

COLLECTING

Sculptor weaver

BY JUNE FIELD

AN OPPORTUNITY to see and buy the distinctive work of three distinguished and innovative women artists comes with three highly personal exhibitions in London this month and next of a sculptor in bronze, a weaver of tapestries and a potter who makes the most of specialist techniques.

Bronzes of great charm and beauty by Estella Campavias are at the Richmond Gallery and Poole Fine Art, 8, Cork Street, London W1, until December 4. They are the product of an artist with Spanish antecedents; born in Istanbul, who is now married to an Englishman and living in the converted wing of a Gloucestershire manor, working, appropriately, in the old crypt of a former monastery. (The Jacobean house stands on the site of an Augustinian Priory founded in 1128, of which only the buttresses and vaulted cellars remain.)

"It is necessary to shut yourself away when you work," says the volatile designer, admitting that she "forgets the day, the hour, the time which passes" in her dedication to sculpture. "My work is like a religion, and solitude is essential." Estella Campavias began her career as a ceramicist, and has exhibited in London, Monaco and France, as well as taking part, with Henry Moore, Epstein and Sutherland in the British Artists-Craftsmen two-year tour of the U.S. in 1960. Some of her pieces are in the Victoria and Albert Museum, various American museums and numerous private collections.

Peter Vigurs, keeper of Fine Art at Stoke-on-Trent's City Museum and Art gallery — where her bronzes and ceramics were shown last year — acclaimed them as having "that rare but unmistakable quality of total harmony between spirit, hand and clay . . . This blend of elements is so subtle and complex, each sculpture can communicate in many different ways with the onlooker." And Genevieve Couteau, in her book on the sculptor, to be eventually published in English, refers to the qualities of "*la douleur, la résignation, en des volumes enveloppés, mystérieux*" which the sculptor expresses in what amounts to as mankind without a face.



Bronze figure by Estella Campavias in the exhibition which opened at the Richmond Gallery, 8 Cork Street, London W.1., this week until December 4