

Enrique Chagoya: *Roadmap*

In *Roadmap*, Enrique Chagoya arranges a cast of mythic, religious and political figures in an ambiguous, open-ended poetry of forms. Depicting a conflict between the many faces of fundamentalism and the secular force of imagination – embodied here by Lewis Carroll’s Alice – the artist raises questions about borders and rigid beliefs which are intentionally left unanswered. Accordingly, the tension in Chagoya’s tapestry lies in the subtlety of its internal relationships; it is unclear who holds the power, and though there is clearly an exchange of energy at hand, its nature and result are left to the viewer’s imagination.



Enrique Chagoya, *Roadmap*, 2006 - Jacquard Tapestry, 75 x 76 in. Edition of 8

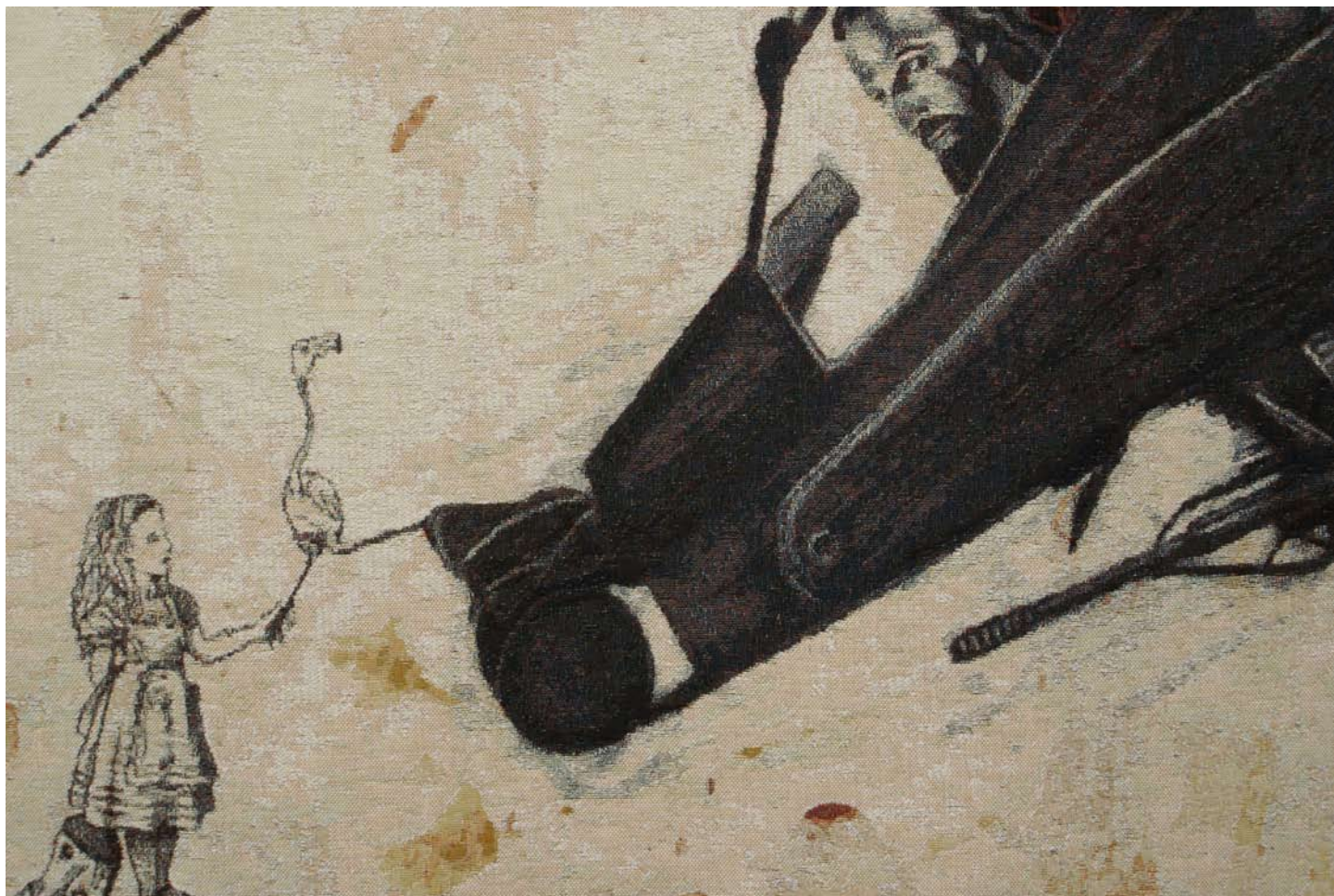
Roadmap's logic is unfettered by ideology, culture, or even gravity as its shifting layers of meaning circle in the air. This perpetual flight is mirrored in the tapestry's iconography of passenger jets, military helicopters, and UFOs; the dodo and the flamingo; even in Chagoya's use of the Arabic *nastaliq* script, whose form was inspired, legend has it, by Persian calligrapher Mir Ali Tabrizi's vision in a dream of geese in flight. (*Roadmap*'s calligraphy delivers an ancient aphorism, dating from the 12th century A.D.: "The road to Mecca is full of music.") Wary of the hubris by which artistic "statements" that presuppose a fixed perspective unwittingly clip their own wings, Chagoya opts for a plurality of concepts animated by the unknowable. His work is a zone of play in which the mythic and the historic converse freely, laughing and mourning in a language that humanity may never translate.

Political roadmaps are just ideological constructions, just more borders. In history, maps and borders – including internal borders among people – are always changing.

- Enrique Chagoya

About the Magnolia Tapestry Project

Rather than weaving solid areas of color, as in traditional hand weaving, the Magnolia Tapestry Project's method makes the most of Jacquard technology's potential to weave a complex, mosaic-like network of color combinations. As Tamarind and Gemini put the commercial lithographic technology of the 19th century into the hands of fine artists in the fifties and sixties,



Detail from *Roadmap*.

the Magnolia Tapestry Project is putting the electronic Jacquard loom to work in unexpected ways for contemporary artists.

The project includes tapestries representative of several generations and numerous art movements: the Abstract Expressionist wizardry of Ed Moses; the monumental, Expressionistic figures of Leon Golub; and the post-Surrealist visions of Bruce Conner are re-envisioned in warp and weft. The Magnolia Tapestry Project has also produced tapestries by Alex Katz, Doug Hall, Lewis deSoto, D.J. Hall, Donald and Era Farnsworth, George Miyasaki, Rupert Garcia, Diane Andrews Hall, Robert Kushner, Nancy Spero, and other artists. ■