



Times in Tapestry

Goshka Macuga x Grayson Perry x Mary Toms

07.11.2025 — 08.03.2026

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Grayson Perry, *Morris, Gainsborough, Turner, Riley*, 2021

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Goshka Macuga x Grayson Perry x Mary Toms

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mudac and the Toms Pauli Foundation lift the veil on an exhibition where wall tapestry becomes a bold political and social manifesto. Bringing together masterpieces from the Toms collection and contemporary works by Goshka Macuga and Grayson Perry, this exhibition highlights tapestry – often monumental in scale – as a powerful medium of propaganda and critical reflection.

Throughout history, tapestry has served as a formidable vehicle for storytelling and testimony. From medieval times to contemporary practice, it has offered a space where collective aspirations, historical narratives and present-day concerns converge. This exhibition showcases major works from the Toms collection, woven in the renowned Brussels workshops between 1660 and 1725, alongside pieces by contemporary artists Goshka Macuga and Grayson Perry. Classical works such as *The Story of Scipio Africanus* or *The Emperors Titus and Vespasian* stage symbolic and glorious episodes from Roman history. Two tapestries will be presented to the public for the very first time, testament to the exceptional quality and prestige of this collection, held by the State of Vaud.

These historical masterpieces, counterparts of which can be found at the

Louvre, The Prado and The Hermitage, resonate powerfully with the socially engaged works of Macuga and Perry. Through series such as *The Vanity of Small Differences* by Perry or *Death of Marxism, Women of All Lands Unite* by Macuga, the exhibition explores contemporary themes: social struggles, critiques of consumer society and power dynamics. For the occasion, Macuga has created a new tapestry, specially conceived in dialogue with the Toms collection, offering a fresh and timely perspective. By placing historic and contemporary works in conversation, the exhibition underscores tapestry's enduring power as a visual language, one capable of conveying complex ideas and prompting reflection on universal issues.

In partnership with	Fondation Toms Pauli
Curation	Marco Costantini, director of mudac Magali Junet, director of Fondation Toms Pauli
Scientific collaboration	Diane Maechler Zané Purmale
Exhibition design	Raphaële Gygi
Graphic design	Notter + Vigne

1. Tapestry as a Message of Power



La Conférence de Scipion et d'Hannibal, tapestry from the *Actes de Scipion l'Africain*, 1660, Brussels, made by Hendrik I Reynders after models by Gianfrancesco Penni and de Giulio Romano

© Fondation Toms Pauli Lausanne, donation Mary Toms

Often viewed as decorative art, tapestry has shown remarkable longevity, remaining relevant today as a means of political and social expression. Across the centuries, tapestry has reflected societal concerns and the ambitions of rulers. Historically, elite patrons commissioned these works to adorn palaces, castles and churches. Rich in symbolism, they were as much statements of power as they were ornamental.

A striking example is the famed Bayeux Tapestry, an embroidered work from the 11th century, which recounts the Norman conquest of England in 1066. More than a historical document, it serves as political propaganda in favour of William the Conqueror. Tapestry thus offers a unique window into the worldviews, conflicts and power dynamics of the past – a visual archive of ancient and modern ideologies.

2. Tapestry as a Critical Tool



© Grayson Perry. Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro

Today, a number of artists have adopted tapestry as a means of criticising social and political values. Contemporary works often address civil rights, feminism, social justice and global conflict. These pieces serve as collective or personal testimonies of political struggles, anchoring such narratives in the public consciousness while also questioning and confronting them. The exploration of political engagement through tapestry reveals how this traditional art form, often regarded as merely decorative, can in fact serve as a powerful tool for political communication and documentation.

From the propaganda of medieval elites to the critical staging of contemporary artists, tapestry has long played a significant role in expressing engaged political ideas. Its enduring relevance as a medium for social and political messaging lies in its unique ability to bridge tradition and modernity. Today's artists continue to reinvent the form, drawing on its rich heritage and narrative potential to tackle urgent and complex issues. Far from fading into obscurity, the art of tapestry asserts itself as a space for dialogue and reflection, a medium that remains strikingly pertinent in our contemporary world.

3. Past References, Present Reflections



Goshka Macuga, *Of what is, that it is, of what is not, that it is not 1*, 2012

Pinault Collection. Photo © Nicolas Brasseur

For the last fifteen years, tapestry is enjoying a remarkable revival thanks to contemporary artists who use the medium to reflect on pressing current issues. The works of Goshka Macuga and Grayson Perry are emblematic of this renewed relevance. Their tapestry series – *Of what is, that it is; of what is not, that it is not* by the Polish artist and *The Vanity of Small Differences* by the British artist – offer sharp critiques of consumer culture, globalisation and the representations of political, societal and cultural power structures. While they draw on traditional tapestry-making techniques, the looms used are now digitally programmed and automated by skilled technicians. This fusion of craft and technology enables Macuga and Perry to create works deeply rooted in the present, proving that tapestry can be every bit as incisive and relevant as any other form of contemporary art. Alongside the works of Macuga and Perry, a selection of tapestries from Flanders, woven

between 1660 and 1725 in Brussels' leading workshops, will illustrate the major themes of the history of tapestry: *The Story of Scipio Africanus*, *The Emperors Titus and Vespasian* and *The Art of War*. These historic pieces, held by the Toms Pauli Foundation, depict legendary and mythical battles from Roman antiquity and the age of Louis XIV. Remarkable for their composition, the finesse of their weaving and their monumental scale, the Toms tapestries on display provide a striking introduction to the rich world of historic tapestry – a legacy to which the politically engaged works of Macuga and Perry respond with insight and intensity.

