

Global  
Narratives  
in Textiles

# The Event of a Thread

**ifa** An exhibition by ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen) in collaboration with Museum of Contemporary Art – Skopje

Curated by Susanne Weiß, Inka Gressel and Jovanka Popova

Image: Yane Calovski and Hristina Ivanoska, Uprooted (detail), 2015.

Ulla von Brandenburg  
Kristina Bozurska  
Yane Calovski and  
Hristina Ivanoska  
Noa Eshkol  
Andreas Exner  
Uli Fischer  
Zille Homma Hamid  
Heide Hinrichs  
Olaf Holzapfel  
Christa Jeitner

Elisa van Joolen &  
Vincent Vulsmas  
Jovan Josifovski  
Eva Meyer &  
Eran Schaerf  
Karen Michelsen  
Castañón  
Judith Raum  
Franz Erhard Walther  
Zorica Zafirovska  
Klelija Zivkovic

along with the  
“Bauhaus Space”,  
a visual archive on  
the history of the  
weaving workshop  
of Bauhaus Dessau  
and Weimar (artistic  
research: Judith  
Raum; design: Jakob  
Kirch; architecture:  
S.T.I.F.F.);

and the artworks from  
the artists in the MoCA  
Skopje Collection: Sonja  
Dimitrova, Dimche  
Koco, Jolanta Owidska,  
Ismet Ramicevic,  
Lisa Rehsteiner, Mira  
Spirovska, Dushko  
Stojanovski, Patricia  
Velasco Wallin.

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# The Event of A Thread Global Narratives in Textiles and The Case of The Museum of Contemporary Art - Skopje

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## Introduction

Textiles are at the heart of the ifa touring exhibition, which focuses on questions including: What inherent meanings and messages can be found in fabrics? What is their cultural significance? How can textiles be ‘read’? What can fabrics tell us about their origins, meanings and social roles? Which traditional textile techniques have artists appropriated, abstracted, relocated and brought back to life? Textiles constitute a locus in which art encounters handicraft, traditions meet the present day, and local knowledge intersects with global relationships.

The exhibition highlights the multiple complex ways in which the participating artists work with textiles. They link personal and aesthetic narratives with the social and economic configuration of a globalized world. In 1965, Bauhaus artist Anni Albers described “the event of a thread” as something multilinear, without beginning or end: more broadly, it signifies constant scope to rethink relations and to restructure connections and contexts.

Artist Judith Raum developed “The Bauhaus Space”, an installation dedicated to the Bauhaus weaving workshop. We encounter rewoven fabrics and historic materials in a specially designed display that unfolds its extraordinary success story in six chapters.

Every part of the world can attest the complex inscription of textiles into cultural and industrial history. In cooperation with local artists, the main body of the exhibition is complemented by artworks that create new narratives relevant to the textile in the local context.

**Susanne Weiß und Inka Gressel**

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The North Macedonian edition of the exhibition “The Event of a Thread”, developed in collaboration with the Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje, unfolds around the concept of “the event” as a disruption in the established order, a transformation introducing new possibilities, radical trespassing challenging traditional views on what textile art is and has the potential to be.

The artists featured engage with the idea of the event as a breach in repressive systems, responding to and embodying historical or social events, inspiring the emergence of new events with their artistic practice.

The research these artists conduct could be considered an event in itself, the result of the process of introducing new materials and techniques in textiles aesthetics, differing from the apolitical views in terms of artwork produced and referring to working with textiles.

The exhibition connects different threads of historical events. The first is the solidarity action originated in 1963, after the devastating Skopje earthquake, when with the support initiated by the Yugoslav cultural scene, and later the global cultural centers of the West and the countries from the East – mirroring Yugoslavia’s political position – not to mention the personal donations of eminent national and international artists, the Museum of Contemporary Art – Skopje became the abode of a remarkable collection of modern and contemporary art, incorporating textile artworks. Applying a process-oriented approach to creating textile art, potentially societal, sentimental, and politically transformative, stories are not simply documented but rather actively woven.

In this context, the artworks featured in the Museum collection in Skopje are exhibited not only as testimonies to the lived experiences and memories emerged from the earthquake, rather as a vivid reminder of how necessary are these interrupted threads of global support and empathy networks, transforming the tragic event of personal and collective loss into a transnational solidarity model.

The second thread links global textile narratives conveyed in the artworks of contemporary artists and their engaged response to recent political events manifested in violence, mass displacement, postcolonialism, in addition to social issues related to labour exploitation, gender issues, problems marginalized people face, etc.

The adaptable and transformative nature distinctive of textile, coincide with the challenges the contemporary world poses, times of geopolitical instability and large-scale migrations. In a political climate marked by detachment and cruelty, textile holds the power to evoke reminiscences of earlier heartfelt humane times, to remind us how precious handicrafts are, to call to compassion and solidarity.

Working with textiles suggests a form of disagreement, knitting active resistance for justice and truth, a creative desire to introduce changes to the material and the world around us, done with eloquence and emotions. Accordingly, the visual solutions imparted on the textile relay the message communicated by the artists, a message of escape from the various oppression forms, systematic but also interpersonal.

Both the artworks from the Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art – Skopje, and those of international and local artists channel their fascination with pre-artistic thinking, and the delicate testimonies of histories woven by autochthonous cultures, erased later by various colonial and other repressive policies.

Interpreted as such, textile is exploited as a subversive tool transforming the inherited matrilineal knowledge and weaving traditions in contemporary activist practices with a broad range of social engagement, the inflection being on the power of togetherness.

Threads are unpredictable in their trajectory. Each fiber possesses certain strength, but entwined with the multitude, it synchronizes, transforming into a more meaningful part of the whole. Similar to this exhibition of artworks inspired by various philosophies, economies, geographies, art histories and visual languages interwoven in a global “fabric of society”. Experiences acquired from personal and collective tragedies transform themselves into the models of endurance, care for the community and the individual and active solidarity.

**Jovanka Popova**

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# Ulla von Brandenburg

## *Flying Geese*

Three patchworks, various fabrics  
232x162 cm; 204,5x140 cm; 207x143 cm  
2017

The point of departure of this series of patchworks is the history of African-American quilts in the “Underground Railroad”, an informal network of secret routes used by enslaved people of African descent in the United States in the early nineteenth century to escape to free states with the help of opponents of slavery, both black and white, free and enslaved. Quilts were encoded with visual information, containing visual advice for the fugitives. The wagon wheel pattern, for instance, indicated to prepare for fleeing.

Von Brandenburg has a personal relationship with quilts and thus a strong fascination for the visual language of these objects. And she refers to fabrics’ potential for memorizing history and stories. The compositions are created using old clothing, curtains, tablecloths, and other fabric remnants, recalling quilting aesthetics and techniques and the “Pattern and Decoration” movement in the United States, as well as modernist uses of forms. In her series, von Brandenburg excerpts parts of the pattern, using it to develop a new patchwork that highlights formal compositions, which in turn can be linked to the history of modern art.

Ulla von Brandenburg: *Women’s history has simultaneously been written through the history of textiles, but I don’t want to reduce themes associated with “fabric” to women’s activity. I admire the work of Franz Erhard Walther just as much, for example. Categorizing textile work narrowly as women’s work is connected to the way power operates in society. (...) I think there is a broader sense in which fabric is associated with revolutionary questions. During widespread strikes in textile factories during the Industrial Revolution, quilts from the “Underground Railway” gave slaves a chance to flee. Every revolutionary movement that calls into question the individual and his or her relationship to the social body is connected, directly or indirectly, to fabric. The tent was the first object made by humans: an object of autonomy and independence. Clothing, which is worn directly on the body, is the first house made of fabric. That is because fabric is, above all, a flexible material: over time, the traces of the body are imprinted on textile fibers.* - Excerpt from a conversation between Ulla von Brandenburg and Ida Soulard

Ulla von Brandenburg (b. 1974) lives and works in Paris. She graduated from the University of Fine Arts of Hamburg in 2004 and studied scenography and media art at Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design from 1995 to 1998. In 2016, von Brandenburg was appointed professor at the Academy of Fine Arts, Karlsruhe. She works at the intersection between theater and the fine arts: in her films, installations, performances, textile works and drawings, she addresses social and historical questions using methods and approaches drawn from theatre. Boundaries between the actor and the viewer, between reality and illusion are blurred by aspects of staging and theatre that

serve as metaphors for human interaction. Central themes in her work include mirrors and shadows, as well as references to cultural history. Her work has been exhibited internationally, at the Biennale di Venezia (2009), the Lyon Biennale (2011), the Sydney Biennale (2014), the Centre Pompidou, Paris (2016), and Power Plant, Toronto. Solo exhibitions include the Produzentengalerie Hamburg, the Whitechapel Gallery, London (2018), the Palais de Tokyo in Paris (2020), the Weserburg Museum für moderne Kunst in Bremen (2022) and the Museo Reina Sofía in Madrid (2023/2024).



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# Kristina Bozurska

## *15 Horror Stories by Women Workers*

Book, Private Print, Publication  
2020

“15 Horror Stories by Women Workers” by Kristina Bozurska is an artistic documentary project published by Private-Print. Primarily, this book is conceived and realized as a fundraising project for support of the disenfranchised labor rights of the women workers in North Macedonia. With every sold book a contribution is made for the activities of the organization “Glasi tekstilec” from Štip, which aims to enable better conditions for the women workers in the textile, leather, and shoemaking industries. On the other hand, the publishing of the book in English underlines the importance of internationalization of the problem and creates a broader space where the voice of these women would echo outside our local context.

The book consists of 15 testimonies by women workers mostly from the textile and the shoemaking industries, but also from other economic sectors, accompanied by drawings made by the artist herself. Bozurska uses a journalistic approach in the book by collecting authentic statements from the women workers. Hence, the book becomes a sort of symbolic pamphlet that disseminates the voices of these women and articulates the artistic engagement to real contribution to the issue of its subject.

On the occasion of May 1, 2021, young activists from the Association for Educational Development “Ekvalis”, translated

several stories from the book and read them with megaphones in front of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, as an action to raise awareness of the abuse of women's labor rights.



## 365(Days)

Stone, cotton, thread  
Dimensions variable  
2018

The “necklaces” made of 365 rocks are a reference to the poem “Days (Denovi)” by Kocho Racin (Кочо Рацин), an important author and socialist activist from our past. And even though it seems like the poem talks about a distant past, it is still relevant to today's social climate, when in the race for profit and daily survival, female workers not only are affected by economic pressure but are additionally burdened with patriarchal expectations.

Kristina Bozurska (1984) graduated from the painting department in the Faculty of Fine Arts, Skopje, and received her MA at the Institute of Cultural Studies, Skopje, with a main research on social art practice. Her interest derives from the intersection of art, pedagogy, and socio-political observations, progressing into practice with elements of participative art that urge to interrupt the “usual” and offer possibilities of transformation. By carefully curating materials and visual



references, she often brings attention to the discarded, forgotten, and useless, questioning the established norms and the dominant consensus. Her solo shows include exhibitions in Bjarred, Sweden; Skopje and Kumanovo, North Macedonia; and Berlin, Germany. Snd has participated in a number of group exhibitions and video art festivals in the country and abroad. She was an artist in residence at ISCP New York (2011) and received a scholarship at the Salzburg Summer Art Academy (2013). She has won several awards: The best video in the category “Nano Minute” of the International Video Festival in Brazil (2008); (YVAA) “Denes” an award for best young artist, Skopje, N. Macedonia (2010), and the BuzArt award at the Art Residence “Togetherness” in Tirana, organized and founded by the Swiss Cultural Fund Albania and gallery Kalo (2019). Currently, she teaches art at the Quality International School of Skopje.

