

Weaving Has Part In New York University's Annual Spring Conference On Industrial Arts

By HELEN B. AMES

Occupational therapy student Ernest Fuchs demonstrating for Miss Grace Post, his instructor at New York University, and Miss June Sokolof, head therapist at Hartford, Connecticut, Rehabilitation Center.



CONTEMPORARY ASPECTS of handweaving that will be helpful to teachers and students of the craft were discussed and demonstrated during the Annual Industrial-Arts Spring Conference, held April 28-29 under the auspices of New York University School of Education. Emphasis was placed on its importance for occupational therapy, a field where handweaving has made definite headway toward its broad possibilities for rehabilitation of hospital patients. With growing comprehension by physicians that craftwork restores confidence in the accomplishment of something worthwhile, there are not, however, enough trained therapists to meet the demand.

To familiarize visitors with hospital conditions, a typical ward was set up at the conference. In this connection, handweaving and many other craft activities were presented. The textile exhibit displayed silk screening prim-

arily, showing the making and printing of screens on fabrics developed as a group project by N.Y.U. students under the direction of Miss Grace Post, head of the textile shop. As a project for occupational therapy, Miss Post believes this type of craft work offers a valuable means of giving those who are ill a feeling of definite achievement. It has been successfully adopted by a group of men patients at St. Barnabas Hospital for Chronic Diseases, New York City.

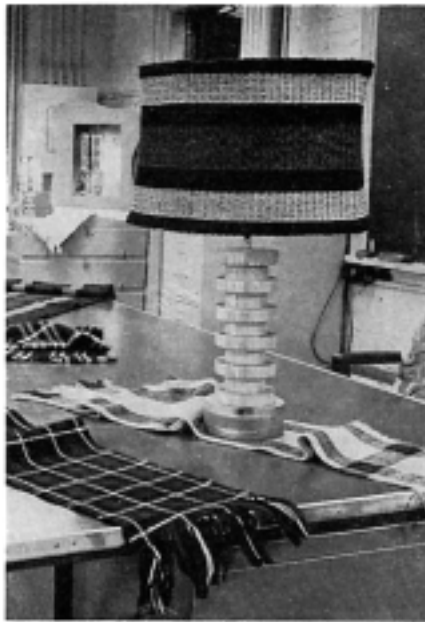
A group-development of the weaving class featured a wall hanging of the sort commonly created in hospitals. Direct source of the idea was a drapery material designed by therapists at Willard State Hospital and carried out by patients there. The exhibited hanging has a widely spaced warp with weft woven in at wide intervals. Designed for harmonious decoration of a corner of the shop where blue predominates, it was made in a combination of blue and white with touches of purple.

Of special interest was the work of Pedro Valera, a partially sighted student from Caracas, Venezuela, who came to the United States on a five-year government scholarship and is aiming for a B.S. degree in industrial arts. This 21-year-old South American intends to return to his native country on completion of his studies and apply his knowledge to the rehabilitation of other handicapped people. Trained teachers of occupational therapy, he says, are badly needed in Venezuela.

Mr. Valera is enthusiastic about weaving, despite complete lack of sight in one eye and cloudy vision in the other. While able to distinguish colors, for weaving steps he depends largely on touch and mathematical calculations. He figures out patterns in his head instead of on paper and feels his way about the loom with sensitive fingertips. The two rugs illustrated show his mastery of the goose-eye pattern. Both have a blue warp—one with white filling and the



Paul Robinson, student, developing a wool scarf.



Lamp shade in tabby weave—black with red and white stripes.



Helen Jaffe, arts and crafts student, weaving table runner.

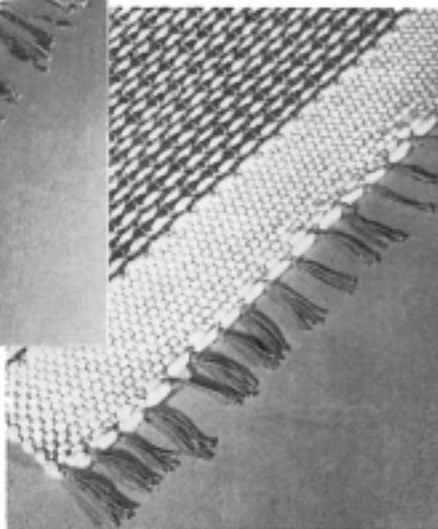
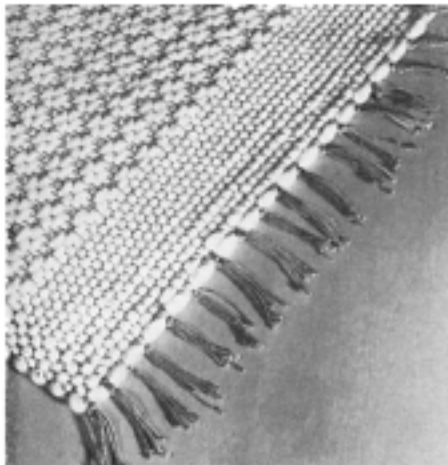
other alternating white and blue filling. Courses in woodworking, ceramics, and printing are also part of his training. Of these, he finds printing the most difficult for a worker with his handicap.

Exhibits by other students included a lampshade and a rug in tabby weave, which showed two entirely different textures with the same warp of black, red and white mercerized 3/2 pearl cotton. Variations were obtained with the filling. For the repeat pattern of the striped lampshade fabric, a pro-

nounced wale or rib was produced with a filling of three shots of black pearl cotton and one shot of black cotton rug roving. For the rug filling only the rug roving was used. Tabby-weave scarves were presented as examples of the initial weaving task assigned to students.

While the craft angle of industrial arts comes first in value for students, instructors are looking forward to a wider approach that will give fuller comprehension of our industrial civilization. "The production of textiles is the

largest industry in the United States," points out Charles E. Ball, instructor in the N.Y.U. department of vocational education, who was one of the luncheon speakers at the conference. "To equip students for a place in this field, they should be given the whole picture, including carding, scouring, spinning, knitting, weaving, finishing, stenciling, roller printing, batik, and fabrication into garments." With such hopes in mind, industrial art teaching is making strides toward a closer link with the industrial world we live in. ● ● ●



Rugs designed and woven by Pedro Valera, partially sighted student from Venezuela, in gooseneck pattern. Variations of blue and white cotton in warp and filling.