



Frieze Masters 2017
Stand G3, 5 - 8 October 2017

Threads to Abstraction

200BC to 1960

Paul Hughes  FINE ARTS



“Astonishing Pattern. I am always a sucker for a great, old textile”

— Maria Balshaw, new director of the Tate Modern

We would like to thank everyone who visited our presentation ‘Threads to Abstraction’ at Frieze Masters as jointly curated by Sir Norman Rosenthal and Paul Hughes Fine Arts. We had a most enthusiastic and overwhelmingly positive response from our audience to the display and as a direct result are delighted to announce that the show has initiated further serious interest for larger exhibitions in a renowned museum and private foundations, thus realising a continuation of this story, further details on these developments and more in our forthcoming newsletter.

We are honoured that works placed at Frieze Masters have found new homes in major collections from South America, Europe, China and Japan as a direct reflection on the quality and calibre of the Frieze Masters staff, marketing and their achievements to set extraordinary museum standards of its gallery selection and vetting procedures, which attracts the world's most focused and discerning collectors.

Social media was also buzzing with endorsements and inclusions from amongst others the new director of the Tate Modern Maria Balshaw, and Alice Black — London's most dynamic and emerging gallerist. Please check out more of our Instagram sharing at the end of this letter.

THREADS TO ABSTRACTION

200BC TO 1960AD

“All art was once contemporary.”

At Frieze Masters Paul Hughes Fine Arts presented a museum quality collection of Andean Pre-Colombian textiles for sale. These sumptuous antiquities date from 200BC to 1500AD and are the fruits of 35 years collecting.

Andean Pre-Columbian Textiles are one of the seminal yet little known influences to a Pan-American prototype of abstraction in the pre and post-war era, innovative art schools such as the Bauhaus, Black Mountain College and museums collections at the Natural History and the Museum of Primitive Art in NYC where also instrumental, dealers such as Betty Parsons and Andre Emmerich also played a pivotal role in these cross fertilisations of visual arts culture.

The extent to which African and Oceanic tribal art have nourished and influenced the Cubist, Surrealist and later schools of modern art is well known and documented. Less known or published is the impact and connections of Pre-Columbian art in the context of modern artistic developments apart from ancient Mexican architectural and sculptural influences on works of, Frank Lloyd Wright, Diego Rivera and Henry Moore.

Threads to Abstraction will present visual comparative narratives illustrating the role that Andean Pre-Columbian Textiles arts have played a significant and major part in opening the windows to new developments of Abstraction in the 20th century. Challenging the notion that abstraction is a unique development of the modern West, this collection reveals its connections and deep roots in Andean Pre-Columbian

Textiles arts, it further illustrates the threads that link and aesthetic kinship in the work of twentieth-century artists such as Joaquín Torres García, Josef and Anni Albers, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, Adolph Gottlieb, and other important artists related to the Abstract Expressionists, Colour Field movement and later stylistic developments such as Minimalism.

The Paul Hughes Andean textile collection comprises over 35 works collected over the last 35 years and has been exhibited and published widely. His focus in collecting is the relationships to be found in the ancient and the modern:

“all art was once contemporary.”

The textile arts of the ancient Andes are one of the most important contributions to the world's artist legacy combined with a technical virtuosity that's hardly surpassed, these artists were deeply aware of their reciprocal relationship with nature and their gods as cosmic forces, counting on the Upper World and Lower Interior World to heed their call. They believed that divine response to their invocations was contingent upon a display of respect and veneration by mortals. It is for this reason that such exquisite textiles, glowing with luminescent colours and vibrant designs, radiate a profound faith and an exquisite transcendental sense of unique splendour.



Miniature Feather Textile

Late Huari Culture Circa, 1000AD, 40 x 50 cm

ANNI & JOSEF ALBERS



Josef Albers

*Homage to the square:
Diffused 1969, 121 x 121 cm*

Anni and Josef first encountered Andean Pre-Columbian Textiles circa 1922 at what was then the Volkerkunde Museum in Berlin, the study of Andean Pre-Columbian Textiles was incorporated as part of the weaving curriculum at the Bauhaus school which Anni developed with her mentor Paul Klee.