## Hristina Ivanoska and Yane Calovski *Uprooted*

Industrial linen fabric, graphite,  
acrylic paint, textile paint, cotton thread  
750x220 cm  
2015

This impressive textile work, created using a combination of painting, drawing, and sewing techniques, is inspired by the ongoing artistic interest of Ivanoska and Calovski in how contemporaneity shapes our cultural and political reading of the present. The artwork incorporates industrial linen fabric, graphite, acrylic paint, textile paint, and cotton thread, each medium contributing to the overall visual and tactile experience. The references to the universal language of social inequality, lack of empathy, and emotional distance occupying public space, as well as the necessity to capture the spiritual restlessness and the need to create a new community, are woven into the fabric of the artwork, literally and metaphorically.

The statement of Simone Weil (1909-1943), French philosopher, political activist, and mystic, that “Uprootedness is the greatest plague of the 20th century,” has never resonated more than today considering the human suffering due to the socio-political upheaval globally. With a predominantly monochrome palette, “Uprooted” metaphorically links the anthropology of the linen fabric production with Simone Weil's writings: “to desire without an object,” “to desire without any wishes,” “to sweeten what is bitter,” “to be rooted in the absence of a place.” These profound ideas are interwoven with the circle as a shape, symbolizing unity and continuity, and the spiritual meaning undercurrent in the metaphysical paintings of Hilma af Klint (1862-1944). The artwork is completed with a fragment from Berlin's open urban spaces, which were experienced as places of self-organization for the undocumented immigrants in the city, to direct our attention toward the current socio-political context of the impending refugee crisis in Europe.



for Arts Initiative (2021) and the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant (2017). In 2004, they co-founded “Press to Exit Project Space,” a platform dedicated to artistic research and curatorial practices in Skopje. Calovski attended studio programs in CCA Kitakyushu, Japan (1999–2000) and Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht, the Netherlands (2002–2004), and graduated from PAFA (1996), Bennington College (B.A., 1997), and Linköping University (M.A., 2010). Ivanoska graduated (1997) and completed her master’s degree (2013) at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Skopje. She is enrolled in doctoral studies at Vienna’s Academy of Fine Arts.

## Noa Eshkol *Desert Landscape with Birds*

Cotton, synthetic fiber, cellulose, lurex,  
190×158 cm  
1990s

When a member of the “Noa Eshkol Chamber Dance Group” served in the military during the Yom Kippur War, the choreographer began creating wall carpets made of found or donated uncut pieces of fabric. Seemingly negative residues create positive unexpected shapes. Over the years, Eshkol made collages out of a wide range of fabrics and patterns, ranging from kaffiyehs to remnants of uniforms: elaborate figurative or abstract compositions which her dancers later sewed together with her. Her unusual tapestries shed light on a unique relationship between modern art and dance. (The Eshkol-Wachmann Movement Notation Center, Holon)

The creative collaboration between Hristina Ivanoska and Yane Calovski, which began in 2000, has garnered international recognition. Their joint works animate multilayered conceptual possibilities inspired by accumulated knowledge, intuitive references, and historical and present-day political concepts. Ivanoska and Calovski’s initial ideas derive from their interest in architecture, literature, theory, art history, and socio-political identification in the current post-transitional society. Their projects have been presented at various international contexts and institutions, including the National Gallery Prague (2024), Kunsthalle Wien (2023), Zilberman Gallery, Berlin (2023), Art Encounters Foundation, Timisoara (2022), Kunsthalle Darmstadt (2019), Museum of Contemporary Art, Skopje (2018), Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb (2017), Silesian Museum, Katowice (2017), Zhejiang Art Museum, China (2017), PERA Museum, Istanbul (2016), Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade (2016), City Art Gallery of Ljubljana (2015), Malmö Konstmuseum (2015) and other venues. Their collaborative work “We Are All Alone in This” was presented at the 56th Venice Biennial – Pavilion of the Republic of Macedonia (2015). They have been invited as artists-in-residence by eminent museums and cultural institutions, such as the Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw (2023), Tobačna 001 Cultural Centre – MGML, Ljubljana (2019), Hyde Park Art Centre, Chicago (2018), Sculpture Space, Utica, New York (2016) and the Corporation of Yaddo, Saratoga Springs, New York (2001). They were awarded a research grant from the Foundation



Noa Eshkol (b. 1924 – d. 2007) grew up on a kibbutz in Palestine. Collective labor would later be an important aspect of her work as an artist, dancer, and dance theorist. After studying music in Tel Aviv and dance at the Tehila Ressler School, she moved to London in 1946 to train at the Art of Movement Studio in Manchester, and later at the Sigurd Leeder School of Modern Dance in London. In 1950, she returned to Israel, where she taught movement and dance at several schools and universities. In 1954, she founded the “Noa Eshkol Chamber Dance Group” to continue her studies in movement, working with a small number of dancers. She developed a movement notation system which transposes bodily movements into lines, numbers, and symbols, registering them in a grid structure. In 1973, she began to make wall carpets from found textiles. In recent years, international exhibitions featuring her work have included the Israel Museum, Jerusalem (2011), LACMA, Los Angeles, the Jewish Museum, New York, TBA21, Vienna (2012); the Musée d’Art Moderne, Paris, Opelvillen, Rüsselsheim (2013); the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2014); the Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe (2016); the 34<sup>a</sup> Bienal de São Paulo (2021); the Norrköpings Konstmuseum, Norrköping (2022); the Georg Kolbe Museum, Berlin (2024).



dence award in Florence, a working award from the Stiftung Kunstfonds in 1996, and a 2003 – 2004 London studio fellowship from the Hessische Kulturstiftung. He has conducted seminars inter alia at the École supérieure des arts décoratifs de Strasbourg (EADS) and Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) in Melbourne, Australia. In conjunction with curator Zylvia Auerbach, in 2000 he founded the edition KANN Verlag, which specializes in independent artistic publications. Exhibitions include Wolfstaedter Gallery, Frankfurt (2019) and Galerie Perpetuel, Frankfurt (2021).

## Andreas Exner *Aldi Curtain*

Stitched fabric  
500x500 cm  
1999

The striped drape is based on a draft by concrete art painter and printmaker Günter Fruhtrunk. The term “applied monochrome painting” seems almost inevitable. Pieces of fabric are here sewn together to form a large curtain: an Aldi curtain. Aldi, a leading German global discount supermarket chain, was founded in 1946 and came to stand for a postwar economy of desire and savings, an economy which in some respects marginalized local manufacturing as something worth striving for in everyday life. Andreas Exner uses simple devices to direct the eye towards everyday objects and designs. What is the social impact of formation? And how does the everyday enter into the use of forms and into design vocabulary?

Andreas Exner: *I am interested in painting. A curtain isn't painted, yet it is still an image. It hangs within a space or in front of a wall or a window. It can be heavy or light and airy like a net curtain. Félix Gonzáles-Torres's curtains create a peaceful atmosphere; you could imagine that the rooms are just being aired for a moment.* - Excerpt from a conversation between Andreas Exner and Marco Fiedler

Andreas Exner (b. 1962) lives and works in Frankfurt. He has lectured on sculpture and artistic spatial concepts at the Institut für Kunstpädagogik (Institute for Art Education) at Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main. After training as a printer, he studied at the Städelschule in Frankfurt from 1988 to 1993. A painter and sculptor, he has been granted numerous fellowships and awards, including a DAAD resi-

## Uli Fischer *Masse*

Raw silk, rayon, paper collage, acrylic,  
stitched-on cotton  
130x295 cm (two-piece)  
2010

Composing, adding, reducing, stitching and unstitching. His artworks communicate using historic fabrics from all over the world, in a visual language based on traditional textiles. The material he's choosing is imbued with time and history,



and with everyday life, whether it is fragments of Japanese indigo dyed futons from the 1920s, linen grain sacks from France from the 19th Century, or garments and fabric used for rituals. He traces the desire for abstraction with a painter's sensibility. But his objects reveal the traces of usage inherent to the material, thereby highlighting the tactile notion embedded in the medium.

Uli Fischer: *It was probably more the quality and intensity of the woven fabric – if I can put it in those terms – that overwhelmed me. When I talk about “aura” in this context, I mean the particular circumstances in which the textiles were produced, which I sensed although at the time I did not know the actual background. That piqued my curiosity and subsequently over the course of several years I travelled to the countries where these traditional fabrics originated. Many of the textiles developed in the context of animistic worldviews and were made for ceremonies following ritualized production steps. Through this mode of production, they take on magical properties. Being able to sense all this, without being familiar with the specific context, was one of the initial impetuses that triggered my current artistic work. I discovered that fabrics could be more than they are.* - Excerpt from a conversation between Uli Fischer and Herbert Neidhöfer

## Rising Spirit

Historic linen and hemp, silk, linen and paper, stitched-on linen, acoustic shape, 93.4×73.4 cm  
2014



## Indigo Aurora

Historic cotton (indigo dyed), stitched-on cotton, 132.5×180 cm  
(two-piece)  
2011



Uli Fischer (b. 1953) lives in Berlin. He studied textile design at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts in Hanover and art at Braunschweig University of Art. In the early 1980s, he lived in the United States, where he studied at UCLA, Los Angeles, also working as a colorist. In Berlin, he continued to study “Color Field” painting. In parallel, he worked as a set designer and production designer for theatre and film. Since the early 1990s, he has travelled regularly to Asia, where he encountered objects from an animistic background, developing a particular interest in old, traditional textiles. The ritual and social matrix, the patina and signs of use thus moved to center stage in his concerns, becoming the material medium deployed in his work from 2008. He has since exhibited nationally and internationally, e. g. in Hangzhou, Vienna, London and Paris. Further exhibitions include the Heidelberger Kunstverein (2016); Künstlerhaus Göttingen (2018); Bermel von Luxburg Gallery, Berlin (2020); Kommunale Galerie Berlin (2021).

## Zille Homma Hamid Dry White Season

Cotton and woollen yarns,  
wire, dried tree bark  
2013

Zille Homma Hamid weaves abstract forms and cultural techniques by means of natural yarns, natural materials, and colors. She visually explores the cultural connections between plants, textiles and language. “Dry White Season” is part of a series of works inspired by poems from South Africa dealing with the oppression of the apartheid regime. This delicate-fragile weaving takes natural and social contexts into account. Similarly, the “Loom Chair” breathes a local spirit, while also standing archetypically for one of humankind’s oldest techno-

logical and cultural achievements. It is flexible and nomadic; it can be taken elsewhere, while remaining interwoven with its environment.

## Loom Chair

Waxed cotton, stones, chair  
82x57,5x53,5 cm  
2013



For Don M. – Banned

it is a dry white season  
dark leaves don't last, their brief lives dry out  
and with a broken heart they dive down gently headed for  
the earth,  
not even bleeding.  
it is a dry white season brother,  
only the trees know the pain as they stand still erect  
dry like steel, their branches dry like wire  
indeed it is a dry white season  
but seasons come to pass.

