



"The Fishing Rooster" Tapestry by Jean Lurçat

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**SKU**

LU654316561712



## Details

Jean Lurçat ( 1892–1966) was a French artist noted for his role in the revival of contemporary tapestry. He was also a painter and ceramist.

### Biography

He was born in Bruyères, Vosges, France. After completing his secondary education in Épinal, he enrolled at La Faculté des sciences de Nancy to study medicine. He went to Switzerland and Germany (Munich) and in leaving his educational path, he went to the workshop of Victor Prouvé, the head of the École de Nancy.

### Painting and the War

In 1912, Jean Lurçat moved to Paris with his brother, André. He enrolled at the Académie Colarossi, then at the workshop of the engraver Bernard Naudin. He met painters such as Matisse, Cézanne, and Renoir.

In 1917, Jean Lurçat made his first tapestries: Filles Vertes (Green Girls) and Soirée dans Grenade (Evening in Grenada). His second exhibition took place in Zürich in the same year. In 1920, he traveled extensively to Berlin, Munich, Rome, and Naples. Then he took up residence in Paris with Marthe Hennebert. It was she who wove two tapestries: Pêcheur (Fisherman) and Piscine (Swimming pool). He unveiled in the same year, at Le Salon des Indépendants, two tapestries and four paintings.

In 1921, Jean Lurçat met Louis Marcoussis and discovered Picasso and Max Jacob.

He created decorations and costumes for Le spectacle de la Compagnie Pitoeff. The following year, he made his fifth



tapestry, *Le Cirque* (the circus). His first personal exhibition took place in Paris in April and September. He made a large decoration on a wall (no longer visible today) at the Castle of Villeflix. Then he went to Berlin, where he met Ferruccio Busoni.

During the next two years, Lurçat resumed travelling. In 1923 he went to Spain; in 1924 he went to North Africa, the Sahara, Greece and Asia Minor. He devoted a portion of the year 1924 to the making of his sixth tapestry, *Les arbres* (The trees). On 15 December, Lurçat married Marthe Hennebert and traveled to Scotland in 1925, then to Spain and northern Africa. Upon his return, he took up residence at La Villa Seurat. He participated in several expositions with Raoul Dufy, Marcoussis, Laglenne, and others. He revealed, at the home of Jeanne Bucher, elements of decoration (carpets and paintings) of *Le Vertige*, a film by Marcel L'Herbier. In 1926, he exhibited in Paris and Brussels and participated in collective exhibitions in Vienna, Paris, and Antwerp. His fame began with several articles written about him.

#### Years of glory

With the company of Marthe, he departed in 1927 for the Orient and spent the summer in Greece and Turkey. He decorated the lounge of the David-Weill family. There are four tapestries in the development and implementation of *L'Orage* (The Storm), for Georges Salles (Musée National d'Art Moderne, National Museum of Modern Art). He returned to Greece and Italy (Rome) in 1928 before embarking in October for the United States of America, for his first exhibition in New York. He spent 1929 in Marco. In 1930 he had exhibitions in Paris, London, New York, and Chicago; he created nine drypoint illustrations for *Les Limbes* (The limbo) by Charles-Albert Cingria; and he made another visit to America. He wrote several articles about painting and reduced his production of pictures.

In December 1932, Lurçat participated in the exhibition *Sélections*, alongside Matisse, Picasso, Braque, Derain, and Raoul Dufy, which was organized in New York by the Valentine Gallery. Being aligned with the far left, he often blended his political opinions with his art from then on. In 1933, he was living in New York. He created the decoration and the costumes for the *Jardin Public* (Public Garden), a ballet by Leonid Massine. 1933 also saw his first tapestry sewn at Aubusson, following the new and revolutionary technique that he developed.

#### Lurçat and the revival of French tapestry

To fully appreciate and understand the works of Jean Lurçat, one must view them in the context of the history of tapestry, particularly the decline of its existence during the Renaissance. It was during this time that tapestry was somewhat reinvented, with traditional techniques being reevaluated in the context of likening tapestry to paintings by artists such as Raphael. Jean Lurçat is mainly responsible for its revival in the 20th century when he redefined the importance of designing tapestry in a way that embraced the integrity of authentic tapestry from the Middle Ages, inspiring artists like Picasso to acquire the skills to design for tapestry.[1]

#### Expositions in the USSR

In 1934, Lurçat returned to New York, where he participated in the creation of new decorations and costumes for a choreography by Balanchine, which he unveiled in Chicago and Philadelphia. Then he returned to Paris and Vevey for the summer. At the end of summer, he departed for Moscow, where he had an exhibition at the Musée Occidental (Western Museum), followed by one at the museum in Kiev. In 1935, he painted the *Dynamiteros* in Spain, drawing inspiration from the revolution and the Spanish Civil War. In Paris, he participated in the activities of the Association of Revolutionary Authors and Artists. Then, he followed, with Malraux and Aragon, the *Journées d'Amité pour l'Union Soviétique* (The Journeys of Friendship for the Soviet Union). In 1936, he exhibited in London and released his first tapestry, made at La Manufacture des Gobelins (The Gobelins Tapestry Manufactory, Paris), *Les Illusions d'Icare* (The Illusions of Icare).

#### Vision of the apocalypse

In 1936, Jean Lurçat was inspired when he saw the tapestry *L'Apocalypse* (The Apocalypse), which was woven in the 14th century. In 1938, *Moisson* was sewn. In 1939, he exhibited in New York and Paris. In September, he took up residence in



Aubusson with Gromaire and Dubreuil to renovate the art of tapestry, which at the time had fallen to a low point. His innovative technique used a simplified palette and robust weaving at a broad point. During this period, he abandoned oil painting in favour of poster paints. The Musée National d'Art Moderne (National Museum of Modern Art) acquired Jardin des Coqs (Garden of Roosters) and L'Homme aux Coqs (The Man of the Roosters).

#### Legacy

Lurçat died on 6 January 1966 in Saint-Paul de Vence. During the 1980s, his widow Simone established the Musée Jean Lurçat de Saint-Laurent les Tours and the Musée Jean Lurçat et de la Tapisserie contemporaine. She bequeathed many of his works to posterity.[3]

REFERENCE NUMBER: LU654316561712

PERIOD: 1960-1969

CONDITION: Excellent

MEASUREMENTS: Height: 29.75" Width: 22" Depth: 2"

COUNT: 1

MATERIAL: Tapestry

CREATOR: Jean Lurçat