



## THE ART NEWSPAPER

### Shows & Events

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MILAN, ITALY

# Anni and Josef Albers and the pleasure of pre-Columbian art

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Museo delle Culture, Milan  
by Pac Pobric | 28 October 15

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The show's curator, Nicholas Fox Weber, stresses that the exhibition is less about the influence of pre-Columbian art on the work of Anni and Josef Albers than it is about the convergence of ideas and forms, but there are some clear parallels. "You might imagine they were by the same artist," he says, pointing to Anni Albers's textile *Two* (1952, left) and a pre-Columbian embroidered cloth depicting double-headed snakes from around AD1000-1300 (right). "I never quite understood why Anni called her work *Two*, but I could imagine that she knew this pre-Columbian textile and that 'two' referred to the double-headed python."

An exhibition at the recently opened Museo delle Culture in Milan looks at how the German-born American artists Anni and Josef Albers digested Latin American art. The show includes more than 130 works by the couple and 150 artefacts from pre-Columbian Latin America, including many that belonged to the Albers.

Between 1934 and 1967, after Anni and Josef escaped from Nazi Germany to the US, they made 14 trips to Latin America, visiting Chile, Cuba, Mexico and Peru. Along the way, they collected hundreds of textiles and figurines. In pre-Columbian art they saw parallels with their own work, which exalted simplicity as a virtue, says the show's curator, Nicholas Fox Weber, who is also the director of the Albers Foundation. "Anni told me that for them, in Mexico, art was everywhere," he says.

While installing the show, Weber says he came to understand more deeply the values that Anni

and Josef held dear. “I put a drawing of Anni’s next to a tiny textile sample bought in Peru probably 50 years ago, and I sensed the rapport she would have felt with the artist, who lived 100 years before she did and spoke another language,” he says. “The words Anni used more than any others were ‘universal’ and ‘timeless’.”

Weber says these values remain the enduring legacy of the work of Anni and Josef. “I’m hoping that anyone will walk into [the show] and feel a sense of what it is that people have in common, as simple as this sounds,” he says. “Whatever someone’s life experience, colour, line, space and seeing can be lasting sources of joy.”

Costs for the exhibition have been covered by the museum and the Anni and Josef Albers Foundation.

• *A Beautiful Confluence: Anni and Josef Albers and the Latin American World*, Museo delle Culture, Milan, until 13 March 2016

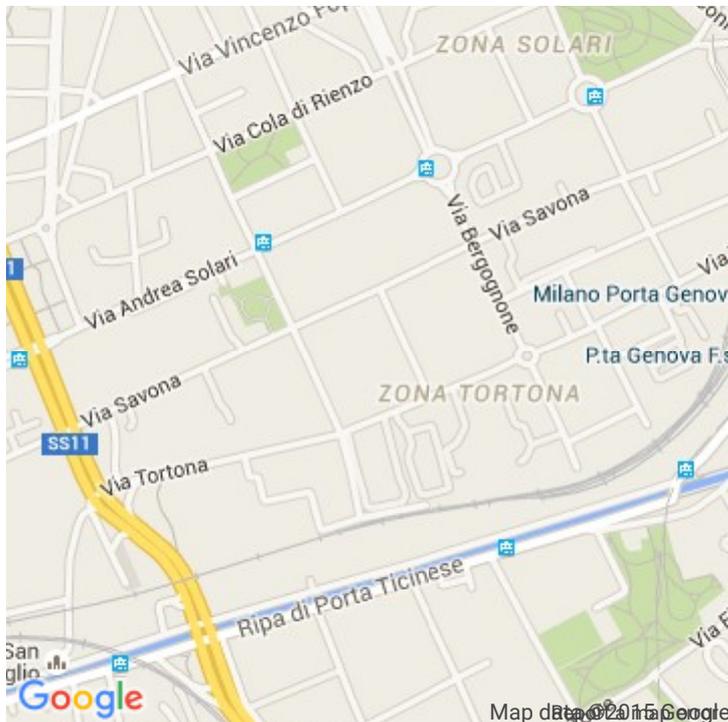
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## VENUE DETAILS

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Museo delle Culture, Milan  
Via Tortona, 56, 20144  
Milan  
Italy  
<http://www.mudec.it>

[View on Google Maps](#)



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