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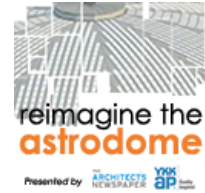
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NEWS

11.29.2011

PREVIEW> JAN YOORS

The Yoors family tapestries on display in New York.



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PURPLE TANTRA, 1976.
COURTESY ESTATE OF JAN YOORS

***Written in Fire:
Tapestries from the
Estate of Jan Yoors***

Through March 28
reGeneration Furniture
38 Renwick Street
New York

1960s and 70s.

Tapestries and life are both about entwined threads but rarely are both as tightly wound together as the life and tapestries of mid-century textile designer Jan Yoors, whose works are now on show at reGeneration Furniture in Tribeca.

“It was a communal project that my two mothers and my father worked on,” son Kore Yoors said by phone from Paris. To be clear, Yoors had only one biological mother, Marianne Yoors. But Marianne and her weaving partner, Annabert Yoors, were both wedded at different points to the Belgian Jan. Together they created a family and a series of tapestries at their studio on Waverly Place in the Village during the

Only now is the family sifting through years of accumulated records showing just how widely popular the tapestries were to modern architects and artists. Visitors and museum curators dropped by the studio frequently. Marcel Breuer, Gordon Bunshaft, and Welton Becket were fans of the group's work.



LEFT TO RIGHT: PLOWSHARE, 1977; MEXICAN PINK TANTRA, 1976; ONY WAH, 1973; PINK & ORANGE ON BLACK TANTRA, 1976.

In the early 1960s, AIA New York asked Jan to photograph 20th century spiritual buildings in South America. Among the 50,000 photographs, there are images of Niemeyer's Brasilia still under construction alongside abstract studies of oil slicks and leaf shadows.

At the reGeneration show, the tapestries' stark forms on rich color fields suggest abstract black and white photography. Compositions vary significantly from abstract to figural. In one a contorting leaf shape seems ready to peel off in pinwheel fashion, while in another a contained body crouches. The influence of 1970s New York City graffiti seems certain, although Sanskrit is the more likely source.

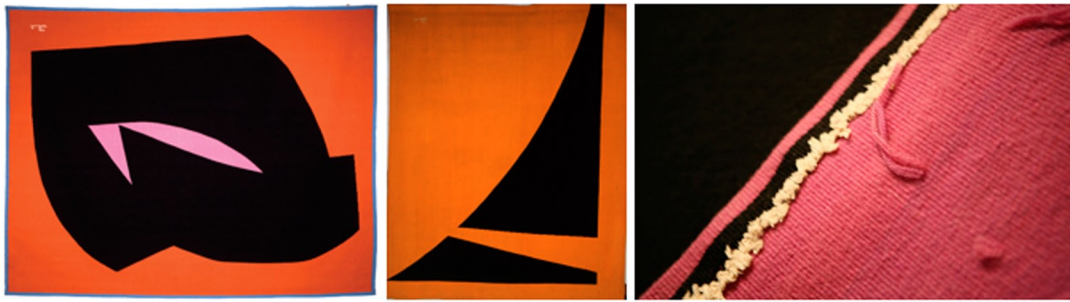


WRITTEN IN FIRE, 1974.

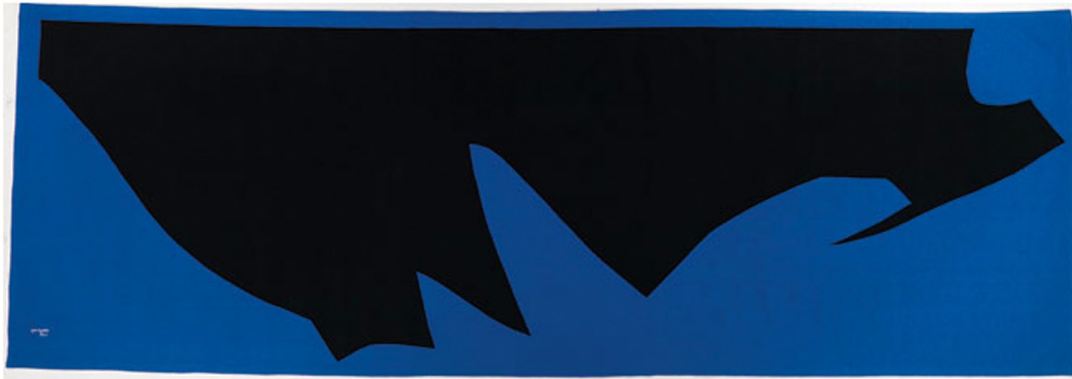
Jan's own life was colorful. He wrote a book about Gypsy culture, of which he had intimate knowledge, having run off with a tribe at the age of twelve. His open-minded parents allowed him to join the Gypsy caravan every year when it came to town. During World War II, he even stayed to fight beside his chosen brethren at Dunkirk.

Jan's back-story, amazing as it is, does not upstage the monumental achievement of his two wives. ReGeneration's show organizer Eric Hibit said keeping the work in the family allowed Jan to be directly involved with the craft, unlike artists Jean Arp or Roy Lichtenstein, who contracted outside firms to execute their textile designs. "Yoors was different, he approached tapestry the way a painter would approach a painting," said Hibit. Using an Aubusson technique, it took the women eight hours to complete one square foot, and many pieces are large scale, such as *Written in Fire*, which runs 7½ feet tall by 24 feet wide. And when Jan died in 1977, the two women carried on his legacy and making his tapestries just as smooth, tight, and exact.

Tom Stoelker



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ORANGE DIAMOND, 1977; SAIL, 1977; A DETAIL OF A TAPESTRY'S REVERSE; COBALT MOUNTAIN, 1977.



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Darya Mead · Managing Producer at Triporati Inc.

So great to see this work again as I grew up surrounded by it. Spending time in the Yoors' home/studio as a child was magical... I am lucky to have some of his work and great memories of the family. My mother modeled for Jan and later our families became close --we considered ourselves siblings. So much of who I am was in part shaped by the lives we shared and I even wrote my college thesis about Jan's life and work, having interviewed his 90 yo mom in Antwerp, Belgium-- a germ of my journalism career to come. Marianne and Annabert, are two great, ladies, each with so much strength and creativity--I wish I could see this show!

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Lovely!

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fascinating...

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