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GOBELIN AS A PART OF FURNITURE

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1 INTRODUCTION

I would like to open my paper with the words taken from a web site connected to hand weaving

“Our present times are characterized by a progressing compaction of all life’s processes. People are becoming more and more the objects of complex links between professional and private life. There is therefore an increased longing for a counter-balance, for a private sphere of tranquillity, contemplation and simplicity. Producing creative handicrafts is one possibility for fulfilling this longing. Apart from pleasure in the activity itself, a kind of confrontation with oneself also takes place when doing handicrafts of this kind. The human being, who is forced into so many situations in life, threatens to act against his/her innermost convictions and to lose oneself upon doing so.” (Wiehler Gobelin Stitching Shop © 2013 Wiehler Gobelin)

The purpose of this study is to analyze the phenomenon of tapestry and hand weaving. Tapestry here is considered as an art object in contemporary interiors. The objective of this work is to study the role of decorative arts in the formation of the objective world from an aesthetic point of view based on self-analysis and historical facts.

Most likely the interest in tapestry has addressed humans’ appetite to counter monotonous everyday dictated consumerism agendas to unconscious decorate their place of being with something that has been made not only to fulfill their primal needs of safety, comfort and fear of the outer world, but something meaningful and beautiful which has been created to bring happiness, pleasure to the eye, and even usefulness. This might also entail opposition to the urban man-made environment emanating from objects created by hand, carrying the energy of its creator. In addition, tapestry, especially classical, makes the interior filled with a feeling of luxury often claimed by modern customers.

2 FRAMEWORK

The development of this thesis has been planned as a research and history based analysis of the tapestry phenomenon itself and its usage revival in modern interiors.

Information taken for the historical part is mainly from books related to the topic and some internet sources. The analytical and practical sections are fully based on self-experience in the field. I as the author of this work have a background in the topic and a close relation to the subject. I myself am a tapestry weaver coming from a family of artists with some heritage in this very unique form of weaving.

In my opinion due to the individualistic and egoistic style of people nowadays it is hard to impress an individual due to the enormous variety of conceptual approach towards things. As I can feel a vast amount of people have forgotten the real aesthetic aspects of life, and consumerism and monetarism have overloaded the upcoming generations with only one approach: get the best at no cost. Sometimes the best means the worst and just a slightly upgraded version of an already existing profit making object, be that a new arm chair or a mobile phone with a function of calling everyone at once while watching videos and looking for a new recipe.

The aesthetic part of the human entity allows for the possibility to look into the depth of beauty and time consumed as well as mainly love and soul agendas those everyday feelings while doing anything, communicating, working, thinking of someone, emotions, those inner moves one is always having, and the operating processes of a human. Thoughts associated with different experiences starting from the very moment and finishing with eternity, no matter how long and what that would even be shared by the creators of any kind. That is why in my opinion custom made products are more valuable.

Design has always been there for art, and art has been there for design. When we are talking about design it depends on what we mean; in my view the new approach of de-

sign in a vast term is to make profit, forgetting about the part where it is comfortable, beautiful and useful. When we talk about art I consider it the pleasure of looking at a painting or sculpture or any “art” related form, meaning the pure aesthetic pleasure not just some “non-criteria” “idea searching splatters. If we take a good idea of any sort which has been there and it had to be popped out like a flower or someone giving birth and compare it to an ink spot falling at arm’s length and it drops, that what is left would be those idea searching splatters.

2.1 Action plan

I started the research with collecting the necessary material connected to the topic. Information was gathered from different sources and people. (Figure 1)

