THE REVIVAL OF THE ETHNIC STYLE AND HANDCRAFT, WITHIN TODAYS INTERIOR AND TEXTILE DESIGN.

4t YEAR TEXTILE DESIGN

1994

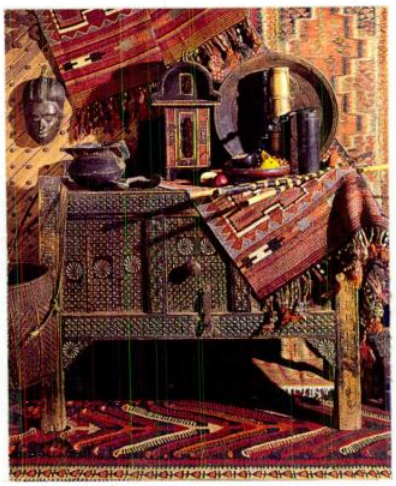

Figure No. 1

Ethnic crafts and textiles available at Global Village.

NATIONAL COLLEGE OR ART AND DESIGN

4th YEAR PRINTED TEXTILE DESIGN

THE REVIVAL OF THE ETHNIC STYLE AND HANDCRAFT, WITHIN TODAYS INTERIOR AND TEXTILE DESIGN.

by Stephanie McElroy

Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and design and Complementary Studies in Candidacy for the Degree of BDes in Textile Design.

1994

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I wish to acknowledge here, the information given to me, on the revival of ethnic crafts, by Global Village, Blackrock, Dublin, and their willingness in allowing me to photograph the ethnic furniture and artifacts within their shop.

I have had much help from Kathryn Jordan, who forwarded me a questionnaire and information on the revival of the ethnic crafts.

The Glenavon House Hotel in Cookstown, who gave me kind permission to take photographs of their traditional ethnic style bar. I offer my thanks.

Also Nice Irma's London who kindly supplied swatches of fabric, inspired by the Navajo blanket style and their valued information.

The Revival of the Ethnic Style and Handcraft within todays Interior and Textile Design.

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INTRODUCTION

For the past decade designed labels that were in fact a mass-produced product dominated interior design. The sleek matt black technology image seemed to possess all but one thing "a sense of individual creativity".

However within the 1990's the ethnic style that has inspired hand crafts has become fashionable again. Designers are borrowing the natural look an object has when it is hand crafted, heightening its unique and individual design identity.

Every country in the world has its own traditional and cultural values, which manifest themselves within the design identity of that culture this is what Ethnic Art means, a culture showing the same art style. Many countries in the past have used their traditional Arts and Crafts to portray their own ethnic and religious beliefs, such as, decorating their crafts and even their own bodies with symbolic motifs taken from their own culture. A country and its culture can be identified from its ethnic design, this is a visual language which can be seen in many different forms of ethnic art and design.

The increasing accessibility of faraway countries and the importation of ethnic goods from opposite sides of the world, have influenced the revival of the ethnic style within our design vocabulary in the west. The growing awareness of ecological matters have all further contributed to the escalating popularity of the earthy natural look.

Designers today seem to appreciate the unique, rich quality an object has when it is hand made. More and more they require within their designs, the primitive and natural ethnic style. The original craftsman fulfilled this promise as all their work had "A rough beauty that bared the imprint of the human hand". (as quoted in Hall, 1992, p.12).

What is so different about today revival of ethnic crafts than its last revival during the 1960's and 1970's, when interior and fashion design borrowed ethnic designs and motifs? It was because they used this style as a form of escapism from their capitalist Society. In this thesis I will discuss whey we have taken a more sophisticated attitude

and approach to out interpretation of ethnic design in the 1990's. I will try to discover why we have in the last decade forgotten traditional values within design and why, we find the need to surround ourselves with ethnic hand made crafts and I will also look at the huge influence these traditional methods, motifs and crafts have on our present interior design and textile industry.

This theses is broken up into four chapters. In Chapter 1 I shall try to define what is ethnic and assess the importance of ethnic hands crafts both in their own culture and when transported to another. I shall talk about the past revivals of the ethnic style and the influence it had on different art and design movements.

In Chapter 2, I hope to explain why we are reviving the ethnic hand craft in today modern society. Is it because modern technology has become capable of creating soulless perfection, so we hunger for imperfection; i.e. The look an object has when it is hand made? A hand made craft carrying with it the association with a creators identity and a strong tradition, has a value a mass produced object can never have. I also hope to ascertain, if this revival of the ethnic hand craft is just a passing fashion trend or indicative of a new direction within design.

Chapter 3, within this chapter I shall discuss where the ethnic hand craft and different ethnic styles have influenced modern interiors. I shall examine why the designers and owners of these homes inspired by the ethnic styles, have allowed this strong ethnic theme dominate their interiors.

Chapter 4, is in the form of a case study, tracing the history and traditional value of the Navajo blanket and discusses the revival of the Navajo textiles within contemporary interiors and fashion designs today. I have chosen the Navajo, because unlike many other ethnic groups with a strongly individual design identity, their art and textiles have always found a market and much admiration throughout the last two hundred years. Although their people witnesses great cultural oppression their oppressor realised the wealth of tradition in their art which to this day perhaps compensates for the lack of such with American society.

CHAPTER ONE

THE MEANING OF ETHNIC

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Ethnic art is an art which can portray a cultures own identity. Different cultures from around the world have different ideas on what art should look like, for example the women of the Kassena tribe from Northern Ghana paint and decorate the outside of their houses with inspiration from natural sources within their daily lives. (PL.No. 2).

However the patterns and designs although indigenous to the Kassena tribal women, serve to remind us stylistically, of other tribal art from other regions in Africa. neighbouring cultures often appear to share similarities in design, this is probably because most tribes take their inspiration, and their design source, from the same land and everyday life. The Kassena houses have been decorated, stunningly in effective, simple geometric patterns. The designs, motifs and colours on these houses are similar to the following illustrations (PL. No. 3). This stitch-dyed cloth from Northern Ireland was made for use by the leopard Society of the Cross River area of South-eastern Nigeria. Notice within this cloth design, similar checkard patterning and the same stylised animals and reptiles (PL. No.4). has some of the international handcrafts sold at Global Village. This particular illustration shows a collection of different African crafts from different regions in the country.

Ethnic hand crafts from around the world, tend to be decorated in each cultures ethnic art, whether it is a simple primitive design typical of African art (PL. No. 5) or intensely decorated like the traditional Kurdish Kilim carpet (PL. No. 6). These different art and crafts, portray a strong sense of belonging to a tradition, not only because of their typical ethnic art styles, but because all ethnic hand crafts are passed on through an inherited craft tradition, through many generations, within a culture.

Various ethnic art and crafts from different countries in the world have in the past inspired many Artists and Designers work. A century ago artiest Paul Guagin was inspired by the Primitive Lifestyle and ethnic crafts from Tahiti. Gavgin dreamt of finding "ancient, sublime, religious things" in Tahiti. (PL.No.7) (Hall, 1992,p.10).

Gavgin felt the need to escape from the progress and technology of civilisation. This primitive culture with its ethnic art and crafts greatly influenced Gavgin's work. It allowed him to free himself from all the preconceptions inherent in academic art of European art of that time, inspiring him to have a much freer attitude towards the way he looked at life and his work. If Gavgin felt this way more than a hundred years ago, how much more desperate must our need be today, when computer and the machine threaten to take over completely. The ethnic craft can possess for us a quality a mass produced object will never have, and that is "the rough beauty that bares the imprint of the fallible human hand". (Hall, 1992, p.10).

After journeying abroad, the artist Diego Rivera noticed the primitive Splendour of Mexican Folklore which thereafter impassioned his paintings. (PL.No.8)

But travelling to far away countries is not the only way to be inspired by ethnic primitive art and crafts. For some artists and designers the quest for the primitive ethnic style, takes place within themselves, just as it did at the beginning of the twentieth century for artists such as George Braque and Pablo Picasso. Even the Arts and Crafts movement, which was conceived in Britain and Europe in the mid-nineteenth century, represented a direct contradiction to the technological advances of the Industrial Revolution. University of Oxford's first Slade Professor of Fine Art, John Ruskin (1819-1900_, blamed the ills of Society on the factory system and codified the anti-industrialist philosophy of the movement.

> **"Censuring the products of machinery as monotonous, uninspiring goods that disassociated their users from contact with human creativity, Ruskin crusaded for hand labour as an essential human right that preserved dignity and inventiveness in Society". (Sheldon, 1993 p.14).**

William Morris (1834-1896), an english writer, designer, publisher and politician, strove to translate Ruskins theories into reality, and devoted himself to the cause of revitalising craft and social reform. He believed "the unification of labour, organization and art would create a harmonious society in which beauty and practicality would be

inseparable". (Sheldon, 1993, p.14).

Ruskin and Morris extolled the virtues of aesthetic beauty inherent in the hand made craft and stimulated a revival of handcraftmanship that would improve the quality of machine made objects in Britain. They believed that common people would benefit from a revival of, honest, handmade objects by living with them in their daily lives. Ironically however, common people could not afford these hand-made objects because of their high price of producing hand crafted objects.

The hand craft has been much revived today within the 1990's at generally more affordable prices, because the craft is not necessarily hand-made but reproduced on a machine with the hand-crafted look, utilising natural materials that would have been used on original hand-made objects. During the 1980's, the French designers Matti Bonnetti and Elisabeth Garouste were going against the grain of the contemporary slickness fashionable at the time, producing furniture of primitive African ethnic style, which earned themselves the nickname "les barbares" (the barbarians). Although it was not an official movement, neo-primitive design started cropping up all over the world, reacted in the same primal passions. In 1941, British sculptor Henry Moore described primitive ethnic art and crafts in saying that it "makes a straightforward statement, its primary concern is with the elemental, and its simplicity comes from direct and strong feelings, which is a very different thing from that fashionable simplicity for-its-own-sake which is emptiness". (Hall, 1992, p.18).

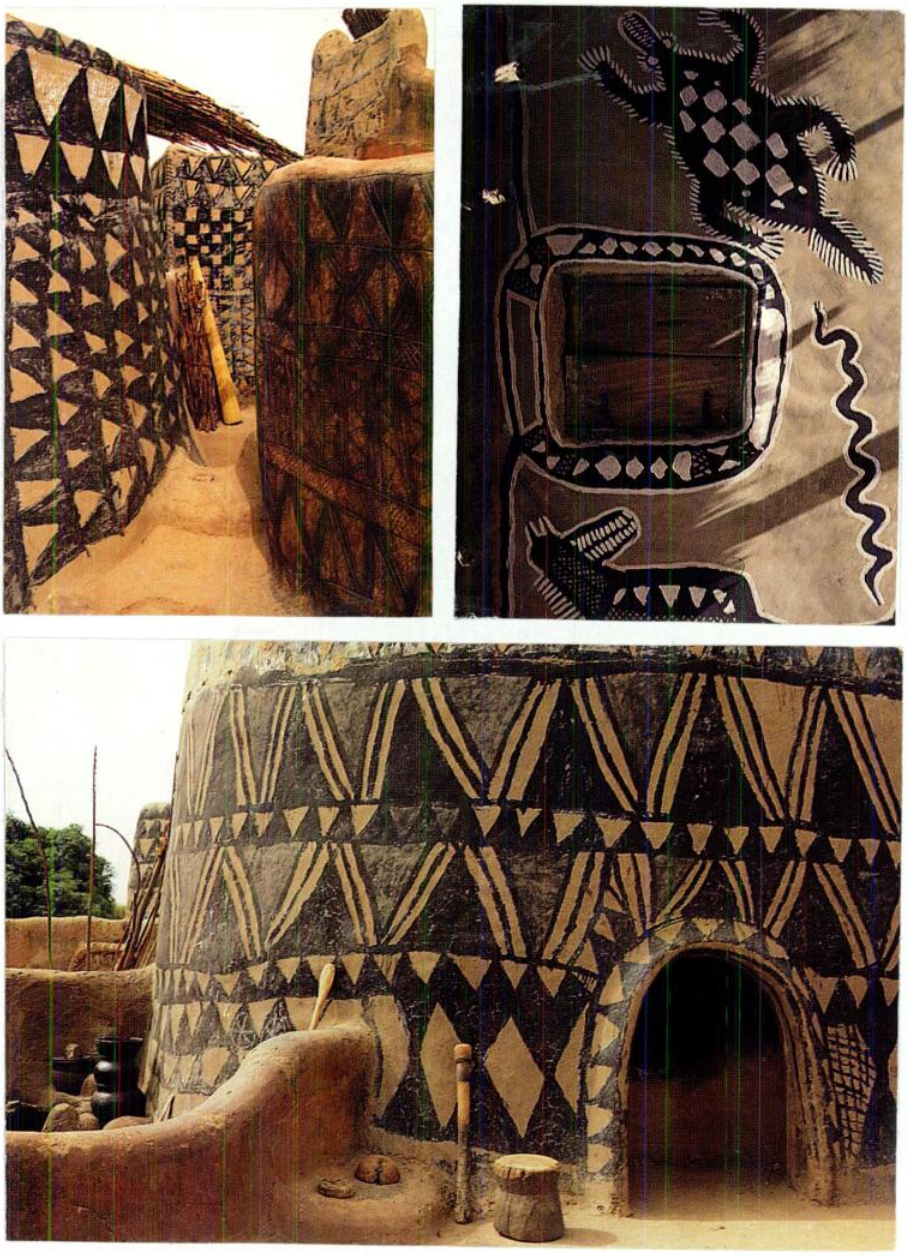

Figure No. 2 The decoratively painted houses of the Kassena tribe from northern Ghana.

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rock by the sun, they need constant at

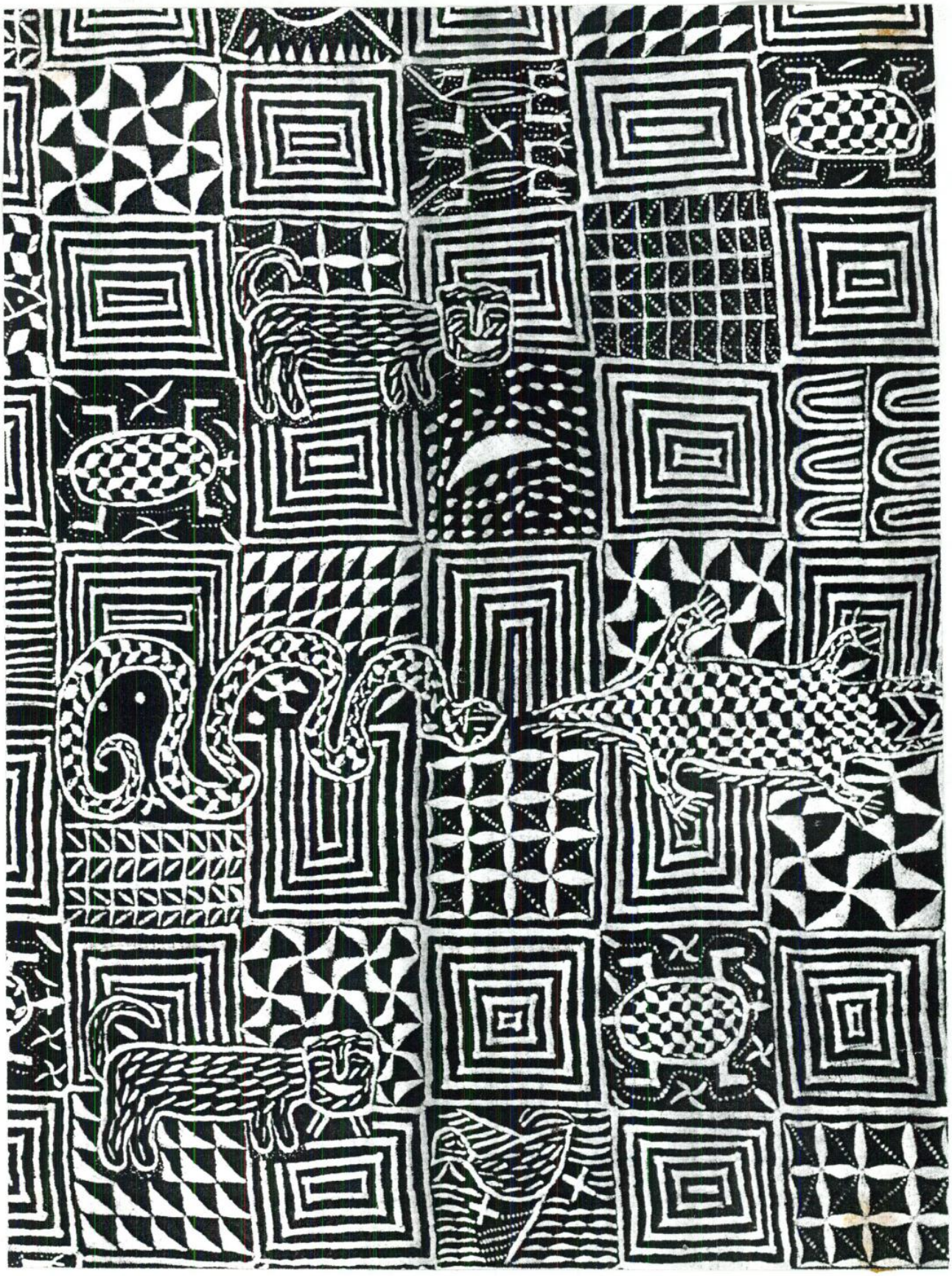


Figure No. 3

A resist dyed cotton textile, Ibo, Nigeria, A Cloth stitch dyed in northern Iboland for use by the Leapard Society of the cross river area of south eastern Nigeria.

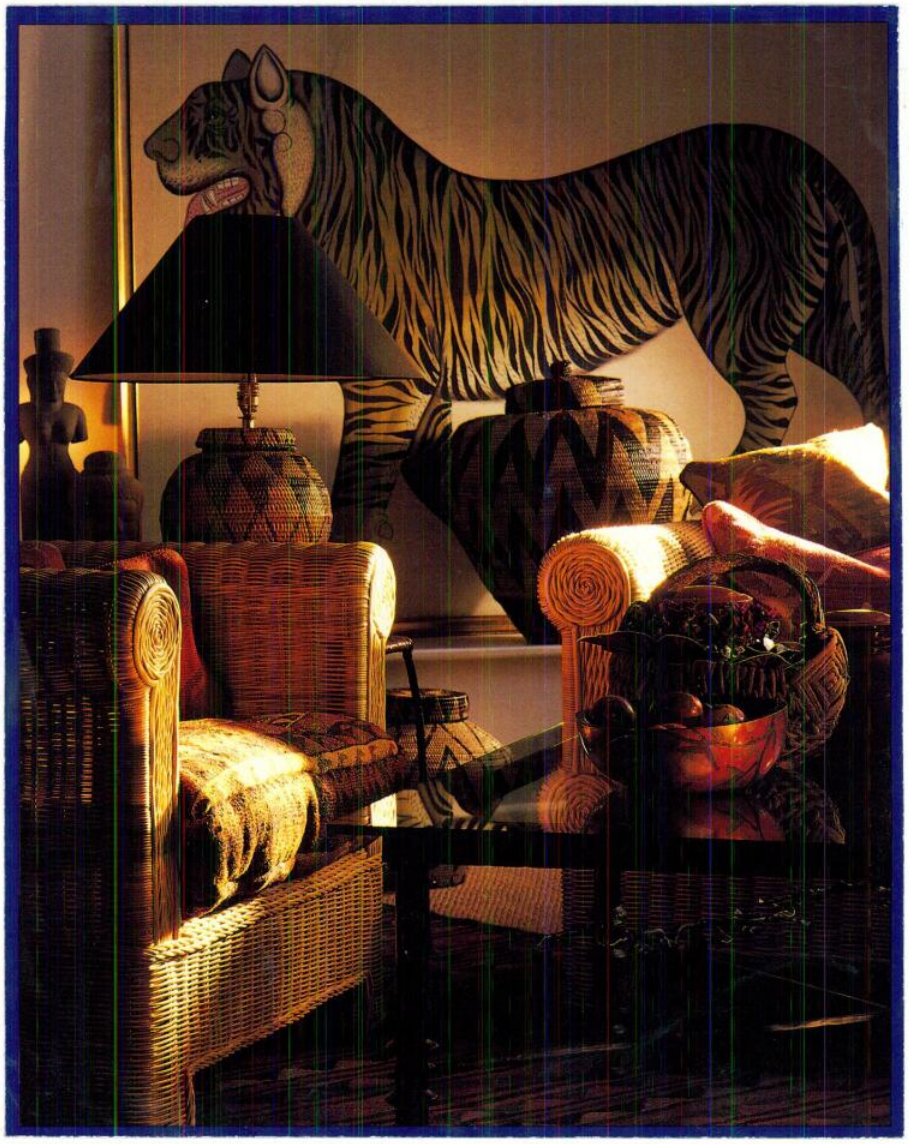


Figure No. 4 and 5 Some of the international crafts sold a Global Village. This particular illustration shows a collection of African crafts from different regions in the country. The primative patterns and colours, sits like a still life against the backdrop of this stylised tiger.

Figure No. 6 Kurdish Sumak Kilim.

Figure No. 8 Flower Vendor, by Diego Rivera, 1949.

Figure No. 7 Arearea Beauties on a Tahitian beach, by Paul Gauguin.

CHAPTER TWO

ACKNOWLEDGING THE REVIVAL OF ETHNIC HANDCRAFTS WITHIN TODAYS SOCIETY.

CHAPTER 2

ACKNOWLEDGING THE REVIVAL OF ETHNIC HANDCRAFTS WITHIN TODAYS SOCIETY

The growing ecological awareness within todays society, I believe has sparked the rebirth of ethnic crafts within modern design. The 1990's has become a time when we are more aware of what damages we are doing to the earth, energy efficiency and the depletion of the ozone layer is forcing new attitudes towards the way we live and thus, towards design. Shiny chrome and sophisticated plastics are a design style of the past. Their manufacture requires the use of chemicals harmful to the environment. Hi-tech materials and the forms into which they are welded, riveted and machined, suddenly have become taboo in the design world. Organic design using natural materials, colours and forms have inspired contemporary designers to use ethnic art and crafts as a source of inspiration for their work, because all ethnic crafts regardless of their geographical origins are made from pure natural materials.

The difference between today's revival of interest in ethnic and the "hippy ethnic" revival of the late 1960's and early 1970's, with its Indian wall hangings, African masks and other ethnic crafts - is that the latter was very much as expression of an alternative culture. It appeared as a turning-away from conservative society, thus a form of escapism, which became fashionable in design of the era. The new ethnic style is not a rejection of the way we live, it is almost a way of coming to terms with and keeping in touch with our fundamental appetites for beauty and creativity. As our lives and surroundings became more complicated and invaded by technology, the strong design identity and spirited tradition inherent in ethnic craft, perhaps became more appealing to us, symbolising a more natural surrounding. This revival is not a regressive - in fact I feel it most successfully manifests itself in modern interiors where crudeness and sophistication can act as a foil to each other. (PL.No.9).

