

Trained at the Academy of Fine Arts in Tournai (Belgium) and settled in Paris in 1925, **Joseph Lacasse** devotes himself to painting but also other disciplines (such as ceramics, sculpture, silk-screen printing, and collage). He also creates a few tapestry template.

He was an avant-garde cubist artist before switching towards the abstract genre with **Tapiserie rouge et bleue**. Through this piece, he gives a purified version of a bird using contrasted coloured areas some of which are in relief.



Joseph LACASSE (Tournai (BE), 1894 - Paris (FR), 1975)

Tapiserie rouge et bleue, 1972

Low stringer - Cotton and wool
Woven by Christien Corio

From the collection of the French Community of Belgium
«Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles» – deposit

«Forces Murales» and the revival of tapestry

In the immediate post-war period, Tournai was in the heart of a renewal movement of tapestry in Belgium. The Academy of fine Arts, where a haute lice course has been held since 1931, is the centre of this movement. Among the lecturers was the painter **Jean Leroy** (Péruwelz 1896 - Tournai 1939) who produced several tapestry cartoons including **Tournai, cite royal**, woven by his wife. One of his students called **Edmond Dubrunfaut** (Denain, France 1920 - Furnes 2007), painted his very first projects. **Pain et vin** is a painting sharing similarities to the aesthetics of the 15th and 16th centuries thanks to the border surrounding the central part and the decorative and vegetal background.

At the "École nationale supérieure des arts visuels de Le Cambre (ENSAV), known as La Cambre in Brussels, he meets **Roger Somville** (Brussels 1923 – Tervuren 2014), and **Louis Deltour** (Guignies 1927 – 1998). All three of them were driven by the same desire: to give back to the mural art genre (tapestry, fresco, ceramics) all its artistic value. Supported by a committee of prominent people from Tournai, they founded the collective called «**Forces Murales**» in 1947 whose approach is specified in their **Manifesto**. The commission by the Belgian government of 300 m² of tapestries, then an additional 200m² for the Belgian embassies abroad, will involve the training of weavers and the creation of a cooperative society named «**La Tapiserie de Tournai**» (1948 - 1953).

Later, **Edmond Dubrunfaut** and **Roger Somville** will be dynamic promoters of the non-profit organisation **TAMAT**.



Forces Murales (1947 – 1959)

Le retour des champs, 1951

Low stringer – wool and cotton
Woven by the workshop of the Cooperative Society
"La Tapiserie de Tournai"

Collection belonging to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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Those three artists will design their projects together, marking them with their initials. Themes covering socio-realistic subjects depict their political convictions by showing people at their work and leisure activities in a vigorous and expressive style: limited range of colours, hatching of tones, clear line drawing, absence of perspective, decorative or plain background, among other things. The piece of works woven by the Cooperative Society are branded with the Tournai's mark used since the 16th century.

The **notebooks** (on display) testify to this activity and provide guidance concerning the work, the weavers' names, the production time of the tapestries, the number of colours, ...

The tapestry technique



Pierre CAILLE (Tournai (BE), 1911 – Brussels (BE), 1996)

Chevaux, manants, chevaliers, 1983

High stringer – Cotton and wool

Woven by the production workshop of the «Fondation de la Tapiserie» in Tournai

From the collection of the French Community of Belgium
«Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles» - deposit

Prolific artist, **Pierre Caille** is a ceramist, sculptor and deeply passionate about all forms of decorative arts. The tapestry **Chevaux, manants, chevaliers** is especially embodying the dreamlike world of his works : the swarming horses and disarticulated characters do not entirely reflect the eagerness emanating from a bloody battle but rather the irony and derision specific to the artist.

This tapestry goes along with the **drawing project** divided into four parts. One part was woven using **numbered cardboard**, each number being assigned to a specific colour. An important range of thirteen colours (the **cones** of colour are currently on loan from the CRECIT, Tournai) was needed to produce this specific detail.

It is this **numbered template**, often transcribed on a tracing paper, fixed behind the wrap threads (vertically oriented) that will guide the work of the weaver. The tapestry is woven into the direction of its height on the loom as well as the reverse side, which justifies the reversed direction of the signature on the figured cardboard. The completion time for a tapestry is estimated to 50 cm² per month, depending on the complexity of the subject.

