

The Light of the Lodge

Chosen works from collection dedicated to Freemasonry societies in Denmark, Britain, Austria and Poland

The artist's ongoing interest in secret societies engendered her project in Copenhagen *The Light of The Lodge*, produced for the Copenhagen Art Festival (2012) and her solo exhibition at Charim Gallery in Vienna (2014).

In her own words:

"For me, ever since I saw Lars von Trier's film, Copenhagen has been the city of The Kingdom. The original Danish title *Riget* also translates as 'the realm', leading one to think of *dødsriget* - the realm of the dead." The sinister, albeit comedic, masonic rituals depicted in *The Kingdom* inspired a series of projects about and around the masonic secret societies, their rituals, allegories and symbolic language.

Two large-scale neons were installed in Copenhagen. One, depicting the Freemasons' altar was installed on the Royal Library, and the other, with the image of the Freemasons' ritual apron, was installed on a residential building in the Old Town.

In addition to the neons, Rajkowska worked a performative response to the city's masonic past - a night march of women. A group of women started their walk through the city from the Royal Library garden, one of the most tranquil spots in the city. They wore long black capes and pointed hats topped with flaming torches. They had rattles in their hands, which intensified the pace of the walk and acted as a warning. The choreography of the march functioned as a symbolic transmission of the power of reason and control to those who, according to the hierarchical and male structure of the lodge, are excluded from authority.

Whereas the Copenhagen project was a public project, the exhibition at Charim Gallery was an intimate dissection of masonic rituals. The Charim Gallery premises, once the location of one of the most important Freemason lodges in 18th century Austria, was an ideal spot for a reflection about the influence, role and heritage of Freemasonry in European culture.

Reflection on the history of the building (where Mozart once played), in conjunction with critical observations of the Freemasons' creed, produced a number of artworks that refer to this most secret and still highly influential society: carpets, collages and objects. A carpet with a distinctive pattern but ritual accessories absent, and a holy book with blank pages were amongst the de-constructed situations and gestures that reflect on the political rationale of the organization and on the artist's fascination with the refined culture it produced.

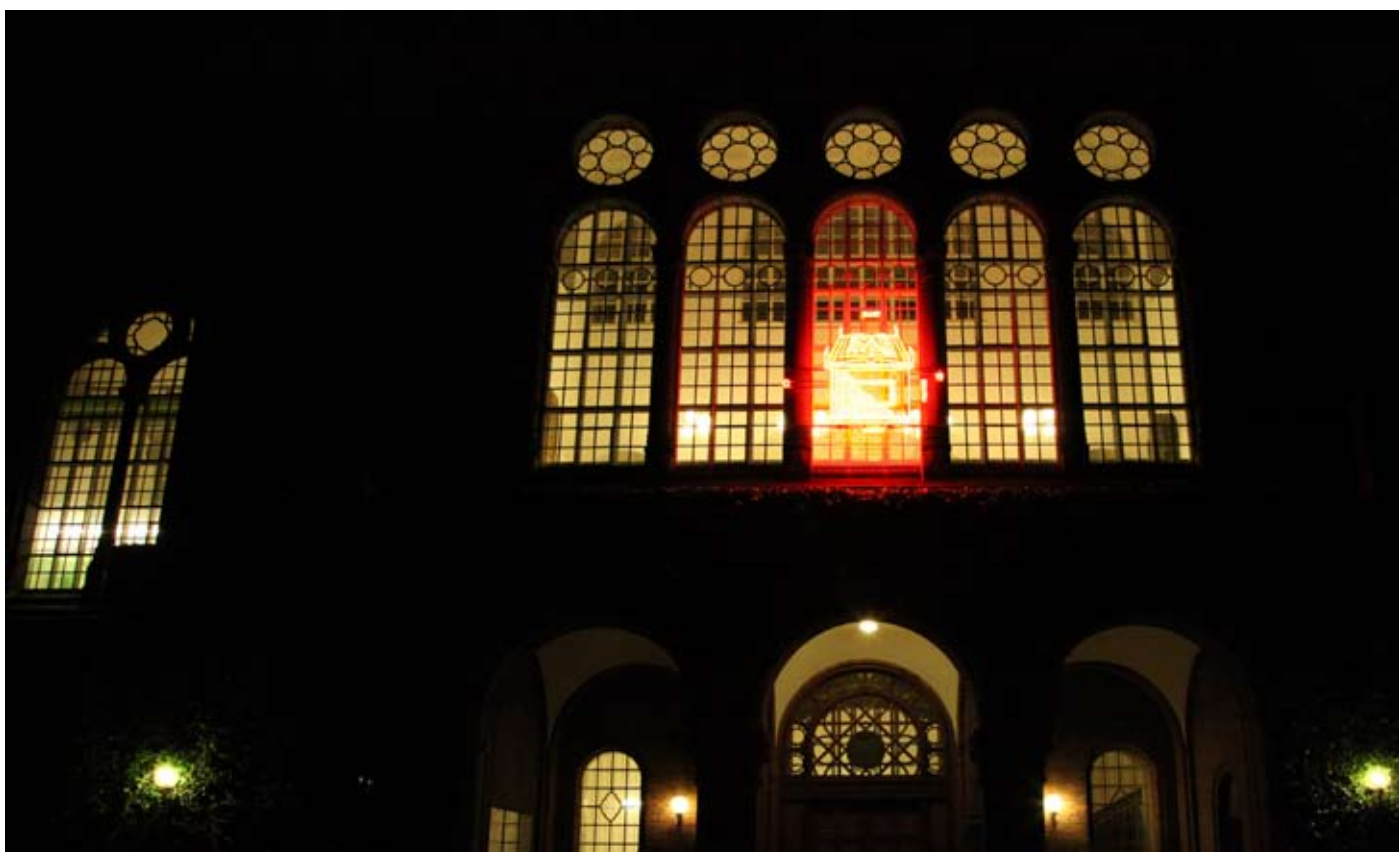
The Light of the Lodge
Neons

Both neons, the *Altar* and the *Apron*, are at the centre of masonic symbolism. The altar is a symbol of the place of communion with the Supreme Architect of the Universe and the apron is a symbol of innocence and sacrifice. They were based on sketches and derived from Freemason manuals.

