

Anni Albers

CONSTRUCTING
TEXTILES

7.11.2025 –
22.2.2026

PRESS KIT


Zentrum
Paul Klee

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Maurice E. & Martha Müller
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Art is something that makes you breathe with a different kind of happiness.

Anni Albers, 1968

Anni Albers (1899–1994) is one of the most important artists and designers of the 20th century. After training at the Bauhaus in Weimar, Dessau and Berlin, she emigrated to the United States in 1933, where she established herself as a weaver, textile designer and visual artist. In addition to her well-known signature pictorial weavings, Albers also devoted herself to developing new textiles for buildings and interiors, so-called ‘utilitarian’ or ‘serving objects’. Her innovative design principles and experimental approach to materials continue to inspire to this day.

From 7 November 2025 to 22 February 2026, the Zentrum Paul Klee will present the artist's first solo exhibition in Switzerland. The exhibition will feature works from all periods of her career, with a special focus on her architectural interventions, thus highlighting the connection between art, textiles and architecture, between building and weaving in Anni Albers' work.

From the Bauhaus to the USA

Anni and Josef Albers arrived at New York Harbour on Thanksgiving Day in 1933. The destination of their journey was the newly founded Black Mountain College in North Carolina, where Josef Albers had been invited by architect Philip Johnson to establish a curriculum in visual design. Both Anni and Josef Albers had already made a name for themselves at the Bauhaus in Germany, which had been forced to close months earlier under pressure from the National Socialists.

The language of threads

Soon after arriving in the United States, Anni and Josef Albers made the first of many visits to Mexico and later also visited Chile and Peru. Albers had already developed a passion for pre-Columbian textiles and artefacts at the ‘Völkerkundemuseum’ – today the Museum of Ethnology – in Berlin. During her travels, she was once again fascinated by the variety of patterns, techniques and colours used by Mesoamerican and Andean weavers and potters.

Inspired by her experiences, in 1936 she created *Ancient Writing*, one of her first 'pictorial weavings,' or purely artistic works. The monumental composition is loosely woven with a shiny black rayon weft in shifting bands of open-weave structures. Scattered across the central column are geometric forms in light-coloured supplemental threads that suggest texts and symbols from ancient archaeological sites. It was not without reason that Albers dedicated her groundbreaking publication *On Weaving* (1965) to 'to my great teachers, the weavers of ancient Peru'.

To let threads be articulate again and find a form for themselves to no other end than their own orchestration, not to be sat on, walked on, only to be looked at, is the raison d'être of my pictorial weavings.

Anni Albers, in the catalogue for the exhibition *Anni Albers: Pictorial Weavings*, 1959.

Ancient Writing is also an early example of a group of works that deal with language and writing. In Peru, Albers encountered the *kipu*, a complex instrument made of knotted camelid hair or cotton threads, which was used in the Andes for counting, recording data and communication. The small-format pictorial weaving *Code* (1962), for example, with its irregularly placed knots, refers to this encrypted language. The additional supplementary weft threads woven into the work are reminiscent of written lines – and speak to the viewer in the language of threads. After 1963 Albers continued to explore the boundaries of writing, knots and threads in her works on paper.

Paul Klee as a teacher

Annelise Else Frieda Fleischmann joined the weaving workshop at the Bauhaus in Weimar in the winter of 1922 after completing a one-year preliminary course. After she married Bauhaus artist Josef Albers in 1925, she shortened and modernised her name to Anni Albers. The theoretical foundations for her work were laid by Paul Klee, among others, who taught design in the weaving class from 1927 onwards and whom Albers greatly admired throughout her life.

Without formal instruction on the loom, the young Bauhaus weavers were left to their own devices. They experimented and studied on the looms and soon mastered the material. The experimentation that marked the very beginning of her career was to accompany Albers throughout her life and become a distinctive feature of her work.

Experimentation and innovation

For Anni Albers, weaving was a form of construction with threads, an experiment with new materials and closely related to architecture. Based on the materials and function of each project, she created numerous fabric samples. In 1930, Albers was commissioned by Bauhaus director, architect Hannes Meyer, to develop a design for acoustic wall coverings in the auditorium of the General German Trade Union Federation (ADGB) in Bernau. Her experiments resulted in an ingenious, innovative combination of materials: while the fabric made of fluffy chenille yarn on the back absorbed the sound of the large hall, cellophane fibres on the front reflected the light in the room and radiated a silvery sheen. This experimental approach to new, unusual materials continued to influence her textile designs in the decades that followed.

