



## Tadek Beutlich MBE (1922-2011)

### Nationality

Polish

### Education

1937-1939: Poznan

1948-1950 Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts



### Taught

Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts (later known as Camberwell School of Art and Design), 1951-1974

### Background

Tadek Beutlich, a strikingly innovative textiles artist was born in Lwówek, Poland, and studied at the Academy of Fine Art in Poznań. Following the German invasion he was drafted into the army and sent to the Russian Front; captured by the allies, he was released to join the British Eighth Army.

After the war Beutlich took up a government grant to study at the Sir John Cass Technical Institute before transferring to the Camberwell School of Art and Crafts where he gave up painting to work with woven textiles. He visited as a lecturer at Camberwell from the early 1950s to the mid-1970s.

### The artist

The artist's point of departure was the quality and texture of the textiles he now used – sisal. He believed that he should *not* try to replicate qualities designed in paint. The power-loom had taken over utility weaving and had left the artist-weaver to focus upon producing significant individual aesthetic objects.

Exploring the relationship between craft and art, function, process and image, Beutlich began exhibiting flat-weave tapestries inspired by folk art and continental modernism. He participated in international biennales of tapestry at Lausanne, Switzerland, exhibited wall hangings and woodcuts regularly at the Grabowski Gallery in London from 1963 and later toured in North America.

Beutlich was appointed MBE in 1993.



## Bird of Prey

Initially the artist used cheap yarns but also worked with the long, soft shiny vegetable fibre, known as jute, which enabled his work to move out onto a sculptural scale. His flowing hanks of sisal and jute were acquired for local authorities and private clients. *Bird of Prey* is a monumental wall hanging in jute, strongly suggestive of a looming bird. This wall hanging is richly varied in pattern and density, creating a visual richness with long elemental plaits that are held vertically at regular distances. Some are given terminal loops; others dangle like long hair. What is evoked is a hauntingly beautiful yet fearful and mythic image. The viewer senses perhaps an unsettling power emanating from the sometimes visceral, sometimes erotic associations of the sisal forms. At the same time, the head-piece and central body-area seem to invite one to wear this huge piece as a costume in some atavistic ritual, and thus in some sense to internalise the power which such an identification would inspire.

### Metadata

Accession number:	N009
Artist:	Tadek Beutlich
Artwork type:	wall hanging
Material:	sisal/jute
Measurements:	203.2 x 355.6 cm
Technique:	twisted and plaited on structure
Date:	1972
Rights owner:	Tadek Beutlich
Rights status:	UK HE use only
Institution:	Council for National Academic Awards