



Commemorative exhibition of crafts and design

‘Tradition and Modernity - Latvian Textile Art’ at the National Museum of Decorative Arts’

- The exhibition commemorates the 100 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Spain and Latvia, and shows, for the first time in Madrid, a representative vision of the history, traditions and most current innovations of Latvian textile art
- Open to the public for free from June 16 to September 5

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The National Museum of Decorative Arts presents ~~together~~ along with the Embassy of the Republic of Latvia in Spain, the exhibition ‘Tradition and Modernity - Textile Art of Latvia’. The exhibition, organized with the National Museum of Art of Latvia, can be visited free of charge until September 5th and has been possible because of the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, and the State Capital Foundation of Culture of Latvia. The core of this exhibition, which offers a comprehensive overview of the most current history, traditions and innovations introduced by Latvian textile art, is made up of 48 works by 29 prominent artists from the collection of the Latvian Museum of Decorative Arts and Design (part of the Latvian National Art Museum) and private collections. The selection of pieces integrates different generations of creators, offering a complete vision of the evolution of Latvian textile art in different formats: upholstery, free-standing works or miniature textiles. These creations are integrated into two areas: one historical (traditional) and the other contemporary (modernity), completing the exhibition discourse with the work of the guest artist Edīte Pauls-Vīgnere, one of the most versatile and relevant creators on the Latvian scene. During Latvia's first independence, especially between the 1920s and 1930s, there was a great development of its textile art. After the Second World War, with the Soviet occupation, this impulse led in 1961 to the creation of the Department of Textile Art of the Latvian Academy of Art. Its founder and longest-serving director, Professor Professor Rūdolfs Heimrāts,



played an essential role in it. The designs produced by Heimrāts and his students, present in the exhibition, are part of the “gold collection” of the Latvian National Museum of Art. Upholstery was the main technique used, although other signature techniques such as fiber art, textile mosaics or felts were used.

The year 1991 marked a turning point in this development, the year of the restoration of Latvia's independence, a fact that which meant the country's return to Europe, paving the way for innovations and experiments by giving artists the opportunity to travel. At the same time, the financial crisis had a significant impact on this development, reducing the size of the works and producing a gradual loss of traditional techniques. Techniques such as digital upholstery or works of a more conceptual nature that overturned more traditional themes emerged. On the other hand, they began to experiment with new materials such as paper fibers, metallic fibers or laminations and began to work on processes related to recycling and reuse. New communication formats such as interactive textiles, video-textiles, smart fabrics or electronic textiles are the last highlighted chapters in this evolution. At the beginning of the 21st century, Latvia became an international event center for textile art. Since 2001, the Riga International Triennial of Fibers and Textile Art has been held, a relevant international event that has led to the establishment of suitable conditions for the promotion of cooperation between artists and museums.

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