Most commercial houses take their designs off the paper, nicht? With no regard for the fitness of that design for a given place. We of Bauhaus are not hostile to industry but we create patterns close to the materials and at the same time related to the use of the textile.

Anni Albers, quoted in the New York Sun after her arrival in the USA on 24 November 1933.

Architectural commissions

In the United States, Albers also developed numerous new textiles for buildings and interiors, always tailored to the specific needs of the location. Between 1948 and 1950, for example, architect and former Bauhaus director Walter Gropius commissioned fabrics from Albers for the spacious dormitories in the new Harvard Graduate Centre, one of the first implementations of modernist architecture at a major university in the United States. Albers experimented with different materials, structures and colour effects and ultimately designed three versions of low-maintenance bed covers with a checked pattern, which were intended to enliven the room and conceal the traces of 'dirty shoes and cigarette burns'.

Albers also produced fabrics for sacred contexts. For the first of these projects, in 1957, she designed eight movable panels made of shimmering, machine-woven Lurex yarn in green, blue, gold and silver for the large Temple Emanu-El in Dallas, Texas. These and five other projects in which Albers worked closely with architects are given special attention in the exhibition with large-format photographs and textile designs.

Textiles as 'contributing thoughts'

In 1949, Anni Albers was the first textile designer to be honoured with a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. For the exhibition Anni Albers Textiles, which was shown in 26 museums across the United States, she designed a new range of textile prototypes, most notable among them free-hanging space partitions made of cellophane and synthetic materials combined with natural materials such as jute fibres and wood. These room dividers served as lightweight design alternatives to solid, immovable walls.

At the Zentrum Paul Klee, some of Albers' textiles are installed as space-structuring elements, thus occupying – in keeping with Anni Albers' vision – the 'place of a contributing idea' in architecture:

[...] and textiles, so often no more than an afterthought in planning, might take a place again as a contributing thought.

Anni Albers, in 'The Pliable Plane' (1957). The essay is published in German for the first time in the exhibition catalogue, together with two other texts by Anni Albers.

Opening

The opening of the exhibition will take place on

Thursday, 6 November 2025 from 18:00.

Admission to the exhibition is free on this evening.

Curators

Fabienne Eggelhöfer, Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, and Brenda Danilowitz, Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany, CT

Curatorial assistant

Kai-Inga Dost

Cooperation

An exhibition by the Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, and the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany, CT, in cooperation with the Belvedere, Vienna

The exhibition will then be shown at the Belvedere in Vienna from 30 April to 16 August 2026.

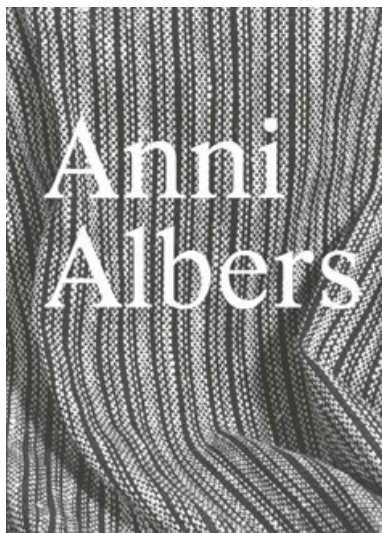
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Media preview

We cordially invite you to the media preview with curators Fabienne Eggelhöfer, Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, and Brenda Danilowitz, Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany, CT, on **Wednesday, 5 November 2025 at 10:00 at the Zentrum Paul Klee.**

Please register via press@zpk.org.



Catalogue

Anni Albers. Constructing Textiles

Published by Brenda Danilowitz, Fabienne Eggelhöfer, Stella Rollig und Nina Zimmer

With texts by Nina Zimmer, Stella Rollig, Nicholas Fox Weber, Fabienne Eggelhöfer, Brenda Danilowitz, Glenn Adamson, Jeffrey Saletnik, Karis Medina, and Amy Jean Porter. Three texts by Anni Albers are published in German for the first time.

German version: ISBN 978-3-7757-6036-2

English version: ISBN 978-3-7757-6035-5

21 × 28 cm, Softcover

2025: Hatje Cantz Verlag

On sale at the museum shop for CHF 39

Digital Guide

There is a freely accessible Digital Guide to accompany the exhibition. It can be accessed from Wednesday, 5 November 2025 via QR code or guide.zpk.org/en/anni-albers.



Biography

1899

Annelise Else Frieda Fleischmann, eldest of three children, is born to Siegfried and Antonie Fleischmann in Berlin on June 12.