l'étrangère



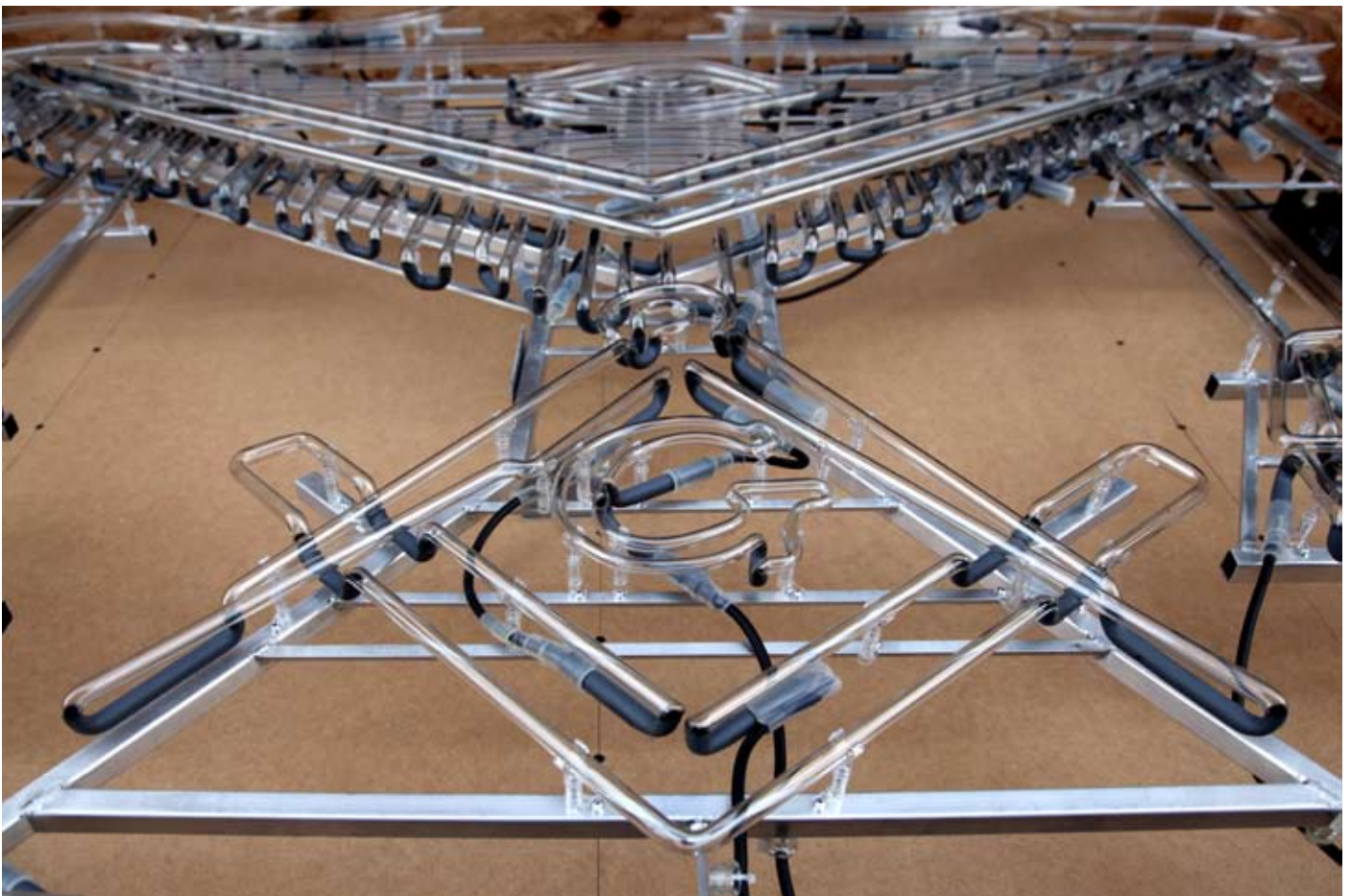
2012, *Altar*, 190cm x 70cm x 20cm, neon tubes on aluminium frame, Royal Library, Copenhagen, Denmark



