



Anna Torma
Fabula

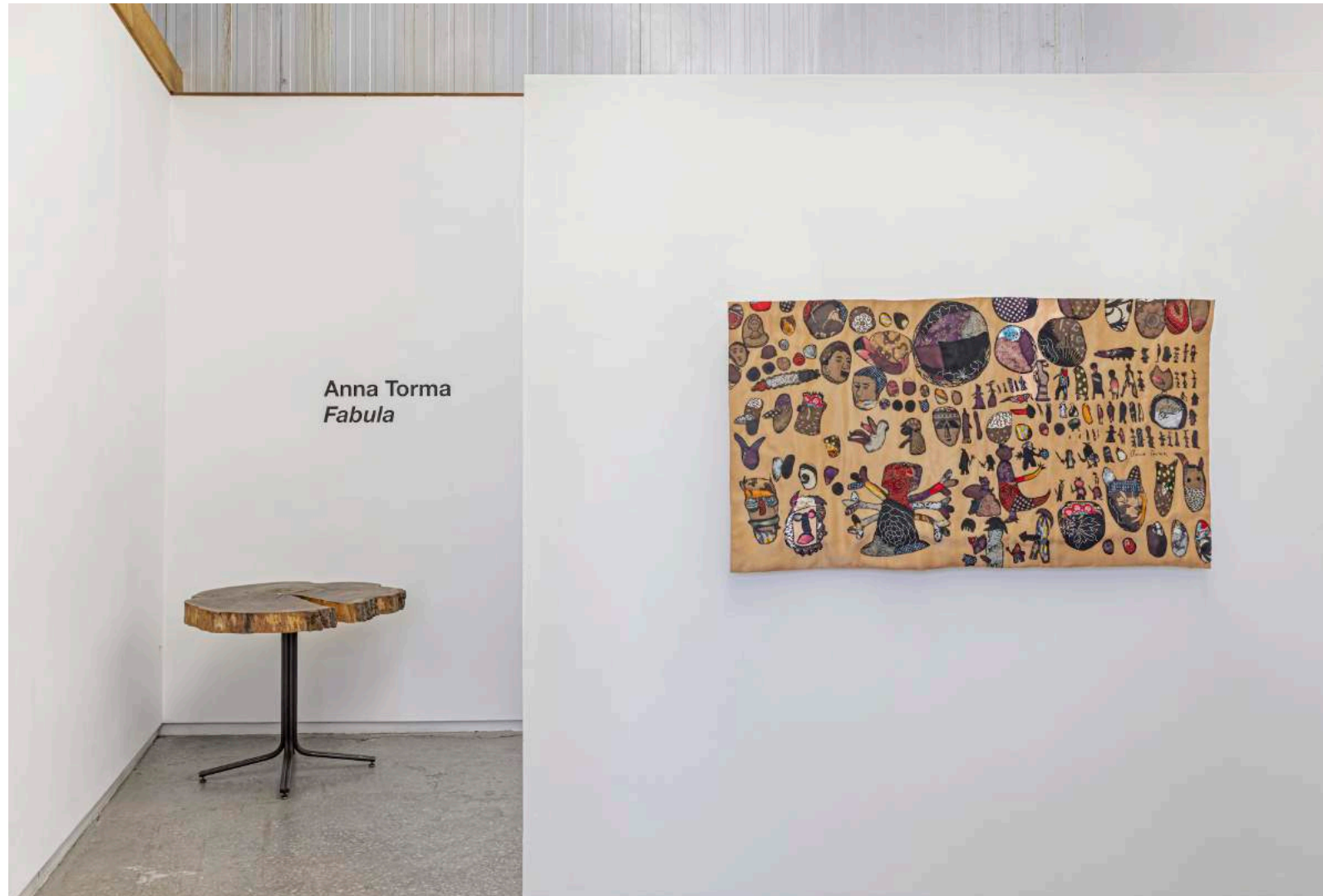
25 May - 1 July, 2023

Clint Roenisch Gallery

AT 23

*The stitching itself must be my language, the first—the
cosy one—similar to my Hungarian.*

- Anna Torma



Anna Torma was born in 1952 in Tarnaors, Hungary and graduated with a degree in Textile Art and Design from the Hungarian University of Applied Arts, Budapest, in 1979. She immigrated to Canada in 1988 and has lived and worked in Baie Verte, New Brunswick since 2002. In mounting Torma's extraordinary 2018 show at the Esker Foundation, curator Shauna Thompson noted, "As a descendant of generations of skilled needleworkers and embroiderers, Anna Torma produces work that is both rooted in a deep Hungarian textile tradition and is also part of a vibrant contemporary practice connected to radical feminist avant-garde movements of the 1960s and 70s, which reclaimed craft and fibre-based work as urgent and political fine art practices."



