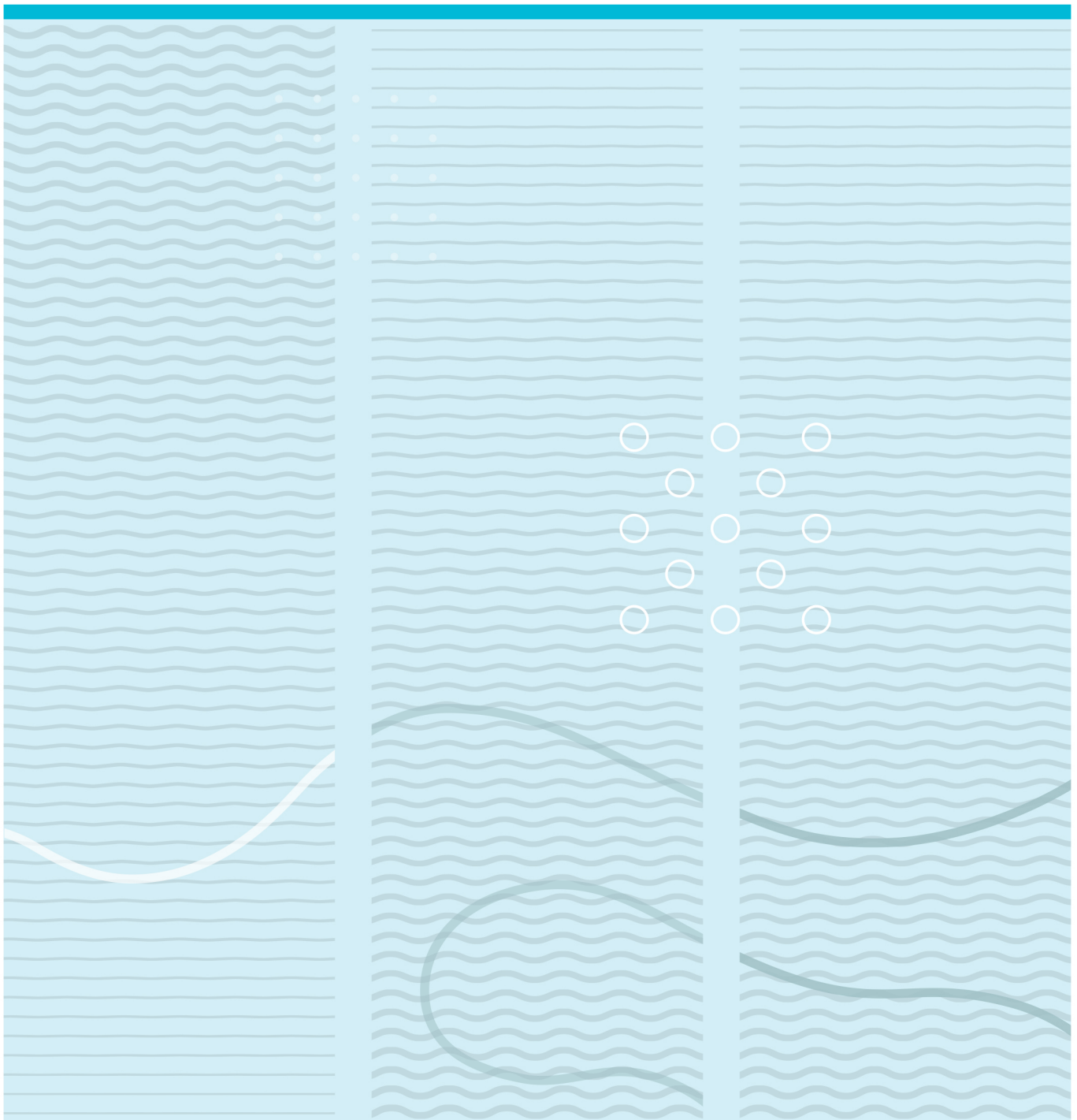


Heidit Vares

## From traditional skirt to interior textile

Creation of blankets inspired by yellow Muhu skirt



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This thesis is worth 60 study points



## **Abstract**

The present thesis contains two components: theoretical and practical. The object of this research is the traditional yellow skirt from the Estonian island of Muhu. The research area of my project covers the field of weaving.

