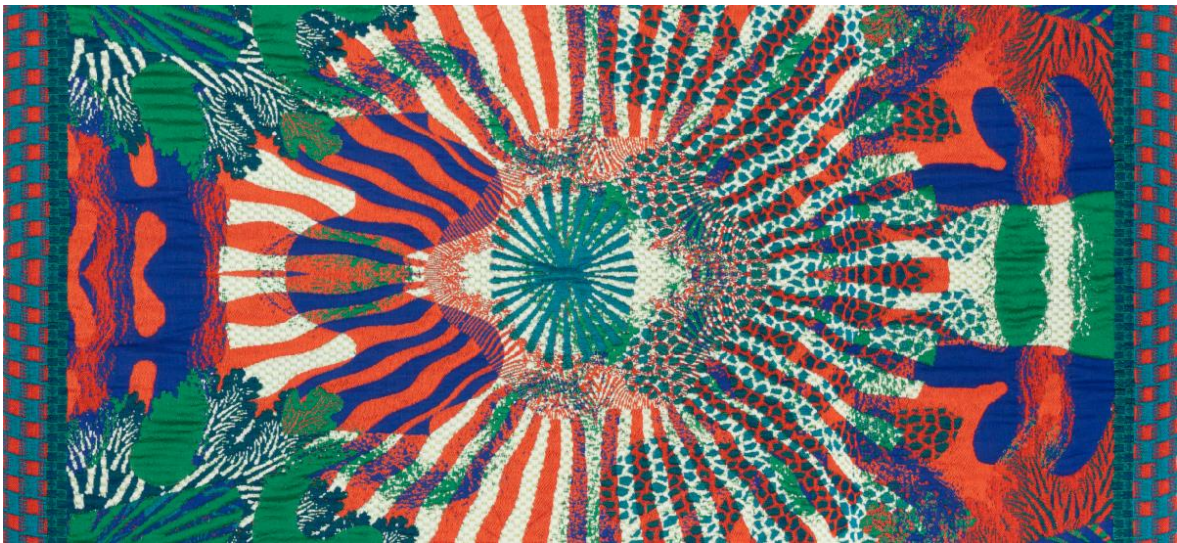


Press release, April 2023

Kustaa Saksi's textile works balance between design and art – works created with the jacquard weaving technique are part of a broad international phenomenon where design traditions are renewed



Kustaa Saksi: Gilgamesh (2021) Mythology series. Photo Jussi Puikkonen

Kustaa Saksi: In the Borderlands  
Design Museum 05.05–15.10

**Press event on Thursday 04 May at 9 a.m.**  
RSVP [martha@juni.fi](mailto:martha@juni.fi)/tel. +358 (0)40 528 4818

The international acclaim of the Finnish design brand is still largely connected to functionality of design products. And although textile art has a longstanding and valuable history in Finland, it may come as a surprise to many that one of the most interesting Finnish artists and designers of the 2020s working internationally focuses specifically on woven textiles.

The main exhibition of Design Museum's 150th anniversary year, *Kustaa Saksi: In the Borderlands*, opens on May 5th. The exhibition offers a comprehensive look at the past decade of Kustaa Saksi's work with textile art and jacquard weaving technique. New works by Saksi, including the seven-metre long tapestries *Forest Boy* and *Ideal Fall*, will also be featured in the exhibition.

Saksi's tapestries are produced in limited editions, and he belongs among the surge of modern designers who seek to revolutionize woven textile traditions by testing new kinds of techniques and visuality. Design pieces that are somewhere between art and

design are typical of the internationally influential genre of collectible design. The term of collectible design often refers to unique, at least partly hand-made pieces that combine art and design.

"Saksi's textile works combine the qualities of a functional product and piece of art. Saksi is particularly fascinated by weaves and the various twists and twines that are an inherent part of the textile techniques. One typical starting point for his works are stories. Stories often have plot twists, which resemble with their intricate turns the complexity and precision of weaving. Saksi's tapestries weave together stories and techniques as well as art and design," says Suvi Saloniemä, Chief Curator at the Design Museum.

Saksi has collaborated with TextielLab, a part of the Tillburg TextielMuseum in the Netherlands, for ten years. TextielLab describes itself as a place where art, craft and design meet. When Saksi first presented his designs at the textile laboratory, the initial response was that they were too complex for production. With further experiments and research, technical solutions were eventually found.

For Saksi, the woven fabric is a medium that combines digital and analogue working methods. He first draws his ideas using a computer or on paper, and the sketch is later transferred into a textile form using the jacquard weaving technique, first invented in the 19th century. The jacquard technique can be referred to as one of the early precursors to the computer. It was the first mechanized technique which enabled the transfer of information about a particular pattern to a weaving machine with the help of a punched cylinder, to eventually become a piece of textile.

In his works, Saksi combines natural materials, such as mohair, alpaca wool and cotton with phosphor, metal threads and other synthetic materials. He is renowned for his rich and multi-layered visual world that often depicts the moments between reality and illusion. His works often feature imagery associated with brain function twilight zones, such as migraines with aura or hypnopompic hallucinations.

"I am inspired by the repeating patterns in nature and mathematical chaos, I get immersed in them and attempt to understand their essence. Afterwards, I simplify and modify them to include them into a visual world of my own" Saksi says.

Kustaa Saksi: In the Borderlands

Curators: Ksenia Kaverina and Sara Martinsen  
Exhibition design: Lauri Johansson  
Visual identity of the exhibition: Kobra Agency

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