Two tapestries from the Toms Pauli collection will be shown to the public for the first time. To accompany this, Goshka Macuga will also unveil a newly commissioned tapestry inspired by her many interpretations of this unique ensemble, housed in Lausanne.

Born in Warsaw in 1967, Goshka Macuga has lived and worked in London since 1989. Her practice blends historical research and archival exploration across installations, sculpture, tapestry and collage. Acting simultaneously as artist, curator, historian and scenographer, Macuga interrogates political systems, historiography and key issues of our time.

Since 2009, she has commissioned monumental tapestries – some measuring up to 17 metres wide and over five metres high – that transpose her ideas into sprawling compositions resembling mind maps, presentations and panoramic scenes. Drawing on the historical tradition of tapestry as a portable textile often bearing political messages, Macuga uses the medium to interrogate representation itself. She incorporates spatial design and 3D effects directly into the weave, inviting viewers, equipped with special glasses, not just to observe the narrative but to step inside it, becoming active participants in the unfolding story.



© Courtesy of the Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle and the artist

Grayson Perry is one of the great chroniclers of contemporary life, who moves us with his feelings or emotions. Across his practice, Perry tackles universally human themes: identity, gender, class, sexuality, religion. His autobiographical references – childhood, family, cross-dressing – intersect with wider reflections on taste, social mobility, the decorative arts and the role of the artist versus the artisan. Working in traditional disciplines including ceramics, cast iron, bronze, printmaking and tapestry, Perry explores how each medium carries its own emotional and intellectual weight.

Perry's tapestries draw inspiration from a form of art traditionally associated with the upper echelons of society – depictions of classical myths, historical and religious scenes and epic battles – and playfully subvert it by using this age-old allegorical medium to elevate the everyday dramas of modern British life. Politics, consumerism, history and art history are all woven into his work, both in subject matter and medium. Yet for Perry, emotional investment – creating works about things that truly matter – is paramount. As he puts it: *"It's the emotional charge that draws me to a subject."*



© Grayson Perry. Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro



© Fondation Toms Pauli Lausanne, acquisition 2023

The Toms Collection is one of the most significant privately assembled collections of historic tapestry from the second half of the 20th century. Bequeathed to the State of Vaud by Mary Toms in 1993, it comprises over one hundred wall tapestries and decorative pieces from major European workshops, dating from the early 16th to the late 19th centuries.

After amassing a fortune in real estate, British developer Reginald Toms (1892–1978) and his wife Mary (1901–1993) settled at Château de Coinsins in French-speaking Switzerland in 1958, where they discovered a passion for historic textiles. During the 1960s, they acquired over a hundred works, including furniture, carpets, embroidery.

More than fifty tapestries in the collection originate from the leading workshops of Flanders, particularly from the 17th to the 18th centuries. The gold- and silver-threaded masterpieces on show are drawn from the original Toms collection and later acquisitions by the Toms Pauli Foundation, established in 2000. Known for its geographical, chronological and thematic breadth, as well as its outstanding state of preservation, this collection, owned by the State, has been exhibited in venues such as Payerne Abbey, the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the MCBA in Lausanne, the Palacio Real in Madrid, the Cité de la Tapisserie in Aubusson and Musée Rath in Geneva. It now takes pride of place at mudac for this landmark exhibition.

Based in Lausanne since its founding in 2000, the Toms Pauli Foundation is an active institution on both Swiss and international stages. Its core mission is to research, preserve and promote collections of historic and 20th-century textile art owned by the State of Vaud.

The Foundation's heritage consists of a significant collection of European tapestries and embroidery dating from the 16th to the 19th century, bequeathed by Mary Toms in 1993, as well as textile artworks from 1954 to 2011 that are emblematic of the *Nouvelle Tapisserie* movement.

Lacking its own exhibition space to showcase its exceptional holdings, the Foundation regularly presented its collections abroad. Since 2020, the Toms Pauli Foundation has been based at Plateforme 10. Its offices, collections and specialised library are housed within the building of the MCBA.

The public can discover the Foundation's historic and contemporary collections through temporary exhibitions held at Plateforme 10 – such as the major 2023 exhibition *Magdalena Abakanowicz: Textile Territories*, organised in collaboration with Tate – and in other venues in Switzerland and beyond. At the end of 2025, another piece from the *Titus and Vespasian* series will go on display at the MCBA as a follow-up to the *Tisser son temps* exhibition.