In the city of Tournai, it is traditional to work on a high loom (vertically). **The loom** on display in the auditorium belonged to a female liciere trained in tapestry at the Academy of Fine Arts. Many former students wove the cartoons entrusted to them by the artists at home and sometimes in association with some workshops.

Nowadays, the technique is still taught in Tournai (at the École des Arts, in evening classes) and is actively practised at the «**Ateliers Tournaisiens de Tapiserie**» (CRECIT, Province de Hainaut), the latest production facility still in business in Belgium.

Tapestry of the 15th and 16th century

During the period of 1440 and 1550, Tournai was a famous European silk city thanks to the quality of its production. **The collection of 11 tapestries conserved in TAMAT** is among the jewels of the city and is embodying a very unique collection in Belgium. Made using wool and silk threads, this collection illustrates the stylistic evolution from the Gothic style to the Renaissance one, through knightly, historical, allegorical and biblical subjects..

>> Information sheets on each tapestry are available. Please, do not hesitate to consult them.



Olga BOLDYREFF (Nantes (FR), 1957)

Les insaisissables, 2010

Crochet – Ball of cotton yarn, golden lurex and balls of crocheted threads

TAMAT's collection

The work of **Olga Boldyreff, Les insaisissables**, bears witness to a specific approach deeply imbued with Slavic culture. After being reunited with her family in Russia in 1976, the artist has been working on the question of identity. She employs unconventional techniques such as knitting, knitwear and, as in this specific case, crochet, which are used in installations tinged with a poetic and enigmatic atmosphere.

This **dress**, or textile sculpture, reflects the ambiguity of the visible and the invisible of appearance and reality. The environment made with golden spheres emphasizes the sacred connotation and connects it through centuries to the noble ladies depicted on the ancient tapestries that surround it.

The new tapestry

In the 1960s and 1970s, **Tapta Wierusz-Kowalski** was at the forefront of the rethinking of wallpaper in Belgium. After a stay in Africa, she made a mark with several innovative creations.

Her **Composition Verticale** appears as conventional based on the weaving of a few elements on a loom, but it leaves the wrap threads (vertical one) visible in black. Relief forms and golden strips are included in the weaving.



Tapta WIERUSZ-KOWALSKI (Koscian (PL), 1926 - Brussels (BE), 1997)

La sauvage 2, 1970

Horsehair and sisal
Woven by the artist

TAMAT's collection

In order to create **La sauvage 2**, the artist chooses to introduce original materials such as woven sisal strips ending in dangling cords and giving way to a bushy mass of hair in the centre. A raw and natural effect emerges from the work which tends to become detached from the wall.

All around the world, women creators stand out and become leaders of the «nouvelle tapisserie» or «art textile libre». This reconsideration of the tapestry regarding its textures, its materiality, and its technique, will finally lead **Tapta** to invest the space and architecture. During the year 1980, she definitively abandoned textiles in favour of rubber and neoprene, whose flexibility, line and monochrome black respond to her more radical approach, towards a flexible sculpture geared towards the essential.

Since 1976, she has taught the "sculpture souple" workshop at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Visuels or La Cambre in Brussels and was also **the artistic director of the research centre based into the TAMAT museum**. **Tapta** lefts her mark on multiple generation of designers, leading them to carry out researches and drive innovative use of materials and techniques towards an artistic language rotted in our contemporary period.

Questioning the tapestry and textile arts

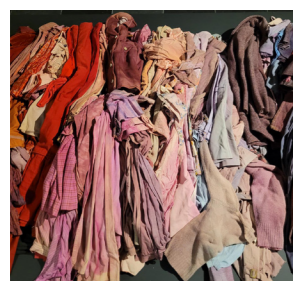
The artistic movement of the 1970s opened up a major field of exploration around textile art. In addition to the classic wall tapestry, the forms of expression become more diversified according to the personality of the artists, their research, reflexion and artistic experimentation. Among the artists from the 1980s presented here, several have been residents of the Research Centre based in the TAMAT Museum.

