

HANNAH RYGGEN WOVEN MANIFESTOS

SEPTEMBER 26, 2019 – JANUARY 12, 2020

WALL PANELS OF THE EXHIBITION

INTRODUCTION

The exhibition “Hannah Ryggen. Woven Manifestos” brings together twenty-five monumental tapestries by the Swedish-Norwegian artist Hannah Ryggen (1894–1970) and thus provides an in-depth insight into her oeuvre.

Ryggen is one of the most important Scandinavian artists of the twentieth century, but until a few years ago she was almost unknown outside the Nordic countries. Although her work was presented in important art exhibitions—not only in her country of residence, Norway, but also internationally—throughout the 1950s and 1960s, after her death in 1970, the tapestries were increasingly categorized as arts and crafts, a situation that did not do justice to either Ryggen’s self-conception or the art-historical significance of her oeuvre. This exhibition recognizes a singular artistic position outside the established canon of modernism, and a strong voice that continues to speak to us and move us today.

Trained as a painter, Ryggen abandoned the medium in 1923 in favor of weaving. In large-format figurative tapestries, she addressed fundamental topics of humanity and society: the horrors of war, the abuse of power, our dependence on nature, and our connections to family and other human beings. Many of Ryggen’s works deal with the events and political conflicts in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s, and simultaneously reflect the artist’s socialist convictions. After the Second World War, even from a small, self-sufficient farm in western Norway, Ryggen took a position on contemporary topics such as nuclear armament and the Vietnam War. In her works, she thus combined urgent political concerns with mythological motifs and everyday topics, and influences of the European avant-garde with elements of folk art, in a unique way.

Hannah Ryggen made use of the traditional technique of weaving for a novel objective: to share her strong political messages with the public by means of tapestries that could be moved from place to place. In the present day, which is characterized by increasing inequality, nationalism, and populism, her uncompromising oeuvre seems highly topical and is a call to stand up for the principles of humanism.

SYNDERINNEN (THE SINNER), 1926

In Ryggen’s early works, apart from impressions of everyday life, the focus is mostly on mythological or biblical scenes. *The Sinner* also depicts such a topic. An adulteress is presented to Jesus, who prevents her from being stoned. The text at the bottom cites the corresponding passage from the Bible: “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery.” The stage-like composition, the flatness of perspective, and the ornamental borders call to mind medieval depictions. Ryggen, however, transfers the scene to her own time by bestowing modern attributes such as spectacles to some of the priests. Detached from the biblical reference, *The Sinner* can be read as a commentary on the double moral standards that are often concealed behind society’s condemnation of female sexuality.

VERHAU (THE SQUALL), 1928

In the dialect of the region of Norway where Ryggen lived, “Verhau” (squall)—woven in at the top right—is a term for heavy storms. The intensity of the storm is reflected in the strongly contrasting colors and in the vibrating energy of the sharply pointed forms. The patterns shoot through the sky like lightning. Aside from this association and the upside-down head in the top left corner, *Squall* is, however, a nearly abstract work. Here Ryggen seems to have attempted a design

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vocabulary that calls to mind the weaving workshop at the Bauhaus. There is a big leap between *Squall* and the naturalistic, figurative work *The Sinner*, which was created only two years before. In the 1920s, Ryggen was still searching for her own pictorial language, which she found over time in a combination of figurative, abstract, and ornamental elements.

FISKE VED GJELDENS HAV (FISHING IN THE SEA OF DEBT), 1933

Fishing in the Sea of Debt is one of the first works in which Ryggen expressed her views on the political and social issues of her time. Here she depicts the suffering caused by the global economic crisis, which began in the United States in 1929 and soon also affected Europe. World trade and economic production collapsed, leading to mass unemployment, high debts, and impoverishment. In Norway, the crisis hit small farmers and fishers particularly hard, and in this tapestry Ryggen shows them literally drowning in a sea of debt. The man on the left side can only just keep his children's heads above water, with great effort; others next to him have already gone under. Above them, in the middle, stands the debt collector. To his left is a woman who has evidently profited from the situation, sitting at a lavishly set table; on the right, a doctor has taken a dead man's last coin.

