

SNO 147

15 SEP–14 OCT 2018

MARGARET GRAFTON With WENDY PARAMOR

CLOCKWISE FROM GALLERY ENTRANCE

1. *Untitled 2002*
90 x 95 cm
copper, aluminium, polyester cord
2. *Triangle 2003*
1450mm x 2230mm
copper, reflective tape, polyester cord
3. *Untitled 2003*
840 x 840mm
copper, polyester cord
4. *Untitled 2002*
870 x 1230mm
aluminium, paint, polyester cord
5. *Untitled 2004*
530 x 2000mm
aluminium, wool, ribbon
6. *Lisboa III C. 1968* (Grafton / Paramor)
1390 x 1400mm
wool
(Loan courtesy of Luke Paramor)
7. *Untitled 1997*
4 panels, 600 x 2500 each
wool
8. *The Third Day 2003*
1200 x 1200mm
copper, aluminium, polyester cord
9. *Untitled c. 1969*
400 x 800mm
wool

Thanks to Luke Paramor for the loan of the tapestry work *LISBOA III* woven by Grafton and based on a painting by Paramor.

Margaret Grafton (1930-2004) was born in England and studied at the Wolverhampton College of Art (1947-51). She exhibited with the London Group (1949) and was a scenic artist in England and Sweden (1951-56). Grafton came to Australia in 1956 and began making tapestries the following year. Grafton has completed many important commissions including for the Tocal Agricultural College altar tapestry, the Wentworth Hotel ballroom coats of arms tapestries, St Vincent's Hospital, NSW Parliament and the Federal Court. Grafton exhibited regularly throughout her career including at the Central St Galley and Art Gallery of NSW Traveling Exhibition among others, her work is held in the collections of The National Gallery of Australia, state galleries, museums, private collections, including in Malaysia and the USA.

From the outset Grafton's practice was experimental in design and technique, well suited to the challenge of the architectural project of developing original interpretations of site, context and subject. Grafton worked closely with architects including Philip Cox, Andrew Andersons and Peter Johnson. The 1964 Tocal tapestry commissioned by Cox - who has referred to this work as 'almost a State Bayeux' - combines early Egyptian weaving technique with the architectural and modern Protestant iconography.

Further exploration into materials led to the use of aluminium foil in combination with traditional wool for the Federal Court tapestries in 1976-77. She returned to the use of metal in early 2000 supplementing other materials of wool, nylons, plastics, copper and appropriately, the reactive elements of acids, inks and varnishes. Always inquiring and exploring, Grafton scored, etched, sketched and alchemised, always towards the texture and light of surfaces allied with the archaic, the personal, the political and crucially, the porous divide between these categories.

Philosophy became a strong influence on Margaret Grafton, not merely as a discipline of inquiry but in her life as a weaver, completing a doctorate in philosophy in 1999 that interrogated deconstruction and difference in view of her practice and feminism.

Whether a wall-sized heraldic tapestry or variegated metal weaving, each strand and strip links not only with the ancient history of tapestry making she thoughtfully and passionately evoked, but also with a radicality of our time.

"Patient and continuous weaving, quiet, small in extent, direct apprehension of reality in a difficult medium. The sober weaver's mind reflects, says no and no and no to elaboration yet the mystery of the random enters. Kinetic energies come into play; rhythms of the hand weave and coalesce with the just beyond of what has been expressed. The object lives." Margaret Grafton, 2003.

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