

# AUBUSSON TAPESTRY

**DISCOVER AN INTANGIBLE CULTURAL  
HERITAGE WITH THE**

Cité internationale de la tapisserie Aubusson

**2018-2019**



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*Untitled*, Mathieu Mercier, 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize 2011, woven by Atelier Legoueix. © Éric Roger.

## CONTEMPORARY CREATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The department of Creuse initiated the Cité internationale de la tapisserie project with a significant support from the State. This project is inscribed in a process of valorisation of the craftsmanship of excellence in weaving and thread in general.

The implementation of a Regional Fund for the creation of contemporary tapestries in 2010 interested until the present day almost 1,200 creators. It led to the production of astonishing pieces that are often requested for loans : they participate in writing a new page of the Aubusson tapestry history.

The platform for contemporary creation within the Cité de la tapisserie strengthens the gathering of this craftsmanship recognized as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and creators of all kinds.

The Cité de la tapisserie initiates projects with private partners, such as the one developed with the Ymer & Malta gallery, in order to help the professionals to get a true perception of clients expectations and markets.

The Cité also implemented a national degree for weaving (National Arts and Crafts Degree « Arts and techniques of carpet and tapestry weaving ») that will be a part of a larger competence cluster including natural dying and textile restoration.

In connection with the Regional Council, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Community of Cities Creuse Grand Sud, the business incubator 2Cube and the association Lainamac, the Cité works to increase the excellency business network around the wool production, the industries of carpets and tapestries, high-warp tapestries, tufted rugs, digital weavings and jacquard carpets.

In this context, an outreach manager develops business relations with the United Arab Emirates, in cooperation with Aubusson manufacturers.

The Cité also takes part in the prospection and installation of innovative businesses in Aubusson, in the field of woven art and the valorisation of the heritage within the « Aubusson world ».

**EMMANUEL GÉRARD**

Director, Cité internationale de la tapisserie



The Tapestry Nave in the Cité de la tapisserie.  
© Béatrice Hatala.

## A RENEWED SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL PROJECT

The Cité internationale de la tapisserie opened in the former National School of Decorative Art, which has been entirely rehabilitated. This was a strong symbol : the valorisation of Aubusson tapestry is assigned to the last building to house the National School of Decorative Art in Aubusson, one of the first three Schools of this kind, created at the same time as Paris and Limoges in 1884.

With a new museum comes a completely redesigned scientific and cultural project. The inscription of Aubusson tapestry on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity was a trigger to put the human back in the centre of the project.

The craftsmanship and its learning are in the heart of the new permanent exhibition itinerary, along with the question of the interpretation of the artist's project by the craftsman (the weaver), as a guiding thread during the visit.

It was also necessary to take into account the openness of the institution. The Cité internationale

de la tapisserie is not only a museum. It is also a place for professional training, creation, and a resources centre.

The museum is the base and all other functions feed on each other. Following this principle, complementarity between spaces guided the rehabilitation of the building of the former Art School the Cité de la tapisserie settled in.

Meanwhile, considerable efforts have been made to upgrade the collection : checking and updating collection inventories (inventory database), definition of a reasoned enrichment plan to establish a reference collection for Aubusson tapestry and offer a complete panorama of the productions in Aubusson from the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the present day.

**BRUNO YTHIER**

Curator, Cité internationale de la tapisserie





## AUBUSSON TAPESTRY, SIX CENTURIES OF HISTORY

### GENESIS

Beyond the myth, the first certain mention of tapestry workers settled in Aubusson's surroundings, in the nearby town of Felletin, dates back to 1457. Even back then, Aubusson tapestry is closed to the aesthetic and artistic evolutions of its time and follows the fashion of the *Millefleurs*, asserting its identity with a rustic and precise weaving.

The 16th century is marked by the greeneries « *with cabbage leaves* », wild and monumental landscapes populated by real or fantasy animals. The verdure hangings, which styles evolve with fashion, create great interior landscapes, and impose themselves as a great force of Aubusson production.

### 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY, THE ROYAL MANUFACTURE

In the 17th century sentimental novels met with great public success. The cartoonists of the region assist this popularity by offering series of tapestries drawn from the illustrated editions of these works.

The quality of Aubusson production is recognised and regulated by the Royal Administration, and the workshops of Aubusson are granted the title of Royal Manufacture of Tapestries in 1665. Contrary to what this title might suggest, the production is not gathered in a unique manufactory but it is spread in a multitude of independant workshops... a specificity that continues nowadays!

### 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY, FINE TAPESTRIES FOR INTERNATIONAL MARKET

After a troubled period due to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the Royal Manufacture is deeply reformed. With King's painter Jean-Joseph Dumons, Aubusson tapestry adopts a lighter style, fashionable in Paris. This fine and colored style, very decorative, meets a great success and offers a new stimulation to Aubusson tapestry.



*Greenery of «cabbage leaves», la Marche (area of Aubusson) workshop, second half of the 16th century*



*Ulysses leaves Aeolus (detail), by Isaac Moillon, Aubusson workshops, 17th century*



## 19TH CENTURY, GREAT MANUFACTORIES

Great manufactories, ruled by tycoons and gathering all the crafts and jobs associated with tapestry, present their best creations at important decorative arts exhibitions.

Rugs and upholstery ensure the profitability of these manufactories. Meanwhile, tapestry follows the numerous artistic movements of the century, turning more and more into an imitation of painting.

*L'Asie (detail)*, Sallandrouze manufactory, 1844, loan from the Louvre



## THE NATIONAL SCHOOL OF DECORATIVE ARTS AND THE REVIVAL OF AUBUSSON TAPESTRY

In 1884, the National School of Decorative Arts is created in Aubusson. From 1917, director Antoine Marius Martin initiates a true revival of Aubusson tapestry. Adopting the modernity of post-impressionist artists and rejecting the imitation of painting, he defines a new aesthetic, inspired by medieval tapestries, using a reduced chromatic scale, bigger threads and a more visible weaving technique.

Jean Lurçat, an already well-known painter emerging from the surrealist movement, gives an impulse to the workshops' activity, carrying along a whole generation of painters inspired by his works.

*Water and fire (detail)*, Jean Lurçat, Goubely workshop, 1952

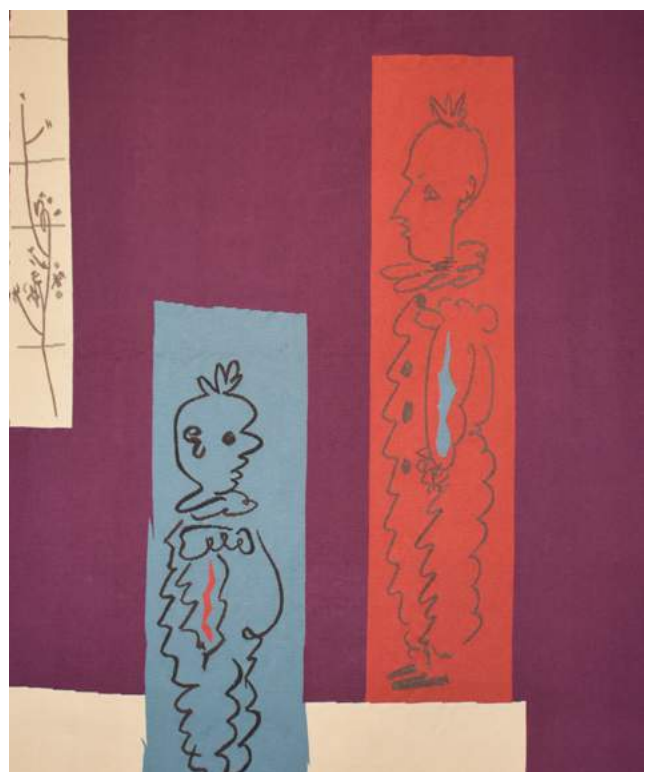


## GREAT ARTISTS IN AUBUSSON

This revival of Aubusson tapestry, built on strong new technique and aesthetics, attracts the greatest artists of the 20th century.

Marie Cuttoli, editor and avant-garde collector, orders cartoons to the likes of Picasso, Braque and Le Corbusier, who find in Aubusson tapestry a medium that fits their aspirations. This movement is carried on by cartoonist Pierre Baubouin, who transcribes in textile language the works of these artists.

*The Clowns*, Marie Cuttoli editor, Pinton workshop, 1962



Aubusson's unwavering link with art of its time is nurtured by the Cité de la tapisserie through its actions for contemporary creations.

# AUBUSSON TAPESTRY, INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY



The process that led to the inscription of Aubusson tapestry on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity took place between 2008 and 2009. It was led by Bernard Bonnelle, the sub-prefect of Aubusson, in connection with the departmental museum curator.

The authorities had the will to face the fragility of the sector and ensure the transmission of a craftsmanship that was in jeopardy.

## The recognition of Aubusson tapestry's craftsmanship relies on two essential lines:

- The presence of a **professional community** that remains complete after more than five centuries of existence.

All necessary skills to produce an Aubusson tapestry can be found on the territory. The professional community includes two spinning companies out of the four remaining in France, dyers, three manufactures, eight workshops, cartoons painters, restorers, etc.

All this with a strong particularity : in a small territory, the craftsmanship is enriched by the exchanges among the professionals who compare and test, accumulating a collective experience.

- The **interpretation / adaptation work** done by the weavers starting from the artist's model.

Producing a tapestry is a « four-hand process », arising from the exchanges between the creator, originator of an artistic intent, and the weaver, who holds the expertise.

## September 2009, General Assembly of UNESCO in Doha

Aubusson tapestry is officially added on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

For public authorities, the Cité internationale de la tapisserie with its various components (professional training, museum, contemporary creation, support of the tapestry sector) is an appropriate response to this UNESCO label.

This label seems to be a very positive factor for the successful outcome of the project. Indeed, it drives strong ethics of working that give greater responsibility to the actors involved in order to build an unifying project.

**10 YEARS  
ANNIVERSARY  
IN 2019 !**











**Luxury product and craftsmanship of local tradition, Aubusson tapestry is made of six centuries of history and renews itself in contemporary creation. A continued production where know-how, men and the Creuse territory converge. Aubusson tapestry is a combination of techniques, crafts and skills, labelled « Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity » by UNESCO.**

### THE WOOL

Tapestry is a matter of fibers, and above all of wool, praised for its isolating, supple and resistant qualities and its dyeing possibilities.

After the shearing, the wool is sorted out according to its fineness, then washed and ungreased. The wool is then disentangled, combed and stretched in strands that, once spinned by two or three, give a solid and regular thread.

