ROSE UNIACKE

OPEN WEAVE: SIMONE PROUVÉ AND PETER COLLINGWOOD

Text by Glenn Adamson

Twenty years ago, at her studio in rural Chazelles le Haut, Simone Prouvé captured a memorable photograph of one of her own creations. Within a frame of heavy timbers above and to the sides, the square composition seems to levitate (the diagonal wires by which it hangs are just barely visible). In turn, it frames the landscape beyond, transmuting the tiered rooflines of the farm buildings into shadow, echoing the twisted sapling to the right and doubling the rambling low wall behind. In this setting of ancient stone, Prouvé's textile seems diaphanous, ethereal. In fact, it is composed of stainless steel, carbon fiber, and fiberglass threads–a tough materiality that bespeaks an urgent impulse to see the world anew.

The image serves as an apt portal into the Prouvé's weavings, which are too little known outside France, despite their austere magnificence and the illustrious contexts in which she has lived and worked. Daughter of the eminent designer-engineer Jean Prouvé, she was introduced to the modernist architectural élite in her youth, corresponding with Le Corbusier and executing upholstery fabrics for Charlotte Perriand. In 1963, she began collaborating with her future husband André Schlosser, freely interpreting his designs in tapestry. In 1990, as she was finally embarking on a solo career as a textile designer, she began working with non-flammable fibers, and collaborating directly with architects like Reiko Hayama, Christian de Portzamparc, and Odile Decq, who commissioned her to weave an entire building façade for the MACRO, the Museum for Modern Art in Rome.

Rose Uniacke presents Prouvé in dialogue with the late, great Peter Collingwood. It is an unexpected but inspired pairing, partly because the two weavers are so aesthetically compatible. They have a shared interest in refractory translucence and taut abstraction, yet also completely contrasting approaches to composition: Prouvé, the exploratorydraftswoman, Collingwood, the hyper-logical constructivist. The curatorial premise is also appropriate on another level, in that it puts together two artists who have often been defined relationally, through juxtaposition to others. One could say that this is the fate of the modern weaver. Even the discipline's most prominent luminaries, like Anni Albers and Dorothy Liebes, mostly worked on commission in response to specific environments, as if their textiles needed such a context to give them purpose. Certainly, Prouvé has thrived following this pathway, having completed hundreds of architectural projects over the course of her long career.

Simone Prouvé

Collingwood, too, has often been seen relationally, if in a different way. Though his practice was more oriented to self-standing works than site-specific commissions, his art has always seemed to work best in conversation, in the context of many group shows and two-person presentations, most importantly an exhibition with ceramist Hans Coper at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1969. On that occasion, Collingwood candidly described his own work as "controlled and impersonal," implying that its particular beauty was the kind one might perceive in a mathematical theorem rather than an expressionist painting.[1] The historian Tanya Harrod has rightly noted the compatibility of Coper and Collingwood's work–"their pots and weavings had a coolly rational look and developed formal ideas in logical sequences"–and there were formal echoes, too, in the tapering, elegant silhouettes of both artists' work.[2] Yet their joint exhibition was again as much a matter of contrast as comparison, with Coper's glowering, mysterious, and archaic vessels throwing Collingwood's clarity into relief, and vice versa.

For Prouvé, the question of authorial control has been fraught. For centuries, the tapestry tradition in France held to a strict division of labor between artist and artisans, with the "cartoon" or preparatory study provided by the former, and the actual work done by the latter. This was true in the Renaissance and Baroque eras and remained so in the twentieth century, when the storied workshops at Aubusson were revived by Marie Cuttoli, executing designs by the likes of Leger, Miró, and Picasso. For most of her career, Prouvé was obliged to operate within the confines of this *modus operandi*. Among her most impressive early works was a hanging for the church of Sacre-Coeur de Bonnecousse, nearly four by six meters in scale; though woven entirely by her own hands, it was conceived by the painter Philippe Hadengue.

Prouvé's creative partnership with Schlosser had a similar dynamic; though she adapted his compositions rather freely–it was definitely a true collaboration–she understandably felt constrained by her role: "Toward the end of our work together, I felt trapped in the role of a worker, an *exécutant*, rendered passive by the burden of intepretation." [Vers la fin de la période du travail en commun, je me sentais enfermée dans un rôle d'ouvrière, d'exécutant, d'interprète rendue passive par la trope grande charge.][3] It was only with their separation in 1989 that Prouvé was formally recognized as an artist rather than an artisan; for good reason is the last chapter of her recent autobiography titled, triumphantly, "Seule."

[1] Collingwood/Coper (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1969), 5.
[2] Tanya Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 301.
[3] Muriel Seidel, ed., *Simone Prouvé: Tisser la Lumière* (Paris: Selena Éditions, 2023), 140.

Peter Collingwood

Collingwood, of course, did not have to contend with the gender dynamics that tacitly circumscribed Prouvé's agency, but he, too, trained within a system in which weavers were understood as subordinate, not to art but rather to industry. He started his career, in 1950, as a student of Ethel Mairet, whose book *Hand-weaving To-day* (1939) transmitted the Bauhaus ideal to Britain.[4] In her view the textile designer's job was to work out patterns which could be replicated en masse in factories. Collingwood went on to work with Alastair Morton at Edinburgh Weavers (effectively, the R&D branch of a textile firm called Morton Sundour). When he set out on his own in 1958, selling his pieces through modernist-inclined stores like Liberty and Heal's, Collingwood was confronted with the brutal economic reality of the handloom. As a profile in *Design* magazine would later explain, "he was at first mainly concerned with techniques–for example finding ways of making rugs in two days instead of in two months."[5] It was simply too slow to easily make a living, and hard on the body as well.

The need for greater speed had a role in Collingwood's most important creative breakthrough, in 1964: the development of the "macrogauze." Traditionally, a gauze structure involves incremental sideways shifts in the positon of the warp (the vertical threads, held in tension during the weaving process), introducing diagonal vectors. The structure appears in historic Peruvian weavings that were much studied by modern weavers, such as Lili Blumenau.[6] In his rugs, Collingwood had been experimenting with an innovative mechanical adaption to his loom that he called "shaft switching," which allowed him to move the warp threads laterally back and forth across the composition, achieving tapestry-type effects. In his "anglefells" he worked across a consistent diagonal arrangement of the weft. Macrogauze is a breathtakingly radical extension of these same techniques: as Collingwood explains it, the warps "become even more mobile, crossing each other in groups, twisting, even turning into weft."[7] In a sense, weaving is entirely transcended, as the warps float entirely free of the bidirectional matrix, leaping unsupported across space. They are, to borrow a phrase from Umberto Eco, "open works," in which conventional structure and functionality are relinquished, leaving ample space for interpretation.[8]

Collingwood's innovation had an important precedent in the recent work of Lenore Tawney, the American fiber artist. She had

[4] Ethel Mairet, *Hand-weaving To-day*: Traditions and Changes (London: Faber and Faber, 1939).
[5] Tarby Davenport, "Weaver's Trade," Design 241 (Jan. 1969), 30.
[6] See Lili Blumenau, *Creative Design in Wall Hangings* (New York: Crown, 1967), 150.
[7] *Peter Collingwood* (London: Crafts Council Gallery, 1981), 3.
[8] Umberto Eco, *Opera Aperta: forma e indeterminazione nelle poetiche contemporanee* (Milano: Bompiani, 1962).

studied gauze techniques with Blumenau, inspiring her to explore open textile structures. After experimenting with a singularly impractical method that she called "finger weaving," in which she simply pulled the wefts in loose lines through the warps–producing something more like a drawing than a textile, fragile to the point of ephemerality–she hit upon the idea of creating a specialized reed, the part of the loom that hold the warps in even spacing, and prevents them getting tangled, which would allow her to manipulate the threads' relative position in each pass of the loom. This, she realized, would allow her to "Weave each warp toward a central point where all are woven together, then out again to separate, to no weaving"–a perfect description of the "woven forms" that she began making in 1961.[9]

The macrogauzes that Collingwood began just a few years later are clearly indebted to these pioneering works of Tawney's, and share their oscillating rhythms of divergence and convergence. Their affect, however, is very different. Tawney's woven forms have a ritualistic quality, connected closely to her meditative practice. She often spoke of them as being like breathing, or flowing water, and clearly improvised as she went along, sometimes adorning them with knots and feathers. Collingwood's compositions are more diagrammatic and exacting, achieving much of their effect through sheer complexity, Bach fugues to Tawney's plainchant. One pair of his macrogauzes shown (84/129–30, see page 20) here mirror one another perfectly; each is a stack of thirteen intervals, populated with contrasting densities of criss-crossing warp threads. Another (143/52, see page 24) proceeds upwards in strict parallel, before branching out into a torch-like display of tessellating diamonds. Most impressive of all, perhaps, is a blaze-red, volumetric hanging in which the threads move not only sideways within one plane, but also forwards and backwards–a display of technical prowess akin to the works of American weaver Kay Sekimachi or Ruth Asawa.

It is hardly surprising, given the astonishing intricacy of such works, that Collingwood has gone down in history as a master technician; and he cultivated that reputation further by publishing several books explaining his methods with marvelous lucidity, including his essential weavers' guidebook *The Maker's Hand: A Close Look at Textile Structures* (1987).[10] One of the salutary effects of the present

[9] Lenore Tawney, entry dated June 26, 1958, Journal 30.1, Lenore G. Tawney Foundation. See Glenn Adamson, "Sculptor," in Karen Patterson, ed., *Lenore Tawney: Mirror of the Universe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019).

[10] Peter Collingwood, *The Maker's Hand: A Close Look at Textile Structures* (London" Interweave Press, 1987).

pairing between Collingwood and Prouvé is that it brings out his more playful side–the evident delight that he derived from working out each new configuration, and though his explorations of light and color. Equally, this duet of two textile artists highlights the methodological aspects of Prouve's practice, which can too easily be lost sight of. As for many artists with decades of experience–one thinks of the Monet of the *Water Lilies*–she summons a wonderful spontaneity in her late naturalistic works. Like Tawney's early "finger weavings," they feel more sketched than woven, an effect extremely difficult to achieve in the protracted process of making. Yet there is nothing physically slight about them. Prouvé has spent years developing her palette of metallic and synthetic threads and combines them to glorious effect, as resplendent as any historic tapestry with its gold-and silver-wound threads. (Collingwood, by the way, was interested in weaving with stainless steel and nylon monofilament, especially in the late stages of his career; had he not died in 2008, it seems likely that he too would have further explored the world of artificial materials.) The combination of technical mastery and artistic expression that she has achieved over her long career is perfectly summed up by her collaborator, the architect Odile Decq: "She works her material as an artist, sending something into her loom, into the weft; though she is the master of its trajectory, it nonetheless has a final result of revelation."[11] [Elle travaille sa matière comme une artiste, elle envoie quelque chose dans son métier à tisser, dans sa trame, dont elle maîtrise le trajet, mais dont le resultat à la fin es pourtant une revelation.]

Such praise is well justified, but we can perhaps go still further. Until very recently, it has been all too easy to underestimate figures like Prouvé and Collingwood, who were working in mediums traditionally associated with craft, all the more so when they were willing to subsume their ego to the exigencies of architectural embellishment, or the conversational dynamics that may occur between weavers, potters, and furniture designers. This implication of domesticity, from a strictly modernist point of view, was a liability. But of course, this was the condition in which European tapestry had its initial inception and became the most venerated of all art forms, prized much more highly than painting and sculpture. Perhaps now, when art is more and more serving as a social connective tissue rather than remaining at a lofty distance from daily life, we can reconnect to this deep history. In this context, Prouvé and Collingwood re-emerge as even more than technical and expressive geniuses. They offer a model for what art, in the future, may become.

[11] Odile Decq, "Du tissage à l'oeuvre d'art," in Seidel, ed., *Simone Prouvé*, 200.

