

## **GUNTA STÖLZL AND JOHANNES ITTEN: TEXTILE UNIVERSES**

SOPHIE TAEUBER: *TEXTILE REFORMER* (cabinet exhibition)

17 August – 1 December 2024, Kunstmuseum Thun

Media release

## **The Kunstmuseum Thun is transformed into a textile universe**

*In the opulent exhibition **GUNTA STÖLZL AND JOHANNES ITTEN: TEXTILE UNIVERSES**, on view from 17 August to 1 December 2024, the Kunstmuseum Thun explores the close connections between the Bauhaus masters Johannes Itten (b. 1888 in Süderen-Linden/Bernese Oberland, d. 1967 in Zurich) and Gunta Stölzl (b. 1897 in Munich, d. 1983 in Männedorf CH). The focus is on biographical overlaps, their lifelong, collegial relationship and their pioneering influence on Swiss textile art. A cabinet exhibition will also show the early work of Sophie Taeuber.*

The Bauhaus in Weimar, 1919: This is where the Swiss painter and art theorist Johannes Itten met the German weaver and textile designer Gunta Stölzl for the first time. She was head of a weaving class and thus a representative of the “women’s art” that was so undervalued at the time in a male-dominated environment; he was a teacher and a great supporter of Stölzl’s department. Itten saw potential that was later confirmed when the textile class ultimately developed into the only commercially profitable department at the Bauhaus.

A few years after Itten’s return to Switzerland, Gunta Stölzl emigrated to Zurich in 1931. While her former colleague ran the School of Decorative Arts in Zurich from 1938 to 1953 and the Zurich Textile School (today the Swiss Textile School) from 1943 to 1960, Stölzl joined forces with Bauhaus graduates Gertrud Preiswerk and Heinrich-Otto Hürlimann to found the company S-P-H-Stoffe. She afterwards ran a hand-weaving business for three decades and then finally devoted herself to her own art until her death, producing works that included a number of remarkable tapestries.

It is a little-known fact that Johannes Itten, whose early artwork was the subject of a special exhibition at the Kunstmuseum Thun in 2020, also delved extensively into the field of textile design. The current exhibition, comprising some 200 exhibits, thus offers an ideal opportunity to rediscover Itten as a textile designer. This pairing with Gunta Stölzl, considered a “classic textile artist”, showcases key works from international museums and private collections. With their innovative ornamental and textile forms, avant-garde materials and textile structures, and experimental use of photography, Stölzl and Itten wrote textile history and laid the foundations for Switzerland to develop into an important centre for modern textile art.

The exhibition also features selective scenographic interventions by the contemporary Swiss textile designer Annina Arter (b. 1987, Kathmandu).

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In parallel, the **cabinet exhibition SOPHIE TAEUBER: TEXTILE REFORMER** will be shown in the projection room of the **Kunstmuseum Thun**. The show looks at the early textile work of Sophie Taeuber (1889–1943), with a focus on newly discovered bobbin lace patterns for the cottage industry in the Bernese Oberland. In 1915, Sophie Taeuber supported the successful project “Klöppelindustrie” (bobbin lace industry) initiated by Alice Frey-Amsler (later Taeuber’s fellow teacher at the School of Applied Arts in Zurich) to provide a better income for women in the Lauterbrunnen Valley by reviving the local lace-making tradition.

Co-curators for Stölzl/Itten: Helen Hirsch (Director of the Kunstmuseum Thun), Prof. Dr. Christoph Wagner (Chair of the University of Regensburg / Member of the Board of Trustees of the Johannes Itten Foundation in Bern)

Co-curators for Sophie Taeuber: Medea Hoch (art historian) and Gabriele Lutz (art historian, curator)

#### Publications:

Gunta Stölzl & Johannes Itten: *Textile Universes* (in German and English)

With texts by Helen Hirsch (foreword), C. Berchtold, M. Deckers, A. Schieck, C. Wagner

ISBN: 978-3-7774-4298-3 / 978 3777442983 / 9783777442983

Hirmer Verlag, Munich

Sophie Taeuber. *Textilreformerin* (in German only)

With texts by Gabriele Lutz, Medea Hoch

ISBN: 978-3-03942-232-6

Scheidegger & Spiess Verlag, Zürich

#### Media conference

On Thursday, 15 August, at 11:00 a.m., a media conference will be held, attended by all of the curators, followed by a tour of the exhibition. Please register in advance. The media conference will be filmed and posted the same afternoon on our YouTube channel.

#### Opening

Friday, 16 August 2024

- from 6:30 p.m. at the Thunerhof
- 7:00 p.m.: speeches
- Followed by aperitifs and music

#### Media contact for interview requests or accreditations

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## Image material

Images are available [here](#) for free download. When using the image material, we kindly request that you always include the information below:



**Gunta Stölzl, *Getürmt***  
1973  
wool, cotton, needlepoint  
240 x 110 cm  
Municipality of Küsnacht ZH



**Gunta Stölzl, *Decoration fabric no. 539***  
1926  
cotton, viscose, chenille, plain weave  
227.5 x 89.5 cm  
Die Neue Sammlung – The Design Museum, Munich



**Gunta Stölzl, "Landitasche" bag for the Swiss National Exhibition (Landi)**  
1939  
rib weave cotton  
20 x 24 cm  
Private collection



**Johannes Itten, *Rug***  
ca. 1920  
knotted wool, Smyrna technique  
133 x 142 cm  
Zurich University of the Arts / Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / Decorative Arts Collection

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**Johannes Itten, *Picture Rug***

1924

wool, knotted by Lucia Stehen

235 x 100 x 1.5 cm

Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe



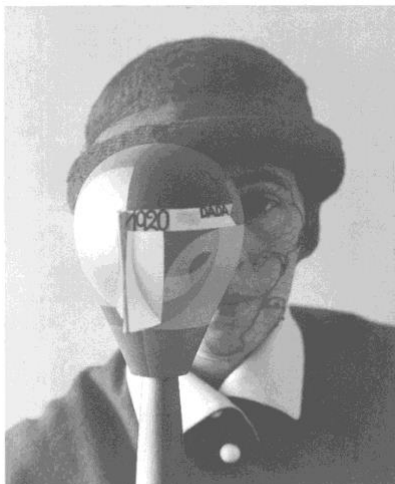
**Johannes Itten, *Woman with the Birds***

1943

oil on canvas

50 x 65 cm

Private collection



**Nic Aluf, *Sophie Taeuber with Dada Head***

1920

vintage gelatin silver print

11.7 x 9.6 cm

Stiftung Art e.V. Berlin

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**Sophie Taeuber with embroidery hoop**

Trogen, 1905

vintage gelatin silver print

6.5 x 5.7 cm

Private collection