

Basic Detail Report



Embroidery

Date

ca. 1927

Primary Maker

Policarpio Valencia

Medium

Wool, cotton

Description

The Rio Grande blanket that serves as this artwork's foundation appears handwoven with handspun warp and weft threads of churro wool, suggesting it was made

before the 1890s. As seen from the reverse side, the original striped design features serrated diamond motifs. Large portions have been patched with material from cotton feed sacks. Valencia visually transformed the front side with a dense cover of abstract embroidery and included a surprise message on the back—a humorous warning not to steal this textile. A printed feed sack logo underneath the embroidery is present. The surprise message embroidered on this blanket's backside follows the formula of a traditional Spanish "ex-libris." An ex-libris is a bookplate or written inscription placed in the front pages of a book to identify who owns it. Spanish versions often start with the phrase, "si este libro se perdiera" (if this book should get lost), followed by a humorous poem to deter thieves. Nasario García, a leading authority on New Mexican Spanish who helped the museum translate Valencia's messages, was taught a similar poem by his grade school teacher when he was growing up in Bernalillo in the 1940s. In English, Valencia's embroidered poem reads: If this item gets lost, as it is bound to happen, I beg whoever finds it knows how to give it back to me. If he should be long of fingernails or short of understanding, I beg him to remember the Seventh Commandment is everything. Policarpio Valencia Santa Cruz, New Mexico

Dimensions

Overall: 59 13/16 x 44 1/8 in. (152 x 112 cm)