But could the revival of the ethnic style today, just be a passing fashion or trend? It is also currently influencing fashion textiles as well as interior design.

Leading textile magazine "The World of International Textiles" has assured us that the fashion textiles for the oncoming years will be influenced by different ethnic styles from around the world (PLS. No. 10, 11, 12 and 13).

This strong ethnic flavour within fashion textiles I feel, will have faded and exhausted its self in one or two years time due to the fickle nature of fashion. Of course the use of natural fabrics hopefully may continue on because of ecological awareness, but the overall ethnic appearance will have died due to new fashion ideas and styles constantly changing. Unlike fashion design, the ethnic style within interiors could easily continue on, because people today appreciate more handcraftmanship.

The increasing accessibility of far-off countries and the importation from them of handmade ethnic goods has all helped to advertise this style. Global Village have a chain of shops all over Britain and Ireland, the company was founded on the philosophy of promoting "trade and not aid" with under developed countries. It provides access to a wide range of different ethnic goods only normally discovered during exotic travels, to opposite sides of the world. Global Village promotes international craftsmanship. I visited the shop in Blackrock, Dublin and it provides a large selection of hand made ethnic goods, such as ceramics, exterior and interior artifacts, fabrics, chests, papier-mache crafts, lamps and furniture. (PLS. No. 14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25 and 26).

While visiting Global Village, I asked the owners of the Dublin premises why they thought ethnic crafts were witnessing a great revival within our Society today? They felt that ... The ethnic craft has been revived because of the growing awareness in society of harmful materials, and the ethnic craft is made of natural materials which had lead to its popularity today. When I asked them about the sales of these goods in Ireland and possible escalation of sales, they appeared optimistic...

Trade at the moment for ethnic goods in Ireland is quite good, more and more people want to decorate their homes using these goods, because design became colourless and boring and these ethnic crafts have strong

designs and colours which tie in well in todays modern interiors.

The 1980's was an era when commercial media had encouraged us to buy items with a designer label, which were infact mass-produced items. Design in the last decade lost the quality of the human touch and a sense of individual creativity. Global Village and other organizations who promote the revival of natural materials and crafts, have introduced Western civilization to a of crafts from opposite sides of the world. They have also freed us from feeling alienated from other arts and craft styles missing from the typical designer environment of the 1980's. But why did we surround ourselves with these so called designer objects in the last decade? It was because we wanted to possess something that was creative. We were capable of appreciating someone elses work or design concept. But perhaps hi-tech chrome or "French provincial style" did not allow for the same wealth of individual stylistic choice, that the present ethnic revival encourages. Maybe more than an art, actually being creative is a basic human need, which modern society and technology has lead us to forget. We still see human creativity in ethnic art, which has been passed down through the generations. For instance the weaving tradition amongst many native Indian tribes has carried on far over two hundred years. Modern technology may have advanced the loom but their is still that strong sense of an inherited tradition belonging to their woven textiles.

Our strong sense of belonging to a culture within the west has also been wiped away by modern civilization and technology. We don't find the need anymore to be creative and make something by hand, when the machine can do it for us. When one witnesses other cultures hand made crafts, it makes one realise how little of our tremendous creative potential we do in fact use.

Decorating our homes with these ethnic style crafts is a constant reminder to us, of a strong culture which we may have forgotten. so we find the need to surround ourselves with something that holds a strong tradition, even if it is one belonging to a different culture. African politician, Marcus Garvey once said, "A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots."

Figure No. 9 Interior showing recycled timber for coffee table, which passes a crude appearance, but blends in well in this modern room.

SUMMER 1994

TROPICAL DELIGHTS

the experience of touching and feeling

Sophisticated rustic fabrics inspired by North Africa. Striking designs clearly inspired by primitive civilizations.

COLOURS

Subdued earth tones with neutral, natural shades and graded vegetable colours.

FABRICS

Rustic does not mean coarse: blends with linen and new special-effect yarns give the fabrics a soft, noble touch • surfaces inspired by nature - irregular woven structures • crêpe yarns • rough-grained speckled fabrics and fabrics with a bleached look • netlike transparency • complex cut threads with a 'destroyed' look • three-dimensional effects • floating and ultra-fine double fabrics are evidence of sophisticated textile technology.

PATTERNING

African folk art • wood structures • wall paintings • masks and body art • symbols in patch and collage style with an aged look • hand-printed look on low-contrast colour woven fabrics • dyeing techniques and simple, geometric prints with batik look • stylized figurative motifs • ideas inspired by ancient craft textiles, mystic and voodoo culture.

STYLING

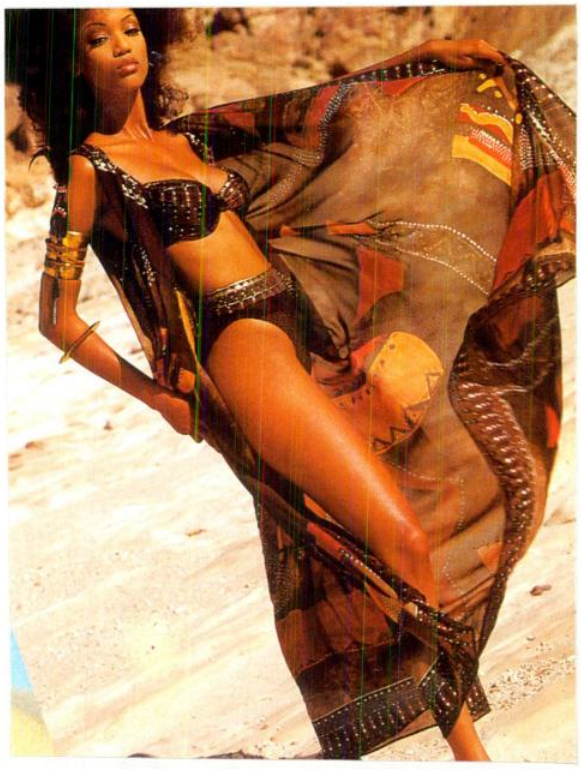
The fabric determines the silhouette • transparents should be wide and loose-fitting • more compact fabrics are tailored or tight-fitting • kaftan shapes • loose, rectangular jackets • elegant sarong and wraparound styles.

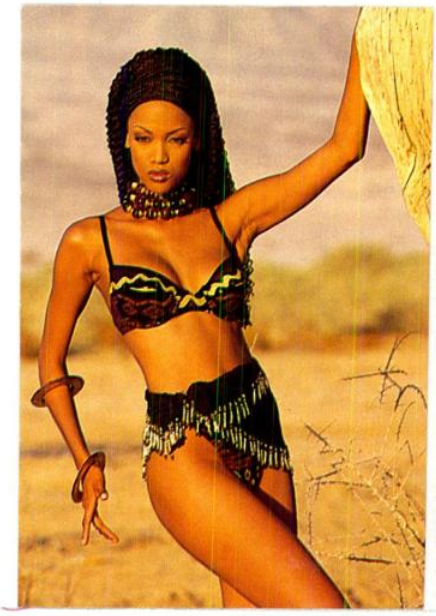
ACCESSORIES

Everything is textural and irregular • nutshells and porous stones • raffia materials • hints of African tribal culture • leather details.

Figure No. 10 International Interiors review for fashion textiles 1994 and 1995.

Figure No. 11 Woven, elasticated viscose dress, by Jean Paul Gaultier.





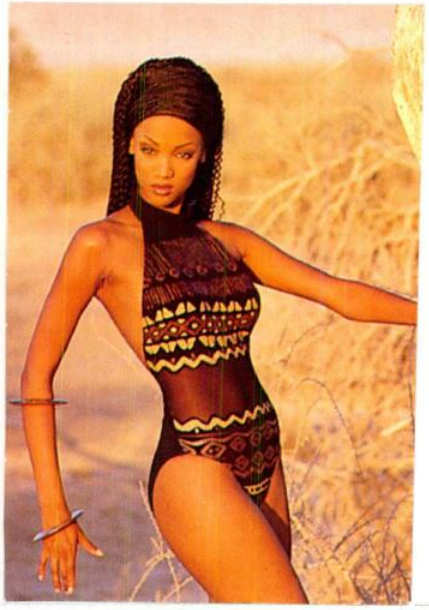


Figure No. 12, Swimwear collection from Gottex.

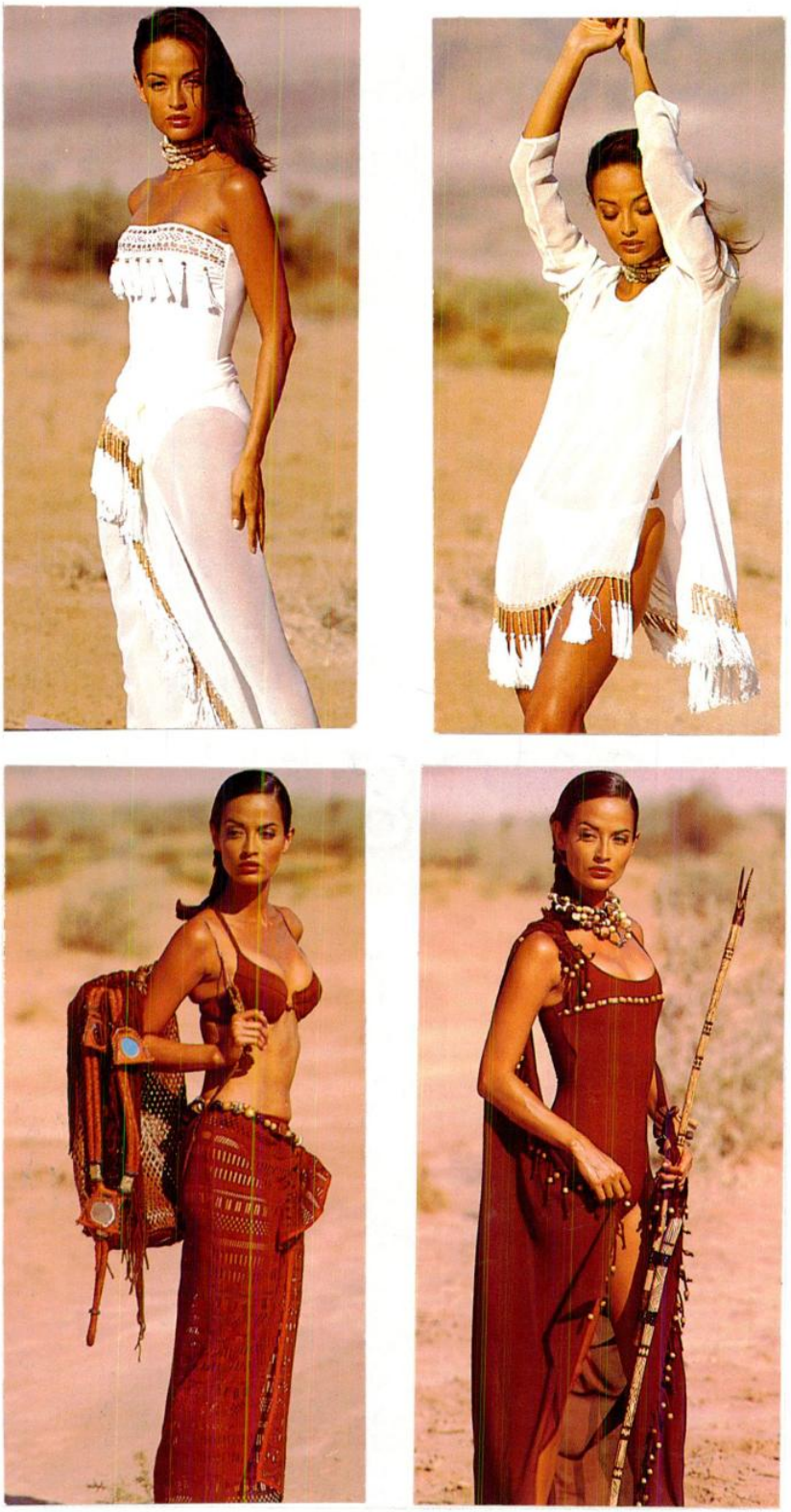


Figure No. 13 Summer Collection for 1994 by Gottex.

Figure No. 14 A collection of ceramic mugs and fish, all hand made from around the world.

Figure No. 15 Furniture artifacts and cushion.

Figure No. 16 African painting

Figure No. 17 Kurdish Kilim stool.

Figure No. 18 Kilim cushions.

Figure No. 19 Ceramic vases, artifacts and lamps.

Figure No. 20 Indian Furniture.

Figure No. 21 Indian and Chinese furniture

Figure No. 22 Teracotta ceramics, decoratively painted and wrapped with ethnic style woven fabrics.

Figure No. 23 Balough prayer carpet

Figure No. 24 Eastern style carpet.

Figure No. 25 Rattan furniture and Kirdish style cushions.

Figure No. 26 Kurdish style cushion.

CHAPTER THREE

EXAMINATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE ETHNIC STYLE AND HANDCRAFT IN TODAYS INTERIOR AND TEXTILE DESIGN.

CHAPTER 3

EXAMINATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE ETHNIC STYLE AND HANDCRAFT IN TODAYS INTERIOR AND TEXTILE DESIGN. Looking at the work of David Champion - Chester Jones - Maxime de le Falaise - Malcolm Temple - Jane Churchill and Kathryn Jordan.

Within this chapter I have selected a variety of contemporary interior and textile design that have been inspired by the ethnic theme. I will discuss the origins of these influences and try to determine these cultures which most inspire modern interiors and textile design. Traditional hand crafts and art, especially from Africa, the Far East, India and native American Indian, have all influenced modern design today.

The strong traditional ethnic patterning or the African style, has been a major influence on interior and textile design today. The Kassena tribe from northern Ghana, which I have already mentioned in Chapter 1, are a perfect example of a culture who still today, carry on their traditional ethnic style of design. For this reason I have chosen to discuss this particular culture and their work, and I feel their designs have had a huge impact on many contemporary interior and textile designs, some of which I will discuss within this chapter.

The women of the tribe for hundreds of years have carried on this tradition of painting the outside of their houses, it is a community activity for them (PL.No. 27). Each woman has her own particular job designing, painting or filling in, but the overall scheme is discussed together. They begin by replastering the walls with a mixture of cow-dung, locust bean-pad juices and mud, smoothing it down with their hands. The pigments are made from grinding a fine powder and mixing them with water. The women still apply the pigments in the traditional way with feathers, sticks and dried grass as well as their fingers.

They get their inspiration for the designs, from objects and events in their daily lives, such as pots, drums, people and animals. The most common motif is the triangular sharks teeth (PL. No.28), the diamond pattern, "wanzanna", illustrates the net made of calabash rope (PL. No.29), Lizard reliefs "bang-doo", are found locally, and snakes "wobig-ziifa", are revered probably because they can often be lethal

(PL. No. 30). Vertical zig-zags signify the wings of a bat (PL.No.29).

The hot sun bakes these houses into a very hard mould (PL.No.31) which provides a protective living quarter from the elements, but it also fades the creative designs covering the houses. This time next year, the patterned walls will have faded considerably due to the sum and heavy rainfall. When the designs vanish completely the women begin to paint them again. While the women are responsible for all the decoration, the building work is carried out by the men. The serpentine walls are built up in layers with moulded balls of wet mud. Considering the sun bakes the mud to the rock, the walls need constant attention to prevent cracking. The overall layout and appearance of the houses reminds me of a magical labrynthe, because of the way they are situated, shaped and stylistically decorated.

Alongside their decorating duties, the Kassena women also make pots, for which they are famous. Apart from using these to collect water and cooking, they sell these pots in local markets to tourists. these hand crafts are an important source of income, especially when the crops have failed.

The designs and colours of the patterning on the Kassena houses, I feel are typical of the motifs and natural shades that contemporary textile designers are using, to produce some of the finest printed and woven textiles today (PL.No.32).

DAVID CHAMPION

Interior Designer David Champion (Hall, 1992, P's 133 to 136) has designed and decorated his London house using direct reference to African ethnic style. His home is an intensive journey back to South Africa, were he grew up. The house is surrounded in traditional African style artifacts, furniture and textiles making it impossible to hide from the spirit of Africa, so prevalent in every room.

David Champion's sitting room (PL.No.33) intuitively celebrates the colours of his South African homeland black-yellow-gold-green and red. The introduction of ethnic objects from other areas of the world don't intrude on the style, for example A Thai temple dog, stripped and

repainted by Champion, guards the fireplace whilst the hearth is tiled in modern English encaustic tiles decorated with ethnically inspired motifs. The printed fabric on the cushion is made from mud-resist Mali fabric. This one colour print is typical of contemporary African style fabrics. These contrasting tones of very dark brown-black and cream-white create an eye dazzling, striking pattern on the fabric. These bold, geometric motifs are typical of the traditional African patterning and style in (PL.No. 27) and reminds us of the Kassena patterning. The dining room is also painted in shades of golden ochres, reds and yellow in (PL. No.34) which reminds Champion of the earth from which the tribes people used to take pigments to paint their houses. The ebonized ash dresser with worked copper inserts, was designed by Champion and his partner Anthony Collett, displays African baskets and Afghan pottery. The table and chairs are original Arts and Crafts pieces by Ambroke Heal, this English style furniture merges very well with the crude ethnic style items in the room. The dark stained dresser contrasts with the bright vivid painted pottery and baskets.

David Champions house may be filled with ethnic objects, but their is a sense of aesthetic order. He has placed these undeniably African objects beside plain Western furniture, which is highly effective. Ethnic craft styles from Africa and other regions of the world need to be selectively chosen and arrayed within a modern interior. Over indulgence in a collection of strong ethnic objects within a room, can look ridiculously busy or disquieting which has the adverse effect of maring or exhausting the individual beauty of each ethnic piece. An example of this over indulgence in a vast, unrelated array of ethnic objects and styles within one setting, can be seen in a bar in the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown, Co. Tyrone. I visited the bar recently and the manager told me that the designers had taken their inspiration from traditional ethnic artifacts and design styles from around the world.

The decoration of the bar, see (PL. No. 35 and 36) has been deliberately antiqued to look as if it had been their for years, employing an old and distressed finish to all paint work and timber. I feel the overall design, lacks good design sense and coherence, all objects within the room bear little relation to one another. The eye is constantly distracted and jarred by the vast and miscellaneous

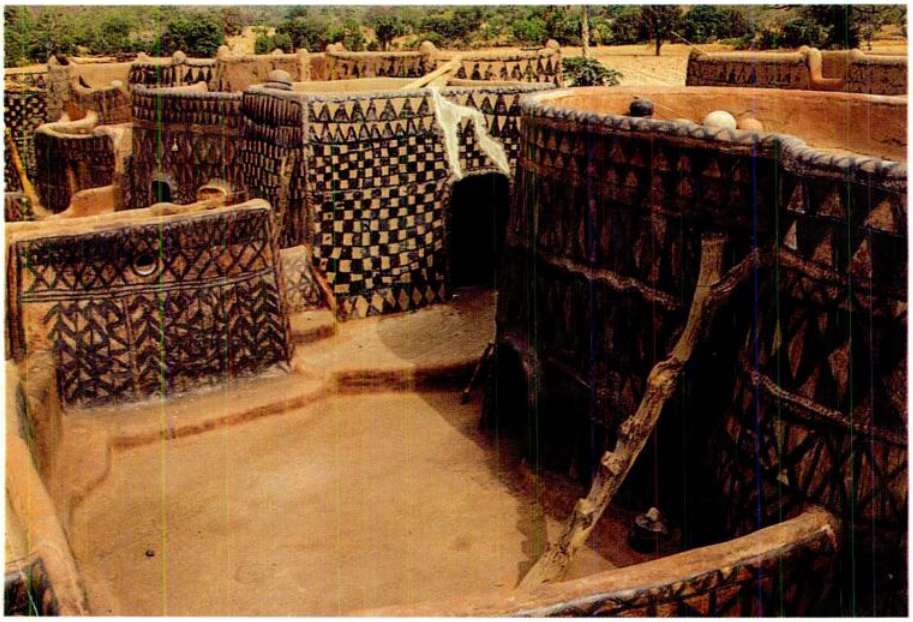


Figure No.27 An overall view of the Kassena mud houses in northern Ghana.

