

AUSTRALIAN TAPESTRY WORKSHOP

KEMP STUDIES



1. Explorative study for 'Piano Movement',
Great Hall Tapestry Number 2
designed by Roger Kemp
Woven ATW
Wool and cotton, 31.5 x 35.5cm
\$500



2. Explorative study for 'Evolving Forms',
Great Hall Tapestry collection
designed by Roger Kemp
Woven ATW
Wool and cotton, 23 x 36cm
\$300



3. Explorative study for 'The Cross',
designed by Roger Kemp
Woven ATW.
Wool and cotton, 28.5 x 40cm
\$450



4. Explorative study for 'The Cross',
designed by Roger Kemp
Woven ATW.
Wool and cotton, 26 x 38cm
\$400



5. Explorative study for 'Release',
designed by Roger Kemp
Woven ATW.
Wool and cotton, 41 x 41.5cm
\$650



6. Explorative study for 'Evolving Forms',
designed by Roger Kemp
Woven ATW.
Wool and cotton, 41.5 x 55cm
\$750



Roger Kemp was one of the earliest artists to work with the Tapestry Workshop. His visual language of symbolic forms made for a dynamic translation into tapestry. Kemp's tapestry *Images* was commissioned in 1978 and acquired by the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) in the same year. In 1984 he designed the tapestry '*Evolving forms*', commissioned by the NGV to hang in the Great Hall.

'*Evolving forms*' became the first in a suite of three tapestries designed by Kemp for, and conceived as a response to, the Great Hall and its extraordinary faceted glass ceiling designed by Leonard French. Both artists' works harmonise: the broad steel trusses of the vaulted ceiling, with its bright glass, find an echo in the charcoal bands that delineate the abstract forms and jewel-like colours of ruby-red, turquoise, lilac and amethyst-pink in Kemp's tapestries.

The three tapestries demanded varying technical approaches. The first tapestry, *Evolving forms*, was soft in colour and approach. Weaver Cheryl Thornton notes, "It was only when it was installed in the Great Hall that we discovered the high viewing distance made the tapestry read as a painting. For the next tapestry in the suite, *Piano movement*, we decided to accentuate the work's medium as a textile. We did this by exaggerating the stepping - the movement up and across the warp threads... which created the effect of a rougher, more jagged surface, giving the work more of a textile feel."



'*Abstract sequence*' woven in 2004 continued the composition and themes of the previous works. By this stage the weavers not only had extensive knowledge and technical expertise to undertake the translation, but also a great awareness of Kemp's artistic sensibility. Thornton noted that when you worked closely with Kemp's mark-making, you can see that "These marks resolved the whole painting. *Abstract sequence* and *Unity in space* were a reminder of what a great artist Kemp had been: it was humbling to work with an artist of his calibre."

Roger Kemp was a major contributor to the development of abstract painting in Australia. His work is housed in major collections in Australia and overseas.