In the diptych *Punctuation*, **Brigitte Leclercq** uses traditional weaving techniques but the strips of linen and wool are folded and punctuated with squares of coloured threads. Her works, which are often monumental, are closely linked to architecture and marked by lines and geometric patterns that punctuate the surface of the piece.

Resident artist at TAMAT in 1984-1985.

Some artists explore path way resolutely removed from the craft and technical restrictions. **Monika Droste**, a visual artist, is deeply interested in the silhouettes and garments devoid of any human presence. In her work *Vêtements figés* (*Frozen Clothes*), textile pieces were salvaged, accumulated and compressed – an unprecedented approach at the time – but also arranged in a gradation of multiple shades, from darkest to lightest. This process brings together and associates these garments, reflecting life, its transition, memory and absence.

Resident artist at TAMAT in 1982-1983.



Monika DROSTE (Warschau (PL), 1958 – Antwerp (BE), 1998)

Vêtements figés, 1981

Accumulation of dyed clothes

Collection of the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles
– Deposit

With *Grand textile bleu et rouge*, **Juliette Rousseff** also explored weaving in strips and sewn in that case. This is made in jute, a very particular material coloured with pastels and natural pigments.

This approach evokes a period of trial and experiment : Indeed, **Juliette Rousseff** used and dyed unspun natural materials (sisal, jute, linen, hemp). Her weavings are intended as a “coded language to deciphered” : the artist plays with the symbolism, or even the ritual significance of the textile act, maintaining the hidden and mysterious side to her creation.



Juliette ROUSSEFF (Liège (BE), 1943)

Grand textile bleu et rouge, 1985

Low stringer – Pigments glued on weave and oil pastel
Woven by the artist

Collection of the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles
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Some works reflect the artists’ interest in experimental research into non-textile textures and materials that combine suppleness and fibre. Paper becomes a medium that is often worked, interpreted and transformed.

Influenced by the traditional techniques of West Africa, **Yolande Pistone** stitches together successive layers of paper coated with bitumen, in *Construction noire*, to obtain a black colour with matt or shiny effects. Once the whole has dried, certain areas are torn open to reveal the underlying colours and lights.

Artist in residence at TAMAT in 1987-1988.



Yolande PISTONE (Binche (BE), 1961)

Construction noire, 1988

Diptych – Coated cardboard and thread

Collection of the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles
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Lighthouse by the Latvian artist **Antra Augustinovica** reflects the use of coloured rolled paper, a traditional domestic technique reinterpreted in the service of a small-format way of working.

From its very beginning, TAMAT has been developing **a centre dedicated to experimentation** which has now become an annual residency programme for the selected group of artists. For one year, supported by artistic advisors, these artists are carrying out multi-disciplinary research, often linked in some way to textiles or the museum’s collections.

This is the case of **Olivier Reman**, a fashion design teacher at the ESA Saint-Luc School in Tournai, winner of the Hainaut province prize in 2017. Since 2018, he has been choose as **an artistic advisor for the research centre**.

Resident artist at TAMAT in 2014.



Olivier REMAN (Charleroi (BE), 1981)

Utopia, 2014

Crochet - Two-tone cotton twine

Collection of the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles
– Deposit

Tournai, his city of adoption, is a source of inspiration for his artistic practice thanks to its rich history and legacy. This textile model and its modules are a case in point. The two-tone system is deeply linked to the city and its waterways : blue and red symbolise the right and left banks of the Scheldt river, while also evoking the flow of blood under the action of the heart and its ventricles. The Scheldt has become an (un)structuring part of the city given that it divides Tournai into two banks; yet, Tournai would not be the city that we know today without it. A more poetic approach would reveal that “the blood is to rivers what ventricles are to banks”.

TAMAT is also :

- a conservation-restoration workshop open to the visitors during the week,
- a mediation service for the general public,
- a documentation centre open to artists, historians and students by appointment.

