

textile^{ETN}forum

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TRACHT IST MODE?

FASHION AND REGIONAL DRESS



'FIBRAS 08/09' - CONTEMPORARY TEXTILE ART Yosi Anaya

Two important events occurred over the last twelve months for WTA, perhaps as a result of slight name change from *Women in Textile Art* to *World Textile Art* (perhaps as a result of a long-term build-up). Both events involved a European connection. This Miami-based organization led by the Columbian artist Pilar Tobón, dedicated to the promotion of textile art and well known for its biennales in the Americas, posted this time two exhibitions in the European Continent. The first, a selection from its miniature textile collection, was held at the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum at Birkbeck, England, from November 24th 2007 to January 28, 2008.

The second, and perhaps most remarkable yet – is the recent alliance between WTA and three Spanish collaborators, who organized a magnificent and select show at Madrid's Costume Museum. María Ortega as curator and Consuelo Viqueira, and María Muñoz as

collaborators all artists in their own right, were the organizing team in Madrid, who together with WTA selected eight international textile artists and eight artists working in Spain through textiles. The exhibition consisted of one large-format work per artist, staged until 2nd of November 2008 in the three spaces of the Museum's winding temporary exhibition halls.

On the 12th of September the exhibition formally opened, led by the Museum's Director Andrés Carrión with the presence of essay artists, press representatives, and an intrigued public. – It title, *Fibras 2008*, conjures up an almost forgotten term in central Spain, but one not without a history – and particularly for Madrid that held its first great international textile show *Exposición Artística Textil* in 1965 with the participation of figures like Abakanowicz, Burc, Glicks, Hicks, Sadley, where in 1983 the National Fair Art Prize was awarded to a textile artist (Carola Torres); where in

1984 the National Prize in Tapestry was founded (surviving for two years), and where the last series of outstanding exhibitions of textile art were held in the late 1980's, as well as officially including textile works in *Enciclopedia 1985*.

Notable textile artists since the 1960's – such as, Gran Gargallo, Aurelia Madoz, Luis Garrido, plus Joan Miró's ongoing collaborations with Josep Royo in tapestry and textile collages – have made their mark in the international art world and as reputed teachers working out of Catalonia, a textile hub for various decades. In 1973, *Tapez: Español Contemporáneo y Extranjero* Textiles was held at Museo Textil in Terrassa to show a panorama of contemporary tapestries in Spain. Granada held its first textile encounter with Andalusian textile artists in 1983. San Sebastián established in 1986 ARTLEKU, interdisciplinary art centre with an active textile workshop organizing many projects until its closure in 1992. The exhibition *Entre telas y relieves* in Santillana del Mar, Santander, presented diverse new tendencies and languages in textile art in 1991. Worth of mention is the heroic venture by Juliana Rucaja in Seville in putting forth texts and ideas that approached textile art through different positions: in contemporary critical theory, serving as a bridge to all Spanish-speaking countries in the 9 editions of the journal *Art y Textil* (1993–1999).

Yet now in Madrid, a bustling cultural city, textiles have again seen delegated to the world of fashion design and daily life. This exhibition however aims to reverse this tendency. Thus the Costume Museum, dedicated to dress and costume conservation, now gravitates a new magnetism, drawing many curious non-textile people to this particular exhibition, qualified by Madrid's reputed newspaper *El Mundo*, as "the show of the week", and also covered in more than nine major international newspapers, plus radio and television.

What is this thing called contemporary textile art? was the main question put to María Ortega over several years of presenting her work in Spanish art galleries. Why stress it in a moment when the digital world seems to be moving and attracting artists and admirers to the new frontiers of art and media? Why then does the term 'textile' challenge the Mainstream evoking a quotidian activity rather than a vanguard art form in the mind of layman and artist

alike? This concern led to the initial steps in the collaboration with WTA. Presumably, *Fibras 08/09* textiles as a valid contemporary art form.

Dr. Antonio E. de Prado, Spanish art historian, has become tools of high art, not found their place along the diverse materials engaged by the contemporary artist to achieve objects in accord with the aesthetics of our time. This show demonstrates what they can. For in it, artists have come forth from original spatial to the most sophisticated in a fruitless dialogue that faces a variety of techniques and processes on many levels of sensitivity from the tactile, spatial to the visual-sensory. Yet I would like to stress the textile pieces in *Fibras 08/09* are more than an object, but in their materiality are pure analytic concepts, playful critique, serious search for meaning to problems, and a loss, memory, suffering, soul disquiet, shelter, migration and links to nature. Each artist has made full use of its textures as an art medium – fibres to paper, from man's plastic, from hand-dyed to digital imaging, linking up with Future and exploring different cultural ideas, where experiment and evolution have transcended many boundaries. What comes across now are the variety and individuality of each discipline and the use of traditional elements to translate into individual innovative statements. Ancient techniques and materials are now made compatible with new – a result very far from time, albeit noble, tapestry work.

To disturb the sediment of exclusion of textile art from mainstream art spaces is a definition of *Fibras 08/09*. The definitive catalogue, available from the Costume Museum's bookstore (Museo del Traje, Julián de Herrera 2, E-28014 Madrid; <http://www.museodeltraje.es>), is a testimony to its commitment. Presented in La Madrid, the exhibition will run as *Fibras 09* to three cities next year – Aranjuez (January 18th to March 15), and Zamora (March 26th to May 24).