The influence of Central and South America on the practice of this couple's work is tremendous, they have both emphatically expressed their gratitude in that their art would not have been conceivable without their encounter with the southern continent. Anni Albers's weavings, drawings, and painted studies demonstrate her appreciation and in-depth knowledge of Andean Pre-Columbian textiles. Similarly, the paintings and photographs by Josef Albers testify to the way he developed his special sense of colour in Latin America, and how he continued to further inform his own independent concept of spatial photography.



Tunic Segment (detail), Huari culture
Circa 800AD, Southern Andes, 96 x 194 cm,



Left: Paul Klee (detail)
New Harmony, 1936, Oil on canvas,
93.6 x 66.3 cm

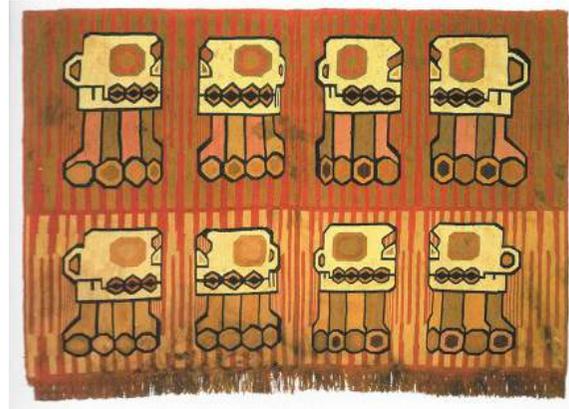
In 1933 they both accepted teaching positions at Black Mountain College. Later making frequent trip to Latin America, collecting ancient art from many regions and spending a year in Peru in 1953 where they further formed a museum quality collection of Andean Pre-Columbian Textiles that remain at the Albers Foundation and at the Yale University Art Gallery Museum. The Alberses shared a kinship akin to an emotional thread with these anonymous ancient Andean weavers, some of whom lived over 2000 years ago, because of a shared interest in aesthetic composition, colour values and virtuosity of technical skill creating resonances between their collecting and art-making disciplines. The list of their student from Black Mountain College and their relationship to the Abstract Expressionists and Colour Field movements is extensive, Willem and Elaine de Kooning, Robert Rauschenberg, Jacob Lawrence, Cy Twombly, Kenneth Noland, Franz Kline.



Above: Anni Albers
Wallhanging, 1925,
236 x 96 cm



Tunic Frontal, Huari Culture
Circa 800AD, Southern Andes, 116 x 116 cm,



Tunic Segment
Huari Culture. Circa 800AD. 92x78cm. Southern Andes.



Torres Garcia
Composition, 1931, Oil on canvas, 64.7 x 54.6 cm

JAOQUIN TORRES GARCIA

Torres Garcia (TG) plays another pivotal role to assimilate Andean Textiles into his work and teaching of Universal Constructivism, his first exposure to these textiles is in 1922 at the Natural History Museum in NYC and then in Paris at the 1928 exhibition Ancient American Art at the Louvre museum, which his son Augusto worked on.

He was also the founding member of the Paris artists led group “Cercle et Carre” in 1929 where he gave talks on Andean Pre- Columbian art, other notable members are, Hans Arp, Wassily Kandinsky, Le Corbusier, Fernand Léger, Piet Mondrian, Kurt Schwitters, Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Sonia Delunay.

Returning to Montevideo in 1932 he founded the Esculo Del Sur and later Talliers de Torres Garcia. The school went on frequent field trips to the Andean regions with his student Francisco Matto who created an outstanding museum collection of Andean Pre-Columbian art and textiles.



Coca Inkuna Ceremonial Cloth
Inca Culture, Circa 1400AD, Southern Andes, 56 x 60 cm,



Tomas Maldonado
composition 208, 1951, 102 x 101 cm

Torres Garcia's schools played a major role in the development of Geometric Abstraction in South America with many of his students returning to Argentina and from there to Brazil to develop their own schools and styles, Tomas Maldonado (Arg) and Lygia Clark (Brz) being the leading exponents. At Garcia's posthumous solo exhibition in New York in 1950 at the Sidney Janis gallery Barnett Newman visited nearly every single day to extoll the virtues of Garcia's works to fellow artists.