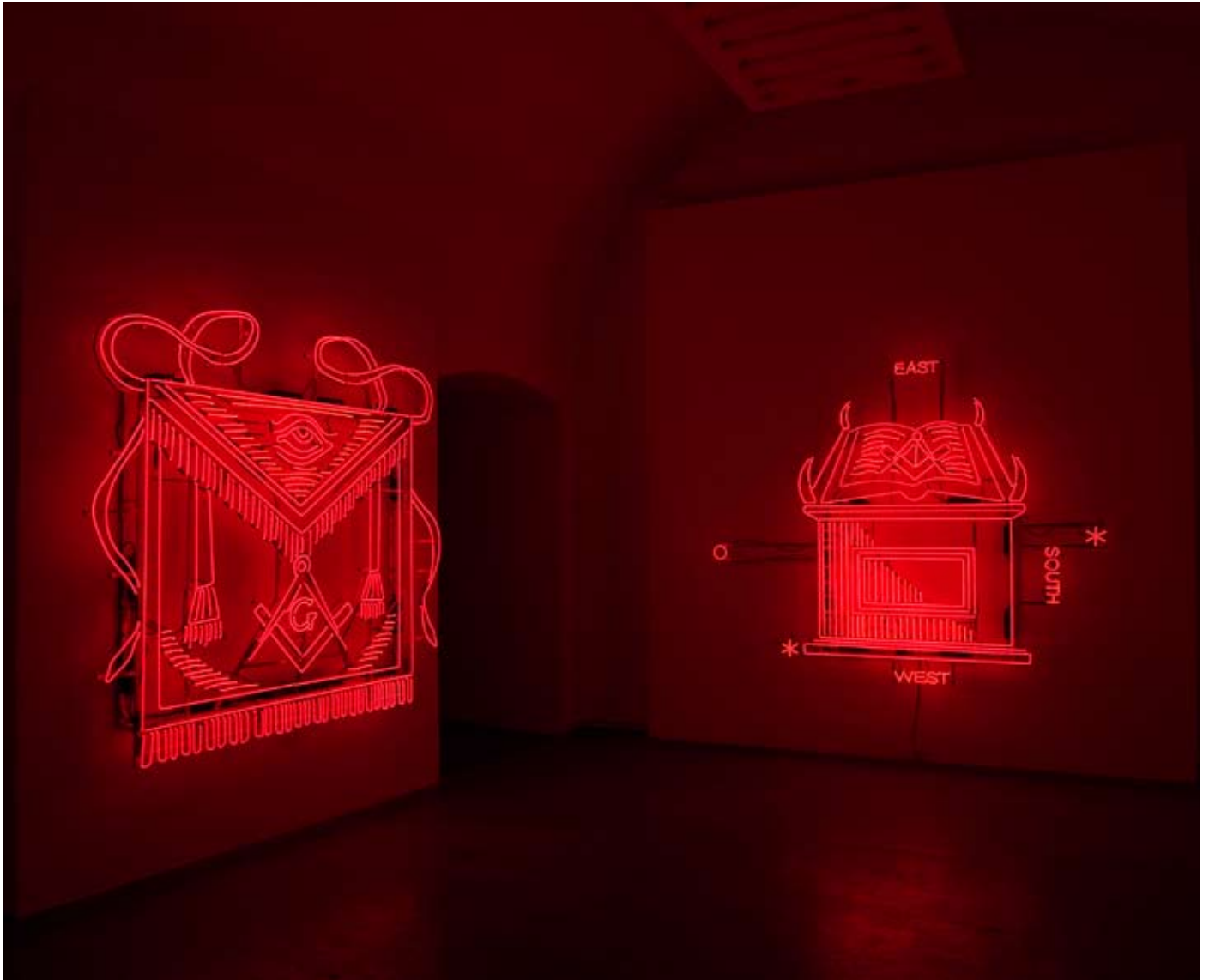
2012, *Altar*, 190cm x 70cm x 20cm, neon tubes on aluminium frame, Royal Library, Copenhagen, Denmark



2012, *Apron*, 180cm x 170cm x 20cm, neon tubes on aluminium frame, Old Town, Copenhagen, Denmark



2012, *Apron*, 180cm x 170cm x 20cm, neon tubes on aluminium frame, detail



2014, *Apron and Altar*, Charim Gallery, Vienna, Austria

The Light of the Lodge
Performance
Video, 4'21"



2012, *The Light of the Lodge*, Copenhagen, Denmark, performance, video, 4'21"



2012, *The Light of the Lodge*, Copenhagen, Denmark, performance, video, 4'21"