Masks
2022

Textile collage and hand embroidery on 2 layers of silk fabrics, silk threads, cotton batting; unique
29 x 52 inches (73 x 132 cm)
\$6,000 plus tax

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Dance

2023

Textile collage, hand sewing and embroidery on 2 layers of silk fabrics, silk thread; unique
35 x 46 inches (89 x 117 cm)
\$6,000 plus tax



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Abandoned Details VIII

2023

Hand embroidery with silk threads on 3 layers of
linen fabrics, cotton flannel batting; unique

51 x 51 inches (130 x 130 cm)

\$10,000 plus tax

SOLD

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Torma has described herself as a "spiritual keeper of memories" and (rightly) believes that "there are endless stories in a little piece of fabric". Her evocative tapestries are vivid, teeming repositories of a life being fully lived, remembered and reimagined through her practice. Torma also draws upon Hungarian folklore, science, ancient mythology, the splendour and fertility of the natural world, family history and domestic life, the fantastical drawings of children, Medieval tapestry, Art Brut and folk art, to name but a few of her sources. "For me, it has always been compelling to observe how seemingly different kinds and forms of knowledge interact with each other. I see similarities, for example, between the explanatory drawings used by young students who struggle to understand and make sense of the world, and a microbiologist's research for virus solutions, and between a child's images and those from myth and legend. These convergences and the infinite hope and dialogue they offer inform much of my work."



Children

hope

for

Child

Children

at 22

at 22

at 22

The recipient of many grants and awards in Canada and abroad, Torma is a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, a recipient of the New Brunswick Lieutenant-Governor's Award for High Achievement in Visual Arts, and the Strathbutler Award from the Sheila Hugh Mackay Foundation. In 2020 Torma won the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts – Saidye Bronfman Award. This award recognizes exceptional artists who have shaped the field of craft in Canada. Torma has exhibited her work internationally and is represented in many public collections, including: the Museum of Arts and Design, New York; RBC; Owens Art Gallery, Sackville; La Peau de l'Ours, Montreal; Foreign Affairs Art Collection, Ottawa; MSVU Art Gallery, Halifax; New Brunswick Art Bank, Fredericton; and Mint Museum of Craft and Design, Charlotte, North Carolina.



Fabula

2022

Textile collage, hand sewing and embroidery on 2 layers of silk fabrics, silk thread; unique

Triptych: 70 x 44 inches (177 x 112 cm) each; 70 x 132 in total (177 x 335 cm)

\$24,000 plus tax



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Still Life With Dragons, I

2023

Textile collage and hand embroidery on linen
fabric, silk threads, cotton batting; unique

39 x 43 inches (100 x 110 cm)

\$6,000 plus tax



Still Life With Dragons, II

2023

Textile collage and hand embroidery on linen
fabric, silk threads, cotton batting; unique

39 x 43 inches (100 x 110 cm)

\$6,000 plus tax



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Puppet

2023

Textile collage and hand embroidery
on linen fabric, silk threads, cotton
batting; unique

8 x 11 inches (20 x 28 cm)

\$1,600 plus tax

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Still Life With Cats

2019

Textile collage and hand embroidery on linen fabric,
silk threads, cotton batting; unique

32 x 32 inches (81 x 81 cm)

\$5,500 plus tax





Target

2023

Textile collage and hand embroidery, using digital prints on linen fabrics, silk threads, 2 layers of linen, cotton batting; unique
24 x 75 inches (62 x 190 cm)
\$10,000 plus tax

Formula 1

2021

Hand embroidery with wool and silk threads on 3
layers of linen fabrics, cotton batting; unique
45 x 45 inches (114 x 114 cm)
\$9,500 plus tax



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Anna Torma: Book of Abandoned Details

Esker Foundation, Calgary

May 26 - September 2, 2018

As a descendant of generations of skilled needleworkers and embroiderers, Anna Torma produces work that is both rooted in a deep Hungarian textile tradition and is also part of a vibrant contemporary practice connected to radical feminist avant-garde movements of the 1960s and 70s, which reclaimed craft and fibre-based work as urgent and political fine art practices. Through the synthesis of techniques such as embroidery, drawing, collaging, dyeing, free-hand quilting, appliqué, and photo transfer, Torma's work offers us an extraordinary world in which the domestic and the fantastic collide in lush imagery drawn from familial history, books and literature, real and imagined places, mythology and folklore, flora and fauna, and personal and cultural memory.

