

## 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.

*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



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

### *About the Magnolia Tapestry Project*

The Magnolia Tapestry Project emerged 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 Farnsworth subsequently collaborated on a series of woven experiments which grew into an unorthodox approach to Jacquard weaving. Using this approach, contemporary artists collaborate with either Nava or Farnsworth to translate compositions into digital “weave files” using custom calibrated color palettes developed at Magnolia Editions. Each completed weave file is then woven in Belgium on a double-headed Jacquard loom, where 17,800 available warp threads generate colors of unprecedented variety and density.



Detail from *Roadmap*.

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 today's artists. The Project includes tapestries representative of several generations and numerous art movements: the abstract wizardry of Ed Moses; the Pop princesses of Mel Ramos; the monumental, Expressionistic figures of Leon Golub; the hyper-real-

ism 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 Expressionist topographies of George Miyasaki are all re-envisioned in striking new editions. The Magnolia Tapestry Project has also produced tapestries by Chuck Close, Lia Cook, Lewis deSoto, Donald and Era Farnsworth, Rupert Garcia, Diane Andrews Hall, Gus Heinze, Robert Kushner, John Nava, Nancy Spero, Katherine Westerhout and others. ■