PANNEAU 021093

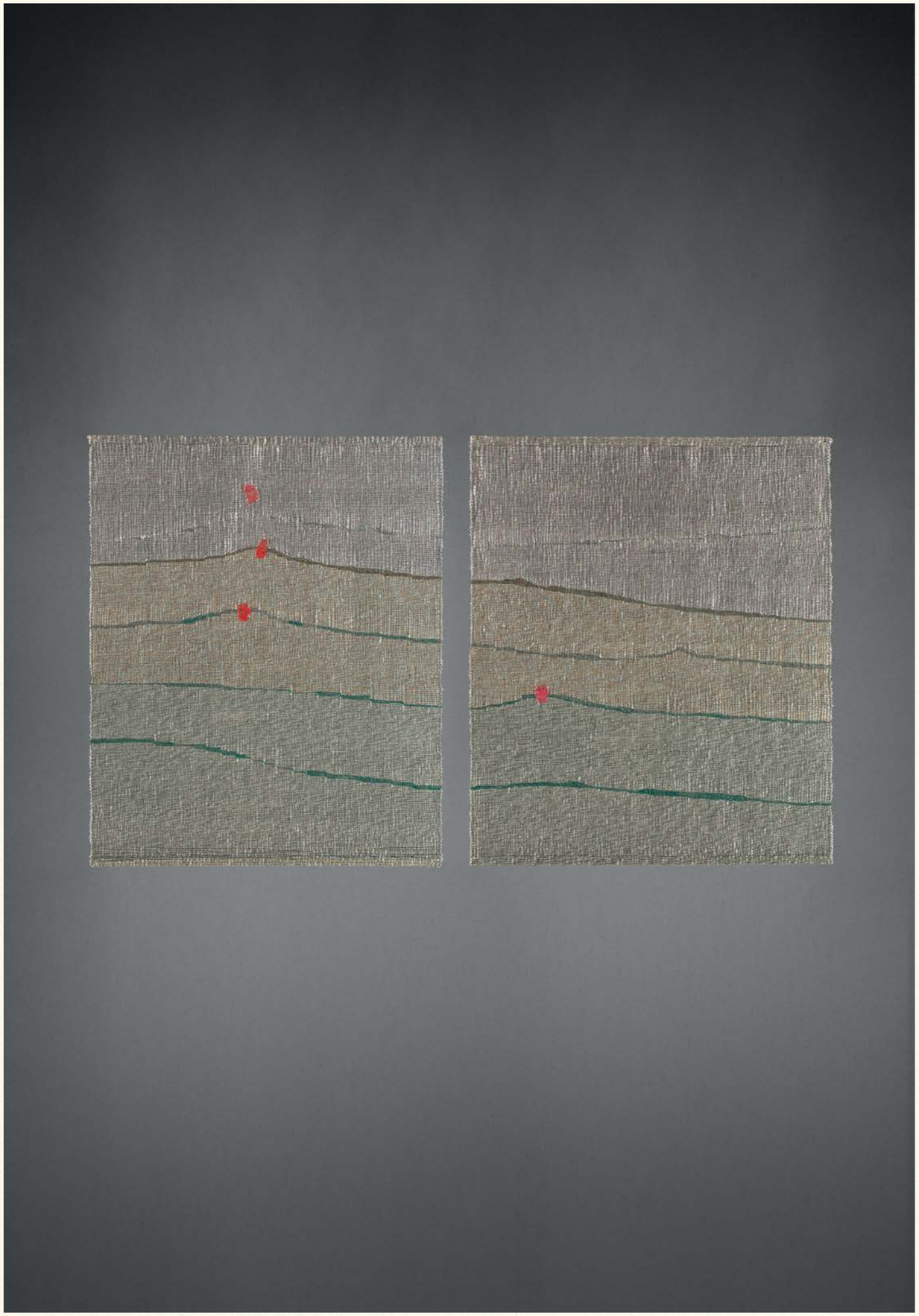
Simone Prouvé (b.1931-)
Panneau 021093, Unique, 1993
Twaron, Panox, Fibreglass, Kermel
Height: 122cm, Width: 100cm
Signed S. PROUVÉ and referenced
'021093' on the reverse

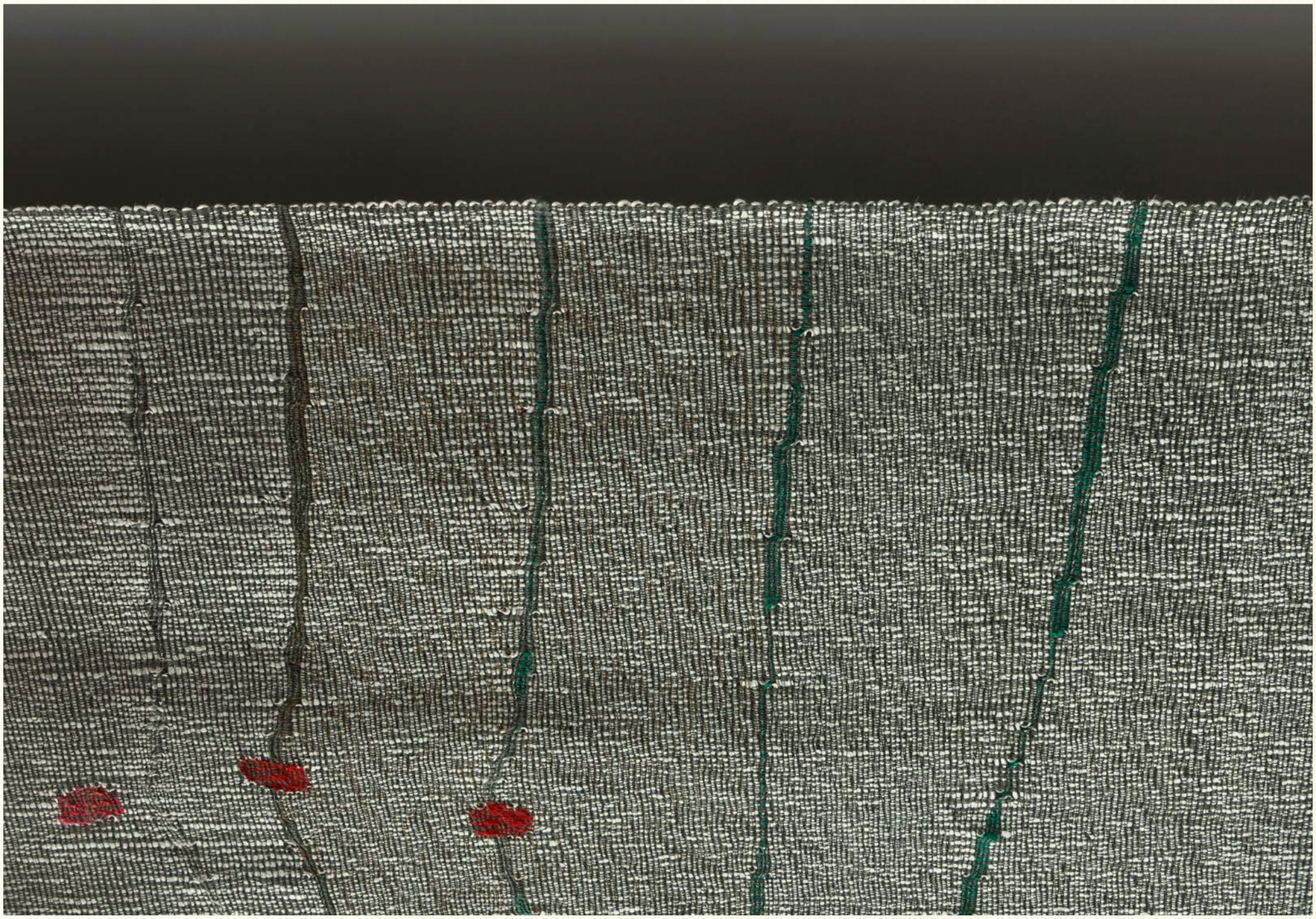
Provenance:
Acquired directly from the artist.

Exhibited:
Galerie Meubles et Fonctions (MFI),
Paris, 1995

In this piece, Simone Prouvé plays with the language of line, as we read this textile from left to right. Two panneaux hung side by side make up a whole, the gap between the two pieces becoming a part of the artwork itself. Once again, Prouvé's penchant for neutral colours is revealed, the only exception being the red accents which punctuate the horizontal green lines.

Prouvé often experimented with complex manmade materials, as is the case with this piece, made of Twaron, a 'para-aramid'. This high-performance material, which is both heat and chemical-resistant, is thought to be one of the most valuable manmade fibres, largely thanks to its durability. This knowledge further complicates our relationship with Prouvé's designs, as their inspiration is so blatantly organic.





PANNEAU 031205

Simone Prouvé (b. 1931-)
Panneau 031205, Unique, 2005
Kevlar, Nomex, Kanekalon
Height: 193cm, Width: 111cm
Signed S. PROUVÉ and dated
on the reverse

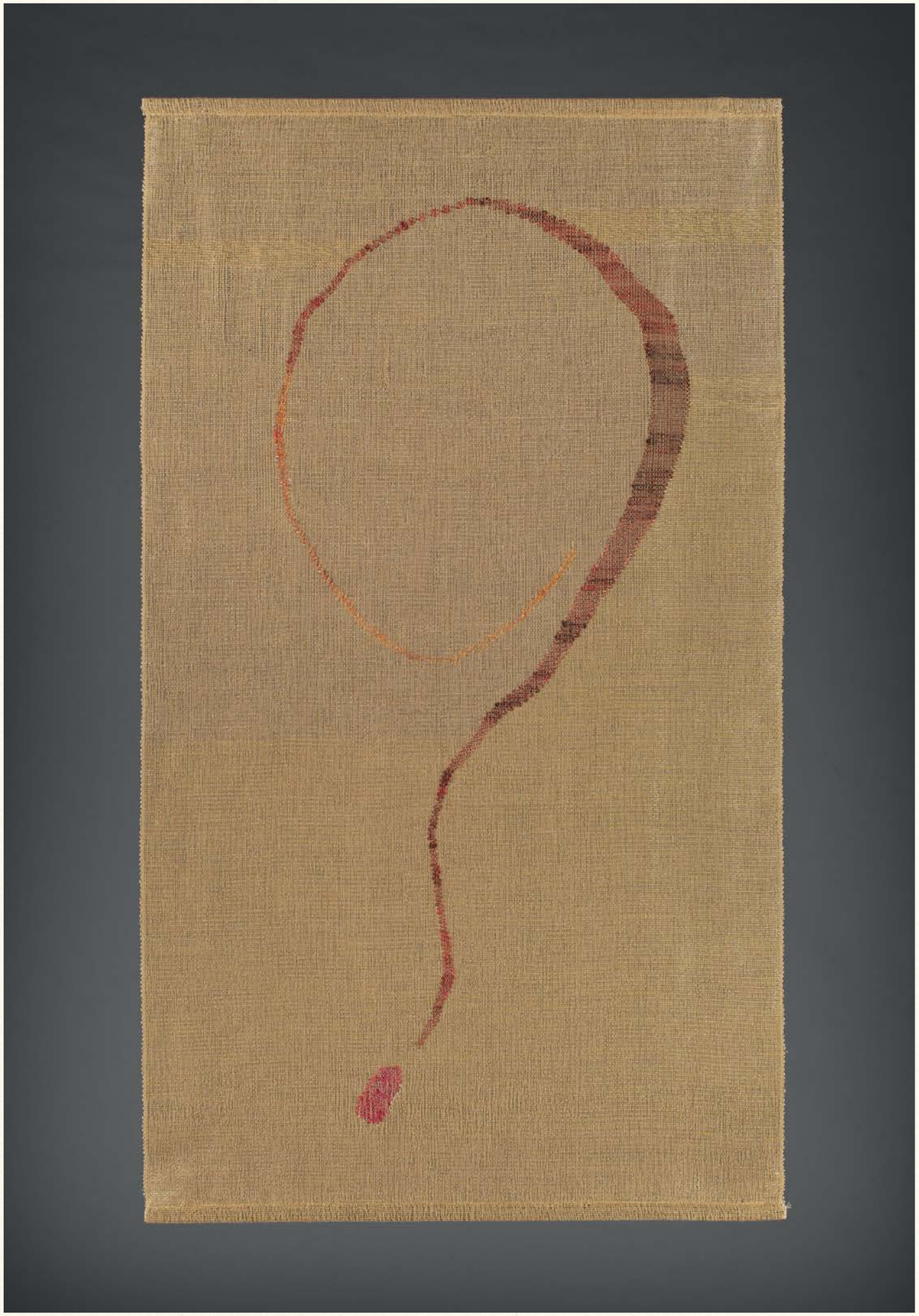
Provenance:
Acquired directly from the artist.

Exhibited:
Biennale Emergences, Pantin, 2018

This piece by Simone Prouvé consists solely of Kevlar, a man-made, synthetic material. Commonly, this incombustible fibre is used for things such as helmets, bulletproof vests, firefighters' garments, and bicycle tires. In 2000 Prouvé introduced flame-retardent materials to her work and is hence known for experimenting with unusual fibres. She spins her own yarn for each of her hangings, carefully choosing her fibers in order to create long-lasting, rot proof pieces that support and encourage sustainability.

This weaving is a rarity for Prouvé, as she seldomly creates a shape as obvious as the question mark.

Keeping the colour palette rather simple, with different shades of brown and creme, she creates a timeless design, that can easily compliment various interior styles.



