

LET'S DESIGN SOME NEW PATTERNS

By Fred L. Copp

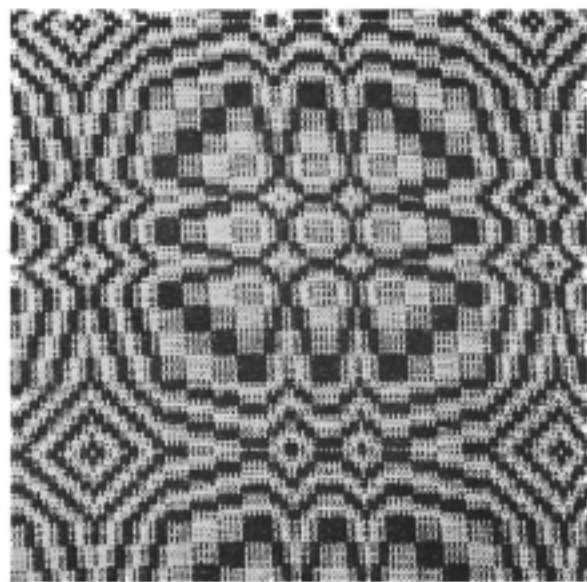
PERHAPS you would like to have some new patterns for your portfolio of samples, yet you have exhausted all the known sources of supply. Why not solve the problem by designing your own drafts? I will give here a simple method which I have often used to design four-harness overshot patterns.

The main idea is to make up a warp of a convenient size, draw in three or four patterns and then weave them in order. Thus in weaving for the first design the other two often show the germ of a new design which can be later evolved into something quite new.

Now about this experimental warp; five yards is not too long, and the width, of course, depends upon the patterns which you decide to use together. It is also a good idea to use the common twill border on one side and on the other your favorite border.

For those who are more experienced, a draft could be adapted from various sources, such as rugs, curtains, crochet patterns, or even from crossword puzzles! If you have one or more of these, now is a good time to use them, if you have not

*Figure 1 (upper left)
Figure 4 (upper right)
Figure 3 (below)*



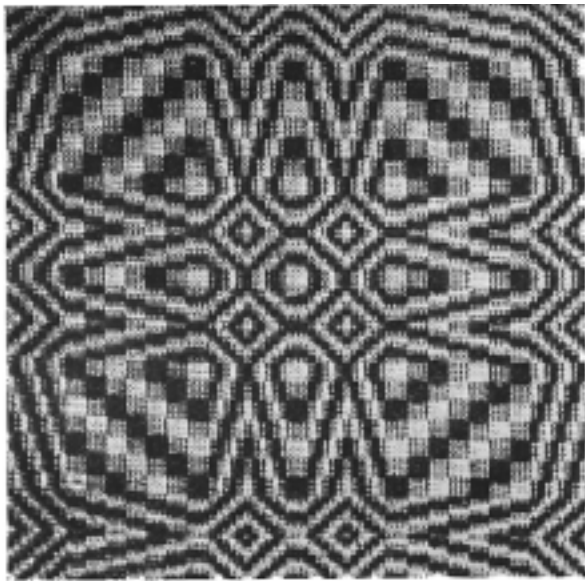


Figure 5 (above)
 Figure 2 (lower left)
 Figure 6 (lower right)

already done so. Try them in combination with a known pattern, or use several for the first experiment.

When you stop to think about it, various combinations will suggest themselves to you, and you don't know what the results will be until you are weaving. Therein lies the thrill of discovery.

In weaving this combination of unrelated patterns, start with the first on the left, and weave "star" fashion or "rose" fashion, as you prefer. I always weave both ways. After you have finished

all the patterns, perhaps a few other methods of treadling can be used with good results. Surprisingly good "accidental" designs are often found in this way, which can be further developed in later warps. Always keep a record of all steps for later reference.