The Light of the Lodge
Performance
Photographs

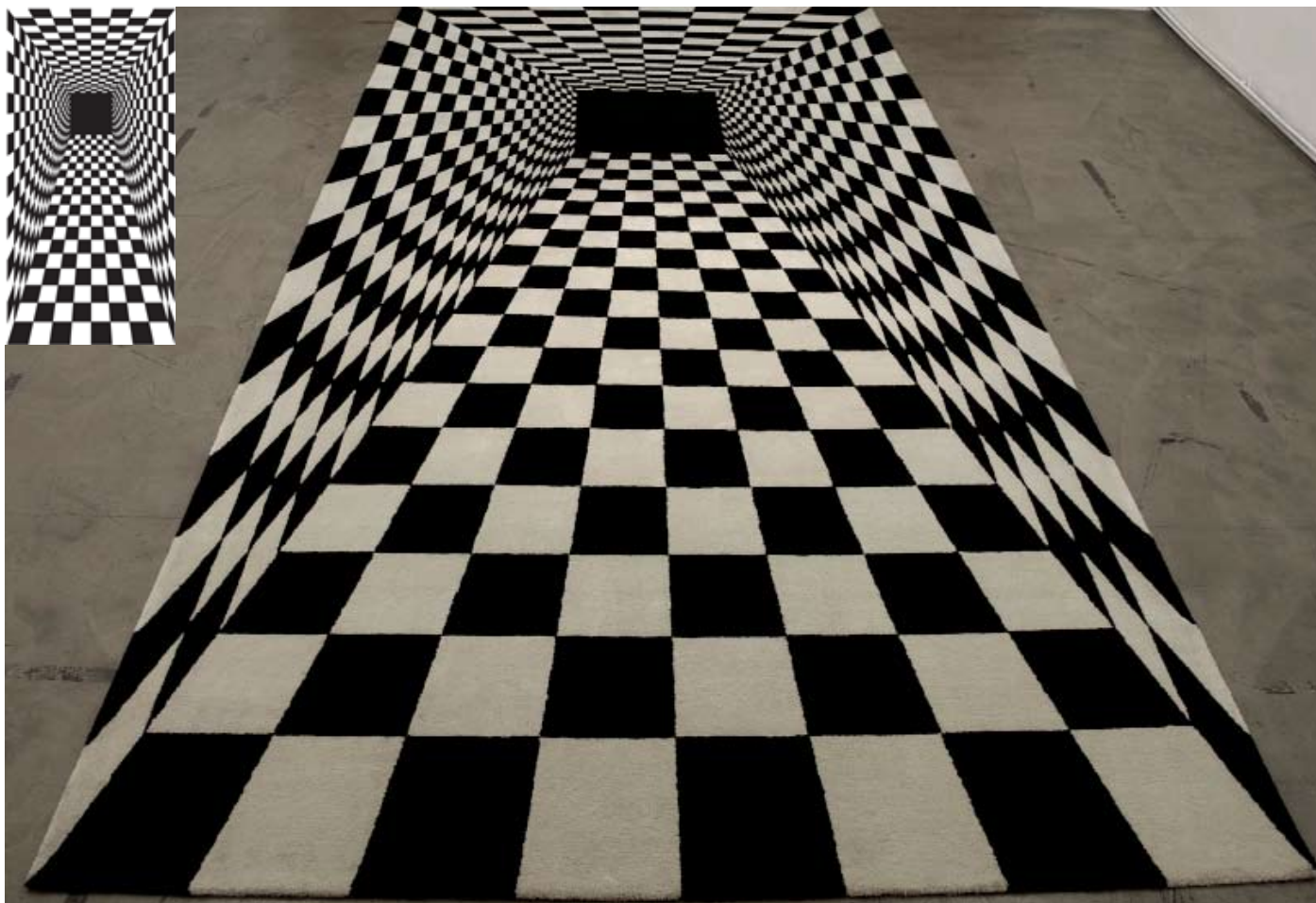


2012, *The Light of the Lodge*, Copenhagen, Denmark, performance, photographs, each 40cm x 26,7cm, ed.3 + AP

The Light of the Lodge
Carpets

THE BLUEPRINT, 2014
carpet, 600 x 300 cm, 100 % wool

l'étrangère

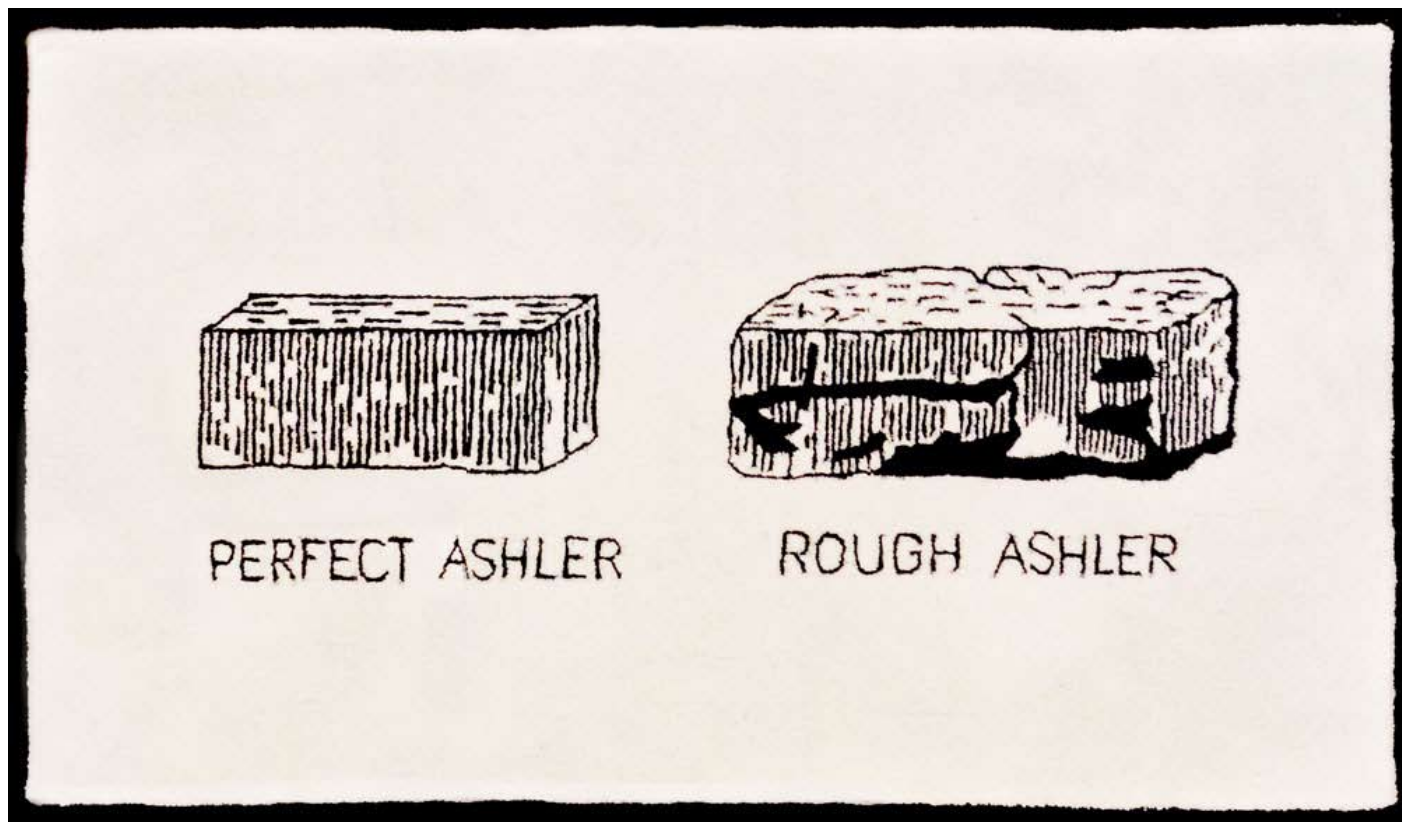


The principle and largest carpet in the series, *The Blueprint* refers to the allegorical teaching using the black and white chessboard floor found in masonic lodges. It is a representation of the ground floor of King Solomon's Temple and is emblematic of human life, checkered with good and evil. The design is based on a small model of the Lodge in the Museum of Freemasonry, London.



