

# Small Wall Hangings Adapted from Guatemalan Textiles

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The textiles described in this article were brought back from Guatemala last summer, by Miss Rosenfeldt and Miss Wyiatt, two Detroit teachers. Because these fabrics have been of much inspiration to my own students, and because there is much opportunity to use some of these ideas, I am presenting them to the friends of the "WEAVER" also.

At Figure No. 1 is a tie dyed cotton skirt. The Guate-

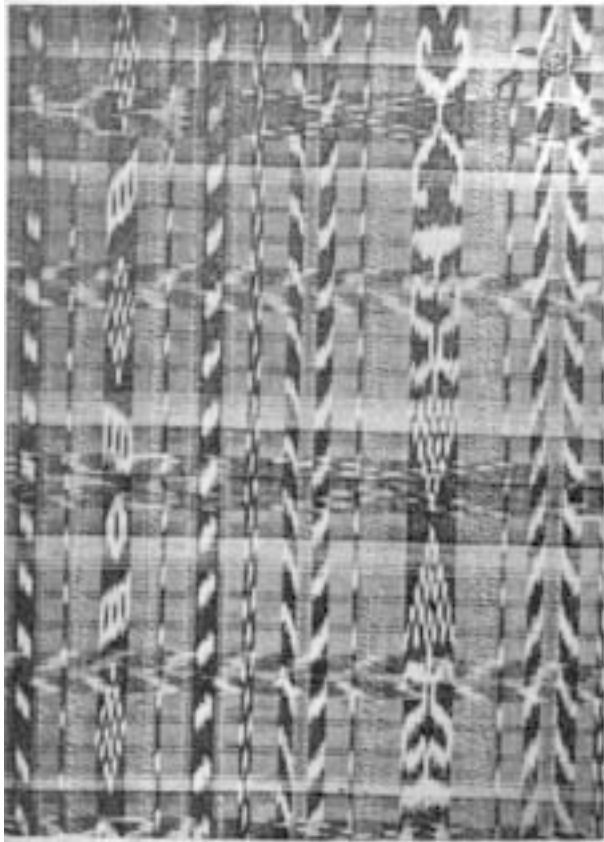


Figure No. 1 Tied and dyed skirt fabric

malan women wear skirts of cotton cloth woven about 36" wide, which are characterized by having the warp and the weft tied and dyed. The warp for the cloth is tied off in small sections by being wrapped with cord around the different groups of warp threads as it is stretched. First all of the parts of the warp which are to remain white, are tied off, then the rest of the warp is dyed yellow. Then it is stretched out again and all of the parts which are to remain yellow are tied off. Then it is dyed another color, let us say blue. Different localities have their own color schemes which to one who knows them, makes it easy to identify the Indians from different parts of the country by their costumes. Usually three colors are used with black to form a plaid, and when the weft is tie dyed also the result is as at Figure No. 1.

Figure No. 2 shows a head cloth. These occur in many different designs and types. The stripes of brocading in this

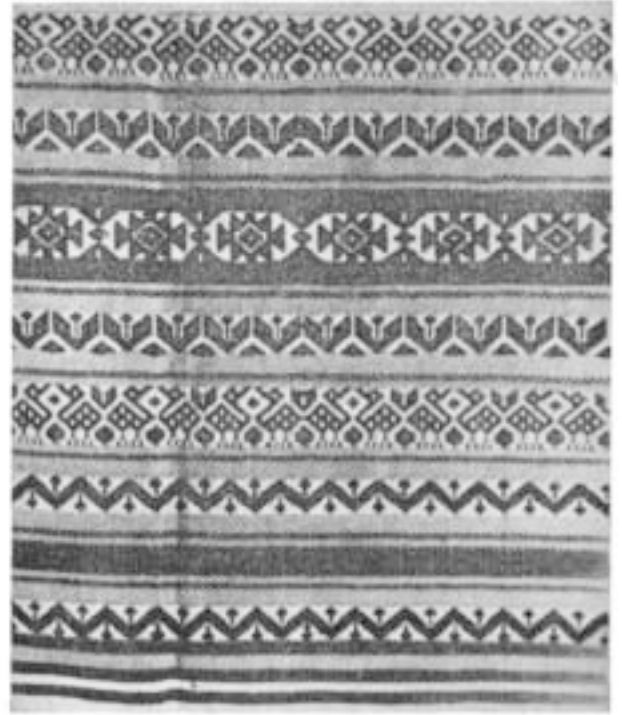


Figure No. 2 Brocaded Head Cloth

one are carried out in red, yellow and some orange. Any of these borders are easily woven on the simple heddle loom or any two harness shed, and are very effective for bags, belts, scarves or simple wall hangings. Figures at No. 4, 5, and 6 give in detail the size of the skips of the brocading. One square equals one warp thread of the design. Sometimes if the skip between the warp threads is a long one, these figures are woven with a separate weft thread, often of a different color as well. And sometimes right in the middle of a figure, the color is changed. There is no set rule about it, the figures are a free sort of design. Just one half of this piece is shown at Figure No. 2. The little border shown at Figure No. 7 was used for the very center border, and then the whole repeated back to the beginning in reverse order.