The spinning mill in Felletin, near Aubusson, provides the wool threads needed by the hand weavers.



### THE DYEING

As opposed to industrial dyeing processes, dyers in Aubusson work using visual trichromatism, creating the desired nuance by adding small doses of primary colours pigments, without the assistance of any machine. In Aubusson, the dyer conducts a real research of nuances, produced in small quantities. This small production of very specific colours fits the needs of tapestry. The dyer's know-how, the mastering of pigments and bathing times, guarantees the consistence and durability of colours.

Yellow pigment.



### "THINKING WOOL": THE CARTOONIST

Cartoonists are the masters of the graphic and technical language of tapestry. They are in charge of translating and adaptating the artist's model into a "textile speaking guide" on which the weaver can relate. Graphic codes indicate particular weaving techniques and the colours can be replaced by numbers. Each number relates to a colour in the assortment made by the dyer. Placed under the warp threads, the cartoon guides the weaver.

Cartoon of *Peau de Licorne* by Nicolas Buffe, under the warp of Patrick Guillot's weaving loom



## THE ARTIST-WEAVER RELATIONSHIP, A TRADITION IN AUBUSSON

The relationship between the artist, conceper of the model, and the weaver who interprets it, is at the heart of the creation of a tapestry. Aubusson has always been a place of dialogue between an age-old technique and the foremost artistic avantgarde. The excellency of a tapestry resides in the quality of this relationship between the creator, who expresses his art in his own medium, and the weaver, who imagines its textile writing.

Tapestries are four-hand works bearing two signatures, the result of a collaboration between a craftsman and a creator (paintor, sculptor, designer, architect, etc.). The weaver's know-how resides in his technique, but also in his sensibility and coimprehension of the artist's intention. The weaver makes different samples, trying different technqiues, materials, colors, and proposes different interpretations to the artist. The manual weaving on a low-warp loom allows the weaver to use an infinite variety of colors and to constantly adapt his gesture. Aubusson tapestry's technique can thus produce a great diversity of effects and textures in a single work. This unique relationship between the artist and the weaver attracted many of the main artists of the 20th century.

Pablo Picasso and Pierre Baudouin (professor in the Aubusson School of Decorative Art and "wool interpreter") examining the Picasso tapestry *The Clowns*.



## BASSE-LISSE WEAVING

The «lissier» is the weaver who executes the work on a loom. He gets his name from the «lisse», a string linking a warp thread to a pedal («marche») actioned to alternatively lift up and lower the two sets of warps, thus allowing to cover them with the weft threads using a wooden flute.

On a horizontal basse-lisse loom, the weaver works on the reverse side of the tapestry, and can only partially check his work by placing a mirror between the warp threads or crawling under the loom. The weaver himself, and the artist, only discover the entire work when they cut the warps and remove the tapestry from the loom. The work then has to be finished, with the sewing of the edges and of the weaving interruptions due to the shifts in colours.

This techniques, closely associated to the know-how of Aubusson weavers, was inscribed on UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2009.



Weaver's hands. © Nicolas Roger





## BUILDING THE CITÉ INTERNATIONALE DE LA TAPISSERIE

**The National School of Decorative Art in Aubusson was one of the first three schools of Decorative Art, with Paris and Limoges, that opened in France by the end of the XIXth century. The building has been given a new skin to house the Cité internationale de la tapisserie.**

The Cité internationale de la tapisserie opened in July 2016 in Aubusson (Creuse, France).

It was a highlight of the cultural season: 40 000 visitors attended the exhibition of the Cité in six months while they were expected in a year.

The building of the former National School of Decorative Art in Aubusson has been entirely rehabilitated by Terreneuve architecture studio (Paris) with the main goal of making visitors understand the vitality of an age-old craftsmanship: Aubusson tapestry.

The heritage collections are presented in an immersive museum exhibit. More than just a museum, the Cité de la tapisserie is a place of artistic creation, training, and supporting the tapestry economic sector, which remains complete and preserved on the territory of Aubusson and South Creuse after six centuries of existence.

The rehabilitation of the National School of Decorative Art ended with the hand-over of the building in March 2016 by the Cité internationale de la tapisserie. The interior layout took about four months and the Cité de la tapisserie was inaugurated by the President of the Republic on July 10th 2016.

The restructuring project was carried out by Terreneuve architecture studio, unanimously selected by a jury at the end of an architectural competition

launched in 2012. The Terreneuve team, led by Nelly Breton and Olivier Fraisse, was able to capitalise on the existing structure of the building, in particular by underpinning the building in order to create an exhibition area with monumental dimensions. Exhibition spaces treble regarding the former Tapestry Museum of Aubusson, whose management belongs to the Cité de la tapisserie since 2011.

before



after



Underspinning the Tapestry Nave : how to optimize the building structure and create an exhibition space with monumental dimensions.



The weaver's workshop available for large-scale orders, opens to public. © Cité internationale de la tapisserie

## A NEW KIND OF MUSEUM

The Cité Internationale de la Tapisserie was established in response to the inclusion of Aubusson tapestry skills on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2009.

It is dedicated to the influence of this world-renowned monumental art. It is supported by a Joint union representing the departmental board of the Creuse, the region Nouvelle Aquitaine and the community of communes Creuse Grand Sud. It was conceived under the co-chair of Valérie Simonet, Chair of the Departmental Board of Creuse, and Jean-Jacques Lozach, Senator of Creuse and is now chaired by Valérie Simonet.

The Cité internationale de la tapisserie in Aubusson is an original institution, created with three objectives :

- to preserve, enhance and promote Aubusson tapestry, Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity according to the UNESCO, with a reference collection;
- to support a complete economic sector, highlight its know-hows, encourage transmission and contemporary creation;
- to develop tourism and textile economies in a fragile rural area.

After being inaugurated by the President of France, the Cité de la Tapisserie opened its doors to the public on 10 July 2016, in the completely restored building that previously housed the Aubusson École Nationale d'Art Décoratif (ENAD - National School of Decorative Art), marking a genuine continuity with Aubusson tapestry history.

### AN UNPRECEDENTED EXHIBITION ROUTE

The scientific and cultural project of the new museum echoes the UNESCO label by keeping the human in the heart of the exhibition route. Discovery, initiation, representation and creation are the four steps of a route deployed over 1,600 m<sup>2</sup>.

### A VIBRANT SPACE, FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A "HYPER RURAL" TERRITORY

Beyond a traditional museum, the Cité internationale de la tapisserie imposes itself as a pioneer project for economic and cultural development on a rural territory with a great craftsmanship: the Cité hosts a series of professional functions related to its mission to support the tapestry industry.





## AN UNPRECEDENTED EXHIBITION

**Echoing the inscription of Aubusson tapestry craftsmanship on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the visitor's itinerary puts the human dimension of tapestry back in the centre.**

This 1,200 m<sup>2</sup> exhibition is supplemented by a platform for contemporary creation. Frédérique Paoletti and Catherine Rouland were in charge of the scenography layout. The scenography consists of three areas : discovery, initiation, representation, as the three steps of the visitor's itinerary. Through very different layouts in each area of the exhibition, the scenographic bias is to create a free yet intimate atmosphere, punctuated by surprising elements, to create an immersion in the Aubusson world of weaving.

### EXPLORING WOVEN MATERIAL: "TAPESTRIES OF THE WORLD"

This first area is dedicated to the textile expressions from different areas of the world to highlight the universal dimension of this weaving technique.

The artworks come from the collections of prestigious institutions in France (Quai Branly Museum, National Museum of Asian Arts, Musée de Cluny-National Museum of the Middle Ages in Paris; Museum of Fabrics-Museum of Decorative Art in Lyon, Bargoin Museum in Clermont-Ferrand...).

This exhibition section works as counterpoint of UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity label : Aubusson tapestry is included in a worldwide textile practice, employed by almost every people at some time in their history.

#### A total of 1,600 m<sup>2</sup> for the exhibition areas

The permanent exhibition occupies 1,200 m<sup>2</sup>. From June to September, it is completed by the 400 m<sup>2</sup> of the Jean-Lurçat Cultural Centre in Aubusson, dedicated to temporary exhibitions.



Tapestries of the World. © Béatrice Hatala.

## UNDERSTANDING THE CRAFTSMANSHIP: THE HANDS OF AUBUSSON

This area dedicated to the craftsmanship of Aubusson tapestry intends to present UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity label. In particular, it develops the "four-handed work": essential dialogue between the artist's project and the technique, in an artist-craftsman approach of the adaptation process.

Tablets with iconographic documents and audiovisual materials present the complete range of technical know-how. The visitor can make his own tapestry on a tablet thanks to a serious game of weaving.

Objects and audio-visual documents explain the daily life of Aubusson tapestry's professional community (from spinners to restorers) that has been kept complete for six centuries.

Every production is represented: wall tapestries, Aubusson rugs (made on a low-warp loom), knotted pile carpets (made on a high-warp loom), "Saracen" embroidery, needlepoint tapestry, mechanical weaving, etc.

The Bettencourt Schueller Foundation supported the realisation of this section of the exhibition.



The Hands of Aubusson. © Cité internationale de la tapisserie/ Eric Roger.



## SIX CENTURIES OF HISTORY: THE TAPESTRY NAVE

Designed as a real show, it is the flagship space of the exhibition. The Tapestry Nave is an invitation to travel through five centuries and a half of productions in Aubusson.

The tapestries are not displayed as if they were paintings anymore. The scenography design evokes the original interior décor where the tapestries could be found, thanks to a set in "trompe l'œil" inspired from theatre techniques, for real immersion in the woven world of Aubusson.

This chronological visitor's itinerary, in an exhibition with fully modular display elements, is a clever way to take into consideration the monumental nature of tapestries and their close link to architecture.

A lot of information is provided about the way the tapestries were made, echoing the previous section dedicated to the crafts.

All along the Nave, tablets are available to zoom in on characteristic areas of some tapestries. This technical aspect is both thorough and pedagogical, in accordance with the inscription on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity Representative List.



The Tapestry Nave: 15th-16th centuries. © Béatrice Hatala.



The Tapestry Nave: 18th century. © Béatrice Hatala.



The Tapestry Nave: 20th century, tapestries by artists. © J.Damase-PSC.



Creating the decors of the Tapestry Nave: the decors are hand-painted, like tapestry cartoons. They were made by the company Jipanco and the decoration painter Antoine Fontaine.  
© Atelier Paoletti&Rouland.



The Tapestry Nave: 20th century, the cartoon painters movement.  
© Cité internationale de la tapisserie.