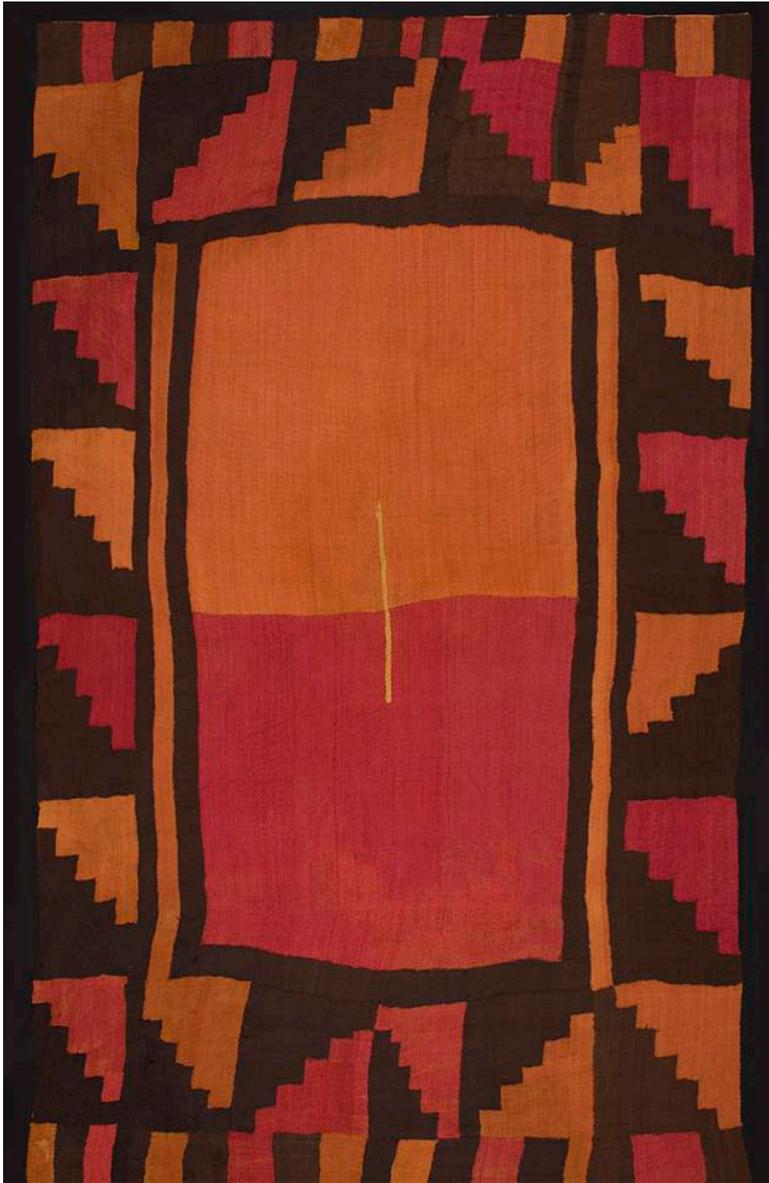
Tunic (detail), Huari culture
Circa 600AD, Southern Andes, 100 x 115 cm,



Barnett Newman
Adam, 1951-2, Oil on canvas,
242 x 202 cm

BETTY PARSONS

In 1947 Parsons opened her own gallery and represented Newman, Pollock, Still, Rothko, Ellsworth Kelly, Richard Tuttle, Robert Rauschenberg, Jack Youngerman, Hans Hofmann, Ad Reinhardt and Agnes Martin. Parsons was an astute collector and promoter of Ancient arts of the Americas, often creating a dialog with Pre-Columbian art and her own gallery artists, Barnett Newman curated and wrote the catalog introductions for two of these exhibitions.