PANNEAU 011297

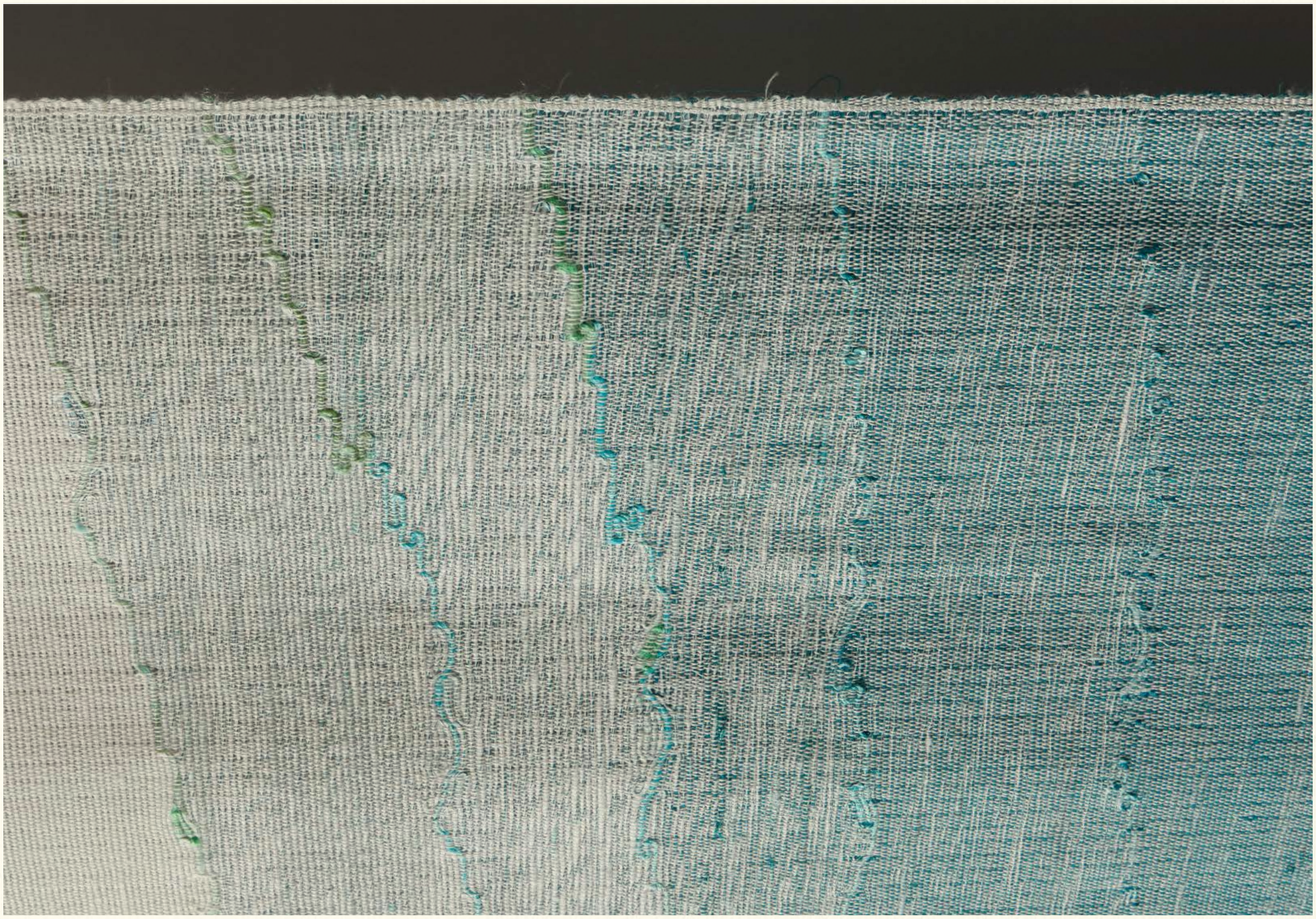
Simone Prouvé (b.1931–)
Panneau 011297, Unique Pair, 1997
Clevyl (some Nomex for the selvages)
Height: 169cm, Width: 79.50cm
Signed S.PROUVÉ and dated
on the reverse

Provenance:
Acquired directly from the artist.

Exhibited:
Espace ELEC at the Centre national
de l'industrie et des techniques
(CNIT), Parvis de la Défense, 1998

This pair of Panneaus by Simone Prouvé is made entirely of clevyl, a non-flammable material used for things such as knit fabrics, baby diapers and fake fur. The fibres are easy to dye, resulting in a beautiful range of blue tones.

The abstract shapes, as with many of Prouvé's weavings, appear to be drawn from nature, resembling the outlines of distant mountains or the birds-eye view of an ocean tide. Prouvé likes to play with our skills of imagination, leaving her designs open to interpretation. The overall impression of these weavings is peaceful and delicate, yet somewhat playful, with bursts of vibrant colour visible in its horizontal lines.



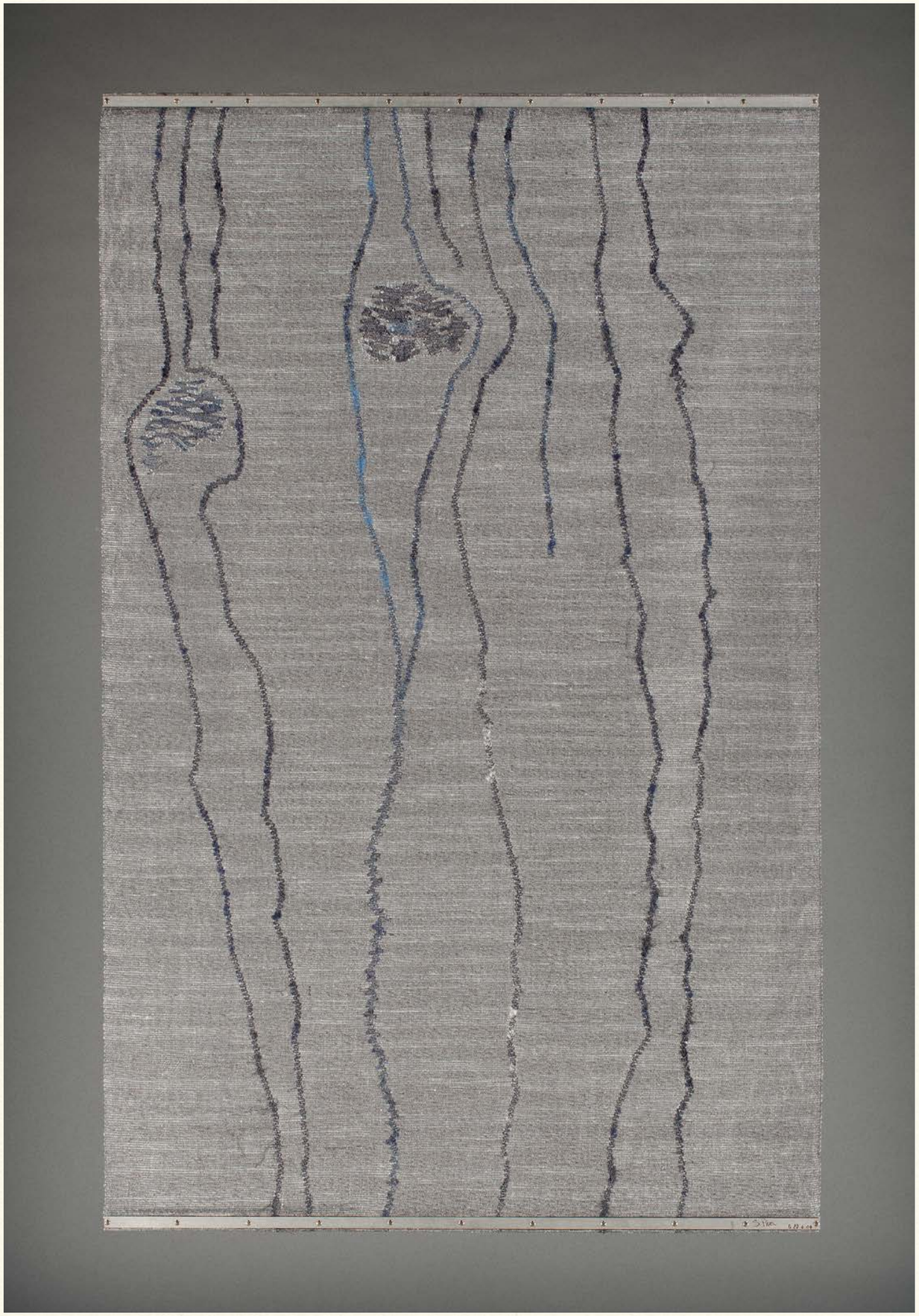
PANNEAU 020504

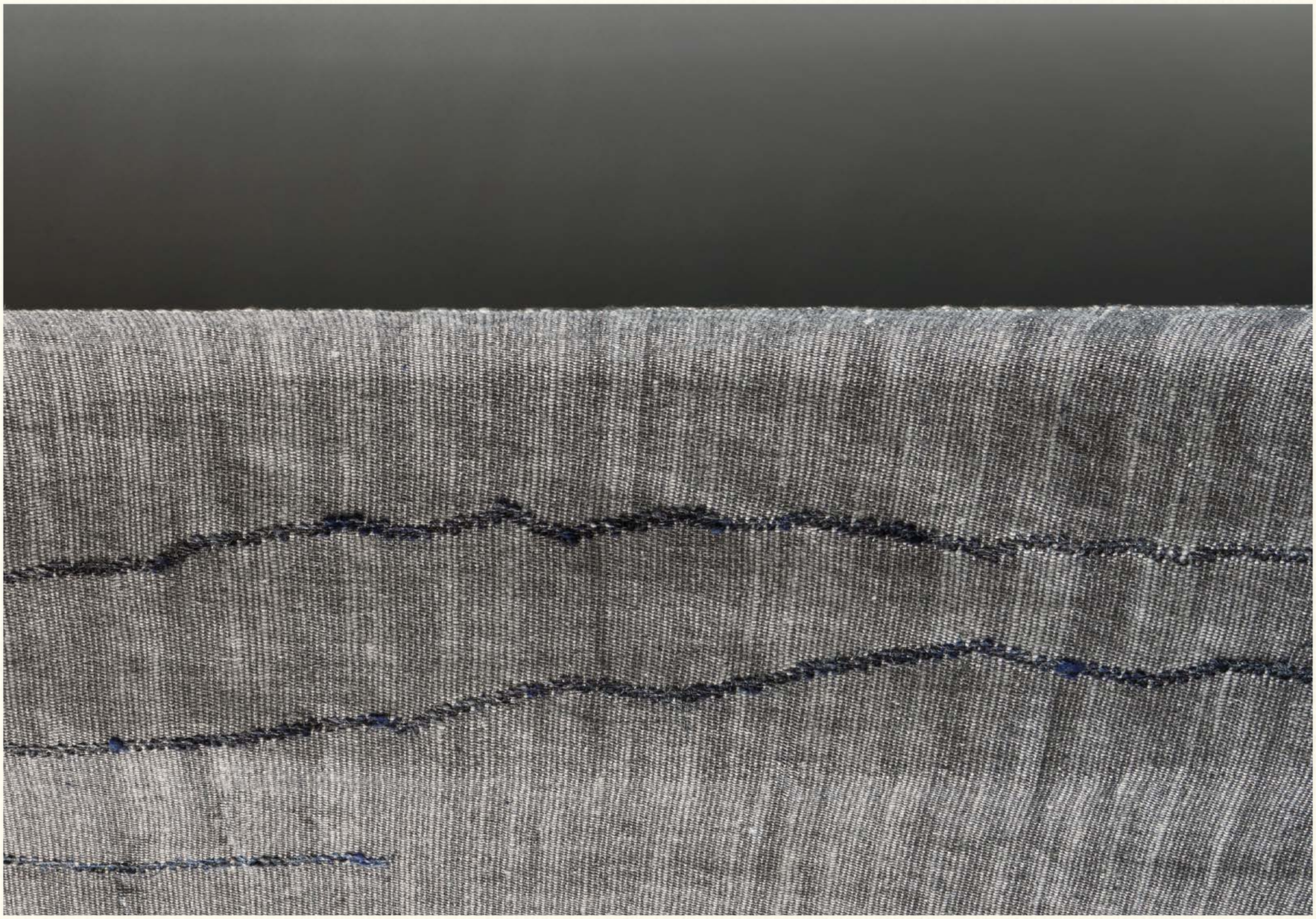
Simone Prouvé (b.1931-)
Panneau 020504, Unique, 2004
Dyneema, Polyamide,
Stainless Steel, Kanekalon, Kermel
Height: 199cm, Width: 124cm
Signed S. PROUVÉ and dated
'27.6.04' on the reverse

Provenance:
Acquired directly from the artist.

This weaving by Simone Prouvé consists entirely of dyneema, a form of polyethylene known for its high-strength level. It is seen used for nautical equiment, as well as for military and emergency supplies. Of all high-performance fibers, dyneema delivers the lowest carbon footprint per unit strength. Prouvé is very aware of the environmental impact of her fibres, choosing materials that she considers less harmful and toxic.