Mongane Wally Serote  
copyright © 1974 by Mongane Wally Serote

Zille Homma Hamid: "Loom Chair" picks up metaphorically on the main themes of my South African work – the relationship between text and textiles, language and the weave of fabric. The hope factor is also expressed here in a figurative sense, namely in the role played by a sense of trust in what lies ahead of me in my working process. I flew to Johannesburg with nothing more than an idea, my backstrap loom and a few yarns. Everything else I found there, or more metaphorically, it found me: *The chair frame, the stones and the cords all awaited me there.* A chair is first and foremost an everyday household object and in its function, as a means to an end, is also an instrument. Yet chairs have always had a strongly symbolic significance too. Generally speaking, a chair symbolizes a superior hierarchical position, power and authority. That's why it seemed natural for me to make a loom chair that would be reminiscent of a harp – that way it would be an instrument that denies the idea of instrumental use. Given the way it is made, it cannot serve as a throne for anyone, except maybe for the person that weaves with it.



That is what I enjoy the most: *learning from others. No matter where I go, I see myself as a student. Over time, I have picked up various abilities and techniques, and every new technique and cultural experience opens up new realms to me. In that spirit, I made a backstrap loom during my stay in Senegal and learnt how to weave with it. In South Africa I worked on a weaving frame I had made myself; in India I wove at a table loom, as well as learning the Ikat technique; in Oslo, I wove with a digital loom.* - Excerpts from a conversation between Zille Homma Hamid and Antje Géra

## Fall Tomorrow

Nylon yarn, silk yarn  
2013



Zille Homma Hamid (b. 1972) is a Pakistani-German designer and artist who lives and works in Berlin and Lahore. Between 2001 and 2010, she had her own fashion label, which bore her name. She links local craftsmanship traditions to her own formal aesthetics, thus rendering visible the close connections between textile materials and their surroundings, as well as the traces they incorporate. By picking up on and continuing traditional techniques, she explores relationships between textiles that cut across history and cultures. In 2008, she took part in “Prêt-à-pARTager,” ifa’s fashion photography workshop in Dakar. In 2015, she visited Bangalore in connection with the bangaloREsidency. In 2016, her work was shown at the National Museum in Dhaka, Bangladesh and she received a fellowship from the National Academy of the Arts (KHIO), Oslo.

## Heide Hinrichs Semibody

Video projection, panel of fabric, cardboard boxes, leather, papier mâché, fabric, feathers, paper ca. 250x350 cm  
2013

Text, textiles, and buildings share a common linguistic past. A text originally refers to something woven. And fabrics are our ‘bodies’ nearest architecture. Heide Hinrichs works with found materials: they are simple and real, like blank linen and feathers. In collecting these materials, she brings them toward a new identity. In the work “Semikörper”, cardboard boxes hold templates of perceptive body parts, hands are seen on the screen. As if it was a semi-body furnished with senses. We feel a space in the making: at once a nomadic space, a language space, and a perceptual space. The work is in a state of motion, advancing to get in touch with us. Each individual spectator can inscribe this body of work with life and with communication.

Heide Hinrichs: *The genesis of the piece is a process of discovery. In this case, I began with the image of a fortified city that made me feel I could gain no access to it, since its architecture was so deeply defensive. At some point, walking through one of the streets, the image became inverted so that it was as if I were walking through myself, without access to myself. The gate of the projection and the cardboard boxes are residues of that architecture, which has become very abstract. As well as pursuing a particular image, the presence of materials and my relationship to them also play an important role. The materials are likewise found components that I move and work on until they take on a meaning corresponding to the image. For example, one box contains circles cut out of leather. In another work, these circles are sewn onto material as eyes. Leather is skin. These eyes would be blind, they could feel their way forward.* - Excerpt from a conversation between Heide Hinrichs and Angelika Stepken

Heide Hinrichs (b. 1976) lives and works in Brussels. She currently teaches at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, where she completed a two-year postgraduate program (HISK) in 2006. She also studied at the Kunsthochschule Kassel and at the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts. Following her solo exhibitions *Borrowed Tails* at the Seattle Art Museum in 2010



and Echoes at the Heidelberger Kunstverein in 2012, she was awarded the Villa Romana Fellowship in 2013. In 2014, she was a fellow at the MMCA Seoul International Residency Program, where she worked on an ongoing long-term project “silent sisters / stille schwestern”, a translation in text and artworks, conducted in conversation with Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s book, “DICTEE”. Her processual artistic engagement entails seeking an infinite form of the object, in which concepts are mediated through materials, their histories, and their sensory attributes. She collects materials and transposes them into a new identity. In her installations, motion is generated by relationships between objects, and between objects and viewers. Exhibitions include the KIOSK, Ghent (2020) and the Galeria Jaqueline Martins, Brussels (2023).

## Olaf Holzapfel *Chaguar Image (5)*

Chaguar, natural color, realized by the Wichí weavers of Misión Chaqueña in Salta Province (Argentina)  
140x105 cm  
2012–2015



Chaguar is a plant used by the Wichí communities of Northern Argentina for fiber to be woven into bags or ponchos. Olaf Holzapfel is interested in specific uses of local handcrafts and materials, the processes of formation and transition between art and craftsmanship. He encourages people to work together and to enter into a visual communication through practices and forms. He asked female Indio weavers to transfer his computer-generated abstract design into their visual language and motives. Thus the artist and the weavers carry on a dialogue in which they mutually try to understand techniques, pictorial concepts, and the image space.

Olaf Holzapfel: *At harvest time, the cacti, in other words the chaguar plants, are ripped up. Their leaves contain a few fibers of this very valuable material. These fibers are separated from the leaves and dyed with natural colors from leaves or flowers. The color shifts depending on how the harvest goes. That is how nature leaves its imprint. The textiles have a ritual function and are not intended for everyday use. Continuous patterns such as these in textiles, which are similar to those found among nomads in Syria or Mongolia, serve to transport knowledge: you can roll up the textiles and take them with you when you travel. (...) The Wichí use a different technique, in which stitches are formed with a stick. The resulting image can be interpreted in a variety of ways: according to size, pattern, stitches, coloring, or by the thickness of the material. The variety of production methods is another way of transmitting knowledge.* - Excerpt from a conversation between Olaf Holzapfel and Paz Guevara

Olaf Holzapfel (b. 1967) lives and works in Berlin. Between 1996 and 2001, he studied painting at Dresden Academy of Fine Arts and was subsequently an artist-in-residence at the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad and at Columbia University, New York. From 2006 to 2008, he was a guest professor at the Academy of Fine Arts, Karlsruhe, and from 2008 to 2010 held a similar position at the University of Fine Arts of Hamburg (HBKH). In his work, he investigates the links between technology and nature. He predominantly uses natural materials which have a symbolic meaning for the people who live with them. His sculptures reference landscape and local ways of life, as well as location-specific techniques. He has had

solo exhibitions inter alia at the Mishkan Museum of Art, Ein Harod; the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Santiago de Chile (with Sebastian Preece); the Palais de Glace, Buenos Aires; the Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck. His work has been acquired for the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden. In 2014, he was awarded the Gerhard Altenbourg Prize. In 2017, his work featured at documenta 14 in Kassel and Athens. Further exhibitions and installations include the Bündner Kunstmuseum Chur (2021), Nassfeldalm Bad Gastein (2022), the German national garden show (BUGA) in Mannheim (2023) und Haus Konstruktiv in Zurich (2024).

## Memories of Bedouin encounters

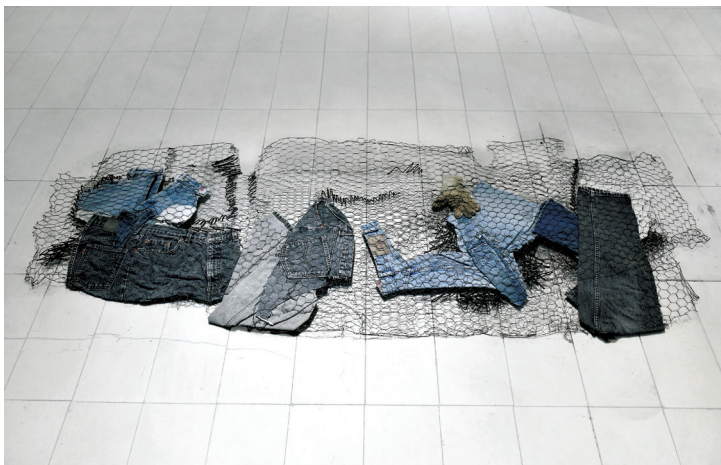
Hosepipe snippets with reconstructed covering  
Work piece  
25x53 cm  
2009

## Christa Jeitner Re-Rester: Wire and Denim

Assemblage  
80x230 cm  
2016

Christa Jeitner works with hemp, ropes, linen fabrics, silk, and cloth, with natural things and existing materials. Since the 1960s, she has met the needs and responsibilities of textile material: it is not about violating or dominating the material, but preserving its distinct and untouched character. On a foundation of integrity and conservation, she proceeds like an archeologist and deploys a variety of old techniques in order to develop structures and unlock the inherent potential of the material. Her memento work pieces seem to commemorate, reflect and transgress human efforts and failures, getting to the bottom of human existence.

Christa Jeitner for “Re-Rester: Wire and Denim”: *A discarded piece from a pair of jeans shouldn't be a rectangular picture to hang on the wall and nor should it be applied to a substrate cut true to the grain in a regular form. It should just lie there, arrested in its contingency. As early as 1989, I made “The Abandoned Mantle, Fixed in Place [Die zurückgelassene Hülle, festgelegt]”: an open form, a devalued scrap of fabric, lying on the ground. In this spirit, the pieces of denim had to be confined within two transparent layers that could be joined together. The used wire mesh dovetailed well with the conscious symbolism of discarded objects.* - Excerpt from a conversation between Christa Jeitner and Petra Pfeiffer



Christa Jeitner for “Memories of Bedouin Encounters”: *Hosepipe snippets with reconstructed covering: In the mountain desert of the Sinai, I see sections of black plastic hosepipe lying deep in the wadi. Hoses run through gardens from the well to the cisterns, from the cisterns through the gardens. I see the drought in unwatered gardens!*

*The sun makes things brittle, which is why people also wrap up hoses. Tied up with thin wire. Hose pipes. I collect sections of hose and binding materials. I will put them together. Along with the soil, which needs the water.* - From “Notes on Development Processes”, September 2009 / February 2010

Christa Jeitner (b. 1935) lives and works in Blumberg, near Berlin. In 1954, she began her studies at the College of Fine and Applied Arts in East Berlin. Having been ex-matriculated from that institution, she then studied at the College of Fine Arts in West Berlin. After German reunification, she finally received her diploma in art and painting in 1996 as part of government rehabilitation measures for individuals treated unfairly by the GDR. She began exhibiting widely in 1961 and her work was acquired by museums in Germany and overseas from 1963. Fritz Kämpfer, Director of the Grassi Museum in Leipzig, described the period between 1965 and 1973 in the following terms: “It was like a ban on exhibiting for her (in the GDR).” Jeitner became a regular visitor to Poland, immersing herself in its history and culture. She lived for a time in Warsaw on a fellowship and the experimental Polish art scene became her window on the world. Since 1965, she has also worked on textile restoration, and has conducted research, published and taught both on textiles and restoration. She has worked with the German peace group Action Reconciliation Service for Peace since 1969. After giving up artistic work in 1990, 2006 marked a new beginning for her, with production of a body of work entitled Objects and Surfaces [Gegenstände und Flächen]. In 2007, a selection of her works was included

in the archive of the Academy of the Arts in Berlin. Further exhibitions include the Brandenburgische Landesmuseum für Moderne Kunst, Cottbus (2022/2023); the Kunstsammlung Neubrandenburg (2023/2024).

