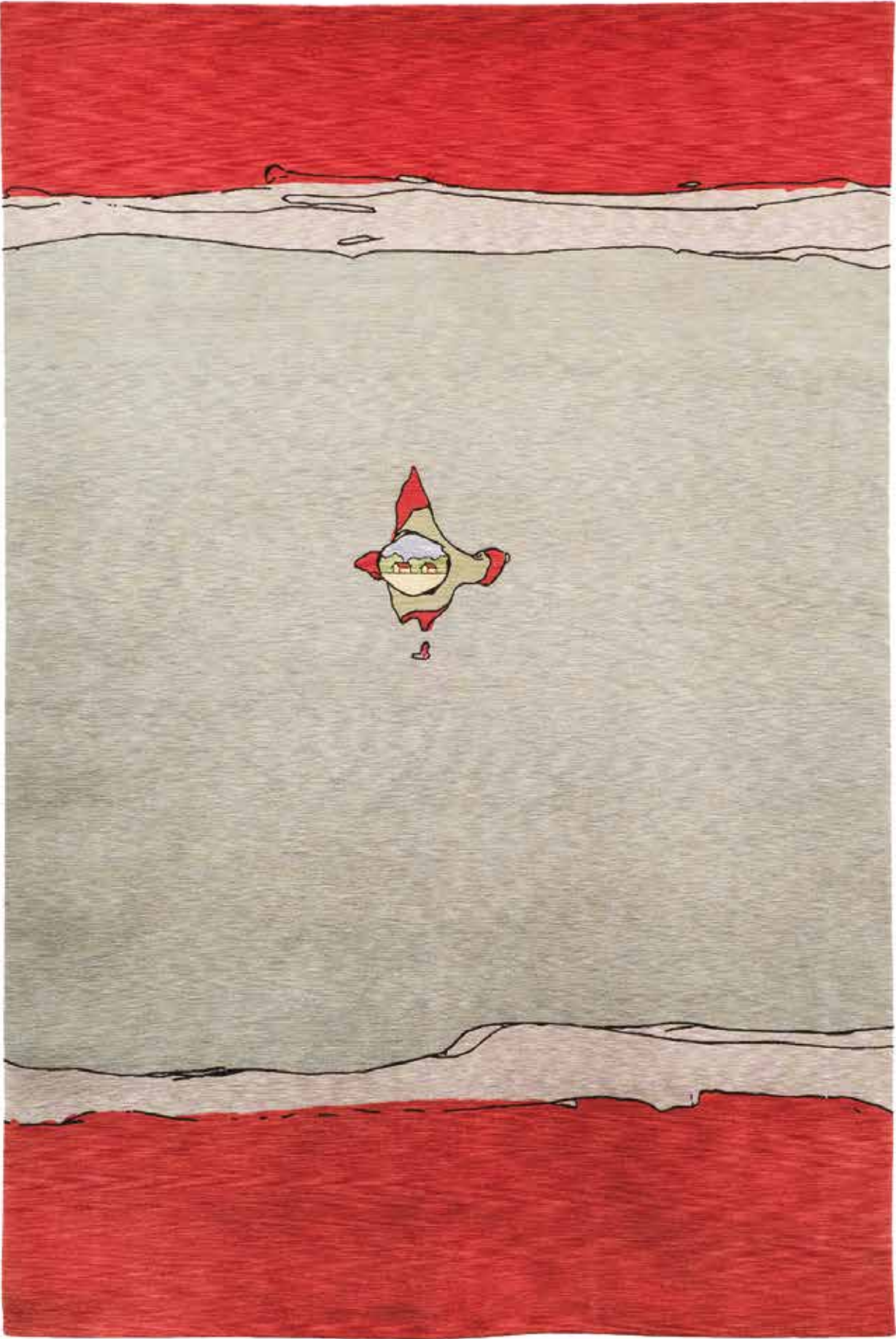
Emilia and Ilya Kabakov are Russian-born, American-based artists that have been collaborating since 1988. Their work fuses the conceptual with the everyday and Ilya is recognised as the most important Russian artist to have emerged in the late 20th century. Growing up in the Soviet Union, their work focuses on Soviet society and culture, highlighting its universal significance. Their work has been shown at the Museum of Modern Art, the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington DC, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, Documenta IX, at the Whitney Biennial in 1997 and the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, to name a few. The Kabakovs have also received a number of honors and awards, including the Oscar Kokoschka Preis, Vienna, in 2002 and the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, Paris, in 1995.

HOLE IN THE WALL

Hole in the Wall (2016) is a carpet taken from a drawing from an album that Ilya Kabakov made between 1968-72. Titled, THE AGONIZING SURIKOV, it was about a character who was trying to see everything that surrounded him but the result was a small scrap, like a keyhole, and everything else was hidden from him by an impenetrable shroud. The shroud never disappeared, no matter how carefully he tried to look through this hole. The piece works as a metaphor for the idea that whenever we are desperately trying to see or understand reality, we are only able to see small parts of it. The whole picture, the complete meaning, will probably never be revealed.

*Hole in the Wall, 2016
100% Tibetan wool,
hand knotted in Nepal
300 x 200cm*

Image courtesy of Equator Production



Alan Belcher

Alan Belcher b.1957 lives and works in Toronto, Canada. His practice spans more than thirty years, and includes a vibrant career as a gallerist, forays into curatorial, editorial, and advertising, a skilled use of media, and a practice at sceptical remove from market, speculation and hype, while tackling their content all the same. Belcher founded Nature Morte Gallery, in New York City, in the 1980s, and was one of the motors behind the art world as we know it today.

DOG CHEW RAG

The Dog Chew Rag of Alan Belcher is just that, a skilful conglomeration of a ridiculous toy that the artist's small terrier, Milo, plays with. But the work is more than that: it's a totem, an Algonquin shield, a use of the readymade in a sculptural mode, and a translation of an object produced en masse in China, rewoven together by computer in the hands of an artist in Toronto, and then delegated, via New York and Rome, back to Asia, to the patient weavers of Kathmandu. It's a perfect example of the liquid society we live in, yet Dog Chew Rag has the authorial strength of an object that lifts off from its reference, because its designer, an artist, understands form, material, and the migration of cultural symbols, deeply.



*Dog Chew Rag, 2016
100% Tibetan wool
hand knotted in Nepal
150cm diameter
Edition of 6 + 3AP*

Image courtesy of Equator Production

Magne Furuholmen

Magne Furuholmen born 1962, Oslo, began his career as a visual artist in the wake of the 1994 dissolution of the Norwegian synth-pop band A-ha, for which he was the keyboardist. His paintings, etchings and woodcuts seek to blend artistic disciplines as they juxtapose words and images and sound and images. He considers the direct and physical process of carving woodcuts to be performative. Since 2008 his artistic activities have expanded to include exhibitions and performances with ‘Apparatjik’, a collective of collaborating artists. Performances include: ‘Thinking Inside the Box’ for the opening of the new The Astrup Fearnley Museum in Oslo in 2012; ‘The Apparatjik Light Space Modulator’ at The Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin in 2011; ‘Globe Art Café’, at Deutsche Bank, Frankfurt 2011; and the ‘We Are Here’ performance at The Serpentine Gallery, London 2010.

GLASS ONION

Magne Furuholmen first created a new unique woodcut print design for a tapestry to be called Glass Onion in 2013, which was derived from a series of ten large format woodcuts known collectively as Norwegian Wood, first showcased in KUTT at the Herne Onstad Art Center in Oslo in 1995. This body of work was closely linked to jazz and Furuholmen’s father’s musical history, constituting a breakthrough for him as a visual artist at that time. Furuholmen embraced the notion of exposing his work to the craft and perspective of others with a different focus in process to his own, which resulted in this collaboration with Dovecot Studios.

Glass Onion, 2014
Tapestry woven by Dovecot Studios
218cm x 158cm
Edition 1 of 2

Image courtesy of Dovecot Studios



Textiles in Contemporary Art

Over the course of history the textile arts have suffered perhaps the most dramatic fall in status of any medium: from the artistic height of Raphael's Sistine Chapel tapestries to the domestic low of the Victorian needlepoint chair cover.

As recently as 1980, Rozsika Parker lamented in *The Subversive Stitch* that “the separation of the craft of embroidery from the fine arts” was “a major force in the marginalisation of women’s work”. Well, what a difference a millennium makes. Since the noughties not only has the craft of embroidery been brought back from the margins, but a practice formerly classed as ‘women’s work’ has been adopted by men.

When the Crafts Council staged the exhibition *Boys Who Sew* in 2004, it seemed like an amusing flash in the pan. Not any longer. Five years later Grayson Perry unveiled his monumental *Walthamstow Tapestry*, following it up in 2012 with a suite of tapestries, *The Vanity of Small Differences*; five years after that Chris Ofili made his textile debut with an exhibition of his tapestry, *The Caged Bird's Song*, at the National Gallery. On the ‘distaff side’, meanwhile, women artists have been busy. Fibre artist Alice Kettle garnered national attention with her recent exhibition *Thread Bearing Witness* at Manchester's Whitworth Gallery, while Nigerian-born Otobong Nkanga's tapestry *Double Plot* helped to win her a place on this year's Artes Mundi shortlist.

What has driven this change? An art student interviewed on the BBC News about *Artes Mundi* put her finger on one reason: it was nice, she said, with so much video and film art about to have a 3-D work - an actual thing - to look at. The digital generation is starting to hanker for a bit of substance; something material to cling to. And what is more material than material?

There's more to the phenomenon, of course, than that. As democratisation has collapsed distinctions between high and low art, there has been a move away from the personal gesture as an expression of genius – usually male and associated with paint – towards less individualistic forms of expression involving the collaborative making associated with craft. This hasn't stopped contemporary textile artists from making a splash by experimenting with novel materials and methods. New York-based Hrafnhildur Arnardóttir, aka Shoplifter, who will represent her native Iceland at this year's Venice Biennale, uses synthetic hair extensions to create her dazzlingly original confections, glorying in the ‘trashiness’ of her chosen material. She likes the idea that “there can be grey areas” between art, fashion, design and craft - though I challenge anyone to find a hint of grey amid the rainbow colours of her map-like wall piece, *At Sea* (2012).

In his floor piece *Dog Chew Rag* (2016), Canadian artist Alan Belcher also promotes trash to the status of art by turning an abject object - a mass-produced dog toy that his terrier Milo plays with – into an ‘objet d’art’; he had the design copied by a computer artist in Toronto, then woven into a carpet by Nepalese handloom weavers in Kathmandu. Exotic craftsmanship can add to an object's allure, but we mustn't believe everything we're told. The Flemish Grandma claimed by Laure Prouvost to have woven her tapestry *You Could Hear This Image* (2017) – a scene of a trumpeter on a busy road seen through the motion blur of CCTV - is an invention of the former Turner Prize-winner. Prouvost is pulling the wool.

Previous attempts at a textile revival in the 20th century took inspiration from two sources: folk art and modernism. The current renaissance - Grayson Perry's folksy tapestries excepted – finds its inspiration in other places. Today's textile artists seem to take a perverse pleasure in making wry comments on the digital world in an analog medium. Like Prouvost's tapestry, the Polish-born Goshka Macuga's *Make Tofu Not War* (2018) has all the appearance of a digital image, except that every pixel is a stitch. Its misty woodland scene featuring environmental protestors in animal suits also includes a cosmonaut and a space capsule. Confused? We're meant to be. Post-modernism has landed.

At first glance, West German-born artist Rosemarie Trockel's machine-knitted hanging *Made in Western Germany* (1987) seems to subscribe to a Bauhaus aesthetic, but its abstract appearance is deceptive; on close examination its pattern breaks up into endless repetitions of the country of origin label. Liam Gillick plays a similarly sly riff on German interwar design in his *Lihotzky Carpet* (2009), which reproduces the Frankfurt Kitchen plan devised by social housing pioneer Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky to liberate the modern woman for leisure pursuits – not, one hopes, embroidering chair covers. Like *Dog Chew Rag*, it was hand-woven in Nepal.

For contemporary multidisciplinary artists like Gillick, textiles are just one of many media. Not for Danish fashion designer Henrik Vibskov, who is in his element in the world of fabric. For Vibskov textiles are more than a material, they're an imaginative outlet for exuberant fantasies such as *Onion Farm*, his absurdist pergola of industrial brushes and strings of fabric onions that made a memorably carnivalesque incursion into the V&A's historic Tapestry Galleries last year.

Artists who habitually work – and think – in textiles can take their chosen media in unexpected directions. In the hands of Freddie Robins, who specialises in knitting, wool becomes a subversive material. Robins picks up cosy picture knits on eBay and infiltrates their idyllic rural landscapes with embroidered scenes of car wrecks, house fires and lynchings. Her martyred self-portrait pierced with knitting needles, titled *Craft Kills* (2002), was intended as reminder - after knitting needles were banned from hand luggage on aircraft - that craft can be weaponised. Underestimate its power at your peril.

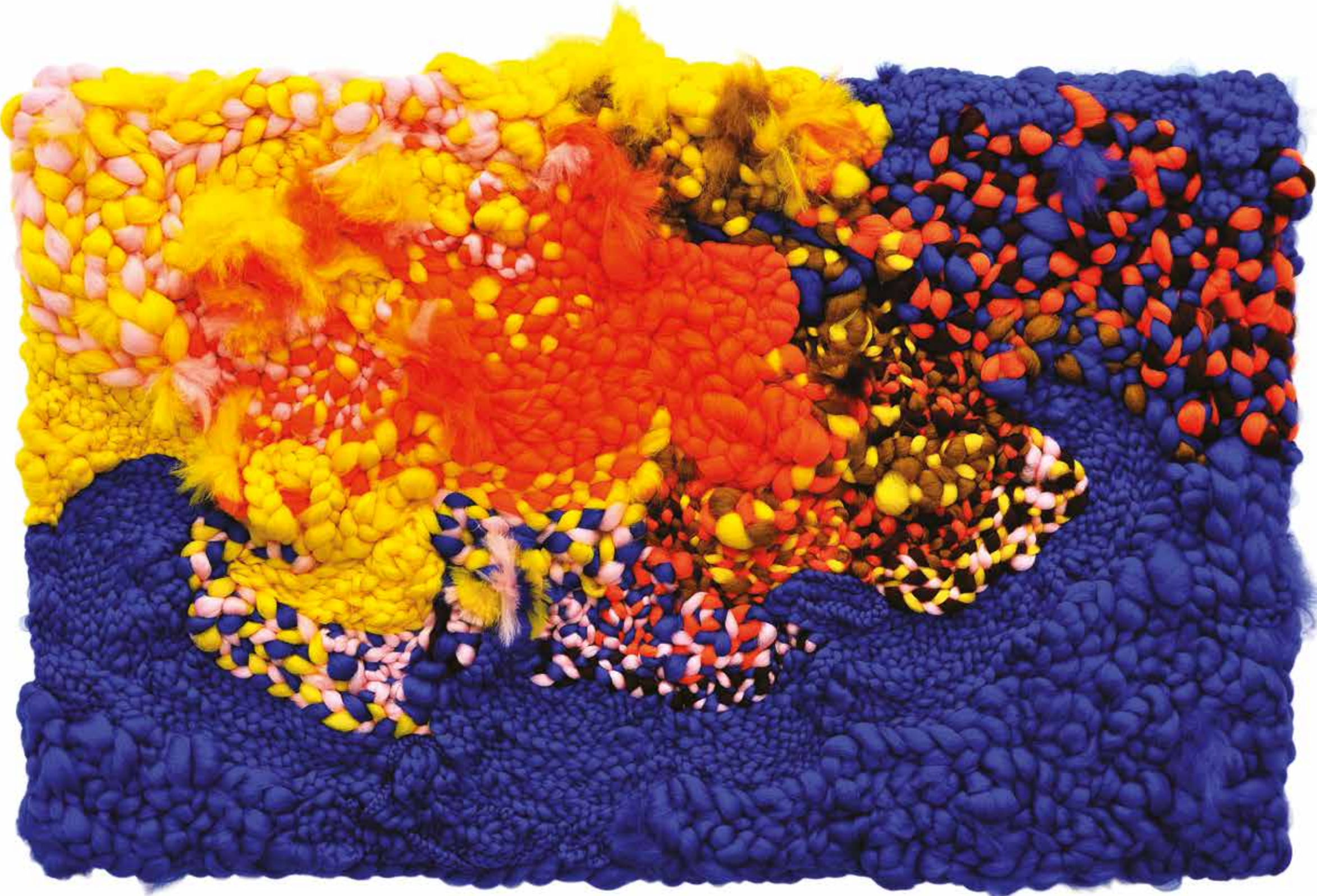
Laura Gascoigne
Art journalist and author

Hrafnhildur Arnardóttir/ Shoplifter

Hrafnhildur Arnardóttir born1969 in Iceland, has been based in New York since 1994. For the past 15 years, she has explored extensively the symbolic nature of hair and its visual and artistic power. She will represent Iceland at the 2019 Venice Biennale and her most recent work includes solo exhibitions at Kiasma - The Finnish National Museum of Modern Art, Finland; The National Museum of Iceland; The Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles; and The Queensland Art Gallery, Australia. She is also known for her window installation commissioned by MoMA, New York (2008), in collaboration with the art collective a.v.a.f., as well as the 2010 Liverpool Biennial. In 2011 Shoplifter received The Nordic Award in Textiles with a large solo exhibition at the Textile Museum of Borås, Sweden. That same year she was awarded The Prince Eugen Medal for artistic achievement from the King and Royal Crown of Sweden.