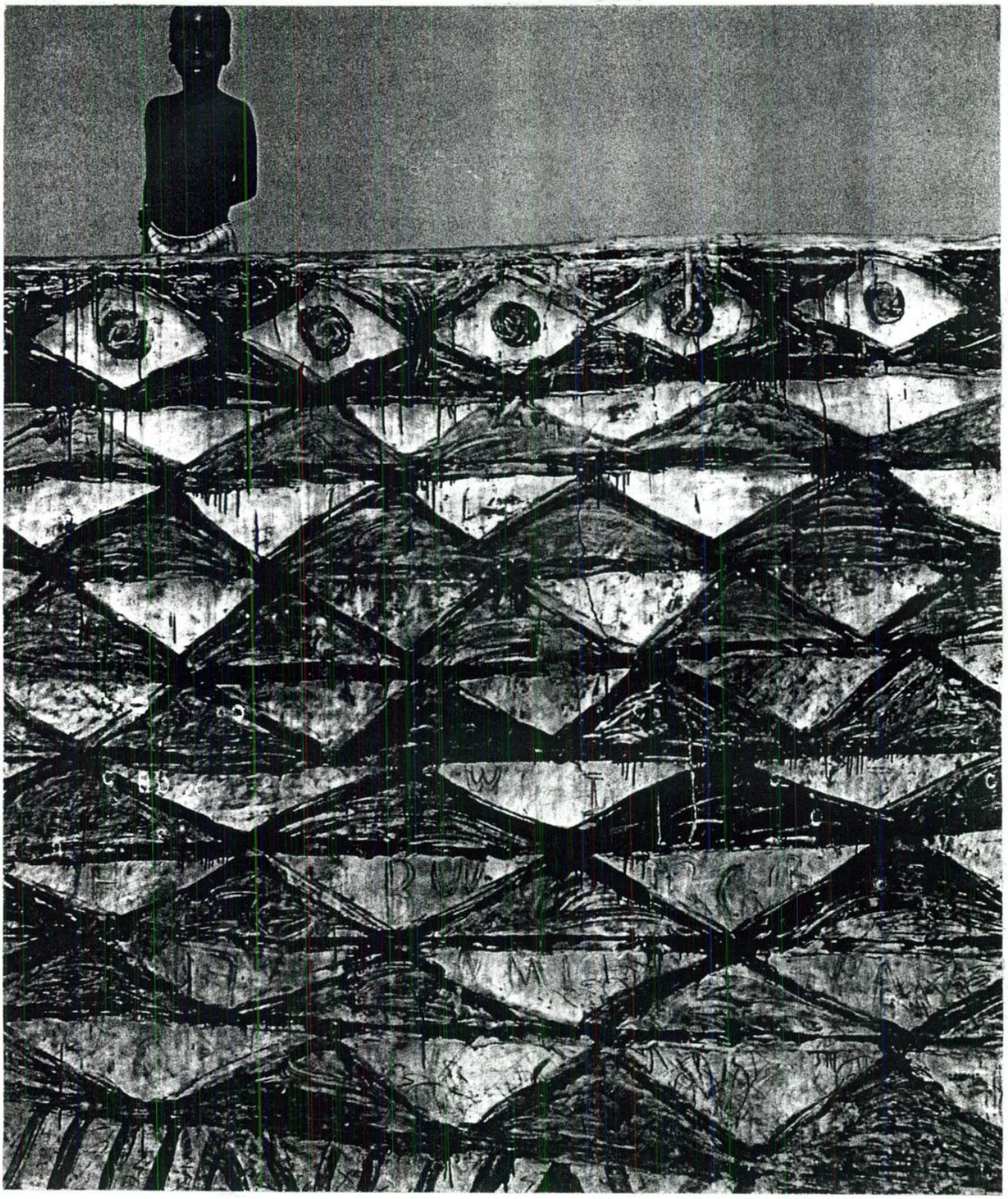
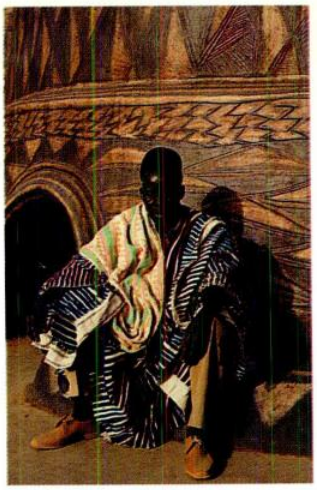
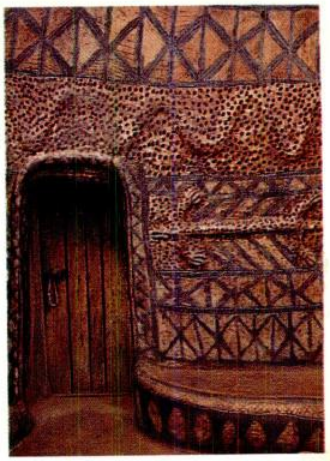


Figure No.28 The triangular sharks teeth, design on the Kassena house.





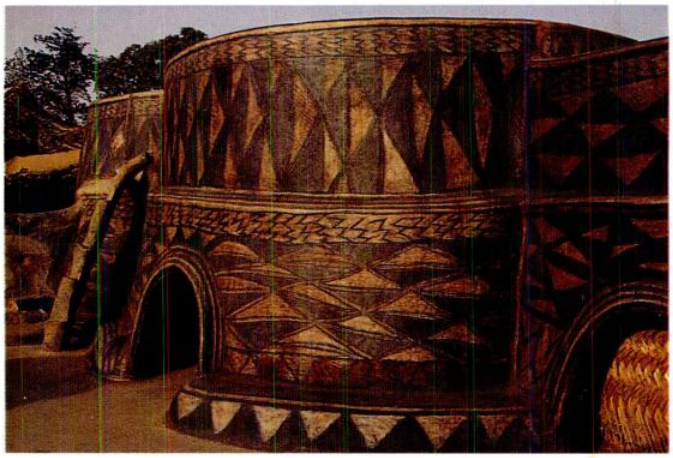


Figure No.29,30,Diamond and triangle designs.

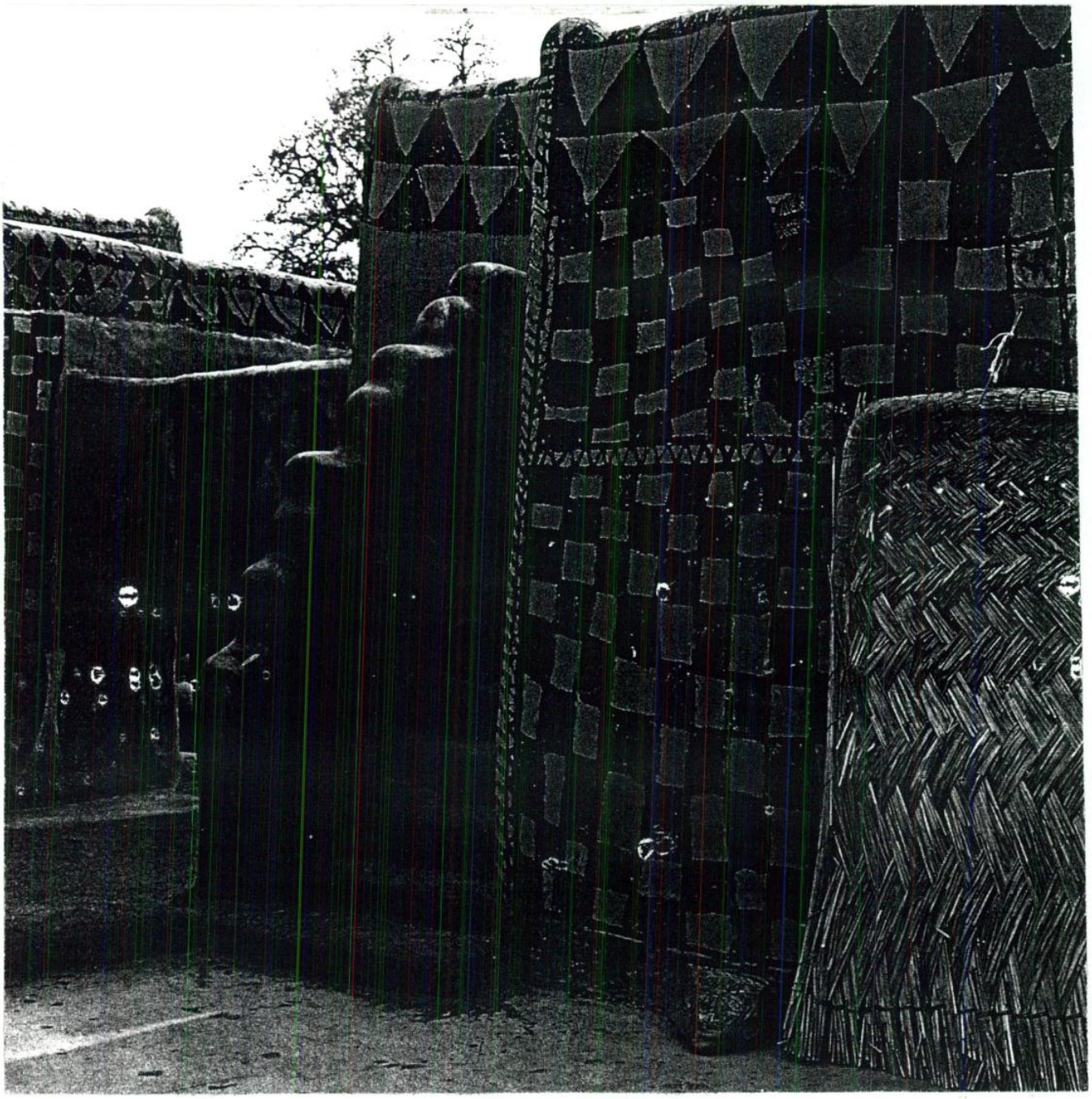


Figure No.31 Serpentine walls of the Kassena mud houses, are built in layers with moulded balls of wet mud, baked by the sun.

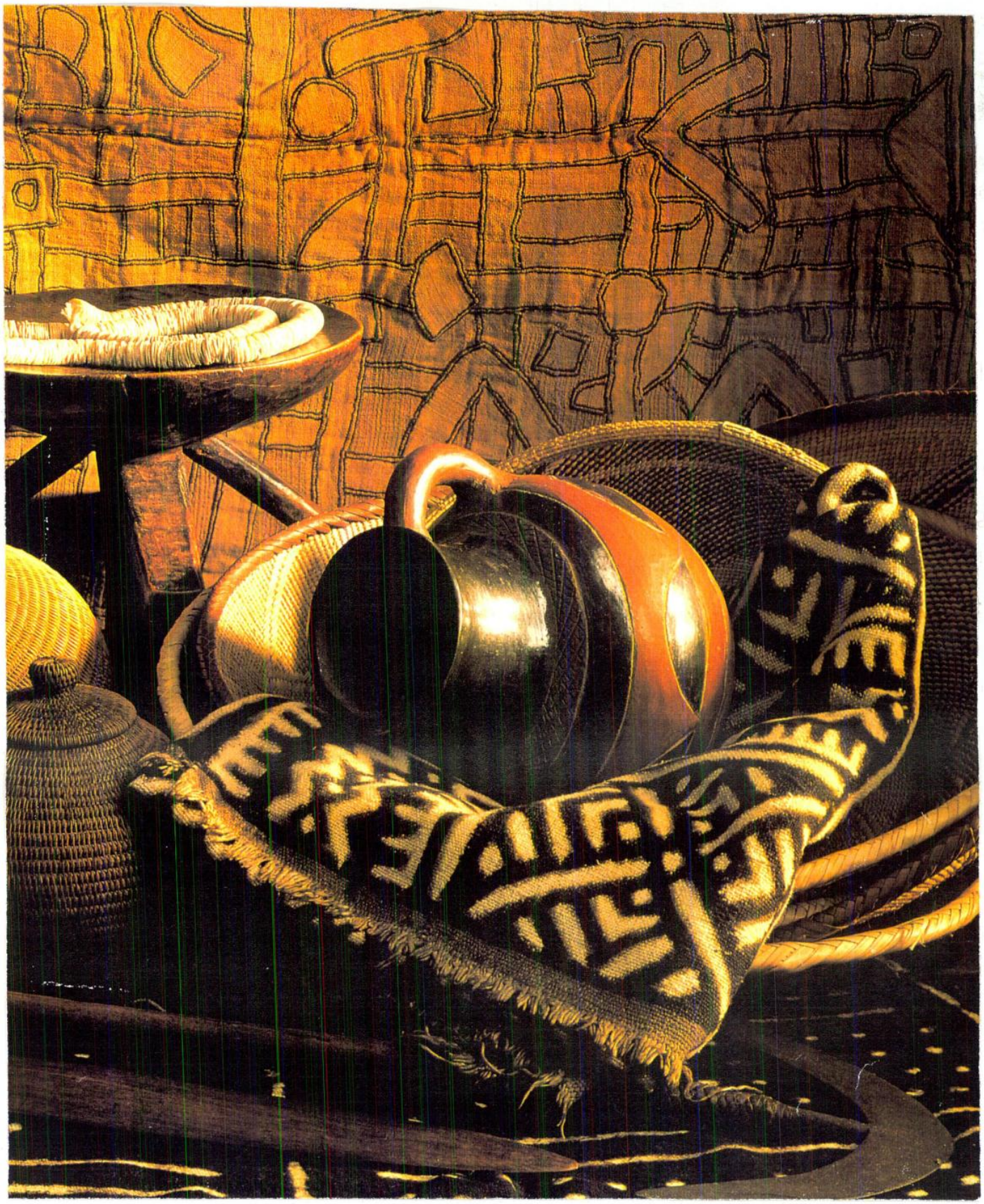


Figure No. 32 Much of the appeal of classic African folk art lies in its abstract patterned fabrics.

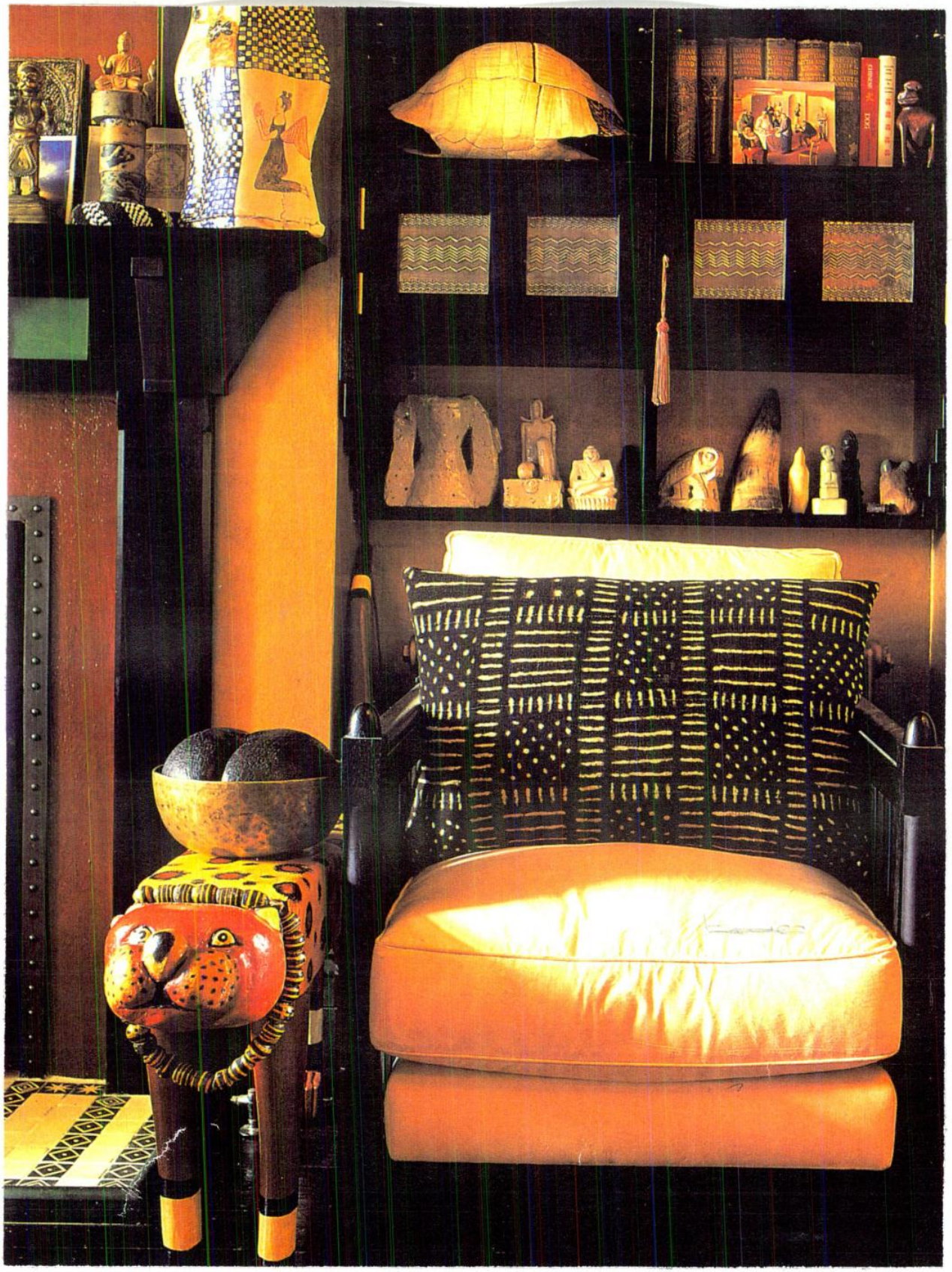


Figure No.33 David Champion's sitting room displays a mannered arrangement of art and design.

Figure No. 34 Ebonized ash dresser designed by Champion and his partner Anthony, displays a collection of African baskets and Afghan pottery.

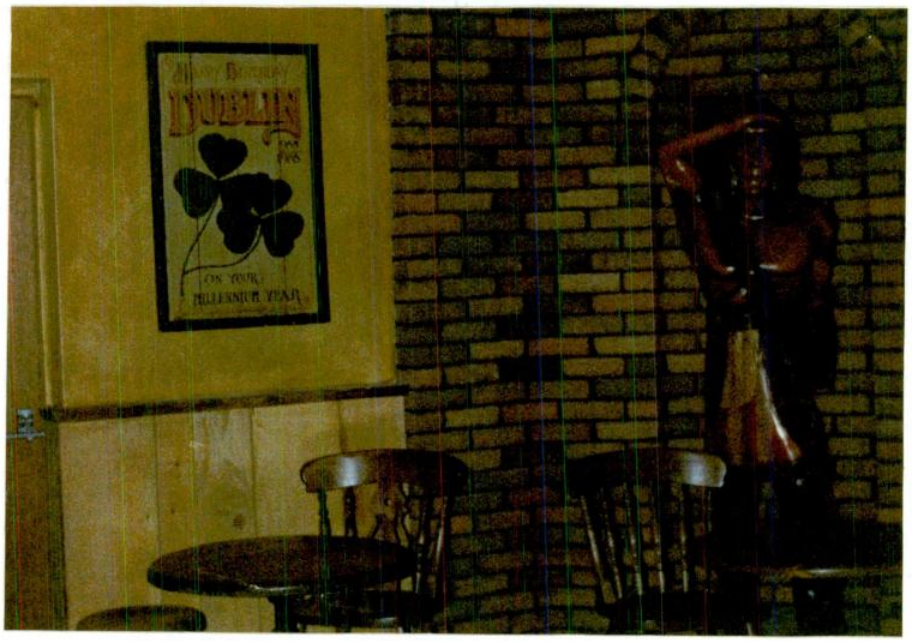


Figure No. 37 Furniture made locally by J. and G. Derry, reproduction furniture company, and the Indian was imported from the Philipines.

Figure No. 38 An old American style cart, imported from America.

Figure No. 39 Boat hanging from the roof in the bar, with a Joker posed inside.

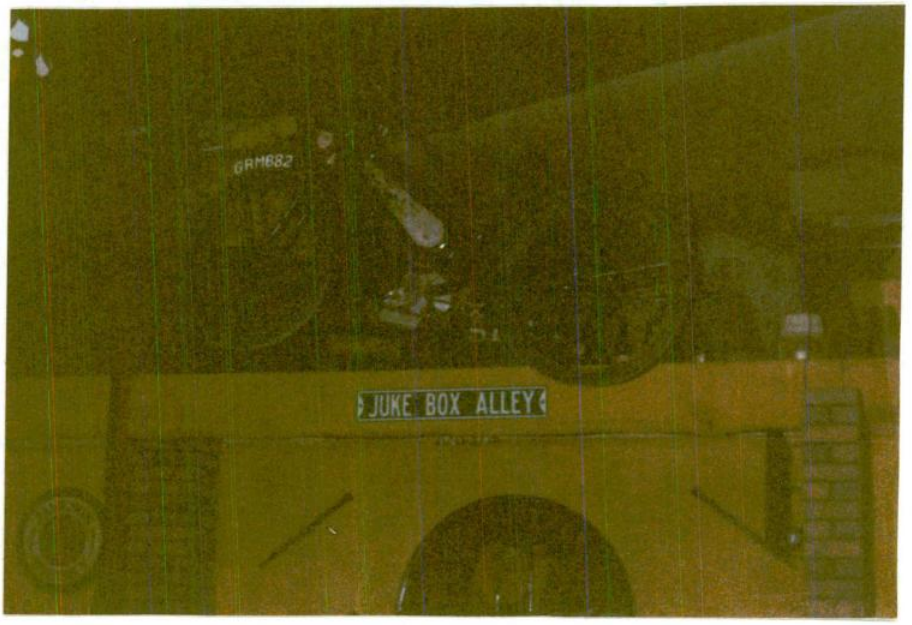


Figure No. 40 English B.S.A. Masterbike also hanging from the roof in the bar.

collection of motifs, leaving one with little idea of design concept the designer is trying to convey. For example in (PL.No.37) a traditional Irish style poster of Shamrocks is placed beside an Indian statue, neither have any connection, and succeed only in lending an air of the ridiculous t the place. Apart from this they fail also, in appearing to represent traditional handicrafts due to their high class finish, making them resemble more a line up of curios for sale. Even the backdrop behind the Indian is not sympathetic to the traditional theme, as the format of the brickwork is too regular, exact, not even attempting to mask machine made regularity.

Hanging from the roof are different items of transport such as the motorbike, boat, and cart in (PL. No. 38,39 and 40). All these items are from different period in history and have reportedly been imported from different countries.

The interior design of this bar is the ultimate display of Kitsch. The room appears cluttered with a vast collection of different ethnic objects that have no relation to one another and no design principle seems to have been employed in its evaluation. This type of over-indulgence in undiluted ethnic was widely practised in the 1970's, when interiors were cluttered with ethnic artifacts from different cultures and placed in a room with heavily bold patterned wallpapers designs.

CHESTER JONES

The African and other ethnic styles has influenced the work of British interior designer, Chester Jones see (PL.No.41). He originally trained as an architect before becoming managing director of the decorating side of Colefax and Fowler and writing a book about their company style. Now having set up his own decorating and design business, he is proud of his architect background that is so central to his style.

I have chosen to discuss Chester Jones because his interior design displays the ethnic style working well within modern design. His wife Sandy is also a designer, see (PL.No.42), who designs fabrics and rugs with the traditional ethnic theme, using the African style as a chief inspirational source. Together as a team they run their family business from a single storey cottage/office in the back garden of

their Battersea house. Their working studio and house is filled with unusual objects from around the world, which reflects in both their design work.

Chester Jones originally gave up architecture because "I was constantly being asked to tear down things I liked". He left Colefax and Fowler as he "felt big companies tended to dilute ideas" from (Geddes-Brown, 1993, p57).

When Chester Jones designed the interior of an old artists studio, he drew his inspiration from different ethnic styles from the 1920's. The studio block in this London flat was located and built for such people in mind. As a structure it is irregular in appearance for example, the number and shapes of windows lend a haphazard and almost accidental feel to the design. The house was designed by William Flockhart in 1904 for Sir Edward Davis, a south African tine millionaire who lived across the street, and wanted to have his artistic friends nearby. Six painters and designers of the Arts and Crafts movement eventually set up shop there among them Glyn Philpot, one of whose exotic portraits hangs over the flats dining table see (PL.No. 43).

Jones spent a year re-arranging, designing, decorating and furnishing the rooms of this once-dilapidated flat. The overall look of this flat could be described as a witty, interpretation of the style of a 1920's European connoisseur - someone interested in the art of France and Vienna as well as in the exotic ethnic style from primitive cultures see (PL.No. 44). Jones also designed the fabric in the flat. The curtains set (PL.No. 45) were designed with the African influence and even the traditional method of stencilling was employed on the fabric. The curtains have similar patterning to the designs on the Kassena mud houses, notice the same related scale of patterning and the same diamond, zig-zag and triangle motifs, are used in both. The earthly tones of the fabric range from cream and dark brown, similar to the colours within its African inspirational source.

