



Wool-on-wool Colcha Embroidery

Date

1750 - 1825

Primary Maker

Artist not recorded

Medium

Wool, natural dyes

Description

Appears to be a cut-down bedcover. Ground of natural cream colored wool, with a pattern of checks embroidered on it in units of 13 squares, approximately 3 x 3 cm. each., forming diamonds of darker colors alternating with lighter colors horizontally with a more or less consistent alternation in each unit of four light-colored squares and nine darker ones. Some are of indigo (4 lt)) with natural

dark brown, (9 sqs). Others are of green made by mixing indigo and yellow dyes, (Possibly canaigre, chamiso, or other native vegetal dye), with nine of these and four yellow squares, and still other units are of logwood tan (9) with four squares of yellow. Originally all of these units were connected by squares of same size embroidered in natural yarn, but nearly all of this has worn away so that it is missing, exposing the basic fabric. The piece has remnants of selvage along the sides but has been cut down very much in length. This is, in the opinion of the curator, one of the oldest embroideries in wool on wool in the museum collections; in spite of previous written comments on northern NM embroideries which insist that the wavy scalloped with floral designs are of the older type of design. The earliest examples of colcha textiles in New Mexico are handwoven sabanilla (balanced plain weave wool cloth) solidly covered with handspun wool yarn embroidery. These dense wool-on-wool colchas often featured geometric checked patterns, zigzags, or stylized florals and scrolling leaves influenced by Asian and Middle Eastern textiles.

Dimensions

66 15/16 x 55 1/8 in. (170 x 140 cm)