

Unusual Color Schemes

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THERE is one phase of textile design which is so important that it can "make or mar" any product, and yet it is often neglected. I refer to the selection of colors which are to be used together. Perhaps it is due to the fact that a simple combination, of ordinary colors, such as blue and white, is easier to select, that ordinary color schemes are prevalent. It takes an appreciation of the art in textiles, for one to select unusual colors, and still it is this very art quality which lifts the hand-made product out of the factory class. An unusual color scheme should be the goal of every textile worker.

Such an unusual scheme contains enough variety to avoid monotony, and not so much variety that confusion would be produced. In it, three characteristics of color should be found. First, there should be contrast of value. Value refers

to the relationship of a color to black and white. Secondly, there should be contrast of intensity, which refers to the relationship of a color to a colorless gray. Some colors are bright, while others are dull. Usually, the grayer color is used in larger areas, and the brighter color, in smaller areas. Lastly, there should be contrast of hues. Hue refers to the distinguishing name of a color, such as blue green, or yellow green.

Strictly speaking, there are five warm colors, yellow, orange, red, yellow green and red violet, with their variations. On the other hand, there are three cool colors, blue, blue green, and blue violet. Grass green, and violet which is an equal mixture of blue and red, more nearly approach neutral. Then there are the neutrals proper, namely, white, black, gray (either warm or cool), silver and gold.



One of a pair of pillow tops

In a successful scheme, an equal amount of warm and cool color should never be used, but one should always predominate. The addition of neutrals enhances any scheme.

To indicate the way a scheme is built up, perhaps you would be interested to hear an analysis of the woven runner and pillow we ordered for my Mother's living room. Both articles recalled all the colors in the unusual scheme which had previously been carefully planned for the room, so the articles in their turn became unusual in color. As has been mentioned before, one type of color must definitely predominate, and in this case it was warm color.

Before enumerating the various colors combined, perhaps I had better tell you that there was not one plain color used in the warp, but a carefully selected variety of colors. These consisted of the following: buff, gray, old gold, taupe, buff, gray, old gold, taupe, buff. As can be noticed in the illustration, a thread of black was used between the old gold and taupe groups, to give a value contrast-accent. This also produced an interesting texture-appearance. You will be interested to note the combination of neutral with warm, in the warp.

As to the weft, starting at the selvage, the following colors appeared: a very grayed old rose (some grayed colors were combined with some bright colors), neutral gray, old rose which was not quite so grayed as that last mentioned, and was a little darker in value, gray, rust, grayed old rose again, gray, grayed violet, deep green, very dark grayed red violet, a small amount of bright yellow green, a lighter value of grayed violet, old gold, rust, deep red violet, medium blue-green, alternated with buff, medium blue-green alternated with deep red violet, then medium blue-green alternated with buff again, deep blue-green alternated with deep red violet (the darkest note in the weft), deep green alternated with rust, deep red violet, lighter violet, gray, very deep grayed red violet, deep tan, rose, violet, light and dark gray, light violet, deep tan. That indicates the colors used from

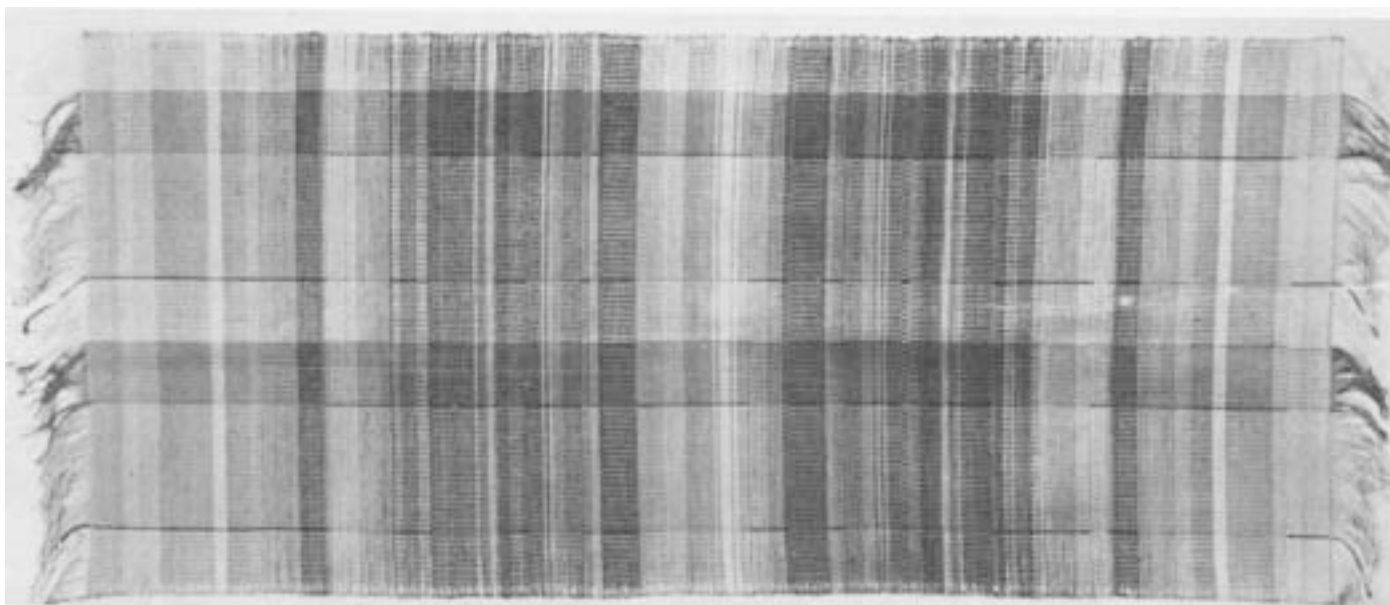
one selvage through the center, after which a repeat of the sequence was used.

Words will not adequately describe the richness of this scheme. The "live" quality possessed, was produced partly by the variety of color in the warp, and partly by the subtle changes of hue, value and intensity of color in the weft. There were no startling contrasts. All the warm colors, and all the cool colors were related to each other. Each time a new color was introduced, a little of it was alternated with the previous weft color, to cause further variety. Incidentally, please notice the variety of size in the stripes of color. This article does not deal so much with the design, as the color, so I have purposely not emphasized the number of threads in each stripe.

We had a pair of pillows woven, but they were twins, so only one is illustrated. They contained all the colors to be found in the runner, but in them, we had the dark stripe come in the center, instead of just off the center. The center of the pillows were composed of very deep grayed red violet alternated with rust, deep red violet, blue-green, grayish tan, deep blue-green, lighter blue-green, violet, dark red violet, rust, old gold, grayed violet, brighter yellow green alternated with deep blue-green, lighter violet and rust alternated, lighter violet and blue-green alternated, lighter violet and tan alternated, old rose and tan alternated, gray and rust alternated, rust, gray, tan and darker tan alternated, rust and gray alternated, and gray and tan alternated. This describes the colors from the center to one selvage.

The warm colors ranged from yellow green, old gold and buff through old rose, grayed violet to deep red violet. Neutrals included both warm and cool gray. The only cool colors used were different values of blue green, and some of the grayed violet had a bluish cast.

If you have never tried building up a scheme this way, using as great a variety (subtle) as possible without losing the unity, I heartily recommend it. It will give you a very unusual color scheme which all your friends and relatives will enjoy with you.



Note how the darker stripes have been placed off center in this runner