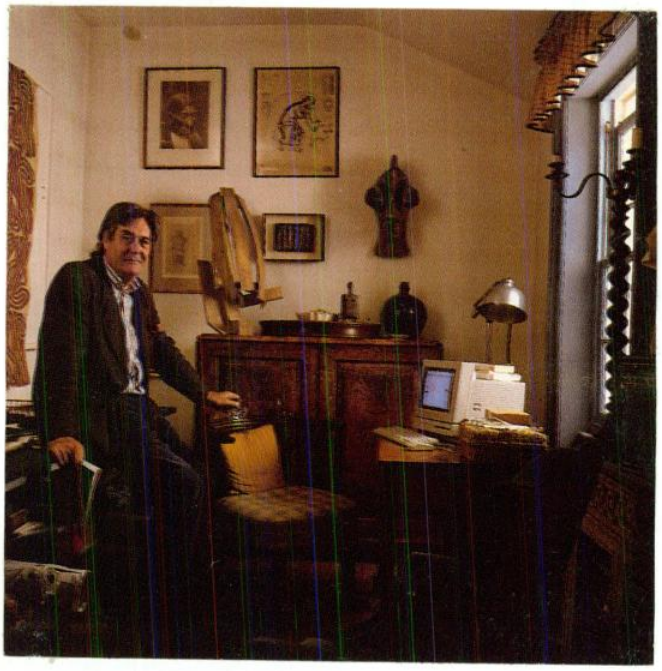


Figure No. 41 Chester Jones in his design studio, in Battersea.

Figure No. 42 Sandy Jones surrounded in her studio by African Textiles.

Figure No. 43 Glyn Philpot's exotic portraits hangs in the dining room of the Flat designed by Chester Jones.

Figure No. 44

A collection of African masks and artifacts from around the world in the dining room of this house designed by Chester Jones.

Figure No. 45 Curtains in this room were hand stenciled and designed by Chester Jones.

She finds working in the African idiom immensely liberating. 'It's like jumping up and down to rock music for people who can't dance. I wonder,' she said in passing, 'if I'm the reincarnation of an African'

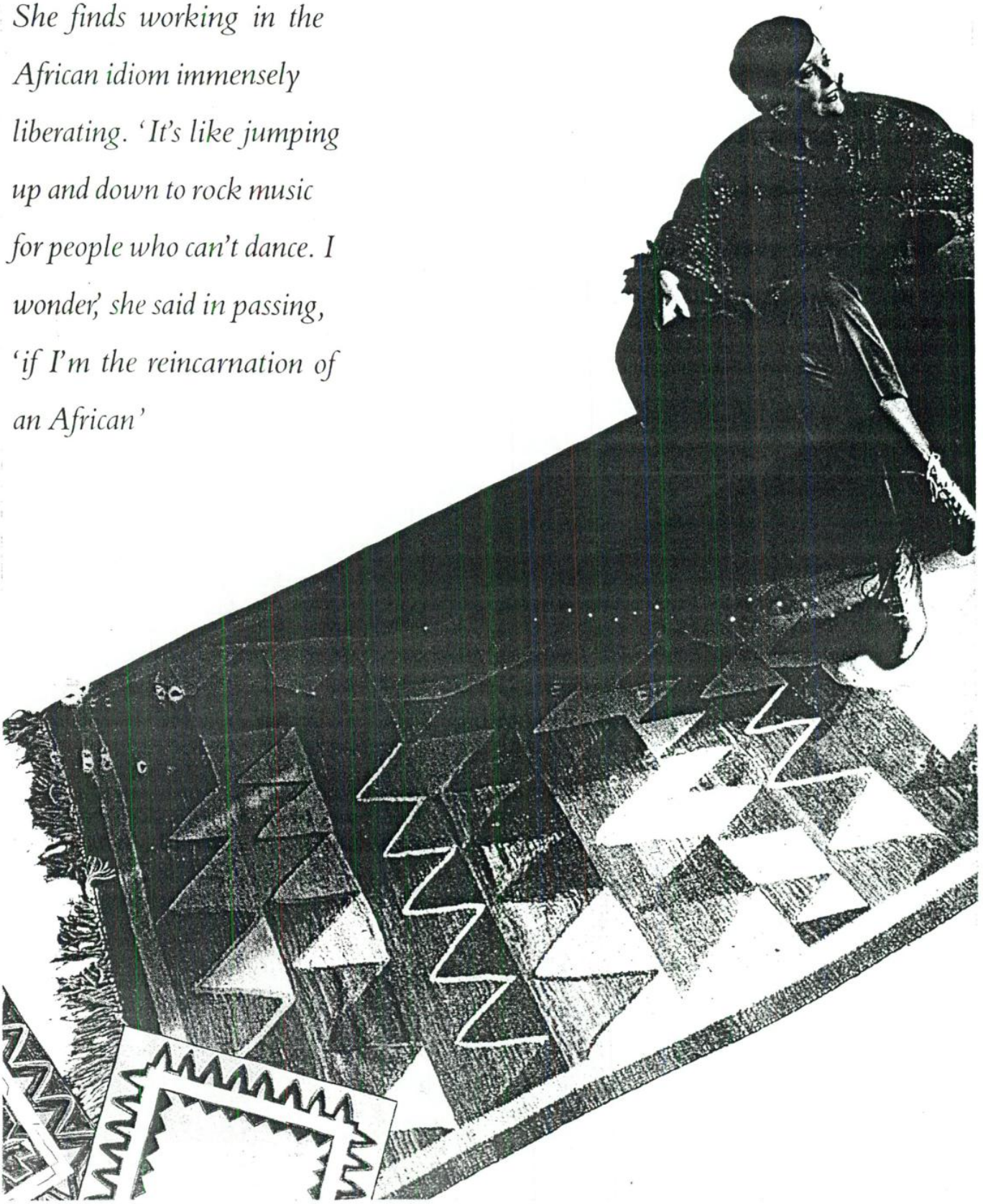


Figure No. 46 Maxime de la Falaise with her African inspired rugs.

MAXIME DE LE FALAISE

Fashion and textile designer, has let the strong ethnic flavour of African handcrafts influence her work, in the past and today. She still works for Yves St. Laurent in New York, as well as painting coffins and designing carpets, which are her latest unlikely twist in her long and illustrious career in fashion and the decorative arts that began in the 1950's when he was a newly married countess working for the formidable Elsa Schiaparelli.

Her painted coffins started life as a dinner party joke, but could well become the ultimate accessory for the fashion victim or the fashionably gothic.

Christopher Farr, who runs a pioneering carpet Gallery in Regents Park Road, London, has for the past few years been collaborating with both young and established artists and designers, including Gillian Ayres and Romeo Gigli, Maxime de le Falaise is also exhibiting her work there see (PL.No. 46). The rug designs are meticulously made up by traditional weavers in Turkey.

Though Maxime has never been to Africa, she loves to collect tribal art. She took her collection to her French country house and furnished it with French traditional style furniture which, just to amuse herself, she painted them with African inspired designs. A magazine did a feature about her furniture which helped to launch her business. She believes that working in the African style allows me to free all hidden thoughts and use the art as a form of free expression.

MALCOLM TEMPLE

In Britain today contemporary Sculptor and Furniture maker Malcolm Temple, also feels that using the inspiration of the ethnic craft design allows him to free himself and explore hidden thoughts and form a free expression within his work. He describes himself as a "Lyrical paganist" (Hall, 1992, p.22). Temple believes that in Britain today.

> We have buried our natural culture along with our true senses. The industrial revolution destroyed indigenous cultures as people moved from the country side to towns to find work, they were displaced from their culture and so the natural paganism of this country was destroyed. (Hall, 1992, p.22).

In rediscovering his pagan origins, Temple has learned to use parts of himself that were previously hidden within him. His work used to be "very tight with the emotions withheld". After freeing these emotions he describes it as the "desert after rain".

Temples work has been inspired by different ethnic crafts from around the world (PL. No. 47). He believe "All natural art forms have a certain similarity, that particular sort of power". (Hall, 1992, p.22). He believes that through creating a piece of his ethnic style Sculptor allows him to capture his lost Pagan culture. Temple gathers together a collection of different ethnic styles as a source of inspiration for his work, he takes these motifs and designs and recreates them in his Sculptor pieces and furniture. Temples Totemic sculptor of "love poles" (PL.No. 48) carved from Canadian pitch pine were loosely inspired by Cycladic art. The stereo cabinet is made from packing case wood and piranha pine, bleached to look as if it had been left out in the sum and then carved in primitive shapes, while the beaten lead panel uses powerful symbols - the eye and the fish - common to almost every culture.

Put into any modern interior, Temples work tends to be the focal point of a room, because of his extremely bright colours and boldly decorated designs. He loves to surround his home with his work which again reminds him of his lost culture.

THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNIC DESIGN OF INDIA, ON THE WORK OF DESIGNERS GUILD, JAMES CHURCHILL AND KATHRYN JORDAN

The traditional craft of rug weaving from India, has been much revived today within design, because of its popularity in Europe, as has the intensely decorated Kurdish Kilm see (PL.No. 49), which has strong colouring and pattern. Which has been reproduced today within design, because of the huge demand from contemporary buyers.

DESIGNERS GUILD

These traditional rug styles and colours from India have influenced the latest fabric and wallpaper collection from Designers Guild, which they have recently launched for 1994 and 1995. They have also launched their first collection of silk fabrics inspired by the old India theme, a selection of which is shown here in (PLS. No. 50, 51 and 52).

JANE CHURCHILL

The Design company Jane Churchill have also let the strong image of old India inspire their latest collection of woven and printed fabrics for 1994 and 1995, see (PL. No. 53 and 54). The rich mix of old India styles in (PL. NO.55) adds spice and colour to a plainly decorated room, in this case with the Indian style fabric on the sofa and matching pelmet.

Vibrant cushions with tassels and beads continue the Eastern Indian theme, while the contemporary designed rug adds pattern to the plain floor. The bright blue of the wallpapers, which matches the blue in the sofa fabric and cushions, makes a strong background colour, and is emphasised by the deeper blue of the armchair. In complete contrast to the wealth of colours and patters in the rest of the scheme, the natural floor covering and accessories, and dark wooden furniture are neutral in colour. With the crisp white paintwork and voile curtains, this brings a light touch to the room and means these strongly ethnic style fabrics do not become overpowering within this modern and easily attainable interior.

KATHRYN JORDAN

Kathryn Jordan has been a restorer of oriental rugs for many years. She set up her business in Castle Combe, in 1990. The studio from which her business is run, is housed in the interior of a white washed stone barn, which is the perfect backdrop for the richly coloured carpets, which are displayed on batons around the walls, see (PL.No. 56). Every nuance of hand-dyed made red, every contrast in texture, from closely woven Persian carpets to the softer feel of tribal rugs, can be seen. There are textiles, bags, embroideries, bag-faces (the

decorative part of an old bug bag, which many people convert to cushions) and blankets. "I go to enormous lengths to get people exactly what they want," Kathryn says, "but I also enjoy just talking about the rugs to anyone who is interested". (Bamber, 1994, p.119).

Kathryn originally trained as an art teacher, but due to her fascination with rugs, she taught herself to restore the rugs and finished teaching. She says that rug restorations is mainly "common sense and patience". Her love and interest in the rugs began in the 1970's - the heyday for rug collectors. "If you were prepared to travel to Afghanistan, Turkey or the bazaars of Iran you could still find wonderful old and interesting pieces", she says.

Today Kathryn's workload of buying, restoring conserving, cleaning and making insurance valuations, not to mention liaising with buyers and interior designers, means that she often sub-contracts excess restorations. The carpets in Kathryn's workshop date from the mid 19th to the early 20th Century, which can be divided up into three main types - those woven by tribes, by cottage weavers, or in urban workshops. Different customers have their favourite types, Kathryn's favourite is the brightly coloured tribal carpets, particularly those made by the Baluch tribe who used to wonder through eastern Iran and Western Afghanistan. "Ther're a complete art form", she says "The nomads would tend the sheep, spin the wool, dye it with whatever they found around them, and in the evenings spin things for their own use."

The prices of the rugs vary from under £100 for a bag-face, to several thousand pounds for rarer pieces. Her repair work, which is invisible until she points it out, is undertaken with a range of wools that hang in skeins from wooden pegs in her workshop. She and other members of the Rug Restorers Association hope to start dyeing their own wools soon. Kathryn also plans to start teaching classes on the history of rugs and how to look after them.

I sent kathryn Jordan a questionnaire on the revival of the ethnic style and handcraft, and also the revival of the American Indian blanket style within todays interior and textile design. Although she does not specifically refer to Indian design as an inspiration to her work she seems strongly aware of the traditional methods and motifs

within carpet and rug weaving of the East e.g. Turkey. She differentiates between the "Guls" (borders) stylistic motifs and techniques, that distinguish the various tribes of Turkey and acknowledges, that often she can notice cross-influence between the tribes in these motifs. Tradition weaving and dyeing techniques fascinate her and are a constant source of study and information for her.

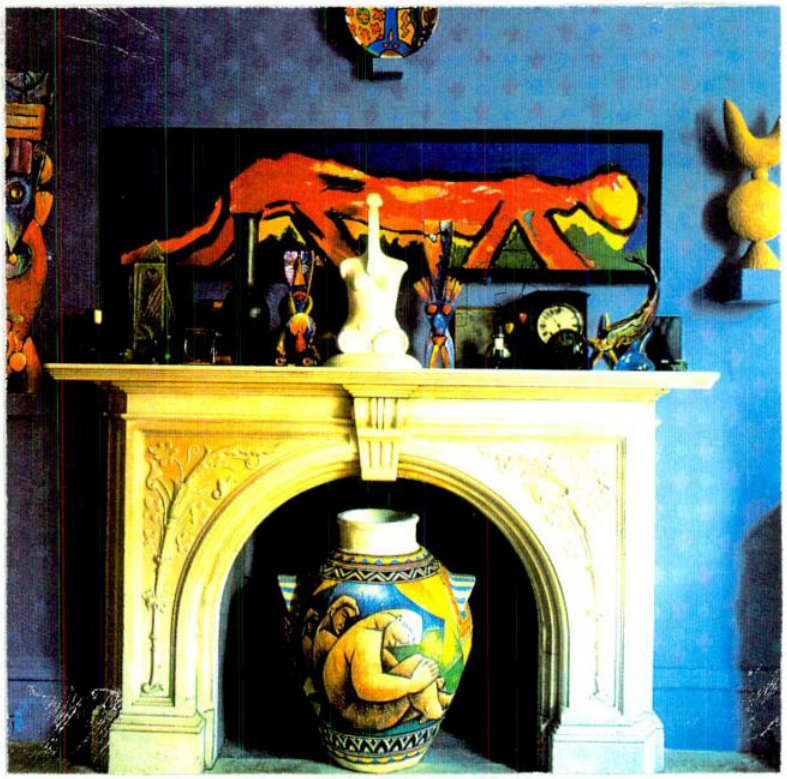


Figure No. 47

Surrounding the mantelpiece in Malcolm Temples living room are examples of his work. The focal carved yellow cabinet is christened the "Optiminsts House".

Figure No. 48

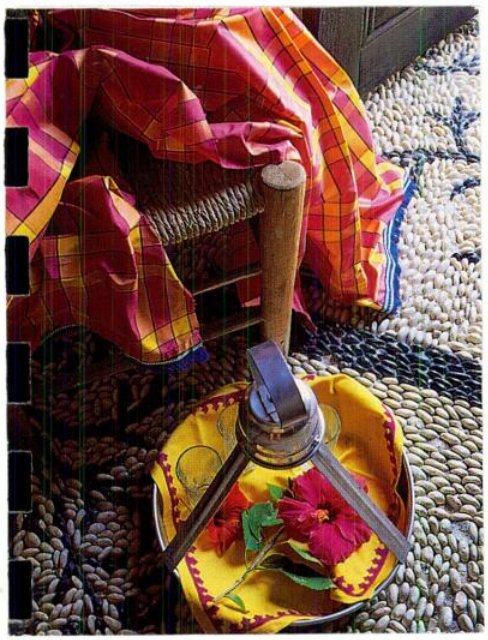
Totemic scupltures or "love poles" carved from Canadian pitch pine were loosely inspired by Cycladic art. The stero cabinet is made from packing case wood and piranha pine, by Malcolm Temple.

Figure No. 49 Kurdish Kilim rugs from Global Village.

Figure No. 50 A collection of Jalapuri silks from Designers Guild.

Figure No. 51

Kusumam prints,
Jalapur silks,
Lalitha velvets
and Kalamkari wallpaper
designs by Designers
Guild for 1994 and 1995.



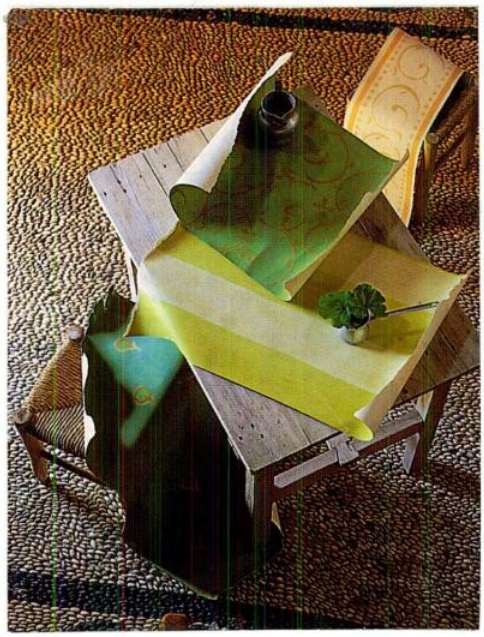


Figure No. 52 A collection of Jalapuri silks, Lalitha Velvets and Kalamkari wallpaper from Designers Guild. 1994 and 1995.

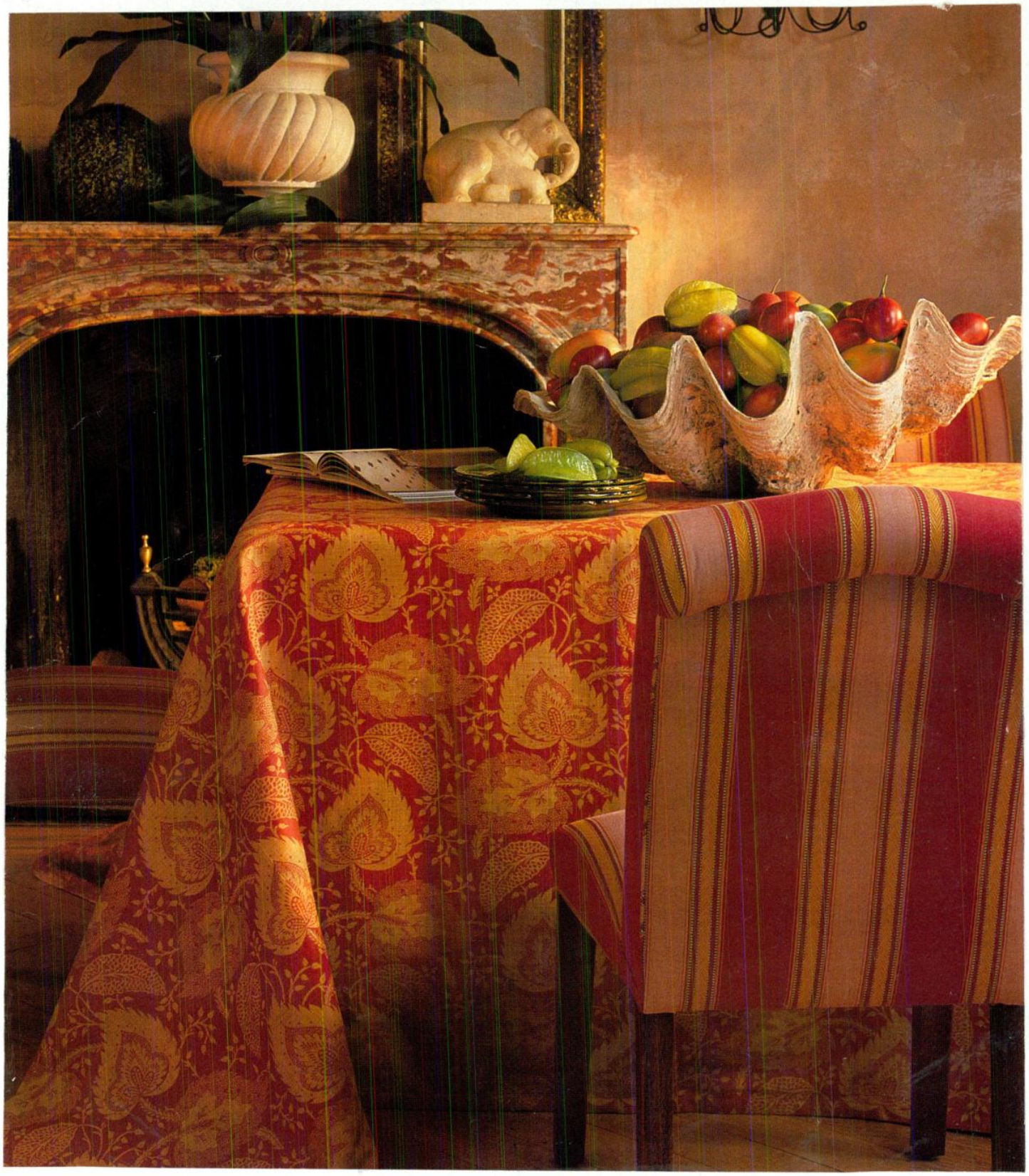


Figure No. 53

Table cloth in Kashimir Leaf, Cheiford Chair in Minara Stripe. Collection of fabrics launched for 1994 and 1995 by Jane Churchill.

Figure No.54 Fabrics: wall hanging - Indian Summer; cushions-Khalsa check, from Jane Churchill.

Figure No. 55

A collection of fabrics from Jane Churchill for 1994 and 1995. The sofa fabric is called Indian Summer, and the fabric design on the cushions is called "Kashmir Leaf".