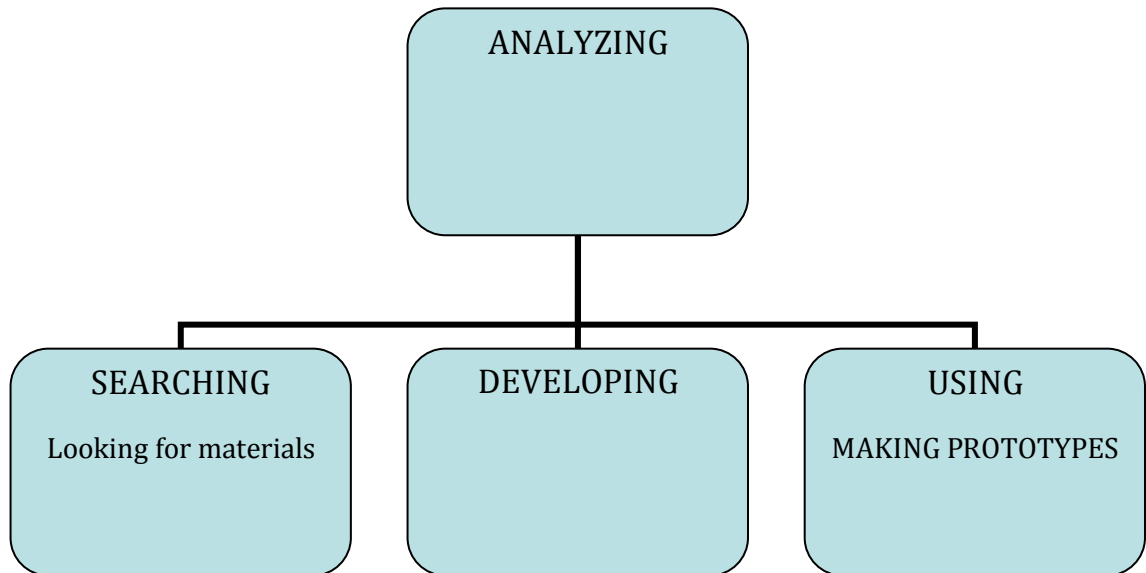


Figure 1. The overall main process.

Gathering information was connected to the phenomenon of gobelin (tapestry) analysis and referring to historical aspects of weaving. This was done by describing the idea of modern usage of gobelin, in comparison to manufactured tapestry on the basis of aesthetics. The use of gobelins in furniture is here considered. Why would it be more important or more aesthetic to have a handmade unique product rather than one which is manufactured? The overall method included the development of my own skills in hand weaving and working on making prototypes of handmade furniture while working with different materials.

2.2 Background information (Family History)

Tengiz Gigolashvili (Picture 2) and Yanina Ivasenko (Picture 3) are both professional hand weaving artists with good knowledge in the field. Both originate from Georgia, a land with a heritage in hand weaving spread throughout a history of carpet weaving in that region and noted for *pardagi* carpets, which were widespread in Caucasus in the early ages up till now used as household decoration. (Picture 1).



Picture 1. Pardagi Carpet, by an unknown weaver.

The technique the artists are using in their works is basically the same that is described in the methods and techniques section of this paper.

The colour palette chosen by the artist is due to the places and other factors which have been influential throughout life. After receiving their education, at Nikoladze Polytechnic for Tengiz Gigolashvili and the Academy of Fine Arts for Yanina Ivashenko, the artists started developing their careers as independent workers. At that time in the Soviet Union, big arrases depicting faces of rulers were widespread. Sometimes the themes blended with religious motives due to Georgia's historical heritage.



Picture 2. Tengiz Gigolashvili (picture by Georgy Gigolashvili).



Picture 3. Yanina Ivasenko (picture by Georgy Gigolashvili).

A big impact in life and art was moving to Sri-Lanka, where the artists continued their work, opened a small school of hand weaving and developed their skills. In the mid 1990's the family moved to Petrozavodsk in the Republic of Karelia (Russia) where they still reside. Several changes have happened over the years. Both of them have been participating in various exhibitions and art biennales. Since 1998 both artists have been in the Union of Artists. Their works are spread around the world and are in some private collections. Their exhibitions have been held in many different countries, and at some point in their career they achieved 1st prize in an annual art biennale "MALTA INTERNATIONAL ARTS BIENNALE" in Valletta, the capital of Malta, with artists participating from 105 countries.

The technique of hand weaving I have inherited from my father, Tengiz Gigolashvili.



Picture 4. Father explaining the basics of weaving
(picture by Georgy Gigolashvili).

3 TECHNIQUES/ METHODS

Beginning with words from Joan Koster's "Handloom Construction" we see that:

"the simple frame loom is the most basic design for a loom. The frame, a structure of four pieces of wood, serves to keep the warp (vertical) threads taut and straight so that the weft (horizontal) can pass through more easily. The loom has a shed stick and heddle which make the weaving go faster and more uniformly than on an even simpler loom where the weaver must intertwine the warp and weft with just the fingers. The frame loom requires less time in construction and in setting up the warp than the more complex foot-powered loom, but requires a greater investment in time spent in the actual weaving of the cloth." (Handloom Construction: A Practical Guide for The Non-Expert. by Joan Koster, 1979)

Tapestry weavers according to Handloom Construction: A Practical Guide for The Non-Expert. by Joan Koster, 1979 "slow painstaking finger weaving", something which I do agree with to an extent, but it gives the possibility to weave very coarse fibres, heavy mats of straw and other similar fibres.

The following paragraphs describe the methodology I used.

There is a hand loom which by itself is a rectangular under frame with two overlapping planks with two rows of nails on top and a bottom for the handloom (Picture 5). Through each nail a linen or cotton thread is stretched, providing the base for the future gobelin. Wool or any other type of thread is used in the tapestry. The threads are slipped through the "base", thus forming the picture (different threads form different patterns which can be used for emphasizing some particular parts). The press (the beater) for the threads is either a wooden plank or any device to flatten them so they form a ladder type composition step by step.

There is a small sketch where colours are set before hand so the threads can be picked up according to the drawing. On the back side of the loom is a full size picture or outline, of the future *gobelin*, which makes it easier to build up the composition.