As the successor to the Centre International de la Tapisserie Ancienne et Moderne (CITAM), the organisation behind the Lausanne Tapestry Biennials from 1962 to 1995, the Foundation also maintains artist archives from these historic events and regularly hosts researchers from around the world.

More information on: www.toms-pauli.ch



© Fondation Toms Pauli Lausanne, legs Mary Toms

Times in Tapestry

Goshka Macuga, Grayson Perry, Mary Toms

Created in collaboration with mudac and the Toms Pauli Foundation, the publication accompanying *Tisser son temps* explores four key facets of the tapestry medium: its creative process, its spatial interaction, its narrative function and its political and social engagement. At the intersection of these themes are the contemporary works of Goshka Macuga and Grayson Perry, placed in dialogue with Flemish tapestries from the 17th and 18th centuries, and held in Lausanne. Published in both French and English, the volume is edited by Marco Costantini and Magali Junet, and features contributions from experts in tapestry and contemporary art, including: Marco Costantini, Sophie Herbin, Magali Junet, Anne-Sophie Laruelle, Diane Maechler, Zané Purmale, Grant Watson, Errol van de Werdt and Bruno Ythier. The essays are accompanied by 22 leporello-style plates reproducing artworks from the exhibition, presented in a deluxe box set limited to 100 numbered copies. The publication is produced by mudac éditions in partnership with the Toms Pauli Foundation.

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Graphic design	Notter + Vigne
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Main partner of mudac

Julius Bär

Main partner for the construction



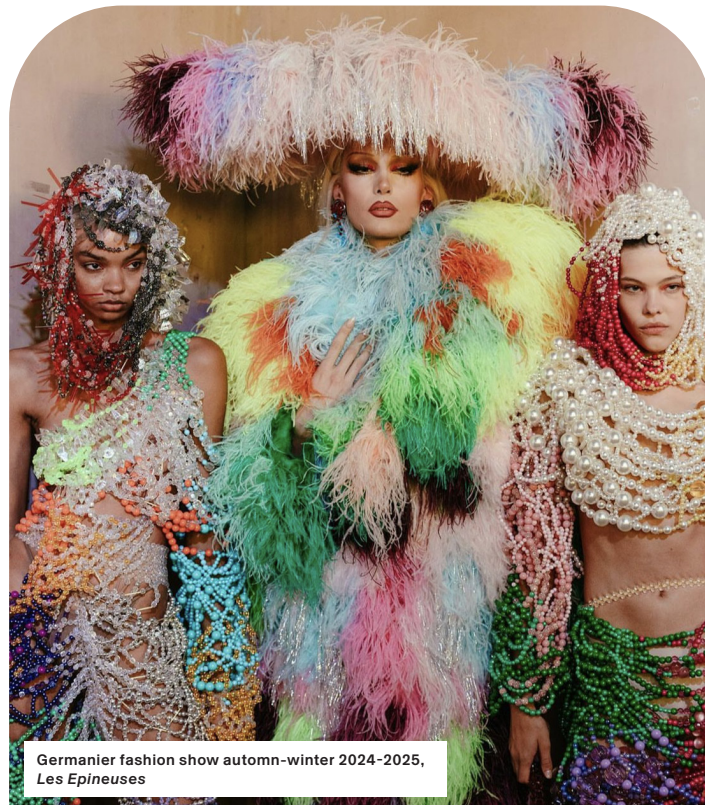
Carte blanche to Kévin Germanier

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mudac invites Swiss designer Kévin Germanier to reinvent the museum space with the same originality and creativity that have characterised his approach to fashion for many years. Kévin Germanier has emerged as a key figure in contemporary fashion, combining innovation, sustainability and haute couture in designs that have conquered the world. Today, he embodies a revival in which creativity is nourished by environmental issues. The exhibition, spread over 300 square metres in the heart of the mudac, offers a rare opportunity to celebrate and explore the many facets of Maison Germanier. A blend of expertise, boldness and singular vision, this immersion reveals an aesthetic language in constant evolution.

Press kit and HD visuals available for download on mudac.ch/presse

Curation	Kévin Germanier Rafaël Santianez
Scientific collaboration	Letizia Petrino
Exhibition design	Magali Conus
Graphic design	WePlayDesign



Germanier fashion show autumn-winter 2024-2025,
Les Epineuses

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Press visit

Wednesday 5 November 2025

Exhibition opening

Thursday 6 November 2025

Tickets options

Visitors are invited to take advantage of the "1 ticket-3 museums" offer to visit all the exhibitions at Plateforme 10. Valid for 3 months.

- Full price: CHF 25
- Reduced price: CHF 19
- Duo (visit for two): CHF 38
- Free for under-26s

Free admission on the first Saturday of the month

Media contact

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Press

Press kit and HD images available for download at the adress: mudac.ch/presse

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Opening hours

Monday	10 am – 6 pm
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	10 am – 6 pm
Thursday	10 am – 8 pm
Friday	10 am – 6 pm
Saturday	10 am – 6 pm
Sunday	10 am – 6 pm

Cover visual: Goshka Macuga, *Death of Marxism, Women of All Lands Unite*, 2013 © Courtesy of the Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle and the artist