Controlling this highly resistant and robust fibre in her weaving, exhibits the level of expertise and craftsmanship Prouvé has attained over the years.





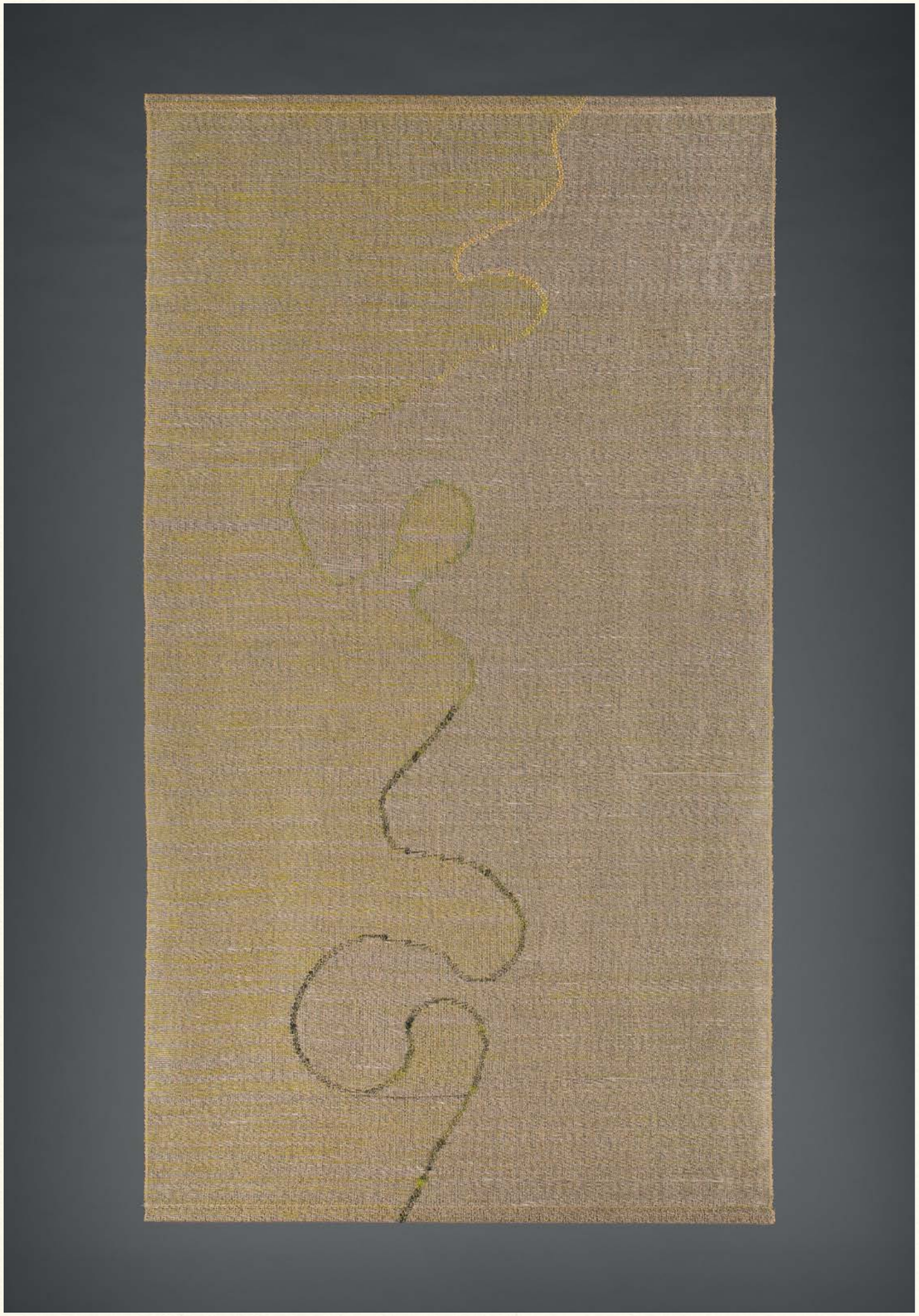
PANNEAU 011205

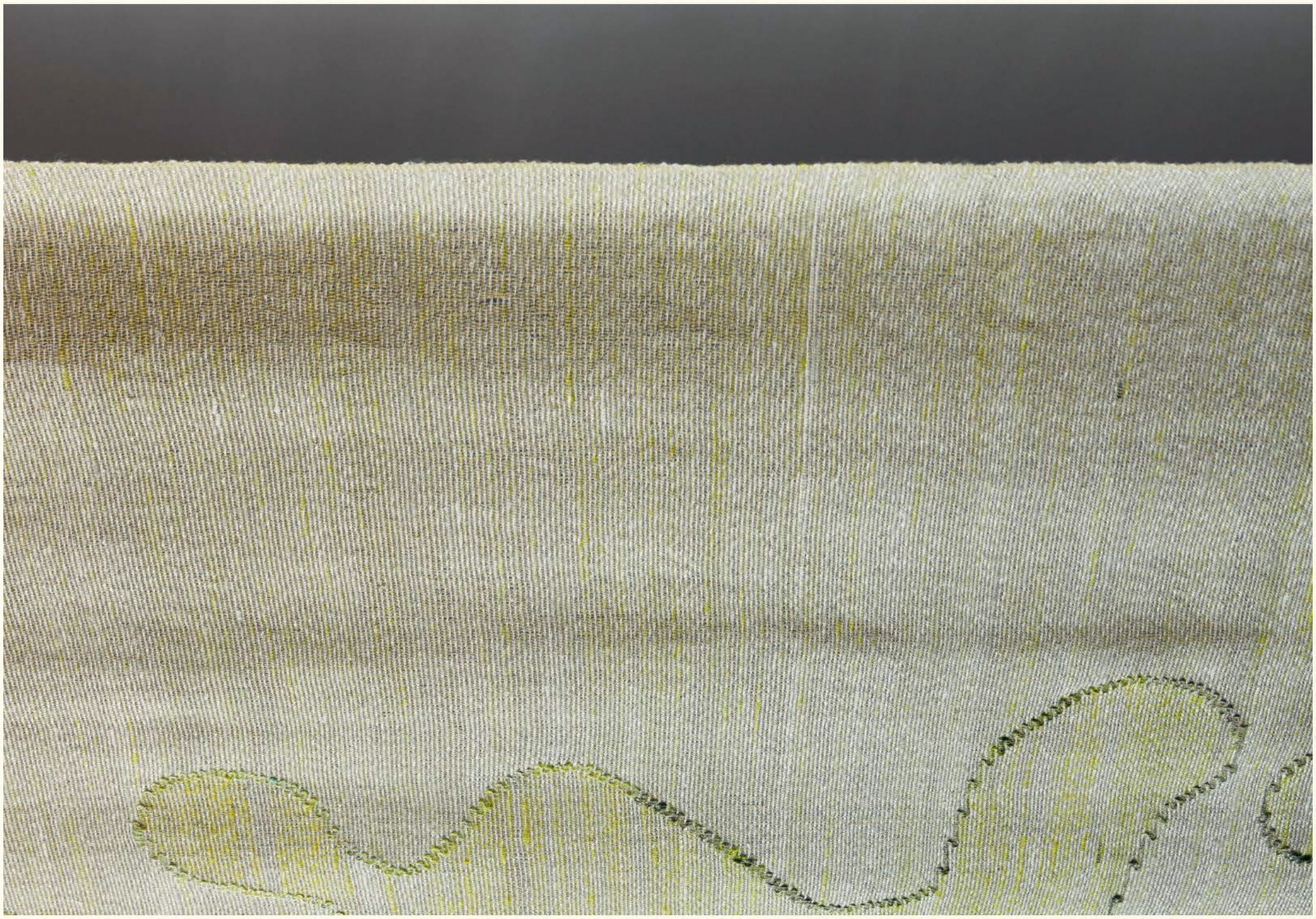
Simone Prouvé (b.1931-)
Panneau 011205, Unique, 2005
Aramid, Kevlar, Kanekalon and Fiberglass
Height: 197cm, Width: 110.50cm
Signed S. PROUVÉ and dated on the reverse

Provenance:
Acquired directly from the artist.

This weaving by Simone Prouvé is made up of various hand spun synthetic fibres. Prouvé uses materials such as aramid and fibreglass, more commonly known for their insulating capabilities, to prevent the ageing of her work.

The simplicity of the design and colour palette make this a very harmonious piece. The various shades of yellow and green, as well as the curved lines, resemble colours and shapes found in nature, a familiar source of inspiration for many of Prouvé's weavings.





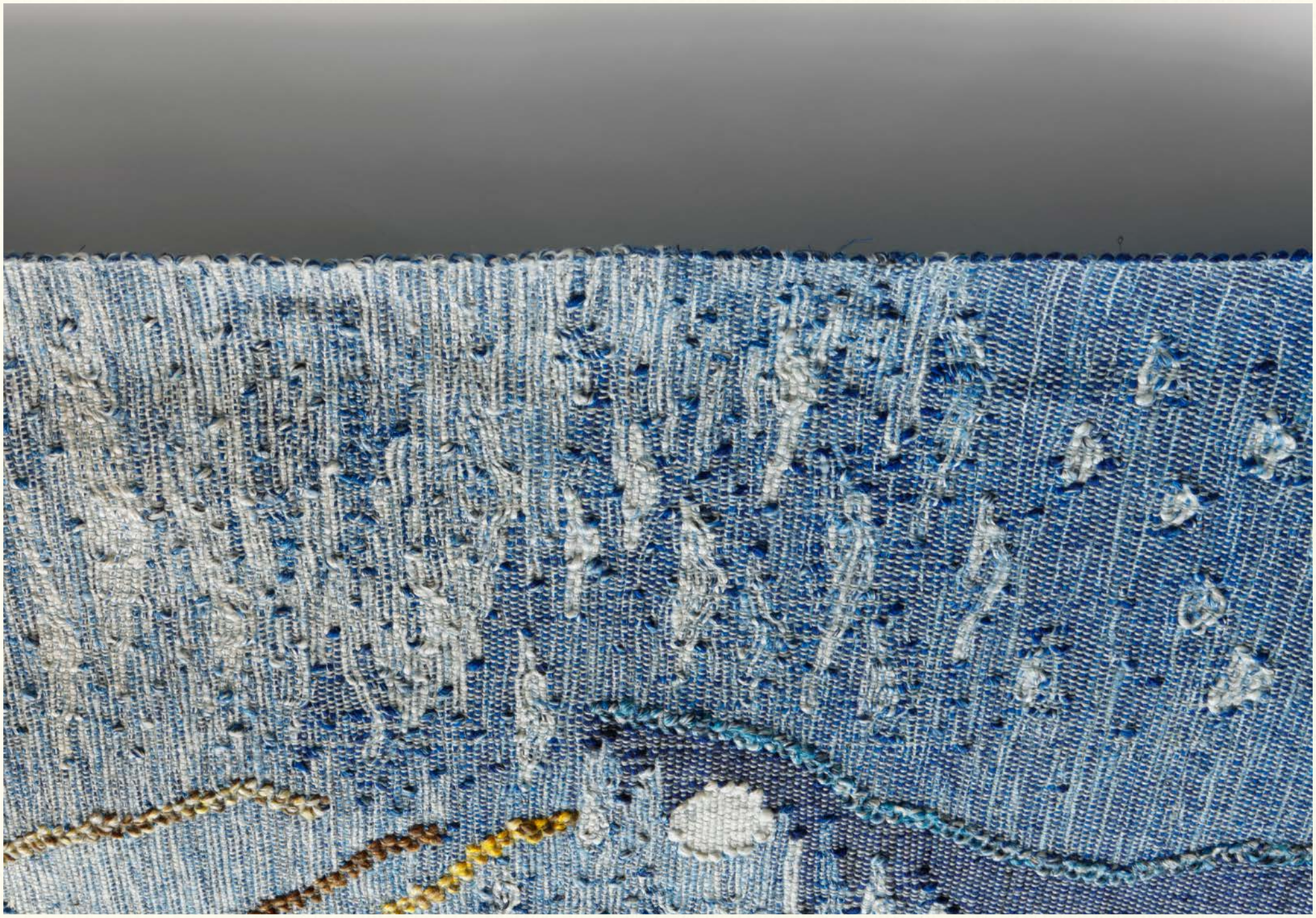
PANNEAU 040918

Simone Prouvé (b.1931-)
Panneau 040918, Unique, 2018
Acrylic, Clevyl, Kanekalon, Wool
Height: 129cm, Width: 128cm
Signed S. PROUVÉ and dated
on the reverse

Provenance:
Acquired directly from the artist.