VI OG VÅRE DYR (US AND OUR ANIMALS), 1934

As if in a frieze, *Us and Our Animals* depicts, in three scenes, the life of Hannah Ryggen and her husband, Hans, with their daughter, Mona, on a small farm at Ørlandet in Norway. They lived almost totally self-sufficiently there by cultivating fruit and vegetables and keeping a few animals. This lifestyle corresponded to Ryggen's conviction that everyone should be in the position to take care of themselves. On the left she herself can be seen feeding chickens and geese, and, on the right is her husband, who is leading the family's horse by its halter. Between the two idyllic depictions, Ryggen shows the harsh reality of rural life: as close as the family's coexistence with the animals was, in order to ensure their survival, it was unavoidable that they slaughter some of their livestock. In the middle of the work, the family can be seen sitting at a table, on which there is a roast goose. At Ryggen's feet, a headless bird is still moving. Ryggen, her hand placed in front of her face in a gesture of shame or grief, leaves her plate untouched.

ETIOPIA (ETHIOPIA), 1935

With *Ethiopia* Ryggen reacted directly to an incident in international politics. Even though she lived an isolated life at Ørlandet, she had access to newspapers and other sources of information. News of Benito Mussolini's invasion of the East African kingdom of Abyssinia (today Ethiopia) also reached her in October 1935. The Ethiopian emperor, Haile Selassie, had appealed in vain to the League of Nations for military support—a fact that deeply angered the artist. In the top strip of pictures, Ryggen shows the central faces in the incident: from left to right, we see an African woman, then (probably) the French Foreign Minister, Pierre Laval, next a series of hands in various colors (representing the League of Nations), Haile Selassie, and finally an Ethiopian soldier, with Mussolini's head on a spear. The anti-fascist work was presented in the Norwegian pavilion at the World's Fair in Paris in 1937, where it was subject to censorship: the right section was folded over.

GULLAMMET ISELIN (THE GOLDEN LAMB ISELIN), 1935

The central figure in this tapestry is the striking blonde woman in an elegant black gown, with high heels and red lipstick. She holds a cigarette in one hand, and the other hand is placed prominently on her hip, so that the ring on her finger cannot go unnoticed. Behind her sits an older man, dressed in what appear to be pyjamas, smoking and holding more cigarettes in his right hand. To the woman's right is a footstool on which she has tossed her jacket. The space is framed by two drapes, drawn back like stage curtains, creating a theatrical setting for the ambiguous power play between the man and woman. The couple portrayed were people Ryggen had actually met: a rich shipping magnate from Oslo, and a doctor's daughter from Trondheim.

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The pair had met in 1934, when he was forty-seven and she nineteen, and they married in 1935. The title contains a double entendre: golden lambs were admired and worshiped for their beauty. Beauty confers power. On the other hand, the lamb is vulnerable, and has a long tradition as a sacrificial animal.

DRØMMEDØD (DEATH OF DREAMS), 1936

Death of Dreams was created in support for the case of Carl von Ossietzky, the German editor who was imprisoned by the Nazis for his disclosure of Germany's rearmament, which was a breach of the Treaty of Versailles. Ossietzky received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1936 and died from the consequences of his imprisonment in 1938. When Ryggen, in 1936, completed her dark and uncannily truthful depiction of a world under Nazi control, it caused a sensation in the highly politicized cultural circles of the era.

On the upper left and right of the work are prisoners behind bars, including Ossietzky, who is handcuffed. To his right are depicted Goebbels, Göring, and Hitler, their faces and hands woven in an intense shade of purple. Goebbels is gripping the throat of a helpless prisoner. The gray prison uniform melds with the ornamentation below, where a geometric pattern of swastikas emerges. On the right we see Albert Einstein with a violin in his hand. Here, the prison bars are broken: a symbol of hope.

UGIFT MOR (UNWED MOTHER), 1937

Here Ryggen places a woman who has had a child out of wedlock in the tapestry's central panel. Being an unwed mother was considered a disgrace at that time, and it was no small feat to provide for children alone. Taking in work as a seamstress, a common, low-paying women's job, was one of the few ways to care for children and work at the same time. The motif is framed by a border, while two blue columns create a triptych-like structure. The seamstress works on a piece of pale pink fabric, and she holds up a scrap of the material to the happy toddler beside her. In both of the side panels it is night, and men emerge from different patterns. What transpires in these areas is unclear, but it is nevertheless subsidiary to the woman and child, who are imbued with pride and dignity. Thus Ryggen emphasizes that there should be no shame attached to being an unwed mother, nor for fending for oneself and one's children.