AT SEA

Working with both synthetic and natural hair, Shoplifter creates sculptures, wall murals and site-specific installations that explore themes of vanity, self-image, fashion, beauty and popular myth. At Sea is one in a series of artworks that use colorful braids made of synthetic hair extensions in the style of an installation, commissioned as a large window installation by MoMA in 2008. Shoplifter places the braids in the same way that a painter would apply paint to canvas. She does not start out with a definite plan, but rather uses the braids to lead her on to where the process itself creates the work. It's simultaneously a drawing, a painting and a textile, where the fibres in each braid create a drawing, shaping the work whilst connecting them in the moment; playing with the different sizes and colour of the braids to create a painting on the verge of being three dimensional. Finding resonance in its visual effect, At Sea is an abstraction of looking at land from sea, longing for the final destination.



At Sea, 2012
Synthetic hair extensions
(on two panels)
152 x 244cm

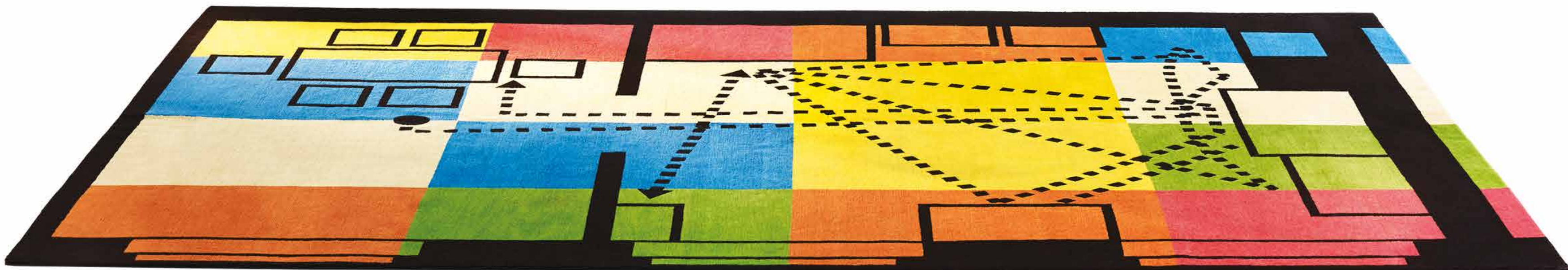
Image courtesy of the artist

Liam Gillick

Liam Gillick born 1964, lives and works in New York and is one of the many British artists to emerge in the last twenty years and claim preeminence in the global art scene. In addition his interests span music, teaching, architecture and design. Gillick is especially known for his brilliant use of colour, his global art practice applied to stainless steel and plexiglass structures, as well as his ability to index seemingly simple forms to complex socio-economic or historical constructs.

LIHOTSKY CARPET

Liam Gillick's design for this carpet - made from Tibetan wool and hand-knotted in Nepal - was inspired by the Frankfurt Kitchen. First designed in 1926 by Austrian architect and pioneer of social housing, Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, the goal of the Frankfurt Kitchen was simple: to create the most efficient kitchen space. It was designed to be cost efficient, time-saving, and hygienic and importantly, the design separated the kitchen from the living space, creating a separation between work (the kitchen), and leisure (the living room).



*Lihotsky Carpet, 2015
100% Tibetan wool,
hand knotted in Nepal
200 x 300cm
Edition 6 + 3AP*

Image courtesy of Equator Production

Goshka Macuga

Goshka Macuga, (b.1967, Poland) lives and works in London. In her practice, Macuga combines the normally distinct roles of author, researcher, collector and exhibition designer for the production of complex projects that involve other artists, art historians, scientists and experts in a variety of disciplines. Her artwork is a collective work composed through mutual understanding and exchange of ideas and knowledge, in which Macuga selects and produces texts, artworks and objects to construct the logical and magical systems of references, referrals and counterpoints that are her installations.

MAKE TOFU NOT WAR

The first of a new series of 3D tapestries designed by Goshka Macuga features an imaginary scene in an old forest possibly in the north of Europe where a group of people dressed as animals (wolf, reindeer and a polar bear) appear to have gathered together after their participation in a protest. Their banners seem to respond to environmental issues as well as political ones. The landscape in the far background reveals the biblical reference of the Tower of Babel which, when coupled with the animals and the water is also suggestive of Noah's Ark and a vision of the possible future.

Futuristic references such as the use of a 3D effect and the space program through the inclusion of the cosmonaut and the space capsule; when placed alongside manifestations of today's environmental and political debates in the form of protest banners creates a confusion in the temporality of the scene. The 3D effect mimics a past understanding of an image of the future as seen through sci-fi design and imagery while the use of animals refers to a long tradition of depicting animals to represent or symbolise human characteristics, in particular in 19th century cartoons published in magazine editorials, animals were featured as political symbols and thus had the power to influence voters by distilling complex ideas into more compressible and humorous representation. The banners also reference stories such as Orwell's Animal Farm and Aesop's Fables, where animals played the protagonists in the narrative, embodying particular traits of humans.

The protesters, rather than being animals, are humans dressed in animal clothing mimicking other species and engaging in what communications scholar Kevin De Luca calls "disidentification" with accepted social values of progress and the domination of the human over nature. By identifying with the non-human in the form of animals, they also "disidentify" with the destruction of our natural environment and animal suffering caused by humans. These animal protesters can also be seen to relate to the 'Furry fandom' movement. Furry fandom traces its origins to a science fiction convention in 1980 where it claimed to unite its members in finding a place of belonging.

Make Tofu not War is not aiming to represent the past, present or the future but rather opens up a platform to speculate about many possible ideas and outcomes of today's current landscape.



Make Tofu Not War, 2018

Woven tapestry

293 x 447cm

Edition of 5 + 1AP

Image courtesy of the artist and Kate MacGarry

Des Hughes

Des Hughes (b.1970) is a British artist who lives and works in London and Herefordshire. He completed an MA in Fine Art at Goldsmith's College, London in 2002, following a BA in Fine Art at Bath College of Art in 1994.

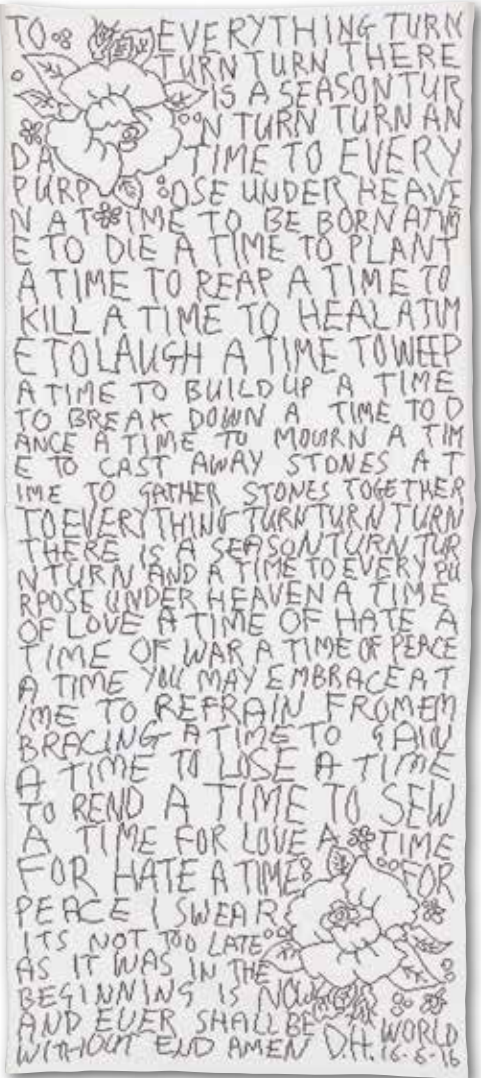
His distinct sculptural practice engages with traditional materials in new and inventive ways and he is fascinated by the strangeness of British art, whether it be primitive art, strange craft objects or the reinvention of landscape, still life in British Surrealism and modernist British sculptural history. He has guest curated an exhibition at Manchester Art Gallery and has been longlisted for the Fourth Plinth, Trafalgar Square, London. Hughes' work is held in many major collections including Arts Council Collection, Whitworth Art Gallery and Manchester Art Gallery.

DROP SHADOW

Des Hughes works in cross-stitch: drawing on to fabric in his own handwriting he uses the hand drawn as an outline for embroidery. The contradiction in the qualities that are specific to this craft - the fact that the fabric has a sculptural thickness and fact the uneven way the fabric is woven emphasises the human error in his stitching – has enduring appeal for Hughes. The process of stitching, something that takes weeks or months, to make pieces based on a drawing that takes seconds, underpins Hughes' humorous approach to his craft.

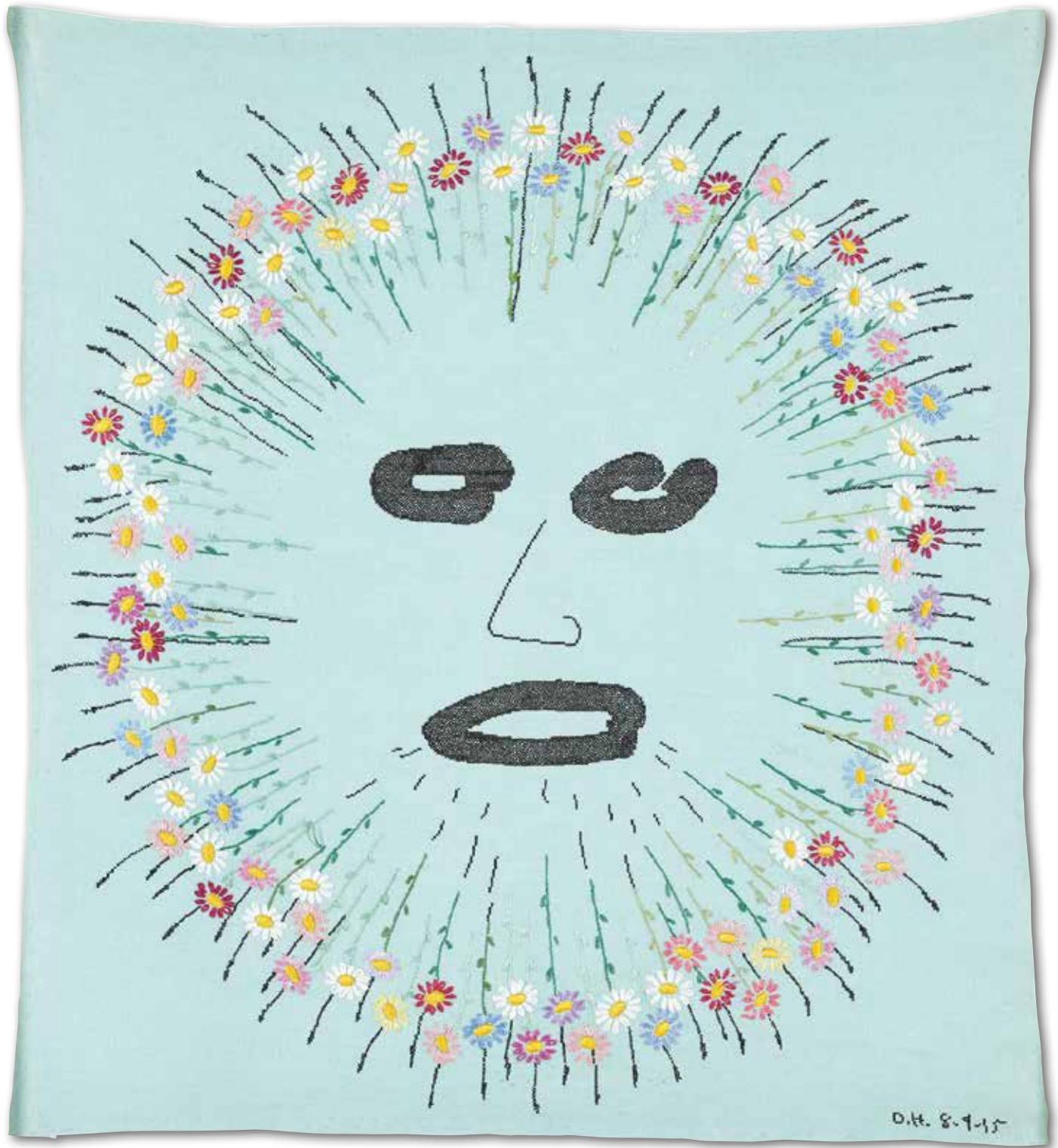
Very often his works start as old tablecloths that already contain an element of decorative embroidery - shapes or colour schemes that he then reacts to in some way. 'It feels like writing graffiti across something that would have been reserved for a special occasion' he says. 'Drop Shadow' was a work made on a tablecloth that the artist had had for a while but for which he was struggling to find the right text, so instead he scrawled a face in the middle because 'it reminded me of a green man'.

Text with a decorative border seemed to him to be one of the stylistic idiosyncrasies of the traditional sampler, especially when made as a 'home truth' designed to be hung on a wall. Hughes kept lists of phrases or lines from songs as source material for titles of sculpture, but these are the very lines that have made their way in to his cross-stitch. 'It meant that I could make these seemingly profound, insightful or even provocative statements but with a dubious authority by hiding behind the fact they are paraphrased or misquoted' he says.