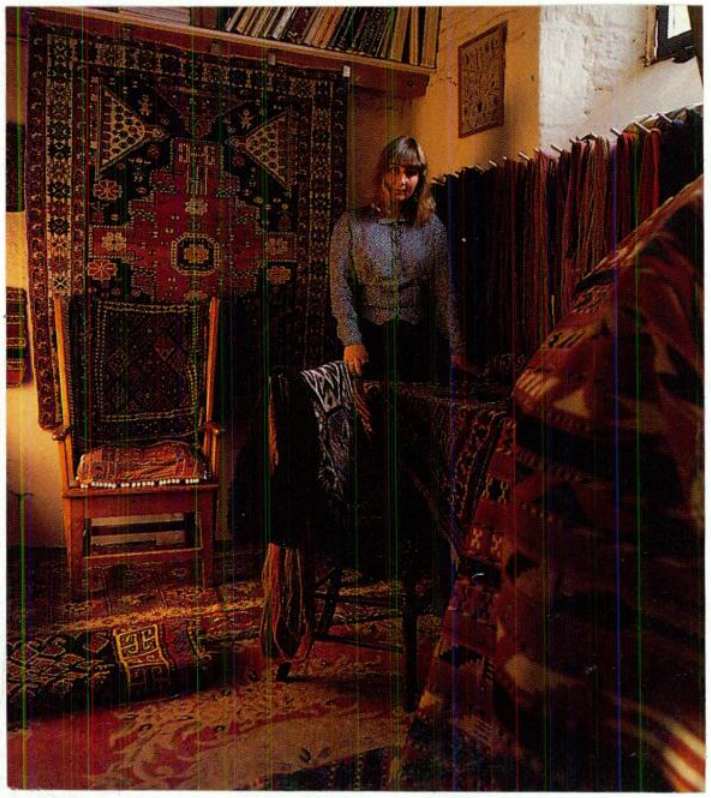


Figure No. 56 Kathryn Jordan surrounded by the oriental rugs that are her passion.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NAVAJO INDIAN BLANKET AND ITS INFLUENCE ON DESIGN TODAY

Figure No. 57

CHAPTER 4

THE NAVAJO INDIAN BLANKET AND ITS INFLUENCE ON DESIGN TODAY

In this Chapter I shall examine the Navajo Indian and their inherited tradition of blanket weaving and its significance within their society. Looking at its traditional design principles and methods of production and tracing their influence on design today.

Among all the other American Indian tribes, the Navajo were undoubtedly, best known in the past and today for their skill at blanket weaving, using the finest materials which produced rich quality blankets contributing lead to their huge success within far and near trade.

The Spanish introduced sheep raising to the Pueblo tribes in the Southwest during the early seventeenth century. This sparked the birth of Navajo weaving when Pueblos captured in Navajo raids or conversely seeking refuge from the Spanish in Navajo lands, brought their "adopted" tribe the techniques of weaving. Navajos originally wove simple striped blankets by Pueblos influence encouraged them to be more adventurous in design ideas.

Traditionally, Navajo men did not take part in any of the weaving, they even left the raising of the sheep to the women of the tribe. Around 1800, they began selling their woven blankets as a means of financial support for their families (PL.No. 58).

The women began trading the blankets with other indian tribes, travellers and Mexicans in exchange for horses, food, wool, and material.

The Navajo Indian woven blanket alone, to my mind, captures the essence of "Indianess" in design more than any other Indian tribal craft. Girls as young as fifteen could weave a blanket alone. The blanket is also an import part of Indian life because of the success in trade beyond Indian territory.

Existing Navajo blankets date back to what is known as the Classical period (c.1800-50). These blankets had designs with thick and varying widths of striped, horizontal bands, dramatic triangles and diamond shapes were sometimes woven into the bands (PL.No 59). The wool for the blankets was taken from the Spanish Curro sheep which gave the weavers a silky fine wool to weave with which left a soft quality in the blanket. The Navajos were later introduced to a cloth called Bayeta, which was introduced to the spanish by the English. The spanish traded the Bayeta to the Navajos, it marked the introduction of new materials into their woven blankets. Bayeta was a highly favoured but relatively expensive material. It was only used by the finest weavers of the tribe. Bayeta was already dyed red by the English before the Navajos obtained it. It came in a cloth form so it had to be unravelled which was time consuming and tedious, but gave the Navajos work a rich quality which inspired them to produce some of the finest textiles of the eighteenth and nineteenth century (PL. No. 60).

During the same classical period Navajos would expand the amount of Bayeta by adding another yarn called Saxany three ply commercial yarn, a fine silky yarn spun from Menna wool, which was also imported. Saxony was the same quality and appearance as the Bayeta. Later at the end of the Classical period an American Flannel (also known as trader flannel) replaced the Bayeta, because it was cheaper and easier to obtain. However the American flannel did not live up to the same standards as the Bayeta and Saxony, because it lacked vibrancy and tended to matt which made is less attractive than the original yarns.

Navajos dyed their yarns with a variety of different natural dyes using many vegetal dyes (within Navajos weaving vegetal dyes usually refers to dyes made from plants native to the southwest). (PL. No. 61).

The source of the colours are as follows:

BLUE: The indigo plant, which was cultivated by the Spanish and sold to the Navajos. The indigo dyestuff was expensive but produced a rich blue colour. It was used up until the end of the nineteenth century.

RED: Early Navajo weavers obtained the predominant colour red

Fig. 58 Navajo women weaving, on an upright loom, nineteenth century.

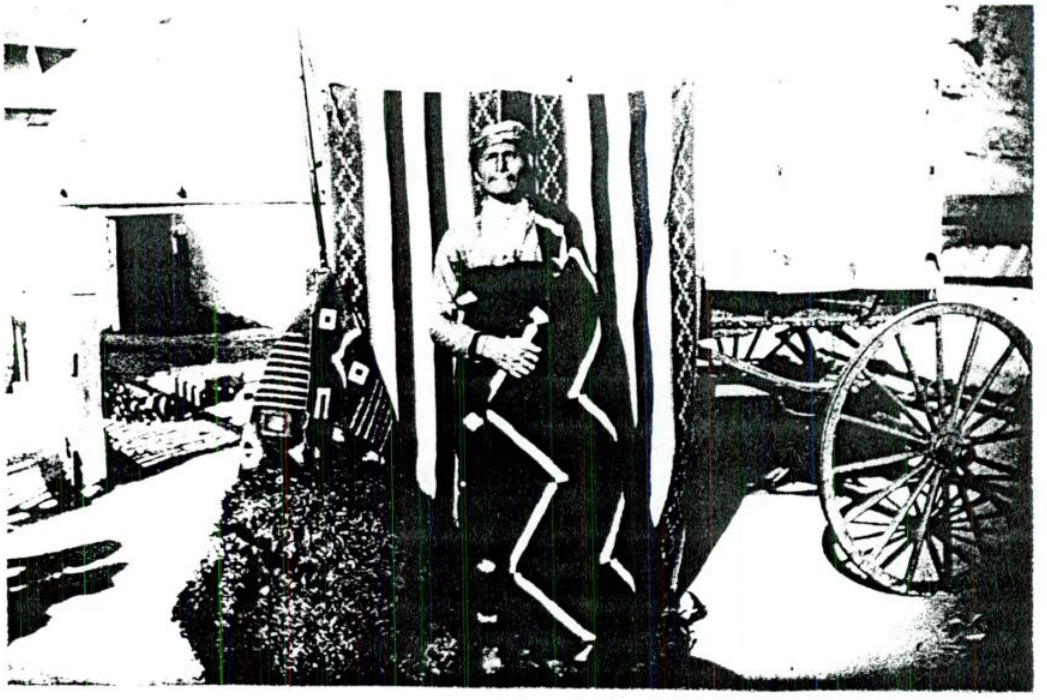


Fig. 59 Navajo man, c. 1890.

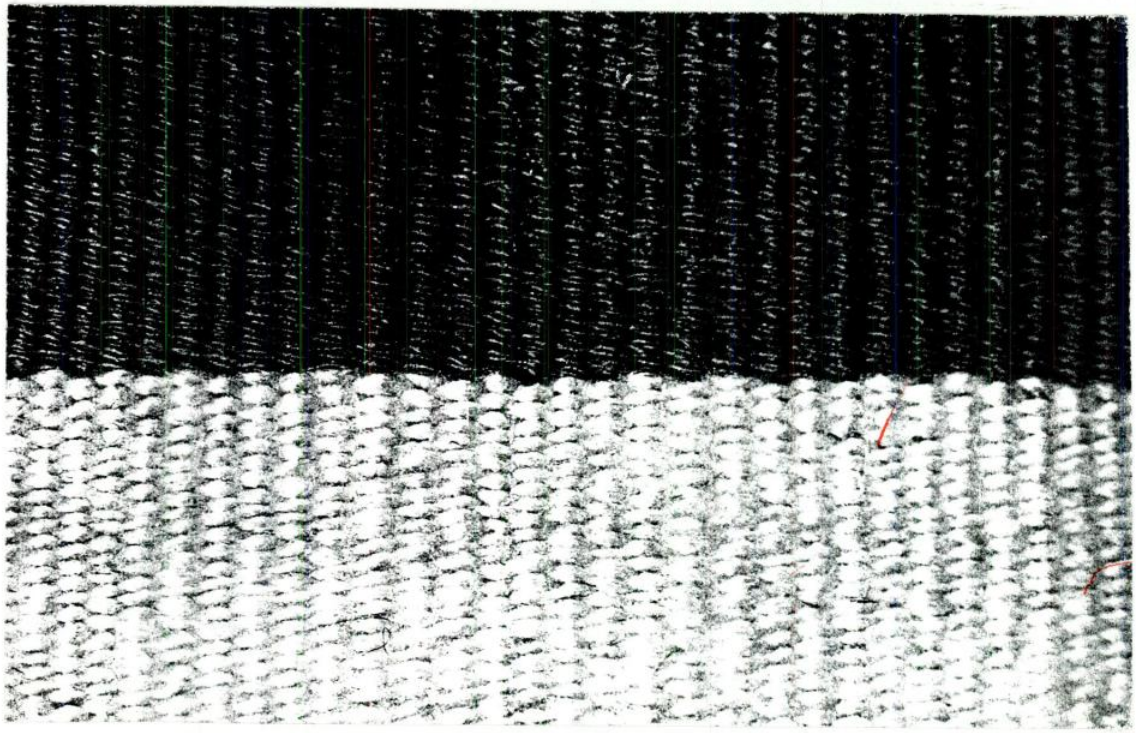


Fig. 60 Englarged detail of a section in a blanket, showing fine raveled Bayeta on top, hand spun wool below.

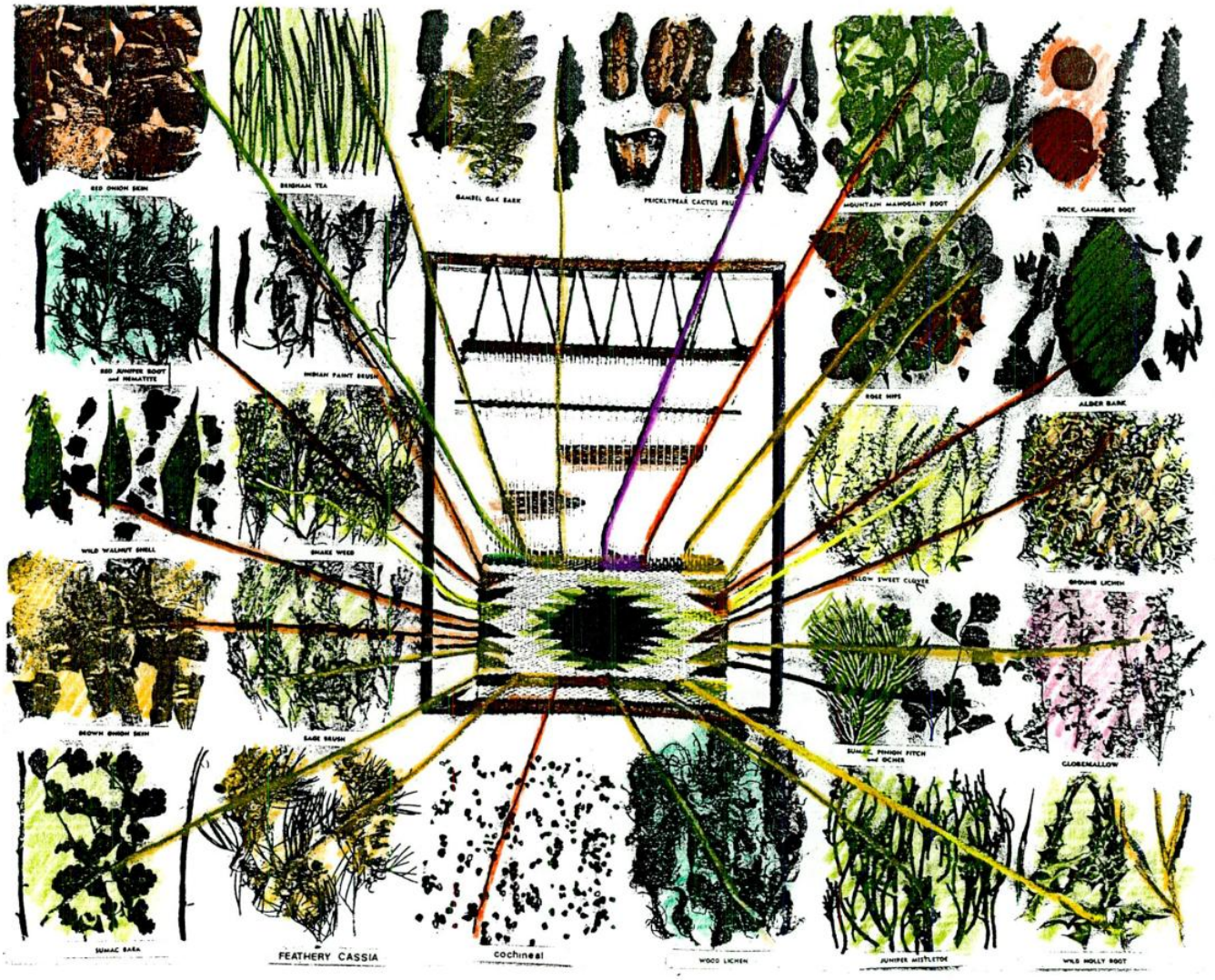


Fig. 61 Vegetal dye samples. Twenty four samples of plants and vegetal colourations commonly used by weavers of contemporary vegetal dye rugs.

through revelling pre-dyed bayeta cloth later they used a cochineal dye which was taken from the crushed carcass of a dead cochineal insect. This dye produced a range of colour shades from pale pink to orange to dark maroon.

YELLOW: Shades of yellow were obtained from a flowering plant called the "Rabbit Bush", a plant native to the southwest which produced the yellow dye used by Classical Period Weavers in the nineteenth century and revived by vegetal dye weavers in the 1920's. Like all the other dyes the shade and intensity of the yellow was obtained depending on the dye strength and the amount of fixture time, given to allow the dye to fix.

GREEN: Shades of green colour were produced by mixing vegetal yellow with indigo blue.

BLACK: Black which was infact, a very dark brown, by dyeing natural hand spun brown wool with a mixture of boiled down native sumac or pinon pitch and native ochre mineral. Over dyeing gave a black shade. To obtain different shades of grey, the Navajos would interweave natural white wool to lighten or darken with a brown/black wool.

The most valuable of all the Navajo blankets was the "Chief Blanket", because of the creative designs, rich colours and quality yarns used to produce one. These were the most expensive and only few members of the tribe could afford one. The Chief blanket got its named because of its valued price. Other Indian tribes longed for these prestigious blankets because of their beauty and quality especially the Ute and Sioux indians. At the end of the nineteenth century trading posts selling these blankets received high prices for them at the substantial sum of $17.50 to $35.00 each.

For means of identification historians and collectors divided the styles of the Chief blankets into three phases. First phase blankets (PL. No. 62) usually dated from 1800-50 comprising of simple thick and varying bands of stripes in their designs. The Navajos neighbouring tribe the Ute greatly admired this blanket and prestigiously collected

so many that they are known now as the "Ute-Style"/ The Second phase blanket (PL. No. 63) (c.1850-65) included rectangles as design and outer stripes which create a grid like pattern. The Third phase blanket (PL. No. 64) (c.1865-80) has rectangles and diamonds placed in the middle of the stripes.

The Navajo did not just see their hand woven blankets as a creative art (as many collectors do today), but as a very necessary part to their lives fulfilling an essential economic function. Apart from the obvious factor of creating warmth by using it as a blanket and flooring in their hogans, it also was worn as a garment around the body. It was also seen by the navajos as a traditional inheritance, which was passed down from generation to generation. When worn on the body the blanket could be used as a form of communication, it could be used as a language to other indians without speaking a word. They would specifically gather the blanket around the body to convey certain maoels and emotions.

Good relations between Indian tribes was important. A blanket would be given to a friend or a member of another tribe to show ones strong feelings of true friendship. If you were given a blanket as a gift you would keep it for special occasions such as bridal ceremonies, dances, weddings or deaths, it could never be given away. Previously an Indian man used to prove his status and wealth within the tribe with the number of horses he owned, but later the blanket was like the horse it proved an Indians status within their community.

In 1821 Mexico won its independence from Spain and gained jurisdiction over New Mexico. A constant warfare broke out between the Mexicans and the Navajos because the Mexicans wanted to claim Navajo land as their own. The Mexicans conducted Slave raids on Navajo country so in retaliation Navajos on horseback continued their bold raids on Mexican towns and settlements. The Navajos raided for livestock and plunder and also to recover their captured people.

Navajo women taken as slaves were required to weave blankets for their Mexican masters. This is how the "Slave blanket" evolved (PL.No. 65). These slave blankets were woven in Mexican taste. They were made with Mexican dyes and yarns but woven on a Navajo loom (PL. No. 66) which

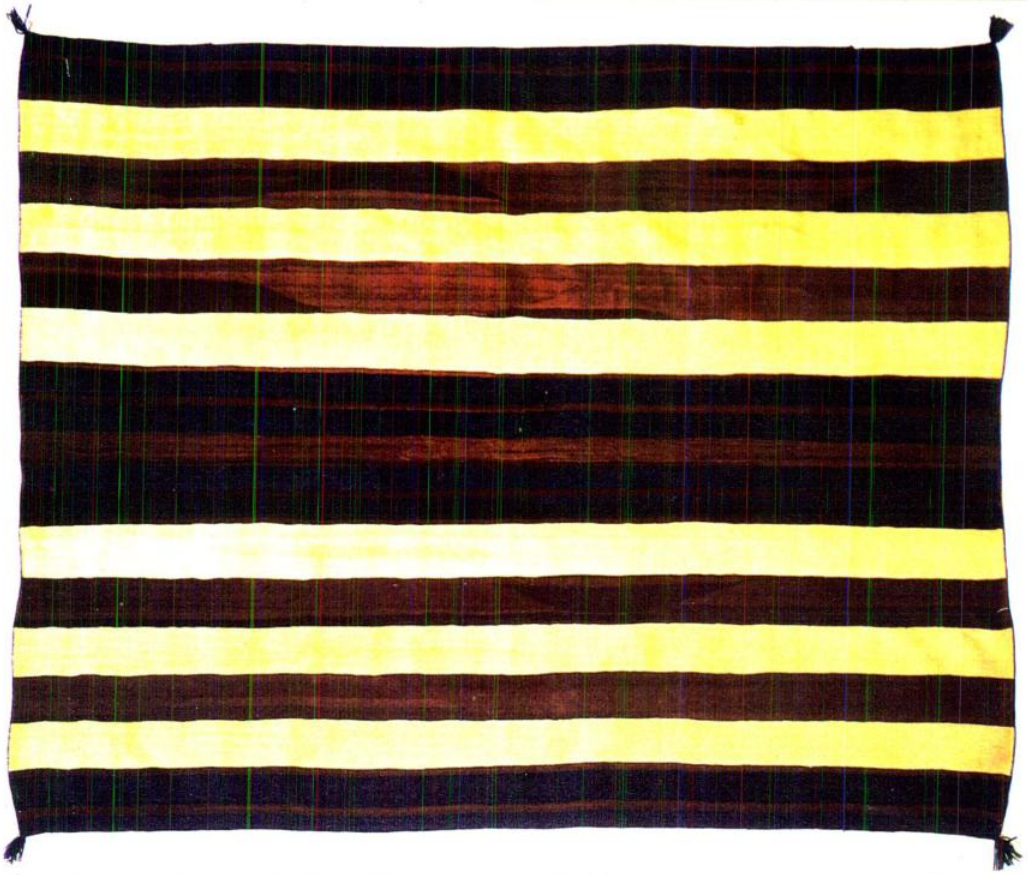


Fig. 62 A Ute-collected First Phase Chief Blanket, woven from handspun, natural fibers and indigo-dyed yarns. c. 1800-50. 68" v 54".

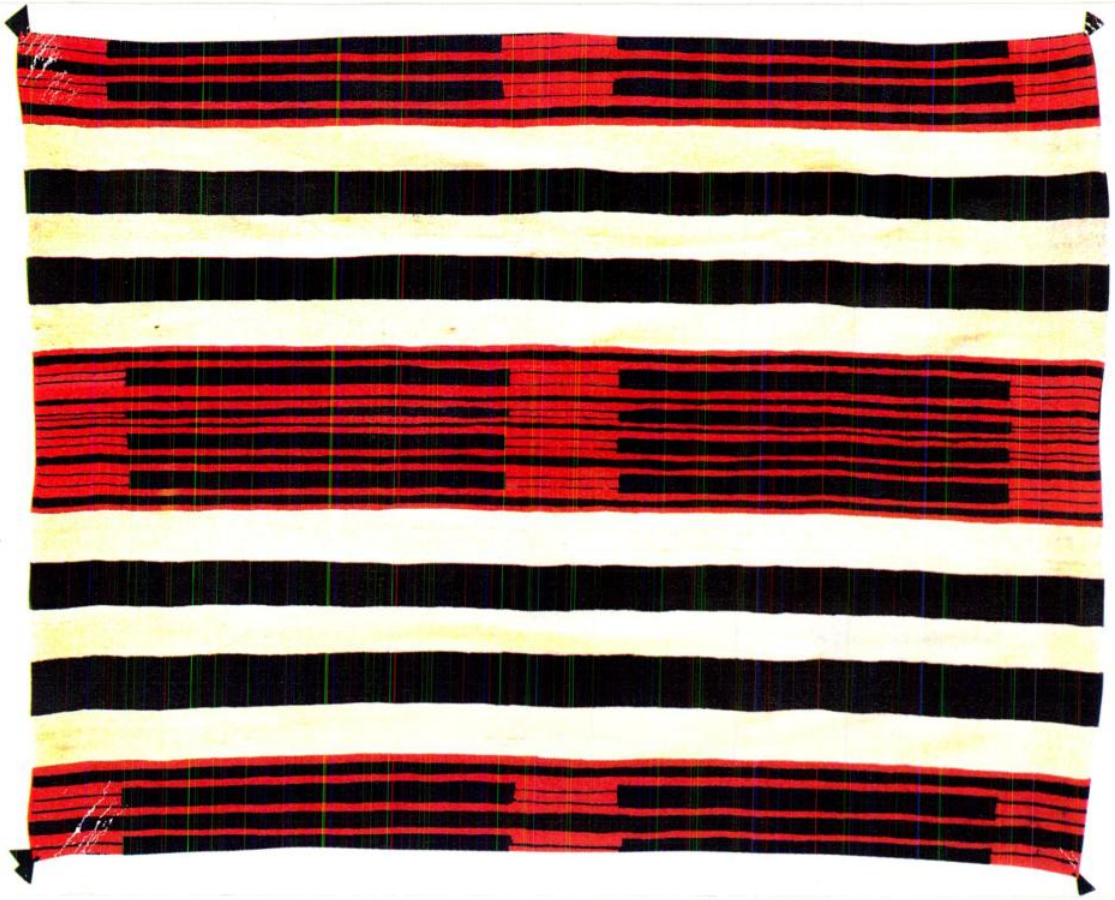


Fig. 63 A Second Phase Chief Blanket of lac-dyed bayeta, indigo,dyed yarns, and natural fibers. c. 1860. 65" x 50".