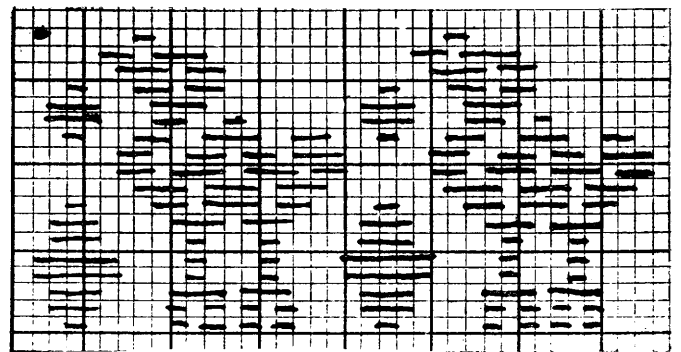


Figure No. 3

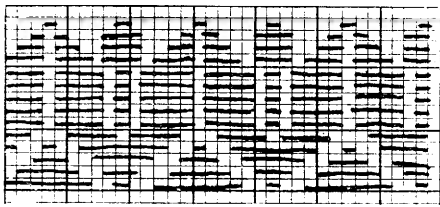


Figure No. 4

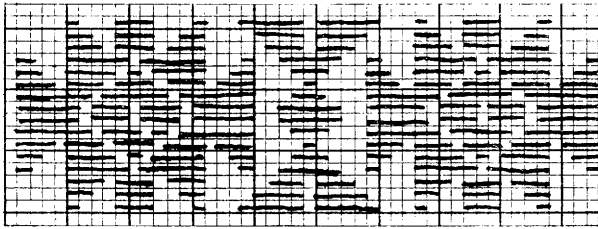


Figure No. 5



Figure No. 6

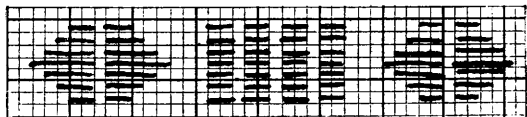


Figure No. 7



Figure No. 8  
Blouse cloth with brocaded women's figures

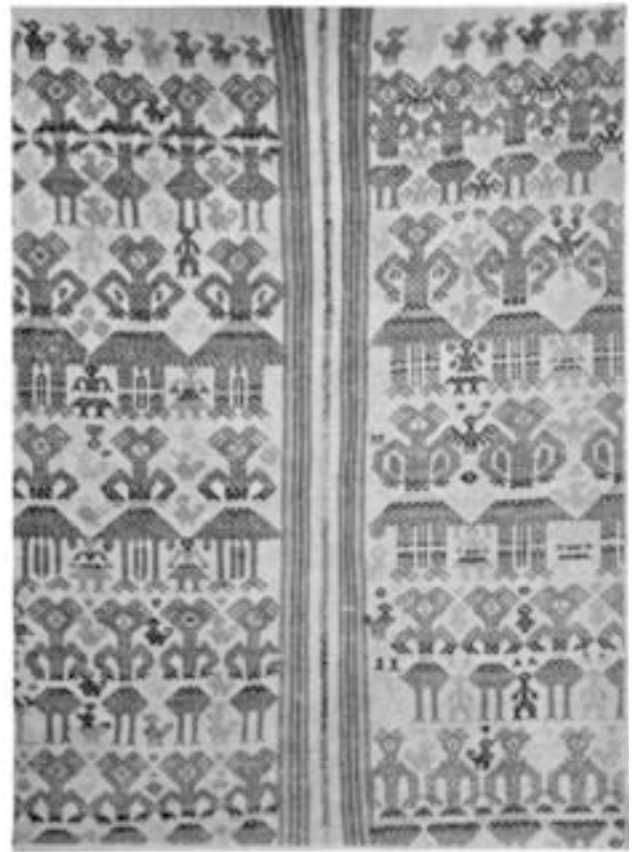


Figure No. 9 Another blouse cloth

Figure No. 8 and 9 show two different pieces which are used for Blouses by the women. Notice how these little women's figures are arranged, and the great variety in them. Sometimes a little boy or perhaps a chicken or a bird, and Figure No. 9 even shows a bird with its wings spread, and a number of different ways of treating the hair. Some of the women are fat and some thin. Different colors were used in the weaving of the figures as well, but they were mostly red, a little yellow and orange, and occasionally some blue. Note the two rows of wavy effect at the top of Figure No. 8, possibly this may mean clouds. Also note the interesting feet some of these people have. There is no attempt to make even these symmetrical, and in many cases they are far to one side of the figure itself. Both Figure No. 8 and No. 9 were woven in two pieces 20" wide and sewed together in the middle as the dark warp stripes which were on the edges show.