Turn Turn Turn, 2016
Cotton silk stitch on linen
87x 38cm

Image courtesy of the artist



Drop Shadow, 2015
Antique embroidery with cotton silk cross stitch
80 x 80cm

Image courtesy of the artist

Henrik Vibskov

Henrik Vibskov (b.1972 Denmark) is a name most commonly associated with a fashion label and the twisted and tantalising universes created in relation to each collection: “*The Great Chain Of Sleepers*”, *The Five O’clock Leg Alignment*” and “*The Kitchen Of The Non Existent*” are titles of recent shows that each refer to a different but equally mesmerising world and set of logic. As a fashion designer Vibskov has produced over 30 men’s and women’s wear collections since graduating from Central St. Martins in 2001 and is currently the only Scandinavian designer on the official show schedule of the Paris Men’s Fashion Week.

As both an installation and textile artist, Henrik Vibskov has exhibited at The Museum of Contemporary Art Kanazawa, Japan; The Museum of Art and Design, New York; MoMA PS1, New York; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; ICA, London and The Textile Museum, Washington, USA and has produced several large-scale solo exhibitions at museums and galleries, including TEMPO at Stockholm Stadsteater, Sweden; Exhibition Daelim Museum, Seoul, South Korea.

THE MOLOGA RIVER and SAYA DE MALHA BANKS

Henrik Vibskov's knits are designed and woven in a traditional Danish knit factory called Elkjær Strik in Herning, Denmark. The pieces are hand-embroidered with rich, colorful wool and embellished with embroidery techniques developed in the studio. Due to the technique of the weaving machines, the graphic and colours of the knit run horizontally creating a certain rhythm.

The Mologa River and Saya de Malha Banks were made in 2018 and refer to traditional Danish fishermen’s lunch-plates, where a typical fish is always pictured. The type of fish on the knits would be from the most exotic regions in the world.



The Mologa River, 2018
Embroidery
163 x 110cm

Images courtesy of the artist

Saya de Malha Banks, 2018
Embroidery
163 x 110cm



Christian Newby

Christian Newby (b.1979, Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA) currently works and lives in London, UK. He received his B.A. in Sculpture and Extended Media at Virginia Commonwealth University in 2002 and then an M.F.A. at the Glasgow School of Art in 2009. He is currently a PhD researcher with the Contemporary Art Research Centre at Kingston University, London. Recent projects and residencies include: ‘Yo Compro Calidad’ for the residency programme at Matadero Madrid; artist in residence at Arthouse Foundation, Lagos Nigeria; ‘Spring Syllabus’ at J Hammond Projects, London; and ‘Notes On A Carpet’, produced as part of We Are Publication, an experimental publication platform based at Kingston University.

GLASSY-EYEDCULT/ESCORIA!/JULIOFLORES/THESPINNERS

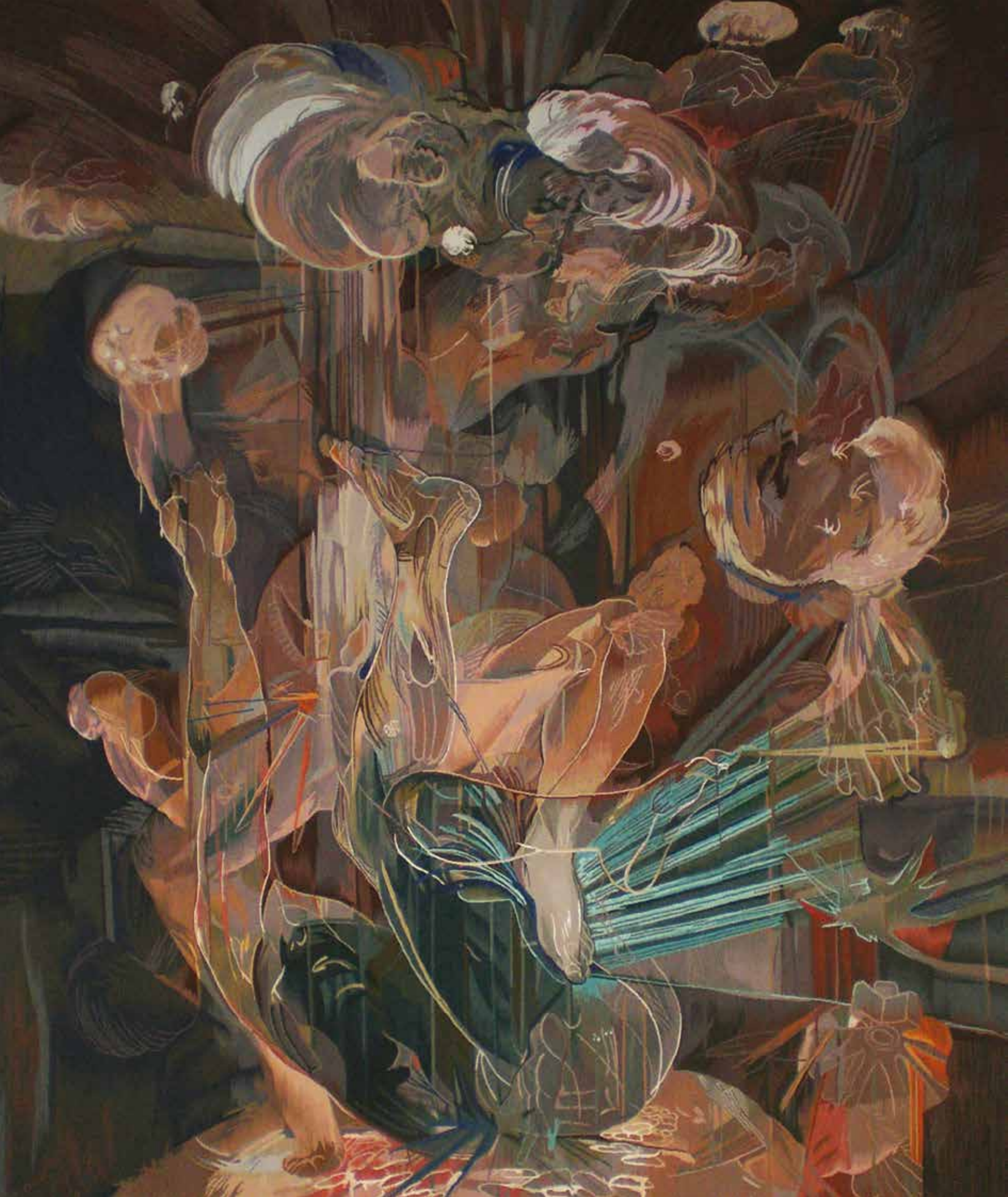
Glassy-EyedCult/Escoria!/JulioFlores/TheSpinners takes four different drawings by Christian Newby and tufts them next to each other. Intended as both a practical and formal decision, allowing the single surface to be seen as a workspace, a discreet object, as well as an exhibition wall itself, its aims are to expand further on where the work stops and the exposition of work starts. In its original presentation at Matadero Madrid it was displayed as a work-in-progress, stretched tightly to the frame it was made in and giving as much information about its production as possible - bolstering the connection that the work plays between the artist and the viewer.

The work is part of a larger series that asks the question, how many different ways can we retool or repurpose an industrial carpet gun into a ‘convivial’ tool? And does the mutation from a hand-held carpet-tufting gun into mark-making tool reveal a sense of otherness existing beyond commercial design objectives and principles? This ‘drawing’ is concerned with bypassing established formats or genre within textile discourse—modes of production defined by how we consume them—re-articulating the carpet as an object to a material process where tufted wool performs an equivalent role to paint, allowing the surface to function outside the confines of traditional craft scrutiny and into a larger interdisciplinary discourse beyond genre.



Glassy-eyed Cult/Escoria!/Julio Flores/
The Spinners, 2017
Tufted wool
550cm x 300cm

Image by Paco Gómez, courtesy of the artist



Francesca Lowe

Francesca Lowe (1979 - 2017) graduated from The Royal Academy Schools in 2004. Lowe's work deals with man's desire to maintain focus and his (increasing) predisposition to do many things at once. It is inspired by the idea of 'interruption' and is designed as an evocation of the impossibility of thought in isolation; the aim being to make images that 'loop' like a repetitive, intrusive thought. Widely exhibited in her lifetime, she represented the UK in the Beijing Biennale at the National Arts Museum, China in 2009. She won the Red Mansion Art Prize in 2003 and the Deutsche Bank Pyramid Award for Fine Art in 2004. She collaborated with the novelist Alasdair Gray on 'Terminus' and has worked with Other Criteria on a print edition 'Love's Letters'. Her work explores the human journey and orientation through life and time.

TRUMP

Francesca Lowe's *Trump*, takes one of the artist's paintings as source material to create a tapestry that was first exhibited as part of *Demons, Yarns & Tales*. The painting depicts an epic struggle between two men, locked in naked combat on top of what appears to be a rock or a globe, silhouetted against a backdrop of clouds in an almost biblical scene. 'The original painting was very light', said Lowe, 'and I wanted more contrast; but it has become more actual and less dreamy – more menacing than magical.' The two figures – one light, one dark – create a tangle of limbs in which 'good' appears to be overcoming 'evil', although it was the other way around in the original painting, inviting us to question who is trumping who?

On the billow of turquoise and green gas that appears to fill the tapestry's background, Lowe said, 'I was venting some spleen, releasing some gas! It was an explosion of frustration, a way of reducing tension. Sometimes you can achieve a lot in a day, but sometimes nothing changes; time goes slowly and there's frustration at the monotony of waiting.' Going on to add that, 'I don't think the work is autobiographical, though: it's more about the art historical source. Authorship comes in terms of observation; that's where the comment lies. And the wider theme is about the fitting together of things that don't fit and to create a problem that explodes – metaphorically.'

Trump, 2009

Tapestry

250 x 200cm

Image courtesy of the artist's estate

Gavin Turk

Gavin Turk born 1967, is an artist whose installations and sculptures deal with issues of authorship, authenticity and identity. Part of the Young British Artists group that came to prominence in the 1990s, his work is concerned with the 'myth' of the artist and the 'authorship' of a work. He has pioneered many forms of contemporary British sculpture that are now taken for granted including the painted bronze, the waxwork, the recycled art-historical icon and the use of rubbish in art.

Turk has been commissioned to make many public sculptures including *L'Âge d'Or* (2016), sited on the south corner of the Press Centre building in the Olympic Park and *Nail*, a 12 metre sculpture at One New Change, next to St Paul's cathedral, London. His work has since been collected and exhibited by many major museums and galleries throughout the world.

CAVE RUG

This rug is taken from the plaque that Gavin Turk made based on those seen on the façades of London houses of distinguished former residents. Turk's examiners on the MA course at the Royal College of Art famously failed him when he submitted this piece for his degree show. The plaque has since gone on to become iconic.



*Cave Rug, 2002
Hand knotted, hand spun Anatolian
wool and mohair rug
244cm diameter
Edition of 5*

Image courtesy of Christopher Farr

Freddie Robins

Freddie Robins born 1965, Kent lives and works in Essex and London. She is an artist who challenges our perception of knitting as craft and her work is internationally renowned, defined by a practice that crosses the boundaries of art, design and craft.

Robins predominantly produces work for public exhibition, most recently StrangeLands, Collyer Bristow Gallery, London, Between things, Minories Art Gallery, Colchester, What do I need to do to make it OK? Rugby Art Gallery & Museum and Liberties, The Exchange, Penzance. She has been the recipient of numerous grants including Arts Council England/National Lottery, British Council, Crafts Council and AHRC (Arts & Humanities Research Council). In 2012 she was on the UK shortlist for the prestigious Women to Watch exhibition at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, USA.

CRAFT KILLS

Craft Kills is a self-portrait based on the well-recognised image of Saint Sebastian being martyred, but here knitting needles replace the arrows that pierce the artist's 'skin'. The title immediately brings to mind the old adage of "dying for your art" but what concerns Robins much more is the stereotypical image that craft - and in particular knitting - has of being a passive and somewhat benign activity. The artist poses the question, "What if craft were considered a dangerous activity?" Since the conception of Craft Kills in 2002, the world has suffered the events of September 11th and its aftermath and as a result of heightened security passengers can no longer fly with knitting needles in their hand luggage. In the UK, charity shops increasingly keep knitting needles 'out the back' so if you want to buy them you have to ask. It is clear that in some environments knitting is now classed as a dangerous activity.



Craft Kills, 2002
Machine knitted wool,
knitting needles
200 x 68 x 38cm

Image courtesy of the artist



Someone else's dream - murdered, 2014-16
Reworked hand knitted jumper,
mixed fibres
59 x 35cm

Image courtesy of the artist

SOMEONE ELSE'S DREAM

Someone Else's Dream – a series of hand-made picture knits and novelty sweaters from the 1980s - takes the genre of hand knitting and subverts it. Having fallen out of fashion because of their strong association with the celebrities of the time, such as DJ and TV presenter Noel Edmunds and astrologer Russell Grant, they became garments of derision but Robins remains a big fan and used eBay to hunt down picture knits still in circulation, becoming fascinated by the repeated appearance of jumpers that portrayed idyllic rural landscapes; farmhouses with animals, villages complete with churches, rolling hills, blue skies and fluffy white clouds.

The title - Someone Else's Dream - refers to this idealised view that many people have of living in the countryside: 'the great white flight for cheaper housing, a garden, to have a dog or more children, supposedly better schooling, less crime and greater personal safety', says Robins. Some of the scenes that the artist has embellished the existing scenery with are from personal experience, some from news stories, but all have happened in the countryside. There is an embroidered car crash, a figure hanging from a tree, a house fire, a body drowned in a river, fly-tipping and a crime investigation scene complete with white tent, police DO NOT CROSS tape, police van, car and helicopter. The artist's use of distressing or violent imagery when presented through a domestic, seemingly passive and benign object such as a hand knitted jumper, subverts our expectations of both the object and the medium employed in its production.

IT'S ALL THE SAME

It's all the same is part of an on-going series of knitted works that confront conformity and notions of normality. The knitted bodies, or 'skins' are made using an advanced industrial knitting technology known as seamless knitting, which was developed to achieve perfection within mass produced garments and multiples and whose manufacture does not produce any waste. Conversely paper chain dolls - constructed from a long strip of paper folded back and forth on itself to form zigzags – yield as much waste as form. Despite the simplicity of this technique what you end up with is the same as with the advanced knitting technology, identical human forms. 'It's all the same' questions our desire for standardization and perfection, an exhausting and of course, unachievable pursuit.



It's all the same, 2017
Machine knitted wool,
dimensions variable

Image courtesy of the artist



Laure Prouvost

Laure Prouvost (born 1978, France) is currently based in London and Antwerp. Prouvost is a multi-media artist whose work in video, sound, installation and performance is permeated by language - in its broadest sense. She is best known for her immersive and mixed-media installations that combine film and installation in humorous and idiosyncratic ways, addressing miscommunication and things getting lost in translation. She combines existing and imagined personal memories with artistic and literary references to create complex installations that twist fiction and reality. In 2013, Prouvost won the MaxMara Art Prize for Women and was the recipient of the Turner Prize. Prouvost was selected to represent France at the 58th International Art Biennial Venice in 2019.

YOU COULD HEAR THIS IMAGE

You Could Hear This Image, 2017 constitutes a tapestry woven by Laure Prouvost's Grandma in Flanders, Belgium. The work depicts a person standing in the foreground playing a trumpet, with cars careering down a busy road in the background. A subtitled sentence of text at the bottom of the work reads "YOU COULD HEAR THIS IMAGE." The colour palette of the work appears as though a hologram or to be an x-ray of a pre-existing image. This wobbly image latticed with the text evokes synaesthesia for the viewer, a trait that frequently appears within Prouvost's work.

