

City & Guilds Level 3  
Patchwork & Quilting  
7716-62

Medal Nomination 2014

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Tutor: Barbara Weeks

Missenden Abbey

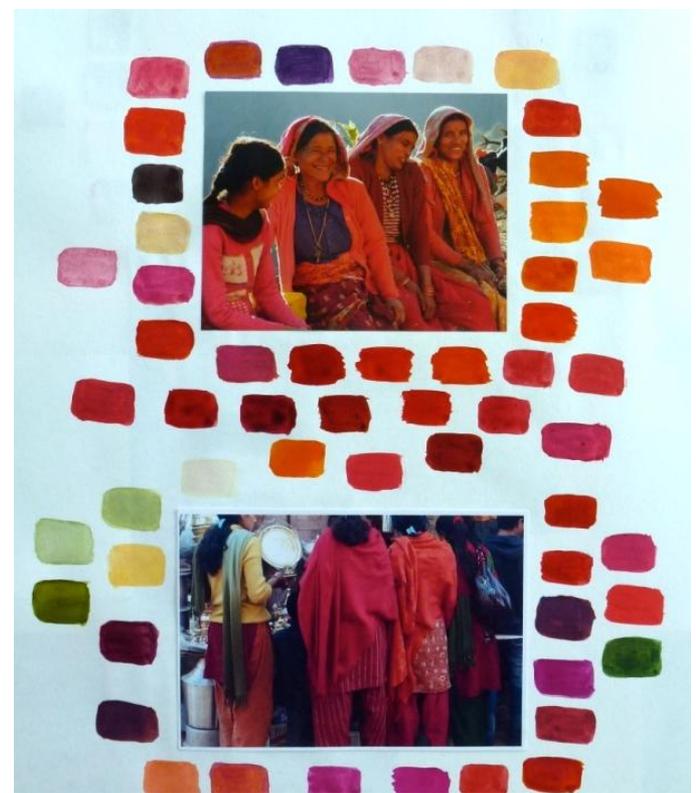
**QUILT: Project documentation**



The finished quilt in situ in my home

# 1. Design Inspiration: Nepal - Textiles and Colours

On a recent trekking holiday in Nepal I came across this farm worker resting from her labours, and in the next village photographed local men wearing a splendid array of 'topi' caps. Amazingly rich and exciting textile inspiration all round!



Colour inspiration from my photographs for the silks I was later to use in my quilt.





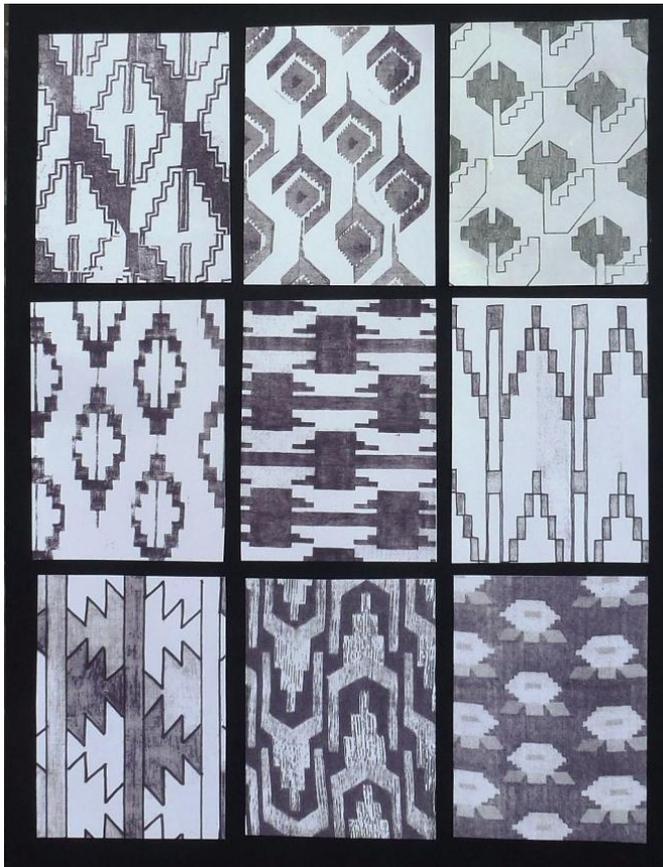
### 3. Planning + Trialling

As new ideas for my hanging crystallized I gradually narrowed down my choices. I aimed for a roughly 1.20 m square size to fit a wall space in my home ideally suited for a hanging (see Slide 1). I envisaged a design superimposed onto a silk background which would consist either of :

- (a) multi-coloured applique shapes, or
- (b) shapes painted on the silk with Decolourant discharge paints applied with hand-cut templates.

