



Left: Collingwood's *M.184 No. 9 Macrogauze* hanging in Rose Uniacke's London home. Right: weavings in the Maximilian William exhibition *A Passion for Form* in summer 2022

Architectural interior designer Rose Uniacke first fell for the wonders of British master weaver Peter Collingwood six years ago after spying a pair of his muscular wall hangings at a provincial auction. "I found them fascinating," she says. "There's something very elegant about them... a geometry and a rawness; juxtaposing strength with a light touch."

It marked the beginning of an interest that has seen Uniacke go on to acquire a significant collection of the artist's creations, a selection of which are sold at her Pimlico Road store. "They have this lovely peaceful quality to them," says Uniacke of his macrogauzes – the intricately patterned, open-structure 2D and 3D wall-hung weaves that Collingwood began creating in 1964.

Uniacke is not alone in championing Collingwood's craftsmanship. Fashion designer Jonathan Anderson is a collector, and London-based interior designer Veere Grenney has used his work in a project. In 2020, the Tate acquired two pieces (one from Uniacke) – *Macrogauze 116 No. 2* and *3D Wall Hanging*. "That would never have happened even a decade ago," says curator and art consultant Andrew Bonacina. "It shows that they're expanding their view of weaving beyond more experimental artists." As strict divisions between visual art and craft are loosened, he adds, there's more space for makers such as Collingwood, who died in 2008, to be acknowledged. In 2015, Phillips sold a large 3D macrogauze for a record £22,500; Uniacke is currently offering three macrogauzes at prices ranging from £28,000 to £40,000.

Created on a one-of-a-kind loom that frees the warp threads to sit any way, rather than only parallel to the weft, the macrogauzes are testament

CRAFT

Peter Collingwood weavings

The textile artist is enjoying a resurgence thanks to a raft of influential fans

WORDS BY AIMEE FARRELL

to Collingwood's focus on precision. Born in north-west London in 1922, he initially trained as a doctor, specialising in surgery. Part artist, part engineer, he fashioned his first Inkel loom from a pair of deck chairs and later employed everything from keyboard parts to discarded wooden balconies to create custom constructions that could realise his geometric weaves. "I did it because it puzzled me as a machine," he said.

As an army officer, Collingwood would weave on a loom in the back of an ambulance. It was while working with the Red Cross in Jordan that he first encountered professional weaving and began amassing textiles – everything from Bedouin tent hangings to Indian money belts to Afghan socks – that became the subject of *The Maker's Hand: a Close Look at Textile Structures* (1987), one of a series of books offering a window into his forensic fascination with form.

Back in England, Collingwood worked in the studios of the pre-eminent weavers Ethel Mairet, Barbara Sawyer and Alastair Morton before setting up his own workshop in Archway in the mid-'50s, crafting modern rugs on a second-hand Maxwell loom. He sold them for around £5 a piece to Liberty, Heal's and the Cambridge gallery Primavera. These later evolved into larger-scale works.

In 1969, Collingwood became the first living weaver to show at the V&A when a series of his rugs and wall hangings went on display alongside the work of potter Hans Coper. Now, as studio ceramics continue to skyrocket in value, the attention of collectors is shifting towards the simpatico, but more obtainable, weaves. Collingwood rugs, for instance, can still be picked up for around £500, while the angle fells are offered in the region of £8,000-£10,000.

"There's an ongoing re-evaluation of where that generation of makers sits within postwar British art and design that's part of a wider shift," says Ben Williams, a curator and art adviser to clients including Phillips auctioneers. He believes the market is yet to fully understand the historical context of Collingwood: "People are buying

"THERE'S SOMETHING ELEGANT ABOUT THEM, A GEOMETRY AND RAWNESS"

because it appeals – it can be as simple as a colourway that matches an interior." But as smaller galleries such as Oxford Ceramics and Maximilian William, which recently showed Collingwood wall hangings from the collection of Dr Brian Harding, celebrate him, buyers are becoming more wise.

"Collingwood is one of those artists who has always been considered within traditional weaving. Unlike contemporaries such as Sheila Hicks who sometimes stepped away from the loom, he remained faithful," adds Bonacina. "But he rebuilt his loom in order to push the boundaries of the craft and he is now, finally, being appreciated for his role in bringing thread and fibre art into a radical space." ■HTSI

WHERE TO BUY

Oxford Ceramics
oxfordceramics.com
Phillips phillips.com
Richard Saltoun
richardsaltoun.com
Rose Uniacke
roseuniacke.com
Sworders sworder.co.uk

WHERE TO SEE

petercollingwood
textiles.com
Tate tate.org.uk
V&A vam.ac.uk

WHAT TO READ

The Maker's Hand: A Close Look at Textile Structures (1987) by Peter Collingwood
The Techniques of Rug Weaving (1968) by Peter Collingwood

3D WALL HANGING, C1960, ACQUIRED BY THE TATE



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Above: Collingwood at the loom, c1965. Below: an '80s macrogauze sold by Phillips for £22,500 in 2015. Bottom left: weavings in the home of collector Dr Brian Harding