Tuni, Huari Culture
Circa 800AD, Southern Andes, 251 x 155 cm



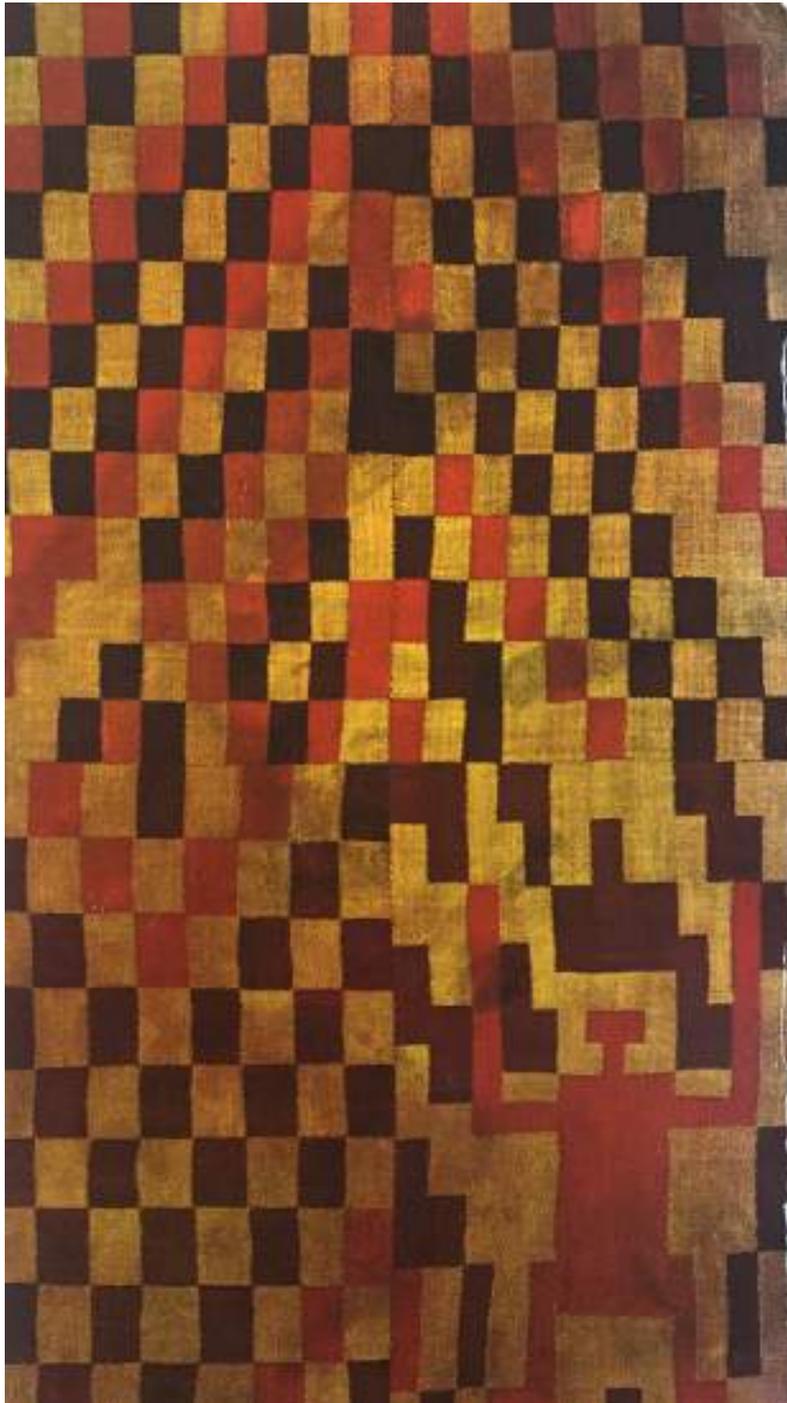
Mark Rothko
Orange And Yellow, 1956, Oil on canvas, 180.3 x 231 cm

ANDRE EMMERICH GALLERY

NYC AND ZURICH

Andre Emmerich is the gallery most associated with the Colour Field movement and juxtaposing exhibitions of ancient textiles with his gallery artists works. His interest in publishing and exhibiting of Pre- Columbian Andean art dates back to the early 1950's. Anni and Josef Albers were frequent visitors and acquired many works for their own collections directly from Emmerich.

So we see a clear line of exhibitions from the Sidney Janis gallery, to Betty Parsons and lastly to Emmerich, these exhibitions begin from the early 1940's, all of the major ABEX and Colour Field artists had representation from one or another of these galleries. In addition to Colour Field painters like Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland and Helen Frankenthaler, he represented, among others, David Hockney, Sam Francis, Anthony Caro, Al Held, Herbert Ferber, Karel Appel, Pierre Alechinsky and John Hoyland.



*Peru, Catalog Front Cover,
Andre Emmerich Gallery (NYC), 1969*



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