

CHAPTER 11

EVALUATION

HANDWEAVING, LIKE OTHER CRAFTS, has an inviting appeal today. Of those attracted to it, none are more appreciative of its value than individuals who, in the course of the day, are engaged in a specialized occupational activity. In these days of intensive specialization, boundaries are more or less defined, and the time element is often emphasized.

Handweaving offers a wide scope for creativity when an individual has acquired a fair degree of skill. Since its practice is mainly avocational, the weaver is free to work leisurely, with imagination and complete independence. He can create, develop, and produce a product alone, as a personal responsibility, and the result represents an individual achievement.

Further satisfaction is derived from the realization that the product, aside from whatever distinctiveness it may have, is generally one of utilitarian value. Weavers make many fabrics for their home, materials for apparel, and innumerable articles that may be given to friends and family, and some find a market for their work.

► WEAVING GUILDS

Many localities throughout the country have organized weaving guilds. Some have been in existence many years and it is mainly through the efforts of these groups, in the lean years of craft work, that the activity has been kept alive. Guilds have stimulated the desire for honest craftsmanship and have made it possible for many beginners to learn the craft when no other source of instruction was available. The mutual



Fig. 11.1—Hand woven by Marianne Strengell, these draperies are for the lobby-gallery of the Des Moines Art Center. (Courtesy of the Des Moines Art Center.)

Fig. 11.2—Screen using $\frac{1}{2}$ - and $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch outside peel bamboo, textured rayon yarns, and rayon ribbon as filler. Warp is an interesting grouping of chenille and novelty rayon yarns with cotton and a rayon ribbon. Colorful warps are in order when using bamboo, reeds, and other natural materials which are usually neutral in tone.