LISELOTTE HERRMANN HALSHUGGEN (LISELOTTE HERRMANN ENTHAAPTET / LISELOTTE HERRMANN DECAPITATED), 1938

In the mid-1930s the plight of the communist resistance fighter Liselotte Herrmann triggered a protest campaign throughout Europe, but this was unsuccessful in preventing her murder by the National Socialists in 1938. Hannah Ryggen dedicated this tapestry to the remembrance of the German communist. Liselotte Herrmann is pictured as a young mother with her son, Walter, on her lap, in garden-like surroundings. She is also depicted in the bottom right section of the picture as a prisoner in handcuffs. Above her floats the menacing red face of the executioner. As if on a gravestone inscription, Ryggen wove the title and the year in which the work was created into the bottom edge of the tapestry: "Liselotte Herrmann decapitated 1938." Here, as in many other of her works, the artist draws on the pictorial conventions of Christian iconography, as seen in the cross structure of the picture and the reference to the classical motif of the Madonna in a rose garden.

LIVET GLIR FORBI (LIFE SLIDES BY), 1939

Ryggen wove *Life Slides By* as a tribute to Paul Gauguin, having read his travelogue *Noa Noa* (1901) from his first visit to Tahiti in 1891. The scene depicted in the tapestry is based on an episode where Gauguin describes taking a swim. The surface of the water is choppy and in motion, and Gauguin is looking up at Tehura, his companion on Tahiti and the personification of a new life, who stands with a platter of sweet fruit in her hands. She evokes Eve in Paradise, standing on the back of a fantastic creature, holding out an apple from the tree behind her.

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Rygggen admired Gauguin for seizing the opportunity to break free from the monotony of routine. The idea of sacrificing everything, including a spouse and children, for art is something often associated with major, mostly male artists. Rygggen, too, wanted a new life, free of struggle and daily toil. Here, she allows herself to play with the idea of leaving it all behind.

6. OKTOBER 1942 (6. OKTOBER 1942 / 6 OCTOBER 1942), 1943

The trigger for this monumental work was a tragic event that took place not far from where Rygggen lived during the occupation of Norway by the German National Socialists. On October 6, 1942, martial law once again entered into force in Trondheim. Ten men, including prominent citizens such as the theater director Henry Gleditsch, were executed as a propitiatory reprisal. In the left part of the composition, Gleditsch, wearing a theater costume, lies in the arms of his wife after being shot, with a Serbian prisoner of war behind them. Above them floats an armed Adolf Hitler, depicted as a caricature, and trailed by both the author Knut Hamsun, who sympathized with the National Socialists, and the Norwegian Prime Minister Vidkun Quisling, who was appointed by the occupying power. The central section of the picture shows the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, in a statue-like pose, while the scene on the right depicts the Rygggen family's imagined escape.

GRINI, 1945

Hans Rygggen was arrested by the German National Socialists in May 1944 and taken to the Grini prison camp near Oslo. He was accused, among other things, of having assisted prisoners of war to escape from the labor camps at Ørlandet. The work *Grini* shows Hans in prison clothing with a printed number, painting warning signs for minefields. Barracks with smoke rising from them and fearful faces behind barbed wire can be seen in the background. The column pervaded by gray faces on the right edge of the picture depicts additional prisoners. As if in a dream, from the left, the Rygggens' daughter, Mona, bearing flowers, is riding in on a horse to free the prisoner. *Grini* is a work in Rygggen's oeuvre that makes use of folk art motifs in an especially clear way.

SCHWEDEN (SWEDEN), 1946

In 1924 Rygggen emigrated from Sweden to Norway, where she lived until her death in 1970. The work *Schweden* (the German name for Sweden) arose from Rygggen's outrage at the normalization of Nazism in her home country. She depicts Sven Hedin, a famous Swedish explorer and a Nazi sympathizer, dressed in brown and holding a scruffy Nazi eagle. The woman wearing a crown and a regal dress in yellow and blue is Mor Svea, the personification of Sweden. On her arm is Rütger Essén, a Nazi-friendly Swedish diplomat. A lion from the Swedish coat of arms sits in the foreground, vomiting soup into a little girl's pail: a reference to the 'Swedish soup' given as aid to Norwegian children during the war. On the right, the good and altruistic Sweden is represented by the editor Torgny Segerstedt, a relentless critic of Sweden's foreign policy. The heart that envelops him has Norway's national colors, red, white, and blue, at the bottom.