Even though hand weaving seems to be a rather specific type of work, it has found and will find connoisseurs of this already rather ancient form of art. After all, the foundation was the handloom. Handcrafting is not only a manufacturing procedure; it has its own charm and hypnotizing effect.



Picture 5. Showing approximately how the hand loom looks
(picture by Tengiz Gigolashvili).

4 HISTORY OF TAPESTRY

TAPESTRY (French *gobelin*) is a decorative woven lint-free carpet. The history of woven carpets with pictures on them begins in 1200s. No exact date and place where the first tapestry was created is known. In ancient Egypt, reps weavings, with the image of the lotus and dung-beetles was known in the 11th century BC were made. The highest artistic perfection different from other textiles were Coptic textiles (Egyptians professing Christianity) in the end of the 7th century. Coloured wool was woven on linen with images of humans and animals interspersed with decorative ornaments. Tapestry weaving techniques are well known in pre-Columbian America. Samples of this art are preserved in the dry climate of Peru.

“In 2,500 BC Archaeological evidence suggests a very high level of technical skill of weavers producing elements from wool and cotton. This fabric was used for clothing. Even nowadays the popular form of weaving used in ancient times is found in contemporary techniques with its methods and motives” (V. Savitskaya 1995, 11)

Weavers had up to 200 weft threads per square centimetre depicting mythological scenes with people and animals. The colour range has almost not changed, which is due to centuries of using only natural vegetable dyes (yellow, brown, blue) animal (red) or mineral (black). In Asia, Chinese masters were working on the technique of hand weaving. The works of the masters of 10th -13th centuries are well-known.

Warp and weft are made of silk only, where one centimetre has 116 weft threads. This gave the works different fineness and elasticity. The Chinese have been famous for weaving complex compositions with landscape-floral motifs. In Western Europe, artistic weaving came from the crusaders which were returning from the Holy Land with a variety of carpets and fabrics.

The origins of some weaving techniques for tapestries took place in northern Europe in Germany, where the climate allowed for it. The cold and wet climate prevented the spread of popular murals found the South. The developing tapestry turned wool into

murals. The earliest is dated to the 11th century by masters of the Rhine weaving in the Catholic Church in Cologne. The first tapestries, as well as murals, were created by order of the church on biblical or historical themes.

Around the 12th and 13th centuries works by German artists began to penetrate into Scandinavia. A famous series of tapestries of French weavers entitled as the “Angers Apocalypse” was attributed to the highest achievements of Gothic art. Since the late 14th century tapestry firmly was established in interior decoration and has become an integral part of the balconies, windows and the walls of houses as well as during the festive celebrations.

Tapestry weaving, which has become one of the most important sectors of European arts and crafts created by the individual studios, was no longer trendy. Authors worked together with a sketch artist, who drew on cardboard while looking at the sketch painted with glue paints on paper or with oil paints on canvas. Weavers transferred the sketch to their working material. The weaver was also supposed to be able to draw in order to make significant adjustments not only in the colour spectrum but also in composition.

“At various times, many centres of tapestry weaving disputed their leadership. 14th century Paris, 15th century Arras, 16th century Brussels and Antwerp, and then the 17-18th centuries saw royal manufacturing in Paris bloom. Among European factories before the end of the 18th century, the Flemish and French were considered the best” (Savistskaya 1995, 5.)

4.1 Mid-15th century. Jean Lurcat

According to the information taken from visual art internet source it is said that “by the mid-15th century as many as 15,000 weavers and other artisans were working in the tapestry centres of the French Loire Valley alone using either a vertical loom (high-warp) or a horizontal loom (low-warp), and a range of no more than 20 colours. The finest European tapestries are considered to have been made by the Gobelins Royal Factory in Paris, while major tapestry-making centres existed in Arras, Tournai, Brussels, Aubusson, Felletin and in the Beauvais factory in Paris.” (ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ART © visual-arts-cork.com)

Since its appearance tapestry is associated with architecture, as it is an active component of environment, and pictorial art with its monumentalism and easel, as tapestry is mainly a decorative function. The evolution of tapestry took place in accordance with the development of architectural ideas. Tapestry was gaining sufficient autonomy as a self-valuable object transformed into an architectural space, then serving as an element of decoration of the interior later deprived from it and losing value. Unfortunately, reaching its peak in the 17-18 centuries, the classic tapestry started to gradually lose itself in the 19th century, and its fine quality and its role in the interior began to be replaced by easel painting.

The 20th century has created a new spatial concept and set the task of not only the complex organization of the subject with environment and the ensemble of interior solutions, but also built a special relationship between space and person. A new concept dramatically increased requirements for plastic form and expression of colour. During this period, not only tapestry but other applied arts started experiencing their rebirth.

Interaction with the interior of the tapestry in the 20th century evolved in the direction of the plane to the object from the wall - a self-spatial structure.