Grandma is a figment of narrative the artist has invented, which exists throughout her oeuvre. Grandma (and Grandad) are recurring characters in her painting, film, installation, sculpture, and tapestry works. Though they belong to an imaginary narrative, they purportedly carry out active roles in the creation of Laure's works. Grandad is in part inspired by her relationship with the late John Latham, in whose studio she assisted for several years.

You Could Hear This Image, 2017

Tapestry

149 x 250cm

Edition of 3+1AP

Image courtesy of Lisson Gallery

Rosemarie
Trockel

Rosemarie Trockel (b.1952, Germany) is a contemporary artist currently living in Cologne. She began her career in the 1970s, addressing issues of sexuality, feminism, and the human body. Her work has been shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Fondation Beyeler in Rien and the Deichtorhallen in Hamburg. In 2011 she was awarded the Kaiserring from the city of Goslar, which is one of the best-known prizes for contemporary art in the world.

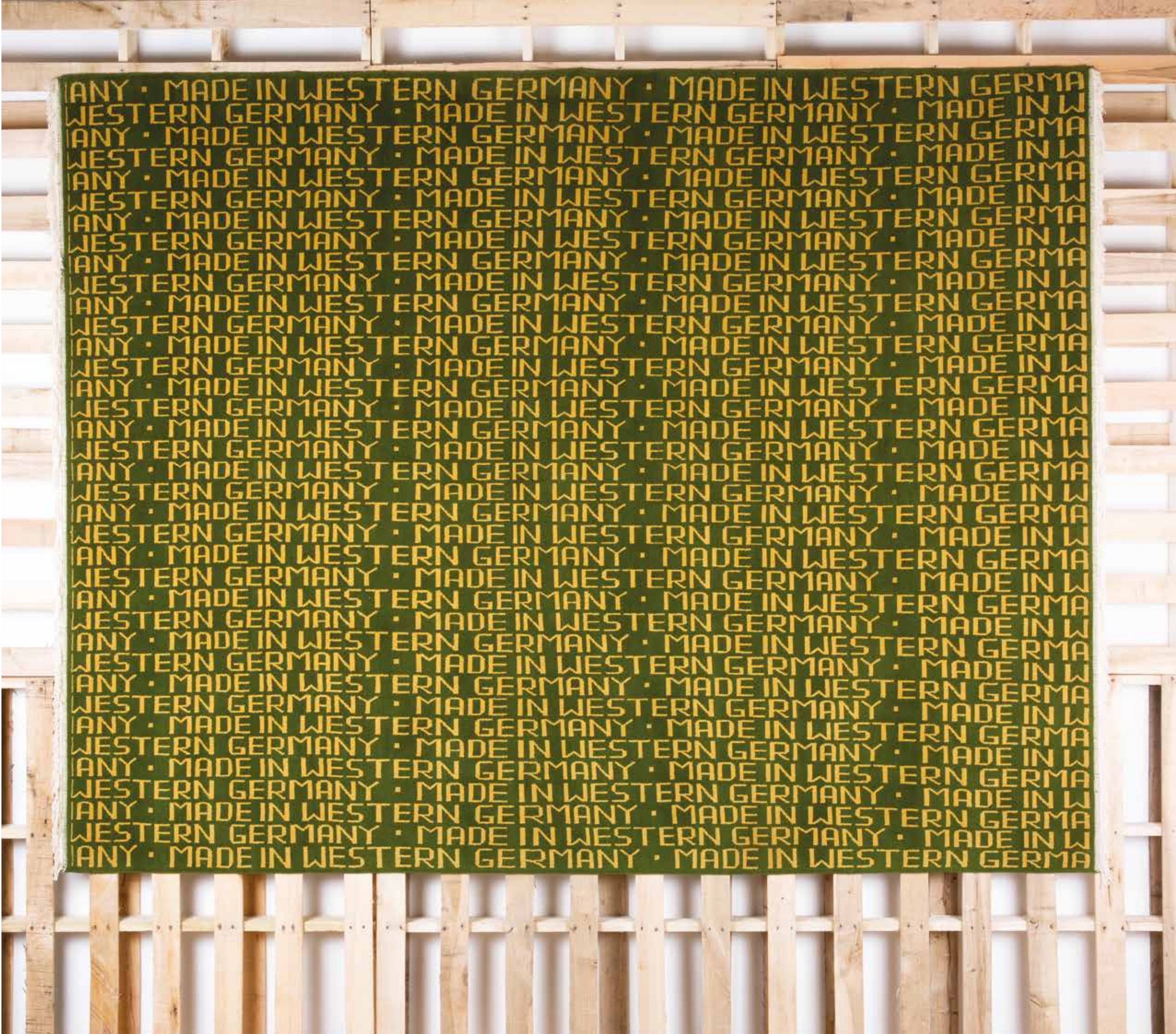
MADE IN WEST GERMANY

Rosemarie Trockel, rather than expounding radical change in design and the lives it affects, creates ingenious objects that are light and always humorous. Her fondness for wordplay and puns, often connecting words from different languages through sounds or spellings they share, is an emblem in her work, a recurrent, almost Dadaist game.

In the mid-1980s, Trockel broke art/design barriers in the fine art world with a series of computer-generated knitted works - intended to be hung on walls - which featured familiar yet enigmatic emblems including the Woolmark logo and the Playboy Bunny symbol. Her desire to transgress the “decorative” category of textile was galvanised by such rugs as Made In Western Germany, which like her knitted works, wove in well-known logos and symbols with a distinctively political as well as aesthetic impulse. Her esprit de plaisance aligns Trockel’s consummate designs with those of early 20th century French artists and artists working in France, most notably Eileen Gray and Jean Prouve, whose furnishings also fused lightness and wit, putting the fun back in function.

*Made in Western Germany, 1991
100% Tibetan wool,
hand knotted in Nepal
200 x 320cm
Edition 15 + 3 AP*

Image courtesy of Equator Production



Textiles as Art

Material: Textile takes a timely and holistic look at Textiles as Art. This astonishing mix of the ancient, the modern and the new is destined to once again remind art lovers, curators and collectors of the astonishing versatility of artists working in textiles. Gray M.C.A presents a selection of important mid twentieth century commissions from leading Modern artists, many of which date from the Festival of Britain and its aftermath. The 1950s and 1960s saw an evolution of British textiles when the divide between fine and decorative arts was increasingly blurred. Designers of this period challenged the traditional design discipline and in their own innovative ways, revolutionised the partnership between the artist and the textile manufacturer. Their foresight would fuse, for the first time, Modern Art and textile design and bring Modern Art and Artist Textiles into the modern home as never before

It was rare for an artist, who considered himself a painter, to work with textiles other than on the very canvas he used to make his painting. Yet the rise of Modernism challenged these taboos and allowed artists to experiment in a new, versatile and exciting medium. Through the vision of Alistair Morton of Edinburgh Weavers, the Modernist painters William Scott and Alan Reynolds would produce rich textures as dramatic as any oil painting. Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth's silkscreen designs for Zika and Lida Ascher of Ascher Ltd would hold the same subtle delicate beauty as any watercolour.

The first move towards bridging the gap between the fine and decorative arts began with The Arts and Crafts Movement of the late 19th and early 20th Century, when William Morris rejected the commercial production of textiles and returned to hand loom jacquard weaving. Roger Fry swiftly followed with his inspirational Omega workshop. Though short-lived the Omega workshop (1913-19) was a laboratory of ideas that revolutionised British Art and Design. With these crucial first steps taken, the door was now open for Edinburgh Weavers, Ascher Ltd and Tom Heron's Cresta Silks to expand their vision into the later 20th Century and increasingly allow Modern Art to take centre stage in the modern home.

Edinburgh Weavers, launched in 1928 was the creative powerhouse of Morton Sundour, one of Britain's most important and influential textile businesses since the 1860s. Working with some of the most exciting and powerful Modern artists of the period including Ben Nicholson, William Scott, Elisabeth Frink, Keith Vaughan, Kenneth Rowntree, Alan Reynolds and Cecil Collins - a new dynamic direction was forged for British textiles. Fabric runs, using both traditional and more innovative modern fibres, were kept short and exclusive, enhancing their desirability and allowing the most contemporary homes to furnish their rooms with extraordinary designs.

The Edinburgh Weavers' creative legacy is so important that examples of the textile designs of the Modern Art period are held in the permanent collection of The V&A and are regularly sought by international collectors of Modern Art as seminal works in the careers of the Modern painters of the 20th Century.

Working with the same passion, but with an alternative vision, were Czech émigrés Zika and Lida Ascher who were to become a dynamic addition to the creative drive behind post-war London. Forced to flee the Nazis whilst on honeymoon, Zika and his wife Lida Ascher would bring new meaning to artists textiles by commissioning Modern artists' work for both interior and dress fabrics.

Henry Moore was the first of the Modern artists with whom Ascher Ltd struck up an immensely important and creative relationship. Hugely moved by the power of Moore's drawings of Londoners sheltering from German bombs in the underground at the 'Shelter Drawing' exhibition held at The National Gallery in 1941, he immediately approached Moore with the idea of a commission for textile design. Moore was thrilled with the idea and by 1943 Ascher was thumbing through four notebooks filled with striking and beautiful textile designs.

Historian Fiona MacCarthy points out: "There is a lightness, wit and humanism in Moore's outburst of designs for textiles in the middle of the war. Some of his sketchbook ideas for curtain fabrics, with their draped and huddled human forms, have a tendresse reminiscent of his wartime shelter drawings. He was always intrigued by the fluidity of folds. Repeat patterns based on clock faces, insect wings and safety pins, caterpillars, watering cans and piano keys: this is consciously the imagery of everyday life, postwar art for the people, dealing in shared memories."

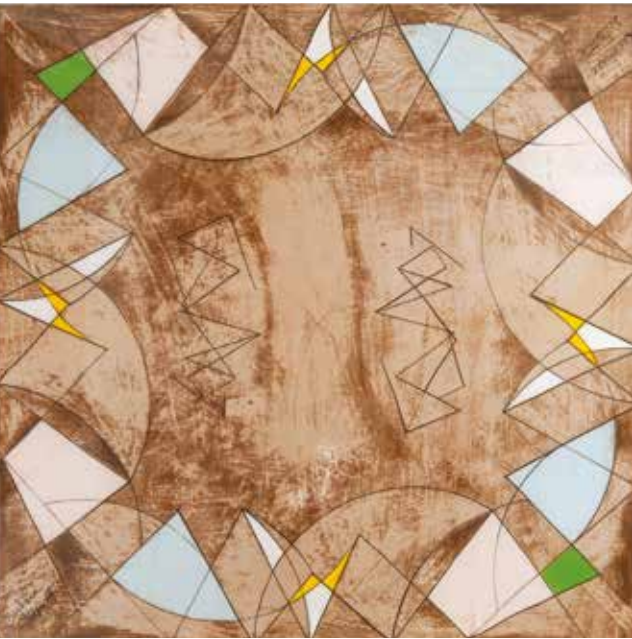
Further developments included the innovation of the 'Ascher Squares': commissions for a single drawing to be produced in silk by artists including Ben Nicholson, Felix Topolski, Graham Sutherland, Julian Trevelyan, John Piper, Barbara Hepworth as well as Henri Matisse, Alexander Calder, André Derain, Jean Cocteau and Christian Bérard. These exquisite silk scarves were framed and presented at The Lefevre Gallery, London in 1947 as art for the home. The media reaction was so favourable that the entire collection went on tour to galleries in New York, Zurich, Sydney and Cape Town.

While Edinburgh Weavers had remained firmly focused on innovative fabrics for the home, Ascher Ltd had broadened the horizon and taken textiles out of the home and onto the streets with dramatic effect.

The 1951 Festival of Britain celebrated and promoted Modernist textiles to a watching world, encouraging Modern Art to feature in the home through interior design that complemented the architecture and mood of the day. This was further championed by Hans and Elsbeth Juda's publication '*The Ambassador*', which sponsored 'Painting into Textiles' at the ICA in October 1953, encouraging a further stable of influential artists to produce work that could be used for textiles. The dark days of war were receding and colour, texture and originality were on the increase. Commissioning a contemporary artist became increasingly de rigueur.

Today Modern British painting has never been in more demand with prices rising ever higher. It is a great tribute to the post-war textile visionaries of Modern Art that these now rare and powerful mid 20th Century textiles are sort out worldwide as beautiful and historically important examples of the wider works of the artists of the last century. As Material: Textile proves; textiles have truly become a vital creative pillar in the story of Modern and Contemporary Art. Once again, when it comes to artist textiles, what is Modern has never been more Contemporary.

Ashley Gray
Director, Gray M.C.A.



Barbara Hepworth (1903 -1975)

Born in Yorkshire, Hepworth attended Leeds School of Art in 1920 and The Royal College of Art 1921 - 24 where she met and married the sculptor John Skeaping. Following time spent in Florence and Rome she received a thorough training in carving and developed an understanding for marble. At this time carving was not taught by The Royal College. In 1931, whilst on holiday with Henry Moore and other sculptors she met Ben Nicholson and later that year went to live with him. They travelled to France during the early 1930s, where they met artists Picasso, Brancusi, Braque and Mondrian and in 1939 they set out for St. Ives in Cornwall. Her work, influenced by Nicholson's formality and abstraction, was also influenced by Gabo's constructivism. Throughout the 1950s, Hepworth gained recognition and started working on a larger scale principally in bronze. By the early 1960s her work had become not just about a strict geometry but also about composite structures and monumental presence. She exhibited nationally and internationally and was made a Dame in 1965 and appointed a Trustee of The Tate Gallery in London. She died in a fire that started in her studio in 1975.

Barbara Hepworth was rigorous in her approach to creating a design for an Ascher Square and her sculptural approach is an interesting lens through which to view her scarf design. A scarf is a two-dimensional work which, when worn, is transformed into a three dimensional object and Hepworth was aware of this in the structure of her composition. 'Textile designing is more than patterning. Colours and form go hand in hand – brown fields and green hills cannot be divorced from the earth's shape – a square becomes a triangle, a triangle becomes a circle, a circle an oval by the continuous curve of folding: and we return, always, to the essential human form – the human form in landscape'. Barbara Hepworth, Letter to Ascher in 1947

Landscape Sculpture, 1947
Screen-printed in colours on woven silk
90 x 90cm
Edition 49/175
Ascher Ltd



Donald Hamilton Fraser (1929 - 2009)

From 1949 to 1952, Fraser studied at Saint Martin's School of Art alongside Frank Auerbach, Sandra Blow, Sheila Fell, Leon Kossoff and Joe Tilson. Anthony Blunt and John Piper were among the assessors who awarded him a one-year French government scholarship in Paris in 1953 at the same time as the first of nine solo exhibitions held at Gimpel Fils over his career. Carel Weight appointed him tutor at The Royal College of Art in 1958 where he continued until 1983 with fellow teachers Peter Blake and Julian Trevelyan. Fraser's students at The Royal College included Patrick Caulfield, David Hockney, Ron B. Kitaj and Thérèse Oulton. He was elected a fellow at The Royal College of Art in 1970 and Honorary Fellow in 1984. From 1986 to 2000 he was a member of The Royal Fine Art Commission and in 1983 Hamilton Fraser designed four commemorative stamps for England celebrating 14 March as Commonwealth Day for the Commonwealth of Nations.