In either case the finished piece would be hand-quilted with simple kantha-type running stitch throughout.

Final selection of my favourite woven 'topi' cap patterns, the measurements transferred onto squared paper, hand drawn and then enlarged on the photocopier to plan the overall design. Originally I had intended to combine several designs, but as I trialled these on a full-scale pattern of the quilt, it became evident that the overall impression would be too busy.



Experimental samples in applique technique and quilting on discharge-painted shapes.



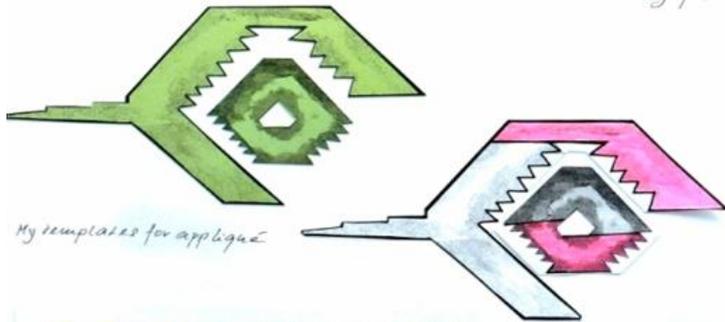
#### 4. Pattern Development: the Buddhist 'Eye of Wisdom' motif



Above: detail from Buddhist temple in Kathmandu (left). Contemporary scarf with 'eye' design (right).



Digitalized versions of the traditional 'eye' motif, found on the website of a Dutch NGO working to preserve endangered 'dhaka' weaving patterns for posterity



My templates for applique

**My final design, adapted for applique and simplified from traditional and digitalised sources**

Delicate ikat-like edges, a dynamic tapering shape, yet economical in its basic 2-part composition of 'eye' and 'pupil' - with great potential for subtle colour variations within the design.



Phul Maja is a very talented artist in the loom. The threads are counted off individually to keep to the pattern.



Nepalese' dhaka' weaver Phul Maja at work creating the 'eye' design by inlaying supplementary coloured threads into the weave.



Detail of 'dhaka' woven cloth in British Museum collection

## 5. Planning: Colour and technique



### Trialling of techniques and background colour

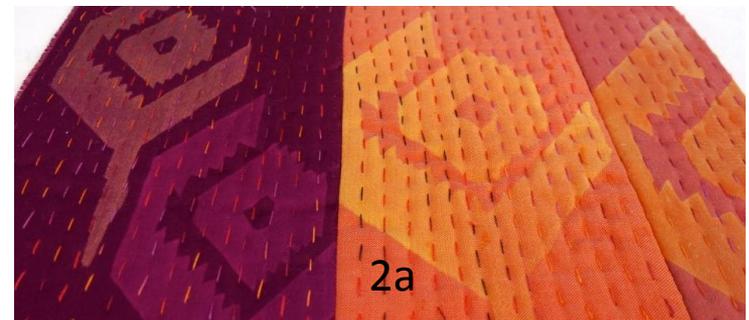
1a + 1b: Light and dark background and the very different effects it would have on the overall design.

2 + 2a: Discharge method.

Decolourant paste applied with a template.

3: Applique method. Trialling colour combinations + graded sizes.

