

Dialogues between Intention and Intuition

Known for her spacious sculptural tapestries, Desire Moheb-Zandi connects past, present and future in her work. She explains how her background and experiences have shaped her work



In 1971 I was born in Berlin and, when I was six, moved to Adana on the southeastern Mediterranean coast of Türkiye. My family background is Turkish, Iranian and Uzbek. Adana, surrounded by cotton fields and a long history of women's handcrafts, is where my curiosity with textiles began. As a child, I would watch my grandmother with fascination as she wove and knitted household fabrics.

Later, when I moved to New York to study at Parsons School of Design, it felt natural to express myself through weaving. Today, I create sculptural tapestries made of natural, synthetic and upcycled materials that blur the boundaries between weaving, painting and sculpture. I interweave my personal history into these, using contemporary materials to explore new forms of weaving that I call new traditions or textile scores.

Every material carries memory, a story before I even begin. Weaving feels like a musical score: patterns resemble notes, warp and weft are like code, and the loom becomes a language I keep returning to. It unfolds in real time, guided by the hand, a dialogue between intention and intuition, past and present.

Threads have always transmitted meaning. Like cave paintings, they are among the earliest languages. The word 'textile' even shares its root with text. In Greek mythology, weaving symbolised the birth of new ideas. Arachne and Athena both used threads as metaphors for creativity, history and the making of worlds. Textiles hold more than technique; they hold care, warmth and stories that can still be felt in the future.

The loom feels to me like a musical instrument that I keep wanting to play. It is a full-body process; my hands, eyes, feet and the loom all work together. As with learning a language or practising music, you must become fluent enough to think in textile terms. Each piece unfolds like a melody, a textile score.

“Every material carries memory, a story before I even begin”

In a world that moves at digital speed, weaving asks for another kind of tempo, one of care, attention and presence. When so much of life is virtual, we all feel a need to reconnect with the real, to rediscover the haptic and tactile qualities of things made by hand. For me, craft is not about nostalgia; it is about embracing new materials and processes while staying rooted in tradition. In this cross-cultural mix, new forms of craft can emerge. Textiles can act as bridges between worlds, linking new technologies with age-old knowledge.

I mix natural, synthetic and found materials. On the loom, differences find ways to coexist, opening new sensibilities and giving upcycled materials a second life. This mixing



1 Desire Moheb-Zandi

2 *Let Me Be Me*, Desire Moheb-Zandi, 2022



3 *Forest Fantasy*, Desire Moheb-Zandi, 2022. Exhibition view at Greenline Foundation, Ognon Park, France

4 *Earth Remembers*, Desire Moheb-Zandi, 2025. Handwoven sculptural tapestry, stitched and layered on canvas. Exhibited as part of Asia Now at Monnaie de Paris, installation curated by Victoire de Pourtalès

5 *Earth Remembers* (detail), Desire Moheb-Zandi, 2025



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of materials is also a way to think about regeneration, not only in an ecological sense but culturally as well.

I have created work in New York, Paris, Los Angeles, Brazil and Türkiye. Wherever I am, I experiment with what is around me. In New York, upcycled PVC and rubber appear alongside softer threads; in Brazil, neon threads and natural fibres; in Paris, linen, reflective threads and advanced synthetics. Each place shapes the palette of my work in a unique way.

Recently, I have worked with hemp fabrics from a regenerative farm in France, hand-spun wool from Uşak in Anatolia, botanical dyes from Antalya, and upcycled yarns from

the Italian company Vimar1991, with whom I collaborate closely on material research.

These materials carry ecological urgency but also ancestral symbolism, linking soil, heritage and craft. The resulting installation was curated by Victoire de Pourtalès for Asia Now at Monnaie de Paris during Paris Art Week.

These questions of material and place are also deeply personal. During my recent time in Anatolia, I found myself asking: how do we carry tradition forwards? How do we preserve its soul while letting it grow? And how can we honour the earth in the process? What I discovered was a sense of warmth,

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6-9 Photos taken by Desire Moheb-Zandi of dyeing and weaving processes in Anatolia

9 *Sun Loops*, Desire Moheb-Zandi, 2025



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generosity and ancestral knowledge. These materials, the wool, the colours, the stories, hold more than texture. They carry a way of life.

For me, regeneration means more than reusing materials. It is about preserving intergenerational craft and renewing relationships. Weaving becomes a bridge that carries memory into the future. Materials are never just resources; they hold meaning, touch and time. Each work feels like opening a new door, a conversation between tradition and possibility. My purpose is to carry this forward, honouring where it comes from while imagining where it might go next.



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