The main objective of my Master thesis is to gain better understanding about how to work within a tradition and give a new perspective to the traditional Estonian weaving technique.

The thesis includes the questions: what is the Muhu skirt? How to use tradition a different way than it has been used before? What happens when we look at an old technique with a new perspective? How can we preserve the principles of an old tradition?

The theoretical part includes an analysis of Muhuskirt patterns, construction, colours and material and a comparison of Muhu skirts from different time periods.

The practical part details the learning process and looks at bringing a new perspective to an old tradition. The aim of my practical work is to weave two blankets that are inspired by the yellow Muhu skirt.

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## **Preface**

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I can never thank my Norwegian and Estonian family enough for being so patient and believing in me.

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I also want to mention Hilde Opedal Nordy for being such a good friend during the study period and always having an answer for every question.

# 1. Introduction

In my master thesis, I would like to present an important part of Estonian folk art, the yellow woven skirts from the Estonian island of Muhu.

My work is mainly practical and presents the process of learning how to weave Muhu skirt patterns while at the same time bringing in new elements. The work is, partly ethnological research as it will take us to the island of Muhu which is known as the place of origin for the some of the most remarkable handcrafts in Estonia.



*Fig. 1 Map of the Estonia. Red pin is the Muhu Island.*

In today's world, it is hard to keep up with the uncertainties and rapid changes that we see every day. To get out of the vortex of change, people need something familiar to make them feel safe and secure. The use of folk art patterns in interior design brings out a variety of emotions, partly because of its meaning and connection with the past. People recognize folk art patterns and associate them with their national identity, cultural importance and history. Traditional folk art patterns have always offered a feeling of comfort and assurance to people and they, will continue to do so in today's hectic life. Folk art patterns are not just a memory of the past; they are also found in modern culture. Folk art has become an eye catching and a common element in modern design.

Inspiration for working with traditional skirt patterns in interior design, came to me during my trip to the Muhu island. The island of Muhu is the third largest island in the small Republic of Estonia, lying on the shore of the Baltic Sea. Muhu is 206 square kilometres and has 2000 current inhabitants.

During my visit, I noticed that I met people who saw craft completely differently about craft than people from the Estonian mainland. People in Muhu have a close relationship with their traditional handicrafts and there are many museums and shops where you can buy and look at a traditional handcraft from the island. Craft from this place is versatile, but it struck me that many of their traditions and traditional craft techniques are about to disappear. People are moving away from the island and the older generation that took care of these traditions are slowly dying.

*“Muhu handicraft is a slightly mystical phenomenon – at first sight everything seems comprehensible and uniform, yet when taking a closer look, more and more exciting layers and shades come to light. Muhu women used to cast their eyes on each other’s clothes and patterns and, in replicating what they saw, each of them tried to add her “own knack”. The authentic Muhu costume is unique due to its patterns and exquisite play of colours. One discovers inexhaustible richness in studying Muhu folk costumes; the reason for this is the common principle which was followed- to make one’s clothing as fine as the finest garment of one’s home village and even a little bit better”(Kabur, Pink, & Meriste, 2011, p. 197)*

I have previously worked with wicker bottom chairs from Muhu Island, during my studies at University College of Southeast Norway, campus Rauland. This leads me to the Muhu skirts, because in my opinion the patterns of these wicker chairs, mirror the Muhu skirt patterns.

After taking a closer look at traditional skirts from different periods, I knew instantly that I wanted to work with the yellow Muhu skirts. I was interested in the possibility of letting interior design be influenced by the pattern of the Muhu skirt. I was also interested in learning the technique of weaving this special textile and taking the knowledge further with me further in life.

I have lived in Norway 6,5 years and therefore my work will be affected by Norwegian design. I will try to find a way of combining my work in traditional Estonian textiles with Scandinavian interior design. I will do this in part by using materials from Norway.

## 1.1. Main problems and research questions



*Fig. 2 Folk costume from Muhu island. Photographer Anu Pink.*

The yellow Muhu skirt has a special part in Estonian folk art because of its unique characteristics. Firstly, I would like to find out: What is the yellow skirt of Muhu? On the figure 2 is the costume that people from Muhu island today are calling traditional. Yellow Muhu skirt is the most notable detail in the set. I will also look at the loss of traditional skirt tradition on the island and the following mass production of these patterns (in part for the purpose of singing and dancing festivals in Estonia). Compared to other Estonian traditional skirts, the Muhu skirts have an eye-catching appearance and are designed with a base of colourful yarn and horizontal pattern lines on the top.