“Modern tapestry consistently advocated in various roles in the interior. Starting as a mural or decorative painting with emphasis on the wall, it becomes an integral part of the wall as an active plastic flamboyant kind of relief. In the end, the tapestry can be separated from the wall, first as a backstage curtain, and then - in the form of self-spatial structure” (Strijenova 1975, 55).

In the 18th and 19th centuries many institutions for the expensive and luxurious floor rugs woven in the style of tapestries were established. Since the 1830s French tapestry

manufactory had a desire to copy the paintings in a masterly way executed by the weavers especially manufactured by the Gobelin brothers. By the end of the 18th century, the number of shades reached 14,600 for a complete resemblance to the paintings the surface of the tapestry weavers tried to make as smooth as possible by increasing the density of the weaving. A lot of French painters were involved in that manufacturing.

In the first quarter of the 18th century in St. Petersburg, under the decree of Peter the Great, tapestry manufacturing was established. Its production was adjusted by French masters. The heyday of the Petersburg Tapestry Manufactory is considered to be dated in the years 1760-1770. The steady growth of industrial production in Western Europe did not promote but rather hindered the development of those areas of decorative surroundings, and the same could be said of applied art that was associated with an individual performing. In the late 19th century tapestry weaving in its classical form could not resist its decline. In the end Tapestry had been replaced by the factory made carpets representing the ideas of the client instead of the artist's hand.

Under these conditions, it was difficult to defend handmade tapestries position for the classical arras. However, a movement against the total mechanization of tapestry weaving appeared in Europe. A special role was played by the English painter and art theorist, William Morris. He spoke with a call to go back to the early stage of pure art of eras and styles. Morris considered Gothic to be the highest measure of artistry.

There have been two major events that shaped the "face" of hand-weaving of the last century: the revival of tapestry weaving with Jean Lurcat in 1930-1940's and the so-called "plastic explosion" in 1950-1960. Jean Lurcat turned to medieval tapestries and identified the basic principles of hand-weaving tapestry:

- woven paper should use a limited number of colours;
- tapestry should be created for the wall, i.e. be planar and target specific areas;
- tapestry should be carried out on cardboard, creating a life-size;
- The structure of the weave must be large.

Principles of weaving by J. Lurcat, can be considered as a sort of "formula decoration" in the textiles of the twentieth century. Brilliantly realized in practice, both by the mas-

ter and his numerous followers Lurcat returns to its original tapestry specificity: the strength of ties with the plane of the wall, which he decorates, because "basically a tapestry - is a piece of architecture". (Savistkaya V. 1995, 66)

The frontier of 1950-1960's was marked by the rapid surge of interest in textile art, - a period of searching for non-traditional forms, tools and materials, as well as new ways of development of the tapestry. The research of the 1960s led to the creation of structural relief compositions, and further intensified the desire for separation from a wall tapestry. Finding a balance between design and aesthetics in the plastic forms, the desire to express the subject matter much more than its function, all it required was a new approach to materials and techniques.

The desire to identify the relationship of surface structures with an internal structure of the tissue resulted in a tapestry that was perceived as an independent object outside the wall. It was during this decade, there are qualitatively new kinds of decorative arts which have not know the history of art: a new tapestry - soft sculpture art of rolled fibre. The use of materials and equipment used in various fields of decorative art promised extremely attractive prospect. Exhibited before traditional subjects have lost the functionality of and reference to these works has conventionally adopted the term of "art object".

4.2 20th century. Modern tapestry

According to a visual arts history web site oriented to tapestry weaving history:

“more recent 20th century developments have occurred in Sweden and Finland, thanks to the work of Marta Maas-Fjetterstrom (1873-1941), one of the best known Swedish tapestry artists, and the freer, more colourful tapestry art of Finland exemplified by Martta Taipale, Laila Karttunen, and Dora Jung. The religious authorities in Scandinavia have been unusually receptive to this art. Traditional folk weaving has also sparked a revival of tapestry making in central European countries like Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and especially Poland where mid-20th-century designer-weavers like Magdalena Abakanowicz and Wojciech Sadley have employed unconventional materials such as sisal, jute, horsehair, and raffia, to emphasize the nature of the material, and its tactile plasticity”. (ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ART© visual-arts-cork.com.

A crucial role was eventually played by the Nordic countries, especially Finland. After this work L. Alvar Aalto had an enormous impact on the future course of development of architecture and decorative arts of the 20th century. The discovery of new colour and texture of brick persistent preference for the merits of artificial materials - primarily natural wood beauty craze curved shape characteristic of Aalto's architecture and decoration in the works. The main creative principle of the master is always an organic integration of the architectural complex in the natural landscape. In fact, all architectural structure is transformed into a kind of art object. In the work of Finnish artists in the field of decorative arts is a search for the balance between design and aesthetics in plastic forms. The main thing is still a desire to express something more about a particular subject besides simply its function. A unique personality trait of the author is needed, including games of the mind combined with the touch of his hand. This approach to the works of Finnish artists in many ways defined the further development of Europe's tapestries in the 1960's.