## Elisa van Joolen & Vincent Vulmsa *Technik*

Navajo Indian weaving, Transitional period, ca. 1890's, hand woven, Natural wool, 139,7x213,4 cm; Pendleton Indian trade blanket, J. Capps and Sons Tribute #2, based on an original design circa 1910, felt binding, pure virgin wool and cotton, made in the USA, 162,6x182,9 cm; Ikea, Lappljung Ruta, design by Anna Evferlund, machine woven, Polypropylene, made in Egypt, 200x200 cm; Bernhard Willhelm, Chevron Print Sweater, AW 2012/2013, knitted, cotton and mohair, made in Belgium, size: S; metal clothing racks  
2012–2013

“Technik” shows the confrontation between four ready-mades: a Navajo tribal motif from Arizona; a Pendleton Indian trade blanket; an Ikea rug; and finally, a fashion item from a Bernhard Willhelm collection. Through the dialogue between the components, Vulmsa not only shows strong formal-aesthetic relationships, he also emphasizes how highly functional



materials can migrate across various cultures, and how forms survive historical, economic and social change, in a series of cultural shifts. He analyses cloth as a medium which communicates signs that are transferrable between highly different contexts and periods, while maintaining a memory.

Elisa van Joolen & Vincent Vulmsa: *The appropriation of Native American patterns is not uncommon in fashion and design history. (...) Pendleton was one of the nineteenth-century businesses that benefited greatly from the contentious restrictions imposed on Native American communities across the United States. For centuries the various tribes had produced and traded their hand-woven woolen blankets. They herded their sheep, sheared them, spun and then dyed the wool, which they used to weave their blankets. As colonization spread, however, a growing number of Native Americans were driven off their land, losing their herds and thus their means of production and income. Ironically, the Pendleton blankets owe their name – “trade blankets” – to the fact that they were traded (back) to Native Americans now no longer able to produce the textiles that had once belonged to them.* - Excerpt from a conversation between Elisa van Joolen, Vincent Vulmsa and Christel Vesters

Elisa van Joolen (b. 1983) is a designer, artist and researcher based in Amsterdam. She holds a BA from the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam (2006) and an MFA from Parsons in New York City (2012). In 2016 she participated in the Iaspis artist-in-residence program in Stockholm (2016). Her approach to design is characterized by strategies of intervention and reconfiguration. Her projects often reflect specific societal contexts and emphasize collaboration and participation. They shed light on relational aspects of clothing and subvert processes of value production. Her work has been recognized with a Han Nefkens Award (2016), Fulbright Award (2010), and has been nominated for the Dutch Design Award (2013) and New Material Award (2014). She has participated in exhibitions at Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam, New York Fashion Week, 5th Brazilian Design Biennial in Florianopolis, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg, OCAT Art Terminal in Shenzhen and West Bund Art Center in Shanghai. In addition to running her own studio she is co-founder of Warehouse, a place for clothes in context in Amsterdam. Since 2024 she is the head of the fashion department at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam.

Vincent Vulmsa (b. 1982) studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam from 2002 to 2006 and was a participant at De Ateliers in Amsterdam between 2006 and 2008. Solo exhibitions include *Mindful Circulations*, Mumbai, (2019), *A Sign of Autumn* at Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam (2011) and *ARS NOVA E5305-B* at Galerie Cinzia Friedlaender, Berlin (2009). Vulmsa has participated in group exhibitions at Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris (2013); Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach (2013); *De Vleeshal*, Middelburg (2013); *Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen*, Düsseldorf (2012); and Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (2012). He has received grants from Villa Romana, Florence (2011) and the Arts Initiative Tokyo (2014), *de ateliers* (2020). Vulmsa's work explores the tensions between autonomous art and the socio-political relations underlying its production. The history and economy of cultural appropriation forms an important starting point for his investigations.

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# Jovan Josifovski

## *The Cockroach*

Framed embroidery on faux leather  
16.5 cm diameter  
2022



“The Cockroach” is a representation of fear, literally and metaphorically, associated with the artist’s abnormal phobia of cockroaches. The roaches can be associated with resilience, but the artist addresses the negative aspects, related to his extreme fear of these insects, but also to the indestructible nature of right-wing policies that, under the guise of tradition and manifested through violence, are constantly perpetuated in the personal and public space. The technique is an homage to embroidered tapestries from the past that he associates with unpleasant childhood experiences. Created as “templates” to hide the faces in his parent’s photos in his first art book (“I Used to Be a Lovely Boy But Turned Out Queer”, published by PrivatePrint, 2022) the broken mirror and the decorative pillar theatrically represent the dominant characteristics of artist’s parents, the father as a mirror, the mother as a pillar, and vice versa, and address a broken parent-child relationship.

## *Symbols*

Black ink on tracing paper  
Variable dimensions  
2022

Created as “templates” to hide the faces in his parent’s photos in his first art book (“I Used to Be a Lovely Boy But Turned Out Queer”, published by PrivatePrint, 2022) the

broken mirror and the decorative pillar theatrically represent the dominant characteristics of artist’s parents, the father as a mirror, the mother as a pillar, and vice versa, and address a broken parent-child relationship.



## *Mirror*

Marker on 14 pieces of textiles  
Variable dimensions  
2022

The “mirror” reflects experiences from the artist’s childhood as a queer child related to his parents, phobias, loneliness, violence, escapism, death, etc. Aside from personal



topics, he addresses criticism related to the influence of the church, an inexhaustible topic in which he shows interest from an early age. The “mirror” is a public diary written on textile that covers different phases of his life. This piece was created for his second solo exhibit, ‘Will you tell them?’ (organized and curated by PrivatePrint, 2022).

Jovan Josifovski (b. 1993) is a Macedonian queer artist born in Resen. He graduated from the high school of Applied Art in the Department of Fashion Illustration and Design and graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts in the Printmaking department in Skopje. Inspired by the oppressive systems in today’s society, and the things he disagrees with, he bases his artistic practice upon socio-political themes such as religion, the influence of the church, the right-wing, radical nationalism, anti-gender movement, etc. experienced through the queer perspective. His artistic work and research also address the physical violence present among the local LGBTI community, domestic violence and violence in public spaces. Starting with drawing and collage as primary media in his first solo exhibition, today his techniques incorporate different approaches such as experimental text, personal belongings,



*we could hold on to, as if clinging to something that had become a temporary habitual practice. That occurred day by day, with found images, found sentences entering into a conversation with us and with each other.* - Excerpt from a conversation between Eva Meyer, Eran Schaerf and Susanne Weiß

## Eva Meyer & Eran Schaerf *In the Habit. A Set Piece*

Mini-DV, one channel film, stereo,  
color, 27 min.  
1997/2018

“In the Habit” is a documentary fiction about how to adapt oneself to unknown regions. This movie is situated in Mombasa and Zanzibar, where you can find a material called kanga that hovers between language and architecture, and in fact turns into a habit. Kanga is a piece of cloth printed with a pattern and a saying, ready to wear or to be displayed protection against the sun or against being seen. Doing this implies however that one allows others to read what you want to say. A habit now has become something that you can put on and take back off again. It has incorporated a critical fiction, involving the reader as well. Giving in to its material, the movie is not following a script. Instead it’s edited according to a pattern relying on habits and habituality, of bodies and houses. The pattern, that language that makes both walls and veils to billboards, turns into an architecture of layers that covers the international style and re-orient it. While veils and walls are supposed to protect religion and possessions, the sayings involve these veils and walls in a public conversation.

Eva Meyer: *We actually set out without a definite plan, just a vague idea that the kangas could be our blueprint for a knowledge-driven practice in dealing with the intangible. Time and again, we were delighted when men whom we asked to translate a kanga answered very directly with a proverb, whereas women avoided the question, laughed and said it couldn’t be put in such simple terms. That meant we began to develop a kind of synchronization with sentences we did not really understand yet began to wear them like clothes as we moved back and forth between image and text, seeking out some kind of fabric or weave*

Eva Meyer (b. 1950) and Eran Schaerf (b. 1962) live and work in Berlin. Since 1997, they have worked together on a “memory for two.” Their films include: “Mein Gedächtnis beobachtet mich” [My Memory Observes Me] (2016/2008), “Pro Testing” (2010), “Sie könnte zu Ihnen gehören” [She Might Belong to You] (2007), “Flashforward” (2004); the films have been shown inter alia at Putting Rehearsal to the Test, VOX Centre de L’image, Montreal; Theatrical Fields, NTU CCA Singapore; Ambulante, Documentary Film Festival, Mexico; Seance: Performing Film, Mumok, Vienna; Sculpture Projects Münster; and Cinema Without Walls, Rotterdam Film Festival. Publication: Gedächtnis zu zweit: For the Performance of Europe, Munich, 2000.

Eva Meyer is developing a cinematic form of thought. Her books include: “Zählen und Erzählen. Für eine Semiotik des Weiblichen” (1983, new edition 2015); “Architexturen” (1986); “Die Autobiographie der Schrift” (1989); “Von jetzt an werde ich mehrere sein” (2003); “What Does the Veil Know?” (edited with Vivian Liska, 2009); “Legende sein” (2016).

Eran Schaerf’s transdisciplinary practice focuses on architectures of narration. His numerous exhibitions and participations include the Zwinger Gallery, Berlin (2022); the Museum Ludwig, Köln (2021/2022); the Venice Biennale (2011); Manifesta (1998); Enterprise, ICA Boston (1997); Documenta IX, Kassel (1992). Selected publications: “Frequency Modulated Scenario” (2015); “The Listener’s Voice” (2001); “Re-enactment” (1996). His radio plays for Bavarian Broadcasting Corporation are available online at: [www.fm-scenario.net](http://www.fm-scenario.net), [www.hoerspielpool.de](http://www.hoerspielpool.de)

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# Karen Michelsen Castañón

## *Embrace*

Videoessay, mini-DV, color, 10 min. German with English subtitles  
2001-2017

Karen Michelsen Castañón “incorporates the Khipu (ancient Andean mnemonic devices made of colored, knotted strings) as the central metaphor of this video, in order to talk about memory, migration, and colonial identities, particularly the construction of personal and collective history through the colonial reading of genealogies.” Individual and collective histories are inextricably tied together, like a multi-layered fabric. The video essay dwells on the recurring Western tendency to locate textiles within a feminized domestic space. That this is a simplified, fabricated vision of history, is one of the research strands she weaves into her video. The histories of textiles are as diverse as the gender roles—not just female—they represent.



Karen Michelsen Castañón: *The textiles of the Peruvian Andes are the reason why I became an artist at all. But I am not an indigenous weaver. To me, weaving was more a metaphor than a practice. I was more interested in using a variety of materials in order to tell a story. You can also see that in my interest in arpilleras and in embroidery. I am more concerned with symbolic interpretation and communicating something than with formal design perception. Reading “On Weaving” by Anni Albers enabled me to engage critically with the question of why pre-Columbian textiles from the Peruvian Andes had been an inspiration for me. I very much agree with her when she writes with reference to tapestries that it is a pity if weaving merely imitates the language of painting. She understood that well. The surfaces of textiles are ultimately the result of a complex architecture, an art of engineering with various layers of threads. (...) For me, weaving and speaking are connected. No matter which medium you use, it relates to the voicing of your own language, to self-empowerment and to the voice.*- Excerpt from a conversation between Karen Michelsen Castañón and Inka Gressel

Karen Michelsen Castañón (b. 1969) is a visual artist, filmmaker and educator. She has lived and worked in Berlin since 2002. Her work focuses on the ways (colonial) histories are written. Her films, installations and photos are also informed by the language of textiles, in particular textiles from the Peruvian Andes. She studied textile arts at Capilano College in Vancouver, as well as Fine Arts at Concordia University in Montreal and the University of Fine Arts of Hamburg. She is currently a member of COMPA Berlin and colectivo quellcay.

