

## Rupert Garcia: *La Xochitl IV*

Rupert Garcia is a master of graphic economy, and his compositions have a deceptive simplicity: there is a wealth of information at play in the interaction between his expertly placed marks. His tapestry's title, *La Xochitl*, means "flower" in the Aztec language Nahuatl; the 13-day period associated with the day Xochitl in the Aztec calendar is thought to be profoundly influenced by creativity and playfulness. In this spirit of creative play, Garcia embellished each tapestry in the edition by painting on its surface; the pigments were absorbed and embedded into the fibers of the tapestry, lending it the same hand-worked quality as his paintings and pastels.

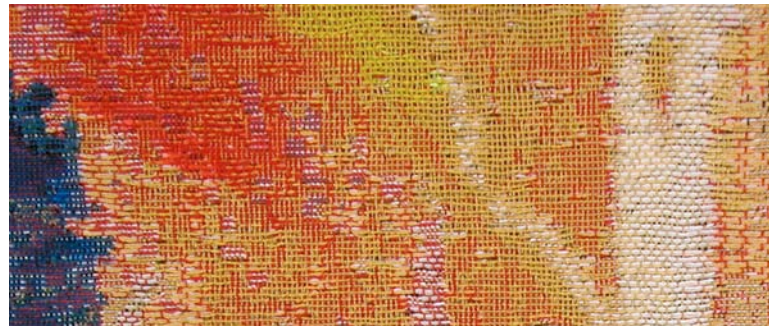
The central flower is an *Ipomoea tricolor* or Mexican morning glory, a motif which Garcia has revisited in several paintings: the roman numerals in the work's title indicate that this is the flower's fourth transformation. Garcia's work is informed by a personal philosophy that reconciles dualistic notions such as life and death or conscious and unconscious. As a result, he frequently uses motifs which embody unity by evoking multiple ideas which might otherwise be seen as contradictory. The morning glory is a prime example: its lively blossoms are often laid on graves during the Mexican Day of the Dead. Garcia notes that it is a nearly universal phenomenon to bring flowers to a funeral and to have some kind of social gathering after the service; hence sadness and celebration are not opposites, but are layered and interwoven in the fabric of human emotions. Likewise, the vibrant hues of *La Xochitl's* morning glory are overlaid with dripping, hole-like shapes: echoes of a lament in the colors of joy, simultaneously evoking both growth and decay, the violent and the sublime.

*What I like about the tapestry medium is the idea of warming up a room. This happens physically in terms of temperature and at the same time, in the impact of its design: when the image is powerful enough, it can ignite the room. Tapestry is part of a tradition that is truly universal: a human practice that gives space a statement and gives it meaning, whether spiritual or otherwise.*

- Rupert Garcia



Rupert Garcia, *La Xochitl IV*, 2003 - Jacquard Tapestry and fabric paint, 82 x 82 in. Ed: 6



Detail from *La Xochitl IV*

### *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, 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. ■