The introduction of new materials and techniques involved particularly synthetics, using ancient techniques such as weaving and knitting, and weaving macramé baskets unlimited rise in the Hispanic technical experiments. But the plastic possibilities of tapestries were so inexhaustible that it attracted many artists, not only textile. That is why tapestry weaving is an area where the most fundamental reforms implemented traditional crafts, which committed the most abrupt change of the applied art for art monumental. Gradually a tendency of radical departure from the old principles of weaving from the necessity of cooperation of the artist and weaver-cartoonier took place. New tapestry weaving

overturned cardboard and proclaimed the need for the creation of weaver-cartooniers own performance. This allowed us to expand the creative possibilities of the artist, which immeasurably enriched shaped plastic language. The search for new material structures and textures led to a synthetic raw material for sisal (agave fibre) to the use of sheep skin fleece horse hair all sorts of wire cables that are introduced into the tissue in addition to such eternal weaving materials like wool, flax, hemp, silk. The technology of weaving has modernized, and in addition to classical methods of hiding the basis of the artists is trying to introduce some new systems of weaving and using the thread differently from classical method based on different techniques of overlapping the thread.

Weaving becomes widespread and gets a different method: a manifold increase in single or repeated doses. The new tapestries appear in various structural and textural effects. These are taken from different eras and different national schools - macrame, embroidery, lace and knitting.

The desire to identify the relationship of surface structures with an internal structure of the tissue led to what was perceived tapestry and outside walls as separate items in the volume space. Thus, it is not only subject to the laws of weaving, painting and sculpture, but also included in the new system of plastic thinking that relies on a new perception of space and the internal structure of the object. From now on, the artist weavers serve as a painter, as a weaver and a sculptor, and sometimes even as an architect. Renowned scholar Andre Kuenzi hand-weaver in the 1960s identified three types of new textile forms:

- Hanging on the wall;
- 2 Spatial that can be walked around;
- (Environment), allowing not only walk around the bulk form, but also to get inside it.

Mildred Constantine and Jack Larsen (1960-1970s) developed this classification and in further to divide the third part in the form of three subspecies:

The environment finds application in architectural practice, costume and wearing a purely experimental nature of the research during the 1960s environmental principle invades the terminology, architecture and art and becomes an international phenomenon.

The development of conceptual textile enables artists to create and develop new forms of art objects: textile installations. The works were executed in various techniques using different materials: felt, linen, cotton, wool, synthetic fibres, metal, glass, optical fibres. Modern art has been interesting to look at, explore and create new art objects.

“The main idea of involving the viewer into the work itself, rather than just looking at it from the outside which significantly increases the emotional impact” (Strijenova 1975)

With increasing technical capabilities with the expansion of the materials used, both old and new, within the last two types of spatial and modern environmental tapestry dramatically increased the number of different kinds of variations. At the exhibitions works have become to massively appear as three-dimensional structure and, especially open-work design. Artists often turn to non-textile materials trying at the same time give it the textile properties. Among these materials are soft plastic rubber wire materials, etc. The search for unusual solutions often leads artists to revive long-forgotten techniques such as macramé yet those well known such as the Assyrian Babylonian masters.

Artists create a macramé technique and the spatial structure of a variety of cords in essence turning the graphics in the sculpture. Their concept is to make the graphic design of the cord not only evident and tangible but also to have its interior space. The viewer is offered a real opportunity to cross the boundary between space existing and that created artificially.

4.3 Baltic school

The richest material for the study of the national heritage in the formation of the modern school of art gives the experience of Baltic artists. The strength and freshness of the folk art tradition of supplying their work is truly endless. In the best works of professional artists in Estonia Latvia, and Lithuania a deep affection and respect for native culture as well as the desire to preserve the best of the artistic heritage and a desire to continue the national tradition has always been felt. In folk, art painters seek and find unique images

of the main system of special artistic thinking which reviewed perception of plastic form. This has provided bold experiments in order to Baltic tapestry artists for a moment not to change the "nature of weaving". (Contemporary art of socialistic countries of Europe. M., 1981.)

A traditional source of their work is primarily in the possession of extensive knowledge and the skill of the weaver, because each of the Baltic republics has a long and rich experience of weaving. Deep-rooted traditions are affected by the fact that the Baltic artists from start to finish are the authors of the works and not just the creators of the projects. They choose their own yarn dyed themselves on a weaving machine, thereby giving them the freedom to their own material and the maximum use of all the possibilities of weaving.

4.4 Bionics

In 1970, searching for a new system of morphogenesis in different types of decorative art connected with the desire to turn to nature as a source of an infinite variety of forms. This has affected the acquisition of the world by that time a so called "environmental consciousness" and architects carefully studied bionics. This is a well-known concept of A. Gaudi L. Sullivan, Le Corbusier P. Soleri, and K. Kurokawa, and the tireless research of wildlife enthusiasts. They saw an inexhaustible source of knowledge about the structure of the proportions of the logic of the development of biological forms. Perhaps the most active in the field of biological forms close to the new tapestry was possible because of the properties of textile materials - their soft flexible elastic as well as possible consistent with the idea of imitation of nature.