# THE TAPESTRY NAVE

## SELECTED PIECES

Artworks of their times, the tapestries on display in the Tapestry Nave show that for six centuries, contemporary art has always been woven in Aubusson.

### ***Millefleurs à la licorne* - 1480-1510**

The *Millefleurs à la licorne* opens the Tapestry Nave. This tapestry is particular for Aubusson because it is the oldest tapestry made in the region as far as we know (1480). Moreover, it represents a very symbolical animal in tapestry : the unicorn.



Millefleurs à la licorne ("Millefleurs with the unicorn"), tapestry, 1480. © Éric Roger

### ***The great "tenture" of Rinaldo & Armida -***

A "tenture" (hanging) is a series of tapestries on the same theme or story. This detail is taken from one of the five pieces that are in the collections of the Cité internationale de la tapisserie to constitute the hanging of Rinaldo and Armida (17th century). The artist is still unknown.



Armide emporte Renaud endormi sur son char ("Armida takes sleeping Rinaldo away on her chariot", detail), tapestry, XVII<sup>th</sup> century. © Éric Roger



***Verdure fine aux armes du Comte de Brühl***  
**around 1750**

This tapestry with remarkable colours shows the spectacular recovery plan of the production in Aubusson after 1731.

The cartoon inspired by Jean-Baptiste Oudry (1686-1755) was created by Jean-Joseph Dumons (1687-1779) originally from Tulle in Corrèze, who was the first "Painter of the King" assigned to Aubusson. This tapestry was ordered by Heinrich Earl of Brühl (1700-1763), rich and powerful Prime Minister of August III, King of Poland, aesthete and art collector. His coat of arms are represented at the top of the tapestry. This piece was bought thanks to an exceptional help of the Fond du Patrimoine (Heritage Fund, French Ministry of Culture), and an operation of crowdfunding in partnership with the Heritage Foundation.



*Verdure fine aux armes du Comte de Brühl* ("Verdure with the coat of arms of Earl Brühl"), tapestry, XVIII<sup>th</sup> century.  
© Éric Roger

***Aurore ou les trois Écoles Nationales d'Arts Décoratifs*** - 1895

This tapestry made after a model of Charles Genuys (1895) belongs to the collections of the National School of Decorative Art of Aubusson. It was deposited to the Cité internationale de la tapisserie. This piece woven by the students of the School was presented at the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1900. At the top of the tapestry can be seen the coat of arms of the first three National Schools of Decorative Art : Aubusson, Paris and Limoges. The tapestry is presented close to an original display showing the work of students of the School. The set design evokes the School's stand at International Exhibition of Decorative Art in Paris (1925).

Also on display, the productions of personalities who were pioneers of the Renovation of tapestry in the 20th century, like Édouard Degaine, Elie Maingonnat.



*Aurore ou les trois Écoles* [Nationales d'Art Décoratif] ("Dawn, or the three National Schools of Decorative Art"), tapestry, model by Charles Genuys, 1895.  
Coll. ENAD Aubusson, deposit to the Cité internationale de la tapisserie.

This piece woven by the students of the ENAD in Aubusson was presented at the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1900.  
© Éric Roger

The section allocated to the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Tapestry Nave presents the two artistic trends that coexisted in Aubusson at that time : the cartoon painters and the tapestries from artists (architects, painters, sculptors, etc.).

### The cartoon painters

During the the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jean Lurçat and his followers are called "cartoon-painters": their creations are specifically meant to become tapestries. The full size artworks are designed to be woven with wool, observing all the technical constraints of the low-warp loom weaving.



*Les Lacs* ("The Lakes"), from Jean Lurçat, 1938. © Nicolas Roger

### Tapestries from artists

At the instigation of Jean Lurçat, renowned artists get interested in tapestry, mostly through great Parisian art galleries such as La Demeure (Denise Majorel gallery) or Denise René Gallery: Jean Arp, Alexander Calder, Georges Braque, Victor Vasarely, Fernand Léger, Le Corbusier, etc. These artists were painters, sculptors, architects: contrary to the cartoon painters, their mock-ups have to get in the hands of an adapter, a technical project manager for the future tapestry, like Pierre Baudouin in the National School of Decorative Art.



*Shadows*, from Man Ray. © Nicolas Roger.

Visitors will also discover **mini-tapestries**.

These pieces were made in the 1960's by Pierre Baudouin, teacher in the School of Decorative Art. He was very impressed by the Coptic tapestry fragments he had the chance to see. It seemed to him that theses fragments were a concentrate of high-quality weaving. This series of mini-tapestries were made with a great technical and aesthetic requirement, after models by artists like Jean Arp, Pablo Picasso or Georges Braque.



*Tête violette* ("Purple Head"), mini-tapestry from Georges Braque, 1961.  
© Cité internationale de la tapisserie.





## A PLACE FOR CONTEMPORARY CREATION

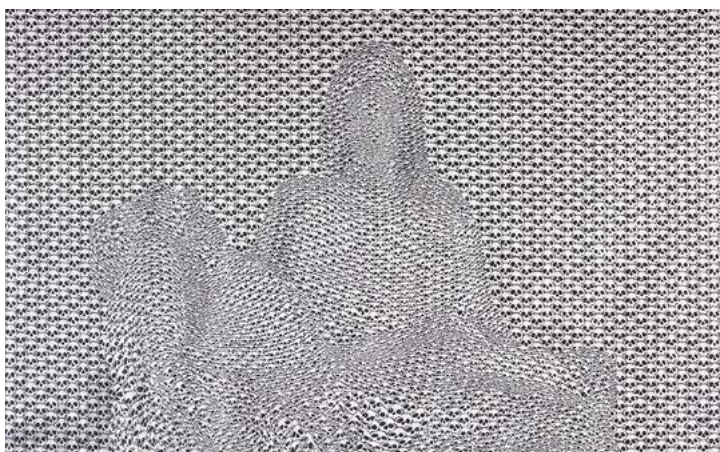
### A PLACE TO INVENT AND SHOW CONTEMPORARY AUBUSSON TAPESTRIES

In the Museum itinerary, contemporary pieces just "fallen from the loom" are on display. These weavings are to join the Cité de la tapisserie's collection. The artworks come from the annual calls for artistic projects launched in 2010, within the frame of the Regional Fund for the creation of contemporary tapestries.

The display is renewed following the loans to other Museums requesting these artworks for outer exhibitions, and following the realisation of new award-winning projects. Other contemporary weavings produced by the Cité internationale de la tapisserie can be displayed in the Cité. Special orders are made to outstanding contemporary artists. These pieces include *Pieta for World War I*, the French-German tapestry realised within the frame of the commemoration of the centenary of the First World War, from a picture by German artist Thomas Bayrle.



*Sans Titre* ("Untitled") (detail), Mathieu Mercier, 3rd Prize 2011.  
© Cité internationale de la tapisserie.



*Pieta for World War I* (detail), Thomas Bayrle (model), Patrick Guillot workshop (weaving). © Nicolas Roger

### Award-winning artists in Aubusson since 2010

**2010** : Nicolas Buffe, Benjamin Hochart, Olivier Nottellet.  
**2011** : Cécile Le Talec, Marc Bauer, Mathieu Mercier.  
**2012** : Bina Baitel, Alexandre Moronnoz & Julie Costaz, Vincent Bécheau & Marie-Laure Bourgeois.  
**2013** : Quentin Vaulot & Goliath Dyèvre, Leo Chiachio & Daniel Giannone, Diane de Bournazel, Jane Harris.  
**2014** : Pascal Haudressy  
**2015** : Christine Phung, Prisca Vilsbøl & Dagmar Kestner, Maroussia Rebecq (aka Andrea Crews), Alessandro Piangiamore, Vincent Blouin & Julien Legras, Capucine Bonnetterre.  
**2016**: Eva Nielsen, Marie Sirgue



### The calls for contemporary creation : how does it work ?

As a first step, the artists are invited to propose an artistic intent, from which the jury designates the final candidates. These candidates are allowed to rework their project before presenting it to the jury composed equally of experts and elected representatives.

The award-winning artworks are then produced following the skills and techniques of Aubusson tapestry, as recognized Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO .

A public invitation to tender for the weaving is launched among the weavers' workshops. This process reflects the question of the adaptation of the artistic project of the creator, by the craftsman and his know-how and expertise.

### A PLACE FOR ARTISTS' RESIDENCY

The Cité internationale de la tapisserie receive artists in mini residency to make them understand the constraints of the textile language of a tapestry, for their future models. They work with a cartoon-maker and receive advice from experimented weavers.

This is how the Cité works with important and international artists of the French contemporary scene like Clément Cogitore (Marcel Duchamp Prize 2018), Jean-Baptiste Bernadet, eL seed...



*Panoramique polyphonique* ("Polyphonic Panoramic"), by Cécile Le Talec, First Prize 2011. Woven by Atelier A2 (Aubusson). © E. Roger



*Toute personne 2*, by Bécheau & Bourgeois, Third Prize 2012. Woven by Atelier Bernet (Felletin). © Cité de la tapisserie



*The artist eL seed lives and works in Dubai. Here in Aubusson, working with the cartoon-maker on the model of his future tapestry.*  
© Cité de la tapisserie

### A PLACE FOR EXCHANGES AND REFLECTION

The Cité internationale de la tapisserie also hosts workshops. In partnership with the Hermès Foundation and the Conny-Maeva Foundation, the most recent session was on the theme "The tapestry, the wall, the architect".

It included students from the National School of Architecture and Landscape of Bordeaux, the National School of Art of Limoges, students in design in Creuse, students from China Academy of Arts (Hangzhou) and students from the Arts and Crafts training for weavers of the Cité internationale de la tapisserie. It led to the design of innovative projects of contemporary tapestries, with a clear interest in one of the Cité's innovation project : the outdoor tapestry.



*Alma*, First Prize of the workshop "The Tapestry, the Wall and the Architect, 2016. Project of outdoor tapestry bandages on the walls of Aubusson.





Weaving trainees © Cité internationale de la tapisserie.

## VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR WEAVERS & THE CITÉ'S WORKSHOPS

### VOCATIONAL WEAVERS TRAINING

The inscription of Aubusson tapestry on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO occurred at a time when this centuries-old craftsmanship was no longer passed on.

To preserve it, the Cité de la tapisserie created a weaving training, in partnership with the GRETA of the Limousin Region (institution for adults training). The vocational training for weavers evolved into a National Arts and Crafts Degree in September 2016.

This 2 years training takes place in the training centre of the Cité de la tapisserie.

### A TRAINING ROOM FOR BUDDING WEAVERS

The Cité de la tapisserie includes a weaving training area. It is located in the former weaving workshop the students used in the National School of Decorative Art.