Donald Hamilton Fraser was one of the most highly regarded Modernist painter / printmakers of the post-war generation, famed for his thickly painted abstract landscapes that are held in numerous public collections. His Cyclades textile was based on a painting originally painted in the early 1950s and exhibited at the famous 'Painting into Textiles' Exhibition held at the Institute of Contemporary Art in 1953. It was not seen as a textile in its own right until the 1960s.

Cyclades, 1962
Screen-printed on cotton
64 x 53cm
David Whitehead Ltd



Patrick Heron (1920 - 1999)

Born in Leeds and brought up in Yorkshire, Cornwall and Hertfordshire at the age of thirteen, Heron began to paint in a Cézanne-influenced style and produced textile designs for his father's Cresta Silks before attending The Slade School of Art. During World War II Heron registered as a conscientious objector and worked as an agricultural laborer for three years. Whilst at the Leach Pottery in St Ives between 1944 - 45 Heron met Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth and many artists of the St Ives School. Heron's work from the 1940s shows the influences of Braque and Matisse, before his progress into Abstraction during the early 1950s. Heron was a respected critic, writer and broadcaster on Contemporary Art prior to his return to Cornwall. The 1956 Tate Gallery exhibition of the New York Abstract Expressionists coincided with his move to Eagles Nest at Zennor in Cornwall and his colourful abstraction continued to be exhibited worldwide. In 1977 he was awarded a CBE and in 1998 a major retrospective of Heron's work was organised by The Tate Gallery, London. Heron had over sixty one-man exhibitions in twelve countries and is considered to be Britain's foremost Abstract painter.

The 'St Ives' silk scarf was originally drawn whilst Heron worked for his father Tom Heron at Cresta Silks but was not used at the time of design. It was later printed in blue and black with printed signature and dated 1948. Printed by Alexander MacIntyre for the Tate Gallery's 1985 exhibition 'St Ives 1939-64: Twenty-Five years of Painting, Sculpture and Pottery', it perfectly captures Herons freestyle early paintings of the late 1940s and early 50s.

St Ives, 1948
Silkscreen in colour
82 x 73cm
Cresta Silks (Unused)

1985 Edition Alexander MacIntyre



On his brother's designs for Cresta Silks, Giles Heron said, 'It was my dad's suggestion that he should do a design for Cresta. At the age of fourteen he produced Melon 1934 and then two years later, Amaryllis, which was his first repeat pattern, block-printed design. Our father would explain to him: if you have a square scarf, you don't wear it as a square, you wear it folded up and therefore you must think of it as two or four triangles – always getting different results. You can see this was taken on board in this design. Patrick was also very keen on Paul Nash's designs, such as Cherry Orchard 1931. He was inevitably aware of the artist-commissioned designs being produced for Cresta and would sometimes look to those artists for inspiration. As his paintings got more and more influenced by the likes of Cubism, so his designs got more outrageously modern. Aztec 1945, for instance, is designed by somebody who's deeply immersed in Modern art. The most extraordinary squiggles as motifs, scattered over the surface. Each informed the other, though he was developing and learning as a painter when he began to produce designs.'

Nude, 1947
92 x 87cm
Cresta Silks



Georges Braque (1882 - 1963)

Georges Braque was born in Argenteuil-sur-Seine, France. He was the third generation in his family to become a house painter and decorator before turning to Fine Art. He attended evening classes at L'École des Beaux-Arts, Le Havre from 1897 - 1899 and later the Académie Humbert, Paris from 1902 - 1904. His Fauvist work was exhibited in mixed exhibitions including at the Salon des Indépendants. His first solo show was at the Daniel-Henri Kahnweiler gallery in Paris in 1908. Though initially a Fauvist he became famous for his role as co-inventor, with Picasso, of Cubism before the First World War working closely with him from 1908 onwards. Both were influenced by the work of Cézanne and would work side by side developing similar but contrasting styles of a new form of painting.

Braque enlisted in the French Army in 1914, saw active service and was decorated twice for bravery. He was severely injured and hospitalised before finally resuming painting in 1916. He worked closely with Juan Gris and his style became softer and looser. In the 1930s he experimented with pottery and in 1937 won the Carnegie Prize. In 1960 Braque was awarded the Grand Croix de la Légion d'Honneur and in 1961 a full retrospective exhibition of his work was held in the Louvre, Paris; the first time a living artist had been accorded such an honour. Braque's work now resides in most major museum collections throughout the world and he was the first French artist to be honoured with a state funeral when he died in 1963.

A woven linen curtain fabric from the series 'Saison Happily Married' by the Cubist painter and printmaker Georges Braque depicts large circular shapes on a light brown surface, in which different images are drawn each time, both figuratively and non-figuratively. Lemons, bulls, horses, fruit bowls, cups and hourglasses on circles of green, black, brown, beige and grey was the only collaboration Braque engaged in with Bloomcraft.

Saison Happily Married, 1956
Woven linen
112 x 83cm
Bloomcraft Fabrics



Antoni Clavé (1913 - 2005)

Antoni Clavé was born in Barcelona and attended the L'Escuela des Artes y Oficios, becoming a house painter's apprentice in 1927. In 1932 Clavé was employed at the firm of Cinaes designing weekly cinema posters whilst also working for a children's magazine and designing advertising posters. During the Spanish Civil War, Clavé served as a draughtsman for the Republican government before fleeing to France where he settled in Paris in 1939 drawing comics and working as an illustrator.

During the 1940s Clavé's painting showed the stylistic influence of Bonnard, Vuillard, Rouault and especially Picasso, whom he met in 1944. From 1946 he worked on designs for ballet and theatre in Paris, Munich, London and New York. From 1954 Clavé devoted himself to painting, with his paintings becoming less figurative and more abstract. After one-man shows in museums and galleries in Zurich, Barcelona, Paris and Tokyo, Clavé was given a comprehensive retrospective at the Centre Pompidou Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris in 1978. The Spanish pavilion at the 1984 Venice Biennale was dedicated to Antoni Clavé.

Antoni Clavé was part of a group of young Spanish artists who all collaborated on The Ascher Squares project. This group included Clavé, Pedro Flores, Óscar Domínguez, Francisco Bores, and Emilo Grau-Sala. Clavé was introduced to Zika Ascher through his friendship with Picasso and said of the project: 'In allowing the artist complete freedom of execution and interpretation, Monsieur Ascher opens a new path for printed textiles.' Clavé would later go on to work with Roland Petit on the Ballet des Champs-Élysées. His work in design and fashion led to an impressive two Oscar nominations for Best Art Direction and Best Costume Design for the 1952 film Hans Christian Andersen.

Still Life with Mandolin, 1947
Silk crepe
85 x 89cm
Edition 8/275
Ascher Ltd



Óscar Domínguez (1906 - 1957)

Óscar Domínguez was a Spanish artist best known for his loosely rendered Surrealist paintings whose early years were marred by a serious bone disorder. Moving to Paris at the age of 21, he worked for his father in Les Halles and spent his nights at cabaret clubs. Initially drawn to the Avant-garde artists, he soon became immersed in Surrealism through his friendship with Max Ernst whom he joined in using the Russian technique of decalcomania. He exhibited in Copenhagen, London and Tenerife in 1936 and later at the exhibition "Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism" in New York's Museum of Modern Art. After a first suicide attempt, he settled in a studio in Montparnasse. He took part in the surrealist exhibition of Oslo and exhibited at the Galerie des Beaux Arts in Paris. During World War II he remained in Paris and befriended Picasso. During the late 1940s and early 1950s he exhibited at the Hugo Gallery in New York, Umelecka Besada (Prague), Apollo (Brussels), Georges Moos (Zurich) and the Parisian galleries La Demeure, Diderot and Rive Gauche. He had a longstanding relationship with the influential Marie-Laure de Noailles.

Óscar Domínguez was another of the group of Spanish artists in Paris who collaborated on The Ascher Squares project. In 1947, Domínguez was close friends with Pablo Picasso and his influence can be seen in the work of Domínguez – particularly in this piece. In a letter to Zika Ascher, Domínguez describes an upcoming weekend with Picasso and Francois Gilot during which he (unsuccessfully) plans to attempt to convince Picasso to design a scarf: 'The idea of commissioning designs for head squares from contemporary artists interests me enormously. Art must affect familiar, everyday objects as well as working in stone and on paper'. Óscar Domínguez

Le Jour et la Nuit, 1947
Screen-printed silk crepe
92 x 86cm
Limited edition 68/250
Ascher Ltd



Henri Matisse (1869 - 1954)

Henri Matisse is known primarily as a master painter but was also a master draughtsman, printmaker and sculptor. He is commonly regarded, along with Pablo Picasso, as one of the artists who best helped to define the revolutionary developments in the visual arts throughout the opening decades of the 20th Century. Although he was initially labeled a Fauve, by the 1920s he was being hailed as an upholder of the classical tradition in French painting. His mastery of the expressive language of colour and drawing, displayed in a body of work spanning over a half-century, won him recognition as a leading figure in Modern Art. Matisse was delighted to be approached in 1947 by Zika Ascher for a textile commission. He went on to design a number of designs for Ascher Ltd including the limited edition wall panel, 'Océanie La Mer' inspired by his time in Tahiti, which sold for over \$4.5 Million at Christies in 2011.

Matisse's screen-print Écharpe A was the precursor for the vast screen-printed linen panels Océanie, Le Ciel and La Mer that followed. Dominique Fourcade in his essay 'Something Else' on Henri Matisse – Paper cutouts, said: "Did Matisse's mastery at the end of his life prevail over his vision? The most beautiful and most winning of his cutouts are those, which do not give that feeling. Océanie, le Ciel and Océanie, La Mer: white forms pinned right onto the beige walls of a large room in his apartment (all the surfaces of which, in the end, were entirely covered by them, including the overdoors), they were the first two of Matisse's large cut out compositions. That they are so very sober and discreet accounts for the fact that they have been neglected, even to the present day. Yet one gets the feeling that they represent Matisse as inspired, in a state of constant improvisation and invention, moving ahead into the unknown areas of his problem with a kind of simplicity and freshness of approach that were to fade out, fatally, in his large subsequent compositions. One finds oneself surrounded with almost nothing, yet well and most truly surrounded all the same, immersed in that 'almost nothing' and what a fine thing it would have been had Matisse not deviated from it."

Écharpe A, 1947
Screen-printed in colours on silk twill
93 x 90.5cm
Limited edition re-issue
Ascher Studio 1985



Pablo Picasso (1881 - 1973)

Born in Malaga, Spain and a son of an art teacher, Picasso spent his early years between France and Spain, his first exhibition being in Barcelona in 1900. His melancholy Blue period began in Barcelona and coincided with his move to Paris in 1904 where he befriended the influential writer Gertrude Stein. His work in Paris progressed from the Blue to the more cheerful Rose period and he famously pioneered Cubism with Georges Braque in 1912. His early 1920s work was mainly figurative leading to various styles, including Surrealism by the end of the decade. The 1930s saw an attraction to sculpture and a major retrospective in Paris. By 1936 the Spanish Civil War had profoundly affected Picasso, the expression of which culminated in his painting Guernica (1937) held at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid. In 1939 he exhibited at The Museum of Modern Art, New York. A renowned pacifist, he was deeply committed to the peace movements. He exhibited at The Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris in 1955 and also was commissioned to design textiles in the 1950s and 60s for Fuller Fabrics, USA, Bloomcraft Fabrics & The Peace Movement.

Picadore - the Bloomcraft screen-printed linen that Picasso signed - was celebrated in a Montreal Gazette article dated June 13, 1963. It announced the debut of Picasso signed fabrics. Several of Picasso's original artworks were screen-printed onto fabric over the years that followed and were widely advertised and promoted in the USA to great acclaim.

The Bloomcraft Fabrics – including Musical Fawn – demonstrate how well Picasso's drawings were suited to textile design.



Musical Fawn, 1963
Screen-print on cotton
174 x 121cm
Bloomcraft Fabrics

Picadore, 1963
Screen-print on cotton
80 x 60cm
Bloomcraft Fabrics



John Piper (1903 - 1992)

Born in Epsom in 1903, in 1927 Piper enrolled in The Richmond School of Art and a year later at The Royal College of Art, leaving without graduating in 1929. In the early 1930s Piper exhibited with the London Group and became secretary of the Seven and Five Society which included Henry Moore, Ivon Hitchens, Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth. His early work reflected the trend for abstraction but by the late 1930s he had returned to a more naturalistic style. In 1937 he married the writer Myfanwy Evans. Piper worked on stage designs and costumes for theatre and ballet and on seven operas by Benjamin Britten. He wrote articles on art and architecture and designed stained glass windows and textiles. At the outbreak of the Second World War, Piper was appointed a war artist capturing the effects of the war on the British landscape. These scenes do not always directly relate to bomb-damage but reflect, in Piper's unique way, a sense of loss and nostalgia. He produced textile designs for Asher Ltd, David Whitehead Ltd and Sanderson & Sons Ltd.

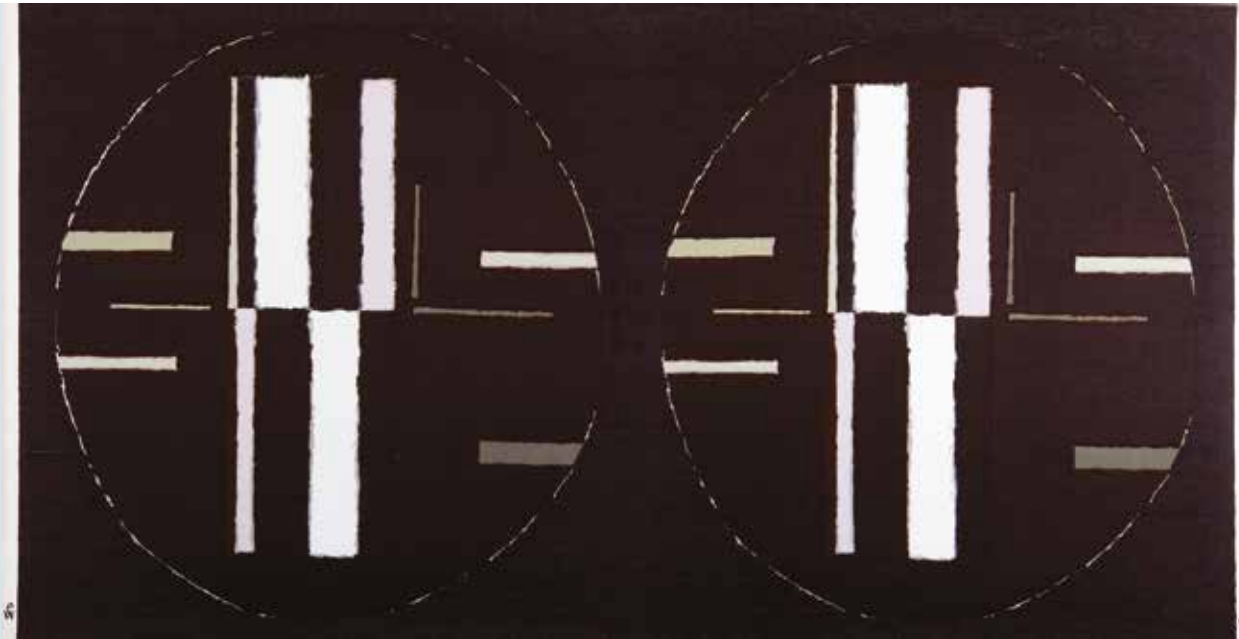
John Piper's Arundel design for Sanderson & Sons Ltd draws on both Piper's collaboration with Patrick Reyntiens light windows for Oundle School Chapel from 1954 as well as the carved figures on the base of the tomb of Thomas, 5th Earl of Arundel in the Fitzalan Chapel of Arundel Castle and the 10th Earls tomb at Chichester Cathedral. The textile itself draws from the imagery of stained glass. One of five designs, used to celebrate Sanderson's centenary in 1960, the design is screen printed on Sanderlin: a cotton fabric with a permanent glaze finish developed at Sanderson's Uxbridge Print Works.