Fig. 64 A Third Phase Chief Blanket, woven of indigo and cochineal dyed yarns with natural fibers. c. 1865 - 70. 63" x 46".

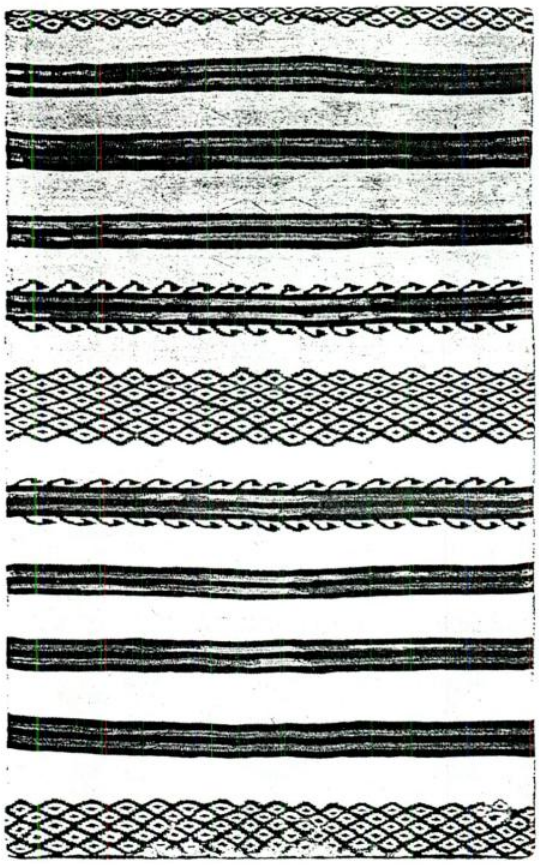


Fig. 65 A Slave Blanket. c. 1860. 81" x 49"

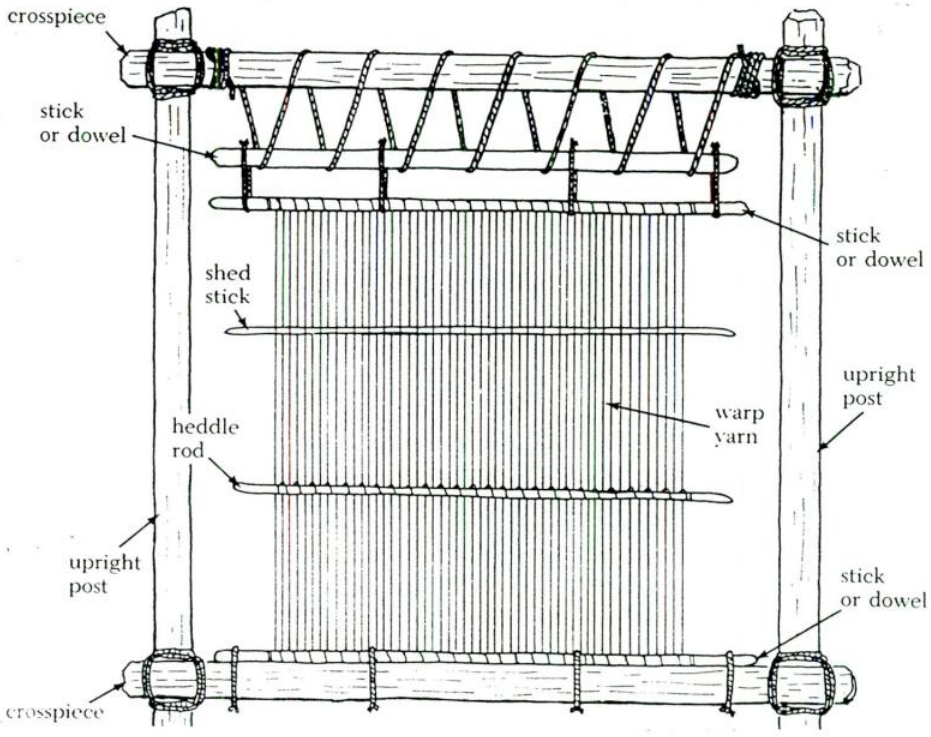


Fig.66 A Navajo loom.

Mexicans admired. The designs on these blankets were of both Navajo and Mexican characteristics. Despite the many Navajo held in captivity, it is not known how many slaves blankets were woven, but very few have survived today.

The American army intervened in the Mexican, Navajo conflict in 1846, promising the Mexicans protection against Indian raids in return for recognising American jurisdiction over Mexico. After three months occupation of New Mexico, the American army realised the need to meet with the Navajos raiding faction. In an effort to subdue or negotiate a peace the Americans promised to curtail Mexican slave raids and open American trade to the Navajo in return for cessation of raids on Mexicans.

These military men were the first Americans to appreciate the Navajo blankets. They highly admired these blankets because of their creativity in colour, designs and its usefulness. In 1847 J.T. Hughes recorded:

> "The Chief presented Colonial Doniphan with several fine Navajo blankets... of these the colours are exceedingly brilliant, and the designs and figures in good taste. The fabric is not only so thick and compact as to turn rain, but to hold water as a vessel. They are used by the Navajos as a cloak in the day time, and converted into a pallet at night. Colonial Doniphan designs sending those which he brought home with him to the War Department at Washington, as specimens of Navajo manufacture."

(As quoted in, Weissman and Lavitt, 1988, P223).

Mexicans under new American rule had no intentions of dropping their slave raids. In 1860 many Mexican families had up to four to five Navajo slaves each. The Mexicans and Navajos continued to raid the others territory. Then the U.S. Government advised the Mexicans to organise their own civilian war parties to raid Navajo land.

Broken treaties became the rule, not the exception. With American soldiers and Mexican vigilantes fighting against each other and marauding Utes and Apaches, led the Navajos into severe hardship and the situation rapidly deteriorated. These major interruptions caused

the crops to be unharvested, sheep flocks were depleted and the weaving ceased.

The U.S. Government in 1862 claimed Navajo land completely and decided that forceful action must be taken against the Navajos and Apaches. A series of ruthless Generals and a heavy American oppression saw the Navajo exiled to a reservation in Basque Redando, which was named (circle of trees) by the Navajos, this was an isolated area. Despite this site being remote and lacking pure drinking water and subject to flooding, the American Generals were adamant in their relocation plans. Severe persuasive measures such as starvation, pillaging and robbing the Navajos of their livelihood led to the surrender of the tribe, and forced them to comply with American plans. The long walk of 400 miles to Basque Redando (PL.No.67) had its toll on the Indians, it exhausted the tribe and their livestock.

Later when the Americans (under different leadership) decided to revue the plan and return the Navajos to their territory in 1862, but their spirits and livestock had greatly depleted. The Navajos were never to regain economic independence, for a long time after the devastating impact of the "Fearing Times",: (their name for the years at Basque Redando). And other changes occurred after, such as their style of dress, they arrived wearing blankets, serapes and two piece blanket dresses made from wool, and left wearing clothing made from cotton and velvet which resembled the cloths worn by the soldiers and their wives stationed at Basque Redando (PL. No.68).

After returning home, the Navajos finally were given 15.000 sheep by the State, an inferior breed which had totally unsuitable wool for Navajo weaving. The result of this poor quality wool lead the Navajos to depend on commercial yarns and yarns that could be unravelled from commercially woven fabrics. The Navajos grew accustomed to these commercial yarns and younger weavers that had been taught to weave with commercial yarns had no desire to learn the traditional methods, to sheer, wash, cord, spin and dye the wool. Hence, many contemporary Navajos blankets woven today are made from commercial yarns.

By the mid 1870's government licensed traders were opening trading posts on Navajos land (PL. No.69). And by the 1880's the Santa Fe

Railroad was carrying eastern tourists through the southwest regularly, this brought valuable trade to the Navajos and their blankets. This also influenced their blanket designs, from what used to be blankets with bold patterned motifs, changed to pictures woven within the blanker (PL. No.70) featuring, livestock, birds, trains and flags. These blankets were called pictographs. The Navajo wove them during their reservation period, they serve to illustrate the changes in their daily lives.

Until the twentieth century Navajo blankets have been influenced by different cultures, such as the Mexicans and Spanish that influenced the Classic Serape Style blanket. (PL.No.71). However by the 1990 the Anglo trader became the dominant influence on Navajo weaving. Some traders had different tastes for different styles, like the oriental rug style, classic period nineteenth century blankets and some for Pueblo/Rio Grande striped style, they all made their preferences known to the weavers.

By the turn of the century tradition was a thing of the past for the Indians. Their way of living and tradition had been wiped out by the American government. Americans now owned Navajo land and tried to destroy all their inherited values of surviving off the land, but their tradition of blanket weaving although in jeopardy, never died, perhaps due to constant admiration they inspired in people in the past and still today.

However to the weavers of the tribes, tradition has been replaced with challenge. The challenge of new yarns, new dyes to master, new designs to explore, new weaving methods and finally a new world of customers. Even today within the 1990's weaving has remained an economic resource and tradition to the Navajo people.

Todays woven blankets inspired by the Navajo can be traced directly back to the personal design preferences of a few influential traders. Juan Lorenso Hubbel who ran one of the first trading posts in Gando, Arizona, wanted his weavers to return to the "Classical Style" with bold patterns and he did this by hanging up oil paintings of the old blankets on the walls of trading posts. He was proved correct when hundreds of tourists along the route of the Sante Fe railroad bought

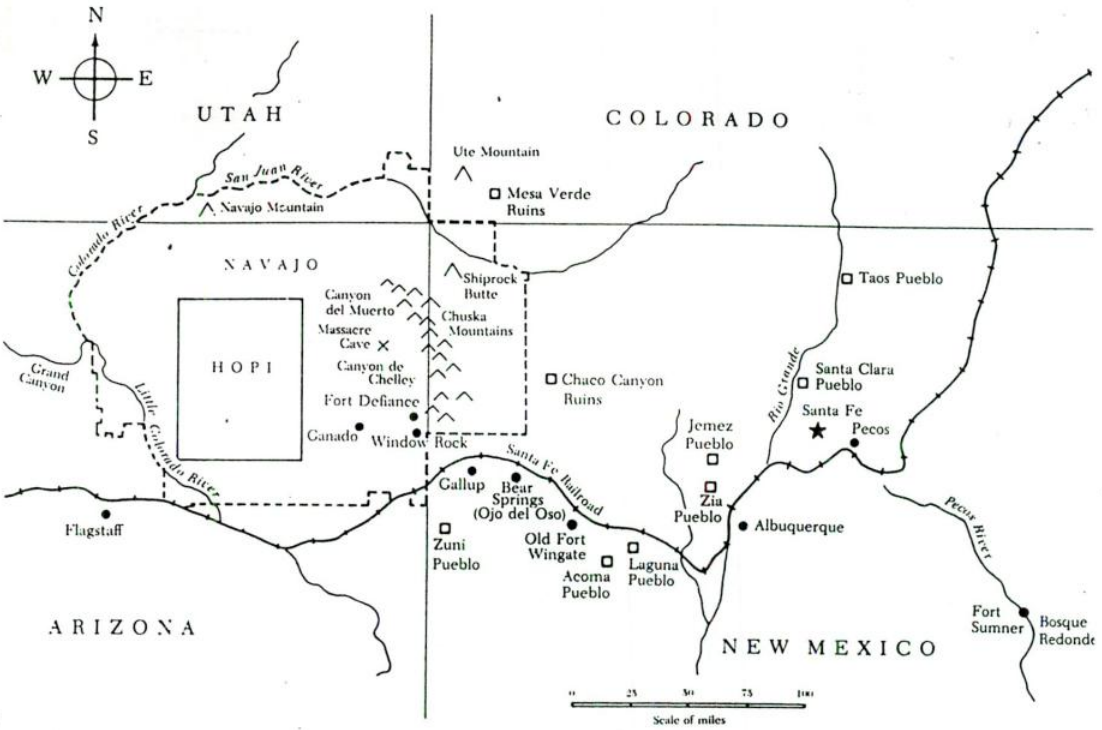


Fig. 67 The Navajo territory and surrounding area.

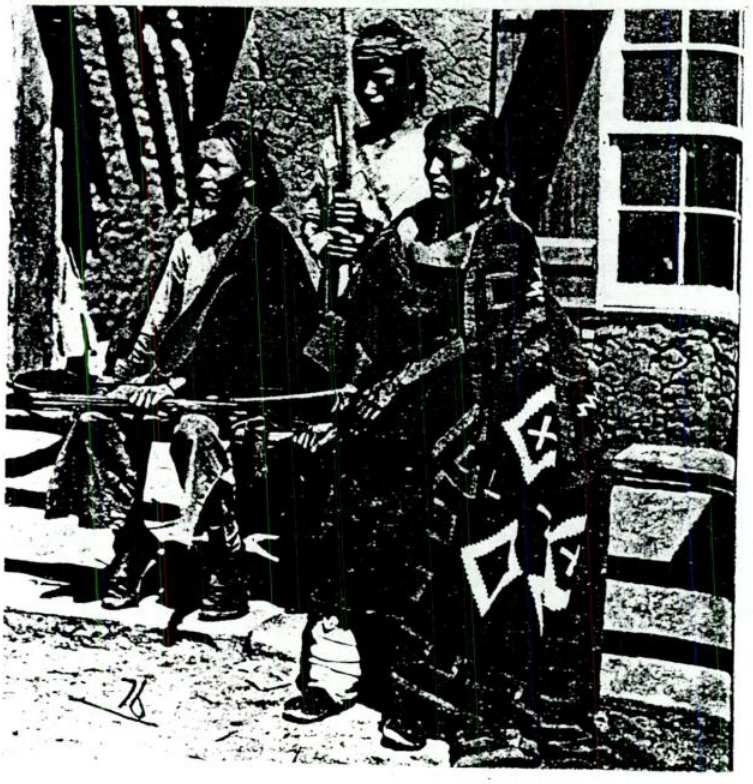


Fig. 68 Fort Defiances, 1873. After Basque Redando.

Fig. 69 Ganado Trading Post, c 1885, Arizona.

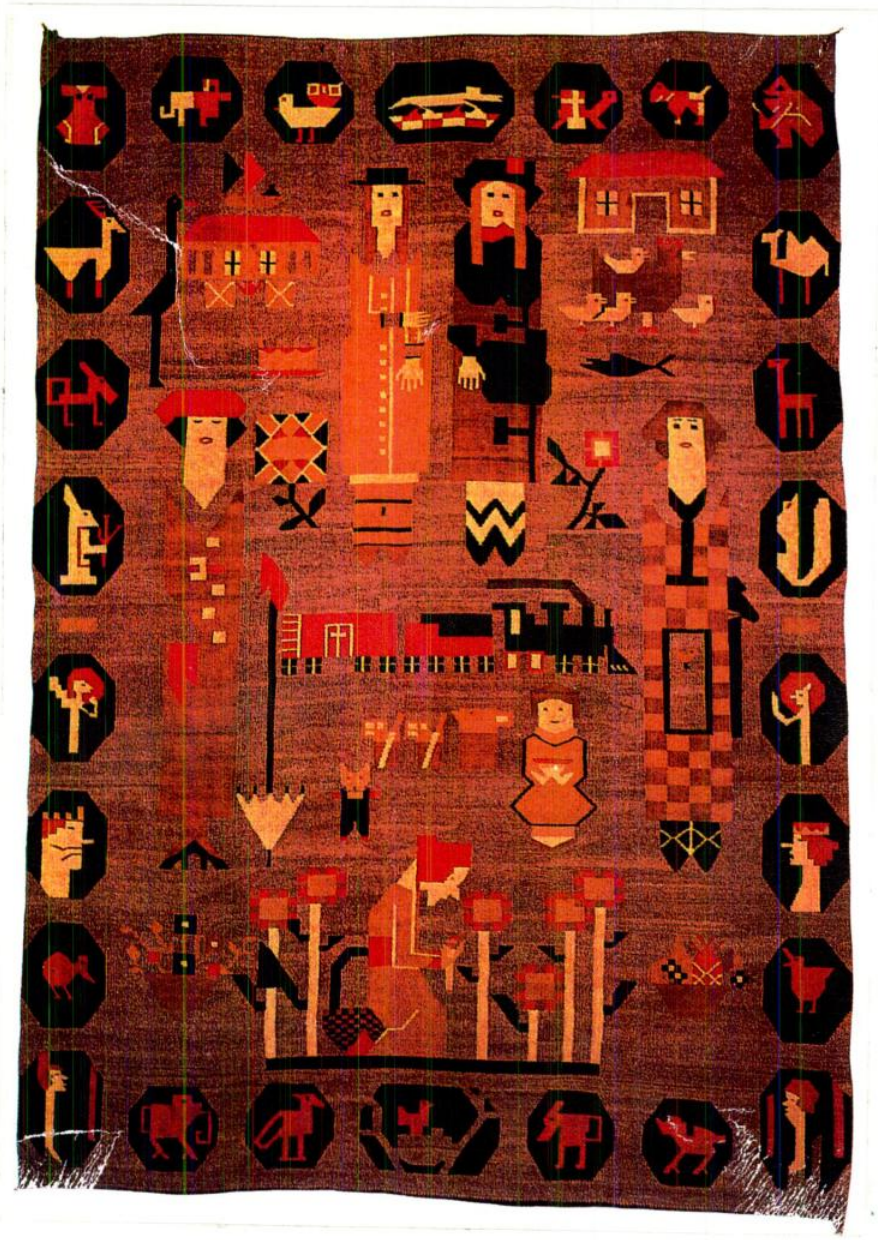


Fig. 70 The weaver of this pictorial rug was so captivated by an illustration in a 1921 issue of The Delineater that she created an approximation of the page in her weaving. Hand spun synthetic dyes and natural handspun yarns. c. 1921.

Fig. 71. Diamonds and zig-zags are the main design components of this Saxony Serape.
c 1850-65.

Fig. 72. Clah-Chese-Chili/G. and his two wives, wearing Pendleton blankets, 1910.

the blankets.

Navajo weaving today incorporates finely woven shoulder wraps to rungs to tapestries destined for Gallery walls around the world. The original hand woven Navajo blankets have also been a major influence on one of America's most successful commercially woven blanket companies, the Pendeltan blanket company (PL. No. 72).

At the turn of the twentieth century, the general perception, that Indian ways were a thing of the past, generated popular enthusiasm to collect even a small memento of a vanishing lifestyle. Collectors sought Indian basketry, weaving, pottery and other traditional Indian crafts, and native Americans across the country responded. Not only did traditional art forms continue to thrive, but in some cases dormant traditions were actually revived, for example Navajo weaving in the southwest of America.

Interior design magazines at the turn of the century, had articles and advertisements suggesting decorative uses for Indian baskets, ceramics and blankets within the home. Much of the interest for this type of decoration came from the design philosophy of the American Arts and Crafts Movement, whose proponents believed that a well-designed environment could promote harmony and well being. The favoured hand crafted items of natural materials, rather than machine made products. This aesthetic also preferred simple, unadorned surfaces and geometric forms.

Unlike the British Arts and Crafts movement, the American proponents of the movement successfully promoted the decorative arts through craftsman.

> **"The crafts in America were not elevated out of industry into the Fine Arts, but instead were adopted to industry... despite the fact that most products were actually hybrids made by various hands and machines."**

(As quoted in, Sheldon, 1993, p.14).

The movement in America took hold more so than it did in Britain,

because American manufacturers were not philosophically opposed to the use of machinery like the British. They were free of a class structure that added political pressures like those associated with the leaders in British design. The Americans were more successful in their efforts to mechanise their process without sacrificing improved craftsmanship and design.

Native American Indian crafts have influenced design in America and In Europe in different periods within this last century. In the 1920's and 1930's, the beginning of another revival of Indian art emerged in the Southwest, especially in Santa Fe and Taos, New Mexico (PL.No.73). The Mexican abode style house was a popular design filled with Indian crafts. The native American style lingered on through different fashion trends in textile and interior designs. Then in the 1960's and 1970's the Indian style resurfaced in interiors and fashion design across America and Europe.

Individual contemporary Navajo weavers in America today, borrow freely from the variety of the original blanket designs. They take their inspiration from the different characteristic styles, from different periods. Outstanding contemporary rugs are collected just as avidly as are fine classic and later classic periods (1800-1875) and the colourful transitional period (1975-1900). Daisy Taugelchee from Two Grey Hills and Mildred Natonie are well known contemporary Navajo rug weavers. See (PL.No. 74), they have been booked well into the future with orders from traders, dealers, and private customers. The best contemporary blankets today are equal to the finest textiles produced in the history of Navajo textiles.

The native American Indian style has been an inspiration for many contemporary textile and interior designers today, as well as rug and tapestry weavers. During the late 1980's, the famous designer Ralph Lauren, sparked the rebirth of the native Indian style back into the fashion industry. Then many designers followed his influence on this style, which became extremely popular within textile and fashion design see (PLS. No. 75 and 76). This style is as strong today within textiles. The models in (PL.No. 77) are from Brown Thomas, Dublin. They are modelling a collection of casual and swimwear, for summer 1994, which has been inspired by the early striped Navajo blanket

Figure No. 73 Interior showing a mixture of southwestern and traditional furnishings. On the wall hangs a Navajo rug in the Classic Two Grey Hills style.

Figure No. 74 Two Grey Hills tapestry contemporary, by Mildred Natonie. Woven of natural shades of brown, grey, and white and over dyed black handspun wool yarns.

Figure No. 75 Strong Indian overture with the fringed suede sarong, by Gucci, 1993.

Figure No. 76 Heavy wool fringed jacket by Susan Backhouse.