The architects chose a clever technological solution to provide them with the necessary light to learn weaving: they used the existing metallic structure to create a lighting system that projects a daylight-like illumination at the ceiling, as a way to recreate the natural vertical light of the original workshop, meant for the weaving training (with no drop shadow).

#### Practical classes:

**Weaving** (preparation of the cartoon and weaving techniques)

**Applied arts** (drawing and colours),

**Art history** (art and tapestry history),

**Traineeships with professionals** from the weaving workshops of the area

**Textile & fibres**

#### General classes:

French, history and geography, foreign language, mathematics, physics and chemistry, eEconomy and management, so that the trainees can open their own workshops.

## THE CITÉ'S WORKSHOPS

The building of the Cité de la tapisserie also offers a business centre with workshops to accommodate innovative projects developers in the field of textile and woven arts.

Another workshop with an exceptionally large loom (8 metres long) allows any weaver to fulfil special orders : this is where the Tolkien tapestries are woven until 2021.

This professional floor is regularly open to visitors, and on request.



Ongoing hand weaving. © Cité internationale de la tapisserie

### The Mobilier national tapestry restoration workshop

Heir to the "Garde-Meuble de la Couronne", the Mobilier national provides the furnishing of official palaces of the Republic and various presidential residences, Parliament, Ministries, embassies, etc.

One of its two tapestry restoration workshops is installed in Aubusson since december 1992, in the building of the Cité de la tapisserie.

Thanks to an agreement between the two institutions, this exceptional workshop will open its doors to the public, at least once a week (by appointment only). The restored pieces will be presented to the public during one to two weeks before being sent back to the institutions they belong to.



Lyse Drouaine designs and weaves textiles with optic fibre for furniture and decoration. © Perrine Nouvier



Oolmoo's workshop in the Cité de la tapisserie: the nunosilk technique is used to create sophisticated wall decoration for architects and decorators. © Perrine Nouvier





The Library © Cité internationale de la tapisserie.

## DOCUMENTATION, RESEARCH, INNOVATION

### THE LIBRARY - RESOURCE CENTRE

The departmental centre of documentation on Aubusson tapestry was created in 1981 along with the Museum of Aubusson tapestry. The ressources centre within the Cité internationale de la tapisserie gathers the funds of the former centre of documentation of the museum and the library of the National School of Decorative Art, for around 16,000 books, plus print documents and artists files.

### MAKING A CORPUS OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

To make the craftsmanship of Aubusson more visible, an inventory of the documentary ressources was led, especially with audiovisual documents. The documents have been digitalised and some are available online on the Cité's website (media library).

### COLLECTING FORMALIZING THE KNOW-HOW AND SKILLS OF THE CRAFTSMANSHIP

During almost six centuries, the transmission of the know-how of Aubusson tapestry was exclusively oral. After the UNESCO label, it was necessary to start the elaboration of a technical corpus and collect professionals testimonies through an ethnographical survey.



Painting workshop in a tapestry manufacture, ancient postcard, collection of the Library of the Cité internationale de la tapisserie. © Cité internationale de la tapisserie.

#### Publishing activities

The Cité internationale de la tapisserie publishes exhibition catalogues (*Corpus Albuciense*).

## INNOVATION

Projects mixing research, design and innovation are launched, among them the **outdoor tapestry** *Inter spinas floret*. This project was born during a workshop in 2013 with the theme "Aubusson tapestry in the parks and gardens" for the creation of an outdoor tapestry. A first prototype has been woven with textured polyester fibres and was tested on the roof of the museum.

In 2016, the workshop "The tapestry, the wall and the architect" led to very imaginative projects, some following the work with outdoor tapestries. The colors ageing and resistance of the first prototype was not satisfying. Another test is starting.



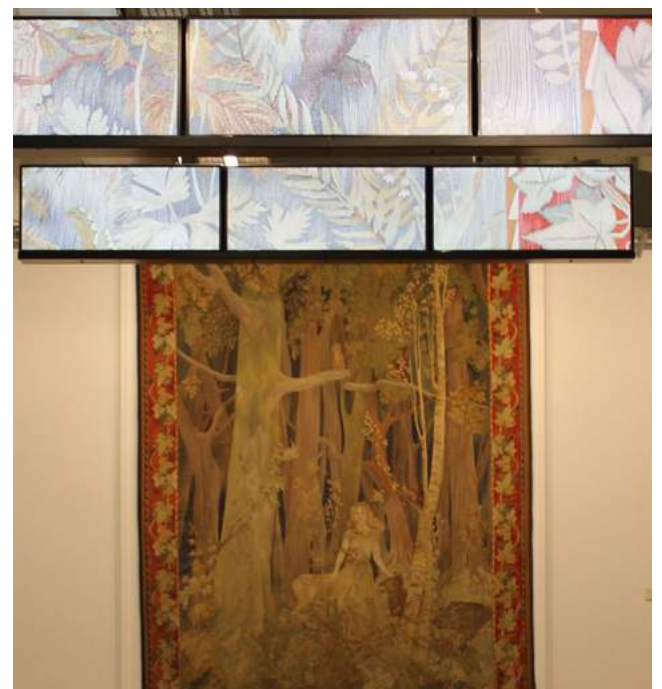
Outdoor tapestry prototype testing, on the roof of the Cité internationale de la tapisserie. © Cité internationale de la tapisserie.

This project is mixing heritage and innovation : the digitalisation in ultra high definition of the tapestry *La Fée des Bois* ("The Fairy Wood"), woven in 1909 by the Manufacture Croc-Jorrand, has been analysed for an identical reweaving, on demand of a collector. This is the first trial for a project of **experimental reweavings**. Digitisation has been made by Italian firm by Haltadefinizione.



Ultra High Definition campaigns for the digitisation of tapestries on scale 1. © Cité internationale de la tapisserie.

The ultra high resolution images open an original exhibition area, as an introduction to the section "The Hands of Aubusson". The visitor can immerse himself into the images of the weaving to the nearest pixel, to prepare his discovery of the technical aspects of tapestry.



*La Fée des bois* show in the Cité internationale de la tapisserie. © Cité internationale de la tapisserie.





*La Famille dans la joyeuse verdure*, Leo Chiachio & Daniel Giannone, 2013, woven by Atelier A2, 2017. © Nicolas Roger

## SUPPORTING THE TAPESTRY INDUSTRY

### CONNECTING AUBUSSON TAPESTRY AND CONTEMPORARY CREATION

Aubusson did not invent tapestry but in Aubusson tapestry workers always had the capacity for experimenting, making the craftsmanship evolve, looking for better production performance, in a mainly private sector.

Aubusson production is characterised by a shorter time of production, savings in resources, speed in carrying out pieces. One square metre costs at least around 6,000 euros and requires 20 days to one month to be woven, according to its technical complexity.

The questions of productivity, efficiency, innovation, weaving techniques, were studied at the National School of Decorative Art in Aubusson. Today, it is the Cité de la tapisserie's turn to try to enrich the craftsmanship: this heritage is alive, it keeps evolving and developing. That is why it needs to be confronted with contemporary creation. Bring tapestry medium to the attention of contemporary creators and prescribers is one of the missions of the Cité internationale de la tapisserie.

### AN ECONOMIC VISION OF THE HERITAGE

An unknown reality is that the economic sector of tapestry is still alive. Today, it counts around 120 jobs. This professional community is still complete: all the crafts and skills required to make a tapestry are present within the territory. It includes two spinning companies out of the four remaining in France, dyers, three manufacturers, eight workshops, cartoons painters, restorers, etc.

All this with a particularity : in a small territory, the craftsmanship is enriched by the exchanges among the professionals who compare and test, accumulating a collective experience.

Aubusson tapestry is a technique used for wall tapestries, carpets, furniture, shoes, clothes or accessories. The technique is an instrument for a universe, making various objects cohabit : artworks, decorative items, fashion items...



Weaver and designer discussing the interpretation of a tapestry.  
© Cité internationale de la tapisserie.

## SUPPORTING YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Between 2000 and 2012, the number of weaving workshops fell from 16 to 4 in the region of Aubusson. With the new training for weavers, 5 new workshops were created.

## WELCOMING COLLECTORS

By receiving collectors, the Cité internationale de la tapisserie shows them the renewal of contemporary creation with Aubusson tapestry.

The presentation of the artworks or the models can lead to re-weavings. For example, the 2D presentation of *Le Bain* ("The Bath"), a project by Félicia Fortuna and Christophe Marchalot, who earned special mention from the jury in 2012, was a real crush for a collector who had this model woven in 2015.

The point is also to make them realise that re-weavings of exceptional ancient tapestries are possible: a first trial is ongoing with *The Fairy Wood* (1909) on request of a collector.

## RELYING ON THE AUBUSSON UNIVERSE TO DEVELOP NEW USES

The Cité's research and innovation activities are meant to develop new uses for Aubusson tapestry. A survey is led to determine products and projects developers using tapestry.

## DELEGATED DESIGN AND PRODUCTION TO SUPPORT THE ECONOMIC SECTOR

A project to delegate the production of a series of elements of furniture including elements of tapestry is ongoing in the form of a public-private partnership between the Cité internationale de la tapisserie and Ymer & Malta Studio (Paris).

The prototypes will join the collections of the museum. The gallery commercialise the re-weavings of the prototypes (up to 7 copies), thus generating activity for Aubusson workshops.



Le Bain d'Aubusson ("The Bath of Aubusson"), tapestry woven for a collector by Catherine Bernet Workshop. © ERoger.





## THE "AUBUSSON WEAVES TOLKIEN" OPERATION

### THE ORIGIN OF THE PROJECT

**The Cité internationale de la tapisserie in Aubusson, France, has signed an agreement with the Tolkien Estate for creating an exclusive series of thirteen tapestries and one carpet to be woven at Aubusson over the course of four years. The creations will be based on the original illustrative works produced by J.R.R. Tolkien (1892-1973), who began painting and drawing as a child, and continued to do so all through his life.**

Christopher Tolkien, the son of *The Lord of the Rings'* author J.R.R. Tolkien, has put a lot of work and effort throughout his life into honouring and promoting his father's monumental work in all its richness, and as literary executor, he notably edited and published the *Silmarillion* manuscript.

In 2010, the Scientific and Cultural Project for the museum at the heart of the nascent Cité internationale de la tapisserie was drafted by the curator, and he came up with the idea for The Nave of Tapestries. The question arose of what it would be like to create a 20th century wall hanging based on a renowned literary work, as was the custom in the 16th or 17th century. J.R.R. Tolkien's stories seemed an obvious choice for this. A young apprentice weaver, Thomas Mondon, began drafting a document listing all the different illustrators of Tolkien's written works, including the author himself. In 2012, an interview with Christopher Tolkien in the French newspaper *Le Monde* provided the team from the Cité de la tapisserie with a breakthrough: the project should honour the memory and illustrative works of J.R.R. Tolkien himself.

