

Ed Moses

The career of iconic L.A. artist Ed Moses combines the gravity-defying bravura of a high-wire act with a fiery, Newtonian commitment to alchemical experimentation and discovery. Throughout the last six decades, Moses has negotiated the periphery between light-hearted West Coast funk and the furrowed brows of Modernism, finding alternating footholds in eclectic sources ranging from the grit and shadow of the Lascaux cave paintings to the smooth, optical rollercoaster of 1960s California Minimalism. His perseverance has earned Moses a reputation as a restless and prolific explorer. Now, in a suite of tapestries published by Magnolia Editions, the artist ventures for the first time into the world of woven textiles.

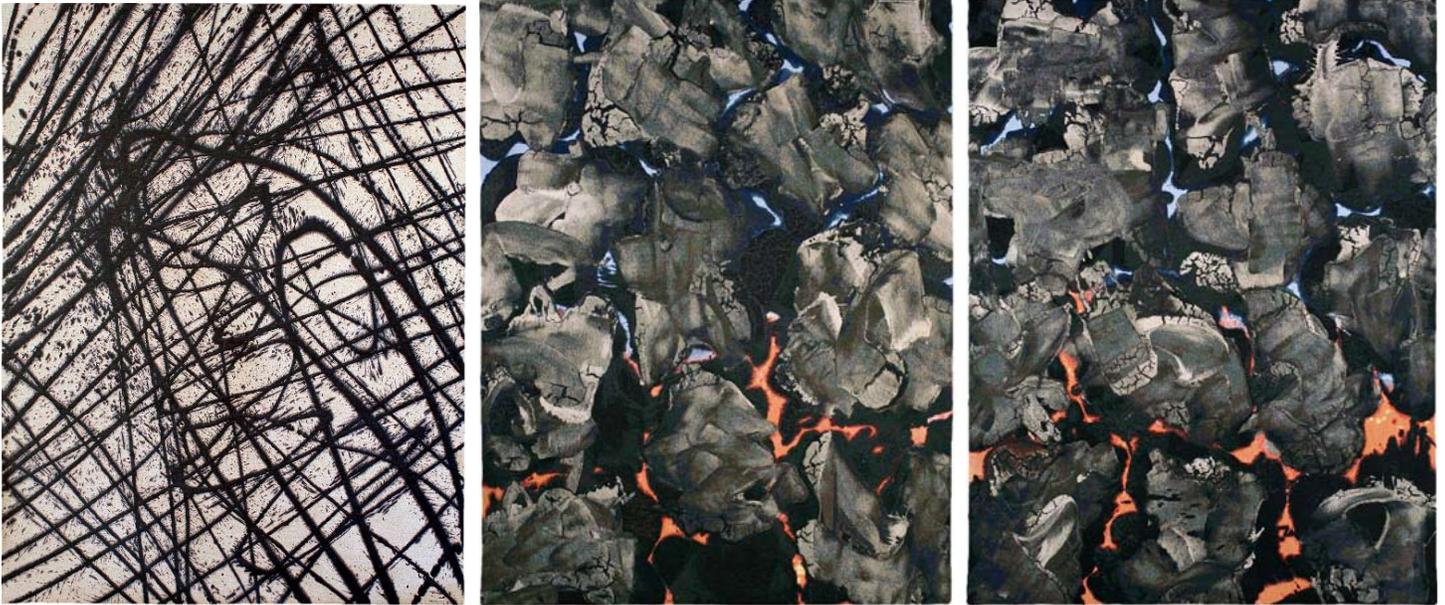


Crema de La, 2006, Jacquard tapestry, 101 x 78 in., edition of 6.
Inset: detail from *Crema de La*.



Ed Moses in front of his 2006 tapestry, *Bronze Man* (photo by John Nava).

To create the “Magma” series of paintings from which his first series of tapestries were translated, Moses worked outdoors on a driveway, laying wet canvas panels on wheeled wooden “skateboards.” Over multiple work sessions, Moses moved from panel to panel applying acrylic and metallic paints with mops, squeegees, squirt bottles and other unusual means. Previously, Moses has sanded down the surfaces of his paintings, coated them with translucent resin, infused them with glitter and stained them with asphaltum. His use of the tapestry medium represents a means to further transform the texture of painted surfaces, to push the work beyond narrative or figuration toward an inchoate and immediate sensory experience.



From left: *Ziwke-X*, 2006, Jacquard tapestry, 103 x 79 in., edition of 6; *Bronco-X (Diptych)*, 2006, Jacquard tapestry, 102 x 79 in. each, edition of 6

The tapestries deliver all the visceral impact of their painted predecessors in new and unexpected ways. Metallic threads were incorporated in the translation of reticulated volcanic blizzes like *Bronze Man* and *Crema De La*; the play of light on these pieces is subtle and inviting. The speedy, whiplike matrices of *Zoke-X* and *Ziwke-X* are offset by the warmth and systematic construction of their woven fibers. An added layer of abstraction is visible at close proximity, as gesture and ground appear to merge in layers of warp and weft threads.

About the Magnolia Tapestry Project

The Magnolia Tapestry Project grew out of 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 developed into an unorthodox approach to Jacquard weaving. Using this approach, work by contemporary artists is

faithfully translated into a digital "weave file" using custom calibrated color palettes developed at Magnolia Editions. The completed weave file is sent to a mill in Belgium to be woven on a double-headed Jacquard loom, where 17,800 available warp threads generate colors of unprecedented variety and density. Finally, the work returns to Magnolia Editions in its woven form, to be approved and signed by the artist.

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 Pop princesses of Mel Ramos; the monumental, Expressionistic figures of Leon Golub; the hyper-realism of Alan Magee and Guy Diehl; the playful poetics of Squeak Carnwath and William Wiley; the post-Surrealist visions of Bruce Conner, and the abstract topographies of George Miyasaki are all re-envisioned in striking new editions. The Magnolia Tapestry Project has also produced tapestries by Chuck Close, Lewis deSoto, Rupert Garcia, Doug Hall, Gus Heinze, Robert Kushner, John Nava, Nancy Spero and others. ■