In the middle of 1970s years in the evolution of a large tapestry led to a new kind - miniature textiles. In 1974 the first international biennale of mini-tapestries in London was held. The organizers of the exhibition in London proclaimed the slogan "Small is beautiful." Thus small tapestry emerged as a great antithesis. Its pocket-size became a challenge to the enormous size of large-scale engineering monumental murals.

5 TAPESTRY AS AN ART OBJECT IN MODERN INTERIOR

According to some internet calculations and discussion boards it appears that people do not hesitate to buy second hand stuff at all. Especially furniture and the factors do vary a lot. Some prefer it because of the low price, some are saving money, some do it as protest, and some are even interested in the stories that are hidden behind their “new” belongings. Why make something new when there is so much already existing and waiting to be restored into a fully functioning item? Some people can easily part with their stuff which they find useless, but this can bring use to others.

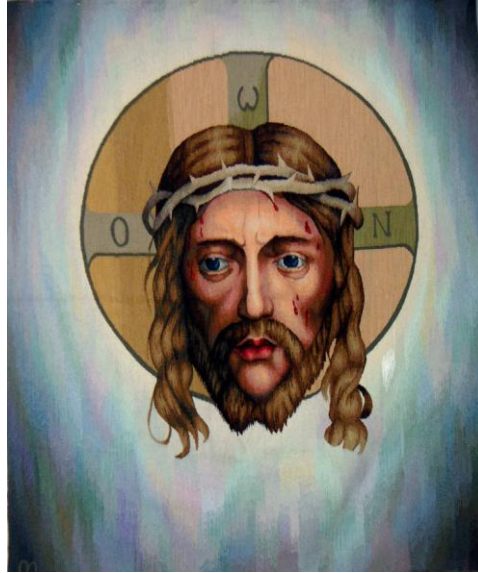
Tapestry is a form of art which makes it food for soul. Furniture (in this case, chairs, armchairs, sofas etc.) is intended for comfort, which, as I see, gives us a blend of physical and mental satisfaction. Hand weaving and handcrafting in general has always been of great value.

From an aesthetic point of view both hand made products would be having a great agenda and value for a customer or future user of the product developed.

Why would one use used material and why would it be handmade? First is the problem of price and the ability to function in modern society with vast forms of luxury and temptation from different brands and big companies. The second one would be the desire to bring “soul” to products made for people. Mass production does not always bring the same result as desired, not regarding the matter of ergonomics, which is a vital need for people to operate with purchased products. Talking about the energy which has been spent producing a handmade unique object would be hard to compare to lifeless machinery work. Tapestry is one ancient form of decoration which gives loftiness to the owner or the entity. All together this would make a great blend of hard work, great care for the outcome of the product and curiosity in finding suitable materials.

A tapestry from the outset acquired feature distinguishes them from the long-known and widely used in European life of Oriental rugs. On the one hand gobeln as carpets were

used for decoration and insulation of interiors of churches (Picture 6. Face of Christ), castles and palaces of the 17th century and houses of the city nobility.



Picture 6 Face of Christ by Tengiz Gigolashvili
 .(picture from private collection, author unknown)

The emergence of new hand weaving caused an explosion of creative activity of artists around the world. The main ideas in the experiments were going towards the final conquest of space: separated from the walls of textile design becomes an independent three-dimensional composition, available for viewing from all sides. This technique was used in the early 1960s as an application for metamorphosis tapestry artist Magdalena Abakanowicz (Poland). “Her woollen fresco claimed organic relationship not only with the wall but also with the interior space as a whole” (Yvarov 1991, 38).

The growth of interest in hand-weaving tapestries demanded new discoveries and interesting ideas. The works of different artists were attracted not only great skill but also great abilities to cope with extremely difficult professional tasks, with the restoration of folk traditions that gave the charge of emotions and vitality to contemporary art. (Picture 7. Time).



Picture 7. "Time" by Tengiz Gigolashvili
(Picture by Tengiz Gigolashvili)

5.1 Using tapestry as upholstery

As a matter of using tapestry as a furniture upholstery became a fashionable tradition since early ages, why would there be a revival and why use it in modern interior would be two main points to cover. (Picture 8 “Fishermans’ chair”, Picture 9 “A fine chair”) The answers would be given through self-analyses based on information taken from observation of human entities.

Talking about the first problem I can say that tapestry has owned its place in history and it is written in gold in the development of decorative art. The second point to cover would be to use it in a modern interior; it is a vast point, but I can try to cover it from my point of view.