MORS HJERTE (MUTTERHERZ / MOTHER'S HEART), 1947

This tapestry is dedicated to the topic of the mother-daughter relationship, with which Hannah Rygggen was preoccupied over a long period of time. Not only had her relationship with her own mother always been difficult, but she also experienced a complicated and tense relationship with her daughter, Mona. This situation was aggravated by Mona's illness, an undiagnosed and correspondingly incorrectly treated form of epilepsy, which was a cause of constant concern for her mother. In two consecutive scenes, Rygggen depicts how the love between mother and daughter can change from intensive joy to one of deep sorrow and despair. Created in 1947, *Mother's Heart*, with its raw, direct form of presentation, can be regarded as a pioneering work; feminism first enabled comparable motifs to be included in art more than two decades later.

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EN FRI (EIN FREIER MENSCH / A FREE ONE), 1948

With *A Free One*, Ryggen creates a comprehensive picture of society and poses the question of the freedom of the individual. Various figures appear here as part of a social fabric, in which they are trapped, while nonetheless also propping it up. The Norwegian Prime Minister, Einar Gerhardsen, can be seen in the center as a personification of the state, supported by a blue column. He is surrounded by numerous “gray ones,” as Ryggen referred to modern slaves, hence workers, whose depiction is fragmented and reduced to hands and faces. Two figures stand out from the masses, signaling their will to ascend the hierarchy. The right half of the picture shows representatives of the upper class, whose rights and privileges possibly originate from their noble origins. In the bottom right, Ryggen portrays a man with a sunflower: “a poet who may have freed himself,” as she says. The work quite vividly shows the artist’s particular visual imagery—the way in which she dealt with the picture surface and the distinctive combination of figure and ornament.

TROJANSK HEST/PICASSOTEPPET (TROJAN HORSE/PICASSO TAPESTRY), 1949–1956

The Trojan Horse is famous as a subterfuge used by the Greek army to gain access to the besieged city of Troy. The Trojans brought the wooden horse into their city camouflaged as a victory trophy, unaware that Greek soldiers were hiding in its belly. Ryggen transforms the myth into a satire on modern art: the collapse of artistic traditions is brought about from within, as with a Trojan Horse. For Ryggen, Picasso, holding a palette and wearing a blue robe, is in turn one of the most important “soldiers” of modernism. In both works, the goddess Athena, who supported the Greeks in their ruse, is depicted as an ancient statue with broken-off arms—an homage to the classical art of Greece, which Ryggen admired. At the same time, she also respected Picasso’s artistic innovations. She freely made use of classical, folkloric, and modern art in her works. In *Trojan Horse/Picasso Tapestry*, she masterfully merges figurative and abstract depictions.

HENDERS BRUK (THE USE OF HANDS), 1949

The Use of Hands was prompted by the debates over Norway’s signing of the North Atlantic Treaty on April 4, 1949. This treaty obligated Norway to engage militarily in NATO. Ryggen firmly rejected Norway’s accession. Her work *The Use of Hands* was a plea to put a stop to war and suffering, and to build a peaceful society instead. In the center of the tapestry stands a woman dressed in blue, calling to mind personifications of liberty such as in Eugène Delacroix’s *Liberty Leading the People* (1830). Heads and hands with weapons, the mass of the army, appear between herself and the soldier whose hand she is holding. She is leading him home, where he, on the right side of the picture, is reunited with his wife. Apart from the concrete political background of the work, Ryggen also understood it to be a reflection on the power of hands to be able to bring about both good and evil.

HJEMMIGE GUDER (HOMELY GODS), 1951

Ryggen attached great importance to having her works presented in public places, where they could reach as many people as possible. She thus applied repeatedly to calls for proposals, including one for decorations for Oslo City Hall. But the work she submitted, *Us and Our Animals*, was rejected. In reaction to this, many years later she created *Homely Gods*, a satirical commentary on the art scene’s fixation on a few established (most often male) individuals. On the right, one sees an influential man with a cart full of gold. The goat and the hammer above him identify him as the god Thor. He bears a striking resemblance to the wealthy Norwegian collector Rolf Stenersen, a patron of Edvard Munch, whose head floats in the upper right. On the left, Ryggen portrays the Norwegian artist Henrik Sørensen as Odin, the father of the gods, with his hand resting on Oslo City Hall. Sørensen created one of the most prominent wall paintings for the building. In fact, Ryggen herself finally received an important commission for the so-called Highrise building in Oslo’s Government Quarter in 1955.

