

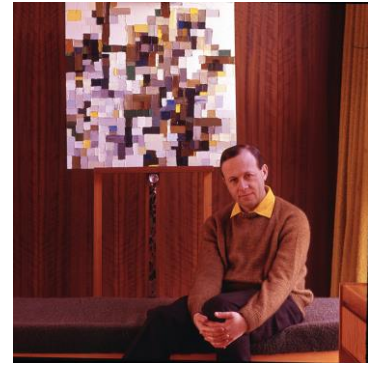


# Dovecot Gallery

---

## Press Release

### Bernat Klein *A LIFE IN COLOUR*



*A Life in Colour* is a retrospective exhibition featuring tapestries and paintings by the textile designer and artist Bernat Klein at Dovecot Gallery from 31 July to 26 September 2015.

Serbian-born Bernat Klein CBE (1922-2014) studied textile technology at Leeds University Textile Department until 1948, after which he embarked upon a career designing woven textiles leading him to Edinburgh to work for Munrospun. In 1950 the company relocated to the Scottish Borders and two years later Klein established his own luxury textile enterprise, Colourcraft.

Architect Peter Womersley was commissioned to modernise Colourcraft's Netherdale Mill at Galashiels, and to design the award winning modernist house and studio at High Sunderland near Selkirk, where Klein remained until the end of his life. The A listed studio building is now privately owned but is registered at risk with flood damage having halted progress to redevelop the property into flats. The subject of Klein supporters, emerging artists and architects alike, the modernist studio and house attracts much interest today. Many have championed to have the High Sunderland buildings restored and have depicted them as subjects for their own work; notably Toby Paterson and most recently Andrew Mackenzie. Bernat Klein's daughter Shelley Klein resides at the house, and has worked closely with Dovecot to realise this exhibition in memory of her late father.

Klein's signature vibrant mohair and tweed textiles were produced in the Scottish Borders for fashion houses in Europe until the 1980s when production was sought elsewhere in the Far East. Klein's commercial success can be attributed to his artistic flair for colour and texture, which won him ultimate acclaim amongst the fashion editors of publications including *Vogue* and *Elle*. As a reaction to the utilitarian and earthy colour schemes of 1950s Scottish fashion and interior textiles, colourist Klein embraced a bright new palette inspired by his natural surroundings. From his own Pointillist inspired oil paintings and designs for Chanel, Dior and Yves Saint Laurent fabrics, to the sumptuous furnishings and floral printed fashion synthetics, seen in the iconic glamour photography of the 60s and 70s, colour technology was at the heart of Klein's practice.

This eye for colour and design was applied to a variety of media by Klein, as illustrated in this exhibition of works spanning five decades, and including tapestries created in collaboration with the Dovecot weavers in 1971. From a suite of 10 tapestries, three including *Highland Pool* are part of the National Museums of Scotland Bernat Klein collection, *Sea and Sky* was sold at a Christie's auction in 1994 in Glasgow and five of the remaining will be made available for sale during *A Life in Colour*. The tapestries directly emulate the deeply folding creases of Klein's painted works, examples of which will also appear in the exhibition. In other works, Klein incorporates his own woven and polyester fabrics. *Provençal Scarlet* is a bold collage of thickly applied paint, interwoven with rich pink and velvet ribbon - the Chanel fabrics seen on the catwalks of Paris in 1968.

Dovecot Gallery is proud to present this exhibition in recognition of the lasting contribution Klein made to Scotland's international reputation for textile design and making.

**-Ends-**

**Exhibition open:** 31 July to 26 September 2015 **Private view:** Thursday 30 July 6-8pm

**This exhibition at Dovecot Gallery is part of Edinburgh Art Festival and supported by Dovecot Foundation.** Check website for opening times [www.dovecotstudios.com](http://www.dovecotstudios.com)

**Exhibition open to the public:**

Daily 10-6pm 31 July to 31 August | Mon-Sat 10.30am-5.30pm 1-26 September  
Book for associated events at [www.dovecotstudios.com](http://www.dovecotstudios.com)

**Event programme in association with Edinburgh Art Festival**

For further details check [www.dovecotstudios.com](http://www.dovecotstudios.com) and [www.edinburghartfestival.com](http://www.edinburghartfestival.com)

**Interviews may be conducted with Bernat Klein's daughter Shelley Klein at the High Sunderland house. To arrange an appointment email [lizziecowan@dovecotstudios.com](mailto:lizziecowan@dovecotstudios.com)**

**Press release image credit:**

*Bernat Klein at High Sunderland, circa 1960s, courtesy Bernat Klein Trust*

**More images here:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/muh7ymgmlljgkb/AACgTcs1zx1qqDuJsJSqYf5xa?dl=0>

**For press information and further images: Lizzie Cowan, Marketing Coordinator**

Dovecot Studios [lizziecowan@dovecotstudios.com](mailto:lizziecowan@dovecotstudios.com) T:0131 550 3660 W:[www.dovecotstudios.com](http://www.dovecotstudios.com)  
Dovecot Studios 10 Infirmary Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1LT.

