



A Bright Patch of Light

Camilla Frances on Sussy Cazalet's wondrous Creativity and woven Masterpieces.

Shot at Tristan Hoare by Genevieve Lukhin

To meet Sussy Cazalet, even briefly, is to fully experience her work. The talented British artist and textile designer is as warm and expressive as her woven masterpieces, each of which takes on a new dimension in her presence. Large-scale rugs and tapestries, with names like *Burnt Earth* and *Sahara Sun*, reflect Sussy's boundless creativity and curiosity, holding multiple ideas within their forms.

"There is an amazing harmony and proportion about her work," says Tristan Hoare, founder of his eponymous gallery in London, where nine of Sussy's silk and wool tapestries hung for 10 days last year. "Sussy is able to take ancient ideas and Eastern philosophies that have influenced her and mix these with Modernist references and incredible colors. She's an original

voice." The art dealer admits to moving his desk and chair into the gallery during Sussy's show: "I usually work from a back office, but I found I just wanted to sit among the tapestries. There's a real energy and calm about them."

It's no surprise to learn that Sussy has studied architecture and music; there is something of a finely balanced composition about the lines, shapes, and colors within her designs. Growing up in an accomplished, intellectual family, her days were filled with music (piano and cello) and art (figurative painting); "I was always going to be a classical musician," she says, "but then I became obsessed with figurative painting and started going to life drawing classes with my Mum (a painter)."



After leaving school, she swapped music for art and design and spent a year in London, "doing odd jobs for artists, textile designers, set designers, basically a bit of everything," before moving to New York to study interior architecture at Parsons School of Design. For Sussy, the American dream was Abstract and Modernist. In the US, the seeds of her distinctive work were sewn, inspired by the West Coast Modernist Movement in architecture and America's modern abstract painters. "My brain just exploded," she says. "I was an English girl from a fairly traditional family who'd grown up with Granny's curtains. This aesthetic was totally different to anything I'd lived with before."

While painting, designing sets, and art-directing events after her studies, Sussy was "dragged from New York to California" by the lure of Modernist masters like Rudolf Schindler, John Lautner, and Richard Serra. She credits the move with changing her style and palette. "I started using lots of warm, earthy colors influenced by the West Coast terrain. I was like a sponge soaking everything up and trying all sorts of different things and ideas." After returning to the UK, she began to design furniture, influenced by the sinuous curves and shapes of Brazilian mid-century design, before a client commissioned a set of original rugs and tapestries. It was to be the start of Sussy's most rewarding creative endeavor yet and a journey that would take her across continents once more.

Sussy's vibrant, textural rugs and flat weave wall hangings—in equal measure, dynamic and harmonious, bold and restrained, powerful and controlled—are the result of a deeply collaborative relationship between the artist and her "amazing" Jaipur-based artisans. Using all-natural fibers, these weavers craft Sussy's hand-painted designs into beautiful, easy-to-live-with works of art, which surprise even the artist with their depth of color. "We use a complicated process called 'wrong dyeing,' so you don't always know what you're going to get when you throw the colors. It means you can get the most wonderful mix and richness of color; they're never flat."

There are echoes of the masters who inspire her, in particular Alexander Calder and Anni Albers, but no contemporary artist whose work compares, according to Tristan Hoare. "Sussy is so full of ideas and references, always hungry for inspiration. I've seen her develop a unique style. She's exciting."

Today, the mother-of-two works from a flint-covered barn in rural Norfolk—scattered with the spoils of her creative process—and lives in a nearby cottage filled with books and forested by pine trees. It's a home of great creativity and conviviality, with intense orange walls. Like Sussy, it feels like a glorious patch of Californian sun burning bright in the English countryside.[]