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Tapestries Installation 2012 - Queen Mary College, London University

Award winning textile artist Claudy Jongstra trained as a fashion designer in Holland and established her own design studio after graduating from the Academy of Art in Utrecht. In 1994 Jongstra became intrigued by the ancient art of felt making – the technique of making non woven fabrics by combining fibres with water and friction.

She worked for years to master the technical processes of felting and then experimented with an entirely new approach to the material. She started to make fabrics in which wool was felted with silk fibres or was combined with silk organza and chiffon, linens and acetates. The process yielded a remarkable combination of transparency and density, combining sophisticated elegance with the apparently unrefined.

The appeal of the textures and the painterly quality of the material, when combined with Jongstra's exceptional skills as a colourist and her control over every aspect of the making process, from the creation of the dyes to the raising of the sheep who provide the wool, has lead many artists, architects, and designers to seek out and use her textiles within their own work.

The bespoke collaborations and Jongstra's responses to site and project specific briefs include all aspects of the use and display of textiles in private interiors and architectural spaces.

She has created vast wall hangings and installations for the Atrium at Lincoln Center, the United Nations building, the Dutch Embassy in Berlin, and the Rem Koolhaas Kunsthal in Rotterdam. Jongstra has also collaborated with Claus en Kaan, Jo Coenen, Tod Williams and Billie Tsien. Her current projects in the U.S. include works for the Barnes Museum in Philadelphia and Bennington College in Vermont.

Her work has been acquired by many museums and is included in the collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; the Museum of Modern Art and the Cooper Hewitt Design Museum, New York; The RISD Museum, Rhode Island; and several important Dutch museums.

Her many awards include the prestigious Dutch prize for applied arts and architecture: *The Prins Bernhard Cultuurfondsprijs*.

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Behind the Design

Lincoln Center commissions art work for new visitor center

...Late last year, Claudy Jongstra was invited to team with Williams and Tsien on the design of a monumental work of art for The Atrium at Lincoln Center. ...chosen both for her ... extraordinary range of textiles that are as rugged as they are refined and ... for her dedication to the integration of ecologically sensitive and environmentally sustainable materials in her designs.

Jongstra keeps the entire process from raw materials to end product in her own hands, so that she can operate independently and to be able to work sustainably. Jongstra tends her own flock of rare Drenthe Heath sheep, contributing to the survival of this age-old breed in the Netherlands and to the preservation of the natural landscape. Establishing her own dyeworks has made it possible for her to color her own products with natural dyestuffs rather than synthetic ones starting with madder, St. John's Wort, and African marigold.

Since 2009 Jongstra also keeps her own hortus botanicus where national historic varieties of dye-plants grow. This garden operates as laboratory for the dyes, but at the same time it is a source of inspiration. By breeding plants that have often become obsolete, she contributes to preservation of heritage in this way too.

At present, her most important projects involve the embellishment of the interiors of buildings with wall coverings and rugs. .. At Lincoln Center, Jongstra is working in close collaboration with architect Tod Williams on the design of a 97-foot fabric installation made of felted wool and silk in a palette of gold and gray... As with other large-scale fabric installations by Jongstra, the fabric takes on a painterly quality when viewed from below or from a distance.

Claudy Jongstra has succeeded in turning a very traditional material with an old-fashioned image into a modern and desirable fabric and, in doing so, she has attracted the attention of major museums around the world.

Felt

Felt is a non-woven cloth made by compacting fibers into a matted fabric. It is the oldest form of fabric known to humankind, predating weaving and knitting.

There are three ingredients needed to make felt: wool, water, and soap. The first stage in the felting process is to lay out layers of tufts of wool. Rubbing water and soap into the wool layers makes the fibers interlock, and the friction of continued rubbing results in the formation of felt.

The remains of felt have been found in Turkey dating as far back to 6,500 BC. Highly sophisticated felted artifacts were found preserved in permafrost in a tomb in Siberia and dated to 600 AD. Felt can be of any color, and made into any shape or size. While some types of felt are very soft, some are tough enough to form construction materials.

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