



LOOKING *at the* CRAFTS¹



—MARJORIE B. AMES, EDITOR—

THE Boston Museum of Fine Arts has rendered modern industrial arts and the crafts a service in its recent exhibition of French Textiles and Textile designs. Noteworthy in the collections were the original water color drawings from famous eighteenth century artists and also the "mises en cartes" or detail sketches elaborated for the weaver's convenience in carrying out the designs. The drawings and "mises en cartes" were shown in groupings with the textiles.

This event represents another step forward in the recognition of working crafts as live components of the great field of arts. The Boston Museum tied up this exhibit with retail stores and manufacturers, expending every effort to make it of practical value. The realization is coming to us that an artistic culture depends on the permeation of every strata in one's civilization with its touch. Periods like the eras of Louis XV and Louis XVI

were artistically flourishing because as much attention and respect was given a chair or piece of porcelain as a painting. There were arts, not "The Arts" which is a namer confined at times to painting, sculpture, and architecture. Proof enough of this is seen in the names of the artists who were the designers of the fabrics on exhibition and the lasting reputation they have. Amongst them are Jean Revel, Phillipe de La Salle, and Jean F. Bony.

In the exhibit, though many of the fabrics were but small fragments, there were definite ascriptions to designers, for many of these men developed their own notions and possessed the same individuality and creative ability that distinguished furniture designers like the Adam Brothers, Sheraton, or

Chippendale. Till the advent of Modernism how much chance would there have been of isolating creations in the spirit of any modern designer in an exhibition medley? Probably none at all and therein lies a salient reason why we have displayed so little progress. For the convenience of mass production and the improvement of technical processes; to placate our undue craving for the antique, we have submerged the individual. There have been no design

types that can be labelled as new or pertaining to one man or school; just a sameness traceable as far as the vendor alone.

Of particular interest in the exhibit were the artist's sketches and "mises en cartes." In the eighteenth century, designers made water colors of their creations and submitted these to manufacturers. The sketches were meticulously done, exuberant in design, and gorgeous in coloring. The bulk of them, in consonance with prevailing

fashions, were floral in type though many have animal, landscape, and Chinois motifs. When the sketch was accepted, it was turned over to another specialist who made the "Mise en Carte." This is a squared paper on which the design is so applied that every square represents a thread or group of threads in the warp and woof. The weaver needed this as his guide for most of the weaving was done in homes on the draw loom.

Though the Museum collected these artist drawings and "Mises en Cartes" independently of the fabrics that were shown, many of them evinced close connection and it was interesting to follow the various steps and changes as the fabric evolved from the germ of an idea. The artist with his brush and water colors could be more liberal in his colorings and the sweep of his lines, than the weaver



Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Louis XV Brocade Style of Jean Revel

¹On the cover is a design by Phillipe de La Salle that was shown in this exhibition. The illustration is used through courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

with silks and the limitations of a loom. Now that we have had this exhibition of old textiles and their designs why doesn't some museum or enterprising group give us something similar in contemporary industrial arts? All of us will find it interesting. The Boston Museum considers itself fortunate to possess such unusual collections; the Museum that acquires modern ones will be just as happy in its possessions a few decades from now.

Boston's New Studio Shop

Anybody interested in handicrafts will enjoy a visit to the studio-shop of the Craftsmen's Guild at 15 Fayette St., Boston. This shop, which is under the direction of Mrs. Chrimes, has a comfortable, homelike atmosphere which is a splendid foil for the delightful things on display.

Both the shop itself and its purposes are interesting. The sponsors were fortunate in obtaining this location for it has lent itself to an unusual decorative treatment — the walls are in cream with a deep blackish tone for high notes; in the partition separating the small office from the shop is an inside bay window that lends a charming touch to the interior. No attempt was made to emulate the policies of the ordinary run of gift shops. The endeavor is to create a pleasing atmosphere in which craft objects can be shown and the work of individuals be displayed to full advantage. Things shown are more for taking orders to be filled by the working craftsmen than for immediate sale. Also a number of the needleworks are for student needs. The Craftsmen's Guild is taking pupils in all types of needlework as well as other crafts and is also planning to supply designs for working so models are kept in the Studio.

A number of prominent craftsmen have cooperated through the submitting of their creations for display. There is leatherwork from Mrs. Cramm and Mrs. Pearce, needlework by Mrs. Stearns and Miss Mabel Cook, enamel work by Miss Twichell, weavings by Mrs. Reed, and a group of red chalk portraits by Mrs. N. I. Amsdel. Numerous other

craftsmen are also represented in the things displayed.