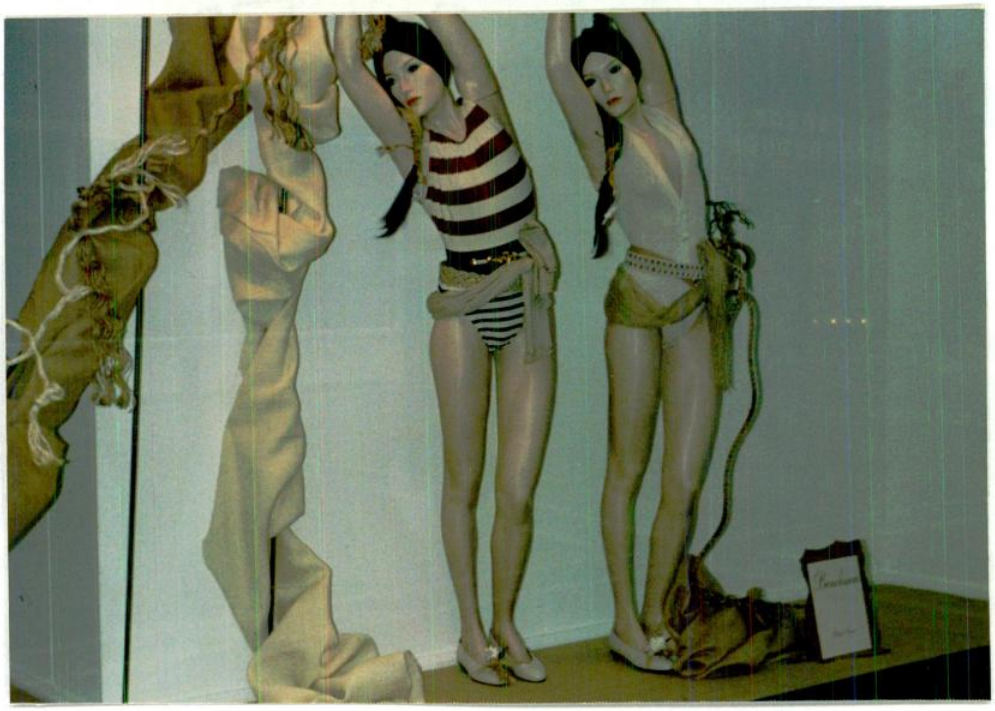


Figure No. 77 Collection of native Indian inspired garments at Brown Thomas.

style.

Within the following I have discussed various different design companies and their work, that have recently been inspired by the Navajo Indian blanket style, such as Nice Irmas-Dorma and Shyam Ahuja. I have also looked at various contemporary interior designs that have included the Navajo blanket.

NICE IRMAS

"Nice Irmas" a London based company, sells professionally designed rugs, fabrics, glass, ceramics and other ethnic style artifacts. They offer the customer a wide range of quality made and designed objects. The company sent me swatches of fabric inspired by the Navajo blanket style. They are woven, furnishing fabrics which have been commonly used today in modern interiors especially, commercial design for example, bars etc., lending a strong ethnic theme to the design. The fabrics are as follows - This lightweight, furnishing fabric in (PL.No. 78), has got the Ikat dyed design, within the dark maroon and black stripes. It has turned the dark shades to orange, green, yellow, white and light blue. The horizontal stripes are of varying widths and are also repeat throughout the fabric. The coloured stripes are divided by solid maroon bands. The warp thread has got five colours which are maroon, turquoise, yellow, salmon and black. The weft threads (the horizontal weave) have one colour maroon. This fabric design, I think has been inspired by the Navajo, First Phase Chief blanket style see (PL.No.62), and the Third Phase Chief blanket, see (PL. No. 64). This influence is seen in the varying width of horizontal striped bands, across the design and the similar palette of colours used in the original blankets.

The following two fabric samples (PL.79 and 80) have got a warp faced weave. The warp threads are very thick in comparison to the weft threads, this creates an uneven surface, to the texture of the fabric. I think these colours of Jade Green, and Mushroom, show the earthy natural palette of colour reminiscent of Navajo colours.

The fabric sample in (PL.No. 81), has fine warp threads and two course weft threads. The warp threads have four layers of colours which are

golden yellow, red, green and black. The weft threads have two colours which are white and dark brown, the warp thread pulls them together in two and fours, to make them look as if they are a thicker thread. This mix of thick and narrow threads lends authenticity to the natural home spun quality of the fabric. This fabric was woven on a Jaipur loom,and the thick fabric is called a multi colour design. The design of this fabric resembles the pattern on the contemporary Navajo, storm pattern rug by Betty Russell see (PL. No.82). Were it not for the yarns used and the precision of the design execution, this contemporary rug by Betty Russell could easily be mistaken for a much earlier Navajo storm pattern rug. The origins of the style has been the subject of debate for decades. Some say the style is sacred: that the central rectangle represents the Navajo hagan (a traditional Navajo hut) and the rectangles in each corner represent the four sacred mountains of Navajo legend. The connecting lines between the central rectangle and the corner rectangles are said to be lighting bolts carrying blessings between the mountains and the hagan.

This fabric design in (PL.No. 83) is another light weight furnishing fabric. The IKAT dyed method has been used a lot within this design, it has been introduced into the thicker horizontal bands, the thinner stripes are a lighter, solid colour blue. The IKAT has dyed the warp threads, leaving nine colours - orange, white, yellow, jade, grey, red, pink, black and blue. The weft thread is a solid colour clue. The Ikat design in fabric, creates an effective gradation in colour, which may Pendelton Blanket weavers used See (PL.No. 72), the division into strong bands of colour is also similar to the original blanket styles.

This fabric design on (PL.NO. 84) is also a light weight furnishing fabric, which also has the IKAT dyed method used in the design, which acts as a resist to the dye, this weakens the shade of the colour. The IKAT patterning has been used all over the fabric design. The thicker warp threads are a tan colour, and the weft threads have five colours which are blue, yellow, green, white and peachy read.

Another light weight woven furnishing fabric on (PL.NO. 85). The IKAT pattern has been randomly scattered around this design. This is another multi-coloured fabric. The warp threads have three colours which are peach, maroon and dark blue, the weft thread had one colour,

which is thicker than the warp, it is dark blue.

The fabric design in (PL.No. 86) is a heavy weight woven fabric, it is also a multi colour design. It has also been woven on a Jaipur loom. The warp threads have four colours which are yellow, red, black and green, and sit in four layers within the fabric. The weft has thicker threads which are red and jade green. This fabric design I think is most similar to the Navajo blankets in (PL.No. 87 and 88). The same diamond motif and cross symbol, are placed in the middle of the design, which has also been used in these early blanket styles.

DORMA

Textile company Dorma, have let the Navajo blanket style, influence some of their furnishing fabrics for 1994 and 1995, See (PL.No. 89), notice similarities in the design pattern, to the Navajo blanket on (PL.NO. 90).

SHYAM AHUJA

Textile design company, Shyam Ahuja, have also let the Navajo and Mexican blanket designs inspire their latest collection of home furnishings, rugs and miscellaneous ornaments. Shyam Ahuja claim to make "The Santa Fe magic happen with their red hot colours and sizzling designs".

Products are available at Liberty, Regent Street, London.

Figure No. 78 Sample of fabric - IKAI A13

Figure No. 79 Sample of fabric Mushroom toning.

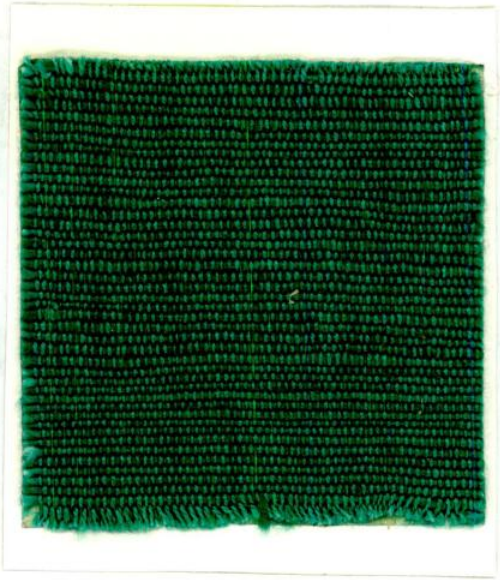


Figure No. 80 Sample of fabric Jade toning.

Figure No. 81 Sample of fabric - Jaipur Maroon. Fabric Cotton.

Figure No. 82 Contemporary storm pattern rug, by Betty Russell. Woven of synthetic dyed red, tan, and black and natural gray (two shades) and white processed wool yarns.

Figure No. 84 Sample of fabric - IKAT AA61
100% handloomed cotton.

Figure No. 83 Sample fabric - IKAT 4490

Figure No. 85 Sample of fabric - IKAT AA95
100% handloomed cotton.

Figure No. 86 Sample fabric - Jaipur Red/Green

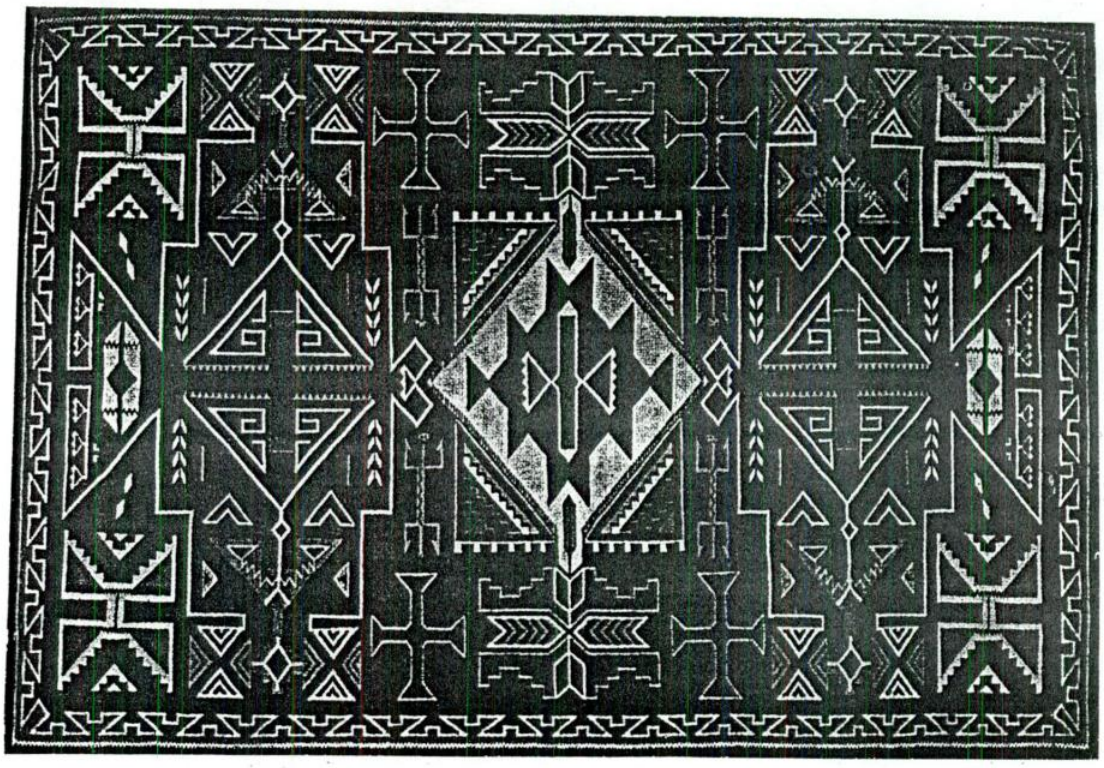


Figure No. 88 Teec Nos Pos Rug, c.1930. By 1930 the Teec Nos Navajo rug, which were the most colourful and comples regional style rugs.

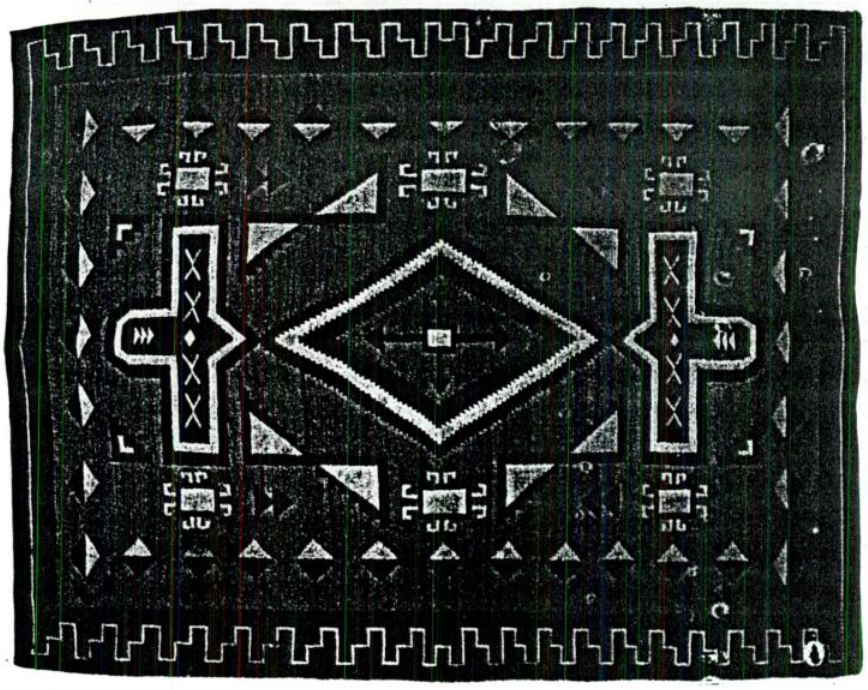


Figure No. 87 Navajo crystal rug, c. 1910.
Woven of synthetic -dyed red and natural gray, brown, and white handspun wool yarns.

Figure No. 89 Home furnishing collection from Dorma Fabrics. Some of their 1994 and 95 collection inspired by Indian Blankets Style.

Figure No. 90 Navajo blanket .

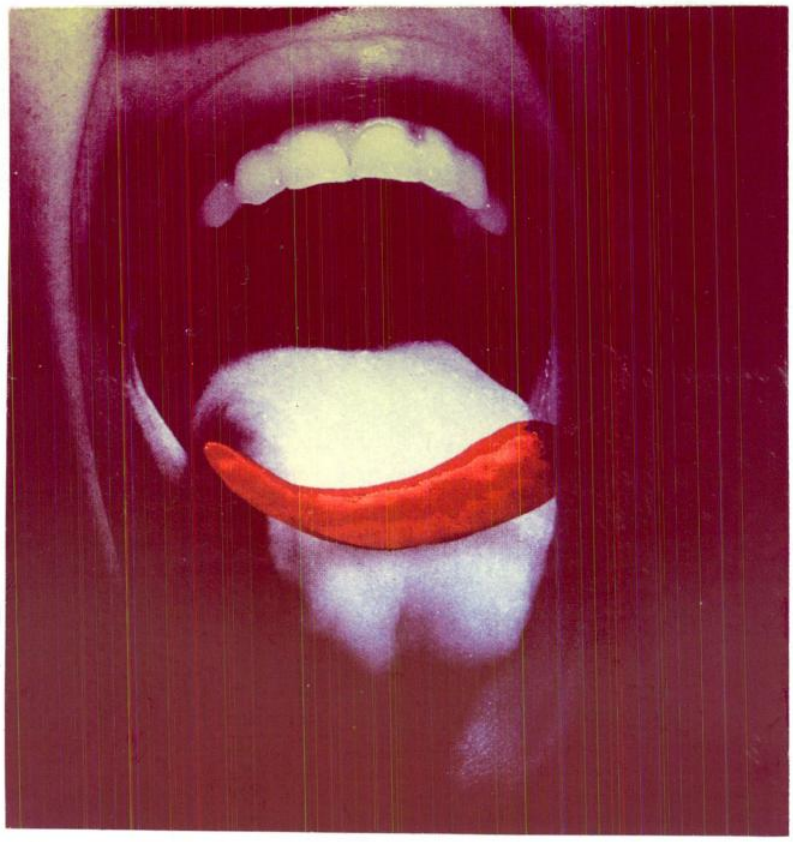


Figure No. 91
Life gets Chillie in Santa Fe!

Figure No. 92 Collection of handwoven all cottom towels Shyam Ahuja

Figure No. 93 A collection of bed linen from Shyam Ahuja.

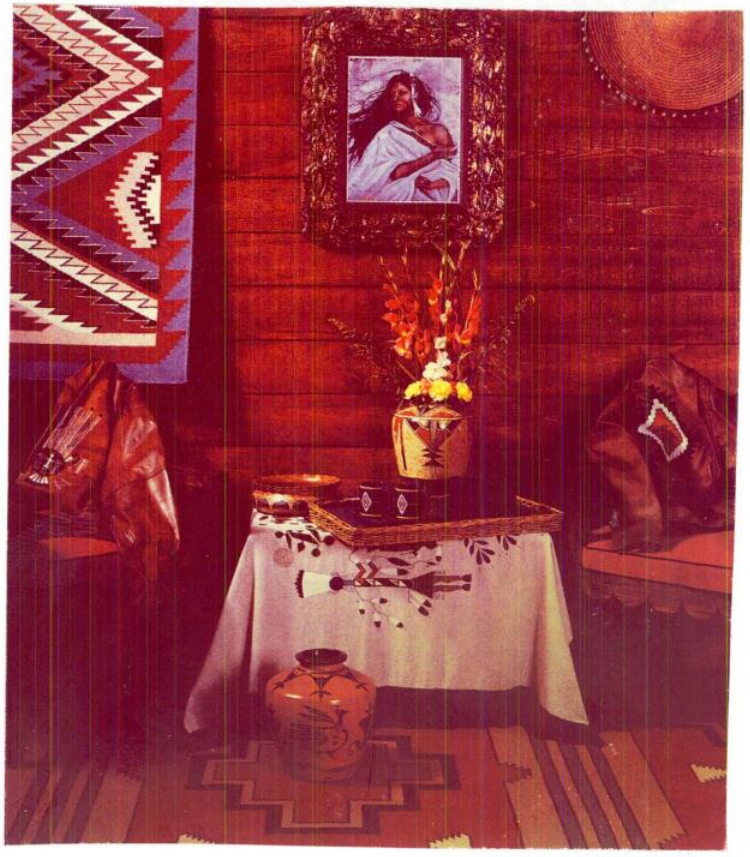


Figure No. 94 A collection of rugs and furnishing fabrics from Shyam Ahuja.

The rug on (PL.No. 95) is an example of a rug style, which has been commonly used within modern interiors today. This particular design I think has striking similarities to the Navajo Second Phase Chief Blanket design, on (PL.No. 63). Notice the same amount of thick stripes, and the motifs placed inside the three horizontal striped bands, in the design.

Collectors of Western Americans, Teresa and Tyler Beard indulge in a textual revival of cowboy and native Indian style. The rooms in their house are full of colourful Navajo blankets, creating a bright and colourful scene, to the browns the greys of the wood and stone walls within the structure. In (PL.No. 96), a hunky leather sofa with a framework of undisguised tree trunks were designed by the Beards, and made in New Mexico. Junior cowboy boots, deprived of their functional context, are viewed as objects of art and together with the hat, make an original mantelpiece display.

The bedroom has also been inspired by this American style see (PL.NO. 97). Piled with pillows made from Navajo weavings and draped with warm, clear coloured Beacon blankets, which were machine woven from the 1930's through to the 1950's in Indian designs, the cedar post bed was made by contemporary Texas craftsmen. The wardrobe is also native Texan, made in the Hill country in about 1920, while the cowboy box on top is typical of the travelling trunks used from 1830 to 1910. Next to the wardrobe is a cowhide choir.

This Colorado home, is a mountain retreat for the Gubers family (PL.No. 98). The interior of the house has also been designed with the native American theme. In the dramatic space, of this living room, moose antler chandeliers, saguaro cacti and native American artifacts and textiles ground the opulence in accessible ethnic style. Massive pine trunks from Colorado, which look as if they have been freshly uprooted from the forest, support the timber structure and emphasise the houses harmony with its surroundings.

In (PL.No. 100), Chis O'Connell, has let native Indian crafts inspire the colour scheme and interior design of his Santa Fe house. The library in his house displays a variety of rich native Indian art, and represents many of the different tribes. The splendid Assinabo

headress hangs above a carved chiefs bench from the northwest coast. The basket was made by the Pima tribe, who are famed for their basketry skills. On the table is a Navajo pictorial rung and another Navajo blanket lies on the ground.

Film director Barry Myers and his wife Victoria decided to build their dream house on the outskirts of the medieval village of Tour-rettes-sur-Loup in France. They chose Robert Dallas, a locally based British Architect who designed the house. The house was designed to look as if it has always been their it was inspired by old barns and cottages around the area. Strong influence from Mexican and Indian designs have also inspired the Interior design.

The internal layout is simple, with bedrooms upstairs and living area downstairs. The terracotta tiled floor is in every room in the house and white washed walls which is typical of all the ethnic style interiors which I have discussed within this thesis. The Myers helped design the house because they felt they wanted something completely different from their Regency style cluttered house in London. Felix Delmer a painter and designer was imported from London to decorate. He painted doors, shutters, alcoves and furniture, his inspiration came from the "Hockney" - blue from the swimming pool, the yellow achre of the earth and the lilac haze of the hills. Delmer's ageing techniques took flight on the furniture and other wooden structures in the house. Blowbenches, wire brushes, even chains and wood spiked with nails were used to "distress" new wood. Although he helped nature along this way, all the techniques of applying the colour were traditional layers of natural pigments, gasses, and finally beeswax ancient treatment were used so the colour would improve by age.

The interior decoration of the Myers house has endless reminders of the primitive abode style of Mexican buildings. The Myers drawing room on (PL.No. 101) has white washed walls and an abode style fireplace, which adds to the strong Indian and Mexican influence. The chair in the foreground, by Habitat has been covered in a woven fabric inspired by Navajo blanket designs. The patterning is of striking resemblance to the "slave blankets" which were wove by Navajo Slaves when captured by Mexicans. The hall on (PL.No. 102) shows a strong native American ethnic, influence.

The wood and furniture has been painted with a washed effect and given the "handmade" distressed feel. The rustic painted settle bench is from the Designers Guild, London. The overall interior of this house I think, has a strong Mexican and native Indian overture. The above shaped walls and traditional furniture within the house, have striking similarities to those in this traditional Santa Fe Style House, on (PL.No. 103). This house was only recently built, designed by Santa Fe architect Bad Nestor. Yet with traditional building techniques and the incorporation of old fittings such as the hefty studded wooden doors, it has the spirit of a house that has been lived in and enjoyed for generations.

Figure No. 95 Comtemporary Rug design, used as a wall hanging here, in a modern interior. Woven from cotton.

95

Figure No. 96 Interior showing Teresa and Tyler Beards living room.

Figure No. 97 Interior showing the bedroom of the Americana inspired house of Teresa and Tyler Beard.