PERFECT ASHLER ROUGH ASHLER, 2014
carpet, 120 x 200 cm, 100% wool

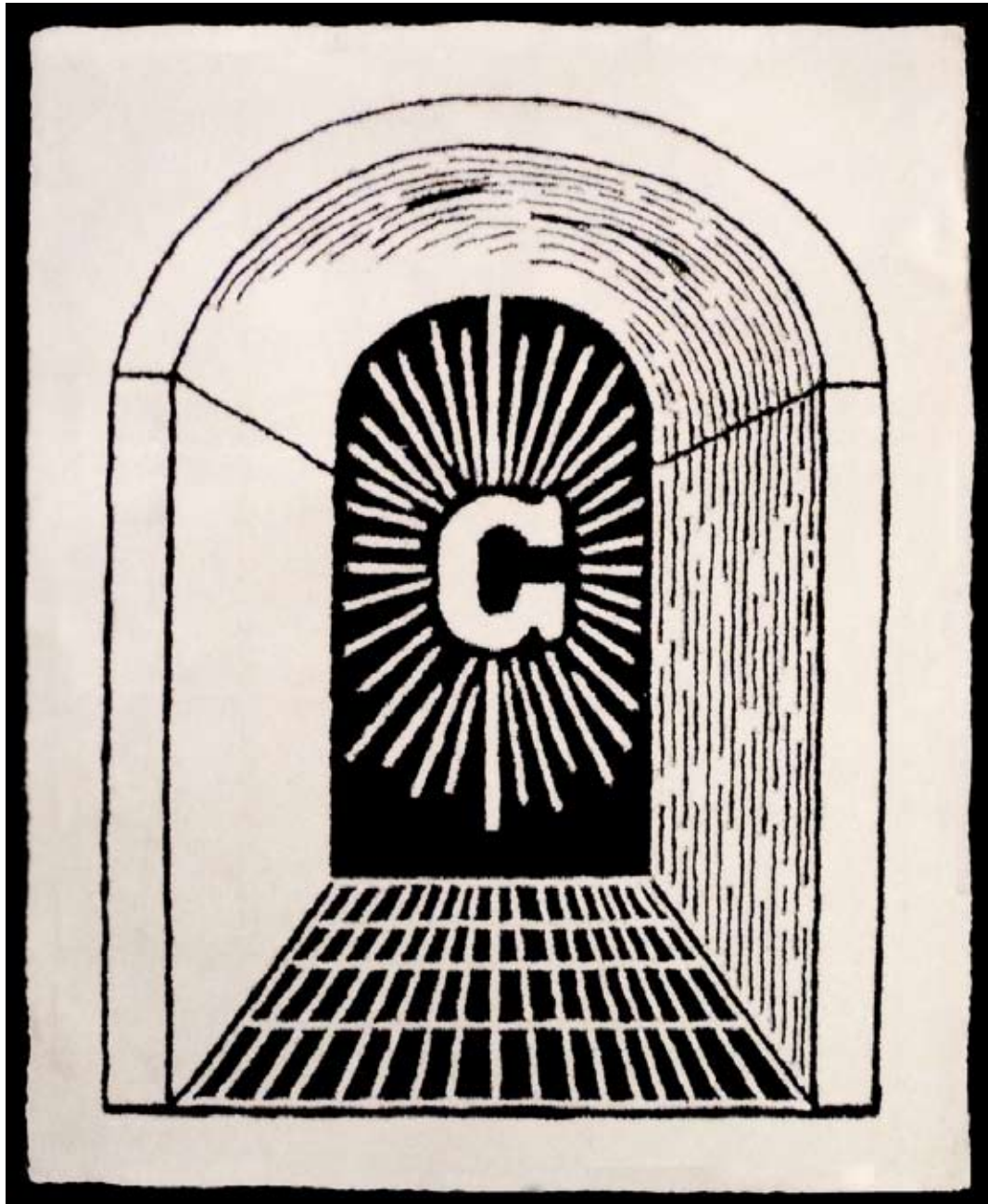
l'étrangère



The rough ashler is the symbol of the present, imperfect physical body; the perfect ashler is the symbol of the physical body after it has been perfected.