As we all know chairs in all of their forms are a vital part of our interior giving possibility not only to rest after a long day but also to be a fancy art object, varying from its form and the nature of its product origin. If one would think about the variety of different possibilities of making specific type of furniture, it would take more than one work to describe even the tip of the idea. So we can imagine how vast can it be, especially with modern technology and the dictatorship of brands and mass produced household belongings labeled as durable and eye resting elements of human entities. I have come to the idea that to make a very small unique hand made chairs which would combine my profession as an industrial designer and my passion and historical heritage – tapestry weaving. Why small? Because I am still working on it, and making small products as I see is the best way to see whether it is eligible to make them at all. Plus it is easier.

Talking about tapestry as upholstery I can say that it is rather durable material due to the fabric which is used, mainly woolen with implementations of synthetic and acrylic yarns. Good examples of their use would be a historical summary of early centuries, where tapestry was in great use not only on walls but was a part of furniture.

In my works the motive was purely abstract. The technique I was using is the same as making any tapestry, but in this case I made smaller sizes.

After the tapestry was ready I sewed the piece with some fabric, in the first chair on the picture “fisherman’s chair” I used silk, and on the other, “A fine chair”, I used velvet.

The shapes and colours of the furniture can not be explained at this very point, I was using my subconscious which dictated me to do this very particular forms and colours. Of course one can use parallel connections with the symbolical attitude where fishes are representatives of different religious motives or the idea of wisdom, as well as fishes are water creatures, and water from different mythological ideas is the initial state of all things, the source of life. But in order not to offend anyone's beliefs at this stage I would go with decorative ornament and beautiful stylizing of those godly creatures.

Talking about "A fine chair" I could use the same analogy where the abstract lines could be representative of a non stop dynamic process in which we all are bound to, it is a non stop development which needs no start and no end just a loop of living and dying either with no purpose or some or a great one, depending on one's ideas and prerogatives. Or in order not to go deep I can just say that those are pleasant free hand lines blended with some geometrical straight lines. This would suit someone's wallpaper or go good to someone's doll collections. Customers or future owners of my products are free to label them as they are willing to, due to their own taste.

As my own evaluation and feedback I can say that due to the fact of my first upholstery and working in basically home conditions I was able to make only that kind of work, of course there are some defects connected to lack of knowledge and experience and in a sense horrible working conditions. The lack of a sewing machine which would be rather suitable in that situation I had to use a needle, but it gives a great look of a purely hand made product, so for someone with a particular taste it might even be of a great interest. I would like to say in my own defense that I am working on unique products and developing myself as a free artist which is a longsome and hard road. So these kinds of shortages and defects are from one point of view unacceptable, and from the other a vital part of development. Unfortunately there is no visible boundary between philosophical attitudes towards the problem at this very stage of my development, or there is, which I can not designate due to my incompetence. But in case I am going to continue with my work, I might review and reconstruct the way of dealing with this particular form of using tapestry.



Picture 8. Fisherman's Chair by Georgy Gigolashvili
(picture by Georgy Gigolashvili)



Picture 9 A fine chair by Georgy Gigolashvili
(picture by Georgy Gigolashvili)

A vast number of people nowadays try to apply some magazine dictated outlooks, it may be due to the fact of no possibility to cultivate one's own taste because of a lack of time and particular life goals. Tapestry due to its rich historical heritage gives it a good chance to become a part of any interior and easily blend while still stand out from other objects. (Picture 10 "Triptych") To my concern it is because of the time consumed by the weaver and energy and soul implied to the work. Soft woollen threads touched by the weaver's hand could carry some information on different levels of human compre-

hension, those “soul agendas” mentioned earlier in the text, giving the possibility of the work to “live” forever.



Picture 10. “Triptych” by Tengiz Gigolashvili
(picture from private collection, author probably Tengiz Gigolashvili)

Tapestry upholstery fabrics are an indispensable medium in today’s design world. Some tapestry upholstery fabrics introduce a complex colour palette into a room. Other tapestry upholstery fabrics are more subdued and simply create quite comfort.

“Tapestry upholstery fabrics carry themes that include everything from nautical, to contemporary, to country to floral.

All tapestry upholstery materials are of the highest quality. They are classified as heavy duty. All are woven from durable blends of cotton, polyester, acrylic, and olefin yarns. The composition of each tapestry upholstery fabrics is clearly identified due to the theme.

Like all the other upholstery fabrics from which one can choose at handmade tapestry upholstery fabric offerings are made with traditional handloom weaving using the yarns that would be interesting for the future owner.”

(Discount designer fabrics web site)

5.2 Ethics

“The dynamics of an aesthetically meaningful environment is reflected in the structure of architectural space, which in turn determines the specific organization and system of the interior, and direction of development of certain types of decorative and monumental art. (Picture 11. Some interior) From this point of view, of great interest to appeal to such important component of the interior as a tapestry by nature for centuries and is closely associated with the architecture and paintings - monumental and easel.” (Soloviev 1975, 3).