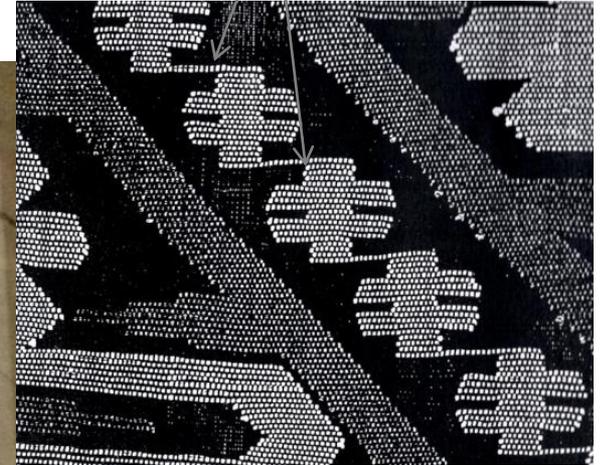
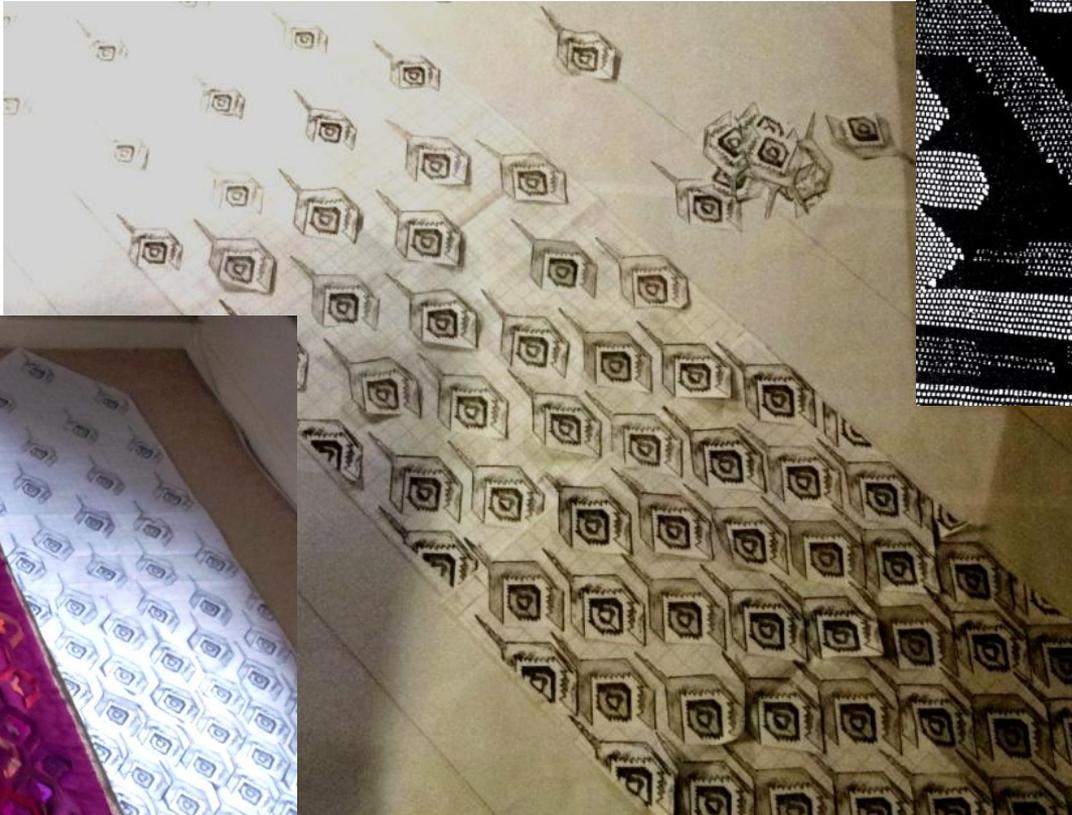
To achieve the desired balance I decided on the softer, richer effects of a dark background (1b), combined with the applique method which would provide clear, incisive shapes, in subtle size and colour variations (3).



## 6. Planning: Composition

I chose a diagonal design to create tension and movement, and also to echo traditional 'dhaka' weaving techniques where patterns are often arranged diagonally so that the supplementary pattern can continue from one shape to the next without interruption of the thread at the back.

In order to further enhance the sense of movement from bottom right to top left, I planned for the arrangement of the applique shapes to be dense at the bottom, and gradually more ephemeral towards the top.



Back of a traditional piece of dhaka weaving: the inlay threads run on from one design to another, creating patterns on the diagonal



Working design in grayscale: the layout of the central panel

## 7. Process of Construction: The raw material



Selection of bought and hand-dyed silks, both plain and shot. I used my skills as a silk painter to over-dye certain shades repeatedly in order to achieve a co-ordinated palette of analogous colour harmonies based on reds, pinks, oranges, purples and earth tones.