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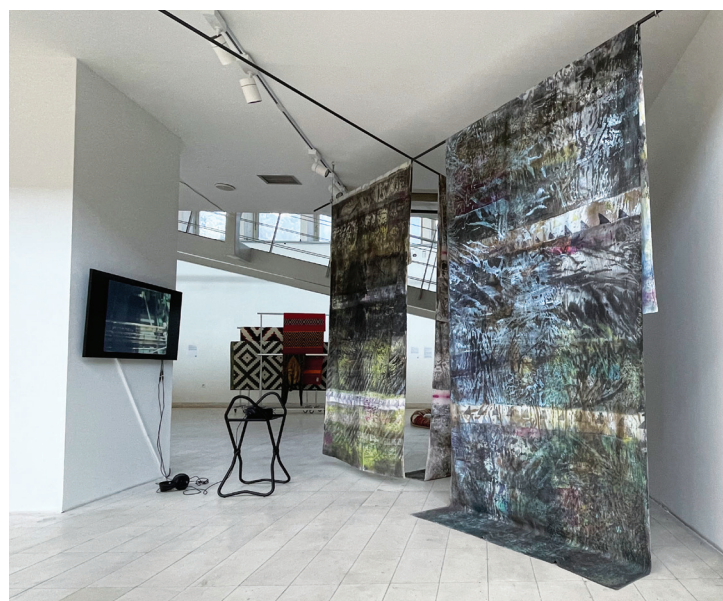
# Judith Raum

## *Cotton Pieces*

Highly pigmented ink and acrylic on cotton  
450x145 cm  
2012

Judith Raum’s installation begins from her encounter with the historic pattern books of the Textilmuseum Helmbrechts. Her large-scale paintings transform excerpts of textile history into a complex spatial situation of socio-economic history. The textiles allude to the surfaces of fabrics produced by German home weavers for the Middle East in the late nineteenth century. Her work suggests that the textile medium intermeshes with the advance of German technology and machinery during the construction of the Baghdad railway, the German engagement in cotton production in Anatolia, and existing trade connections between the Ottoman and German empires. The video reflects the search for a language, both visually and acoustically, apt to reflect a non-instrumentalizing relationship between subject and objects using images from different hand looms in Germany and Turkey. It triggers ideas about the production of self-empowerment.

Judith Raum: “The Cotton Pieces” are magnified interpretations of fabric patterns from Helmbrechts’ home weavers’ pattern books, which I discovered in the museum’s attic. I had hoped I would find traces of the existence of these weavers in these books – notes on how to integrate unfamiliar techniques

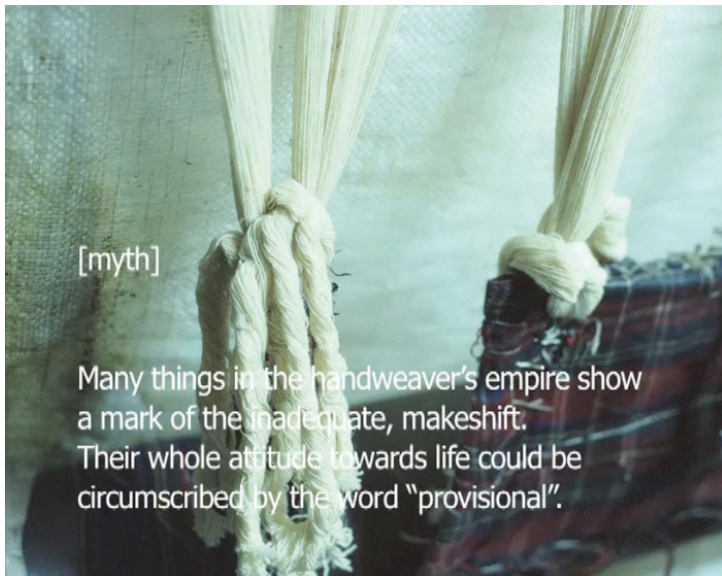


into their own expertise, for example. The weavers from Helmbrechts wove cloth for an international market – ponchos, saris and Oriental sashes. Ethnologically speaking, these patterns were completely alien to them. (...) That means on the one hand that the painted cotton fabrics are magnified versions of individual patterns and particular effects I found remarkable in them. It is also relevant that the fabric was sold by the yard, as is reflected in the way certain motif patterns are repeated in the painted cottons. Above all however my “Cotton Pieces” become surfaces to be “read,” the bearers of traces. It is as if the weavers’ lives were really inscribed into the surfaces of the fabric: stains and dirt from daily work, inscriptions, folds – all the information about them I actually lacked.

Judith Raum for “Machine Subjectivity”: *I was impressed by the essential characteristics of weaving machines when I*

## Machine Subjectivity

Twin channel video installation, color, 15 min. English  
2010



*first visited the textile museum in Helmbrechts and learnt more about the history of home weavers in Upper Franconia. The surviving looms are full of traces of contacts between humans and machines. Two things become legible in a sensuous, tactile way: the weavers' knowledge of their machines and their gift for invention, which found expression in small improvisations. (...) Those manual interventions remain legible for us and open up the machine for us. And they reveal the workers' self-empowerment, allowing them to intervene in an existing structure. That is an important and encouraging aspect. It is closely connected to the socio-historical circumstances of home weavers' lives. (...) for me, the "legibility" of the machine creates a kind of contact through which we can enter into communication (with history). In addition, I decided to narrate the encounter with the home weavers in the first person, because I find it important to depict history in a way that communicates its corporeality and vulnerability. - Excerpts from a conversation between Judith Raum and Rike Frank*

Judith Raum (b. 1977) is a Berlin-based artist and author. She studied visual arts, philosophy, art history and psychoa-

analysis in Frankfurt am Main and New York. In her paintings, objects, lecture performances and installations, she explores tensions between societal and economic research and questions of artistic desire and abstraction. Her work on German economic colonialism in the Ottoman Empire was exhibited at Berlin's House of World Cultures, at Salt Istanbul and at the Heidelberger Kunstverein, among others. Her lecture performances and paintings about the social history of textiles have been presented at Piano Nobile, Geneva, the Chert Gallery, Berlin, the Halle für Kunst und Medien, Graz, and at Ludlow 38, New York. Over the last decade, she has taught at a number of European art institutions, including the University of the Arts in Berlin. In 2015, she was awarded a fellowship at the Villa Romana in Florence. Recent exhibitions include the temporary bauhaus-archiv, Berlin (2024); Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau (2021); Kunsthaus Hamburg (2020).

## Franz Erhard Walther Action Body

Cotton fabric  
73x52x19 cm  
1969

A book sewed together from cotton becomes an “Action Body”. It is as if the book is tailored to a precisely stipulated “choreography,” outlining how it is to be used and the patterns of movement to be combined with it. Its measurements are derived from the human body. But the individual retains freedom of decision in the interaction, the body must respond and act. The book is “readable” with the entire body: its meaning depends on the use the individual makes of it. There were five books in total, all designed so the spectator could unfold and lie down inside them. These days, that interaction with the work is only possible in special circumstances; nonetheless, the qualities of openness and unfinishedness remain highly significant.



Franz Erhard Walther: *The form of the book as an “Action Body [Handlungskörper]” developed from the stack form I*



used between 1961 and 1963. As well as the stack form, there were also book-like forms in cassettes. The earliest book form is the “Pink Paint Book [Rosa Lackbuch]” from 1963. After that, between 1963 and 1969, I made eight copies of the “Action Book [Handlungsbuch]”, which was related to the “First Work Set [1. Werksatz]”. I subsequently developed a second “Action Book [Handlungsbuch]”, with a print run of eighty copies. That was followed in 1969 by two large-format book-bodies that referenced the entire body. Their physicality is linked to actions. I envisaged attaining a complex work. Reading can’t achieve something like that. - Excerpt from a conversation between Franz Erhard Walther and Marco Fiedler



Franz Erhard Walther (b. 1939, lives in Fulda, Germany) is a pioneer of participatory art. After beginning his studies at the Werkkunstschule in Offenbach, he transferred to the Städel School in Frankfurt in 1959. He soon lost interest in painting, looking instead to “go back to the starting point, where nothing is yet formed, to where form first begins.” His radical view of the informel ultimately led to his expulsion from the school and he transferred to Düsseldorf Art Academy in 1962. As a professor at the University of Fine Arts of Hamburg (HFBK), Walther helped influence important artists of later generations. In 2016 he was awarded the Art Prize Aachen, which included a solo exhibition at the Ludwig Forum in Aachen. At Manifesta 2016 in Zurich, waiters at the Park Hyatt Hotel wore his orange-colored “Half Vests [Halbierte Westen]”. In 2017, a major retrospective of his work was held at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid. In the same year, he was awarded a Golden Lion for Best Artist in the central exhibition of the 57th Venice Biennale. Walther transformed traditional ideas of work and material by making processes the foundation of his concept of work: action be-

came the “form of the work.” He developed objects from cotton fabric, foam and wood, creating textile-based sculptures with variable forms. From 1963 to 1969, Walther made usable objects; after 1969, the issue of action became more relative with increasingly hypothetical possibilities for action. His “wall formations” are sculptural works with strongly pictorial qualities, which invite the spectator to discover the plasticity of sculptural material. Recent exhibitions include Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen (2021); Kunstmuseum Winterthur (2023); Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (2024).

## Zorica Zafirovska *Unspoken Embroideries*

Textile work, framed embroidery  
Variable dimensions  
2015

Zafirovska reframes what we consider unequivocally real, and challenges the sensory self-evidence of the existing order, removing the veil of patriarchal violence that still organizes and defines our experience and social existence.

The repressed history of violence comes to light as a possibility and basis for the maintenance and hegemony of fetishism towards commodities and the maintenance of the heteropatriarchal oicus - as an archive of the past and present marked by violence, discrimination, exclusion, exchange, and rape of women - as a symptom-blem of the idealized image of family and social comfort.

In the banal everyday life of patriarchy and capitalism, Zafirovska interrupts the word rape as a monument, as well as the violence implied in the gender division of society. In the grammar of everyday life, through the cracks of the well-known words with which we sterilely sink into the world around us and follow the enthusiastically promised paths of happiness, Zafirovska, as a “feminist killjoy” (S. Amed) speaks with the language of the silenced and ashamed, the cry of those considered less human and animal – like the language of equality.