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ATOMSEN (MR. ATOM), 1951

Although the American atomic bombs dropped on Japan in 1945 had shown the barbarity of nuclear weapons, during the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union nonetheless spurred each other on in developing their nuclear arsenals. The fact that the smoldering conflict might lead to a nuclear war was a threatening recurring scenario throughout the 1950s and the decades that followed. *Mr. Atom* is a warning against the fantasies of omnipotence associated with the possession of atomic weapons. The figure of Mr. Atom is enthroned with a halo and his arms are extended over the earth; he is backed by a starry sky. Ryggen supplements the name on his breast with the Norwegian acronym HKH, which stands for "His Royal Highness." His portrayal is inspired by figures of Christ and presents him as the ruler of the world. Mr. Atom holds sway, seemingly untouched, over the fate of humankind. This is symbolized by the naked couple at his feet, who bring to mind Adam and Eve.

DIKT AV T.S. ELIOT (POEM BY T. S. ELIOT), 1952

"Who then devised the torment? Love. / Love is the unfamiliar name / Behind the hands that wove / The intolerable shirt of flame / Which human power cannot remove. / We only live, only suspire / Consumed by either fire or fire." Ryggen wove a Norwegian translation of these lines from T. S. Eliot's poem "Little Gidding" (1942) into the lower half of the tapestry. A female figure surrounded by the shirt of flame that Eliot describes lies horizontally in the center of the picture. Above her Ryggen herself, with yarn and weaving shuttle in her hands, appears as the creator positioned in the picture. The spinning wheel below her seems to form the origin of all the elements in the tapestry. In his poem, Eliot makes use of existential motifs of human life such as the eternal cycle of destruction and renewal, suffering and love. These themes also pervade Ryggen's work as a fundamental tone.

JUL KVALE, 1956

The Norwegian communist Jul Kvale openly opposed NATO's nuclear armament and Norway's involvement in it. Ryggen was moved by his solitary 'no,' and she wove *Jul Kvale* as a gesture of solidarity. The popular majority occupies the left side, with the middle row 'locked' into a column-like chain pattern, expressing consensus. It is crowned with the heads of NATO advocates such as the German chancellor Konrad Adenauer and the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Halvard Lange. Lange is gripping a sword that is broken and bears the acronym NATO. A pale yet confident Jul Kvale stands tall on the right, clutching the hand of a child who emerges from a blue background. With his other hand he unfolds a document from the abstract pattern of the tapestry on which is written, "Jul Kvale. Nei Nei 1956 Hanna R" (*nei* is Norwegian for no).

VI LEVER PÅ EN STJERNE (WE ARE LIVING ON A STAR), 1958

In 1955 Ryggen received a major public commission for the so-called Highrise building in Oslo's Government Quarter. The tapestry carries to conclusion themes already raised in some of her earlier tapestries: how do we, as human beings, steward time and love, and what role should art have in our relationships with others and the world?

The nude couple is a symbol of life's continual regeneration; the unwavering red flame represents love, and the eternal blue moment is time, which unites and divides. The oval—the fabric of life—that defines the area around the two lovers is similar to the one used in Ryggen's 1952 work *Poem by T. S. Eliot*. The tapestry hung in the lobby of the Highrise until July 22, 2011: the day that the Norwegian right-wing terrorist Anders Behring Breivik detonated a car bomb in front of the building, before going to the island of Utøya where he shot and killed sixty-nine participants of the Labour Party's youth organization's summer camp. The tapestry was damaged in the lower right corner and was repaired by conservators, but a scar remains.

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BAERESTOLEN (THE SEDAN CHAIR), 1959

The Sedan Chair is one of Hannah Ryggen's most personal works. Her husband, the painter Hans Ryggen, with whom she had lived for over thirty years, died in 1956 of complications from a tubercular infection. This work was created three years later as an homage and declaration of love to him. Hannah Ryggen and daughter Mona carry Hans on a sedan chair to his final resting place. Flowers were one of the motifs favored by the painter, who is portrayed here with a palette and surrounded by lilies of the valley. A red rose can be recognized at his side; in the upper right, Ryggen wove in the words "Hans with soil and flowers."