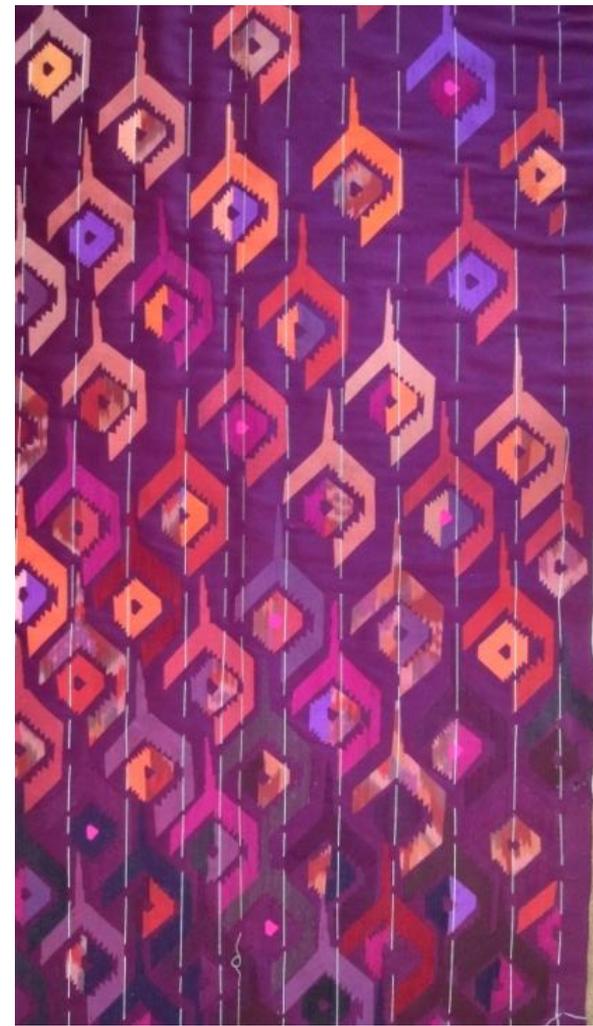
Silk is my passion. As a silk painter I have worked with it for 20 years. I greatly enjoyed sourcing the silks from many places in the UK and abroad. I also searched for and eventually found exactly the type of ikat silk I needed (left). It brought movement to the design and created a perfect link between the background tone and the applique colours.



## 8. Process of Construction: Applique and Quilting



I photocopied applique shapes onto freezer paper and ironed the freezer paper shapes onto Bondaweb-coated silk. This process was repeated with all 15 differently coloured silks. I then cut out the required number of shapes with sharp embroidery scissors and laid them out on the base silk, recombining colours to create subtle colour effects.



Following the layout planned in Slide 7 above, I took care to create a sense of diagonal upwards movement, with colours moving from dark to light, and shapes from dense to spaced out. I fused the applique shapes to the silk, and backed the central panel with thin wadding and muslin. This quilt sandwich was tacked with white cotton thread which at the same time served as a stitching guide for the straight continuous hand quilting in variegated thread.

## 9. Process of Construction: Hand Stitching

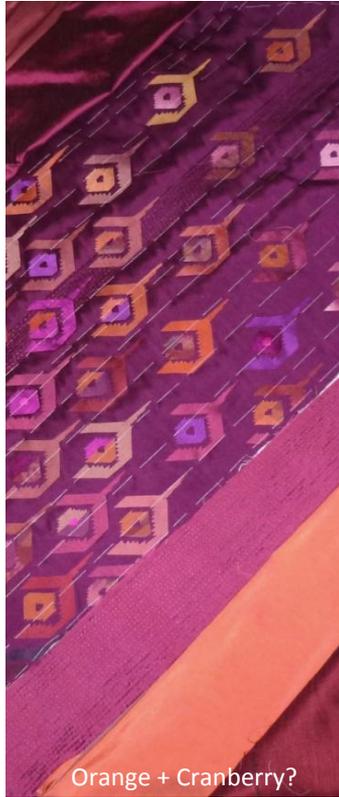
I decided on the time-consuming but therapeutic technique of kantha-style quilting, using a simple running stitch throughout. The use of a high quality variegated rayon thread from Japan for the applied panels creates texture, sheen and rich new colour harmonies. Following ancient weaving patterns, I occasionally split the 'pupil' of the eye into 2 differently coloured interlocking pieces, occasionally enhanced by the vivid pink of the accent colour. The use of ikat silk in some of the applique adds further colour interest and a sense of lightness and movement.



## 10. Process of Construction: Combining the panels



Pink + Raspberry?



Orange + Cranberry?