Arundel, 1960
Woven linen
91 x 114cm
Arthur Sanderson & Sons Ltd



The abstract motifs of Piper's Brittany – a richly coloured work on cotton produced by David Whitehead - can be seen clearly in the gouache, cut marbled paper collage designs 'Poelfoen' and 'Brittany Beach'; similar lithographs were also completed after a family holiday in Brittany in 1960. This textile was a part of David Whitehead's 'Living Art Collection' launched in the late 1960s.

Brittany, 1969
Screen-printed on cotton
110 x 112cm
David Whitehead Ltd



Alan Reynolds (1926 - 2014)

Alan Reynolds was an artist whose career falls into two halves: the neo-romantic landscape painter of the 1950s and 60s and the constructivist artist that followed. After military service in World War II Reynolds trained in Hanover as a schoolmaster. The writings of Paul Klee had a profound influence on him and he returned to England to study at Woolwich Polytechnic and The Royal College of Art which he attended throughout the early 1950s. He taught at The Central School from 1954 - 61 and St Martin's from 1961 - 90 and first exhibited with the London group in 1950 and from 1952 - 74 with the Redfern Gallery, London. He exhibited in many national and international exhibitions and his work is held in public collections including The Tate, London; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; and The National Galleries of New South Wales, Adelaide and Melbourne. His Commissions for Edinburgh Weavers are amongst the best possible examples of Modern Artist textiles.

Based on the painting Black Ovoid (1962) purchased by Alastair Morton from The Redfern Gallery the same year, Reynolds moved on from his more organic forms to a more geometric form by 1963. Legend, based on landscape and archaeology reflected the large circular forms of his painting and under Morton's direction was made in only one colour-way as a dark and powerful silk screen-print. Legend broke new ground for design in textiles and won a Design of the Year award in 1965.

Legend, 1963 - 64
Screen-printed on satinised cotton
63 x 122cm
Edinburgh Weavers Ltd



Alistair Morton said of Crystalline Image: '[It] has a strong vertical orientation. An ovoid form with a fragmented crystalline structure is the focus of this design, positioned horizontally, but with shafts steaming downwards creating a strong vertical axis.' The jewel-like composition, based on a watercolour called August Image – Crystalline, from a series dating from 1958-9, which was transformed by Alastair Morton into a spectacular jacquard weave. It displays an astonishing variety of weave structures, colours and textures of yarn at £5.15s 6d per yard, this was one of the costliest textiles in the range reflecting the richness and intricacy of the cloth.

Crystalline Image, 1961
Jacquard woven cotton and rayon
112 x 117cm
Edinburgh Weavers Ltd

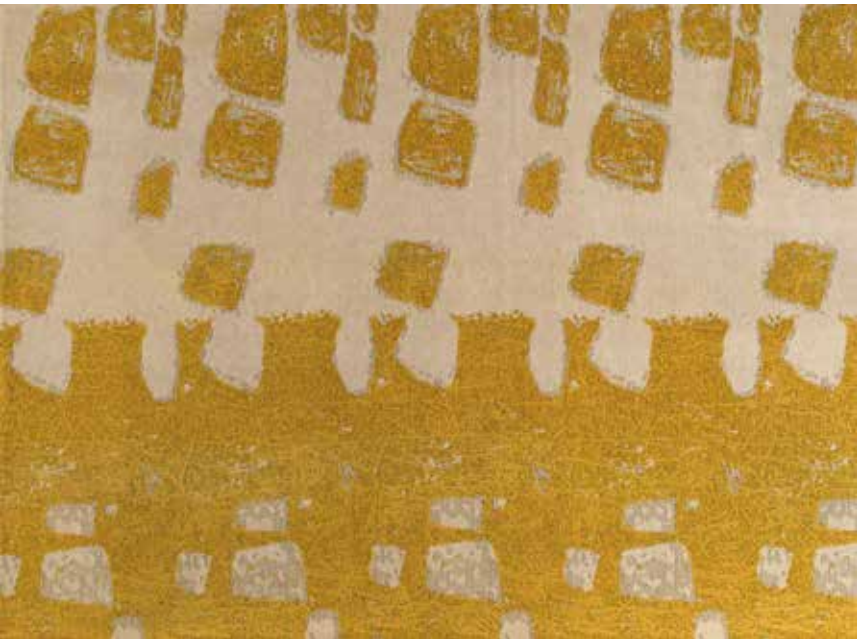


Keith Vaughan (1912 - 1977)

John Keith Vaughan was a British self-taught painter. During the war Vaughan formed friendships with the painters Graham Sutherland and John Minton, with whom after demobilisation in 1946 he shared premises. Through these contacts he formed part of the Neo-Romantic circle of the immediate post-war period. However, Vaughan rapidly developed his own style, which moved him away from the Neo-Romantics; concentrating on studies of male figures, his works became increasingly abstract. Vaughan worked as an art teacher at The Camberwell College of Arts, Central School of Art and later at The Slade School and is also known for his journals, selections from which were published in 1966 and more extensively in 1989 after his death.

Fisherman was based on a lithograph 'The Old Seaweed Hoist' (1953) that showed two men with lobster pots and a boat on shore likely to be Mevagissey in Cornwall, which Vaughan visited in 1948. Vaughan produced a number of designs for Edinburgh Weavers including the staggering 'Adam' jacquard weave alongside other screen-prints.

Fisherman, 1956
Screen-printed cotton crepe
80 x 106cm
Edinburgh Weavers Ltd



William Scott (1913 - 1989)

William Scott was a painter of both Irish and Scottish descent who studied at Belfast College of Art and later at The Royal Academy Schools in London. His early work focused on still-lives before taking influence from the great American Abstract Expressions of the 1950s including Kline, Rothko and Pollock and developing a more abstract style. He represented Great Britain at the Venice Biennale in 1958, one of many occasions in which his work was chosen by the British Council to be exhibited abroad. The 1960s saw retrospective exhibitions in Zurich, Hanover, Berne and Belfast with major shows in London, Tokyo, Paris, Brussels, Copenhagen, Oslo and Rotterdam. He designed a number of important textiles for both Edinburgh Weavers and David Whitehead Ltd and in 1972 The Tate mounted a major retrospective of his work, which included more than 125 paintings dating from 1938 onwards. He received honorary doctorates from The Royal College of Art, London, Queen's University Belfast and Trinity College Dublin. He also taught at Bath Academy of Art. In 1984 Scott was elected a Royal Academician.

Skail, like all of Scott's textiles designs, was a great success and was exhibited alongside his paintings on at least two occasions during the 1960s; including the Modern Art in Textile Design exhibition at the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester in 1962. The artwork was painted to scale and executed in gouache and wax resist - the wax producing the contrasts that show so clearly in the final textile. It was produced in four colourways (black, yellow, dark green and flame orange). The contrasting colours symbolise the rocky cliffs and sea or sky of the Bay of Skail on the west coast of Orkney, close to the Neolithic settlement of Skara Brae, which Scott also used as inspiration for a screen-print made for Edinburgh Weavers during the same period.

Skail (Yellow), 1959
Jacquard Woven Wool
117 x 178cm
Edinburgh Weavers Ltd



Hans Tisdall (1910 - 1997)

Hans Tisdall was born in Munich, Germany as Hans John Knox Aufseeser. In 1928 he entered The Academy of Fine Art in Munich and studied at The Berlin Akademie. He lived and studied in Paris, Switzerland and London where he had a studio opposite Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell from the Bloomsbury Group. In 1935 he was commissioned to produce large mural pictures for the University Settlement, Wapping. In 1936 he was awarded the Medal of Honour at the International Exhibition in Paris for work on the British Pavilion. He produced textile designs for Warner and Sons, Edinburgh Weavers, Donald Brothers and Allan Walton. His mural work included a commission with Edward Bawden for the Michael Rachlis’ International Building Club in Park Lane. During the Second World War he joined the Civil Defence Corps and worked for the Ministry of Information. In 1941 he married Isabel Gallegos, the daughter of a Spanish painter, who worked as a stylist for Edinburgh Weavers. In 1945 he held his first solo show at the Leger Galleries, London. Others followed also in France and Germany. He taught at the Central School of Art between 1947 and 1962. In 1950 he won a competition to design the entrance to the funfair at The Festival of Britain’s South Bank site. His textile patterns are often large in scale and owe much to his experience as a mural painter – such as his design ‘Pheasant Moon’ for Edinburgh Weavers, 1960.

Pheasant Moon was one of ten patterns designed by Tisdall in the late 1950s and early 60s. Many of his dynamic cursive designs were larger than life and the repeat for Pheasant Moon was a vast 220cm, taking several screens to produce. Regardless of its huge scale the design has a delicacy and beauty with an entirely effective use of space.

Pheasant Moon, 1960
Screen-printed on cotton
112 x 202cm
Edinburgh Weavers Ltd

Roger Fry (1886 - 1934)

Roger Fry was to become one of the most important art critics of his time. He studied painting in London and Paris before returning to London in 1893 to work under Walter Sickert. He was elected a member of NEAC the same year. In 1903 he held his first solo show at the Carfax Gallery and helped found The Burlington Magazine. He organised two post-impressionist exhibitions in London in 1910 and 1912 and opened the exhibition Manet and The Post-Impressionists at the Grafton Galleries. He was regarded in England as the apostle of Modern Art and was involved with various artists’ groups. He was the founder and motivator behind the Omega Workshops, which flourished between 1913 and 1919. With his appearance in 1920 of Vision and Design - a collection of articles and essays, Fry’s influence as a critic and arbiter of taste was further extended. A painter and printmaker in his own right, Fry was a central member of the Bloomsbury Group. His work as critic and exhibition organiser made him a key influence upon Modern Art in Britain.

Vanessa Bell (1879 - 1961)

Vanessa Bell was born in London, the eldest of four children and sister to writer Virginia Woolf. In 1901 she began studying at The Royal Academy Schools, under John Singer Sargent. Following the death of her parents, Vanessa and her siblings moved to Bloomsbury, where regular meetings with other artists and intellectuals led to the formation of The Bloomsbury Group. She founded the exhibiting group, The Friday Club in 1906 and joined The New English Art Club. Bell exhibited her work in the influential Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition at the Grafton Galleries, London - a landmark show organised by Roger Fry including notable works contributed by Matisse and Picasso. Alongside Fry and Grant, Bell co-founded The Omega Workshop, an artists’ co-operative for Decorative Arts that operated between 1913 and 1919. She had her first solo exhibition at the Omega Workshops in 1916 and another at London’s Independent Gallery in 1922. She exhibited her work internationally in exhibitions in Paris, Zurich and Venice. Her work is held by numerous public collections and was the subject of a major retrospective at Dulwich Picture Gallery in 2017.

Maud was one of only six designs for Omega Workshop and was probably named after Lady Maud Cunard, the Bohemian society figure who was as eccentric as the design she inspired. The fabric was made through a combination of block and hand-work through stencils, that from the back appear brushed in through a metal stencil, rather than pushed through via a wooden block, which would have left uniform edges round the colours. Areas where the colour has bled out from underneath the stencil shows clear intentions that stencils were the main, if not only, means of printing ‘Maud’.

The overall effect is a mix of saturated and lighter washes of colour; this bold combination of black lines and broken-off blocks of colour is found in a few other Omega designs and is striking for its anticipation of the Deco fabrics of the 1920s and 30s that followed. While Fry wore Maude pyjamas to a party for the Ballets Russes in 1918 and Grant used it in an appliqué costume designed for Jacques Coqueau’s avant-garde production of Twelfth Night in Paris in 1914; the pattern may have proved too challenging for ordinary clothing. This Maud textile features in the 1917 Roger Fry portrait of Nina Hamnett. Although Hamnett stated that Fry was the author, the attribution to Bell is based on the fact that a drawing very close to Maud was found in her studio upon her death in 1961.

Maud, 1913
Printed linen panel
80 x 45cm
Manufactured by Besselievre
at Maromme Rouen, France
for Omega Workshops



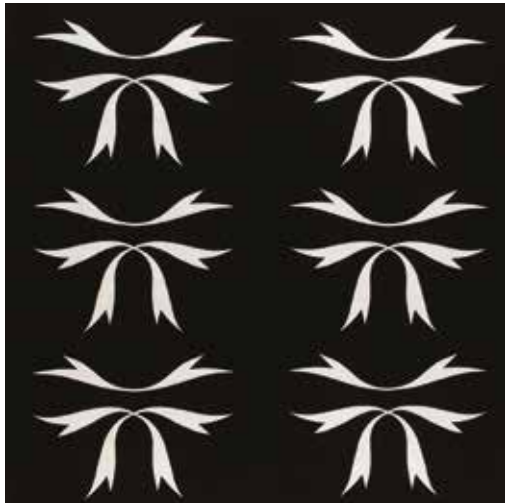


Nicolas de Staël (1914 - 1955)

Nicolas de Staël, born 1914 in St. Petersburg, the son of a wealthy baron, was a Russian-French painter known for his highly abstract landscape painting created using thick layers of paint. A dedicated artist who lived for painting, de Staël achieved both wealth and fame in his lifetime. His work shows the influence of Cezanne, Matisse, Picasso, Braque and Léger as well as the Dutch masters Rembrandt and Vermeer. His own highly distinctive and abstract style is similar to the near-contemporary American Abstract Expressionist movement but developed independently. In 1919 the Russian Revolution forced the family into exile in Poland. Within 2 years his parents were dead and de Staël was sent to study in Brussels where in 1932 he entered the Royal Academy of Arts. In the 1930s he travelled throughout Europe, including Spain, Italy, Morocco and Algeria eventually settling in Paris in 1938. During the late 1940s and 50s de Staël had considerable commercial successes both in Europe and the USA.

Nicolas de Staël's participation in the Ascher Squares project was a result of his friendship with the artists Georges Braque and André Lansky. Whilst Braque never did create a design for the project, he was lifelong friends with Enda Ascher (Zika Ascher's cousin) and provided invaluable introductions to many artists in Paris. Ribbon Design is one of four similar designs that de Staël created for Ascher. His work with its thick layers of impasto and three-dimensionality was ill suited to screen-printing, however through trial and error and the use of many different textured screens a good reproduction of his design was finally achieved.