Zorica Zafirovska (b. 1982) is an artist and cultural worker who lives and works in Skopje, North Macedonia. She graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, and currently she is an MA candidate at the same Faculty. She works on socio-political topics, such as human trafficking, homelessness, consumerism, and ecology, by creating specific, time-space installations, and small actions, while using collaborations and volunteering practices. Since 2008, she has been a member of F.R.I.K. (Cultural Development Association Formation) and one of the selectors of the video program part of the FRIK Festival. She was a co-founder of Art I.N.S.T.I.T.U.T., an art collective and artist-run project space (2009). She is one of the co-founders, together with other female artists, of the initiative “Momi” (2011). She was one of the winners of the open call by the SIA Gallery Skopje (2014). She won the young visual artist award “DENES” by the Center for Contemporary Arts – Skopje and FRU – “Faculty of things that can’t be learned” (2016). She realized over 15 solo projects in public and noninstitutional spaces in North Macedonia, USA, Greece, and Germany.

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## Klelija Zivkovic

### *Fear of Love*

Installation, combined technique, knitted rope, sound  
Variable dimensions  
2023

We are not alone. We carry generations in our bodies, both future and past, not only biologically but also ecologically, politically, and spiritually. Even so, we are sovereign beings; subjects, which are also intertwined in collectives through the complexity of our common existence.

With “Fear of Love” the artist explores the idea of an organ that acts as a “hauntological” boundary, which connects and separates us across space, but also across time and generations, joining in our bodies what is no longer with what has yet to be.

As the human species moves toward gender liberation, umbilical cords will cease to be a function of female bodies only. But right now, that is still the case, and that brings with it the weight of responsibility of women as the weavers of the umbilical cords in our world. The artist asks the question: What kind of worlds do we weave and where do we pull the threads from?

Klelija Zivkovic (b.1989) is a transdisciplinary artist based in Skopje, North Macedonia. Formally trained across several design disciplines, her work is a theoretical, material, and experiential inquiry into boundaries, the physical, psychological, emotional, or spiritual barriers we construct to both help us know ourselves as beings that occupy space, and provide an interface for contact with our surroundings. Studio Private Print published her first artist book “Prototyping tenderness: a personal log of a dying world” (2021), and hosted her first solo exhibition by the same name. She was awarded the “Ladislav Barisic” award from AICA Macedonia for her research proposal “Design for Resurgence” (2022), and received the “DENES” award for young visual artists under 35 (2023). She has participated in several group exhibitions in North Macedonia and Austria, including “It’s Easier to Breathe Underground” and The Biennial of Young Artists and the Museum of Contemporary Art - Skopje.



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# MOCA SKOPJE COLLECTION

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## Sonja Dimitrova *Portrait of Juliette*

Cotton, wool  
30x30 cm  
2009



The artistic practice of Sonja Dimitrova rethinks tradition in terms of the manner of the tapestry's execution, subjects and format, creating contemporary works distinguished by poetics and comments on current topics related to the contradictions and complexity of contemporary society. "Portrait of Juliette" is a tapestry – a miniature and remarkable example of combining textile art with pop art elements. In her work, Dimitrova integrates traditional tapestry techniques with the vivid, dynamic style of pop art, resulting with visually appealing portrait. By joining these two artistic traditions, she manages not only to introduce textile art in the domain of contemporary pop culture but also to reexamine the perspectives and contemporary perceptions of both, tapestry and pop art.

Sonja Dimitrova (1979, Kochani, North Macedonia) lives and works in London. She graduated at the textile department within the National Art Academy in Sofia, and received her master's degree at the department of tapestry weaving at the West Dean College, United Kingdom, having received a scholarship of the Edward James Foundation. She is a member of the Society of Designers and Craftsmen of UK. Among her professional engagements, the most noteworthy are the collaboration with Ann Carrington, the West Dean Tapestry Studio and projects with the Said Business School at Oxford University, as well as the collaboration with Sue Lawty for the installation of tapestry exhibition at the V & A Museum in London. In 2003, she was awarded the Valerie Power Award for Tapestry Weaving of the West Dean College, London (United Kingdom). She has had solo exhibitions and group exhibitions nationally and internationally, such as the II Biennial of Tapestries in Sofia (Bulgaria), the exhibition "just the tree of us" at Brighton

University (UK), at the Museum of Contemporary Art – Skopje (North Macedonia), the exhibition From Venetia to the Balkans in Treviso (Italy) etc.

## Dimche Koco *Bird Fight (Earthquake)*

Wool, cotton  
161x193 cm  
1963



In the field of drawing and tapestry, Dimche Koco's expression blends robust and delicate expressionism with surrealist elements. Apart from his interest in subjects from history, mythology, medieval painting, religion, and folk motifs, his works also deal with subjects from contemporary events. Engaging in a dialogue between tradition and modern expression, his work, titled "Bird Fight (Earthquake)," introduces highly plastic solutions similar to his sculptures. The borderline of the tapestry serves not only the function of the placement of the composition but also enriches the content of the tapestry. Simplified forms of animal and floral motifs, reminiscent of the dark symbolism found in fresco paintings, are utilized to depict the terrifying aftermath of the Skopje earthquake.

Dimche Koco (Ohrid, 1910 - 1993) is an art historian, art critic, author of numerous papers on medieval art and archaeology, and an artist who lived and worked in Macedonia. He graduated from the Department of Art History at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, simultaneously studying painting at the Art School in Belgrade. He visited France and Italy as part of his study visits. He was the director of the National Museum in Skopje, the Archaeological Museum in Skopje, and the Institute for Protection of Cultural and Historical Monuments of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. From 1946, he was an art history professor at the Faculty of Philosophy. He was the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje (1950 and 1957), and also the vice-dean (1951 and 1958). He was editor-in-chief of the Gazette of the Museum Conservation Association of SRM and the Anthology of the Archaeological Museum in Skopje, editor of the Fine Arts Encyclopaedia (for Macedonia), and president and member of the Society of Fine Artists of

Macedonia. Koco was a correspondent and member of the German Archaeological Institute in Frankfurt am Main (from 1955), and was awarded the title Doctor Honoris Causa at the University in Besançon (1969). He was a federative delegate and member of the People's Board of Skopje. He received the Award of the Government of NRM in 1959 and the Award "11th October" (1969). He was also an active artist and critic and published several scientific papers on medieval art and contemporary Macedonian art. His work "Archaeological Map of the Republic of Macedonia" was published in three volumes by the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, of which he was also a member.

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## Jolanta Owidzka *Composition (Grey Sky)*

Wool, leather  
130x200 cm  
1963



Owidzka is one of the artists who in the 1950s and 60s played a pivotal role in reshaping the perception of textiles as sculptural, dimensional, and contemporary forms of expression. Owidzka, and her contemporaries, spearheaded a transformative movement in tapestry art, involving unconventional materials and techniques that resulted in works with textural richness, organic sensibility, and tangible presence. Her work "Composition (Grey Sky)" reflects the color palette prevalent in Poland during that era, incorporating floating yarns and utilizing uncommon materials such as leather, with meticulously defined weaving structures. The artwork serves as a poignant reminder of the delicate balance between raw expression and architecture, in the wider social context. In this interplay of rough edges and luxurious interlace, Owidzka contemplates the scale of forms and the rhythms of slower-paced layers, of both art and history.

Jolanta Owidzka (Radom, Poland, 1927 - Warsaw, Poland, 2020) is considered as one of the contemporary fiber art pioneers in Europe. After graduating from the College of Fine Arts in Krakow and the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, she obtained a diploma in the cloth workshop at the Faculty

of Interior Design. In the years 1951 to 1957, she worked at the Institute of Industrial Design in Warsaw (IWP). Her solo exhibition at the Zacheta Gallery in Warsaw, Poland in 1960 was considered a breakthrough event in the history of Polish weaving. She participated in the IIX Triennial of Art in Milan, the first International Biennial of International Tapestry in Lausanne, Switzerland (1962), the Biennale in São Paulo (1965), and the seminal exhibition, "Wall Hangings" at the Museum of Modern Art (1969). She created 50 monumental fabrics for the interiors of public buildings and exhibited them in 96 exhibitions between 1960 and 2019. Owidzka was the recipient of several noteworthy awards and Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals in competitions throughout Europe and the US: Prize Industrial Design Institute; Prize, 11th National Exhibition of Interior Architecture; Silver Medal, XII Triennial of Textiles, Milan, Italy; Silver Medal, Fine Arts Festival, Warsaw, Poland; Gold Medal, Fine Arts Festival, Polish Architects Association; Bronze medal, Fine Arts Festival, Moscow, USSR; Gold Medal of Distinction, Polish Artists Association. Her work can be found in numerous collections including: Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois; Central Museum of Textiles, Lodz, Poland; National Museum, Warsaw, Poland; National Museum, Poznan, Poland; National Museum, Wroclaw, Poland; Museum of Contemporary Art, Skopje, Poland; Hyatt Regency Hotel, Montreal, Canada; New Art Center, Ontario, Canada; ATT, Chicago, Illinois; LOT Polish Airlines (Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, the US); Horschler Collection, Pasadena; Sentry Insurance, Stevens Point, Wisconsin; Museum for the History of Textile Industry, Lodz, Poland; Contemporary Textile Art Collection of the Pierre Pauli Association, Lausanne, Switzerland.

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## Ismet Ramicevic *Part of the installation "Labyrinth III"*

Handcrafted textures, newspapers  
175x248 cm  
1998

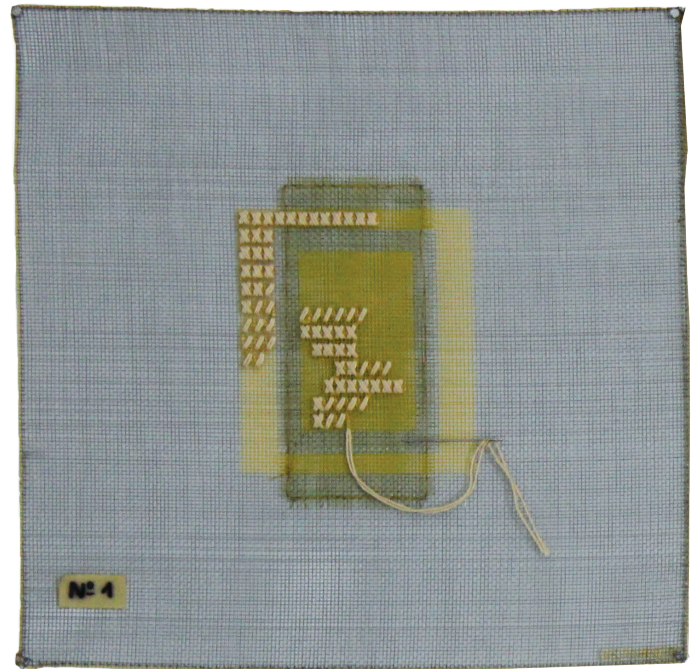


The project “Labyrinth III” foresees the closure and end of the several years-long mega-informatics concept by Ismet Ramicevic. The work consists of ambient structures corresponding to the category of special installations, a focus the artist has been working on for more than ten years, using “nondurable” materials.

The artworks are made from recycled newspaper rolls, fragmented images, and letters without meaning, which the artist weaves and conceptualizes in one constructed whole, presenting his personal stand on the global info-entropic world. In the essence of his work lies the obsession with globalization and the dehumanized society burdened with various tragedies.

The conceptual strategy of the lucidly envisioned texture of recycled, endless games of info-manipulations, as the basis for all types of social ideologies, is the foundation the artist employs in order to create some sense from the intended non-sense by means of his creative artistic ideology.