Using softer materials in this piece, Simone Prouvé is playing with the vibrancy of her hand-dyed, hand-spun threads. The thicker warp and weft create a three-dimensional texture, which, along with the various shades of the blues and yellows, add a perception of depth to the piece.

This is one of the only pieces with blues and yellows of this intensity, and a design as intricate, yet dense, and complex.

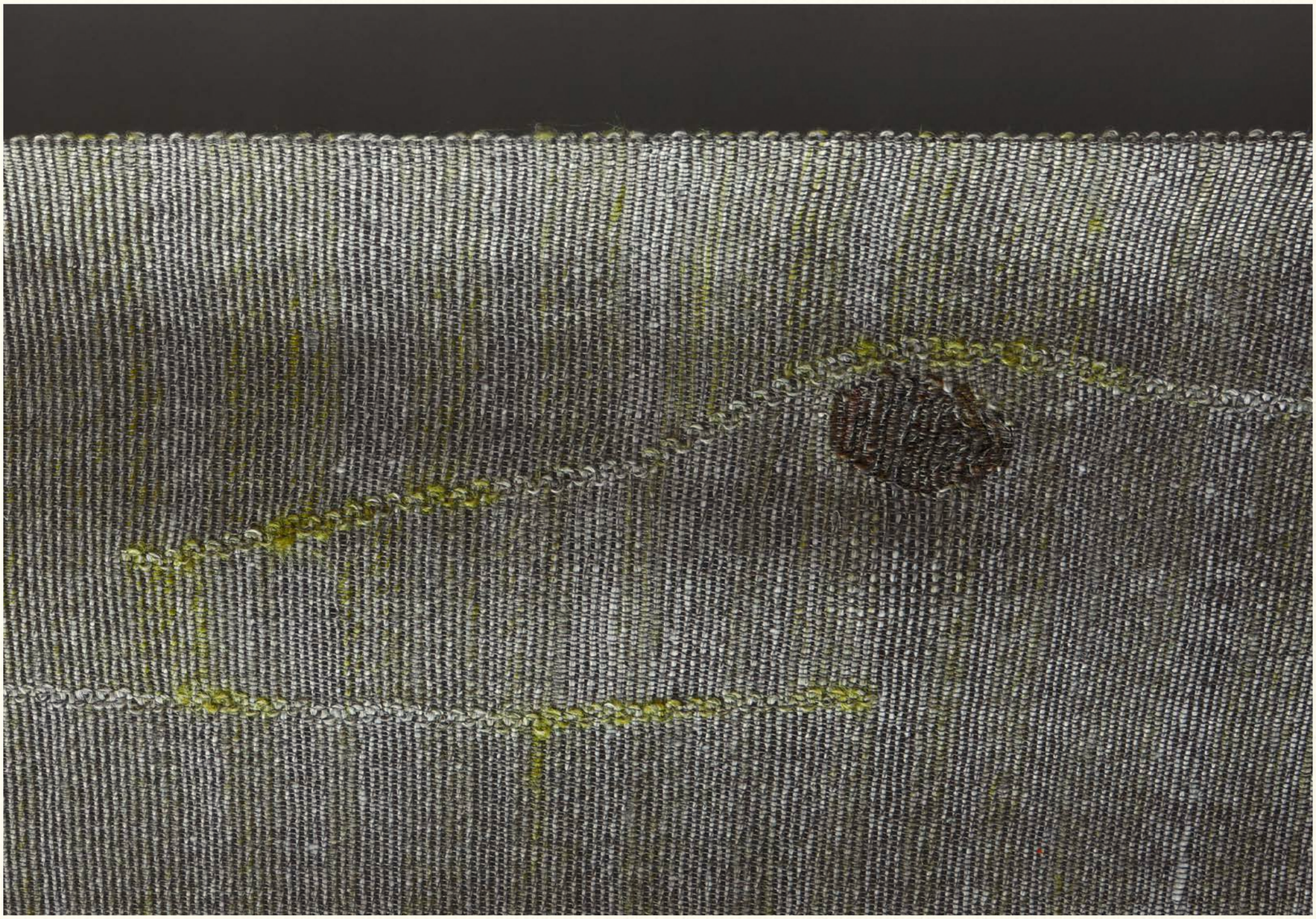


PANNEAU 040205

Simone Prouvé (b.1931-)
Panneau 040205, Unique, 2005
Stainless Steel, Kanekalon
Height: 180cm, Width: 99cm
Signed S. PROUVÉ and dated
on the reverse

Provenance:
Acquired directly from the artist.

The textile panel's intricate yet minimal appearance speaks of Simone Prouvé's profound engagement with Modernism, and its favouring of a new economy of line. From an early age, she worked in close contact with some of the key proponents of the Modernist revolution, such as Alexander Calder, Charlotte Perriand and Pierre Jeanneret. Indeed, it is possible to interpret the Surrealist, almost automatist lines as a two-dimensional product of Calder's prolific mobiles.



PANNEAU 020513

Simone Prouvé (b.1931–)
Panneau 020513, Unique, 2013
Stainless Steel, Kanekalon, Fiberglass
Height: 162cm, Width: 122cm
Signed S. PROUVÉ and dated
'6.7.13' on the reverse

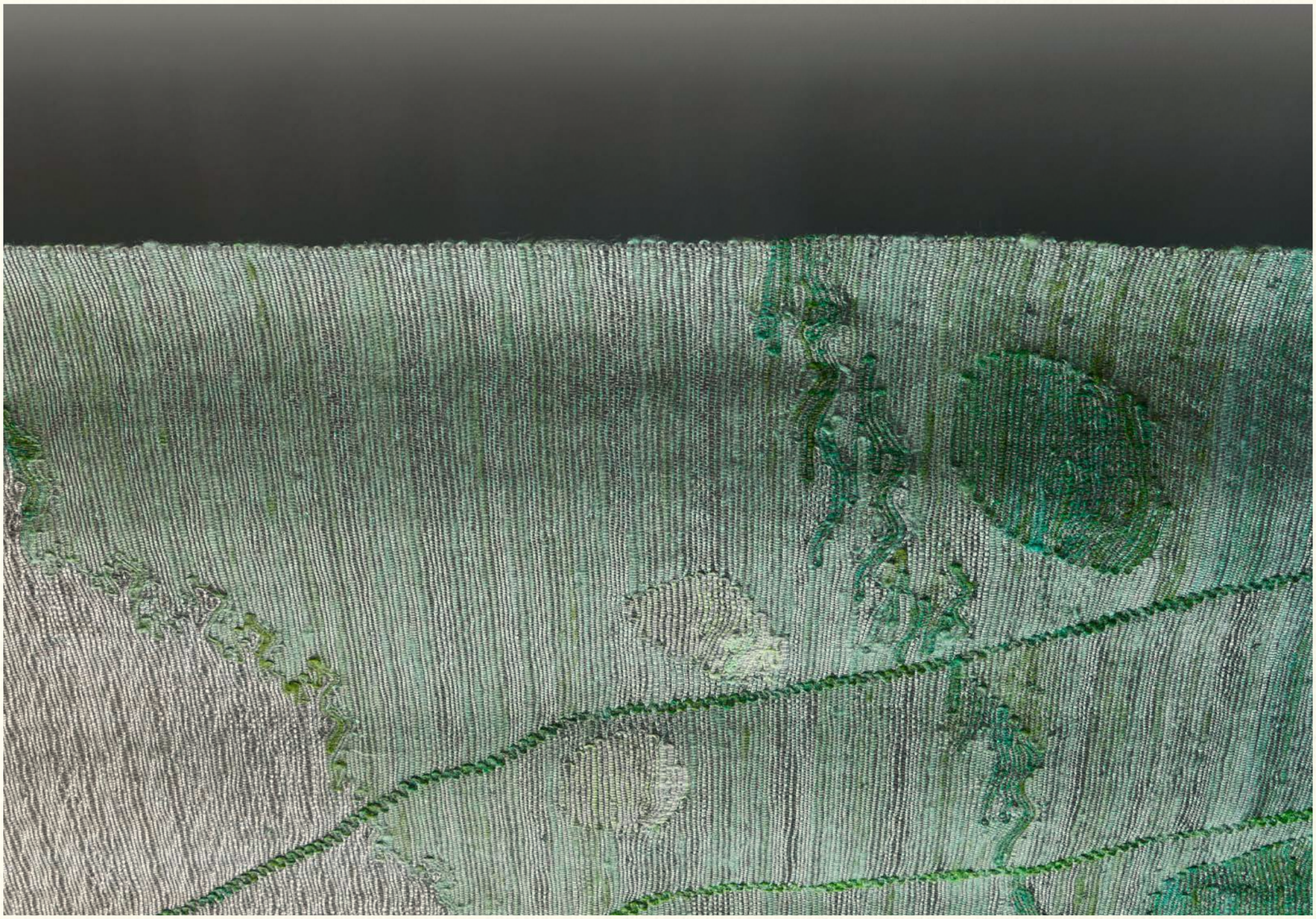
Provenance:
Acquired directly from the artist.

Exhibited:
Livres et art en Guern, Brittany, 2014

The warp consists of a particular thread of stainless steel, that was also used for the work commissioned by the MACRO in Rome. The weft is a mix of hand spun stainless steel, kanekalon and fiberglass.

Using unconventional materials creates an interesting play with the natural, soft shapes and the rigid, and industrial connotations of the steel and fibreglass.

The use of green against the stainless steel, creates a peaceful and calming display. Creating such intricate designs with such strong and resilient, hand spun fibres, is a craft that Simone Prouvé has truly mastered.



PANNEAU 040815

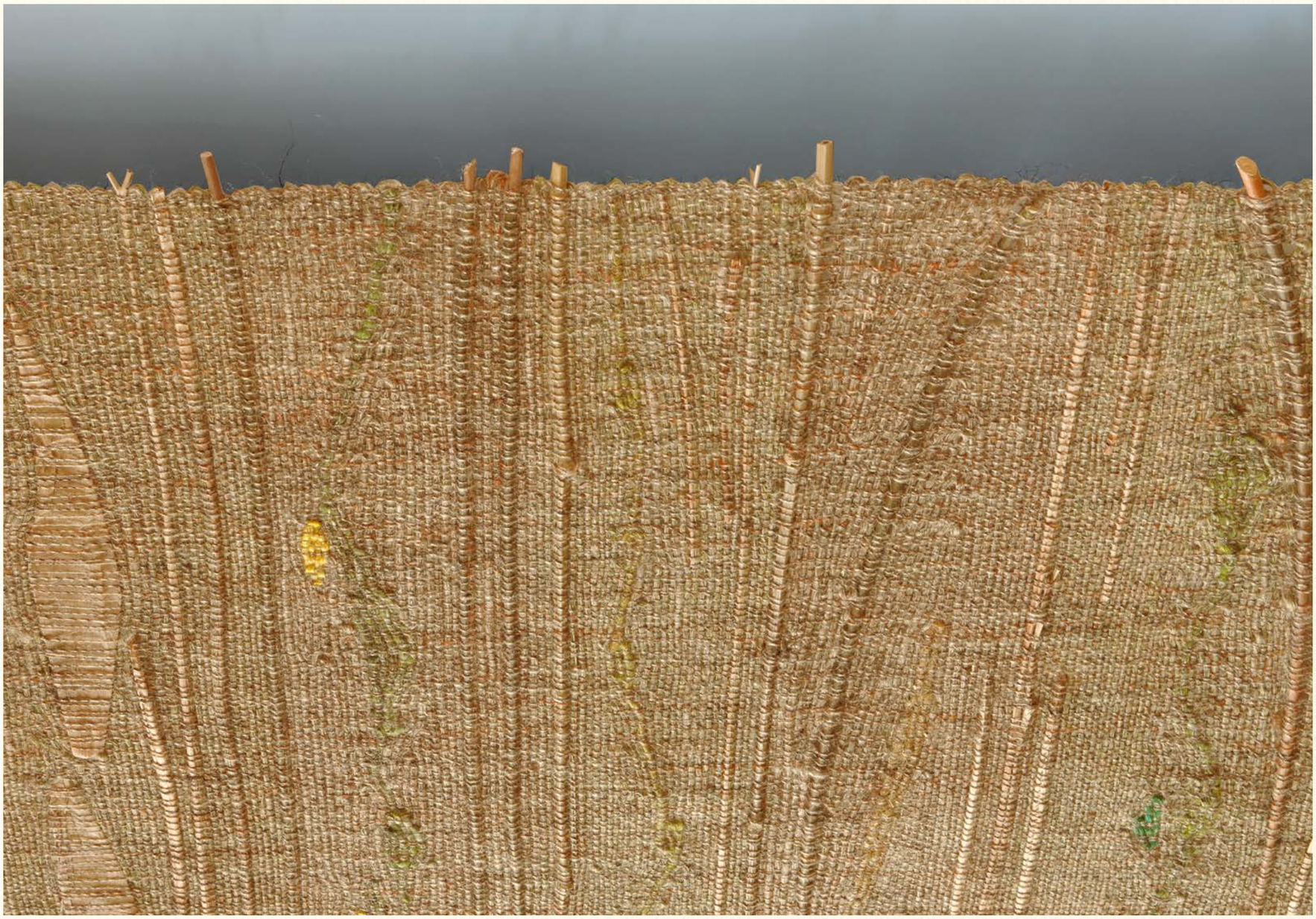
Simone Prouvé (b.1931–)
Panneau 040815, Unique, 2015
Polyester, Linen, Aramids,
Bamboo and Dry Plant
Height: 162cm, Width: 130cm
Signed S. PROUVÉ and dated
‘09.11.15’ on the reverse

Provenance:
Acquired directly from the artist.