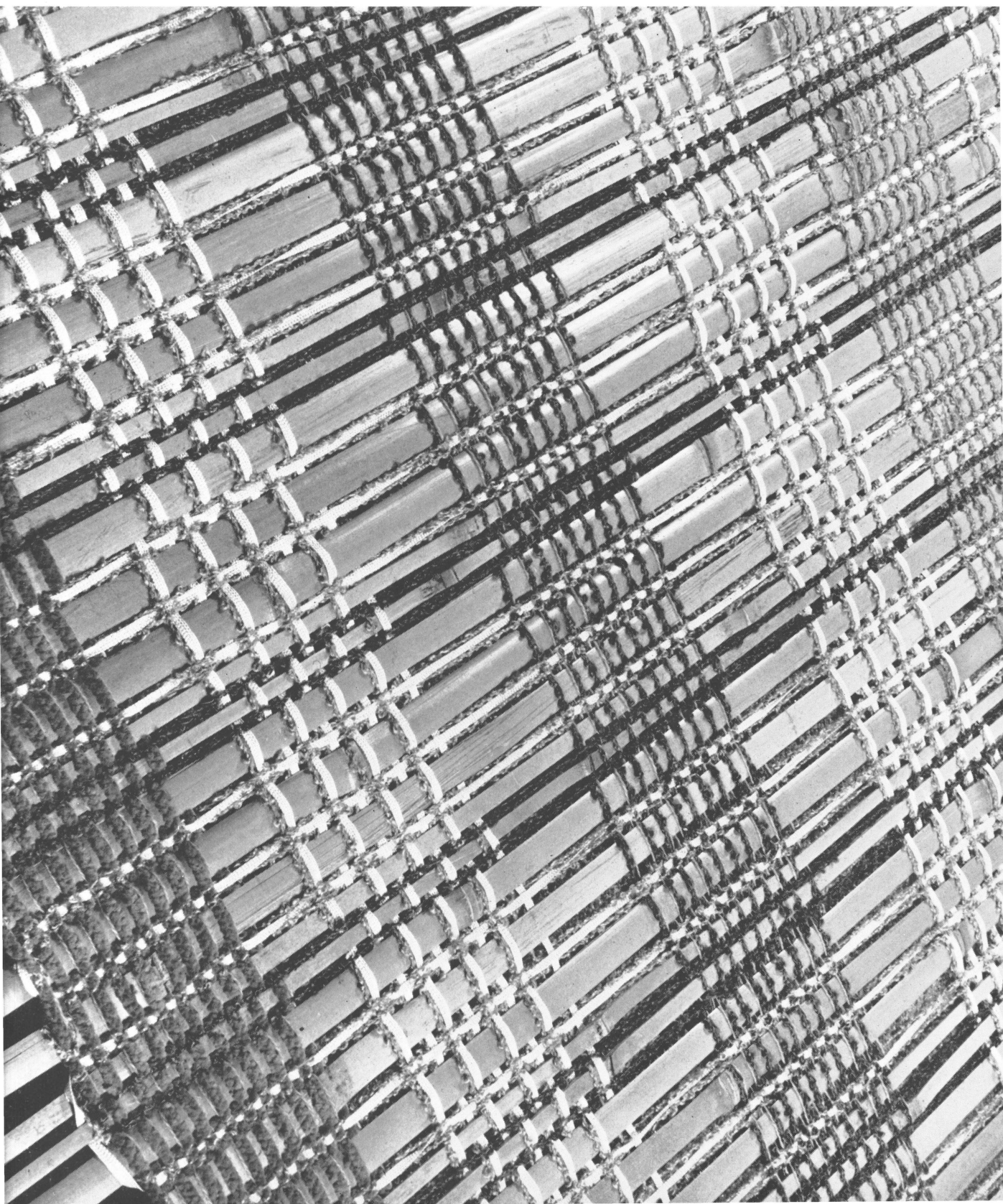




Fig. 11.3—Sheer curtains of linen, nylon, cellophane, and silk, by Karl Lauréll, used with Widdicomb furniture in the Grand Rapids, Michigan, Furniture Museum. (Courtesy "Handweaver and Craftsman.")

exchange of ideas within guilds has exerted considerable influence on weaving trends.

Guild members in some sections have generously contributed their time and experience to hospitals, assisting therapists in their work with patients. In the field of therapy, handweaving has received general recognition as a corrective medium. The therapist's work begins upon the recommendation of the doctor, and it is used chiefly for rehabilitation, for mental and physical restoration, and for pre-vocational training for the handicapped. Floor and table-type looms are adapted to the individual needs of the patient to accomplish the desired therapy.

► THERAPEUTIC VALUE

Successful therapy involves a combination of physical and mental stimulation. Each case must be considered as a separate problem; but with whatever equipment used, a loom or other apparatus, the mental attitude is frequently as important as the physical activity. Aside from

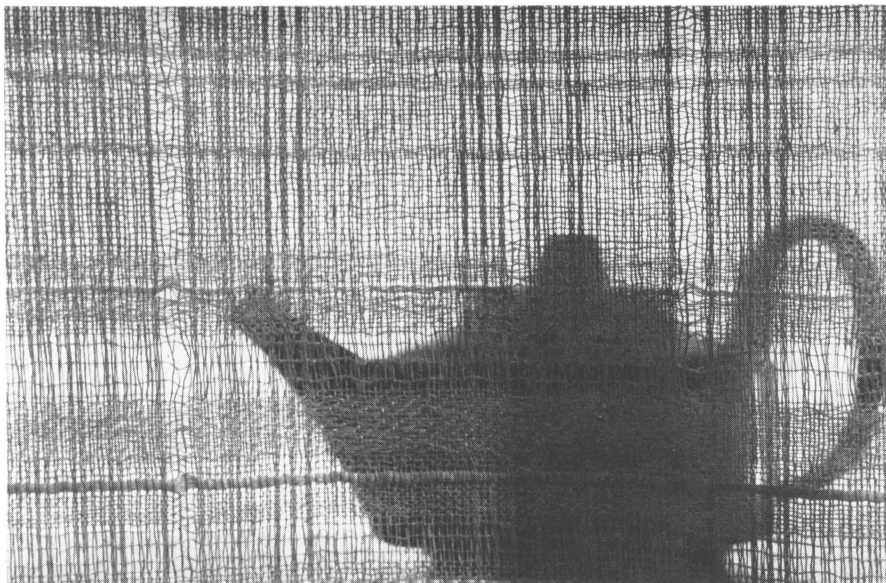
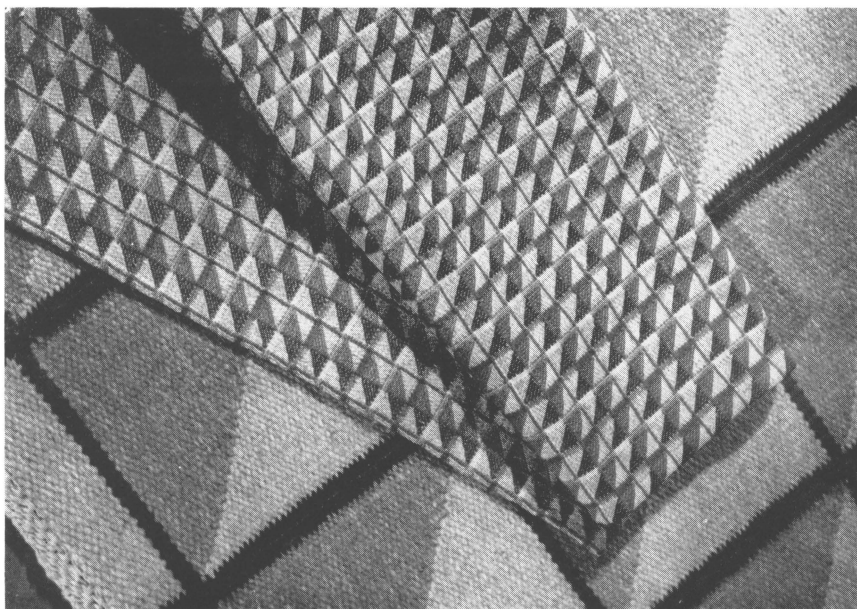