**About Bernat Klein**

Klein was born in Senta, in what was then Yugoslavia. In 1940 he attended the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, and then moved on to the University of Leeds, England, where he studied textile technology from 1945. He was employed by various textile companies in England and Scotland, until 1952 when he established Colourcraft (Gala) Ltd. This comprised a weaving centre in Galashiels in the Scottish Borders, producing rugs and other items which were sold at the company's own shop in Edinburgh. He created innovative textiles, building up trade with producers such as Marks and Spencer.

In 1962, Coco Chanel chose Klein's fabrics for her spring collection, which led to greater exposure and further sales to couture houses in the US and Europe including Dior, Balenciaga, Pierre Cardin and Saint Laurent. The company was renamed Bernat Klein Limited, and a major stake in the business was acquired by a subsidiary of Imperial Tobacco.

Klein resigned from this company in 1966, setting up on his own again. He based himself at his home near Selkirk, where he commissioned a studio building from the architect Peter Womersley, who had designed Klein's house, High Sunderland, in the 1950s. He established a cottage industry of hand-knitters, employing up to 250 people. During the 1970s he began producing his own clothing collections, and later established himself as a design and colour consultant. The Department of the Environment commissioned him in the latter capacity to develop standard ranges of carpets and upholstery fabrics.

Klein drew inspiration from nature for his textiles and paintings. His signature fabrics include colourful exotic tweeds, incorporating mohair and ribbons, as well as velvet and jersey fabrics. He won the Design Council Award in 1968, was appointed CBE in 1973 and awarded an honorary degree from Heriot-Watt University in 2003. Bernat Klein died 17 April 2014.

Copy of biography from: *Bernat Klein Textile Designer, Artist, Colourist*, Bernat Klein and Lesley Jackson, Bernat Klein Trust, 2005 © 2005 Bernat Klein Trust and Lesley Jackson ISBN 0-9541979-2-5 can be viewed here: [https://www.dropbox.com/s/x3mxfp91tg5ucc3/BERNAT\\_KLEIN\\_BIOG.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/x3mxfp91tg5ucc3/BERNAT_KLEIN_BIOG.pdf?dl=0)

Klein was made an honorary member of the Royal Incorporation of Architects Scotland because of his design skills. Rias secretary Neil Baxter described him as “an adoptive Scot whose international influence as a textile designer cannot be underestimated. As an entrepreneur he helped revitalise the Border’s weaving and cloth manufacturing industries. Working alongside the glitterati of 20th-century fashion, several of whom were personal friends, Klein gave Scottish textiles a new cachet and was largely responsible for the introduction of tweed to the catwalks of Paris and Milan. For a generation of Scottish women, owning a Bernat Klein creation was an aspiration.” *Scotsman Publications, obituary by Jeremy Watson, 20 Sunday April 2015*

## **About Dovecot Studios**

### **Dovecot Gallery**

Dovecot Gallery is a landmark centre for contemporary art, craft and design built around a leading international tapestry studio. Occupying an extraordinary building in the heart of Edinburgh, the Gallery works to programme, commission and produce exhibitions and events for audiences and clients who share Dovecot’s passion for making and the creative arts.

### **Dovecot Tapestry Studio**

Dovecot Tapestry Studio is a world-renowned producer of hand-woven tapestry and gun-tufted rugs. Continuing a century-long heritage of making and collaboration with leading international contemporary artists, the Studio weavers are dedicated to producing extraordinary and engaging works of art by commission from private and public collectors from across the globe.

### **Dovecot Foundation**

Dovecot Foundation exists to champion Dovecot Tapestry Studio and its place in the world of contemporary art, design and making. The Foundation puts the Studio at the heart of this mission in supporting the Dovecot Apprenticeship Programme, collaborations with leading artists from around the world and development of cultural and educational partnerships. Ultimately, the Foundation seeks to bring the innovative work of contemporary artists and makers to a wider audience.

## **History**

Dovecot Studios was founded in 1912 by the Marquess of Bute, a patron of the arts. The first weavers at Dovecot, Gordon Berry and John Glassbrook, came from the renowned William Morris Studios at Merton Abbey in Wimbledon. Dovecot’s first commission was for a series of monumental tapestries for the Marquess’ own home at Mount Stuart on the Isle of Bute.

In 1946, the Studios were incorporated as The Edinburgh Tapestry Company. Dovecot soon became established as a leading contemporary fine art tapestry studio, with works commissioned for major public, corporate and academic institutions worldwide. As a key player in the renaissance of tapestry in the 20th century, Dovecot’s Master Weavers worked with many leading contemporary artists including David Hockney, Henry Moore, Frank Stella and RB Kitaj.

Dovecot’s Master Weavers continue to work to commission, producing tapestry and tufted rugs for private and public collectors. Major tapestry projects include Alison Watt’s *Butterfly* for Scottish Opera’s new Theatre Royal, Peter Saville’s *Monarch of the Glen* and Magne Furuholmen’s *Glass Onion*. Working with artists such as Ron Arad, Linder Sterling and Garry Fabian Miller on recent rug commissions have further tested the boundaries of creativity and play with what the process allows.