



Michael F. Rohde

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Much of my art practice is based in the making of textiles, most often handwoven tapestry. Unlike the imagery found in many tapestries, I work with the shapes most easily produced by the loom: the right angle shapes of squares and rectangles. For subject matter, there have been nods to historical textiles, or ones from traditions outside my immediate knowledge.

Recently, I have explored a speculative idea that the patterns in some Incan textiles might embody an undeciphered language. Rather than copy those textiles, I chose to invent my own language of textile patterns. The basic unit of the 'language' is a square composed of twenty-five smaller squares arranged 5x5, and in two colors per unit. A set of 160 of these units were sketched on paper, and then picked at random for each row of weaving.

So, this process of creating what might appear to be a language, is in fact random and without decipherable meaning from the arrangement, colors or grouping of the units. However, the overall choices of colors for each tapestry does carry a symbolism, and commentary on the use of language. A set of ten larger (six by four foot) tapestries have been completed and exhibited here and there. These have titles such as "Exclamatory", "Imperative", "Inflammatory", "Florid" and "Redacted".

Michael F. Rohde has been weaving since 1973. His formal training in drawing, color and design was at the Alfred Glassel School of the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. His activities include lectures, workshop teaching, juror, exhibition organizer and exhibitor in many local, national and international juried and invited shows.

Recently his work has been included in the US Department of State Art in Embassies Program, at the Textile Museum in Washington, DC, the American Craft Museum in New York, the Triennial of Tapestry in Lodz, Poland, from Lausanne to Beijing (twice), Houses for Nomads (a solo exhibit at the Janina Monkute-Marks Museum in Lithuania), at the Mingei International Museum in Balboa Park in San Diego. His work is in the permanent collections of the Textile Museum (Washington, DC), the Mingei, the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles, the Ventura County Museum of Art, the Racine Art Museum and The Art Institute of Chicago.