

Wide Walls

Almine Rech New York Presents an Exhibition of Tapestries by Le Corbusier

By Kame Hame, September 19, 2022



By many, Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, better known as Le Corbusier, is considered the Pablo Picasso of modern architecture. Throughout his career, Le Corbusier experimented with various mediums, including painting, sculpture, and architecture. Yet surprisingly, he was greatly fascinated with the art of tapestry, which he saw as an extension of his artistic and architectural expression.

For the first time, Almine Rech New York is presenting Le Corbusier's tapestries in an exhibition entitled *Nomadic Murals*. The visitors will have a unique opportunity to take a closer look at twenty-six tapestries and the variety of artistic techniques the artist used to produce them.

The Art of Weaving

Le Corbusier is best known for his architectural designs, seventeen of which have been added to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites list. Among his most famous creations are Villa Savoye in Poissy, Notre Dame du Haut in Romchamp, and Palace of Justice in Chandigarh. The accomplished painter and architect discovered tapestry later in his career when in 1936, a prominent entrepreneur and patron of modernist tapestry, Marie Cuttoli, commissioned a piece from him to be produced in a factory in Aubusson.

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By 1948, at the initiative of French artists Jean Picart Le Doux and Jean Lurçat, Le Corbusier was ready to produce tapestries based on his early Puritan drawings and paintings. However, the artist did not wish to simply transfer his artworks into another form, for he saw them as entirely independent. In collaboration with art professor and "wool artist" Pierre Baudouin, he produced more than 50 woven works.

Muralnomad

For Le Corbusier, a tapestry is not the same as a painting hanging on a wall above a chest of drawers. Seeing them as both mural and movable, he coined the name for his woven artwork, "Muralnomad." The artist firmly believed they should be placed at eye level, cover the entire wall and even touch the floor, thus becoming a part of the architecture. Unlike the painted murals, the tapestries can be "taken down from the wall, rolled up, put under your arm whenever you like, and hung up elsewhere." In this way, the medium's flexibility fully satisfied all the demands of modern civilization.

Over time Le Corbusier became an expert in the field and would keep a close eye on the production process. He personally chose the texture and supervised the dyeing of the wools at the National School of Decorative Art's weaving workshop in Aubusson. One of his largest tapestries was designed in 1951 for the High Court of Chandigarh, the Indian capital.

Nomadic Murals at Almine Rech New York

The exhibition features his early works dating back to his first commission for Marie Cuttoli to his large-scale postwar compositions. Le Corbusier said:

"The destiny of the tapestry of today emerges: it becomes the mural of the modern age."

Exhibition Nomadic Murals is on view at Almine Rech in New York until October 22nd, 2022.