BLOD I GRESSET (BLOOD IN THE GRASS), 1966

Ryggen was seventy-two years old when she made *Blood in the Grass*, a shockingly vital protest against the war in Vietnam. This was also the first and only time she used wool colored by artificial rather than natural dyes, evident in the blood-red grid running through the lush green Vietnamese landscape. The US president, Lyndon B. Johnson, is portrayed in a cowboy hat along with his famous dog. Two blue bands contain missiles being fired in the direction of communist North Vietnam. On March 21, 1966, Ryggen wrote: "This evening they said that the South Vietnamese were to pay \$370 million to [the US]. That's great, the people pay for the United States to spread poisons over 20 million acres of land so that food cannot be produced on that soil. Those poor folk will pay with money, blood, and tears. I cannot fathom that lousy president in the Land of Freedom and Lincoln. But most people agree with them because they believe that the United States is going to save them from communism. Yes—the world is no better than it was before."

SISYFOS (SISYPHUS), 1966

Sisyphus is a character from Greek mythology, who manages to fool death. The gods punish him severely. For all eternity, he must roll a boulder up a steep hill, only to start all over again when it tumbles back down: the symbol of perpetual labor.

Ryggen's *Sisyphus* is a puzzling work; instead of depicting the myth, it offers us a portrait of a proud African man. He grips two spiral-patterned rods, symbols of eternity. Below the portrait are two forms that look like empty hands. The portrait resembles the African socialist Kwame Nkrumah (1909–1972), who led the independence struggle of Ghana, formerly a British colony, and was elected its first president. He was a pioneer of pan-Africanism and inspired black leaders such as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. The year in which the tapestry was made, Nkrumah was deposed by a military coup. The title *Sisyphus* may therefore refer to the eternal struggle for freedom and autonomy.

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BIOGRAPHY

1894

Hanna (later Hannah) Josefina Maria Jönsson is born on March 21 in Malmö, Sweden. Her mother, Karna Jönsson (née Gall, 1853–1930), works as a domestic servant, and her father, Gustav Jönsson (1864–1938), as a seaman and factory worker.

1905

Norway dissolves its union with Sweden and becomes independent.

1912

Hannah Jönsson is trained as a teacher and, starting in 1912, teaches at an elementary school in Gryt.

1914

The heir presumptive to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire is assassinated in Sarajevo on June 28, triggering the First World War. Sweden and Norway remain neutral.

1915–16

Hannah Jönsson moves back to Malmö and continues working as a teacher. In August 1916, she starts taking evening lessons with the painter Fredrik Krebs (1845–1925) in nearby Lund. She learns the fundamentals of academic painting there for six years.

1917

In the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks under Vladimir Lenin take power in Russia.

1918

The First World War ends on November 11. In Germany, a social democratic government replaces the Kaiser.

1919

Sweden grants women the right to vote. Finland (1906) and Norway (1913) are forerunners. Women in Germany go to the ballot box for the first time.

1922

Hannah Jönsson travels to Dresden in the summer and studies the art collection of the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister there for a few months as well as the works of the Alte Pinakothek in Munich. She gets to know the Norwegian painter Hans Ryggen (1894–1956). After her return to Malmö, she stops painting and dedicates herself to the art of weaving.

1922

With the 'March on Rome,' Benito Mussolini achieves his appointment as head of the government of Italy. He establishes a fascist regime in Italy that is not overthrown until 1943.

1923–24

Hannah Jönsson and Hans Ryggen marry in Oslo in September 1923. Hannah Ryggen moves to the coastal region of Ørlandet in Norway to join her husband in March 1924. Their daughter, Mona, is born in May 1924. The family lives in a self-constructed house on the property of Hans Ryggen's family, without running water or electricity, where they are almost entirely self-sufficient.

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1926

Exhibition by Hannah Ryggen along with Hans and his brother Arne Ryggen at the University's Art Museum in Lund, Sweden. She presents her first woven works there, including *Synderinnen* (*The Sinner*, 1926).

1929

The New York Stock Exchange crashes on October 24. The global economic crisis results in mass unemployment and massive debts in the United States and many European countries.

1930s

First exhibitions at the Foreningen Brukskunst (Association of Arts and Crafts) in Oslo 1931–32, at the Trondhjems Kunstforening (Trondheim Art Association) in 1933, and at the Kunstnerforbundet (Artists' Association) in Oslo in 1935. Hannah Ryggen's work is repeatedly presented in solo and group exhibitions there in the years that follow.

