2010

Color and Pattern: Tribal and Contemporary Ikats of India and Laos

Concurrent Exhibitions
wweiss@uninotes.unl.edu

Lentz Center for Asian Culture

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/tsaconf

Part of the Art and Design Commons

http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/tsaconf/74

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Textile Society of America at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.
Color and Pattern: Telia Rumals of Chirala. Its basic structure has a strong diagonal or square grid, in which geometric designs are produced double ikat cotton rumals (square pieces of cloth 36" x 36") in simple geometric patterns. These were developed in the 18th century as a way to reduce costs and time of production. Apart from sareis, Orissa ikat weavers also produce yardages, dupattas and bed and table linen. Ikats from Khatav are also in the exhibition. Our collection includes a wide range of colors like reds, yellows, blues, greens, and purples. In these textiles, forms are deliberately feathered so that their edges appear hazy and fragile. This is achieved by using a fine needle and thread to create these effects.

The ikat technique is a dyeing method used in various cultures around the world. Ikat literally means ‘tie, bind or wrap around’, derived from Malay ‘Mengikat’. In Lao, the word is Mut Mii, in India, it is Bandha, Kasuri in Japan, Mudmee in Thailand. The technique results in intricate patterns, which are achieved by tying the threads before dyeing them. The more knots tied, the smaller and tighter the bound area of bundles of weft or warp threads, the more colorful and detailed patterns. Skilled ikat weavers plan the positioning and registration of the pattern in the cloth prior to weaving. Multiple colors applied in sequence of re-tying and dyeing from light to dark result in more intricate patterns. Historic texts differ on whether ikat began in Indonesia, India or Southern China. Traditional and tribal communities have adapted the technique to their individual needs.

Historic Context
The technique spread rapidly as a form of decorating tribal clothing and ritual cloths, clarifying gender, class, tribal origin and marriage status, into Southeast Asia and north and west through China. India served as a critical bridge. Historic texts differ on whether ikat began in Indonesia, India or Southern China. Traditional and tribal communities have adapted the technique to their individual needs.

Global Context
Ikat is a technique that has been used for centuries in various cultures around the world. It is a dyeing method that involves tying the threads before dyeing them. The more knots tied, the smaller and tighter the bound area of bundles of weft or warp threads, the more colorful and detailed patterns. Skilled ikat weavers plan the positioning and registration of the pattern in the cloth prior to weaving. Multiple colors applied in sequence of re-tying and dyeing from light to dark result in more intricate patterns. Historic texts differ on whether ikat began in Indonesia, India or Southern China. Traditional and tribal communities have adapted the technique to their individual needs.

Contemporary Context
A resurgence of interest in ikat production for the marketplace stems in part from this trend, but is also due to the local need and vitality of tribal dress in communities across India, Laos and elsewhere, such as Japan, China, and the United States. Today, Ock Pop Tok, A Program of Textile Revitalization in Laos, works to empower Lao artisans through the use of their traditional skills. Today, Ock Pop Tok, an innovative textile gallery and workshop in Luang Prabang, is a center for the production of ikat textiles. The gallery offers workshops, demonstrations, and sales of its products.

Jill Heppenheimer, of Santa Fe Weaving Gallery, together with Joanna Smith, cofounder and co-director of Ock Pop Tok, have curated this presentation of dazzling single and double ikat from India, including documentation by Wendy Weiss, University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Dr. Anjali Karolia, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda.

www.ockpoptok.org

Prior to the founding of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in 1975, a woman's ethnic group, village, class and tribal origin was determined by the bandha, or ornament, worn to signify her status. The techniques of ikat weaving were closely tied to these cultures. The ikat technique spread rapidly as a form of decorating tribal clothing and ritual cloths, clarifying gender, class, tribal origin and marriage status, into Southeast Asia and north and west through China. India served as a critical bridge. Historic texts differ on whether ikat began in Indonesia, India or Southern China. Traditional and tribal communities have adapted the technique to their individual needs.

Ikat literally means ‘tie, bind or wrap around’, derived from Malay ‘Mengikat’. In Lao, the word is Mut Mii, in India, it is Bandha, Kasuri in Japan, Mudmee in Thailand. The technique results in intricate patterns, which are achieved by tying the threads before dyeing them. The more knots tied, the smaller and tighter the bound area of bundles of weft or warp threads, the more colorful and detailed patterns. Skilled ikat weavers plan the positioning and registration of the pattern in the cloth prior to weaving. Multiple colors applied in sequence of re-tying and dyeing from light to dark result in more intricate patterns. Historic texts differ on whether ikat began in Indonesia, India or Southern China. Traditional and tribal communities have adapted the technique to their individual needs.

Ock Pop Tok, A Program of Textile Revitalization in Laos

Even though Laos is going through a period of rapid change, textile traditions remain strong. As Buddhism and confucianism intermingle, Buddhist influences in ikat designs are evident. The ikat technique is a dyeing method used in various cultures around the world. It is a technique that has been used for centuries in various cultures around the world. It is a dyeing method that involves tying the threads before dyeing them. The more knots tied, the smaller and tighter the bound area of bundles of weft or warp threads, the more colorful and detailed patterns. Skilled ikat weavers plan the positioning and registration of the pattern in the cloth prior to weaving. Multiple colors applied in sequence of re-tying and dyeing from light to dark result in more intricate patterns. Historic texts differ on whether ikat began in Indonesia, India or Southern China. Traditional and tribal communities have adapted the technique to their individual needs.

A resurgence of interest in ikat production for the marketplace stems in part from this trend, but is also due to the local need and vitality of tribal dress in communities across India, Laos and elsewhere, such as Japan, China, and the United States. Today, Ock Pop Tok, A Program of Textile Revitalization in Laos, works to empower Lao artisans through the use of their traditional skills. Today, Ock Pop Tok, an innovative textile gallery and workshop in Luang Prabang, is a center for the production of ikat textiles. The gallery offers workshops, demonstrations, and sales of its products.

Jill Heppenheimer, of Santa Fe Weaving Gallery, together with Joanna Smith, cofounder and co-director of Ock Pop Tok, have curated this presentation of dazzling single and double ikat from India, including documentation by Wendy Weiss, University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Dr. Anjali Karolia, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda.

www.ockpoptok.org

Prior to the founding of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in 1975, a woman's ethnic group, village, class and tribal origin was determined by the bandha, or ornament, worn to signify her status. The techniques of ikat weaving were closely tied to these cultures. The technique spread rapidly as a form of decorating tribal clothing and ritual cloths, clarifying gender, class, tribal origin and marriage status, into Southeast Asia and north and west through China. India served as a critical bridge. Historic texts differ on whether ikat began in Indonesia, India or Southern China. Traditional and tribal communities have adapted the technique to their individual needs.