

Is it possible to sum up a lifetime's work? Perhaps his greatest achievement lay in his ability to make people look across their normal boundaries when studying works of art. The title of his book *Authentic Décor* is a clue. Some people were shocked at the colours in his gallery displays. But anyone worried by the bright colours had to be reminded of the settings described in inventories and to be seen in contemporary paintings. He deplored the survival of the faded colour schemes thought appropriate by previous Keepers in the V&A. Anything he chose to display was clean, carefully conserved, and put into the correct context. His galleries were attractive not just to the specialist who has always appreciated particular objects but also to the general public. Because textiles are regarded by so many as an esoteric branch of the applied arts, unsigned for the most part, and, often, a bit the worse for wear, Peter Thornton's appreciation has had a lasting effect. He was a cheerful man, happy in his work, whose colleagues became his friends.

NATALIE ROTHSTEIN

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY — PETER THORNTON

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PAULINE JOHNSTONE

1919–2007

Pauline Johnstone made a significant contribution to textile scholarship in her studies of embroideries of the Eastern Mediterranean, including vestments of the Orthodox Church, and Western church vestments. Her love of the Byzantine world was shared with her husband Ken. Their joint travels, which fuelled her research, had started early in married life. After working for the Foreign Office at the start of the Second World War, she spent the later part of the war with him in Cairo. They subsequently travelled widely in Eastern Europe, and in Turkey and Greece, living for a while in Athens. Ken, a scholar and linguist, became Deputy Director of the British Council, and Pauline supported him in his diplomatic work. At the same time she continued to develop her interest in textiles and, in particular, in embroidery. Her immersion in the cultures in which she travelled,

and her enthusiastic interest in their heritage, gained her many contacts and friends, and informed her scholarship in her chosen subjects.

Pauline Johnstone joined the V&A in the early 1970s, and was on the curatorial staff of the Department of Textiles and Dress for ten years. During that time she catalogued and published the museum's collections of Greek and Turkish embroidery. She also earned the respect and admiration of her colleagues, and was particularly supportive, encouraging and generous towards those at an early stage in their careers. This support was both intellectual and practical; it was typical of her, for example, to offer and then make the wedding dress for a junior colleague whose modest salary could not stretch to buy one.

This practical skill in needlework was also manifest in her transformation of the vestments in her local church, of which she was a regular supporter and member of the choir. No one could have been better placed to do this, as the study of church vestments came to be the chief scholarly interest of her later life, and resulted in the publication in 2002 of her major work *High Fashion in the Church*. She will be remembered by many who are grateful for her thorough and wide-ranging scholarship, and with particular affection by those who benefited from her generosity and friendship.

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#### BIBLIOGRAPHY — PAULINE JOHNSTONE

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