The fundamentals of learning how to weave involve working with natural fibres such as wool, linen and cotton.

In this weaving Simone Prouvé blends traditional materials and techniques with modern and post-modern fibres, materials she only began to experiment with later in her career.

In 2015, Simone Prouvé weaved five hangings using a warp of brown polyester adding very natural materials to this synthetic base, such as wool, dried leaves, branches or even bamboo sticks. This is a very rare piece, as she has not used dried plants in any of her other weavings.



PANNEAU 030116

Simone Prouvé (b.1931–)
Panneau 030116, Unique, 2016
Stainless Steel, Kanekalon
Height: 200cm, Width: 114cm
Signed S. PROUVÉ and dated
‘23.2.16’ on the reverse

Provenance:
Acquired directly from the artist.

Exhibited:
Biennale Emergences, Pantin, 2020

Weaving this collection of Panneaus, Simone Prouvé’s main choice of material was stainless steel (inox). Prouvé uses fibres that are long-living, rot-proof and durable. Her use of stainless steel is meant to contradict the cold, industrial association with the material. She uses thin, delicate lines to tame and weave the metal wires in a poetic and flowing style.

One of her motivations in her work is to refract the light passing through the steel, creating more beautiful patterns and colours illuminating from her Panneau. The addition of colour in this piece breaks out from the industrial silver glow and warms the overall appearance of the shiny metal.

2-DIMENSIONAL MACROGAUZE

Peter Collingwood (1922–2008)
2-Dimensional Macrogauze, circa 1960
Natural linen with wooden rods
Height: 127cm, Width: 44cm
Unsigned

Provenance:
Private collection, UK. Acquired directly
from the artist.

An early macrogauze wall hanging by Peter Collingwood, the fact that this weaving is hung on wooden rods signifies the early nature of this piece. Collingwood used steel rods for the majority of his career.

UNIQUE ‘ANGLEFELL’

Peter Collingwood (1922–2008)
Unique ‘Anglefell’, circa 1964
Natural linen with wooden rods
Height: 105cm, Width: 96cm
Unsigned

Provenance:
From the estate of the artist.

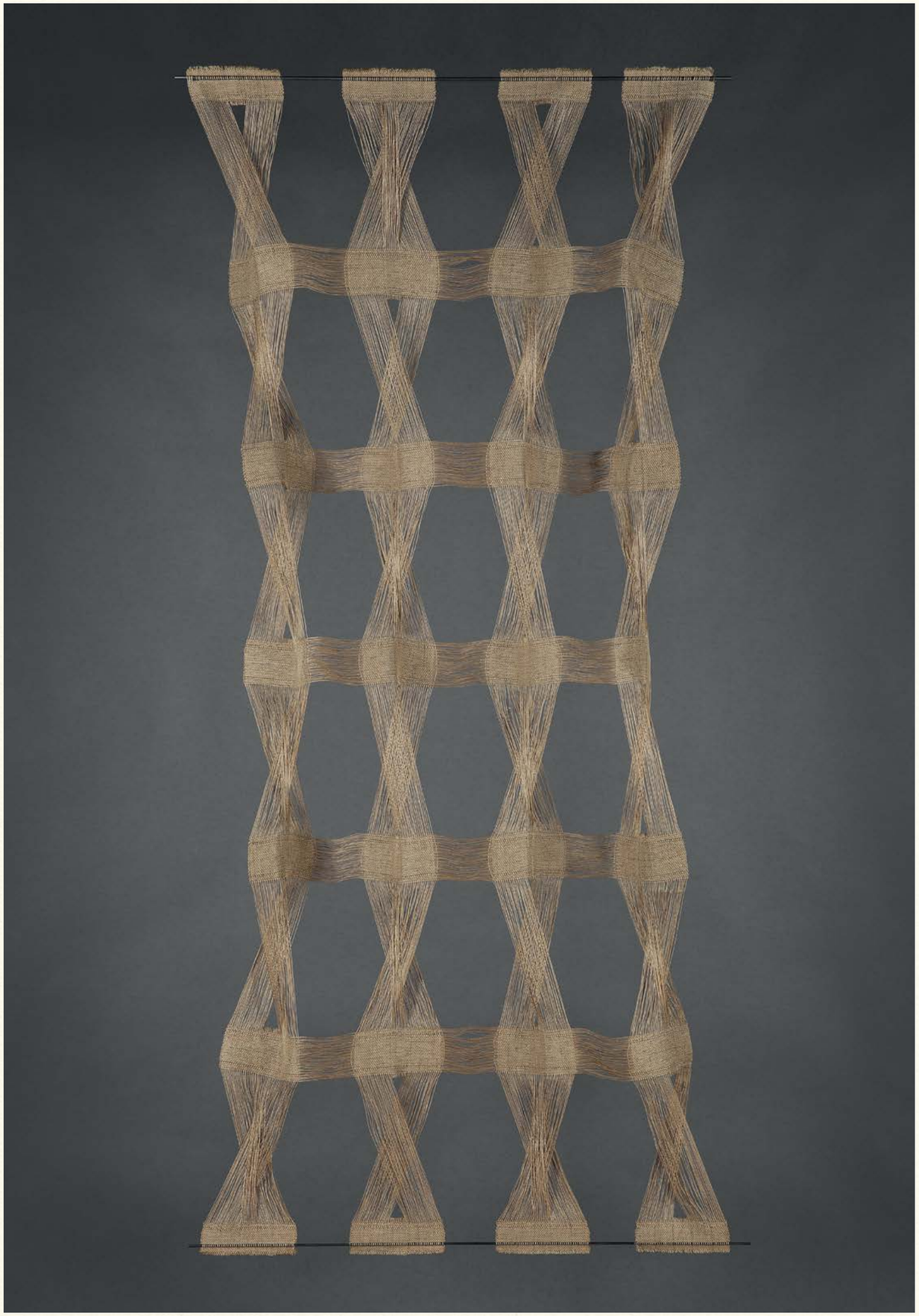
A unique wall hanging from Collinwood’s early 1960s ‘Anglefell series.’ Woven linen on wooden rods, being typical of the artist’s early work before he began experimenting with steel.

UNIQUE 3-DIMENTIONAL MACROGAUZE M.173D/04

Peter Collingwood (1922–2008)
Unique 3-Dimentional
Macrogauze M.173D/04, circa 1969
Woven linen on steel rods
Height: 158cm, Width: 77cm
Signed and numbered
'Peter Collingwood M.173D/04'
(on metal plate to reverse)

Provenance:
From the estate of the artist.

A unique 3-D Macrogauze wall hanging of substantial proportions from Peter Collingwood's studio. This is one of the earliest examples of the artist's work with steel rods–until the late 1960's he worked mainly with wood. In this work, the artist demonstrates his extraordinary ability to create sequences in threadwork. Stamped and signed on lower rod.



MACROGAUZE M.174

Peter Collingwood (1922–2008)
Macrogauze M.174 No.9, circa 1969
Woven linen on steel rods
Height: 124cm, Width: 42cm
Signed and numbered
'Peter Collingwood M.174 No.9'
(on metal plate to reverse)

A long Macrogauze wall hanging with striking two-tone threadwork in a geometric pattern. Linen in two shades, mounted on steel rods. This hanging is another early example showcasing the development in Collingwood's weaving techniques, as he shifted away from wooden rods towards steel in the latter part of the 1960s.

UNIQUE 2-DIMENSIONAL MACROGAUZE

Peter Collingwood (1922–2008)
Unique 2-Dimensional
Macrogauze, circa 1969
Black and natural linen with
wooden and steel rods
Height: 200cm,Width: 33cm
Unsigned

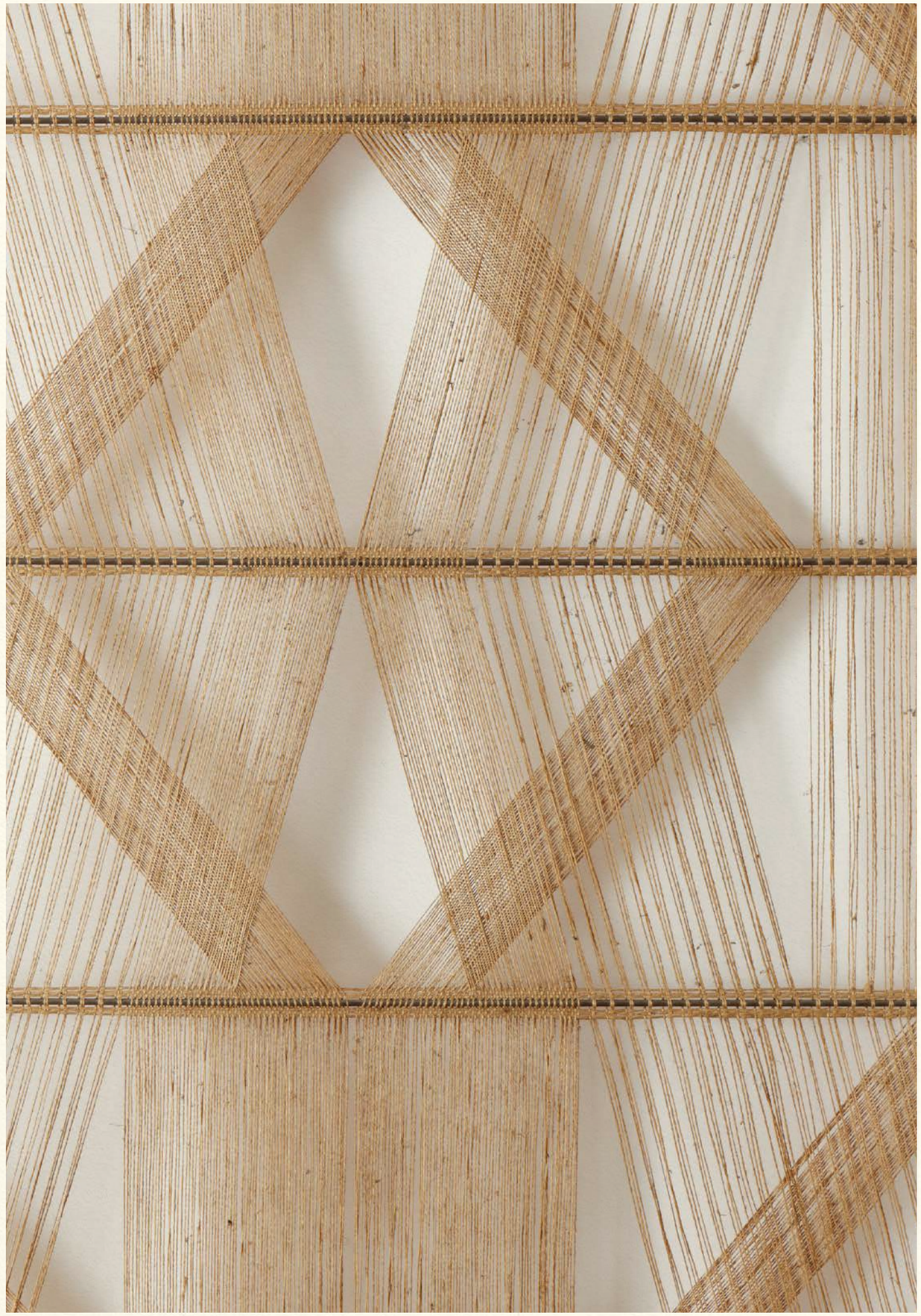
Provenance:
From the estate of the artist.

A unique and unusually long geometric 'Two-Dimensional Macrogauze' wall hanging.This wall hanging was made as Collingwood began to experiment with steel rods (having used wooden rods before).The combination of wood and steel rods is very typical of this short transition period in Collingwood's weaving technique.