Ismet Ramicevic (Sjenica, Serbia, 1960) graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts at the St. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Department of Sculpture. He is a professor at the same faculty in sculpture, sculpture techniques, and drawing. He has had solo exhibitions in Skopje, Prilep, Plovdiv, Nish, and New York, and participated at numerous significant group featuring in Skopje, Rieka, Cetinje, Sarajevo, Ljubljana, Novi Sad, Washington D.C., Dresden, Vienna, Brussels, Sofia, Warsaw, Paris, Berlin, Nurnberg, Los Angeles, Rome, Belgrade, Tallinn, Podgorica, London, Rovinj and others. He is a member of the Macedonian Association of Fine Artists and has been awarded numerous awards for his work.



She introduces work on splices (links between two wires or ropes), and in the space, she places frames that open a dialogue between her works and architecture as a whole. An important aspect of her work is the reference to motifs and techniques from ancient customs. Fragments of colored fabrics evoke the hues of past architecture, cracks in its aged walls, but in correlation with the social concerns of her time.

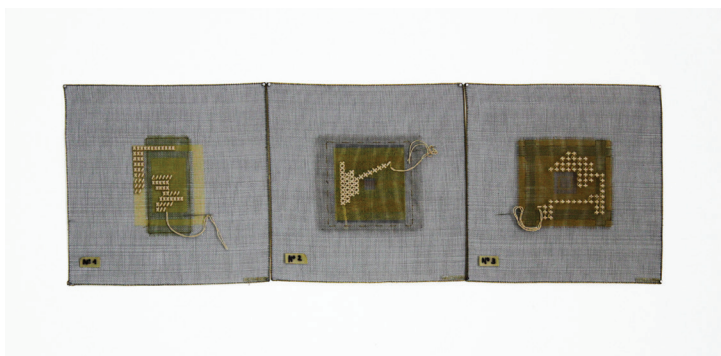
Lisa Rehsteiner (St. Gall, Switzerland, 1945) resides in Corbera de Llobregat, Barcelona. She graduated from the School of Decorative Arts in Basel, Switzerland, specializing in the textile section. She started her career as an artist in 1975 with her participation at the 7th International Tapestry Biennale in Lausanne. She continued her work in Spain and the United States. In her textile work, she explores the correlation between the dimensions of architecture and the object. Her work reflects engagement with the interplay between textiles and their surrounding spaces, pushing the boundaries of traditional textile art.

## Lisa Rehsteiner

### *Embroidery (series of 3 works)*

Embroidery on a metal sieve  
14x10, 14x15, 12,5x15 cm  
1977

Lisa Rehsteiner claimed a conceptual approach in the world of textile art. She carried out experiments of certain sewing and embroidery stitches which she often carried out on a large scale on metal mesh and which she left unfinished.



## Mira Spirovska

### *Free Forms 1*

Combined technique, cannabis sativa  
150x85x40 cm  
1979

Mira Spirovska is among the rare artists who after a brief venture in painting devoted herself completely to tapestry. Consistent with global contemporary movements, she weaves her tapestries not only as an addition to the elements forming space but rather as an active stakeholder in its shaping. This results in her three-dimensional tapestries, object tapestry-sculpture standing in space unsupported, thus becoming part of interior architecture. By applying perforations, braid-

ing, and pendants she achieves the third dimension, detaching the tapestry from the wall and setting it in space. Released from the constrictions of the weaving technique, and the freedom of independent execution, the artist introduces changes in the process of art creation, achieving impressive structures associated with ribs, repp, lacing, etc. She derives her inspiration from local folklore, embroidery, decorative folk costumes, and metal ornaments, with rich natural colors and with the tendency to renew and transform the traditional into contemporary plastic creation.



Mira Spirovska (Bitola, Macedonia, 1939) is a Macedonian artist who graduated at the Pedagogy Academy in Skopje in 1973. She has realized study visits in Italy, France, Germany, Switzerland, and Sweden, and featured in several solo exhibitions. From 1957, she has participated in all exhibitions organized by the Association of Fine Artists in Bitola, and from 1966 the exhibitions organized by the Macedonian Association of Fine Artists, and several national and international exhibitions: Women Artists of SR Macedonia (1969), Rijeka, Opatija, London with the exhibition of group of artists from the Croatia and the Slovenian Association of Fine Artists (1971), Contemporary Macedonian Artists – Young Generation II (1972), 25th Anniversary of the Yugoslavian Union of Fine Artists - SLUJ, Skopje (1973), 12 Contemporary Macedonian Artists, Novi Sad (1974), The Life of a Woman from Around the World, Sweden (1976), The National Liberation War in the Works of Yugoslav Artists, Belgrade (1976), Macedonian Artists, Zagreb (1976), Women Painters, Skopje (1977), First Sarajevo Artistic Triennial of Art Shaping“, Slovenj Gradec, Sarajevo (1978). She was awarded the Tapestry Award for the

exhibition Our Past in the Works of Macedonian Fine Artists (1972). Her works are part of numerous public objects in the country and abroad (Belgium, Germany, USA, and Sweden).

## Dushko Stojanovski *Tapestry 53Utum huium. S*

Combined technique, wool, cotton  
150x100 cm  
1989



Dushko Stojanovski's artistic suggestions divulge his curiosity in the organic world processes, geo-biological structures, micro or macro shapes, partially or completely exempted from decorative constituents. The form and how it is organized in the composition discloses an independent morphological system honoring the noble qualities of the fabric. The chromatic conception of his works is in agreement with the coloristic harmony of nature. The two-dimensional treatment disrupts the smooth tapestry surface, adding to the impression of informel technique. The tapestry dynamics results from the confrontation of various textures, small and big, open and closed shapes, black-white, light-dark, warm-cold tones, organic with the pure art form. The determination to achieve the third dimension narrates of a delicate relationship with sculpture, while the arabesque in the lyric drawing links it to graphic art. (Sonja Abadziewa Dimitrova)

Dushko Stojanovski (Skopje, 1930) is an academic painter and costume designer. He graduated at the Academy for Applied Art in Belgrade. He worked as a professor at the School for Applied Art in Skopje, and from 1968 as a costume designer at the Skopje Television. His solo exhibitions were featured at the University of Workers, Skopje (1960), Art Gallery, Bitola (1960, 1982), Art Gallery Pavillion, Skopje (1961), Museum of Applied Arts, Belgrade (1962), University of Workers, Ohrid (1962), University of Workers, Pristine (1965), Culture and Information Centre of the City of Skopje (1970, 1979, 1980), the Netherlands – Arnhem – Eindhoven – Amsterdam (1977), Australia, Sydney (1978), City Museum, Negotino (1982). He

has also participated at numerous group exhibitions, such as: Contemporary Yugoslavian Tapestry, Belgrade (1963), The National Liberation War in the Works of Fine Artists, Skopje (1963), Dijon, France (1965), International Exhibition of Tapestry, Lodz, Poland (1978), Yugoslavian Exhibition of Tapestry, Sarajevo (1978), Contemporary Yugoslav Tapestry, China (1979), Contemporary Yugoslavian Tapestry, Rome, Italy (1983). In addition, Stojanovski has also performed study visits to Italy, Germany, the Czech Republic, Poland, Turkey, Greece and the Netherlands.

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## Patricia Velasco Wallin

### Aconcagua

Cotton, wool  
200x53 cm  
1972

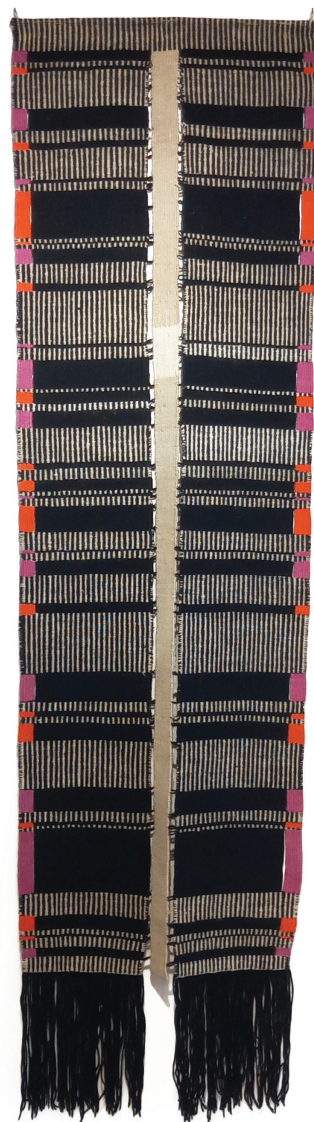
Patricia Velasco maintains a close relationship with pre-Columbian textile practices while simultaneously conducting ongoing research on the possibilities of the material in her works. As the artist describes:

*“More than influences from indigenous cultures, in my looms there is a spirit, a sensitivity common to pre-Columbian textile art. It is in the warp, in the tones, in the purity of the designs, and in the symbolism. The material is very important to me, manual work and great handling of materials, to explore the different possibilities of color, shine, and texture that the fibers offer.”*

In her latest years, Patricia Velasco has embraced new techniques and materials, prints, unique pieces, in which she explores every textile possibility the medium allows. She prints fabrics in halftones, capturing textures and imperfections of the weave, simulating the fabric on paper, or in other cases incorporating the fabric itself as a collage. She has also continued her exploration with tapestries, with wool as the primary material, inscribing geometric visual purity on broad chromatic planes. The precision of her textiles is complemented by meticulous dyeing work with wool reserve and delicate composition strategies.

Patricia Velasco Wallin (La Paz, Bolivia, 1940) studied painting in Bolivia under the guidance of private tutors and also studied at the Art Students League of New York, United States, where she specialized in Textile Art. She worked in Santiago de Chile in a workshop that she shared with her husband, the Chilean painter Nemesio Antúnez. Her work gained recognition both nationally and internationally, becoming part of esteemed public collections such as the Art collection at the Museum of Contemporary Art – Skopje, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and Gabriela Mistral Cultural Center, Santiago, Chile. She had solo exhibitions in Carmen Waugh Gallery, Santiago (1971, 1988); Galería Arte Único, La Paz, Bolivia (1991), Galería El Caballo Verde, Concepción, Chile (1994), Sala Nemesio Antúnez, Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación, Santiago, Chile (1994), Tapices, Artespacio,

Santiago, Chile (1999). She participated in numerous group shows in Carmen Waugh Gallery, Santiago (1968, 1970), Camden Art Center, London, England (1971), National Museum of Fine Arts, Santiago (1973), Pecanins Gallery, Barcelona, Spain (1974), International Tapestry Biennial, Lausanne, Switzerland (1975, 1977), Suzy Langlois Gallery, Paris, France (1977), Arrivet Studio, Lyon, France (1977), Third Lodz Textile Art Triennial, Poland (1978), Cultural Institute of San Miguel, Santiago, Chile (1978), San Martín Cultural Center, Buenos Aires, Argentina (1984), Chilean - North American Institute of Culture, Santiago (1985), Las Condes Cultural Institute, Santiago (1985), Municipal Corporation for Social Development, Iquique, Chile (1985), Escuela Moderna, Santiago (1985), Plastic Gallery 3, Santiago (1986), Del Cerro Gallery, Santiago (1990), Arcos de Bellavista, Santiago (1991), Rockville, Maryland, United States (1991), García Monge Gallery, San José, Costa Rica (1993), New Plastic Gallery, Santiago (1994), Caballo Verde Gallery, Concepción, Chile (1994), Nemesio Antúnez Room of the Metropolitan University of Educational Sciences, Santiago (1994), National Museum of Fine Arts, Santiago (2003), Santiago Campus Art Room of the University of Talca, Santiago, Chile (2006), Andean Museum, Alto Jahuel, Chile (2008).