1922

Albers enrolls as a student at the Bauhaus in Weimar in April. After completing the preliminary course, she is accepted into the weaving workshop in winter 1922/23.

1924

Albers weaves her first large-scale wallhangings. In November, her first essay, 'Bauhausweberei,' is published.

1925

The Bauhaus moves from Weimar to a new campus in Dessau. On May 9, Anni and Josef Albers are married and Annelise Fleischmann becomes Anni Albers.

1929

Albers designs a sound-absorbing, light-reflecting wall-covering material for the auditorium of the Bundesschule des Allgemeinen Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbunds (Federal School of the General German Trade Union Confederation) in Bernau, Germany.

1930

In February, Albers receives the first diploma awarded for weaving at the Bauhaus for her "experimental use of new materials and her mastery of structural possibilities in textiles."

Albers opens her own independent studio in Dessau and later moves it to Berlin. She designs cellophane wall-covering materials, upholstery fabrics, and other textiles for industrial production.

1931

In July, Albers is awarded the Honorary Prize of the City of Berlin for her textiles in the *Deutsche Bauausstellung* (German Building Exhibition). Her work is seen by Philip Johnson, who at the time was head of the architecture department at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

In September, after Gunta Stölzl, master of the Bauhaus weaving workshop resigns, Albers becomes acting director until Lilly Reich is hired in January 1932.

1933

On April 11, the Bauhaus, relocated to Berlin, closes under pressure from the Nazi authorities. In August, Philip Johnson telegrams Josef inviting him to form an art department at the newly created Black Mountain College in North Carolina. Anni and Josef Albers arrive in New York on November 24 and travel on to Black Mountain College.

1934

Albers initiates a weaving program for students at Black Mountain College. In December, Anni and Josef Albers travel to Havana.

1935–1936

Anni and Josef Albers make their first journey to Mexico in 1935, visiting Mexico City, Oaxaca, and Acapulco, and the sites of Teotihuacan, Monte Albán, and Mitla. They begin to form their collection of pre-Columbian objects and textiles.

In the following year, Anni and Josef Albers drive to Mexico where they spend June through August. Anni Albers creates two large wallhangings, *Monte Albán* and *Ancient Writing*.

1938

Albers writes her first published text in English about the Bauhaus weaving workshop for the catalogue of the exhibition *Bauhaus 1919–1928* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Albers's fabrics are featured in the show.

1939

In May, Albers becomes a naturalized US citizen.

1947

With the weaving *La Luz*, Albers inaugurates a new phase of her work – ‘in the direction of art’ – that continues through the next two decades. She later calls these works ‘pictorial weavings.’

1949

In February, Anni and Josef Albers resign from Black Mountain College. They spend the summer in Mexico City where Josef teaches at the Universidad de México. In the fall, they move to Manhattan.

Walter Gropius commissions Albers to design textiles for Harvard's new Graduate Centre.

Anni Albers Textiles opens at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, on September 14.

1950

Philip Johnson selects one of Albers's copper thread and chenille fabrics for the Rockefeller Guest House in Manhattan.

Josef is appointed chair of the newly created Department of Design at Yale University. In the fall Anni and Josef Albers move to New Haven, Connecticut.

1953

From June until September, Anni and Josef Albers travel to Chile and Peru.

1957

Commissioned by György Kepes, Albers designs eight ark panels for Temple Emanu-El in Dallas, her first synagogue project.

Albers designs fabrics, including her open-work casements in fiberglass and linen, for Knoll Textiles. The collaboration continues for twenty years.

1959

Albers's *On Designing*, a collection of ten essays from 1937 to 1957 is published.

In May, the New Gallery at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, organizes the exhibition *Anni Albers: Pictorial Weavings*. The exhibition travels to several other venues in the US.

1963

Albers creates her first prints at Tamarind Lithography Workshop in Los Angeles.

1965

Wesleyan University Press publishes Albers's *On Weaving*. She dedicates the book 'to my great teachers, the weavers of ancient Peru.'

1967

Albers's *Six Prayers*, commissioned in June 1965 to commemorate the six million Jews who perished during the Holocaust, is exhibited for the first time in the lobby of the Jewish Museum in New York.

1968

Albers creates her final pictorial weaving, which she appropriately titles *Epitaph*. She then shifts her attention from weaving to printmaking and works on paper.

Commissioned by architects Ricardo Legorreta and Luis Barragán, Albers designs a monumental wallhanging for the new Hotel Camino Real in Mexico City.

1969

In October, Albers's wallhanging *We 791* (also known as *Black-White-Red*) and her pictorial weaving *Tikal* are featured in the landmark exhibition *Objects: USA*. The show, which travels for three years to thirty-three venues in the United States and Europe, is a touchstone for understanding craft as fine art.