MACROGAUZE M.634

Peter Collingwood (1922–2008)
Macrogauze M. 634 No. 26, circa 1975
Natural linen with steel rods
Height: 165cm, Width: 63cm
Signed and numbered
'Peter Collingwood M.634 No.26'
(on metal plate to reverse)

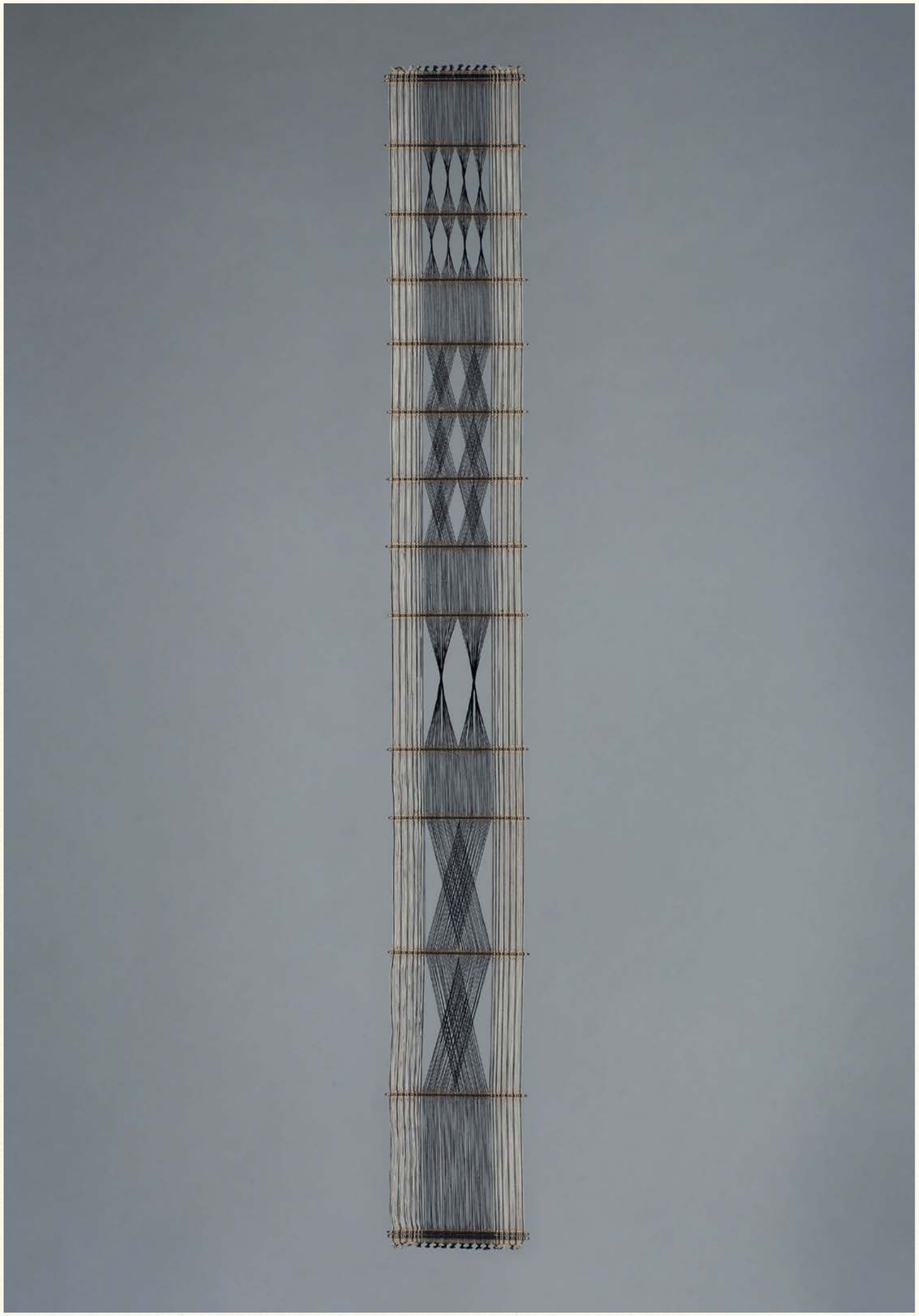
Provenance:
Private collection, UK.



MACROGAUZE M.84

Peter Collingwood (1922–2008)
Macrogauze M. 84 No. 129, circa 1980
Woven linen with steel rods
Height: 184cm, Width: 22cm
Signed and numbered
'Peter Collingwood M.84 No. 129'
(on metal plates to reverse)

Provenance:
Private collection, UK.



3-DIMENSIONAL MACROGAUZE 3D6/3

Peter Collingwood (1922–2008)
3-Dimensional Macrogauze 3D6/3 No. 8, circa 1980
Woven linen with steel rods
Height: 176cm, Width: 32cm, Depth: 23cm
Signed and numbered
'Peter Collingwood M. 3D6/3 No. 8'
(on metal plate to lower rod)

Provenance:
Private collection, UK. Acquired directly
from the artist.

This intricate 3D Macrogauze Wall Hanging by Peter Collingwood is made of woven linen suspended on steel rods. Collingwood's technical skill is amply demonstrated in the macrogauze's display of controlled sequences of threadwork, giving the hanging a luminescent quality further enhanced by the bold colour palette.

MACROGAUZE M.127

Peter Collingwood (1922–2008)
Macrogauze M.127, No. 2, circa 1985
Woven linen on steel rods
Height: 145cm, Width: 73cm
Signed and numbered
'Peter Collingwood M.127, No.2'
(on metal plate to reverse)

Provenance:
From the estate of the artist.

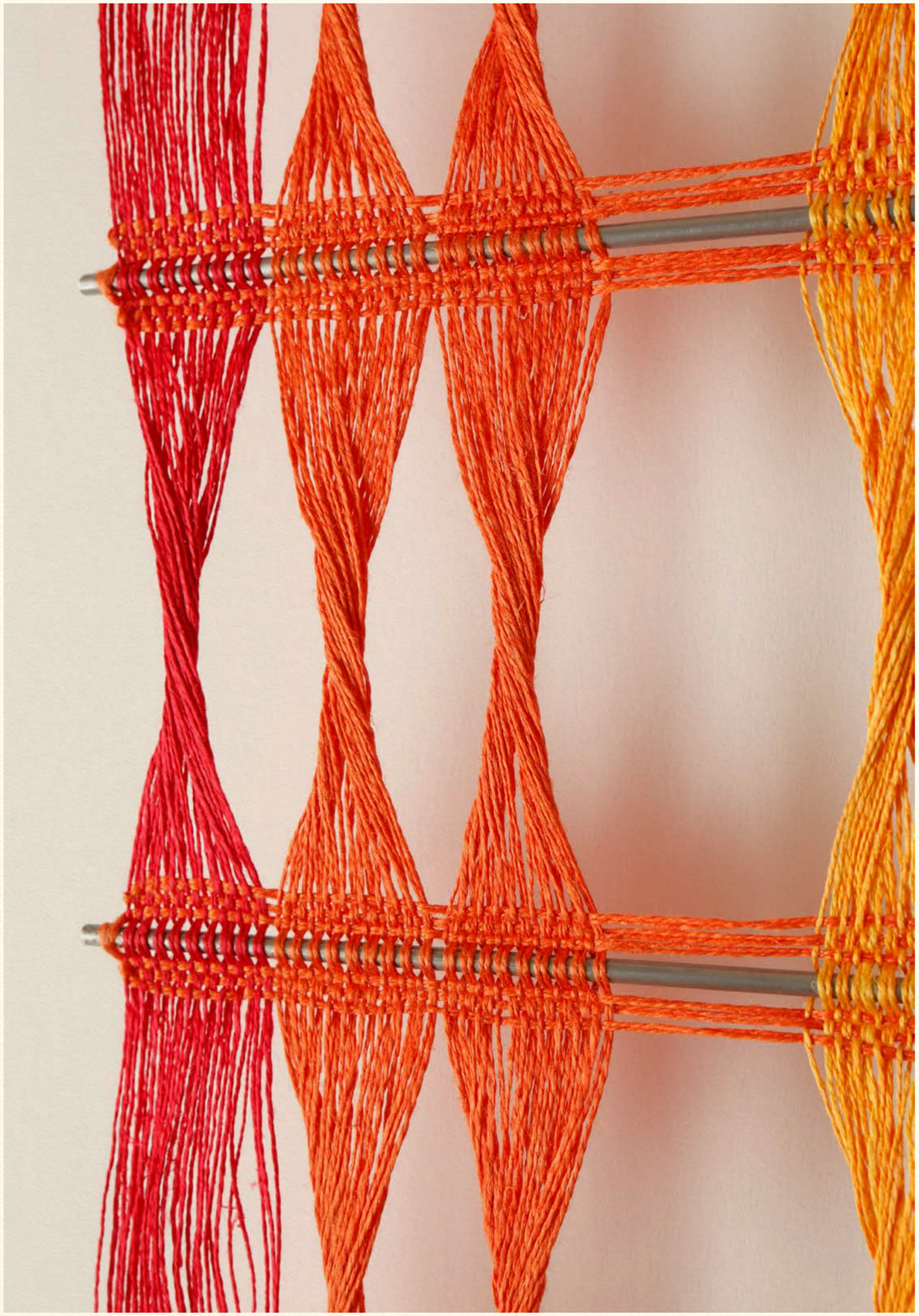
This work was one of three
Macrogauze's which the artist
hung in his house.

MACROGAUZE M. 217

Peter Collingwood (1922–2008)
Macrogauze M. 217 No. 1, circa 1985
Woven linen on steel rods
Height: 67cm, Width: 21cm
Signed and numbered
'Peter Collingwood M. 217 No. 1'
(on metal plate to reverse)

Provenance:
From the estate of the artist.

Woven linen suspended on metal rods, stamped. An intricate 2D composition of red, orange and yellow linen threads displaying Collingwood's skill as a weaver demonstrated through complex twists, floating between the two metal rods.



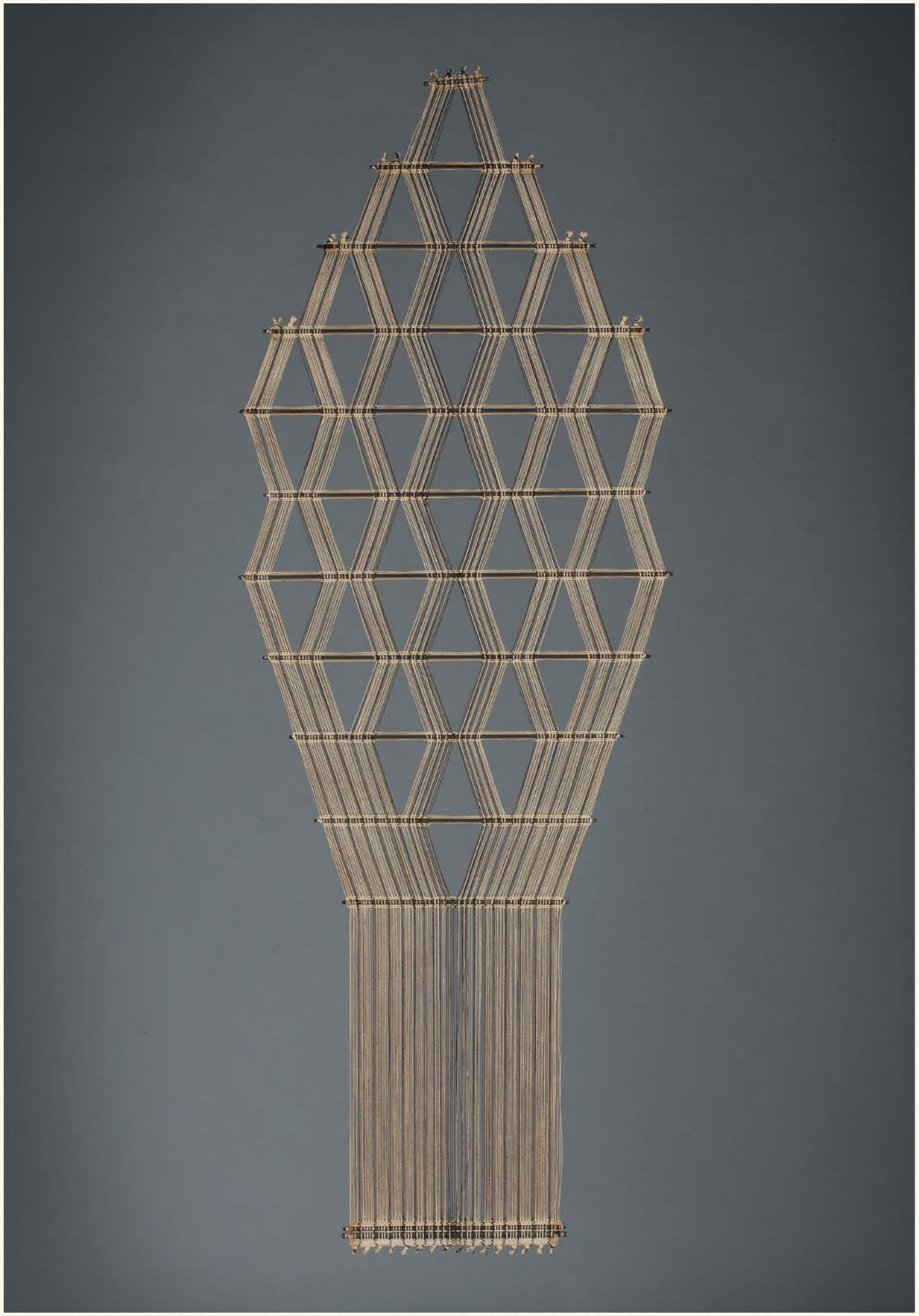
MACROGAUZE M.143

Peter Collingwood (1922–2008)
Macrogauze M.143 No. 52, circa 1990
Woven linen on steel rods
Height: 116cm, Width: 42cm
Signed and numbered
'Peter Collingwood M.143 No.52'
(on metal plate to reverse)

Provenance:
The artist. Thence by descent to his wife
Elizabeth Collingwood.