TAMAT

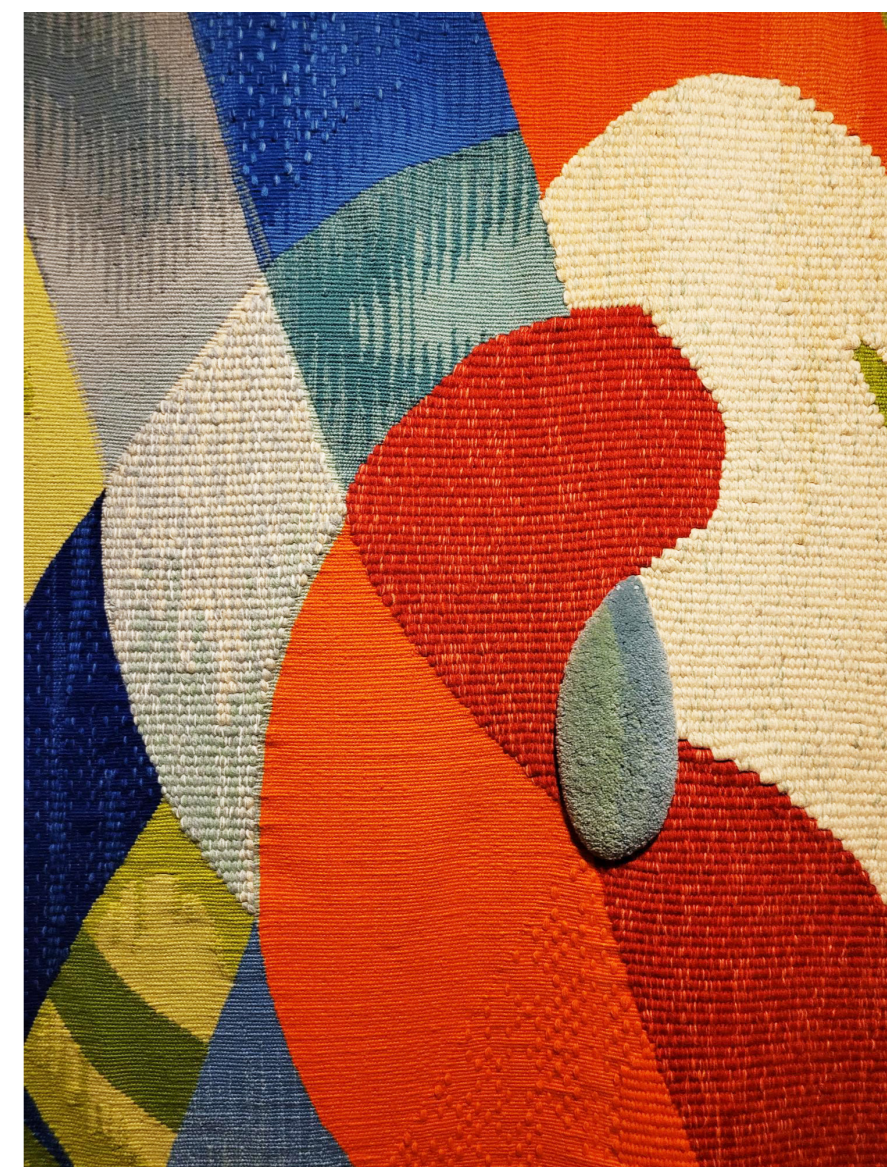
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Tournai, Territoire Textile Visitor’s guide

TAMAT is the Museum of Tapestry and Textile Arts into the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. Founded in 1981, the non-profit organisation’s (asbl) aim from the outset is to promote the art of tapestry, as well as contemporary textile design by welcoming each year several artists into the experimentation centre, making it a unique centre of textile creation in Belgium.

Through a selection of works from its collection, *Tournai, Territoire Textile*, demonstrates the importance of tapestry in Tournai from the Middle Ages to the present day. From the middle of the 15th century, the town was a renowned centre for the manufacture of tapestry throughout Europe and was also the heart of the renewal of the art of lice-making in Belgium in the immediate post-war period.

Five historical and thematic sections explore the evolution of tapestry and its changes from the 15th century to nowadays, illustrating the experimental research of artists who are challenging the codes of wall tapestry and firmly anchor their textile creations in contemporary art.



TAMAT
Musée de la Tapisserie et
des Arts Textiles de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles



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