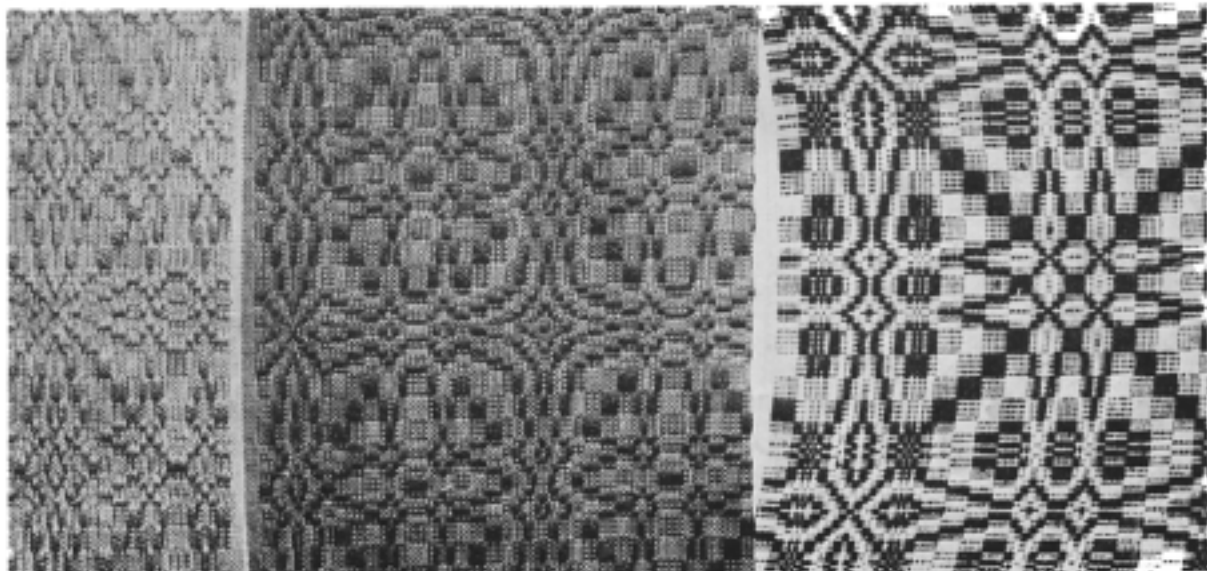
Right here I want to say a few words about colors and yarns. In weaving this experimental warp, use up whatever odds and ends you happen to have on hand. I use a different color for each pattern, and sometimes each pattern has a separate color for its section of the warp. When you have selected a small bit of the weaving to use in a later warp, plan to have the warp long enough, so that you can weave each design, in a number of color combinations. Then, if you want a larger sample for your portfolio, you can select the best of these small blocks for reproduction.

To illustrate this method of designing I will give here the results of one of my own attempts.

Figure 1 shows a part of the original piece of cloth. The patterns used are Big Pine Burr, a variation of Honeysuckle, and a portion of a design seen in a Swedish weaving book. In weaving for the Honeysuckle design, I sow in the center of this section a square block surrounded by four small figures which somewhat resembled butterfly wings, but they were unconnected. In the corresponding section of the Big Pine Burr design there were a similar set of wings, but these were connected vertically, instead of horizontally as they are in nature, by the insect's body.

Right here I cut the finished cloth from the loom, and rethreaded three new variations which I hoped would give me the butterfly design. All were woven

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which there is a magnificent collection in the monastery of Guadalupe.

Queen Isabella, much as she hated the Moors and whose banishment from Spain she accomplished, had the same love of embroidery as her foes. Her recreation from the hardships of camp and heavy governmental duties was embroidery, enriched with gold and silver thread, for the altars of the cathedrals. But the decorative arts were not Isabella's only preoccupation. She made her husband's shirts, of which we have lists telling that they were worked in the "Spanish stitch" in black and gold, or even in black alone.

The daughters of Isabella were accomplished needlewomen. Catherine of Aragon introduced the "Spanish stitch" to the English Court, and in the difficult years with Henry VIII found solace for her lonely hours in embroidery. Mary was taught this needlecraft, and during her reign she preserved the traditions of her mother and grandmother. In the Victoria and Albert Museum is a jacket-tunic said to have belonged to Queen Elizabeth. It is of linen worked entirely with black silk with the characteristic floral designs of the period.



Figure 8

Within recent years lovers of these passing arts and crafts have established the Museo de Artes Industriales in Madrid where they are rescuing these works from destruction. The copying of the motifs is encouraged. One of the recently revived designs is shown in Figure 8, the double-headed eagle of Charles V. And so this ancient art of needlework is being preserved in various ways.

Harness Tapestry

(Continued from page 13)

5	6	Orange	5	4	Green
1	6	Orange	1	4	Green
6	6	Orange	5	4	Green
2	6	Orange			
			2	6	Orange
5	6	Green	6	6	Orange
1	6	Green	2	6	Orange

ILLUSTRATION No. 2

No. of Treadle	Picks	Pattern	Weft	Binder	No. of Treadle	Picks	Pattern	Weft	Binder
5	6			Bitter-sweet	2	6			Electric blue
1	6			Bitter-sweet	6	6			Electric blue
5	6			Bitter-sweet	2	6			Electric blue

Repeat in the same order, ending with the bitter-sweet.

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"rose" fashion, except the last, which was woven "star" fashion. These results are shown in Figure 2.