MIDDLE CHAMBER, 2014
carpet, 200 x 150 cm, 100% wool

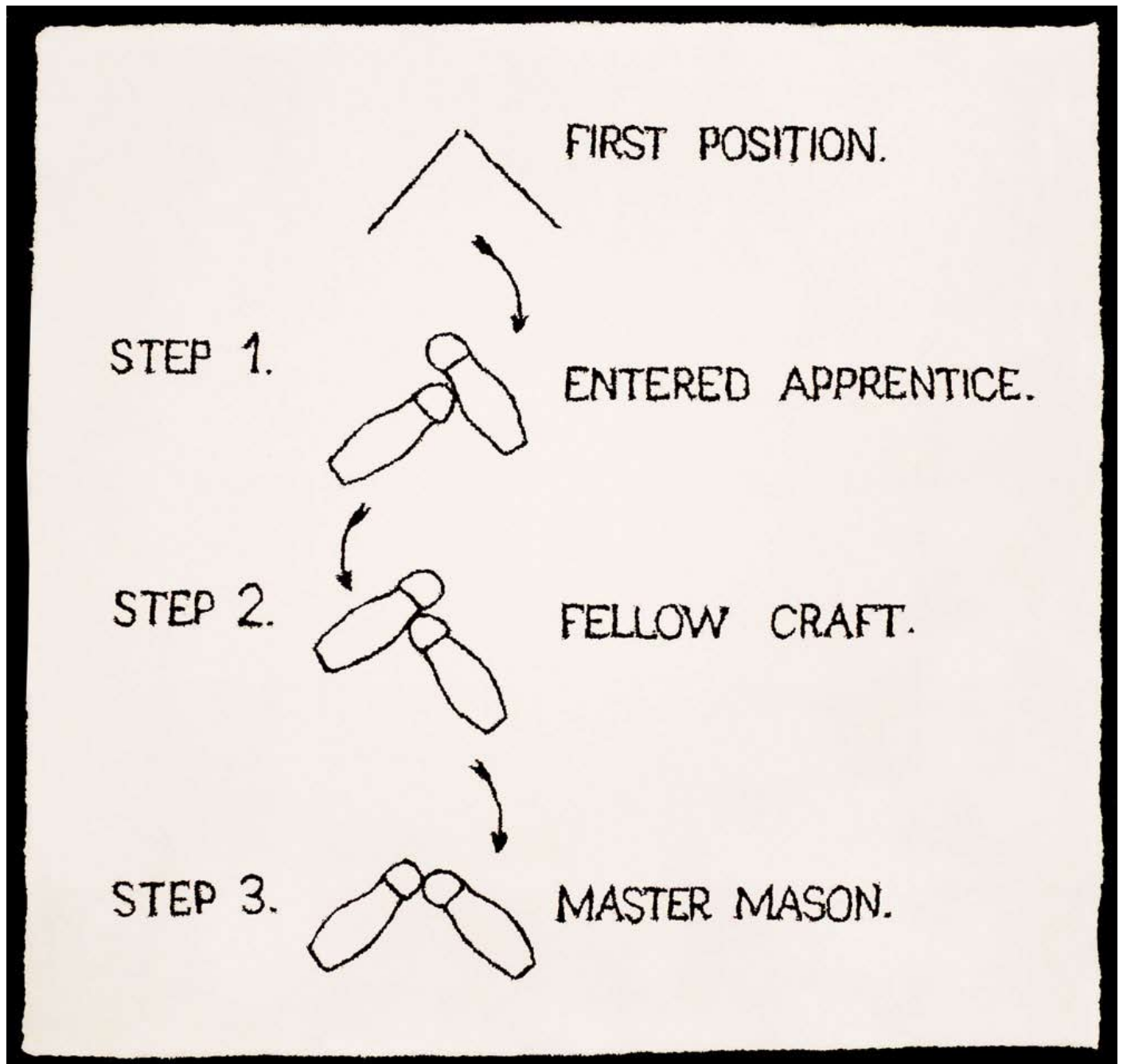
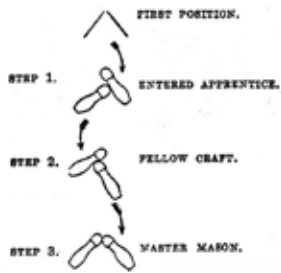
l'étrangère



The winding stairs of life lead us to we know not what – for some, a Middle Chamber of fame and fortune; for others, one of pain and frustration. The Middle Chamber is a feature of King Solomon's Temple. The letter "G" – standing for God, Gnosis and Geometry – illuminates the Middle Chamber, as God illuminates the life of the Craftsman. It reminds us that our every act is seen by the Great Architect. Here, the lodge symbolizes the body from the chest to the genital area. When the temple is rebuilt, the Ground Floor will be the pelvic section, the Middle Chamber the abdominal section, and the Sanctum Sanctorum the thoracic section.