It is to be hoped that this shop will prove a successful venture; the craftsman has so few outlets, especially in the semi-private type, that one can only hope this venture and any others of its type will meet with popular favor.

The craftsman who produces a hundred pieces in one design can find a wholesale outlet but the worker who makes individual or special order things has a task in finding a mart for his production.

In filling this gap, the Craftsmen's Guild and other shops on its pattern will be rendering a great service to crafts.



Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

"Mise En Carte" French, 18th Century

A Revival of the Art of Tapestry Weaving

THE recognition of weaving and tapestry and the interest in its revival as a fine art is shown in the new course in the Design and Weaving of Gobelines and Tapestries and Oriental Rug technique being inaugurated this season at the Master Institute of Roerich Museum, 310 Riverside Drive, New York.

This course is to be conducted by Mme. Verita de Bertalan, one of the authorities in this field. Mme. Bertalan's own tapestries, indicating the remarkable manner in which modern creative ideas may be applied to this old art, were shown with great success this summer in Woodstock.

The course will be a practical one, the students designing and executing their own designs. It is hoped in this way to combine the beauty of the ancient tapestry with something of the dynamic spirit of modern life.

In speaking of the course and of her belief in the renaissance of this great art of the ancients, Mme. Bertalan, who has taught hundreds of students in America and Europe, says:

"The past of tapestry weaving was in Europe, but the future for it is in America. Thousands of

(Continued on page 46)

floral forms in their tapestry rugs or the winsome charm in the haphazard motifs of their decorated pottery. These are but two of the arts that are copiously treated and illustrated in this book; all the others are just as interesting, just as amusing and just as rich in their value as designing aids.



A REVIVAL OF THE ART OF TAPESTRY WEAVING

(Continued from page 43)

offices, showrooms, apartments and yachts have to be decorated. The textures of tapestries are what give them their peculiar excellence and what distinguish them above all other textiles, just as other textiles are distinguished by texture qualities that raise them above wood and stone and brick and plaster and procelain and paint and the metals. In other words, tapestry has a more interesting texture than any other material in the world and one capable of expressing more in the hands of the weaver, who understands."

As the Master Institute has just entered its new home in the new twenty-four story Roerich Museum Building, splendid facilities are available for the inauguration of its work. In addition to the fine studios for its classes, there is a research library to which the students will have access in their

study of designs and in gaining their historical background. An added advantage of the course will be the opportunity for the students to share in the general cultural courses and lectures, concerts and productions given to the students of the Master Institute for the purpose of developing the broad artistic appreciation of each pupil.



MARIONETTES

(Continued from page 9)

above the heel. Into this fasten the pointed end of the leg by boring and putting a wire through, bending the ends (Fig. II). It should be weighted by screwing a piece of sheet lead under the heel, or inserting shot in it if you model it out of papier mâché.

Now it is ready to dress. Do not design the costume as a thing by itself, but always as part of the larger design of the stage scenery and other puppets. Is the puppet to play a leading part? Be sure then to have the costume stand out boldly in strong contrast to background and other figures, at the same time keeping the whole in harmony. Study what color will best express the emotion of your puppets. Keep the costumes extremely simple—as a problem of spacing and color harmony. Dyeing, block printing and batiking will be of service here.

Then to the stringing! The controller must be made first. Cut a piece of wood 1" x 1/4" about 10" long. Screw two tiny screw-eyes at one end for the hand strings and one at the other for the string to the back. Cut another piece 6" long and screw a screw-eye at each end, to which the strings from the wire loops at the sides of the head are to be attached. Nail a strip of cloth or leather to the ends large enough so you can slip your hand in under it; then nail it to the longer piece at right angles nearer one end and string as in Figures I and VII.

Tip the controller forward and your puppet bows. Tip the cross bar and he cocks his head sideways. Lower the controller and he seats himself.

The leg strings fastened to screw-eyes on end of thighs and passed through holes in the clothes are fastened to a "leg stick" about 6" long with a hole in the center to place it on a nail at B when not in use. To make it walk, tip it alternately, simultaneously moving the puppet forward. If the dress touches the floor, no leg strings are needed. Your lady just glides in. Figure VIII shows a more complicated controller which, by pressing the finger on A, lifts A B and causes the puppet to hang from the shoulder strings, liberating the head strings so that the head falls forward in sorrow or nods.

By experimenting in front of a mirror placed on the floor, you will be continually surprised and amused at the things these little actors can do and

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