At the end of 2012, the director of the Cité internationale de la tapisserie, Emmanuel Gérard, contacted Dominique Bourgois, publisher of the French version of *The Lord of the Rings* (Christian Bourgois publishing house) in France, and emphasised the relevance of weaving the illustrative works of J.R.R. Tolkien that accompanied his novels, in the Aubusson tapestry tradition. The sheer size of the work would invite visitors

to immerse themselves in the fantasy world of J.R.R. Tolkien as never before. The publisher was taken with this idea, as was most of the Tolkien family subsequently.

At the end of 2013, Christopher and Baillie Tolkien received the Cité's director, Emmanuel Gérard, and curator Bruno Ythier, at their house in Haute-Provence. They said that aside from an exhibition of Tolkien's original pictures by the Bodleian Library in Oxford, it was the first time that anyone had expressed a wish to showcase the illustrative work of their father and father-in-law. They asserted that in their eyes, the idea of using tapestry to present this illustrative work was perfect. 14 drawings and watercolours by J.R.R. Tolkien were jointly selected by the Tolkien family and the Cité de la tapisserie as subjects for tapestries or carpets. This then led to negotiations with the Tolkien Estate's lawyer, Cathleen Blackburn. At the end of 2016, this resulted in an agreement signed by Christopher Tolkien for the Tolkien Estate, and French senator Jean-Jacques Lozach for the Cité internationale de la tapisserie.

### TIMELINE

- **End of 2013:** meeting with Christopher and Baillie Tolkien, start of negotiations;
- **End of 2016:** agreement signed with the Tolkien Estate;
- 25 January 2017: official launch of the project and start of the digitisation process for the 14 original works at the Bodleian Library in Oxford;
- **2017:** the weaving committee establishes the technical aspects (colour sampling, size of tapestries, selection of weaving thickness, etc.), work is carried out on the first tapestry cartoon (real-size painted paper-board model);
- **Autumn 2017:** weaving starts and progress can be followed at the Cité de la tapisserie;
- **6 April 2018:** first 'tombée de métier' (when the tapestry is cut from the loom) with Baillie Tolkien;
- **2021:** weavings come to an end, exhibition with the whole hanging in Aubusson.

## REUNITING WITH THE TRADITION OF GREAT NARRATIVE WALL HANGINGS

This project came to light after much thought on the form a large tapestry wall-hanging with a literary narrative would take today. The name of J.R.R. Tolkien quickly came to the fore as author of one of the greatest literary sagas of the 20th century.

The project is structured around four series, each linked to different works by the author: *Letters from Father Christmas* (a collection of letters written and illustrated by J.R.R. Tolkien for his children between 1920 and 1942), *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and finally, *The Silmarillion* (published posthumously in 1977 by J.R.R. Tolkien's son, Christopher Tolkien), which traces the first Ages of Middle-earth – the setting for his novels. 13 mural tapestries will be created. The fourteenth piece, the Numenorean Carpet, is a woven floor-covering of about 130 square metres. This will take months of meticulous work in the French tapestry-crafting manufactures and workshops of Aubusson and the Creuse that specialise in the very same Aubusson tapestry techniques recognised by UNESCO, and added to the lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009..

Such a large project showcasing this major aspect of the author's work has never been seen before. Using Aubusson tapestry craftsmanship to weave this series of 14 pieces based on the illustrative works of J.R.R. Tolkien is very innovative in the world of tapestry today. It creates a link to the great narrative wall-hangings (series of tapestries illustrating the different parts of a story) of the 17th and 18th centuries that made reference to important literary texts (Homer's *Odyssey*, or *Renaud and Armide* taken from Torquato Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, etc.). This direct link to literature was lost in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Today, in the 21st century, this project of weaving the illustrative works of J.R.R. Tolkien has an added originality: it benefits from illustrations created by the author of the literary works himself, which is a first in the history of great narrative wall hangings.

Every due respect will be given to the original works as the Cité de la tapisserie embarks on this heritage-based adventure of combining Aubusson tapestry, a major decorative art, with the illustrative works of J.R.R. Tolkien that are so suited to becoming history-in-the-making tapestries, embedded as they are in a 'present-day mythology'. The sheer monumentality of this woven wall-hanging project will invite viewers to immerse themselves in the fantasy world of J.R.R. Tolkien as never before. In the wake of Charles Le Brun's *L'Histoire d'Alexandre* (The History of Alexander) or Isaac Moillon's *L'Odyssée d'Ulysse* ("Ulysses' Odyssey"), it is now the illustrative and narrative universe of J.R.R. Tolkien that will live on through the ages alongside his books.

## THE 14 ORIGINAL ARTWORKS

### *The Father Christmas Letters*



#### *Christmas 1926*

From *Letters from Father Christmas*

Original drawing by J.R.R. Tolkien, 1926, pencil, black ink, coloured ink, watercolour, 17.8 x 14.8 cm.

Tapestry size: 3.07 x 2.50 m.

© The Tolkien Estate Limited 1976



#### *Christmas 1928*

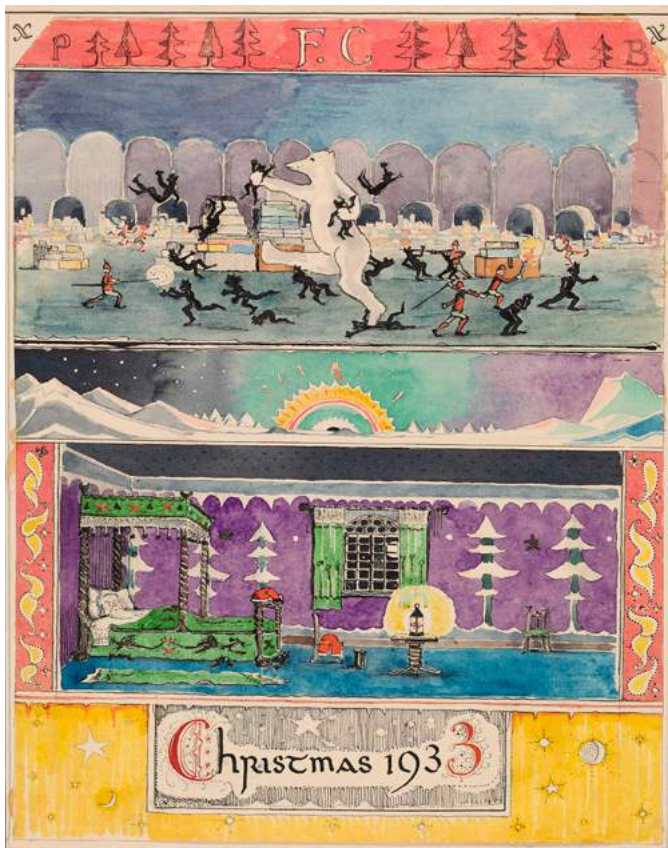
From *Letters from Father Christmas*

Original by J. R. R. Tolkien, 1928, pencil, black ink, coloured ink, watercolour, 18.2 x 18.2 cm.

Tapestry size: 2.50 x 2.61 m.

© The Tolkien Estate Limited 1976





### *Christmas 1933*

From *Letters from Father Christmas*

Original by J. R. R. Tolkien, 1933, pencil, black ink, coloured ink, watercolour, 24.7 x 19.8 cm.

Tapestry size: 2.20 x 2.03 m.

© The Tolkien Estate Limited 1976



### *Halls of Manwë - Taniquetil*

From *The Silmarillion*, Book II, *Settings of Middle Earth*.

Original drawing by J.R.R. Tolkien, 1927-1928, pencil, watercolour, gouache, 24.4 x 18.4 cm.

Tapestry size: 3.20 x 2.42 m.

© The Tolkien Trust 1977

### *The Silmarillion*



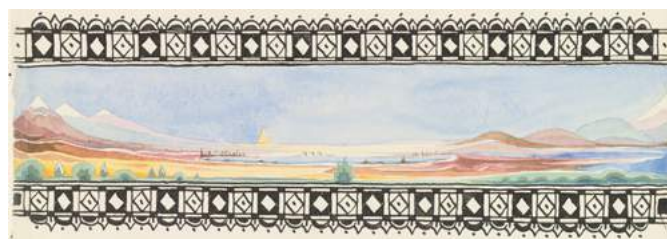
### *Glórund sets forth to seek Túrin*

From *The Silmarillion*, Book II. *Settings of Middle Earth*

Original drawing by J.R.R. Tolkien, 1927, pencil, black ink, watercolour, 16 x 21.7 cm.

Tapestry size: 2.80 x 3.60 m.

© The Tolkien Trust 1977



### *Mithrim*

From *The Silmarillion*, Book II, *Settings of Middle Earth*.

Original drawing by J.R.R. Tolkien, 1927, pencil, watercolour, black ink, 7.6 x 21.6 cm.

Tapestry size: 1.50 x 4.50 m.