FIRST THREE STEPS IN MASONRY, 2014

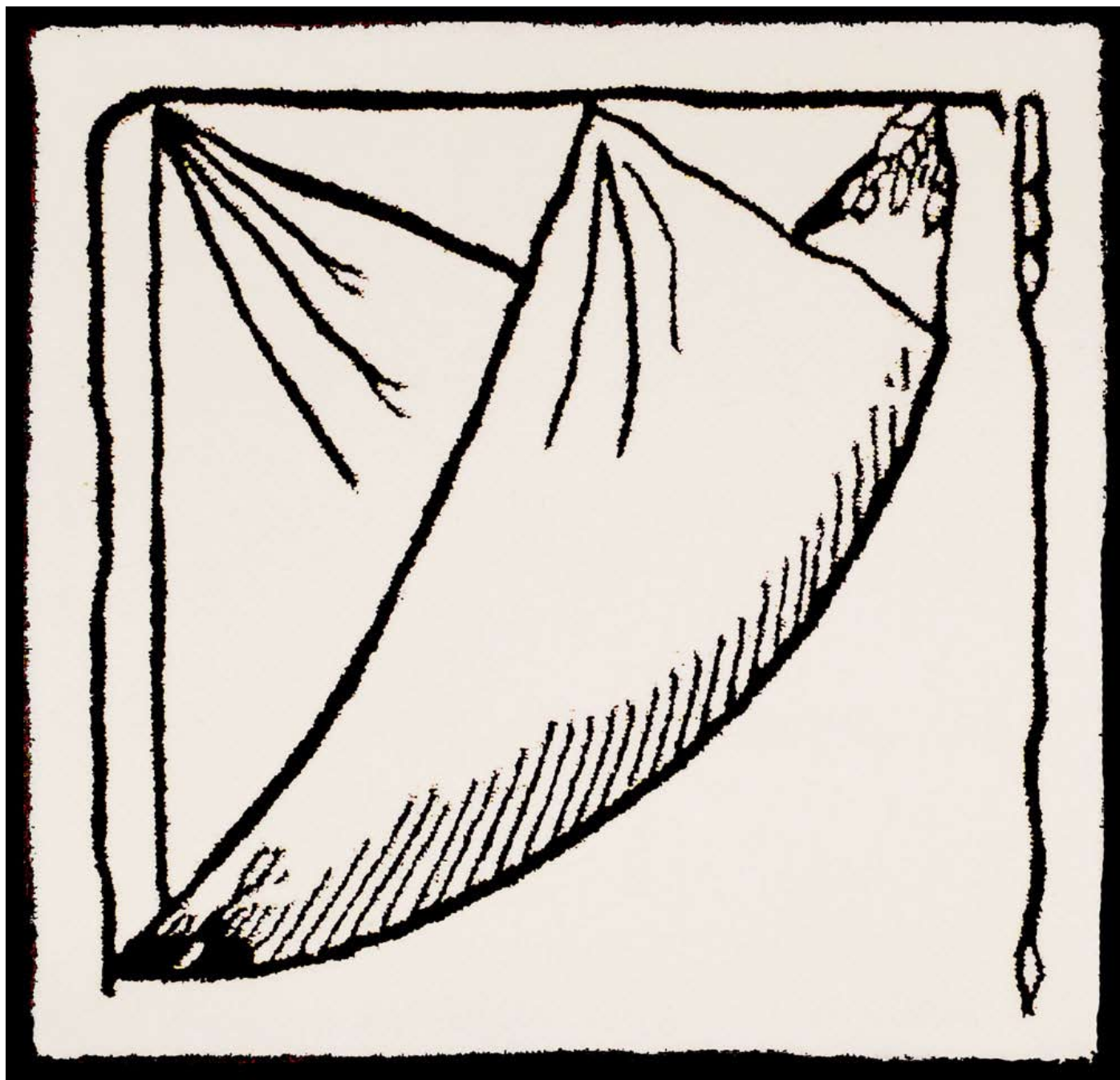
carpet, 200 x 200 cm, 100% wool



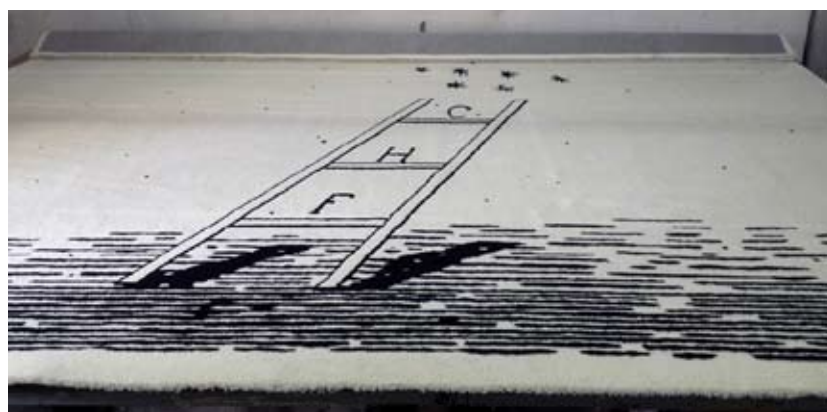
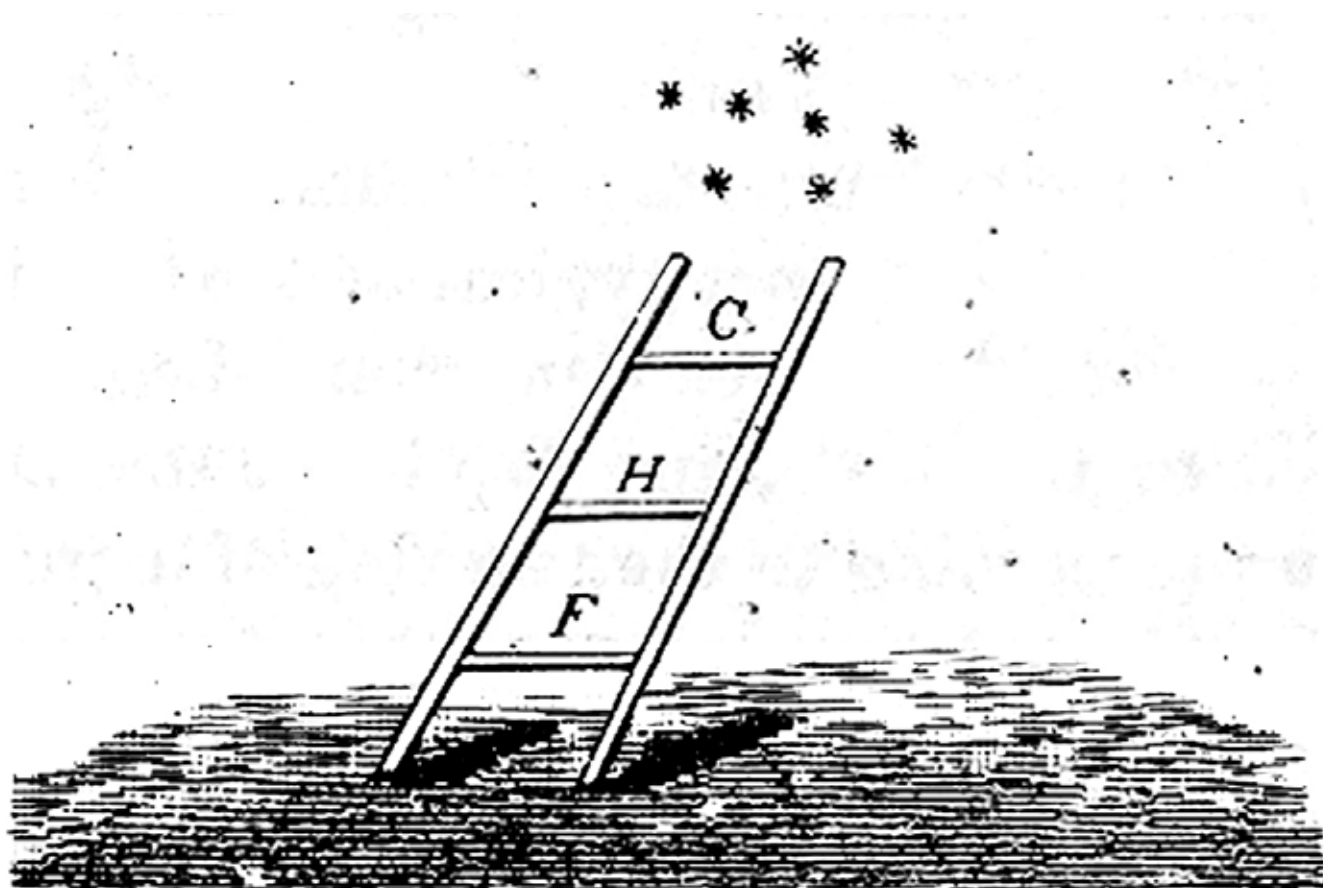
Masonic rituals are conceived around the symbolic story of the building of a great, spiritual temple, represented by the Temple of Solomon. The masonic degrees represent the three stages of life: youth, manhood, and old age.

