



From here to Eternity: contemporary tapestries from the Victorian Tapestry Workshop

exhibition 29 June - 12 August 2007

"Tapestries are the murals of our time." Le Corbusier

National Trust S.H. Ervin Gallery is pleased to present the travelling exhibition, ***From here to Eternity: contemporary tapestries from the Victorian Tapestry Workshop***. From humble beginnings in 1976, The Victorian Tapestry Workshop (VTW) is now a world leader in the production of contemporary tapestries, recently celebrating their 30th year of operation.

From here to Eternity, is a not-to-be-missed opportunity to view the extraordinary work from the VTW's talented weavers and to gain insights to the Workshop's important role and collaboration with living artists, as they showcase their collection of exhibition tapestries with a national tour.

In the 14th century, woven tapestries provided succor to both mind and body through their beauty and warmth. The 16th and 17th centuries saw the art form rise to prominence via the celebrated Gobelin, Fontainebleu and Aubusson workshops, whilst the late 19th century embraced the oeuvre of William Morris. Following its establishment in the mid seventies, The Victorian Tapestry Workshop quickly earned its role of flagship of the modern era. Tapestry was a natural 'fit' because of the country's early status as a great wool-producing nation. Within 12 years, the scale and complexity of design of the tapestry woven for the new Parliament House, in collaboration with Arthur Boyd, established the VTW as one of the world's best.

Once established, the VTW provided opportunities for painters, architects and designers who wanted to explore the medium. Powerful works by leading Australian artists including Boyd, John Coburn, John Olsen, Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Roger Kemp, Ginger Riley and William Robinson have been translated into tapestry by the Workshop's weavers, as have collaborations with international artists such as Alan Davie, Patrick Heron and Frank Stella.

The Victorian Tapestry Workshop is unique in its philosophy of an integrated approach to creating artworks, in which artist and weavers collaborate as equals. Never is any tapestry of the VTW an imitation, however skilful, of a work of art already existing in another medium. In order to realise this philosophy, the Workshop places an emphasis on working with living artists.

Fine artists in their own right, the weavers blend the old and the new. Working by hand in the traditional 14th century Gobelin style, they translate and interpret using specially spun Australian wool dyed in-house with a palette of 366 colours to create entirely new artworks.

Most of the commissions from the VTW have been for public spaces. They hang in hotel lobbies, boardrooms, chapels, schools and hospitals, the foyers of performing arts centres and gallery complexes and in Australia's Houses of Parliament. Tapestries are also displayed in selected embassies and high commissions. Works have been exhibited in Singapore, USA, UK, India, Denmark, Istanbul, Japan and Russia.

The VTW hosts several artists-in-residence each year. It also hosts CAE weaving classes and bi-weekly public access tours. Exhibitions of tapestry are held at the workshop throughout the year as well as touring exhibitions which travel interstate and overseas.

From here to Eternity presents 52 carefully selected tapestries from the Workshop's touring collection and features works designed by some of Australia's leading artists - Davida Allen, GW Bot, Angela Brennan, Mike Brown, Eugene Carchesio, Jon Cattapan, Peter D Cole, Gordon Crook, Alan Davie, Merrin Eirth, Louise Forthun, Graham Fransella, Katherine Hattam, Christine Johnson, Roger Kemp, David Larwill, Alun Leach-Jones, Bessie Liddle, Chris O'Doherty (aka Reg Mombassa), Glenn Morgan, Stieg Persson, Jimmy Pike, Geoff Ricardo, Gareth Sansom, Mark Schaller, Martin Sharp, Heather Shimmen, Arlene Textaqueen, Lin Utzon and Peter Walsh.

The exhibition's title is drawn from Martin Sharp's quintessentially Sydney tapestry "Eternity", his graphic homage to Arthur Stace. It is fitting for the Workshop to select Sharp's flag-like image as the focus for this touring exhibition: eternity is also a word that evokes the lengthy history and physical longevity of the tapestry medium.

From here to Eternity: contemporary tapestries from the Victorian Tapestry Workshop touring through 2007 & 2008.

29 June - 12 August 2007
14 October - 25 November 2007
09 July - 17 August 2008
06 - 28 September 2008
31 October - 12 December 2008

National Trust S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney
Benalla Art Gallery VIC
Hamilton Art Gallery VIC
Castlemaine Art Gallery VIC
Anne + Gordon Samstag Museum of Art SA

A colour catalogue with featured essay by Anna Clabburn, accompanies the exhibition.

S.H. Ervin Gallery will host a Public Program series of Guest Talks each Sunday at 3pm.

Susie Shears, Director, Victorian Tapestry Workshop, is available for interviews.

For further information & media requests.

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Selected images available for media use.

www.nsw.nationaltrust.org.au for regular updates on Public Program Guest Talks & Winter Art Workshops.

Exhibition organised by

S.H. Ervin Gallery supported by



images:

Martin Sharp

Eternity 1999

200.0 x 390.0 cm

Weavers: Georgina Barker, Merrill Dumbrell, Laura Mar, Katia Takla, Cheryl Thornton

Angela Brennan

It was not I that looked 2006

216.0 x 260.0 cm

Weavers: Sue Batten, Amy Cornall, Pamela Joyce

Jon Cattapan

Orange Spotted Figure 2006

26.0 x 35.0 cm

Weaver: Chris Cochius

Alun Leach-Jones

Revisited objects 1988

225.0 x 198.0 cm

Weavers: Chris Cochius, Hannah Rother, Joy Smith