© The Tolkien Trust 1977





### *Numenorean Carpet*

From *The Silmarillion*, Book II, *Settings of Middle Earth*  
Original by J. R. R. Tolkien, 1960, pencil, black and coloured inks, coloured pencils, 18.1 cm x 13.1 cm.  
Tapestry size: 4.50 x 3.20 m.  
© The Tolkien Trust 1977

### *The Hobbit*



### *Rivendell (Fendeval)*

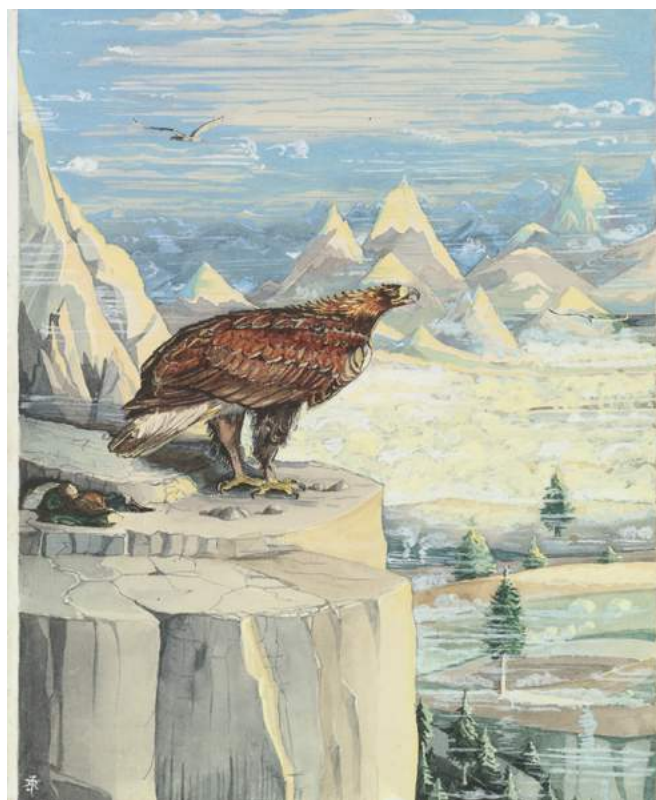
From *The Hobbit*  
Original drawing by J.R.R. Tolkien, 1937, pencil, black ink, watercolour, 13.5 x 13.5 cm.  
Tapestry size: 3.20 x 3.20 m.  
© The Tolkien Estate Limited 1937



### *The Trolls*

From *The Hobbit*

Original drawing by J.R.R. Tolkien, 1937, black ink, gouache, 17.6 x 13.5 cm.  
Tapestry size: 4 x 3 m.  
© The Tolkien Estate Limited 1937



### *Bilbo woke up with the Early Sun in his Eyes*

From *The Hobbit*

Original drawing by J.R.R. Tolkien, 1937, pencil, coloured pencils, black ink, gouache, 24.7 x 19.4 cm.  
Tapestry size: 3.20 x 2.54 m.  
© The Tolkien Estate Limited 1937





*Bilbo comes to the Huts of the Raft-Elves*

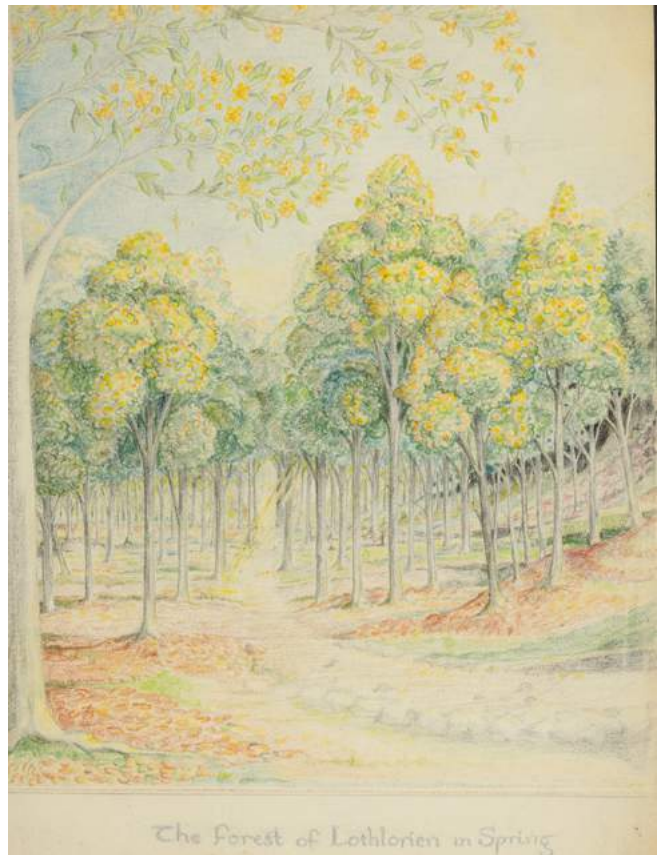
From *The Hobbit*

Original drawing by J.R.R. Tolkien, 1937, pencil, watercolour, black and blue ink, gouache, 24.7 x 19.4 cm.

Tapestry size: 3.2 x 2.78 m.

© The Tolkien Estate Limited 1937

## *The Lord of the Rings*



*The Forest of Lothlorien in Spring*

From *The Lord of the Rings*

Original drawing by J.R.R. Tolkien, 1940, pencil, coloured pencils, 24.6 x 20.25 cm.

Tapestry size: 2.8 x 2.14 m.

© The Tolkien Trust 1973



*Conversation with Smaug*

From *The Hobbit*

Original drawing by J.R.R. Tolkien, 1937, pencil, black ink, watercolour, coloured inks (?), 22.7 x 17.7 cm.

Tapestry size: 3.20 x 2.69 m.

© The Tolkien Estate Limited 1937



*Orthanc*

From *The Lord of the Rings*

Original drawing by J.R.R. Tolkien, 1942, pencil, coloured pencils, black ink, 24.6 x 20.25 cm.

Tapestry size: 2.8 x 2.14 m. © The Tolkien Estate Ltd 1995



## A GROUND-BREAKING ADAPTATION

**The starting point for this Tolkien wall hanging is a collection of original watercolours and drawings made by the famous author, kept at the Bodleian Library in Oxford and most of which do not measure more than 20 cm on any edge. It takes every bit of Aubusson expertise to successfully transpose these small formats into a woven work of several metres square, while honouring the original works. Our pledge: to create a wall-hanging in the spirit of the time when the illustrations were created.**

The first stage consists of establishing the final formats of each tapestry, their technical blueprints and the range of wool colours used, with the aim of creating a harmonious wall-hanging while also honouring the original works.

The next stage is creating the 'tapestry cartoons' (painted and annotated models) scaled to the real size of the future tapestries and that serve as a guide to the hand weavers during weaving.

Bruno Ythier, curator of the Cité internationale de la tapisserie, gives an overview of this transposing technique: "It is Aubusson know-how that dates back to more than five hundred years ago. It is the work of the cartoon painter, who transposes the work. And it is not just a case of enlarging the work as the weavers point out with this anecdote: 'You start with a tiny rose on the picture, and if you thoughtlessly enlarge it, you end up with a cabbage.' The enlarged illustration needs to be reworked bit by bit to restore the spirit of the original. A whole range of technical parameters need to be taken into account, especially the properties of the wool itself. Wool absorbs light, which implies that colours must be as saturated as possible when the wool is dyed to obtain colours that are as vibrant in the woven fabric as in the original works."

Once each illustration has been digitalised in high resolution, and with a view to creating enlarged versions, a weaving committee comprising cartoon painter Delphine Mangeret, who is in charge of transposing all the works onto the cartoons, the curator of the Cité de la tapisserie and the retired hand weaver, René Duché, was created in Spring 2017 to think about all the production constraints imposed on the weavers who will be chosen to work on the project. The weaving workshops are selected tapestry after tapestry, after submitting samples of work.

The first cartoon to weave *Bilbo comes to the Huts of the Raft-Elves* illustration set the tone for entire wall hanging. This piece was chosen as the graphic standard for the wall hanging as a whole because of its very tapestry-like nature and its similarities with works created within the National School of Decorative Art in Aubusson in the 1930s. The weaving committee was inspired to opt for a return to past traditions promoted by the School at that time through bold colours and a very specific technical draft influenced by 15th and 16th century tapestry work, and rarely in use today.

This first tapestry was revealed on April 6th 2018, in attendance of Baillie Tolkien: "The fact that this venerable French craft tradition has been used to make this creation inspired by Tolkien's work, that's something

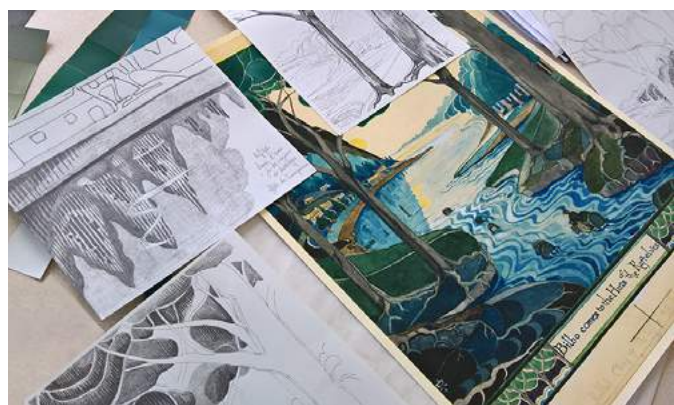
that really moves me. [...] I am absolutely sure that he [JRR Tolkien] would have been delighted by the tapestry and by the fact that human hands worked stitch by stitch to reproduce his work."

2 more tapestries were finished on October 5th 2018, this time in attendance of Baillie and her son Adam Tolkien, *Halls of Manwë - Taniquetil* and *Glórund sets forth to seek Tûrin*, and were just as successful as the first one: "Theirs is a work of length, of patience, and to now see these artworks that I originally saw, which are mostly in watercolours, in a A4 format, on this scale, well, It pays them tribute, it transforms them." (Adam Tolkien).

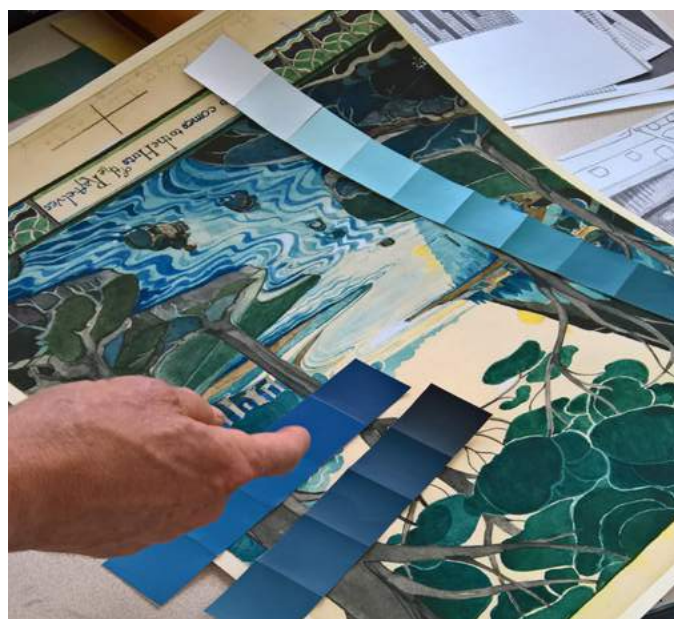
--> All the videos of the unveiling ceremonies are on the Cité's YouTube channel : <https://www.youtube.com/user/CitArtAubusson/>

The weavings keep going on in the Cité's workshop where an eight-metre-long loom is made available to weavers for these exceptional orders: the next one will be the first "Letter from Father Christmas": *Christmas 1926*. It will be revealed on December 21st 2018.

*The Tolkien hanging has been made possible thanks to the support of the Fondation d'entreprise AG2R LA MONDIALE pour la vitalité artistique.*



Preparatory work before transposing the illustration onto the cartoon. © Cité internationale de la tapisserie.