The yellow traditional skirt from Muhu Island and its striped appearance is familiar to most of the people in Estonia. People enjoy seeing patterns influenced by these skirts on countless things that are available in shops today. The Estonian fashion and tourist industries are taking advantage of people's interest in the traditional patterns by making different items with Muhu skirt patterns on them. In Estonia, textiles and other domestic products designed with traditional skirt patterns are widely available and several factories produce the textile solely because of the great demand. The industry's obvious goal is to earn profit. Selling something that has such a strong tie and meaning to people can be a smart way to earn more money.

Often, the simplicity of the patterns in the Estonian traditional costumes is taken for granted, and this makes it easier to justify for mass production. In this sense, the striped pattern on the Muhu skirt is very simple from a distance, but when you get closer you notice changes and nuances which make each skirt unique. These diverse patterns are often transformed into simple stripes by producers and industries. The transformation gives opportunity to add the product into minimalist interior. I am critical about this simplifying practice and think this should be done differently, especially if it is labelled as a "yellow Muhu skirt pattern". In my opinion that is one example how producers are using tradition differently. The pillow case in the picture is one example of many new designs.



*Fig. 3 Muhu skirt pattern transformed to stripes. Photograph unknown.*

Regarding my practical work, I have prepared the following questions: How can you use an old tradition differently than it was used before? What happens when we look at an



old technique with a new perspective? How can we preserve the principles of an old tradition?

My aim is to design two blankets which are inspired by the yellow Muhu skirt. Largely the aim of my project is also learning how to weave pattern strips from the yellow Muhu skirt and producing the final product independently. I will take into account the principles and techniques from the historical yellow skirt of Muhu.

## **1.2. Tradition**

I would like to explain definition tradition and traditional costume.

Tradition for me is a way to show who we, as a group of people are as a nation. To demonstrate how we, as a group of people, are different from others and to show how we as a collective identify ourselves. Tradition is something which our ancestors considered to be important.

According to Bertil Rolf, “ Traditions are pathways through time where relatively unified forms of action, language or thoughts are transmitted from one generation to another” (Rolf, 2012, p. 101).

Tradition can also be seen as social phenomenon. According to Kristin Kuutma “tradition is a modern construction, that marks cultural continuity and repetition of historical patterns” (“Traditsioon,” n.d.).

Traditional costume was every day and festive clothes worn by peasants and the working class. It has been recontextualized more recently as formal dress(Eriksen, 2005). Here I refer to Thomas Hylland Eriksen who is writing about the Norwegian “bunad” although but in my opinion it is possible to identify this idea with the Muhu skirt.

## **1.3. Traditional pattern**

In this project I define “traditional pattern” as specifically as the traditional skirt pattern from Muhu. Authentic skirts which were woven by women from the Island of Muhu.

A traditional pattern is a pattern which our ancestors considered essential to use in their handcrafted items and something that has lasted through time. For the Muhu women, the patterns they used on their skirts were developed by following certain rules and

standards. They developed their specific style within the limitations of a tradition. The border and colour the patterns are examples of this. The construction of the patterns also depended on the available looms which had different features.

#### **1.4. Muhu skirt pattern as part of interior textile**

In doing my research, I had correspondence with author of the book “Designs and patterns from Muhu Island” Mai Meriste, who is from the Muhu island herself. She mentioned that after the death of the Muhu skirt tradition (circa 1940), she experienced firsthand how people remade the skirt into pillow cases or sofa covers. To her, this solution seemed meaningless. I believe the reason for her negative response, was because this symbolised the direct transformation from Muhu skirts to something else. To me, however, being an outsider, it shows that traditional patterns like the one on the Muhu skirt, can also be used as a decorative interior design object.

The aim of my practical work is not to create something for the interior that looks like a Muhu skirt. My aim is to use historical technology and give a new perspective to an old technique and use it from another perspective.

Being inspired by my surroundings, the practical work, has definitely been influenced by nature, as it is hardly possible to live and study in a place like Rauland, without letting nature inspire you.