Ribbon Design, 1947
Screen-printed rayon
89 x 89cm
Printers proof from limited edition of 175
Ascher Ltd



Paule Vézelay (1892 - 1984)

In 1926, the British artist Marjorie Watson-Williams moved to Paris and adopted the name 'Paule Vézelay'. By the early 1930s she had become an active member of the Parisian avant-garde where she lived with the Surrealist artist André Masson and met Kandinsky, Mondrian, Miro, Magnelli and Jean Arp. In 1934, Vézelay joined Abstraction-Création and exhibited in France, Italy and Holland. The artists of Le Groupe Espace, founded in Paris in 1951, were concerned with space in art and were influenced by the pre-war movements of Constructivism and Neo-Plasticism. Vézelay exhibited with them and became president of the British branch of Le Groupe Espace. Her early work was figurative, but apart from her Surrealist-inspired works from the early 1930s and her wartime drawings, she became one of the first British artists to commit to the abstract movement. Vézelay lived in France until forced by the war to return to England in 1939. She provided designs for textiles for Edinburgh Weavers and had almost disappeared from public view until The Tate Gallery retrospective exhibition of her work in 1983 held the year before she died. Vézelay's work is represented in museums and public collections in Britain and abroad.

Born Marjorie Watson-Williams, Paule Vézelay trained in London and spent much of her time in Paris from the 1920s onward, finally settling there in 1926 when she adopted the name Paule Vézelay to obscure both her nationality and her gender.

The Tate Gallery included Vézelay's textile designs in its 2017 retrospective exhibition on her work. Originally commissioned in the late 1940s by Ascher, in the 1950s Vézelay created a series of simple but striking abstract patterns for Heals composing of flat shapes floating on dark backgrounds. Vézelay was considered by many including Paul Nash to be a key figure of the Modern Art movement.

Harmony, 1956
Screen-printed on cotton
121 x 122.5cm
Heals & Son Ltd



Ben Nicholson (1894 - 1982)

Ben Nicholson was born on April 10, 1894 in Denham, Buckinghamshire. Both his parents were painters and Nicholson attended The Slade School of Fine Art in London from 1910 - 11. His first solo show was at the Adelphi Gallery in London in 1922 and shortly thereafter he began abstract paintings influenced by Synthetic Cubism. By 1927 he had initiated a primitive style inspired by Henri Rousseau and early English Folk Art. From 1931 Nicholson lived in London; his association with Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore dates from this period. In 1932 he and Hepworth visited Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso in France where they were encouraged to join Abstraction-Créatio. After moving to Cornwall with his wife Barbara Hepworth in 1939, he resumed painting landscapes and added color to his abstract reliefs. He was given retrospectives at the Venice Biennale in 1954 and at The Tate Gallery and The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam in 1955. Nicholson moved to Switzerland in 1958 and began to concentrate once more on painted reliefs. In 1968 he was awarded the Order of Merit by Queen Elizabeth II.

In 1918 Ben Nicholson's sister Nancy married the poet Robert Graves with whom she had four children. Following her divorce from him she lived with Geoffrey Taylor near Sutton Veny in Wiltshire, establishing Poulk Prints in 1929 and later renaming it the Poulk Press, which printed fabric and paper in limited numbers. Around this time her brother created several different designs, sometimes in collaboration with his wife Barbara Hepworth, of prints that were made using blocks of linoleum. They often incorporated one reversed impression as a 'signature', as well as a vertical or horizontal red line appearing at intervals across the pattern.

In the late 1940s Nicholson gave many of the blocks to his sister Nancy who used them to print editions which she sold, alongside her own textiles at Poulk Press, in London. In 1937 Nicholson also produced six woven and printed designs for his friend Alastair Morton, of Edinburgh Weavers, which were marketed as part of the Constructivist range.

Princess, 1949
Hand block printed cotton
57 x 73cm
Poulk Press



Ashley Havinden (1903 - 1973)

After attending Christ's Hospital, Horsham, Havinden was first a trainee at a printing company in Watford and later joined the advertising agency W.S. Crawford, becoming their Art Director in 1929 and then Vice-Chairman of the company. Havinden attended evening classes at Central School of Arts and Crafts in 1933, taking drawing lessons from Henry Moore. He became friends with many artists of the Modern Movement and from 1937 often exhibited alongside them. Alistair Morton commissioned him to create textile designs for Edinburgh Weavers where his modernist paintings adapted easily to furnishing textiles. In advertising, Havinden created the signature house style for Simpson of Piccadilly, Liberty's store in Regent Street and KLM Airlines. He was a member of the Display Committee for the British Pavilion at the 1937 Paris Exposition and during the Second World War designed posters for the Ministry of Information. He was a founder member and later President of the Society of Industrial Artists and Designers, twice Chairman of the London College of Printing, Governor of Chelsea College of Arts and of The Central School of Arts and Crafts. For his services to industrial design Havinden received an OBE in 1951.

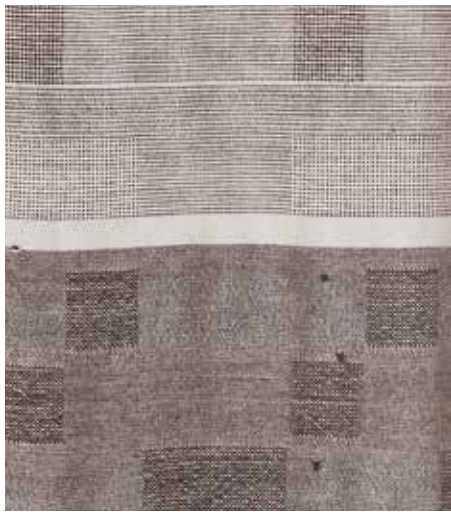
Though issued by Sanderson in 1956 there is some question as to when Organic Abstract for British designer Ashley Havinden's textile was originally commissioned. The design is the organic modernist style of the late 1930s, particularly associated with the Mars Group – Edward McKnight Kauffer's poster for a Mars Group Exhibition of 1938 is closely related. Of more direct significance is Ashley Havinden's textile of 1937 for Edinburgh Weavers – Ashley's Abstract. Many signature stylistic traits of Havinden's are shared by these two textiles: the abstract designs contained within the 1956 textiles' organic forms are so closely related to a series of abstract paintings and drawings by the artists from the late 1930s that they appear to have been directly derived from them. Yet the design also echoes the Crystal Structure designs from the 1951 Festival of Britain's Festival Pattern Group, where textiles used at the Festival were based on atomic structures and accurate crystal structure designs.

Organic Abstract, 1956
Screen-print on cotton
107 x 93cm
Sanderson & Son Ltd



Common Threads Makers and Contributors

See page 78 for full events programme



Catarina Riccabona

Catarina Riccabona is a textile designer/artist based in South East London who specialises in hand-weaving. Her work incorporates one-off interior pieces, throws and, more recently wall hangings using paper yarn and raffia.

She loves working with her hands and enjoys the flexibility and the spontaneous changes that are possible when weaving by hand, creating large compositions that feature sections of juxtaposed weave structures.

Her practice is based on environmental values and she takes direct inspiration from the materials she uses, working with a well-researched selection of yarns - predominantly natural (unbleached, undyed) linen in the warp. For weft yarns she works with linen, hemp, wool, alpaca and second-hand or recycled yarns. Where possible she uses undyed yarns to avoid or minimise the use of chemicals and waste of water in their processing.

Her practice often incorporates the use of plant-dyed wool from a woman in Finland who grows all the ingredients in her own garden and dyes small batches of local rare breed wool by hand. The result is yarns that contain subtle and unpredictable nuances.



Catarina also uses recycled linen that comes direct from a British company who re-spin industrial surplus into new yarn. The colours are what they are depending on what is available at the time.

She also introduces colour is by collecting “waste warps” (warp remnants) from weave colleagues. When a weaver cuts the work off the loom, there is about one meter of warp that cannot be woven and usually goes to waste. These form hundreds of individual lengths of yarn that she collects and knots back together to form a continuous string that can then be used to weave with. During weaving the little knots appear all over the cloth and form a distinct design feature that is reminiscent of the hand-made look and feel of tribal textiles, with their natural character, which has always had a strong appeal for her.



Celia Pym

‘Mending’ is a workshop by artist Celia Pym that explores textile repair, how you do it and why you do it by inviting participants to work on repairing any garments that they own and that have holes. It considers the tenderness and care of mending, as well as aiming to practice techniques and develop skills in woven and ‘knitted’ darning.

Pym has been exploring mending garments since 2007 with extensive experience of small everyday holes, at heels, elbows, in pockets as well as working on more dramatic damage, from water damage, animal nesting and moths issues. Her interests are around the evidence of damage – through repair we are invited to look closely at where garments and cloth have become worn down and thin. In clothing this wearing is often to do with use and how the body moves. She says “I like that darning is often small acts of care and paying attention to where things fray and wear out.”

Most recently her work has been included in the Woman’s Hour Craft Prize, V&A Museum and Between Things, The Minories, Colchester. A three year engagement with the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco’s costume collection culminated in a newly commsission work: Flying Gold Cape, 2018. She mended and took on the road a gold cape from their archive, which 63 people wore and performed in. She is currently a visiting lecturer in textiles at the Royal College of Art.

Hope’s Sweater 1951, 2011
Moth-eaten sweater and darning
30 x 40cm



Zoë Ritchie

Zoë Ritchie says of her practice as a weaver: “I knew colour was going to play a big part in my life and living remotely was always going to happen. I grew up down a mile long bumpy track and it seemed to me like the middle of nowhere. We were self-sufficient as much as we could be and growing, harvesting and making everything has moulded my life.”

Zoë spent a career working with colour in fashion and interior decorating all over the world but it is the remote west coast of Scotland and the area of Argyll that really gripped her. Her weaving brings together traditional craft and unusual designs, combining texture and colour to create naturally hand-dyed and woven wearable garments.

“I taught my-self to weave, amongst the chaos of children, when my husband brought me home a wee table loom,” she says. “At this point I struggled to find the colours I really wanted so embarked on an extraordinary journey of dyeing my own wool naturally with flowers, leaves, roots and bark. Now, with the endless subtle range of colour I can get from plants, I have the freedom to create and weave a moment of where I live.”

For our Process Weekend’s events Zoë presents ‘Weaving the Landscape’ showing her natural-dyeing techniques. Her talk on the ancient art of dyeing with plants explores the fascinating process of how to extract dye from natural sources such as bog myrtle, thistle, or heather, which is inspired by the wild coastal fringes of Argyll.

Dovecot

Dovecot is a world-renowned tapestry studio in the heart of Edinburgh and a landmark centre for contemporary art, craft and design. Established in 1912, Dovecot continues a century-long her-itage of collaboration with international artists to make exceptional and engaging works of art.

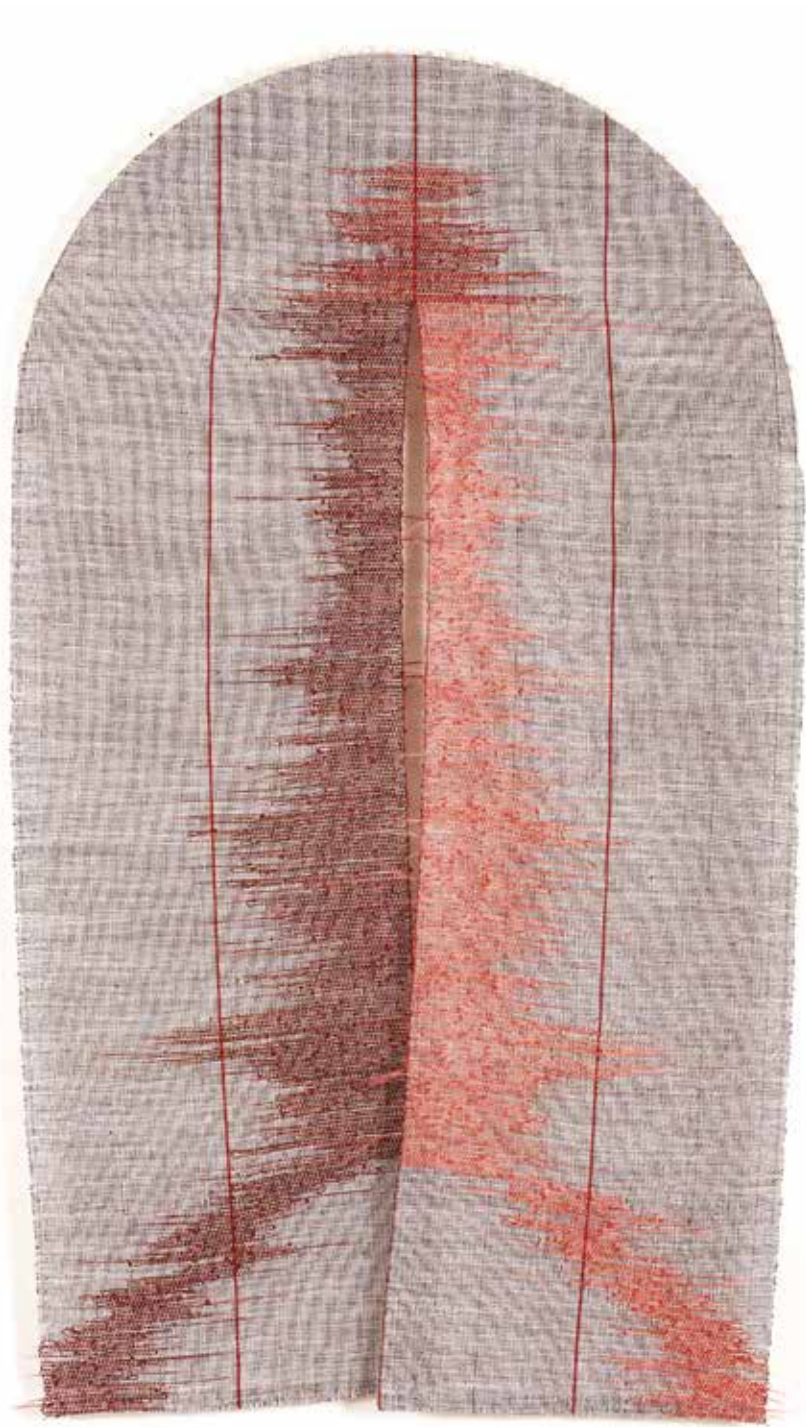
Dovecot Studios undertake public and private commissions for tapestries and fine art rugs, with recent projects that include ‘The Caged Bird’s Song’, a tapestry with Turner Prize-winning artist Chris Ofili for The Clothworkers’ Company and a major exhibition at The National Gallery, London in 2017; ‘The Perse School Rug’ created for the new Peter Hall Performing Arts Centre in Cambridge, with artist Victoria Morton and architect Haworth Tompkins; and the ‘Butterfly’ tapestry with artist Alison Watt for Scottish Opera and the Theatre Royal in Glasgow.

Founded in 1912 by the Marquess of Bute, a patron of the arts, the first weavers at Dovecot - Gordon Berry and John Glassbrook - came from the renowned William Morris Studios at Merton Abbey in Wimbledon. Dovecot’s first commission was for a series of monumental tapestries for the Marquess’ own home at Mount Stuart on the Isle of Bute. In 1946, the Studios were incorporated as The Edinburgh Tapestry Company. Dovecot soon became established as the leading contemporary fine art tapestry studio, with works commissioned for major public, corporate and academic institutions worldwide.

As a key player in the renaissance of tapestry in the 20th century, Dovecot’s Master Weavers have worked with leading contemporary artists including David Hockney, Henry Moore, Frank Stella and R.B. Kitaj. The 21st century has created exciting opportunities for tapestry with the opening of Dovecot Studios as a gallery space, exhibitions focused on tapestry as well as contemporary artists exploring new ways of working with textiles.