Again the cloth was cut from the loom and, using a new warp, I drew in an enlarged version of the last experiment, which is shown in Figure 3.

In Figure 4 we have a similar design, except that now the bold diagonal line of blocks of the figure in the center of the cloth has been further enlarged, so

that now there are six blocks in line, and the center also has been changed. Yet I was not satisfied, because the four small diamonds in the central position were not connected on all sides as I wished them to be. However this same design woven "star" fashion, as shown in the lower part of Figure 4, is more pleasing than when woven "rose" fashion.

Figure 5 shows the design still further enlarged. With seven blocks on the outer diagonal, the design has now grown smaller wings inside the large wings. They also resemble "eyes" on the wings of the wild silk moths. The four diamonds in the center are now connected on all four sides. We now have a pattern suitable for coverlets, but probably for little else unless woven in fine silks. If you turn the page around so that you look at the picture from the corner, the design seems to be entirely different, a somewhat elaborated maltese cross.

Figure 6 shows another alteration of this family of designs, and this is woven "star" fashion. Here the double diamond design between the larger central figures has been reduced and reversed. Also, a small block or "table" figure has been inserted between the two parts of the design. We now have a large composite figure, made up of three distinct elements, or three smaller patterns. Many of the old Colonial drafts were composite designs, and I believe that it was in this way that many of the old weavers composed their own patterns.

For many people, these old Colonial drafts will never cease to be fascinating; but with all our improvements on the heavy, clumsy looms of Colonial

days, I see no reason why we of today should blindly accept the older drafts and stop right there. Those old master weavers did not accept everything without stopping to adapt and experiment with them. Why should we? Once we train ourselves to adapt the old patterns to our new uses, and are able to design new patterns for ourselves, then hand weaving will be an expression of our own age and not merely a dead art that has been temporarily revived.

A New Canvas to Paint

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Swedish wall hangings, the application of this art is made more extensive. It may be used to decorate glass, it may be applied in coloring paper which is used to cover boxes of one kind or another, or it may be used for a border on scarves and towels. Because of the naïve conceptions, this form of art is one which appeals to children as well as adults regardless of the adaptation, or the purpose to which the finished piece will be put.

Painting on glass is one of the simplest forms, because it involves working with small units. For this particular type of decorative work, it is necessary to use a flat piece of glass, a plate or a flower bowl, for example, and in most cases uncolored glass of this kind can be purchased for a few cents. Usually the outer circle, which is about three inches wide, is the part on which a design is placed. The craftsman cuts a circle from a sheet of white paper the size of the dish upon which he is working, and marks off on it the part the same size as that of the glass which he expects to decorate. The design is drawn and worked out with crayon colors on this plain white piece of paper. One of the favorite themes among the peasant workmen were the five wise virgins and the five foolish virgins, a motif that will work out well for a border of the type required on the glass. The figures are alike, but individual differences, worked out by varying the color scheme on the costumes, provide contrast. When the design on paper is completed, it is pasted or clipped on the inside of the dish, and the work-

man reproduces the colors on the outside of the bowl with enamel paint. After the design is finished, the inside paper can be washed off, or preserved for another time.

For those who desire to work on a smaller scale than that which is necessary for the wall hangings, small designs can be worked out on paper which will be used to cover small boxes. Perhaps the most satisfactory arrangement would be to work out a design on the top cover, and allow the rest of the box to be a plain color.

When the design is on scarves, towels, table runners, curtains, or bags, the most satisfactory technique is the wax crayon color in designs on fabric, because articles prepared with this method can be laundered easily and safely, and, if they are ironed on the wrong side while they are damp, the color is not injured. The materials which are needed are only a pencil, paper, crayons, and a piece of fabric, the material ranging from unbleached cotton and canvas cloth to linen and pongee, depending entirely upon the use to which the article is to be put.

While it was the aim of the Swedish peasant to tell a story, to depict some scene with which he was familiar, an ideal which can be still faithfully followed in painting the wall hangings, it is wise to simplify the motif to a single figure which can be reproduced in a border repeat pattern when the crayon technique is used. The Queen of Sheba, or King Solomon, Jonah, or the Children of Israel are popular characters. The floral patterns are especially desirable. The minute details of the wall hangings cannot be reproduced with the crayons, but the suggestions of the peasant art can be used in subtle ways. The crayon method has been explained in many different types of publications.

For a craftsman who has had experience with crayon work, numerous adaptations of the method suggest themselves, although for the novice the simplest method is undoubtedly that of painting the design upon cloth or paper. The painted glass is also an easy technique. While this art form, like many others, must be used only moderately, it can add interest and color to dark corners.

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