



Le Corbusier Tapestry

Client Sydney Opera House
Services Textiles Conservation

Overview

When young Danish architect, Jorn Utzon, designed the Sydney Opera House, his vision also included plans for the art to be displayed within it. So, in 1958 he wrote to renowned French-Swiss architect, Le Corbusier, asking if he would like to collaborate, and the concept for the tapestry '*Les Des Sont Jetes*' (The Dice Are Cast) was born. By 1960, Le Corbusier had completed the tapestry and sent it to Utzon in Denmark.

Quite modern and abstract in design, the tapestry features large bold blocks of white, black and red, connected by a thin, meandering white line. Made of wool and measuring 2.18 x 3.55 metres, it is thought by some to represent Sydney Harbour, with a sailboat and Bennelong Point visible on the right-hand side.

The story doesn't quite end there. Utzon hung the tapestry in his dining room, and planned to bring it to Sydney once the building was complete. However, in 1966, construction delays and other controversies led him to resign from the Opera House project, and so the tapestry remained in Denmark. That is, until it was put up for auction in June 2015 after his death, and the Opera House purchased it for around A\$550,000.

Treatment

Conservation

Having hung in the Utzon family dining room for several decades, the piece was in need of cleaning and repair. And so, once it arrived back in Sydney, ICS was called upon to restore it. After initial surface cleaning, tests were carried out to ensure that the dye colours wouldn't run when the piece was submerged in water. A custom-made tub was then built to enable the washing, and the particular detergent and water used had to be carefully selected and mixed to ensure they had the right PH levels.

Display

ICS was also involved in the installation process – providing advice on the best type of display case and lighting for the tapestry, as well as physically hanging the piece in its new location in the Western Foyer of the Opera House.

More information

- Watch this You Tube video 'Sydney Opera House: Utzon/Le Corbusier tapestry' (Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwEZq1wq8wg>)



After treatment, installation



During treatment, washing



During treatment, drying



During treatment

- Read 'Sydney Opera House tapestry commissioned by Jorn Utzon arrives at its destination after 60 years', ABC News (Link: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-03-29/tapestry-jorn-utzon-planned-for-sydney-opera-house-reaches-walls/7283012>)
- Read 'When Utzon met Le Corbusier: Sydney Opera House unveils 'eye-catching' tapestry', The Guardian (Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/mar/29/le-corbusier-tapestry-finally-finds-its-home-on-sydney-opera-house-wall>)



After treatment, installation