

Christina Forrer's Whimsical Wonderlands of Myth and Memory

Her colorful tapestries explore the power of folklore to shape collective psychology and personal identity across generations.

By [Mya Ward](#) • 01/22/26 11:14am



In her tapestries, Forrer explores themes of folk tradition, memory and intuition. © Christina Forrer; Courtesy of the artist, Luhring Augustine, New York, Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago, and Parker Gallery, Los Angeles. Photographed by Scott Rodd

There are some fairytales so ubiquitous and beloved that they exist in an almost psychic capacity. We know them before writing, before speaking even, and we remember them long after. Cinderella will outlive us all. Yet most fairytales—stories shared solely through speech and repetition—tend to emerge and evaporate within a generation. For artist Christina Forrer, it is those ephemeral tales that are the most compelling.

Her tapestries feature bold, vivid figures in contiguous arrangements. Sometimes these forms emerge as geometric patchworks, but they just as often waft off into sinuous streams of color and consciousness. Most often, her tapestries reach the agreement between these two odds. They triangulate points of center between expression and figuration, between intention and intuition. Such is the case with *Cave*, one of several works showcased at Forrer's recently closed solo exhibition at Los Angeles' Parker Gallery. *Cave* depicts a scene—or rather a single frame—from the tale, "The Turnip Princess." In the story, an old crone is transformed into a beautiful bride for a young prince who lifts her curse by pulling an enchanted nail from a cave wall. Forrer depicts the princess not in her cursed state, nor in a state of ethereal beauty, but in the throes of metamorphosis. She stands amidst the foliated enchantment that Forrer renders in sunbursting flames, specks of light and dust and dappled flowers. The tapestry is set at the climax, with the nail struck

through all the magic and the prince's hand hovering just above it.

"Usually when a spell is broken, it's over," Forrer told Observer, elaborating on her sustained interest in the Bavarian folk tale, "but with 'The Turnip Princess,' the nail functions almost like a gauge. You can put it in and out, and the person goes in and out of the spell. The nail allows the flow between different parts of one."



In Cave, Forrer weaves an instance of liminality and personal complexity in folklore. © Christina Forrer; Courtesy of the artist, Luhring Augustine, New York, Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago, and Parker Gallery, Los Angeles. Photographed by Paul Salvesson

Forrer, who was born in Zurich, Switzerland, but works in Los Angeles, named a medley of avant-gardists among her inspirations: the German Expressionist Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and the seminal Bauhaus textile artist Gunta Stölzl. However, she derives much of her material from folk traditions, stories with no singular name, origin nor junction that nonetheless pervade the collective memory—secondhand knowledge that becomes second nature. Forrer confessed that she did not register her continued arrival at folklore until others laid it before her, but the assessment felt apt. She spoke of how folklore was always part of her life in Zurich, manifesting in murals and stone carvings around the city. Stories, in other words, as conditions of human experience.

Forrer is telling stories through her work, just not fixed ones. Occasionally, she sets out to personify a specific emotion or experience—such as the hundred-headed beast of conflict portrayed in *Gebunden II*—but oftentimes, the moments of synchronicity are happenstance. Perhaps they are the artist's subconscious revealing its hand. Such is the case in *Training Tables*, where a woman peers into a miniaturized domestic world, and like Alice or Gulliver before her, she finds it full of vivid color and vertiginous peculiarity. Staircases start at the street level and lead up into closets. Checkered rugs, tablecloths and tiles begin as anchors of geometry and trail off into the unrefined hanging threads at the tapestry's border. A rainbow streams in from the window and an apple sits tempting on a plinth. *Training Tables* resembles both a distorted dollhouse with the effects of the real and toy worlds enfolding each other and a domestic portrait of a cluttered mind.

Forrer explained the piece was not the result of a strict conceptual framework, but rather an open window or a page in a storybook. Yet she agreed that the domestic interior rendered in *Training Tables* could also be the map of a mental space. Forrer works out of her duplex apartment. “One side I live in, and the other side I work in,” she explained, emphasizing the permeability of boundaries between her home, work and social lives. These various selves thread together, overlap one another and eventually find their way into Forrer’s practice. “Home becomes a very psychologically charged space. It’s so close and it’s intimate, and yet at the same time, it’s very cerebral.”



An internal conversation becomes a domestic wonderland in *Training Tables*. © Christina Forrer; Courtesy of the artist, Luhring Augustine, New York, Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago, and Parker Gallery, Los Angeles. Photographed by Paul Salvesson

Home is employed as another symbolic and psychological medium in *Cutaway*. A family is seated for dinner in their subterranean domicile, but their mouths are open not for food, but for a serving of vital convergence. Multicolored vapors waft from their mouths and ears, mingling with similar strands rising from their dog, the steam from pots and pans, the fronds of plants and the whistling teapot. None of the figures appear to be particularly comforted by the bonds that entwine them, and yet they are intractable, crucial, webbing over nearly every fixture of the house like capillaries.

Forrer’s tapestries have always boasted an intelligent comprehension of color and space, but in execution, these qualities echo beyond their technical application and into temporal space. Forrer weaves the color and movement of life into her tapestries, particularly the strange, overwhelming and almost unnatural forces that compel and connect us. She convenes with the traditions, urges and stories constituted by way of inheritance and not of free will. Yet, at her loom, Forrer rethreads them. There’s plenty of will involved, but just as much intuition.

“I found out that at a certain point in time, most houses in Switzerland would have a loom,” Forrer mused. “There’s something in me that felt like tapestry is something I have been doing forever... It’s a feeling of that tradition that I feel personally connected to.”



Forrer portrays the literal and figurative bonds between the living and inanimate beings of a household in *Cutaway*. © Christina Forrer; Courtesy of the artist, Luhring Augustine, New York, Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago, and Parker Gallery, Los Angeles. Photographed by Paul Salvesson