This is a concrete way distinguished from the trellis of the carpet, although the identity of the arts bring together materials for a similar technology, and other traits (classical trellis are only woven, woven carpets and nodular). And in the carpet and tapestry yarns coloured yarn used to create the same image or ornament, each line is part of the fabric).



Picture 11. Some interior, work by Tengiz Gigolashvili
(picture from private collection, author probably Tengiz Gigolashvili)

Trying to trace the path of the tapestry from the earliest times to the present day gets one closer to understanding the essence of this art - one type of decorative art, which is primarily inspired by the "memory of manual labour." Watching those transformations that have occurred and are occurring in the art of tapestry, one of the oldest on earth, can reveal not only the origins of the traditions and secrets of weaving past eras, but also to identify the problems of modern decorative art, search, find, and the loss of the avant-garde experiment.

Referring to the large range of images of social content, artists commonly use the language of generalizations, symbols and allegories, that is, to some extent solve the problem of monumental and decorative art. At the same time in their work retains all the features and properties, the inherent trellis: the traditional warmth, softness and pliability of the structure, versus the cold environment, the modern tapestry as it keeps alive the touch of human hands. Therefore, it is given such an important role in the formation of modern material and spiritual environment: it is designed not just to decorate it, but also to mitigate, to bring to a man.

Although the process of forming a "new hand weaving not yet completed recently in the emerging back to the wall makes you wonder about many things". Probably, it is time to reflect on the limits of freedom and sense of formal experimentation in the decorative arts. The goals and purpose of "emancipation" tapestry, more recently, are more based on common enthusiasm, rather than questioning and criticism.

“Today, perhaps, it is worth remembering that all the great masters of the 20th century, enthusiastically striving for new forms of art have never forgotten the principal - the person in whose name they were looking (Gabriel 1988, 15)

5.3 Own opinion about tapestry in modern world

This form of art has to have a grant for its long time journey through centuries and different environmental and political and ideological changes. It has been there along with art itself as an ancient representative of humans' natural longing for depicting ones entity for either future generations or just as a decoration for the living area. Carpets and tapestries were made by hand sometimes by different workers, who were able to communicate with their future work, giving it different feelings and emotions. When considering anything that has been created by man which would have at least some particular life elements in it, on a different, spiritual level then it would be easier to comprehend the real part of time consumption and ideas and thoughts which could be used while working on the product. A machine made product is lacking the warmness of human touch. As I see, time is a rather important element in people's lives, and due to the effort spent, one can imagine a way of communication or synchronization which is established.

Different colours and yarns blended together bringing up complex patters, portraits and even depicting important historical moments. With some particular skills one would be able to do not only decorative art, but also use it in clothing, or any apparel.

6 BENEFIT OF WORKING ON THE TOPIC

While working on the topic I have come to different conclusions and was able to develop skills in hand weaving. The usage of tapestry as upholstery gave me a possibility to think dimensionally when creating unique forms of furniture. Reading different materials made me understand the enormous and vital need of the aesthetic aspect of human life. I realized how through time one man's work, which has demanded a lot of energy, care and thought, can carry a part of the creator.

I realised that tapestry is a labour-intensive work which calls for a specific approach, not only in creating it but also in valuing it, where to appreciate the full significance of hand weaving one should realize the amount of time and energy spent on just starting work with gobelins. At first it includes assembling the hand loom then working on the sketch and then copying the drawn sketch to hand woven composition, representing the original drawing with treads.

Working with tapestries gave me the possibility to share them with people through exhibitions and a hand weaving symposium where I could show the technique. Frankly to say I am glad that I have chosen this particular path and have the possibility to learn and study not only the research side of the topic but to be able to create and manufacture my own works with my own sketches and thoughts and use it not only as a wall decoration but also in furniture. I also figured out that with right threads and attitude it is possible to use gobelins in apparel.

7 CONCLUSION

Most likely the interest in tapestry has called man's desire to oppose the urban man-made environment emanating from the object created by hand, carrying the energy of its creator. In addition, tapestry, especially classical, makes the interior filled with feeling of luxury which is also often claimed by the modern customer.

The dynamics of an aesthetically meaningful environment is reflected in the structure of architectural space, which in turn determines the specific organization and system of the interior, and direction of development of certain types of decorative and monumental art.

“Apart from pleasure in the activity itself, a kind of confrontation with oneself also takes place when doing handicrafts of this kind. The human being, who is forced into so many situations in life, threatens to act against his innermost convictions and to lose himself in doing so he can find himself again in the tranquility of concentration on the creative activity.”

(Wiehler Gobelin Stitching Shop © 2013 Wiehler Gobelin)

Trying to trace the path of the tapestry from the earliest times to the present day gets us closer to understanding the essence of this art - one of those types of decorative art, which is primarily inspired by the "memory of manual labour." Watching those transformations that have occurred and are occurring in the art of tapestry, one of the oldest on earth, can reveal not only the origins of the traditions and secrets of weaving past eras, but also identify the problems of modern decorative art.

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