Book of Abandoned Details presents major work produced over the past five years, much of which speaks to the complex nature of diasporic identity and experience; the desire to remember and preserve the details of a past, while also adapting to and articulating a new present. Torma describes herself as a storyteller and a “spiritual keeper of memories.”¹ The expressive needlework of her textiles communicates stories—fragmented and non-linear—that alternate between the figurative and the abstract. Torma's needle inscribes the surface of these materials with a language that speaks simultaneously to past and present, and the resulting works act as documents, ledgers, or catalogues of memories—of both grand and important as well as small and intimate things meant to be preserved and remembered. The form of the work often references the nature of memory: sharp and clear at one moment; fragmented and tangled at the next.

The new series of works from which this exhibition takes its name offers a register of words, shapes, and forms—some that we might recognize, others that we might not; some that are marvelous, others that are mundane. For Torma, the small and seemingly unexceptional are equally as important as the large and easily recognizable. In this series of work, as in life, Torma urges us to value and treasure the minute and the everyday, because it is through the accumulation of these minor details that one can often access greater and more important facets of life as well.

The diptych *Carpet of Many Hands* (2012-18), is a powerful manifestation of Torma's emphasis on the potential of the small or quotidian to add up to more than the sum of its parts. Comprised of two long, vertical panels, it is a monumental collage of found and collected fabrics and original embroideries. Hundreds of textile pieces sit next to and on top of one another— printed fabrics, crochet and lace samples, embellished swatches, and needlepoint sourced from domestic linens such as curtains, sheets, tablecloths, and protective Hungarian *falvédő* (a decorative and/or protective wall covering that often features embroidered inscriptions or proverbs)—all examples of women's

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handwork brought together in a remarkable reflection on domestic space, labour, and value. Collected, treasured, and respected by Torma over many years, these common, domestic textiles are united in an act of reclamation and tribute to the value of women's domestic work. Torma's wider practice has long included the gathering and sharing of stories through many voices, histories, and materials. She will often incorporate the creative work of others, such as drawings or texts based on the work of her husband and two sons, each artists themselves. The series *Transverbal* was inspired by her children's early drawings, which were produced at a time in which communication between mother and child was based on visual signs, gestures, and empathetic guesswork. *Red Fragments* (2017) features the work of Torma's late mother-in-law, a skillful needleworker who had suffered a stroke. Seeking to connect with her and to nurture mental and emotional healing, Torma encouraged her to create new redwork embroidery pieces using traditional Hungarian cross-stitch patterns. Brought together with Torma's own fragmented and reworked pieces, the progressively empty cross-stitch squares offer a beautiful and melancholy rumination on aging, loss, and resilience.

Working slowly and labour-intensively, through time and with immaculate attention and skill, Torma invites us into her wild, many-layered imaginary. Her practice gives weight and value to humble objects and materials—the overlooked and undervalued. She invites us to enjoy the sensuality of texture and surface and offers us a glimpse into the spaces that she, herself, inhabits— her inner and outer worlds.

¹Anne Koval, *Anna Torma: Needleworks*, Halifax: MSVU Art Gallery, 2007.

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Exhibition view, Anna Torma at Esker Foundation, 2018

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Textile Museum of Canada Announces Major Solo Exhibition of works by Anna Torma,
Winner of a 2020 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts
Anna Torma: Permanent Danger

February 19, 2020 Toronto, Ontario – The Textile Museum of Canada is pleased to announce a major solo exhibition of work by Anna Torma, winner of the prestigious 2020 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts – Saidye Bronfman Award.

The exhibition takes its title –Permanent Danger – from a 2017 artwork of the same name, making reference to human strife and vulnerability, threatened natural environments, and the highs and lows of daily life. Anna Torma's unique drawing style is an expression of her complex experiences of family, identity, joy, and artistic creation. The artist sources her materials from all over the world; linen, cotton, silk, thread, and found materials are selected for their distinct physical qualities as well as cultural references from popular culture to traditional Hungarian embroidery and thrift shop aesthetics. “Anna Torma has dedicated her professional life to an astonishingly singular studio practice that has emerged from an early, deep understanding of embroidery traditions and their place in global, contemporary visual culture.” – Sarah Quinton, exhibition curator and Curatorial Director, Textile Museum of Canada.

The Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts – Saidye Bronfman Award recognizes exceptional artists who have shaped the field of craft in Canada. The Museum is thrilled to have nominated Anna Torma for this award, and to celebrate her 40-year commitment to an innovative practice in contemporary textiles with this exhibition

Anna Torma: Permanent Danger is a key project of the Textile Museum of Canada's 45th Anniversary celebrations. It consists of a major solo exhibition, publication, tour, and a series of public programs that will run over a six-month period.

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