1970

Anni and Josef Albers move to Orange, Connecticut. Albers donates her remaining two looms to a local college and makes significant gifts of her textiles to the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

1976

On March 25, after a brief hospitalization, Josef Albers dies in New Haven.

1979

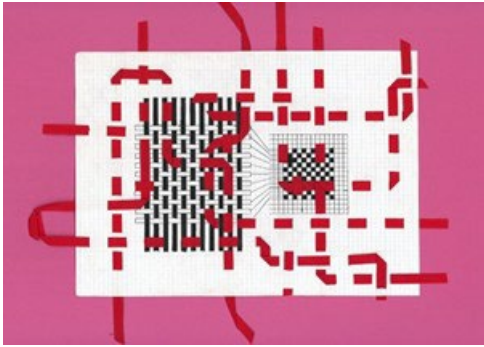
Albers designs a line of draperies based on her drawings and prints for Sunar Textiles (later the S-Collection).

1985

The Woven and Graphic Art of Anni Albers, a retrospective exhibition, opens in June at the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum and travels to the Yale University Art Gallery.

1994

On May 9, the sixty-ninth anniversary of her wedding, Anni Albers dies peacefully at her home in Orange, Connecticut.



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Interactive Exhibition at Creaviva

Woven art. Of threads and patterns
7.11.2025–22.2.2026

What are warp and weft threads? And how are the warp and weft connected? How can threads be woven into patterns? Inspired by the artist Anni Albers, we create fabric in space at Creaviva and design large collaborative works. *Woven art. Of threads and patterns* respond directly to the content of the exhibition at Zentrum Paul Klee and translates central aspects of the artistic work: the focus in on materiality, rhythm, structure, repetition and the connection between body and space.

The interactive exhibition itself becomes a workshop. Looms and various devices are available for visitors to explore the art of weaving independently and experimentally. Oversized weaving frames invite visitors to experiment freely. Lines become surfaces, and surfaces define spaces. Visitors make design decisions about colors, materials and patterns even before the first weft thread is threaded. The process is physical and collaborative, because weaving requires movement, coordination and often cooperation, very much in line with Anni Albers' understanding of textiles as a social and structurally permeated medium.

With *Woven art. Of threads and patterns*, Creaviva invites all visitors to try out an experience-oriented perspective on arts and crafts and to engage in an effective and collaborative experiment.

Family vernissage on Thursday, 6 November, 2025, at 17:00

To mark the opening of *Woven art. Of threads and patterns*, all young and young-at-heart visitors are invited to experiment with one of the oldest crafts in a playful way and lay their first threads. The event is free of charge.

Opening hours

Tuesday–Sunday, 10:00–17:00, free admission

Concept

Lorenz Fischer, Katja Lang, Regula Zähler and students of the Polydesign 3D course at the School of Design

Thanks to

Creaviva would like to thank the Förderfonds of the Berner Kantonalbank BEKB and the Kulturstiftung der GVB for their valuable partnership and support.

Further information

Katja Lang, Co-Management of Creaviva: Katja.lang@zpk.org

Lorenz Fischer, Artistic Employee of Creaviva: lorenz.fischer@zpk.org

Press images

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01

Anni Albers

Intersecting, 1962

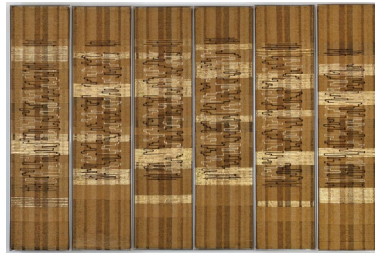
Cotton and rayon

40 × 42 cm

Josef Albers Museum Quadrat Bottrop

Photo: Philipp Ottendörfer

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02

Anni Albers

Ark panels for Congregation B'nai Israel, Woonsocket, Rhode Island, 1962

Jute, cotton, and Lurex mounted on wood and aluminium panel

161,9 × 245,2 cm

Photo: Tim Nighswander / Imaging4Art

© 2025 The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation/ProLitteris, Zurich



03

Anni Albers

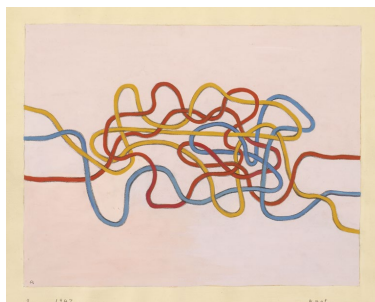
Black-White-Grey (executed by workshop Gunta Stölzl), 1927/1964