Selecting the wool colours using gouache paint samples to establish the formulas for the dyer. © Cité internationale de la tapisserie.



**MURAL AND SPATIAL**  
**MUTATIONS OF THE WORLD OF TAPESTRY**  
**IN THE LAUSANNE BIENNIALS 1962-1969**

JUNE 28 - OCTOBER 6 2019

**The Cité internationale de la tapisserie à Aubusson associates with the Toms Pauli Foundation in Lausanne to propose an international exhibition dedicated to the "art quake" provoked by Lausanne Biennials in textile creation and tapestry in the 1960s. The exhibition will be held in the Jean-Lurçat Cultural Centre of Aubusson – former museum of Aubusson tapestry – which was designed for monumental tapestry.**

In seven years from 1962 to 1969, the world of tapestry experienced a radical transformation. Accepted concepts, principles, rules, practices and techniques were seriously challenged by events at the Lausanne Tapestry Biennials.

**THE SEISMOGRAPH BECOMES THE EARTHQUAKE**

The founding fathers, Pierre Pauli and Jean Lurçat, had envisioned the Biennials functioning as a kind of seismograph, but in reality they became the epicentre of an earthquake that seemingly destroyed traditional wall tapestry, and laid the ground for a new, three-dimensional approach, which later expanded into Fiber Art. The first four Lausanne Biennials (1962, 1965, 1967 and 1969) were stormy. They witnessed tensions that degenerated into conflict between advocates of old and new, and brought to the surface formidable challenges and revolutionary innovations.

By 1962, the year of the first Biennial, the tapestry revival, largely initiated by Lurçat in France, had shaken off the restrictive image of tapestry as woven imitations of paintings and revived a weaving method that had been dormant since the 17th-century, a technique developed by the Ecole Nationale d'Art Décoratif, in Aubusson, in the 1920s, and put on public display in 1946, at the Paris exhibition French Tapestry from the Middle Ages to our Day. Jean Lurçat had launched the tapestry revival on the world stage by organising numerous exhibitions and conferences on all four continents. In that same spirit, along with Pierre and Alice Pauli, he had envisaged an international exhibition which would take place in Lausanne every two years and showcase the latest developments in wall tapestry.

**FEMALE ARTISTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

What Lurçat had not envisaged was that the tapestry-making principles he had so strongly advocated would be completely overturned. The challenge

came from young artists, mainly from Switzerland and central and eastern Europe. From the very first 1962 edition, they brought a fundamental change by breaking with the principle of the painter/weaver duo (the designer working with the craftsman). Moreover, in a world hitherto dominated by men tapestry-makers, this shift opened doors for young women artists, who took on both the roles. By the 1965 Biennial, most artists were women, and it has stayed that way to the present.



Arthur Jobin, creation for the 4th Lausanne Biennial in 1969, weaving by Claire Jobin, wool, paint, 6 x 3.20 x 3.20 m. Toms Pauli Foundation collection, Lausanne, Switzerland. © Arthur Jobin.

1965 edition blew up the technique-based approach. Entries were no longer limited to tapestry but broadened to include all woven and embroidered works — a highly contentious issue between the French and the Swiss organisers and a major disappointment for Lurçat, who passed away the following year. As the makers of wall tapestries explored new textures, contemporary artists were increasingly investigating the three-dimensional possibilities of the medium. The 1969 Biennial approved these innovative approaches and accepted numerous pieces that had moved off the wall to textile sculptures. The exhibition was shown that same year in Paris, in the Manufacture des Gobelins, giving the French public the opportunity to familiarise themselves with these new forms of textile art. By the 1970s, the different currents were able to co-exist, exploring their own individual paths which often crossed, but rarely merged.

## ARTWORKS

About 30 artworks will be on display in the 4 rooms of the Jean-Lurçat Centre in Aubusson. French wall tapestries will include mature works by Lurçat and his friends, also cartoon painters, such as Prassinis, Picart-le-Doux, Jullien, and Tourlière, and some tapestries based on paintings by great artists such as Picasso, Matisse, Delaunay, Estève, and Vieira Da Silva. Other tapestries will illustrate European and American productions, including Somville, Rousseau-Vermette, Yoors, and Scholten. Certain Polish artists that caused a stir and generated much commentary such as Abakanowicz, Owidzka, and Sadley will also be on view. New techniques and embroidered works will be represented by Funk and Chevaley. Three-dimensional works showcased will include emblematic pieces by Giauque, Jobin, Abakanowicz, Daquin, and Lindgren.

## LENDERS

The Cité internationale de la tapisserie and the Toms Pauli Foundation will present several pieces from their collections. Pieces from the collections of the "Mobilier national (Gobelins)" in Paris and the Central Museum of Textiles in Lodz were also requested. Contacts are ongoing with museums, foundations and companies in Japan; United States, Canada, Switzerland, Netherlands and United Kingdom.

## PUBLICATIONS

The book *Tapestry to Fiber Art: The Lausanne Biennials 1962 - 1995* written by Giselle Eberhard Cotton and Magali Junet and published in the end of 2017 by the Toms Pauli Foundation, will be available. Odile Contamin's doctoral thesis, *La Tapisserie contemporaine en France dans les années soixante* ("Contemporary Tapestry in France in the Sixties"), written in 1998, will be published by the Cité de la Tapisserie.

The Toms Pauli Foundation preserves 2 exceptional collections, properties of Vaud Canton in Switzerland:

- The Toms collection of ancient tapestries from the 16th to the 19th centuries, is one of the most important collected privately, with more than a hundred pieces produced in the great European manufactures.
- The Toms Pauli Foundation also preserves the archives of the International Centre of Ancient and Modern Tapestry (commonly referred to by its French acronym CITAM) created by Pierre Pauli and Jean Lurçat, organiser of the Lausanne Tapestry Biennials from 1962 to 1995, and 200 modern and contemporary tapestries that were presented in particular during these Biennials.



## THE COLLECTIONS

### A YOUNG, DEVELOPING COLLECTION

The departmental museum of tapestry in Aubusson was created in 1981. Its collection, now managed by the Cité de la tapisserie, is still young, like the museum's history. With its label "Musée de France", it belongs to the Departmental Council of Creuse.

### THE PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF A REFERENCE COLLECTION

The Cité de la tapisserie reasserts the original intention of building a reference collection offering a complete view of the production of tapestries in Aubusson from the 15th century to nowadays.

### THE COLLECTIONS : A FEW FIGURES

**440**

Tapestries and carpets, including 330 wall tapestries

**50**

Pieces of woven furniture

**16,000**

Graphic artworks from the collections of the museum and the National School of Decorative Art, and among them about 4,500 models and drawings

**20**

Tools and weaving equipment

**5,000**

Woven pieces, deposits of the National School of Decorative Art.

Mainly samples, a few tapestries of medium size, made by trainees. These pieces draw the history of the institution since it was created in 1884, and show the evolution in weaving training

**600**

Pieces of Saracen embroidery, made by the students of the School for girls in the National School of Decorative Art between 1880 and 1918



*L'Été* ("Summertime", detail), by Dom Robert, woven by Manufacture Tabard, 1941. © Manzara - Claire Tabbagh.



*Le Palais de Circé* ("Circe's Palace", cartoon), 18th century. © J.-M. Péricat / Cité internationale de la tapisserie.

## DATES AND KEY-NUMBERS

### 2009

#### September

Aubusson tapestry is inscribed on the List of Representatives of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.



### 2010

#### Creation of the Cité internationale de la tapisserie

The institution gathers the Regional Council of Limousin, the Departmental Council of Creuse and the Community of Communes Creuse Grand Sud.

*Peau de licorne* ("Unicorn Hide"), by Nicolas Buffe.  
© Nicolas Buffe / Cité internationale de la tapisserie.



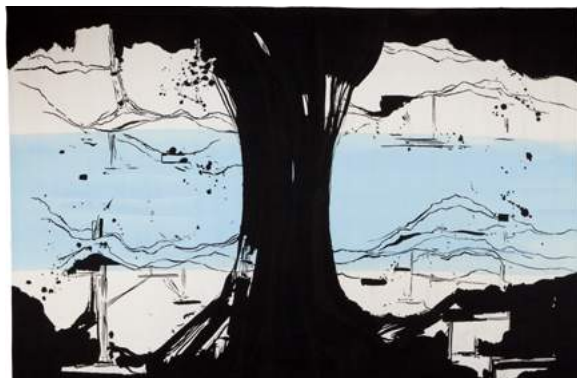
Launch of the first call for contemporary creation.

First Prize : *Peau de licorne*, Nicolas Buffe

2<sup>d</sup> Prize : *Blink#0*, Benjamin Hochart

3<sup>d</sup> Prize : *La Rivière au bord de l'eau*, Olivier Nottellet.

*La Rivière au bord de l'eau* ("The river by the waterfront"), by Olivier Nottellet. Woven by Bernard Battu (Aubusson). © Éric Roger / Cité internationale de la tapisserie.



New weaving training program (promotion François Tabard).

### 2011

2<sup>d</sup> call for contemporary creation.

Theme : "Tapestry in the era of movement"

First Prize : *Panoramique polyphonique*, Cécile Le Talec

2<sup>d</sup> Prize : *Melancholia I*, Marc Bauer

3<sup>d</sup> Prize : *Untitled*, Mathieu Mercier.

*Panoramique polyphonique* ("Polyphonic panoramic"), by Cécile Le Talec.  
Woven by Atelier A2 (Aubusson) © Éric Roger





## 2011

Launch of a program of research and innovation-oriented workshops.



*Inter spinas floret*, by Cédric Delehelle (project), 2013.  
© Cédric Delehelle / Cité internationale de la tapisserie.

Beginning of the inventory and documentation of the collections.



Inventory in the Museum's reserves. © Cité internationale de la tapisserie.

## 2012

TERRENEUVE architecture studio, associated with museographers Paoletti&Rouland, wins the architecture competition for the rehabilitation of the National School of Decorative Art of Aubusson.



The Cité de la tapisserie by TERRENEUVE (architectural project).  
© TERRENEUVE.

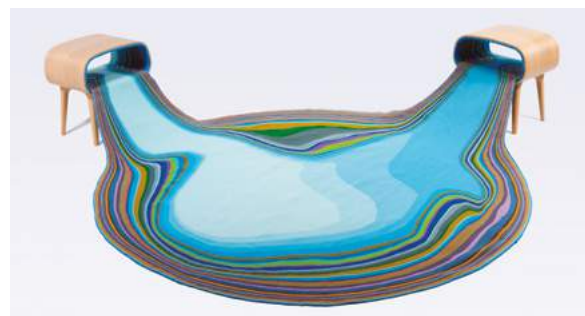
3<sup>rd</sup> call for contemporary creation.