On the author
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REPORT

Exhibition at the Museum of Costumes in Madrid

▼ **MARIA ORTEGA** Spain
Black Out Black Out! Black Out! remains in a series of works regarding communication between us. Two boxed insulating works hang side by side, the smaller one within a glass case, the larger one in a wire frame against the wall.

Furthermore shown in the exhibition but unfortunately not documented here are the works of Flora Sotón/Argentina, Isabel Polkowski/Argentina, Natalia Parajo/Spain, María Muñoz/Spain, Cristina Almodovar/Spain, Sagane Hara/Japan, Amelia Jiménez/Spain, Kae Newcomb/USA & Spain, Cristina Bosta/Spain and Consuelo Viqueira/Columbia & Spain.



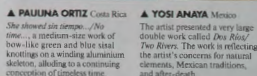
▼ **PILAR TOBÓN** Colombia
Her hanging *Homage to Koinon* / *Homage to the Koinon*, in antique brass and silk four-piece weaving, spinning gently in the middle of the hall reflecting the exhibition lights.

▼ **LAURA FERRANDO** RA
Her work *J.N.R.J.* of aluminium and silk was presented as a post-mortem tribute to her father, regarding their conversations on religion.



▼ **PAULINA ORTIZ** Costa Rica
She showed *sin tiempo... / No time...*, a medium-size work of blue-like green and blue vital knotting on a winding aluminum skeleton, alluding to a continuing conception of timeless time.

▼ **YOSI ANAYA** Mexico
The artist presented a very large double work called *Dea Rely* / *The Rivers*. The work is reflecting the artist's concerns for natural elements, Mexican traditions, and after-death.



▼ **SILKE** Argentina (RA)
She is a scholar of the mystic beliefs. *La creación de la humanidad según el Popol Vuh*, The Creation of Humanity according to the Popol Vuh – It shows the Divine descending to earth in a moment of fecundity and from the earth life sprouts. This finely woven silk work of multiple squares, each with a different pattern, is like an awaiting offering.

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Michele Howard Rashman/UK:
Textile sculpture

MICHELE HOWARTH RASHMAN

The exhibition, "An Obsession, He calls Himself Margaret" was presented at the Outside World Gallery, London (44 Redchurch Street, E2), from 17th November to 14th December 2011. It featured larger-than-life textile sculptures and knitted objects, entitled "psychiatric knitwear" by the artist. Rashman staged her first exhibition in conjunction with Grayson Perry in 1982, for which she received support from the British Crafts Council.



Maïté Tanguy/F: „Des profondeurs au très haut“

MAÏTÉ TANGUY

For a musical event entitled "Le temps, le son, le geste", held at the Paris Nadine Gallery (12 rue d'Alger) from 15th November to 4th December 2011, this French artist pre-

sented a piece entitled "Des profondeurs au très haut", based on music by Alain Kremski. In addition to her free art she designs one-off fabrics for haute couture, including the Christian Lacroix and Balenciaga fashion labels.

'THE NATURE SPIRIT'

The exhibition "The Nature Spirit – Japanese Contemporary Textile Art" was held at the Hispano-Japanese Cultural Centre in Salamanca from 5th to 28th October 2011, and again at the Complutense Art Center in Madrid from 18th November 2011 to 15th

January 2012. Organised by World Textile Art (WTA) and backed by the Japan Foundation, the project was realised by Maria Ortega, artist and WTA representative in Spain. Japanese textile artist Sugane Hara acted as curator. Fifteen Japanese artists participated in the event.



"The Nature Spirit – Leaf, Wind"

50 YEARS OF LATVIAN TEXTILE ART

An event entitled "Textile LV" featured several exhibitions and a conference from 7th October to 20th November 2011:

- 1) "Golden Section", 7th October to 20th November 2011 at the Arsenal's exhibition hall of the Latvian National Museum of Art
- 2) "Identity of Latvian textile art", 8th October to 8th November 2011 at the Pinacotheca/Museum of Happy Art
- 3) "How to become a textile artist", 21st and 22nd October 2011 at the Riga Art Academy
- 4) International conference "Textile – Smart Art", 21st and 22nd October 2011 at the Pinacotheca

The event was occasioned by the 50th anniversary of the year that the Textile Department was established at the Latvian Art Academy by Rudolfs Heimrats, who died on 1st May 1992. Museum director Velta Raudzema introduced him to our readers in TF 3/92, pages 40/41.

The accompanying programme of the event was diverse, including the exhibition "The Sixteenth" by the Association of Latvian Textile Artists, solo exhibitions featuring Ruta Bogustova, Ieva Krumina, Inese Jakobi, Baiba Osite and

Egils Rozenbergs, as well as workshops led by Peteris Sidars and Ingvilda Kravina. The exhibition mentioned earlier, "Golden Section", was devoted to historic development whereas the remaining shows portrayed current Latvian textile art.

Representatives of higher education institutes and companies participated in the conference, together with artists and textile enthusiasts from the Baltic countries, Scandinavia, the UK and France. Focal subjects were education, art, design and technology, ethnographic issues and applied art.

Publicity for this event of international significance suffered from a lack of information and coordination. In late September, the international textile art community gathered in neighbouring Lithuania for the ETN Conference, but there was no delegation from Riga who might have announced the forthcoming event focusing on the importance of Rudolfs Heimrats' achievements in Latvia. Although the Latvian website presents many photographs of the event, regrettably the explanatory text has been provided in the national language only (<http://www.tekstils.lv>).



View at one of the Riga exhibition



◀ Edita Vignere/LV: Collage, portrait



◀ Irena Andrejeva /LV: "Pin-up-girl", 2009