



## Press Release

28 May 2015

# What is handwoven tapestry's place in contemporary art?

## West Dean Tapestry Symposium

Friday 31 July 2015

[www.westdean.org.uk](http://www.westdean.org.uk)

[www.westdean.org.uk/tapestry](http://www.westdean.org.uk/tapestry)

Near Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 0QZ



Yvonna Demczynska, West  
Dean Tapestry Symposium 2015



Professor Lesley Millar at West  
Dean Tapestry Symposium  
2015



'Black Cat' by ©Tracey Emin woven by  
Master Weavers at West Dean  
Tapestry Studio

West Dean Tapestry Studio, one of only two commercial studios in the UK, has announced a Tapestry Symposium to be held at West Dean College, internationally renowned for Creative Arts and Conservation. The symposium will explore the status of hand woven tapestry within the context of contemporary art and craft practices. Speakers include; Professor Lesley Millar, Director of Anglo Japanese Textile Research Centre at the School of Craft and Design; Yvonna Demczynska, Founder and curator of Flow Gallery in Notting Hill, a consultant for the Crafts Council.

"A distinct feature of art can be its immediacy," says Alison Baxter, Head of Creative Enterprise, West Dean Tapestry Studio. "Hand weaving is a time-rich creative practice and by its very nature the making of a tapestry is a lengthy, highly skilled process. Hand weavers are producing complex and innovative pieces."

Other speakers are:

- Textile artist Dr Liz Clay, whose collaborations include Givenchy, Balenciaga, Mina Perhonen, Stella McCartney and the Crafts Council.
- Artist Shelly Goldsmith who has exhibited at major galleries and museums in Britain, Europe, the USA and Japan and is a past recipient of the Jerwood Applied Arts Prize for textiles.
- UK based artist Anne Jackson whose work is held in collections across the world. Anne is a juror for the open call exhibition *Heallreaf*, which is organised in association with the symposium.
- West Dean Master Weaver Katharine Swailes, who studied Applied Design and has worked in textiles for over 20 years. Throughout her career Swailes has researched the re-interpretation of historical textiles.
- Philip Sanderson, West Dean Master Weaver and tutor on the College's full time Tapestry and Textile Art programme. Sanderson was shortlisted for the John Ruskin Prize Recording Britain Now.

West Dean Tapestry Studio's weavers recently completed the biggest tapestry project undertaken in the UK in over 100 years. The Studio was commissioned by Historic Scotland to design and weave a series of seven tapestries recreating the 16<sup>th</sup> century *The Hunt of the Unicorn*. The 13 year project is the subject of a new exhibition *Weaving the Unicorn* at Stirling Castle. Royal inventories at the castle show that James V owned over 100 tapestries, however there is no record of what happened to them.

The West Dean Tapestry Studio accepts commissions on both public and private, large and small scale. Previous commissions include *Black Cat* and *Rose Virgin* for the artist Tracey Emin. The Studio also weaved *Play* part of British designer Faye Toogood's *Furniture and Coats; Roly-Poly Assemblage No. 4*, which was exhibited at the Internazionale Salone del Mobile in Milan.

West Dean College is one of the only colleges offering full time postgraduate study in Tapestry and Textile Art in the UK. The College offers a Visual Arts Scholarship in Tapestry and Textile Art which will cover the full tuition fees for one year.

For further details on commissioning a tapestry or to make an appointment to visit please contact the Tapestry Studio on +44 (0)1243 818233.

For all enquiries relating to graduate and postgraduate study at West Dean College please contact the Academics Office +44 (0)1243 818291 or [diplomas@westdean.org.uk](mailto:diplomas@westdean.org.uk). Download an application form at [www.westdean.org.uk/college/apply](http://www.westdean.org.uk/college/apply).

**Notes to editors:**

- *Weaving the Unicorn* charts the story of the Stirling Tapestry project, part of a project to return the interiors of the palace of James V to how they may have looked in the 1540's when it was home to James' daughter, Mary, Queen of Scots. The exhibition runs until 31 May 2016. [www.stirlingcastle.gov.uk](http://www.stirlingcastle.gov.uk).
- Hall reef, an exhibition of small format handwoven tapestry at West Dean College and gardens, runs from 1st August 2015 to 8th August 2015 [www.heall reef.com](http://www.heall reef.com).
- West Dean Tapestry Studio is part of the Edward James Foundation, a charitable trust which also comprises the West Dean College, West Dean Gardens and the West Dean Estate. Charity No. 1126084.
- West Dean College is situated on the A286, six miles north of Chichester and within easy reach of Portsmouth, Guildford and London.
- All photography included here is free to use for editorial purposes. To request an interview or high res images contact the Media Relations Team.

**For further information, high-resolution digital images or B roll footage, please contact**

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