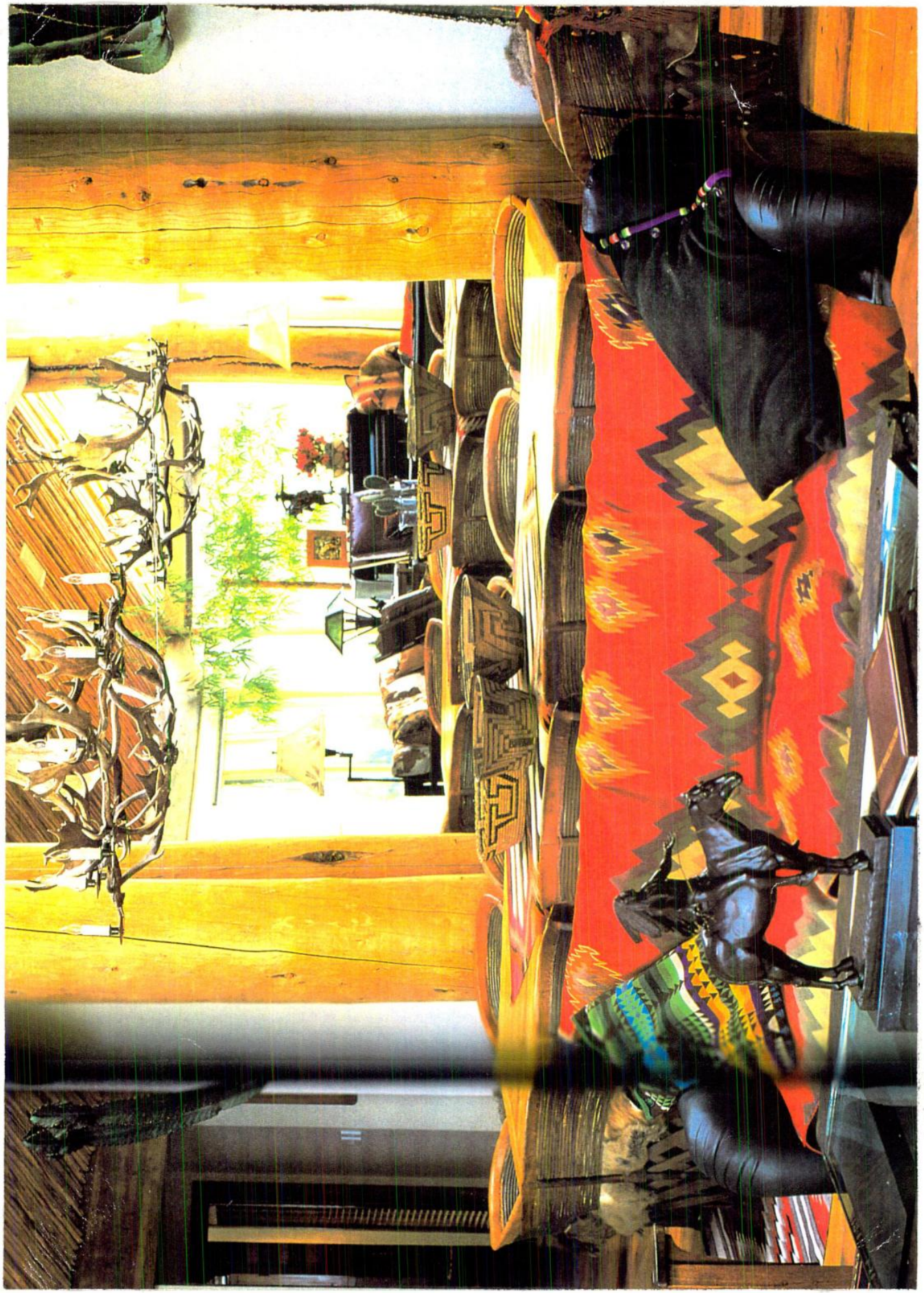


Figure No. 98 Interior showing native American inspired room.

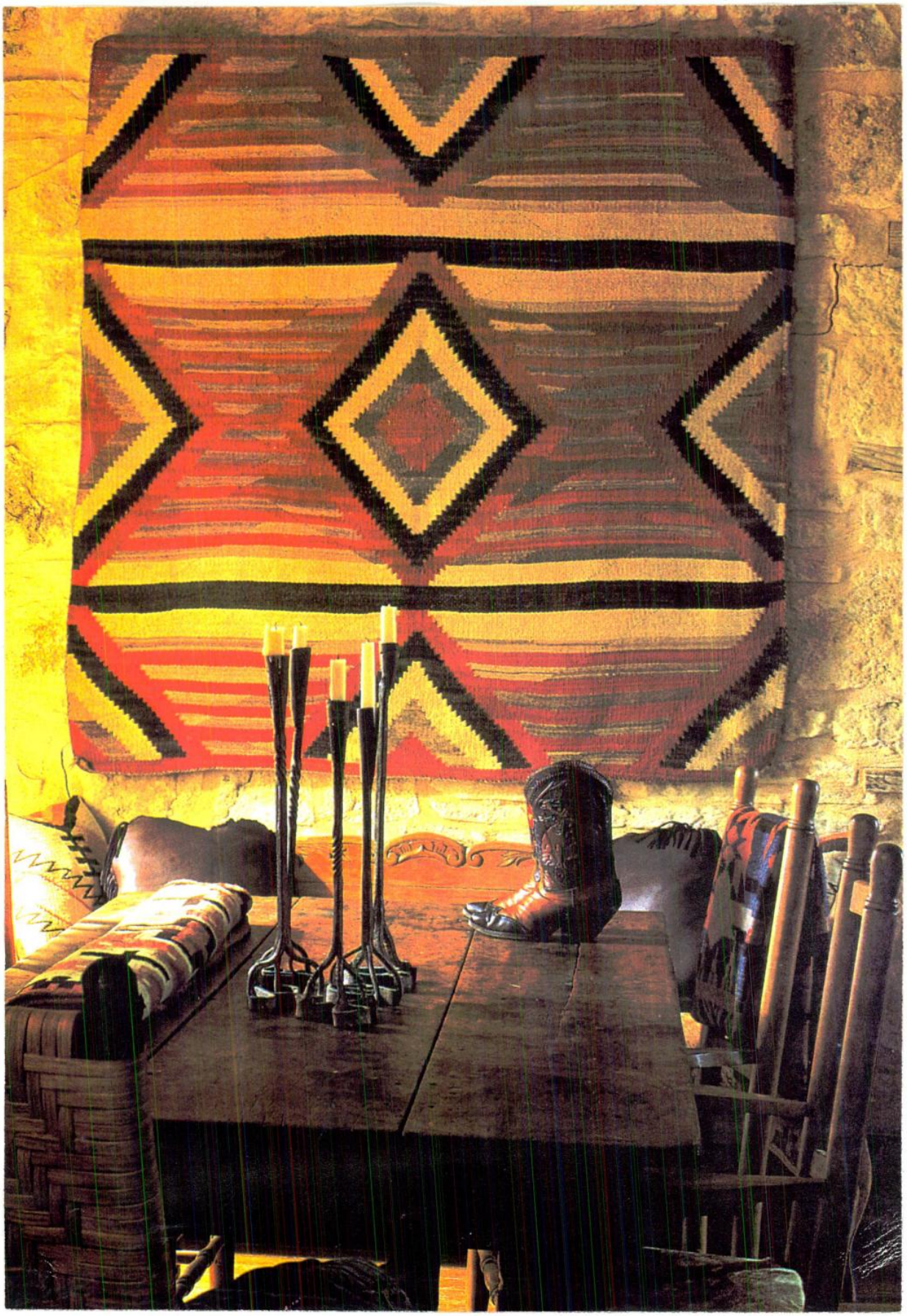


Figure No. 99

In the foreground of this interior is an early 1900's Chief's Blanket; and on the table is a 1920's Ganada-style example.

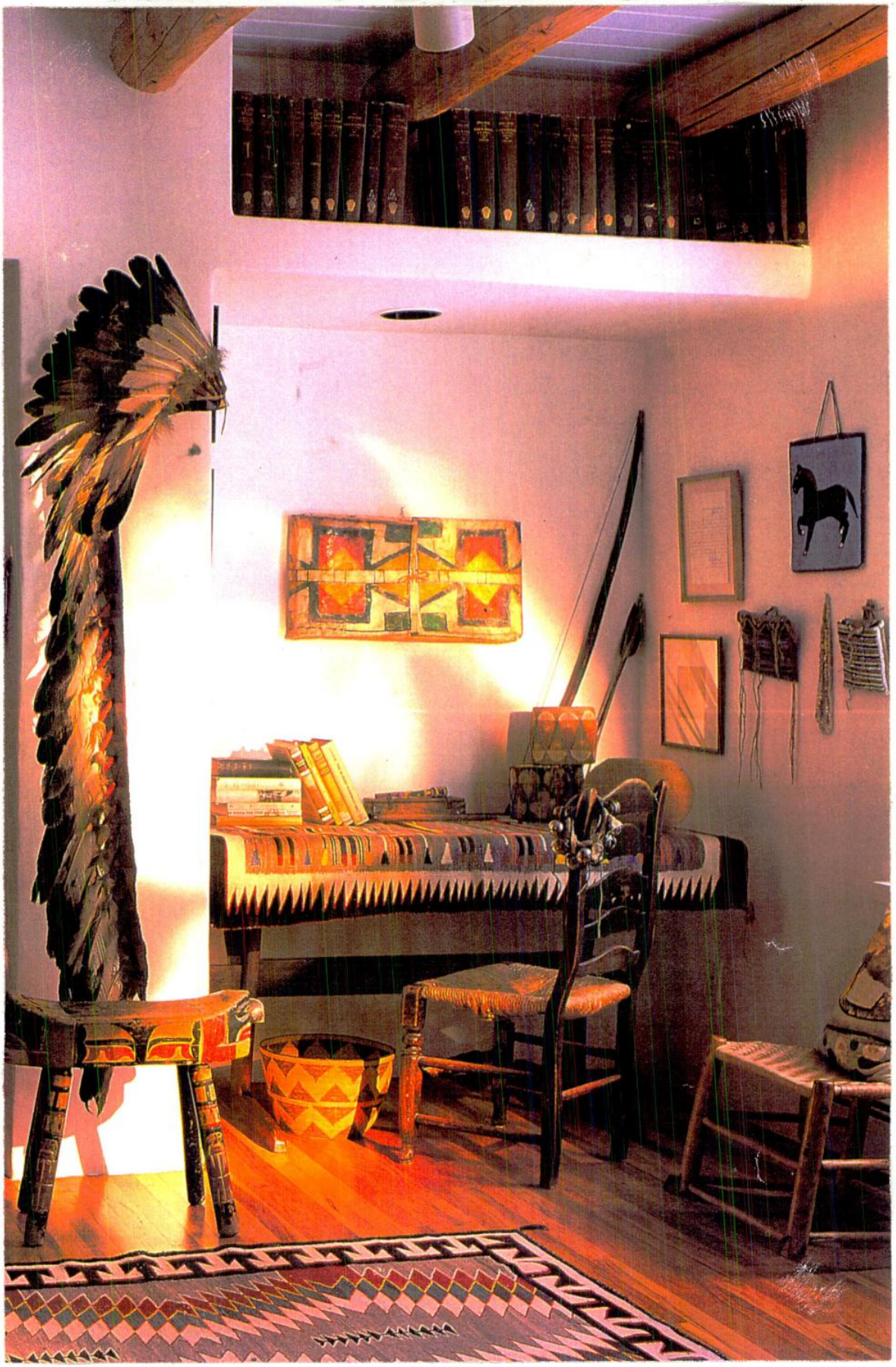


Figure No. 100 The library of Chris O'Connells Santa Fe house.

Figure No. 101

This huge drawing room focuses on an eighteenth century carved fire surround. The furniture is from London, sofas are by Conran; chairs are by Habitat. The Indian tables are by David Wainwright.

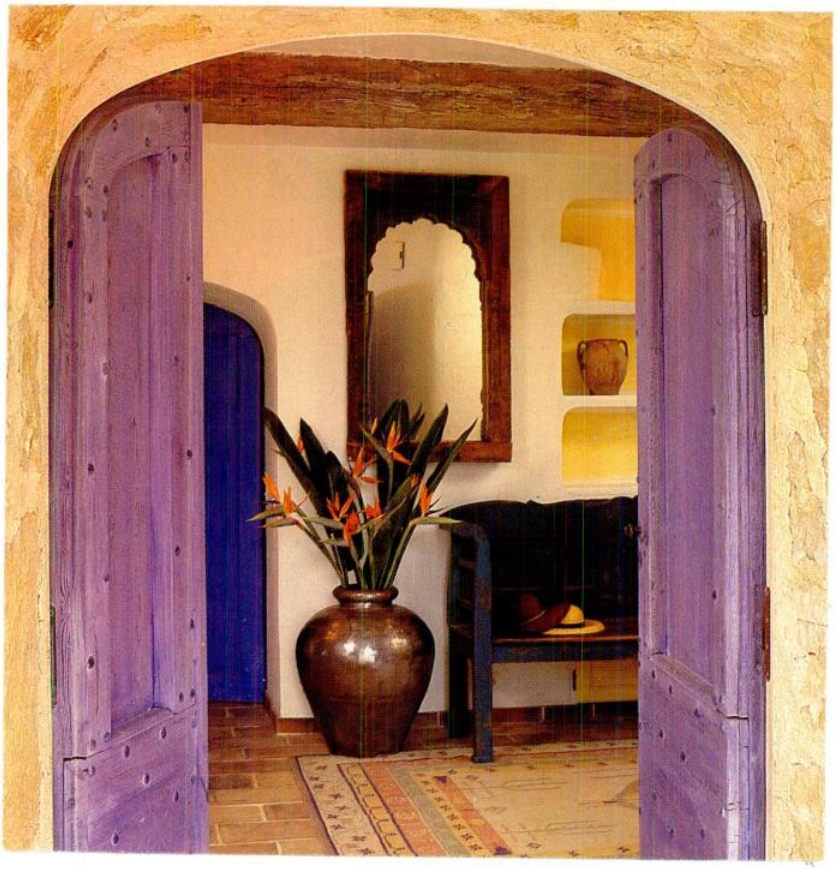


Figure No. 102 Interior showing colour washed and "home-made" distressed front doors open on to the entrance hall. The rustic, painted bench is from Designers Guild.

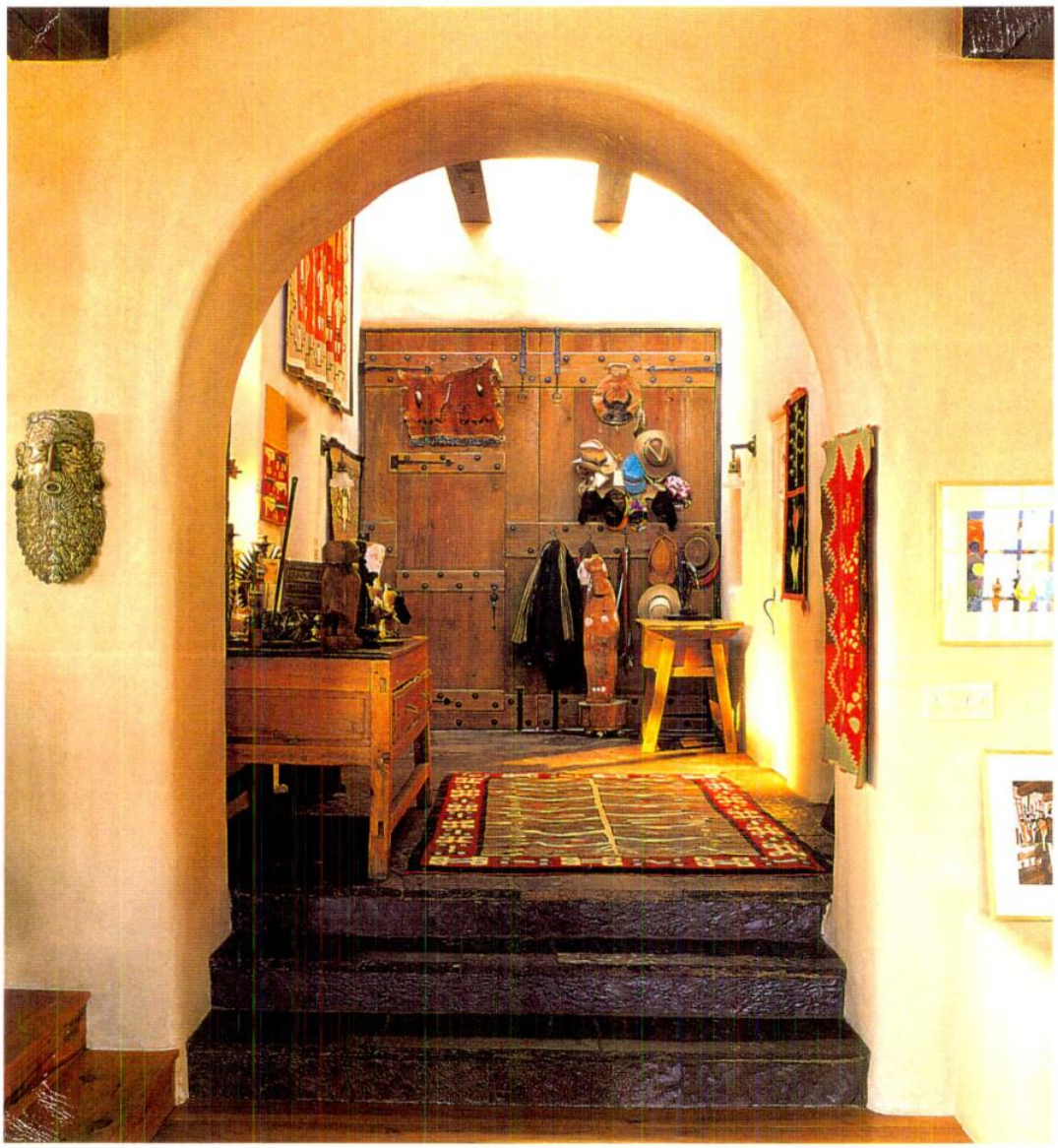


Figure No. 103 Interior showing Santa Fe Style Hallway.

CONCLUSION

On the surface, it is not difficult to see why the influence of the original native ethnic style and crafts were to have such far-reaching effects, on textile and interior design today. In reality, there has been various separate influences, taken from the ethnic handcraft that have inspired contemporary designers. Among these would be the strong identity and appearance of handcrafted products, bearing "the imprint of the human hand" (Hall, 1992, P.10), a quality a mass-produced object cannot possess, and of course, the strong individual sense of colour and design that many ethnic cultures portray in their work. The most important advance to emerge from Western Focus on, and revival of this style and craft, contributing largely to its popularity within modern design and society, was the emphasis on natural materials. Encouraged by the heightened awareness of ecological matters in our society, we seem to be looking toward an environmentally less compromising solution, thus creating a market for the ethnic handcraft as well as evolving a new breed of customers, aware of the importance of the natural environment or interior in tune with ecology.

But modern technological changes and advancing manufacturing techniques, will not stand in the shadow because of this revival of ethnic handcrafts, thus it has given the manufacturer a chance to improve and develop a more personal touch to produce these ethnic crafts on machine, just as American manufacturers died in the turn of twentieth century during the American Arts and Crafts movement. Improvements and developments in transport and travel to exotic corners of the earth have eliminated that feeling of alienation between West and East. Thus Western tourism and patronage have brought economic help to previously isolated countries in financial difficulties, and the importation of these ethnic goods through businesses like Global Village, has effectively advertised international handcraftsmanship. Even in some cases it could be argued to be giving deserved exposure to dying crafts, and traditions, of countries in much need of organised manufacture and trade.

The change in lifestyle has been reflected in the evolving ethnic decorative styles within this last century. For example, perhaps it was a sense of guilt in americans, at the turn of the century,

following their persecution of the native Indian population of the annihilation of the entire race. By robbing them of their heritage and land, which lead to the revival and awareness of native Indian crafts with the American Arts and Crafts Movement and later, appearing in interiors of the 1920's and 1930's. The more recent revival of ethnic influenced design, in the 1960's and 1970's during the so called Hippy era, was perhaps more a native form of escapism, from a capitalist society, than the inspiration behind the structural industry it is fast becoming today.

The 1990s has been a time of great advancements in manufacturing and design technology, and which have resulted in a closer relationship between mass manufacturers and fine handcraftsmanship. This emphasis on the handcraft has served to heighten the appreciation and awareness of ethnic communities of their traditional methods in design.

But one can only hope that the aftermath, of this awakening interest in ethnic crafts and style, does not witness the exploitation of people, hitherto only creating design for their own use and pleasure. Sudden Western eagerness for ethnic craft and style could easily inflict capitalist interests on people, who up to this have escaped, thus eventually putting their own carefully preserved heritage in jeopardy.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Q.1. Would you agree there is more and more people in the 1990's introducing the look of the hand made craft into their homes?

Ans. **Yes**

Q.2. The Ethnic style of the American Indian is highly Hand Crafted, would you agree designers today are borrowing the warmth and vibrancy of the Ethnic Patterning and colour and introducing it back into textile design?

Ans. **Yes**

Q.3. Why do you think we keep on using the original Ethnic style motifs and colours for contemporary collections?

Ans. **Because they are designs which cross cultures, re-occur all over the world. They come from deep in our inner conscious, and we re-act to them with pleasure/satisfaction.**

Q.4. Does your company, design any fabrics using Indian/Ethnic motifs as a source for designers?

Ans. **No.**
I am an oriental rug restorer, but I do see similarities between patterns used commonly in the East with those used by Indians in both North and South America.

Q.5. All native American Indian Tribes had different strengths when it came to making their crafts, etc. (The Navajo's were renowned for their superb pots and their skill at weaving. The Cherokees and Hop Tribes were particularly good at basketry). All tribes each had a motif which symbolised and differed them from one another. Within the fabrics you have with the Ethnic influence, could you identify some of the motifs?

Ans. **As I said previously I do not work with fabric, as such, but with knotted rugs (and occasionally Kilims). In the east the different tribes had their own motifs. If you should ever study Turkoman rugs, you will find that each tribe had their own "guls" and borders, and it is interesting to see what happens when a woman marries into a different tribe.**

Q.6. Would you be able to identify the motif to the tribe which it belonged to?

Ans. **Yes, in the case of rugs. (I have been working with rugs for nearly 20 years and I am still learning, but it is easy after a while, to work out which tribe, the date etc.) from designs dyes and the weave.**

Q.7. When you have chosen a colour story for your designs with the

Ethnic Theme, would you stay strictly with the original earthy natural shades that the Indians would have used, or would you introduce new colours according to the colour forecast for the oncoming year or so?

Ans. **Not relevant. (However, if I ever should design cloth, I would hope to use the very best dyes, as close to the old vegetable colours (which could be quite stunningly bright) as possible.**

Q.8. When you are designing a pattern for a printed fabric, would you take into consideration the weight and type of fabric in the earthy stages of the design?

Ans. **(Hypothetical answers)**
If I were, then of course.

Q.9 What type of fabrics would you use for commercial use?

Ans. **Natural.**

Q.10 Which fabric (woven or printed) is there a bigger demand for at the minute within the middle to upper market?

Ans. **?**

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