Theme : "Design furniture in Aubusson"

1<sup>st</sup> Prize : Confluentia, Bina Baitel

2<sup>d</sup> Prize : Stock Exchange, Alexandre Moronnoz & Julie Costaz

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize : Toute personne 2, Tissage-métissage, Vincent Bécheau & Marie-Laure Bourgeois.



*Confluentia*, by Bina Baitel. Woven by Françoise Vernaude (Nouzerines).  
© Éric Roger

Exhibition "Tapestries 1925", in partnership with the Mobilier national. As a focus on the role of tapestry in the International Exhibition of Decorative Art in 1925 in Paris, this exhibition revealed the different approaches of the Manufactures of Beauvais and the Gobelins, compared to Aubusson workshops, more contemporary creation-driven.



Tapestries 1925, the exhibition.

© Romain Évrard / Creuse Grand Sud Creuse Grand Sud.

4<sup>th</sup> call for contemporary creation.

Theme : "The new verdure of Aubusson"

First Prize : Nouvelles verdure d'Aubusson, Quentin Vaultot & Goliath Dyèvre

2<sup>d</sup> Prize : La famille dans la joyeuse verdure, Leo Chiachio & Daniel Giannone

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize : Bordure des bois, Diane de Bournazel

4<sup>th</sup> Prize : Deux parterres, un reflet, Jane Harris

*Nouvelles verdure d'Aubusson*, by Quentin Vaultot & Goliath Dyèvre

© Vaultot&Dyèvre / Cité internationale de la tapisserie.



Exhibition "Aubusson Tapisseries des Lumières", declared of National Interest by the French Ministry of Culture. The scientific commission was ensured by Pascal-François Bertrand, professor of Art History at University of Bordeaux.

*Chloé sauvant Daphnis au son de sa flûte* ("Chloe saving Daphnis with her flute", detail), 18th century. © Éric Roger



The tapestry specialists from all over the world gather in Aubusson for the research program Arachne, around the project initiator Pascal Bertrand, professor at University of Bordeaux.

Rinaldo and Armida (detail). © Manzara - Claire Tabbagh



Beginning of the partnership with Hangzhou Academy of Arts (China) at the first International Triennial of Textile Art in Hangzhou. Two pieces of the collection were exposed: *Panoramique polyphonique* by Cécile Le Talec and a tapestry of Jean Lurçat.

*Panoramique polyphonique* ("Polyphonic Panoramic"), Cécile Le Talec. Woven by Atelier A2 (Aubusson). © Bruno Liance





## 2014

The call for creation is exceptionally in the form of an art commissioning project for the creation of "matrice-tapisserie" ("matrix-tapestry").

*If ("Yew")*, by Pascal Haudressy. Woven by Patrick Guillot and CC Brinde-laine (Aubusson). © Cité internationale de la tapisserie.



Beginning of the inventory and documentation of the collections of the National School of Decorative Art.



Working on the collection at the National School of Decorative Art.  
© Cité internationale de la tapisserie.

Beginning of the works in the boarding house of the School of Decorative Art.  
Rehabilitation of the former School of Decorative Art.



Demolition of the boarding house of the School.  
© Cité internationale de la tapisserie.

## 2015

6<sup>th</sup> call for contemporary creation  
Theme : "Aubusson weaves fashion"  
First Prize : Teddy jacket, Christine Phung  
2<sup>d</sup> Prize : Libramen forma, Dagmar Kestner & Prisca Vilsbol  
3<sup>rd</sup> Prize ex-aequo : Infinite flowers, Maroussia Rebcq (aka Andrea Crews) and The peacock cane, Alessandro Piangiamore  
5<sup>th</sup> Prize : Henri Cap, Vincent Blouin & Julien Legras  
6<sup>th</sup> Prize : Japanese-style coat, Capucine Bonnetterre

Teddy jacket, by Christine Phung.  
© Christine Phung / Cité internationale de la tapisserie.



## 2016

7<sup>th</sup> call for contemporary creation  
First Prize : Lucite, Eva Nielsen  
2<sup>d</sup> Prize : Bleue, Marie Sirgue  
Special mention: Salades, Sébastien Gouju

*Lucite*, by Eva Nielsen.  
© Eva Nielsen.

**10 July 2016**  
Opening of the Cité internationale de la tapisserie inaugurated by the President of the Republic

Inauguration of the Cité internationale de la tapisserie, 10 July 2016.  
© David Daroussin.



## 2017

Launch of the "Aubusson weaves Tolkien" project in partnership with the Tolkien Estate for the weaving of 13 tapestries and 1 carpet with original drawings of the famous author J.R.R. Tolkien.

## 2018

The first Tolkien tapestries are unveiled in attendance of the Tolkien family.  
The Cité internationale de la tapisserie wins the Parcours award of the 2018 Lilliane Bettencourt Prix pour l'Intelligence de la Main.  
Launch of the weaving of a tapestry by Clément Cogitore, a French contemporary artist recently rewarded the Prix Marcel Duchamp by the most influent collectors in France.

Baillie Tolkien cuts the first Tolkien tapestry off the loom, April 6th 2018.  
© Perrine Nouvier.



## 2019

Celebrations of the 10th anniversary of the UNESCO label attributed to Aubusson tapestry craftsmanship.



## STAKEHOLDERS & PARTNERS

### Cité internationale de la tapisserie

#### President

Valérie Simonet

#### Vice-Presidents

Jean-Luc Léger, Éric Correia, Gérard Gaudin

#### Director

Emmanuel Gérard

#### Curator

Bruno Ythier

#### Administration

Christophe Jamot, Viviane Jullien, Rémi Requet

Scenography, museography, public division

Dominique Sallanon

#### Documentation

Catherine Giraud

#### Communications

Séverine David

#### Public division

Dorothee Toty

#### Collections management

Cannelle Cibert, Karine Ringuelet

#### Staff of the museum

Christine Lacour, Julie Françoise,

Marie-France Pinguet, Fabrice Santinon

### Institutional and financial partners

European Union : Feder & Leader programs

Ministry of Culture and Communication /

Regional Office of Cultural Affairs of Limousin

Creuse prefecture (PER / FNADT)

General Commission for equality of territories Massif Central

Regional Council of Aquitaine Limousin Poitou-Charentes

Departmental Council of Creuse

Community of Communes Creuse Grand Sud

GRETA - Creuse

### Tourism and professional partners

Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Creuse

Chamber of Commerce and Industry Region ALPC

Crafts and Artisans Chamber of Creuse

Regional Committee of Tourism

Departmental Agency for the Economic and Tourist Development of Creuse

Tourist Office Creuse Grand Sud

The Weavers Union

Lainamac

Conservation association for "Saracen embroidery"

Association des Commerçants et Artisans of Aubusson (Trade and Crafts Association in Aubusson)

Association des Commerçants of Felletin (Trade Association in Felletin)

Felletin Patrimoine Environnement

Société des Amis de la Cité internationale de la tapisserie et de son musée

Maison de l'Emploi et de la Formation de l'Arrondissement in Aubusson (MEFAA)

Arachné network

Mobilier national

### Sponsors for the real estate investment (rehabilitation of the ENAD)

Crédit Agricole - Pays de France Foundation

Fondation Bettencourt-Schueller Foundation

Atelier de Tôlerie du Limousin

### Sponsors for cultural and scientific programming

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Mrs Francine Ortiz

Atelier de Tôlerie du Limousin

Codéchamp

NETTO - Intermarché Aubusson et Felletin

Carrefour Market Aubusson

Eurovia (Aubusson)

Club des entrepreneurs du pays sud-creusois

Société des Amis de la Cité internationale de la tapisserie et de son musée

### Sponsors for the Tolkien Hanging

Fondation d'entreprise AG2R LA MONDIALE pour la vitalité artistique

The Tolkien Trust

Fondation d'entreprise Crédit Agricole Centre France

### Lending museums

Mobilier national

Centre National des Arts Plastiques

Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Paris)

Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Pompidou (Paris)

Musée du Quai Branly (Paris)

Musée National des Arts Décoratifs Guimet (Paris)

École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts (Paris)

Musée de Cluny (Paris)

Musée des Tissus - Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Lyon)

Musée Bargoin (Clermont-Ferrand)

Musée Tessé (Le Mans)

Musée d'Art Moderne (Troyes)

### **A few figures**

#### **Operating budget**

1.62 million euros

#### **Project budget**

8.5 million euros

#### **Staff**

15 agents

# PRACTICAL INFORMATION & CONTACTS

## Opening hours

September to June  
Daily 9.30 am-12 am and 2 pm-6 pm.  
Closed on Tuesday.  
July and August  
Daily 10 am-6 pm. Except on Tuesday: 2 pm-6 pm only.  
Annual closure: January.

## Admission fees

**Full rate** 8 euros  
**Reduced rate** 5.50 euros:  
students, visitors under 25, visitors over 65,  
groups from 10 persons  
**Free entrance**  
visitors under 18, ICOM members, journalists on  
presentation of press pass, other persons on pre-  
sentation of supporting documents.  
**Guided tours in English** (on reservation)  
40 euros for the whole group of 2 to 40 persons,  
reduced rate for each person.

## Get to the Cité de la tapisserie

**By train**  
From Paris-Austerlitz :  
Paris-Toulouse, Paris-Limoges or Paris-Brive line.  
Stop at La Souterraine.  
Regional transport : TER La Souterraine-Aubusson  
(bus).

**By bus**  
Clermont-Ferrand > Felletin,  
Limoges > Felletin  
and La Souterraine Gare SNCF > Aubusson lines.  
Stop at Aubusson Gare routière.

**By car**  
National road Limoges > Clermont-Ferrand.  
Close to highways A71, A89 and RN145.

**Parking areas**  
Place Maurice Dayras, Esplanade Charles De  
Gaulle and Gare routière.

## Contact information

**Director**  
Emmanuel Gérard

**Curator**  
Bruno Ythier

**General information, reservation, administration**  
(+33) (0)5 55 66 66 66  
contact@cite-tapisserie.fr

**Communications / press officer**  
Séverine David  
(+33) (0)9 72 48 15 65  
severine.david@cite-tapisserie.fr

**Library, research requests**  
Catherine Giraud, archivist  
catherine.giraud@cite-tapisserie.fr

## Address

**Postal address**  
Rue des Arts BP 89  
23200 AUBUSSON (France)

**Public entrance**  
Rue Williams-Dumazet  
23200 AUBUSSON (France)

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