

PRESS RELEASE  
*TALES OF THREAD*

18 November 2019 – 5 March 2020

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GALLERY

DUBAI

Custot Gallery Dubai presents 'Tales of Thread', a major exhibition featuring twenty-eight unique and limited edition tapestries, carpets and textile works of art by eighteen internationally renowned modern and contemporary artists, including Etel Adnan, Alice Anderson, Alexander Calder, Eduardo Chillida, Antoni Clavé, Robert Delaunay, Sonia Delaunay, Maurice Estève, Sheila Hicks, Jean Lurçat, René Perrot and Pablo Picasso, among others.

With works dating from the 1960s, 'Tales of Thread' celebrates the recent revival in Textile Art, widely recognised as a frontier of experimentation for interdisciplinary artists. Curated by Laurence Custot and Isaure Bouriez, works by the leading pioneers of the 20th Century renaissance in tapestry making have been selected to weave the intricate relationship between European modernism and medieval craftsmanship.



French artist, Jean Lurçat is credited with the rejuvenation of tapestry in the 1940s, inspiring many well-known artists. His innovations at Aubusson (France) were later seen as the Renaissance of the Tapestry Movement, giving new life to old traditions. A contemporary of Lurçat, René Perrot, widely acknowledged as a master of tapestry design, created exceptionally detailed renderings of nature. On view, 'The Great Waterfall' (1977), is a narrative of the swan song; measuring over eight meters in length, it is a veritable masterpiece. Also on display works by Sonia Delaunay and Pablo Picasso amongst others emphasise their formal ambitions to achieve simplicity of form and colour in abstraction.

Textile Art became firmly embedded into the modern canon through the collaboration between artist and craftsman. The 1960s subsequently witnessed the development of the artist as weaver, illuminating the potential for greater intimate artistic expression. In 1962, Jean Lurçat and Pierre Pauli, the future curator of the Musée des arts décoratifs in Lausanne (Switzerland), held the first International Tapestry Biennial in Lausanne (1962–1995). The event witnessed and contributed to the extraordinary evolution of a medium that graduated from a decorative art to a truly independent art form.

Since the 1960s, the transformative role of the artist as weaver has revolutionised the manifestation and meaning of Textile Art, specifically in the work of Antoni Clavé, Sheila Hicks and Alice Anderson. The works of Clavé are assemblages of various fabrics, such as old carpet and ragged cloth, torn, cut, wrinkled and sewn according to a carefully chosen order. He transformed tapestry making into an almost painterly activity, based on the aesthetic juxtaposition of different fabrics and colours.



Hicks began working with textiles in the 1950s, travelling around the world to study different traditions and techniques of weaving. Her 'Palghat' tapestries from the late 1960s were made during her stay in India; braided cotton ponytails protrude from the centre of the work, bringing three-dimensionality to a traditionally flat medium, revealing an experimental approach that transcended the conventional boundaries of textile manufacture.

Anderson is a London-based performer and artist currently undertaking an artist's residency at the Atelier Calder in Saché (France). In the legendary artist's studio, she continues her research in movement through the 'memorisation' of Calder's studio door. As part of her on-going 'Architecture Data' series, Anderson experiences an intimate knowledge of the physical object through her human body by 'memorising' the architectural elements using copper-coloured thread in a meditative ritual. For the first time, Anderson uses vibrant coloured threads.



Textile Art has received overwhelming recognition from public institutions, museums, and private collectors. Overdue retrospectives of fiber artists have been presented in recent years, such as the ground-breaking monographic exhibition 'Decorum: Carpets and Tapestries by Artists' (2013-2014) at Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, which travelled to Shanghai, and 'Sheila Hicks: Lifelines' at Centre Pompidou Paris in 2018.

Laurence Custot and Isaure Bouriez are proud to present this comprehensive survey of modern and contemporary Textile Art at the Gallery. 'Tales of Thread' aims to contribute towards bringing Textile Art from the fringes of culture into the central fold of Fine Arts.

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Images: Sonia Delaunay, *Automne (Autumn)*, circa 1970, Aubusson tapestry woven in the Pinton Workshop, 220 x 163 cm, edition 1 of 6  
Sheila Hicks, *Palghat Tapestry*, 1966, handwoven cotton, 169 x 99 cm, unique work

Alice Anderson, *Remains from Calder Architecture Data / 2*, 2019, wood, metallic thread, cotton thread, 37 x 37 x 2 cm, unique work

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