At Figure No. 10 is an adaptation of some of these simple brocaded figures woven by one of my students, Nell Byster Keyser. This wall hanging was woven on a simple 2 harness 20" heddle loom of dull, light rose colored shetland yarn for warp. The weft was all Bernat's Tapestry yarn. The background light beige, with borders in dull soft green, gold and rose. The first border is of green with occasionally a shot of darker green and rose put in. Above this is the first row of little chicken figures taken from the detail of Figure No. 3. These are also of green.

The second plain weave border above the chickens is of rose, and some darker rose shots, and a bit of gold also. Above this is a row of little figures taken from Figure No. 11. Figure No. 11 is the little small figure at the feet of one of the women in Figure No. 9. With these figures are small



lengths of laid-in with blue, gold and dark rose, and also a fine thread of Bernat's Boucle in gold is shot through to give an unusual texture effect. These shots break up the plain surface of the background and make it very effective. Above the little figures is another plain weave stripe of dark gold tapestry yarn for about an inch, then comes a row of small animals, possibly goats or sheep, the detail of which is given at Figure No. 12. These are woven with blue



Figure No. 10 Moula Wall Hanging with brocaded figures from the Guatemalan figures

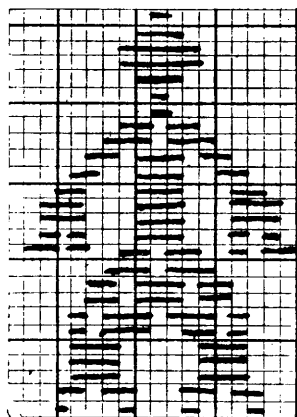


Figure No. 11

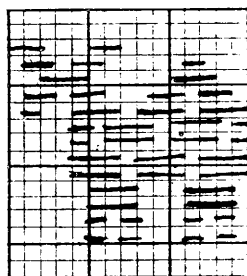


Figure No. 12

tapestry yarn with very dark rose and some yellow shots in the background. Above these goats is a strip of plain weave in a lighter gold color than the previous plain weave strip below. And above this are two cows taken from the Guatemalan fabric as shown at Figure No. 13, as were also the goats. The detail of this cow was given in the May 1939 copy of Handweaving News, as were also more of these figures from the textiles as shown.

The textile shown at Figure No. 14 is another piece woven on the same warp as the one described above, and three of the little women's figures taken from those as shown in Figure No. 8. The background of this piece is Bernat's rose shet-



Figure No. 13 Guatemalan Animals

land floss, while the figures are brocaded in with dark red violet, for the center one, and dull blue for the two side figures. Occasional shots of gold and darker rose are also inserted which break up the plain effect of the background.

These small wall hangings are particularly adapted for children's rooms, they adore them. And this, it seems to me, is one way in which we as modern weavers can turn some of the ideas of other foreign weavers into fabrics for our own use today. These weavings are not blind copies of the Guatemalan pieces, for first of all the colors and the yarns with which they are woven are entirely different and secondly, the arrangement of the figures is also changed. In such ways as these, it is possible to use our own imaginations for interesting and unusual textiles for present day use.

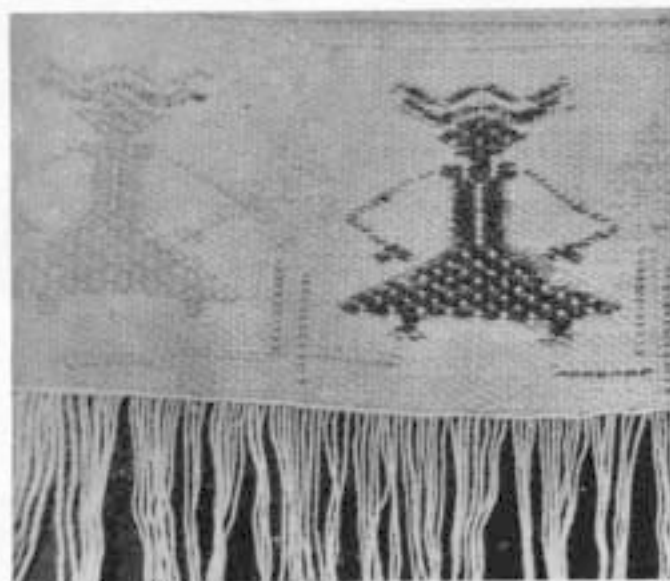


Figure No. 14 Small modern Wall Hangings of Guatemalan Women by Nell B. Keyser