Cotton and silk

149 × 122 cm

Photo: Franz Xaver Jaggy & Umberto Romito, Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, Kunstgewerbesammlung, ZHdK

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04

Anni Albers

Knot, 1947

Gouache on paper

43,1 × 51,1 cm

Photo: Tim Nighswander / Imaging4Art

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05

Anni Albers

Ancient Writing, 1936

Cotton and rayon

150,5 × 111,8 cm

Smithsonian American Art Museum,
Washington, D.C., Gift of John Young
Foto: bpk / Smithsonian American Art
Museum / Art Resource, NY

06

Anni Albers

Red Meander, 1954

Linen and cotton

52 × 37,5 cm

Photo: Tim Nighswander / Imaging4Art
Private Collection
© 2025 The Josef and Anni Albers
Foundation/ProLitteris, Zurich



07

Anni Albers

Sheep May Safely Graze, 1959

Cotton and synthetic fiber

36,8 × 59,7 cm

The Museum of Arts and Design, New
York, gift of Karen Johnson Boyd, through
the American Craft Council, 1977

© 2025 The Josef and Anni Albers
Foundation/ProLitteris, Zurich



08

Anni Albers

Camino Real, 1968

Wool and cotton

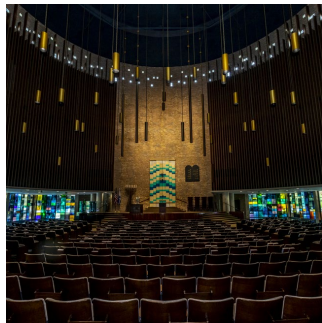
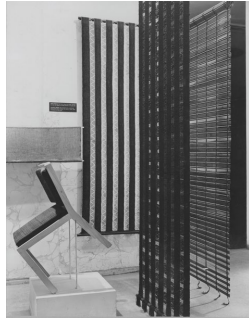
294 × 269 cm

Private Collection

© 2025 The Josef and Anni Albers
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Courtesy The Josef and Anni Albers
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09

Anni Albers

Code, 1962

Cotton, hemp and metallic thread
58,4 × 18,4 cm

Photo: Tim Nighswander / Imaging4Art
The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation,
Bethany, CT
© 2025 The Josef and Anni Albers
Foundation/ProLitteris, Zurich

10

Installation view *Anni Albers Textiles*,
Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1949

Photo: Soichi Sunami
© Digital image, The Museum of Modern
Art, New York/Scala, Florence

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Olan Sanctuary, Tempel Emanu-El,
Dallas, Texas, completed in 1957.
Ark panels by Anni Albers,
stained glass windows by György Kepes

© 2025 The Josef and Anni Albers
Foundation/ProLitteris, Zurich
© György Kepes Estate (Imre Kepes and
Juliet Kepes Stone)

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Anni Albers with *Scroll* (1962), 1965

Photo: New Haven Register
© 2025 The Josef and Anni Albers
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Anni Albers, ca. 1960

Photo: Josef Albers
© 2025 The Josef and Anni Albers
Foundation/ProLitteris, Zurich

Accompanying programme in English

Guided tours in English

Sunday, 7.12.2025 / 1.2.2026, 15:00

Family Offers

Open Studio at Creaviva

Tuesday–Friday 14:00 / 16:00 | Saturday–Sunday 12:00 / 14:00 / 16:00

Creative one-hour workshop on a variety of themes linked to the exhibition *Anni Albers. Constructing Textiles*. For children from 4 years, teenagers, adults and the whole family

You can find out more about guided tours, workshops and other offers on

zpk.org/en/ausstellung/anni-albers or zpk.org/en/creaviva

Current and upcoming exhibitions at the Zentrum Paul Klee

Schwitters: Grenzgänger der Avantgarde

20.3.–21.6.2026

Kosmos Klee. The Collection

Fokus: Gego (Gertrud Goldschmidt)

until 18.1.2026

Fokus. Hans Fischli

24.1.–2.5.2026

Opening hours

Tuesday–Sunday

10:00–27:00

Monday closed

Contact

Cédric Zubler

Communication & Media relations

press@zpk.org

+41 31 328 09 93

Accreditation for media representatives



Admission to all exhibitions at the Zentrum Paul Klee is free for media representatives with a valid press card.

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Press office
+41 31 328 09 93
press@zpk.org

Zentrum Paul Klee
Monument im Fruchtländ 3, 3006 Bern
zpk.org