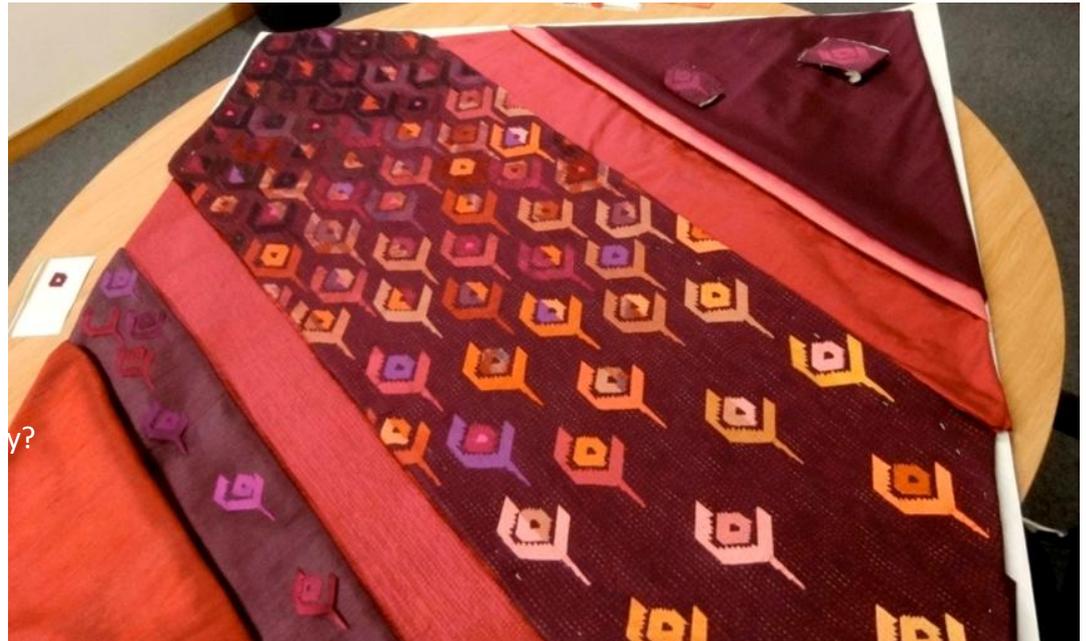


Yellow + Cinnamon?

Experiments with colour combinations for the side panels. I eventually decided that a Pink and Raspberry combination for the plain diagonals was best suited to complement the overall balance of the design based on an analogous colour scheme.

I decided to have 8 panels of variable width overall, with some plain, quilted in plain colours, to create a balance between busy, colourful areas and the more restful monochromes.

This was one of the most difficult parts of making the quilt since seemingly small changes in colour often had big impacts on the overall compositional effect and the tonal balance of the hanging.



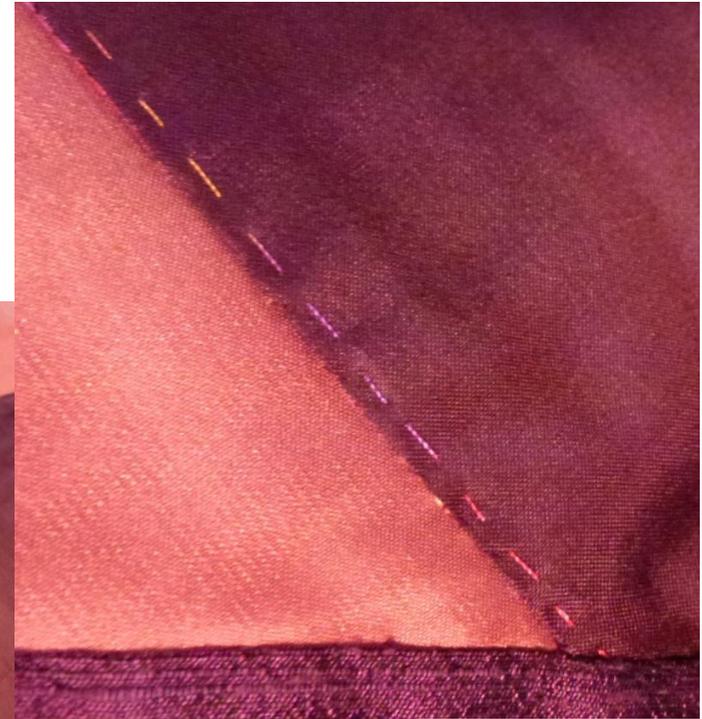
Experimenting with overall composition: I had planned for an odd number of panels, but this image shows the need for an additional pink strip on the left.

## 11. Process of Construction: Finishing Off



Joining backing to front and preparing for binding

The central and the 2 corner panels were individually lined with medium habutai silk, and joined by a further 2 strips either side. The seams were hand-stitched with the same variegated thread as on the front.



Binding with straight corners in purple dupion silk



*The Colours of Nepal*  
Applique  
on hand-quilted silk  
by  
Charlotte Koenig  
Oxford  
2014

## 12. Process of Construction: The finished quilt