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# Bauhaus Space

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## *An artistic research project on the Bauhaus textile workshop by Judith Raum*

Gunta Stölzl, 1926

By what right [...] do we undertake weaving at the Bauhaus? does weaving even belong to those things that are the object of the creative human will to form? [...] yes! because a fabric is an aesthetic whole, a composition of form, color and material into a unity.

although initially the work of the Bauhaus began from pictorial principles, which thought, as it were, that a weaving was a picture made of wool, today it is clear to us that a fabric is always a functional object, determined by its ultimate purpose and to the same extent by the conditions of its production.

these conditions are:

- the loose tissue which only knits into a particular surface through being subjected to an order,
- a multiplicity of intermeshings, giving a plastic quality to the surface,
- the color, intensified or softened by gloss or dullness,
- the material, whose qualities set limits to our treatment of it.

### Introduction

This space is entirely given over to the Bauhaus textile workshop. The installation recounts, in six chapters, the extraordinary success story of the workshop.

In the interwar years, specifically between 1919 and 1933, the Bauhaus sought to teach young people a new conception of design, looking to abolish the widespread division between art and craft. In 1933, the National Socialism government brought the progressive school to an abrupt end, a moment which also marked a radical break in the lives of some of the weavers.

The kinds of textiles created at the Bauhaus evolved over the years, as a series of directors implemented their own vision of the school's program. The early years saw the production of "pictures made of wool," as the weaver Gunta Stölzl retrospectively called it. Later production focused above all on functional fabrics, which were intended for cheap, large-scale manufacture. This close relation to industry went along with a social philosophy: to create well-designed products for as many people as possible. However, the weaving workshop was not simply a reflection of the school's changing aesthetic programs and the various political visions associated with them. The workshop also highlighted contradictions within the Bauhaus, above all with respect to gender and women's professional opportunities in the early twentieth century. From its earliest years, the textile workshop had become a female work environment, a gathering place for women students, even though the founding manifesto of the Bauhaus

had encouraged applications from both men and women, who were supposedly equally welcome in all its workshops.

Here, in the Bauhaus Space, the material itself can speak. Recreations of Bauhaus functional fabrics can be looked at, and above all can be touched. These newly recreated fabrics highlight how individual weavers brought together craft skills with distinctly artistic viewpoints and methods, based on intuition and inventiveness. In the work of an artist like Stölzl, we can trace how her talent as a painter finds expression in a finely nuanced selection of materials, as well as in the construction and color schemes of her upholstery and curtain fabrics.

The significance of the Bauhaus textile workshop goes beyond its rigorous engagement with the materials used in textile production and the connections forged between hand weaving and industrial practice. From very early on, the weavers found it necessary to write about textiles as a medium, establishing theoretical frameworks, in particular in its relation to architecture. This kind of linguistic clarity about one's own material is quite special, and for this reason, we give prominence here to the artists' own voices. Alongside Stölzl, the textile designer Otti Berger – whose writings reflect on "fabrics in space" – has a particularly important role in this.

The Bauhaus Space is the product of an artistic research project by Judith Raum. It was co-designed by Jakob Kirch (Lamm & Kirch). Architectural realization was by Till-Moritz Ganssaugue and Florentin Steininger (S.T.I.F.F.).

### 1. Until your entire body resonates

The Bauhaus is founded in Weimar in 1919. The architect Walter Gropius is the source of ideas and the school's first director. Gropius has a vision of bringing together arts and crafts in a new unity in the training of young designers. This is why internationally-known artists teach at the school, but it is a fundamental Bauhaus principle that training would not take place in master classes, but in workshops devoted to individual crafts. In a mandatory foundation course, Johannes Itten – later followed by László Moholy-Nagy and Josef Albers – has the task of teaching students color theory and surface design. Students learn about light-dark contrast, the qualities of materials, and rhythm in space and in two-dimensional surfaces. But Itten also understands his task more broadly: he aims at a holistic opening and general sensitization of the personality.

### 2. Attaching form to the weaving process: the Weimar years

During the Bauhaus's time in Weimar, between 1919 and 1924, the textile workshop has to establish itself and define its areas of activity. Students work up individual pieces on the horizontal loom, based on designs on paper: carpets and woven tapestries, complex in color and form, before ultimately moving on to wall hangings, scarves and other fabrics on the horizontal loom. In 1923, Gropius demands a new unity of art and technology. This leads to the weavers examining the feasibility of serial production of some weaves and patterns. They consciously concentrate on the basic conditions of the weaving process, resulting in formally reduced fabrics, often featuring stripes. At the same time, the Bauhaus participates in trade fairs and creates new structures enabling the workshops to receive commissions, sell products and work commercially.



### 3. The Dessau years: a fundamentally different program

In 1924, the Bauhaus has to leave Weimar for political reasons. New premises are found for the school in the city of Dessau. Students and workshops move into the Walter Gropius-designed building in 1925. In 1928, the architect Hannes Meyer takes over leadership of the school. In 1930, he is succeeded by the architect Mies van der Rohe. During the Dessau years, which end in 1932, the textile workshop makes a clear separation between free artistic work, on the one hand, and the production of functional fabrics, on the other. In 1925, a limited company is founded for the commercial exploitation of all Bauhaus products. From now on, the focus of the textile workshop lies in designing fabrics for furniture, curtains and wall coverings, and more generally, in considering the functional suitability of certain materials. The professional qualifications of weavers are guaranteed by a journeyman's diploma from the weavers' guild. Gunta Stölzl, a former student of the workshop, becomes the Bauhaus's first female craft master, and runs the textile workshop until she is dismissed in 1931, a victim of increasing pressure exerted on the school by right-wing forces.

### 4. Developing an idea from one experiment to the next

In Dessau the textile workshop is divided into teaching and production operations. The Bauhaus ethos – a fundamental rehabilitation of craft through precise knowledge of work materials and processes – finds expression in the workshop through a focus on work with the handloom. This also marks the first step in developing fabrics for industrial production. In order to create new fabric qualities, direct work at the loom without drafting designs on paper is encouraged, as is experimentation and speculation with yarn combinations and weaves. In their technical teaching and weaving theories, Gunta Stölzl and Otti Berger support collective learning and shared knowledge: fabrics they develop are distributed to all students to be analyzed and learned from.

### 5. A connection to industry

The Bauhaus increasingly expands its contacts with industry. The textile workshop's commercial fabrics are exhibited at fairs. Some individual producers, such as Polytex, are given licenses to produce furniture and curtain fabrics using the Bauhaus brand. However, anonymous authorship is a controversial subject among the students. In the production workshop, professional weavers work alongside students on orders for carpets and for fabrics sold by the meter. Numerous strapping and upholstery fabrics are produced for the furniture workshop; the textile workshop also produces materials for the interiors of architectural projects with links to the Bauhaus. Above all, the Bauhaus attempts to establish itself as a center of research and innovation. Commercial fabrics with innovative qualities are physically tested and sold, including wall covering fabrics which can provide insulation and sound-proofing.

### 6. Putting tactility in the picture

The textiles developed by the Bauhaus weavers were meant to be photographed and disseminated for advertising and exhibition purposes. This demanded a conscious use

of photographic media: from 1929 on, this was done by the Bauhaus's photography department under the leadership of Walter Peterhans. Tactile properties usually experienced with the hand had now to be transposed into a two-dimensional photographic image. To represent the softness or hardness of a particular fabric, it was displayed in a crumpled or taut arrangement. Lighting could emphasize a glossy or matt surface, as well as the transparency of certain materials. To achieve this, the camera lens had to come very close to the fabric; in the photographs, the edges of the fabric are often unraveled, making the play of the individual threads visible.



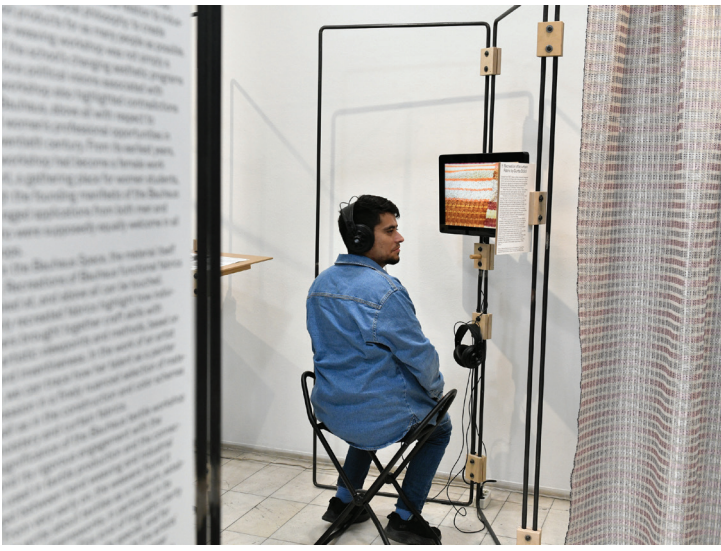
Bauhaus Space, installation view



Installation view, detail with newspaper and recreation of a wall covering fabric by Kitty van der Mijl Dekker (originally from 1932)



installation view with sample board of threads, a.o. from the Bauhaus time (on the right)



Installation view, on the right detail with recreation of a curtain fabric by Gunta Stözl (Original from ca. 1925-28), and video essay



Installation view, detail of a „yarn chart“



Installation view, detail with newspaper and recreation of a curtain fabric by Otti Berger (originally from 1932)



Recreation of an upholstery material by Gunta Stözl (original from ca. 1925-30)

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## Colophon:

The Event of a Thread: Global Narratives in Textiles  
28.5 – 8.9.2024

An exhibition by ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen  
in collaboration with  
the Museum of Contemporary Art - Skopje

### Exhibition

- Concept and selection: Susanne Weiß, Inka Gressel and Jovanka Popova
- Planning and organization: Clea Laade, Inka Gressel, Susanne Weiß, Jovanka Popova and Bojana Stojmenovska
- Technical implementation: Christa Fülbier, Frank Marks, Tomislav Karevski, Jordan Arsovski
- Overall design concept: Jakob Kirch, Pascal Storz, Jordan Arsovski
- Program and operational coordinator: Bojana Stojmenovska
- Graphic design: Iliana Petrushevska
- Curators collaborators: Blagoja Varoshanec and Iva Dimovski
- Conservators: Ljupco Iljoski and Jadranka Milcovska
- Education and Museum Guiding Department: Bojana Janeva
- Translation into Macedonian and English language: Julija Micova
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- The artworks are provided through the courtesy of the artists, Museum of Contemporary Art - Skopje, PrivatePrint Studio, Slavco Dimitrov

The exhibition project has been supported by the German Embassy – North Macedonia, Goethe Institut – North Macedonia and Tikves.

### About ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen:

ifa is the oldest international cultural and educational relations body in Germany. It promotes peaceful coexistence between people and cultures worldwide. ifa values contemporary art as an important medium for international dialogue and organizes exhibitions on contemporary visual arts, architecture, design, and photography that place current discourses within a broader context all over the world and create local platforms for encounters. Through its exhibitions and accompanying educational programs, ifa encourages global exchanges between the arts, cultural producers, and institutions, in particular supporting the expansion of artistic networks.

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Global  
Narratives  
in Textiles

# The Event of a Thread



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28.05.<sup>24</sup> – 02.09.<sup>24</sup>

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