Exhibited:
Galerie Besson, London

A cream and black macrogauze hanging, of unusual shape and pattern, made of woven linen on stainless steel rods. The geometric design, reminiscent of a flaming torch, is an example of how Collingwood used his hangings to communicate sequences–the way the weave begins at the bottom very simple and straight, and then fans out as it continues up the hanging.

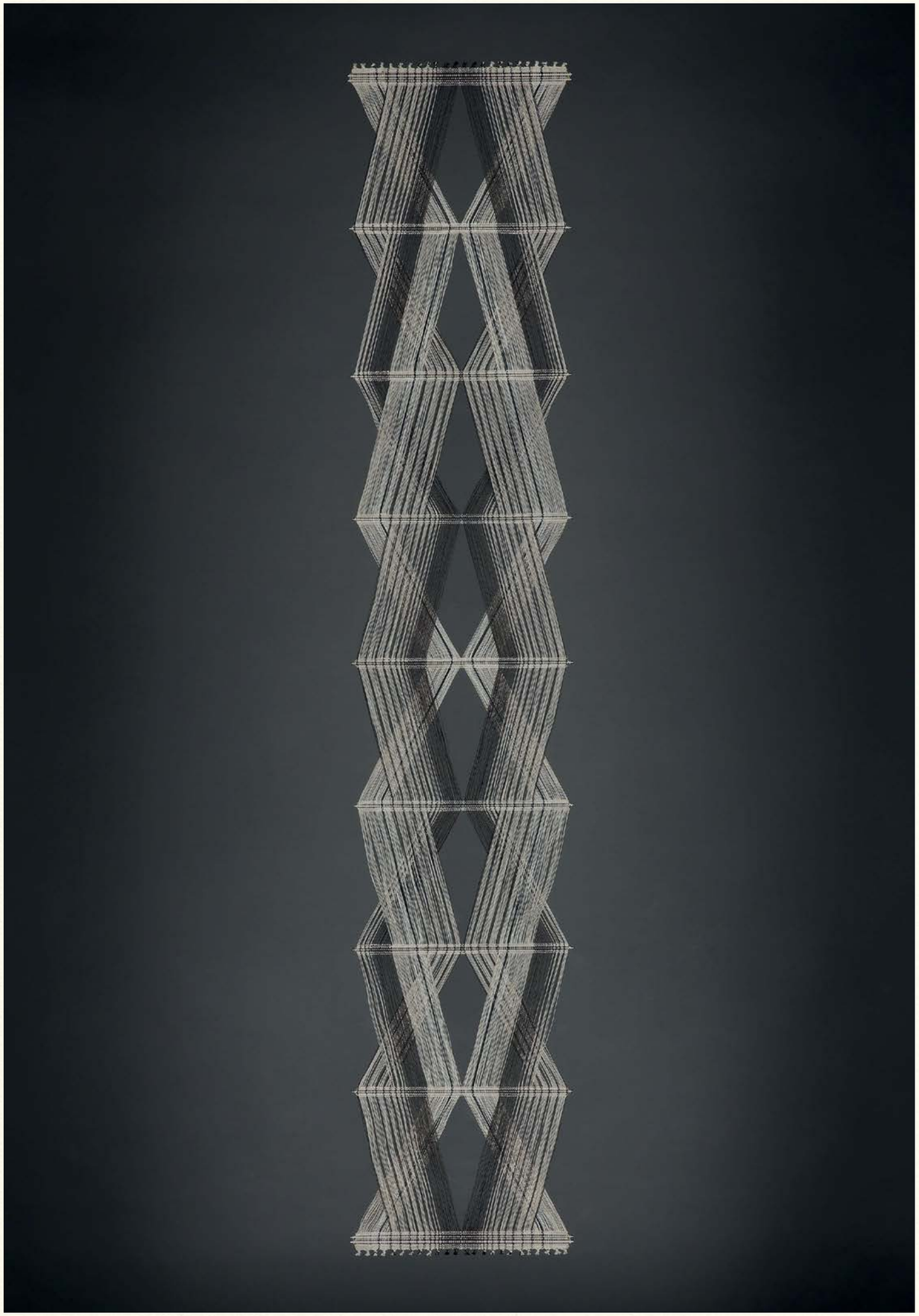


MACROGAUZE M.186

Peter Collingwood (1922–2008)
Macrogauze M.186, No.7, circa 1997
Black and natural linen with steel rods
Height: 170cm, Width: 32.5cm
Signed and numbered
'Peter Collingwood M.186 No.7'
(on metal plate to reverse)

Provenance:
Private collection, UK.

Exhibited:
Collingwood: Master Weaver
Holburne Museum & Crafts Study Centre,
Bath, 1997



Simone Prouvé

SIMONE PROUVÉ

French weaver, born in Nancy, France, in 1931. In her early years, Simone Prouvé struggled with school due to her dyslexia, unbeknownst to her family, teachers and herself. She began sewing under her desk to escape her schoolwork, selling knitted jacquard socks and gloves to her parents' friends for extra pocket money. Her interest in weaving grew as she started making paper string figurines and dressed them in various handmade outfits.

Her father Jean Prouvé, French industrial designer, architect, and engineer, was often surrounded by the most fascinating people, meeting them in their workshops, in bistros, and sometimes in jazz clubs or at the cabaret. Simone found interest in rubbing shoulders with these influential architects and designers who brought about the modernist revolution. Names such as Charlotte Perrinand, Pierre Jeanneret, Steph Simon and Alexander Calder, surrounded her childhood and adolescence, and later her adult life, as she worked with them on numerous construction sites.

In 1953 Prouvé left France to train in Sweden and Finland.With the weavers Alice Lund and Dora Jung, two fascinating women, she immerses herself in new techniques and cultures and first finds her passion for photography in Scandinavia.

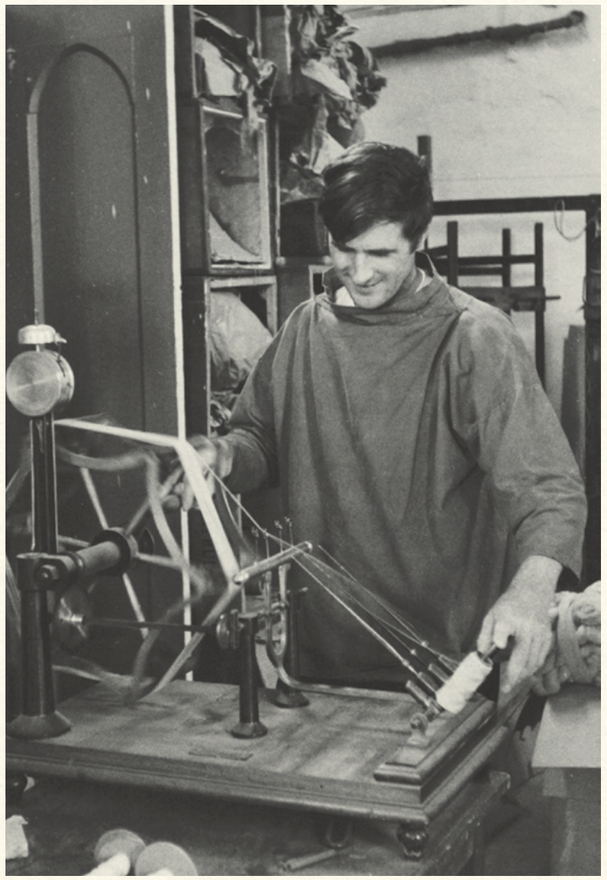
Upon her return to France, Simone resumed her career as a weaver without thinking about the technique she now masters. She worked closely with her father, Jean Prouvé, expanding her projects in size and working in a more architectural, rather than purely design framework. During this time Simone fused her passions in photography and weaving, as she took her Leica camera and escaped into the industrial wastelands near Nancy, taking pictures and gathering inspiration. She produced her first weavings for Charlotte Perriand's banquettes, which were exhibited in March 1956 at the opening of the Steph Simon Gallery in Paris.

In 1963, she began working as a team with her companion and future husband, the artist André Schlosser. In nearly twenty-five years of collaboration, they created around forty projects for various French architects, including giant tapestries. The largest, an extraordinary work of 250 square meters, was entirely executed by hand by Simone. The workload was intense and creating as a couple caused frustration and, eventually, separation.

In 1990, at the age of 60, Simone embarked on her exploration of fire-retardant yarns, including flexible stainless steel and other metal yarns and aramids. Full of enthusiasm for these materials, she undertakes thorough research and development, continuously using these fibres for her pieces ever since. New architects discover her creations, her unique mastery of these "non-fire" threads: Claude Parent, Christian de Portzamparc, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, and Odile Decq.

Since 2021 Simone Prouvé has a room containing with her work on permanent display at the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

She has never ceased to weave and photograph, intertwining both arts which have become inseparable in understanding her work.



Peter Collingwood

PETER COLLINGWOOD

Peter Collingwood, born 1922 in Marylebone, London, was described as the pre-eminent British artist weaver on his death in 2008. His technical and aesthetic innovations have been appreciated across the globe, most notably in his Macrogauze wall-hangings. A master craftsman and the author of several works on weaving, his work as a teacher had a profound and lasting impact on generations of students.

Collingwood's mother was a classics scholar, and his father was professor of physiology at St Mary's hospital medical school. He initially followed his father into medicine and soon found himself doing national service in the Royal Army Medical Corps. He began to work for the Red Cross in Jordan, and yet he seemed to have already found his true calling, which was to weave. Collingwood made his own loom out of two deckchairs and produced scarves for officers' wives on it. He also discovered a lifelong passion for textile structures from around the world, after receiving a gift of a Bedouin tent-hanging, which remained a treasured possession.

On his return to Britain, he spent six months at Ditchling, East Sussex, in the workshop of Ethel Mairet, who was, at the time, Britain's best-known weaver.

He worked for the prominent weavers Barbara Sawyer and Alastair Morton, and both, giving him the freewdom to try out ideas, encouraged a lifetime of experimentation.

He created his first Macrogauze in 1964, combining steel and brass with linen threadwork, leading on to a life-time's work of 2D and 3D weavings based around mathematical sequences. *Macrogauze 1* was exhibited in the V&A's touring exhibition "Weaving for Walls" between 1965 and 1967. The show took a determined fine art angle and moved away from Collingwood's previous industrial works, a clear response to his earliest teacher, Ethel Mairet. His work grew to be widely exhibited; the best-known being 'Coper/Collingwood' at the V&A in 1969.

In 1952 he set up a workshop in Archway, north London. He experimented with shaft switching, for which he adapted the loom for his designs. This allowed him to weave quickly designs for his rugs, that would normally use a slow tapestry method. Another innovation was weaving the weft at an angle; bringing into fruition his series of Anglefell hangings. This demonstrated how, "the hand loom is a highly developed precision instrument its products bear little evidence of the actual manual operations of the weaver, only his decisions as to material, colour and form."

Collingwood managed to manipulate the loom to his benefit, creating an unusual affect through the building of his own looms, in Heath Robinson style, a salient feature of his craft from the very start, he built an eight-shaft double-acting dobby sample loom, using part of a musical keyboard that he and his younger brother had made during the war. "This loom had eight keys like a piano; you struck a chord, say, depressing 1, 3, 4 and 7; then pressed the single foot treadle and those four selected shafts were lifted and the others lowered. It was a triumph of Heath Robinsonism," he wrote.

By 1964 he was developing his Macrogauze wall hangings, using a technique that permits warps to cross each other and even move sideways. Collingwood eventually extended these into 3D structures. He died in his studio, working to the very end.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Page 2
Simone Prouvé (b. 1931),
French weaving artist, at the Hires loom,
Atelier 3, Salle de musique. Nancy, 1957.
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Page 96
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