1933

Adolf Hitler is appointed Chancellor of the German Reich on January 30. A progressive withdrawal of basic rights and violent persecution of opponents and the Jewish population ensue.

1935

First purchase of a work by Hannah Ryggen by an institutional collection, the Kunstindustrimuseet (Museum of Decorative Arts and Design) in Oslo.

1935

The East African kingdom of Abyssinia (today Ethiopia) is invaded and occupied by Italy in October. The Abyssinian Emperor Haile Selassie's request for military assistance receives no response from the League of Nations.

1936

In Spain, General Francisco Franco, supported by the military and conservative monarchist forces, attempts to overthrow the Spanish government. After three years of civil war, the Franco dictatorship is established and it survives until his death in 1975.

1937

Hannah Ryggen presents her tapestry *Etiopia* (*Ethiopia*, 1935) at the Norwegian pavilion at the World's Fair in Paris. Pablo Picasso's painting *Guernica* (1937) can be seen in the neighboring Spanish pavilion.

1939

Opening of a joint exhibition by Hannah and Hans Ryggen at the Kunstnerforbundet in Oslo. The family abandons its plans to spend a few months in Paris due to the apparent preparations for imminent war by the Allies.

1939

The German Armed Forces invade Poland on September 1. The Second World War begins.

1940

Germany attacks Norway and Denmark. Norway puts up resistance for a few weeks, until the king and government flee to exile in London. Between 1941 and 1943, a military airport is built in Ørlandet.

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1944

The German security police arrest Hans Ryggen in May on the suspicion of committing acts of resistance. He is initially interned in the Falstad internment camp near Trondheim and then, from August on, in the Grini prison camp, southwest of Oslo. He remains imprisoned until the end of the war.

1945

The German Reich capitulates on May 8. Japan capitulates on September 2, after the United States drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

1946

Successful solo exhibitions at the Det danske Kunstindustrimuseum (today the Designmuseum Danmark) in Copenhagen and the Kunstnerforbundet in Oslo. The Ryggen family lives in Bures-sur-Yvette, a few kilometers southwest of Paris, from September 1946 to July 1947.

1949

With the North Atlantic Treaty, twelve nations, including Norway, form the NATO defense alliance on April 4. The Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic are established.

1950–53

War between North and South Korea, the former Soviet and/or American occupation zones.

1953

The Norwegian Nasjonalgalleriet (National Gallery) purchases *Henders bruk (The Use of Hands, 1949)* as the first textile artwork in its collection.

1954

Hannah Ryggen participates in the exhibition *Cinq artistes norvégiens (Five Norwegian Artists)* at the Petit Palais in Paris.

1955

Ryggen receives a commission for three works for the new 'Highrise' building in the Government Quarter of Oslo, one of which—*Vi lever på en stjerne (We Are Living on a Star, 1958)*—is to be hung prominently in the lobby. From 1955 to 1956, the Smithsonian Institution organizes a traveling exhibition through the United States, including Chicago, Washington, D. C., Seattle, and San Francisco.

1956

Hans Ryggen dies on December 19 as a result of a tubercular infection. After his death, Hannah Ryggen leaves the house at Ørlandet and moves to Trondheim.

1959

The artist is awarded the Prins Eugen Medaille as recognition of her outstanding artistic achievements in the field of arts and crafts.

1960

In the so-called 'Year of Africa,' eighteen African nations gain independence from the colonial powers.

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1962

The stationing of intermediate-range missiles on Cuba by the USSR nearly leads to a nuclear confrontation with the United States. An agreement with the Soviet Union is first reached six days after John F. Kennedy's ultimatum of October 22.

1962

Extensive retrospective at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm.

1964

Hannah Ryggen represents Norway at the 32nd Venice Biennale. She receives a large final commission for the council hall of the University of Oslo. The jury of the tradition-steeped *Høstutstillingen* (*Autumn Exhibition*) in Oslo presents Ryggen's works in the painting section.

1964

The United States intervenes militarily in the conflict between North and South Vietnam to prevent the victory of communist North Vietnam.

1965

Appointment as Knight 1st Class of the Royal Norwegian Order of Saint Olav. Ryggen donates seven major works to the Nordenfjeldske Kunstindustrimuseum in Trondheim.

1968

Massive protests against the American presence in Vietnam in the United States and Europe. The student movements call into question the guiding principles of Western capitalist society.

1970

Hannah Ryggen dies in Trondheim on February 2.