Fig. 11.4—Casement cloth of plain and twill weave in natural linen, mohair, cellophane, and silk, by Karl Laurell. (Courtesy "Handweaver and Craftsman.") Note the occasional heavy filler yarn and the more closely beaten sections that give stability to a sheer fabric.

Fig. 11.5—Matched carpeting and upholstery for guest rooms at the Grand Hotel, Stockholm, by Astrid Sampe of Nordiska Kompaniet, Stockholm, Sweden. Made of cowhair, the squares are light gray and dark sand, with borders in deep red and sea blue. Furniture fabric is same design on a smaller scale, of bleached linen yarn in two shades of bright blue.



the application of special resistance attachments, maximum physical activity on a loom can be attained by use of the simplest threading and tie-ups. The patient's interest may be stimulated in most cases by a colorful selection of yarns; these may be of different constructions and, whenever feasible, of the patient's own selection. In cases where the therapy has been carried over into the vocational rehabilitation program of the patient, he has, in many instances, found a modest market for his products. The more creative have been able to compete favorably with other weavers in exhibitions.

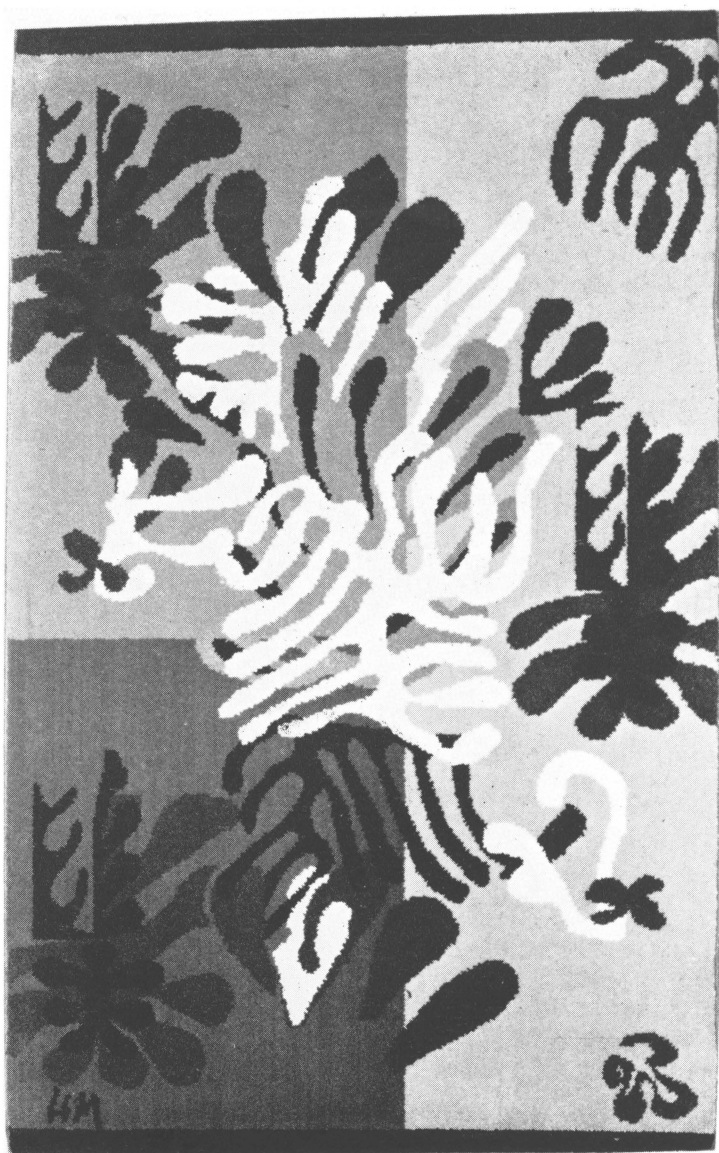


Fig. 11.6—Rug "Mimosa," by Henri Matisse, commissioned by Alexander Smith, Yonkers, New York. (Courtesy of the Detroit Institute of Arts.) The design was created by cut-out, pasted paper, then transferred to graph paper, each square to represent one tuft. From this guide, an edition of 500 rugs was woven.