FELLOW CRAFT'S APRON, 2014
carpet, 100 x 100 cm, 100% wool

l'étrangère



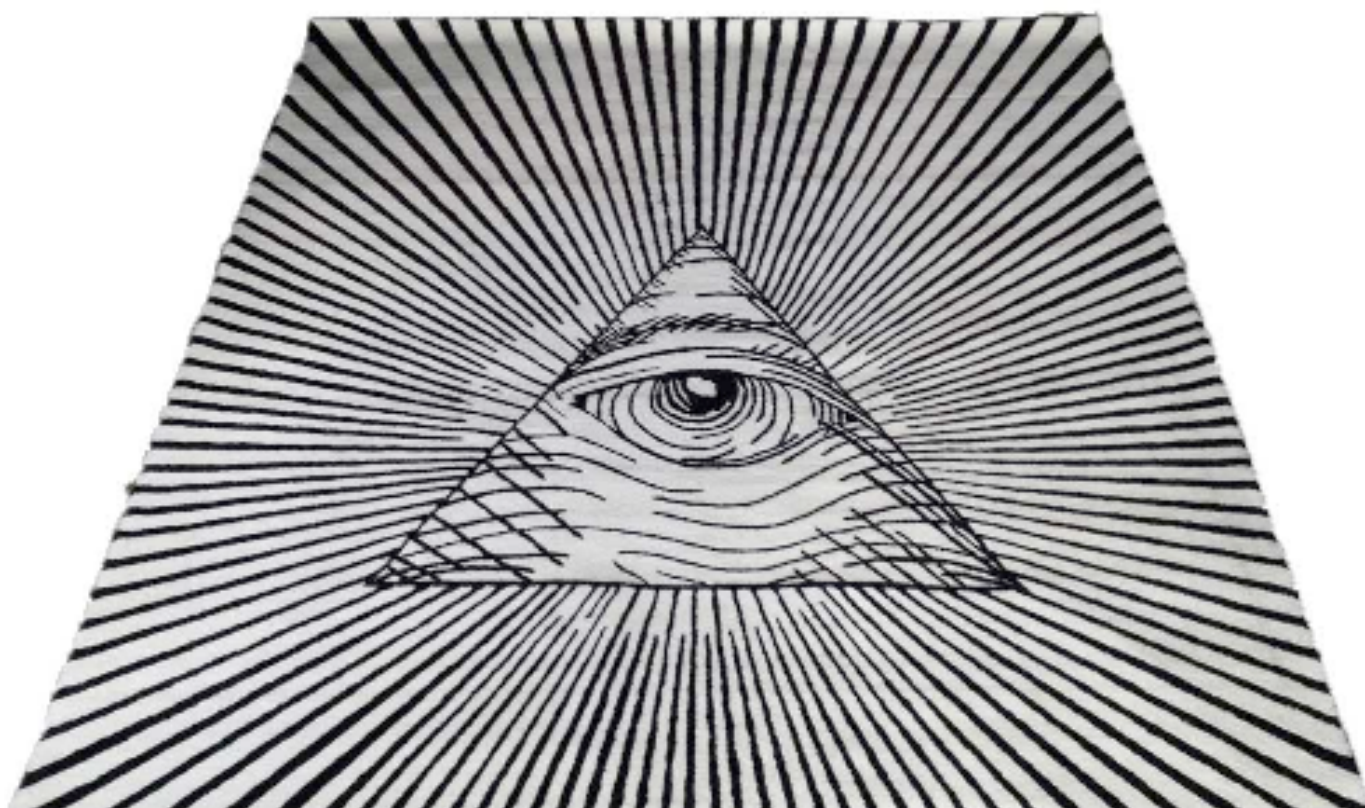
The Masonic Apron is the primary physical representation of a man's commitment to the Craft. It is an inheritance from the past, a badge and an emblem of innocence and sacrifice. Craftsmen wear their aprons with the flap turned down and the corner turned up.



The three rungs of the ladder represent the sun's progress from its lowest southern inclination through three zodiacal signs to the seven stars of the Pleiades in Taurus. This is the time of the vernal equinox, the start of new life. Some sources state that masons believe that human life indeed originated in this constellation. The rungs are labelled Faith, Hope and Charity: the virtues required of the candidate on his mystical journey to spiritual bliss.

THE PROVIDENCE EYE, 2016
carpet, 400 x 300 cm, 100% wool

l'étrangère



Representing the all-seeing eye of God, this is a reminder that a Mason's thoughts and deeds are always observed by the Great Architect of the Universe.

The Light of the Lodge
Collages



The Great Architect, 2014
collage, 33,7 x 51,7 cm, unique



The Grand Lodge, 2014
collage, 39 x 39 cm, unique

l'étrangère

l'étrangère

44a Charlotte Road
London EC2A 3PD
United Kingdom
+44 (0)207 729 9707

mail@letrangere.net