Photo credit: Shannon Crofts



Marianne Kemp

Marianne Kemp specialises in working with horsehair, combining a passion for weaving with craftsmanship she creates unique hand-woven pieces. After graduating from the Art Academy in The Hague in 1999 she received a scholarship to Chelsea College of Art & Design in London. During her time in London she became fascinated by the possibilities offered by horsehair, the lustre of which has had an extraordinary effect on her work.

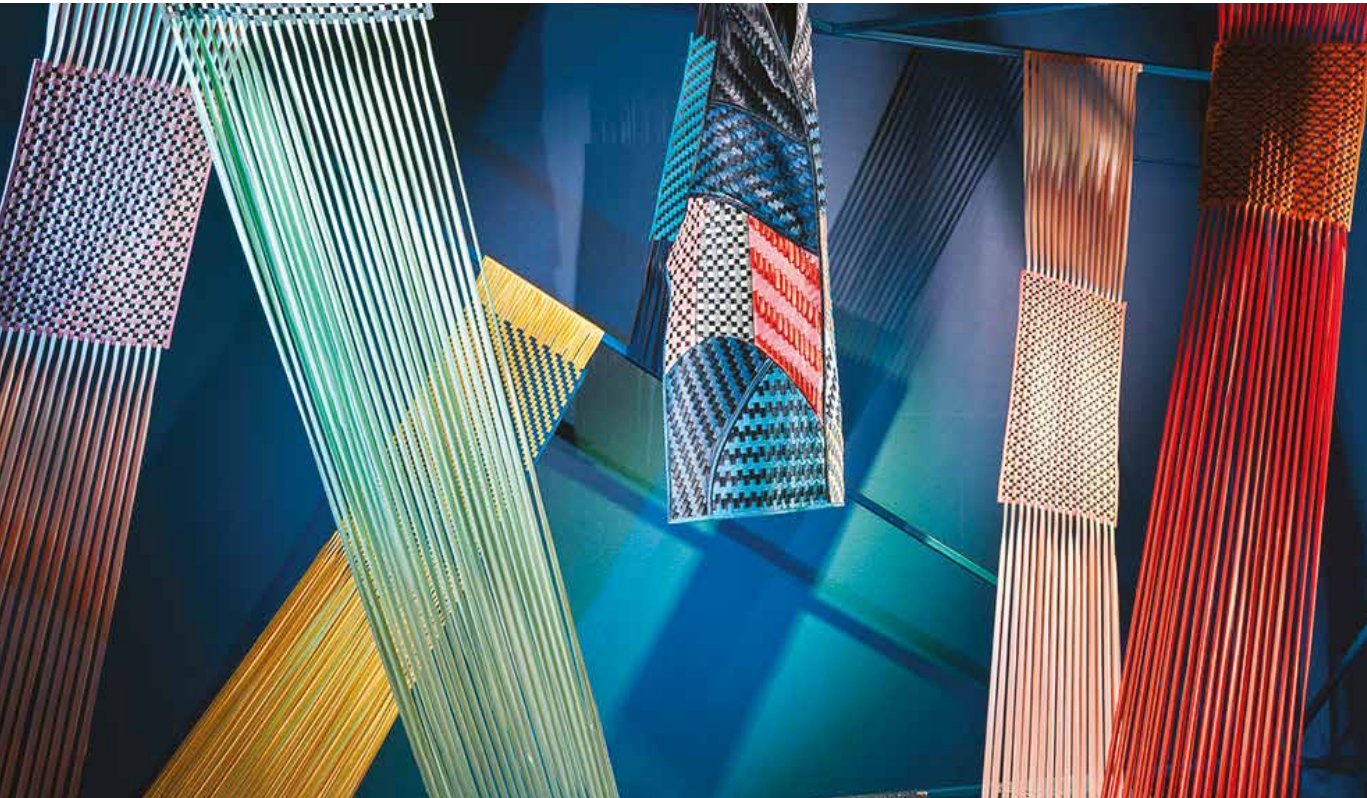
On closer inspection of her pieces we can see that each has its own unique character not only granted by her unconventional weaving techniques but also by combining texture, movement and colour. Marianne Kemp’s designs carry an indisputable signature; “I’m fascinated by the movement of the weavings, how the horsehair manifests in the net of the weaving technique”, she says. Her pieces can be shiny and smooth, organic, wild, flexible and stiff but the outstanding texture and unique use of colour, make them incredibly tactile.

Marianne takes inspiration from her imagination with influences from the outer world: street-life, fashion, architecture as well as nature. Travelling around Europe and outside to Mexico, Japan, Africa and Mongolia has stimulated her interest in traditional art and design and enabled her to explore new ways of creating a dialogue between architecture and textile art by creating more three dimensional effects and shapes.

Amorph. Bubiŕ, 2017

Woven horsehair

160 x 95cm



Martina Spetlova

Originally from the Czech Republic and now based in East London, Martina Spetlova is a graduate of the renowned MA Fashion course at Central Saint Martins.

Spetlova's scientific background influences her uniquely experimental approach to making that restlessly challenges materials, elements and expectations, forever scanning the horizon for innovative approaches to her work and ethical transparency. The result is M WOVEN - her first luxury hand woven bag collection, which marries ethical values with form and function through purposeful design and customisation. Each bag is designed to evolve with the wearer and their ever-changing lifestyle so there are a variety of options in wearing by hanging and holding of each style.

Alongside her uncompromising design aesthetic, Spetlova is committed to sustainability and ethical sourcing throughout her supply. She partners with sustainable and organic suppliers, and her leather is hand woven by Syrian artisan refugees in a women's social enterprise. The aim is to create a stable income to support these displaced communities and promote craftsmanship.

The women Spetlova is working with all fled Syria for a better and safer life in Turkey. The city of Istanbul, which is now home for these women, has taken in over 560,000 refugees over the past eight years. These men, women and children rely on work through a non-governmental organisation to help make ends meet. Spetlova has partnered with Small Project Istanbul, an NGO that supports around 150 families.

To tell all the stories hidden behind her collection of hand-made accessories, she now applies cutting-edge Provenance technology so that each bag comes with a scannable chip detailing its materials, sourcing and processes, taking steps towards greater transparency and histories of her product. With this technology Spetlova can easily gather and verify stories, keeping them connected and embedding them anywhere online to be viewed.



MA Material Futures

MA Material Futures at Central Saint Martins is a two-year Masters course dedicated to exploring how we all will live in the future through trans-disciplinary practice and expert collaboration. Through collaboration, risk-taking and blurring the boundaries between craft, science and technology the course aims to look beyond existing disciplines to anticipate our future needs, desires and challenges for the 21st century.

Believing that it is only by observing and analysing how we live today that we can begin to explore how we might occupy tomorrow, the course considers the current and future context of design decisions, combining social, scientific, political, environmental, ecological and economic inquiry and insights to help inform future design scenarios, material propositions and research-led speculations.

Jack Newbury, Maël Henaff and Rachel Foley, Design Researchers from MA Material Futures, have explored the power that innovative engineering has to create a better future. Taking inspiration from the Perpetual Plastic Project and using open source resources, the researchers created a number of machines to turn discarded plastic into 3D printing filament:

Shredder machine

Shreds discarded plastic objects into small flakes making it easier to melt.

Extrusion machine

Extrusion is a process where plastic flakes are put into a hopper and extruded into a thread of plastic printing filament.

3D Printer

Built using Ultimaker's open design plans, making it easier to print using the new filament, the design of the 3D printer allows users to use materials of any type to print with.

As less than a fifth of all plastic is recycled globally, the Plastics Workshop - included as part of Messums Wiltshire's Process Weekend events - demonstrates how on the spot recycling is possible and how we can transform plastic waste streams into usable products.



The Nigerian Riot Girl
Embroidered Couture

Jacky Puzey

Jacky Puzey originally trained in Fine Art working in installation, photography and later costume and pattern-cutting. In 2014, she completed her PhD in Fashion, Textiles and Visual Culture at Bath Spa University where she honed her skills in digital embroidery and tailoring. She also received funding from Arts Council England to produce a collaborative theatrical project, Shade, which focused on fashion, dress and food as a cultural exchange.

Combining traditional embroidery skills with digital technology, Jacky uses diverse textiles such as fur, feathers, tweed and organza with digital embroidery to create her distinctive imagery and design signature. The animal kingdom is a constant source of inspiration for her with designs that include foxes, ravens, hares, koi carp, parakeets and peacocks. However, there is nothing twee about the scenes that she creates – while her work may reference 19th-century allegorical still life paintings, it also speaks of contemporary, urban themes.

Jacky has received several prizes and accolades, including the Hand and Lock Prize for Embroidery 2015 and being selected for the Crafts Council’s national Hothouse business development scheme. Her current collection includes statement cocktail chairs and screens, as well as intricate, embroidered wallpapers.

For Jacky, embroidery is as much about embroidering stories as about creating beautiful and unusual textures. Her workshop for Messums Wiltshire’s Process Weekend, focused on the ‘anatomy of an embroidery’, looks at samples to explore both concept and process. Using her award-winning embroidery piece The Nigerian Riot Girl she looks at the process from concept to drawing to execution, discussing embroidery for couture garments and placement as well as the conceptual design and references of the piece.



Jason Brooks

Jason Brooks has become one of today’s leading fashion and lifestyle illustrators. He is credited as being among the first to bring digital technology to the field of fashion illustration, although the foundation of his work is based upon the skills of traditional and academic drawing and painting. After studying Graphic Design and Illustration at St Martins College of Art, London he began working regularly for British Vogue, winning the Vogue/Sotheby’s Cecil Beaton Award for Fashion Illustration.

Brooks has travelled widely; drawing and painting colorful travel journals from Central America, Europe and Africa, and travel, alongside fashion has continued to be a recurrent theme in his work. This has lead in recent years to the publication of a series of illustrated travel sketchbooks focusing on Paris, London and most recently, *New York Sketchbook*, published by Laurence King. *London Sketchbook* won the Book Illustration Award for 2016 from London’s Victoria & Albert Museum who also hold an impressive collection of Brooks’ work in their permanent prints and drawings archive. His work is included in numerous publications including *100 Years of Fashion Illustration* (Laurence King), *Fashion Illustration Now* (Thames & Hudson), *Stylishly Drawn* (Harry Abrams Inc.) and on the front cover of *New Icons of Fashion Illustration* (Laurence King).



Each year Brooks completes a range of commissions and collaborative projects with clients worldwide. He thrives on the experience of working with individuals, art directors and companies who share his creative vision and desire to create beautiful images with commercial applications.

Brooks’ Master Class for Messums Wiltshire’s Process Weekend explores both experimental and more traditional academic artistic techniques, encouraging people to share his creative vision and desire to create beautiful images with commercial applications.



FASHION SHOW

Joshua Millard

Joshua Millard established his London-based womenswear brand in 2016. After graduating from London College of Fashion in Bespoke Tailoring, he gained experience at Jonathan Saunders and on Savile Row.

Influenced by his farming childhood in southern England, he was forced to find inspiration in what was offered. 'Driven by the integrity of those who surrounded me, I was absorbed by the farmers look throughout the years, observing all the practicalities and layering, the wrong but right attitude. Everything around me was real, honest, beautiful but not perfect. I try to translate these recollections, to create a kind of harmony between my environments.'

His Spring / Summer 2019 collection continues to honour the brand's pastoral identity, whilst simultaneously adopting a more relaxed and playful tone. The collection embraces the signature agrarian fabrics, which include organic cottons, linens, sandwashed silks, and lamb nappa alongside silk and alpaca yarn knits. Inspired by his outdoor upbringing, the collection's aesthetic is a balance of relaxed utilitarian cuts with artful accents of texture and tonal layering. Offering tailoring and outerwear that suggest something new, lasting beyond fast trends.

Sustainability and conscious ethics remain at the core of this brand, which continues to focus upon a transitional wardrobe of longevity, respecting the ethics behind quality and buy. £5 from every product is donated to PlantLife, a partnership that promotes endangered species of wildflower growth in arable habitats. By protecting the future of indigenous Cornfield flowers, they help to guarantee rural biodiversity - a cause that is inherent to the brand.



FASHION SHOW

Henrik Vibskov

The environment, and how humans interact with it, is an unquestionable issue today, which presents questions about awareness and how we can reach a more sustainable approach towards nature and agriculture. Taking farming as the inspiration for his Autumn / Winter 2019 collection, designer Henrik Vibskov reflected on how various ways of growing the food we eat every day - whether in the city or in the countryside - affects both our lives and the planet: *THE RADISH ARM CHARM* encourages us to rethink and develop new methods.

Reflecting both a romantic idea about wild nature and more extreme technologies used in speeding up natural processes such as indoor, vertical and sky farming, green rooftops and urban gardening, the collection is designed to create a clash between a wanting to maintain nature as pure and uninterrupted, and something that we need to interfere with at the same time.

Voluminous silhouettes with details of binding layers together and prints and embroidery reminiscent of flowers, fruit, vegetables, endless fields, and the long human arms in agriculture, are imbued with humor and a slight touch of melancholy - a reminder of the importance of environmental awareness.

Events Programme

PROCESS WEEKEND / COMMON THREADS

Wednesday 27 March TALK: <i>Collecting Textiles</i> with Ashley Gray from Gray M.C.A. 7pm
Friday 26 April VIP RECEPTION AND CATWALK SHOWS by Joshua Millard and Henrik Vibskov 7 - 9pm After party and DJ set 9pm - Midnight
Saturday 27 April TALK AND DEMO: <i>Weaving the Landscape</i> with Zoë Ritchie 10am - 11am TALK: <i>Sustainability in Textiles</i> with Catarina Riccabona 11am - 12 noon 3x15 TALK: <i>Common Threads – Narrative, Process and Collaboration</i> with artists Celia Pym and Freddie Robins and Kate Grenyer (Curator, Dovecot Studios) chaired by Polly Leonard (Editor, Selvedge Magazine) 12.45 - 1.45pm WORKSHOP: <i>Mending</i> with Celia Pym 2pm - 5pm WORKSHOP: <i>Material Propositions</i> by CSM MA Material Futures Fab Lab 2pm - 5pm 3x15 TALK: <i>Common Threads – Can creativity, productivity and sustainability overlap</i> with Galahad Clark (Founder, Vivo Barefoot), Kieran Jones (course leader MA Material Futures) and Martina Spetlova (Founder, M Woven), chaired by Edwina Ehrman (Senior Exhibition Curator at the V&A) 5pm - 6pm
Sunday 28 April WORKSHOP: <i>Fashion Illustration Master Class</i> with Jason Brooks 10am - 12 noon 3X15 TALK: <i>Common Threads</i> with Jacky Puzey (embroidery specialist), Joshua Millard (womenswear designer and tailor) and Connie Gray (fashion curator) 1pm - 2pm WORKSHOP: <i>‘Anatomy of an Embroidery’</i> with Jacky Puzey 2pm - 4pm

To book tickets visit
www.messumswiltshire.com/exhibitions



Henrik Vibskov
Joshua Millard

Fashion show

Friday 26 April 2019 7 - 9pm

DJ SET 9pm - midnight
Superpitcher
Nick AC

Further information and tickets available via:
www.messumswiltshire.com/exhibitions

Thanks to

- Charles Darwent
- Christopher Farr
- Dovecot Studios
- Equator Production
- Freddie Robins
- Gavin Nolan
- Gray M.C.A.
- Helen Chislett
- Henrik Vibskov
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- Laura Gascoigne
- Lisson Gallery
- Paul Hughes Fine Arts
- Richard and Damian Hoare
- James Tregaskes

And the generous support of the Danish Embassy

