

Mel Ramos

A longtime friend and frequent visitor to Magnolia Editions, Mel Ramos grew curious about the emerging potential of the tapestry medium in 2004 and decided to translate a series of his colorful pop sirens. The results display Ramos's signature fusion of fine art technique, pin-up eroticism, and the gleeful product worship of advertising. In the process of conversion into fiber, Ramos's Pop gloss has gone matte, but his trademark wit, saturated palette and saucy delivery are unmistakable in these new woven editions.

Ramos is well known as a pioneer of Pop Art on the West Coast: while Warhol and Lichtenstein were screenprinting and Benday dotting in New York, Ramos was developing his own sun-drenched take on Pop in the Bay Area. Tongue-in-cheek, technically virtuosic renderings of the female form -- sourced from pin-ups, comic book heroines, classical nudes



Chiquita, 2004
Jacquard tapestry, 82 x 71 in., edition of 24



Phantom Lady, 2007
Jacquard tapestry, 68 x 52 in., edition of 24

and advertising models -- emerged as his leitmotif. As fine art multiples created using industrial technology, Ramos's tapestries are appropriately in step with the spirit of 60s Pop. The editions he has created with the Magnolia Tapestry Project revisit some of Ramos's personal favorites from a career that, having spanned nearly fifty years, shows no sign of slowing down.

About the Magnolia Tapestry Project

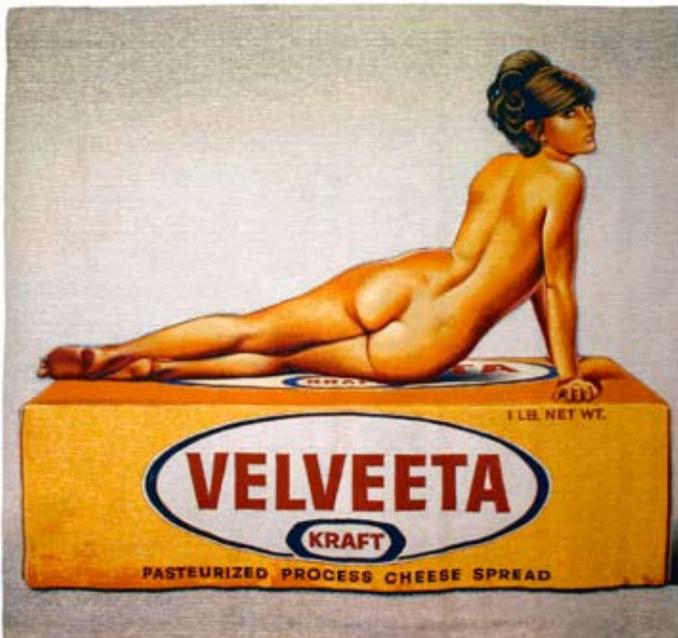
The Magnolia Tapestry Project developed from artist John Nava's commission to decorate the vast interior walls of the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles, which required a consideration of the acoustical demands of the space: the decorative element was to function practically by reducing unwanted reverberation, prompting an inquiry into the use of textiles. Nava and Magnolia Editions co-director Donald Farnsworth subsequently collaborated on a series of woven experiments which grew into an unorthodox approach to Jacquard weaving, whereby work by contemporary

artists is translated into a digital “weave file” using custom calibrated color palettes developed at Magnolia Editions. Each completed weave file is woven in Belgium on a double-headed Jacquard loom using 17,800 available warp threads.

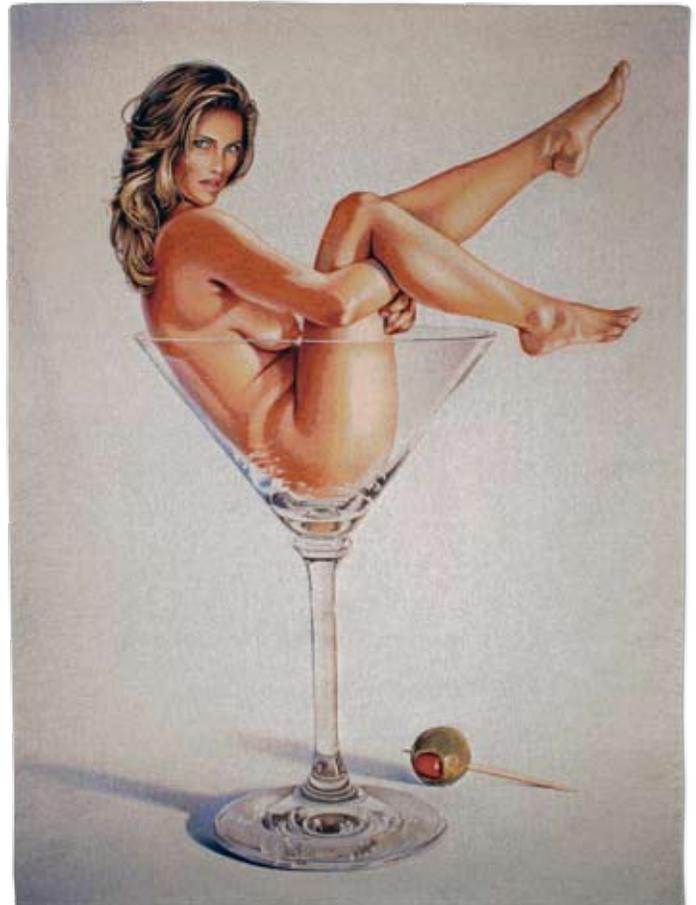
In the same way that Tamarind and Gemini put the commercial lithographic technology of the 19th century into the hands of fine artists in the fifties and sixties, the Magnolia Tapestry Project is putting the electronic Jacquard loom to work in unexpected ways for contemporary artists. The Project includes tapestries representative of several generations and numerous art movements: the formally rigorous portraits of Chuck Close; the monumental figures of Leon Golub; the hyper-realism of Alan Magee; the playful poetics of William Wiley; the post-Surrealist visions of Bruce Conner, and the abstractions of Ed Moses and George Miyasaki are all re-envisioned in striking new editions. The Magnolia Tapestry Project has also produced tapestries by Squeak Carnwath, Lia Cook, Lewis deSoto, Guy Diehl, Donald and Era Farnsworth, Rupert Garcia, Diane Andrews Hall, Doug Hall, Gus Heinze, Robert Kushner, John Nava, Nancy Spero and others. ■



Hav-a-Havana, 2005
Jacquard tapestry, 69 x 69 in., edition of 24



Val Veeta, 2004
Jacquard tapestry, 79 x 83 in., edition of 24



Martini Miss, 2004
Jacquard tapestry, 82 x 61 in., edition of 24