Fig. 11.7—Modern dining chairs upholstered with hand-woven, tweed-type fabric, emphasizing the contrast in textures of wood and fabric.

► INDIVIDUAL POSSIBILITIES

There is a small class of weavers interested primarily in individual expression. This group seeks adventure in the search for the new and interesting combinations of texture, pattern, and color. Endless experiments are conducted with different fibers and yarn combinations, and scores of samples are made. Such weavers devote much time to their dye pots, tinting and shading yarns, to arrive at critically correct color balance for a given structure. In consummating a project, a commercial dyer may be asked to duplicate many of the colors.



Fig. 11.8—Flossa rug by Loja Saarinen, used with modern furniture and textiles in the home of Siggan Sjunneson, Detroit.

The work of these weavers is found often in competitive exhibitions, and some have been chosen for permanent collections. Though few weavers design expressly for the textile mills, many of their fabrics that show promise of being adapted to the power loom are acquired by the mills. These are accepted usually because of some particular quality of color or texture they possess rather than because of technical adaptability. On the other hand, manufacturers of fabrics who are looking for the unusual often turn to the hand weaver as a consultant or designer.

It is difficult to make a transposition of a hand-woven material to a power-loomed product without losing much of the character of the former. Conversely, hand weavers soon realize that it is pointless to attempt certain materials that can best be done by the power loom. The

Fig. 11.9 (opposite page)—Hand-woven fabric used in the St. Claire of Montafalco Church in Detroit. (Courtesy Diehl and Diehl, Architects.) The fifteen-foot screen on rear wall, one of a pair used to cover openings for the organ pipes, has a warp of heavy chenille, cotton, metal, and linen in aqua, natural, red, brown, and gold; filler of heavy bunches of brown reeds spaced with nubby red rayon and cotton, twisted with metal. Draperies back of the statues and communion rail are also hand woven.



power loom, together with the complex finishing equipment used for making commercial fabrics, is a highly technical device and, as such, operates with mechanical precision. A hand loom should be considered rather as an instrument since, being humanly controlled and operated, it in many ways reflects the individual temperament of the weaver. In this respect, every hand-woven fabric may be said to bear the personal imprint and signature of its maker.

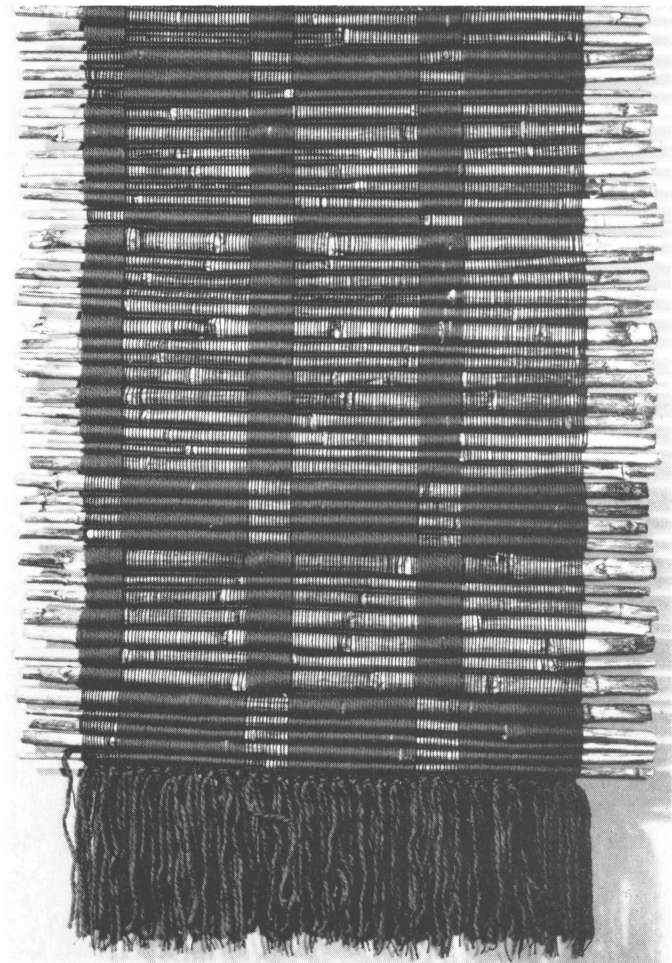


Fig. 11.10—Hanging of stalk and yarn, by Lyda Kahn. (In the Brooklyn Museum Collection.)