People of Muhu island have used a traditional skirt as inspiration for making interior details before. Design principles found in old orange carpets from Muhu island share the same colour and design principles as the orange Muhu horizontal skirts (Kuma, 1976, p. 260). According to Annika Vaalma who has researched carpets from Muhu island, Muhu women took examples from their skirts and embroidered carpets with a stripe pattern. The same pattern system that was used on the carpets was used on skirts (Vaalma, 2013, p. 15)



*Fig. 4 Carpets that share the same design principles with Muhu orange skirts.*

The use of patterns from traditional costumes in interior design has caught my eye and I find it a very interesting topic. The transformation of traditional clothing to an interior design object gives much of food for new thoughts. The current trend for folk art in fashion and interior design has brought decorative folkloric colours and patterns into homes and public places. Traditional patterns from skirts in both interior design and fashion design have gained popularity over the past few years. In Estonia, national symbols are very popular. This involves patterns and motives from the most popular and liked Estonian traditional costumes. The yellow Muhu skirt pattern is one of the most used in Estonia.

To work with a traditional pattern from Muhu and to use it for other purposes than on skirt, can be like walking on “thin ice”. In working with a technique and a pattern that is old, fragile and represents an important tradition there is always a risk that it will be misused. Because of this it is important to me that the final results of my practical work do not directly copy the pattern of the skirts of Muhu. This being said, work within a tradition offers exciting and insightful results. Bringing the past into the present day will

give a fresh breath to old, half-forgotten traditions. It also brings change to old traditions and the way we see them.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Method

My master's thesis includes two parts: the written and the practical part.

I used different approaches for collecting data: overview and analysis of different literature, visiting antiquarian stores and museums, conversations with people both written and oral. I visited the Open Air Museum in Tallinn and was shown a collection of Muhu skirts by the museum curator. Astra Kütt and I took pictures, so that I was able to research old patterns of the yellow Muhu skirts. In addition I was observing the yellow skirts of Muhu in "Museums Public Portal" ([www.muis.ee](http://www.muis.ee)) which is an online collection of exhibits from different Estonian museums.

I have also researched the different ways of using the traditional (skirt) patterns in interior design. I would like to present how different designers have worked with traditional patterns.

According to Janne Reitan, my project can be partly called "practice based research", as it is "Research that takes the nature of practice as its's central focus" (Reitan, 2015). My project is largely based around learning about traditional craft and I have discovered/identified much during my practical work.

Literature that was collected can be divided into a few groups. The first group is literature about Muhu and Muhu craft. This literature is based on the history of Muhu craft and the island of Muhu in general. The Second group of literature is about craft and design. The third group is about ethnological studies.

Thinking about the traditional skirts of Muhu the first thing that comes to mind is the historical aspect of the tradition (which I will discuss in the third chapter). To work with a tradition that has changed so completely, it is important to know the history and understand the origin and change of the tradition. I have not been successful in locating any literature that has a complete history of the yellow skirt of Muhu, from the beginning of the tradition until today. I have however, found literature that outlines the tradition from its beginning until the 1940s. The information that is reflected in my master's thesis is from different data and is a result of several conversations which I have had with people

who are connected to this tradition. The historical part (see part 3) also includes my own conclusions and thoughts about the tradition.

### 2.1.1 Museums

I would like to mention museums because I have had much association with them during my research. Museums are one of the only institutions which have the right to construct heritage and give social authority. When I was researching this project and visiting museums, both the mass produced and traditional yellow Muhu skirts were presented equally. I think it is relevant to mention this because Muhu skirts are presented in many Museums in Estonia. The Estonian National Museum can be seen as an authority for Estonian people. According to Heiki Pärdis, museums have the power to decide what people remember or forget (as cited in Teras, 2015). Sylvan Barnet writes, "Museums decontextualize the work or deprive it of its original context" (Barnet, 2008, p. 29). Museums let the public often have their own opinion about each piece in a museum. To say this another way, each person comes into a museum with a unique point of view and sees the collection in a different way. There is of course a difference which exhibition or museum we refer to. Art museums have other perspectives which often depend on the type of exhibition and type of museum. Observing artefacts in a museum's collections, the information which people take in, can be very different. Museums have a possibility to affect or change the information people acquire. By observing the skirt of Muhu in museums, it is not completely possible to get the original expression of the skirt.

In the beginning of my research I did not differentiate between Muhu skirts woven by Muhu practitioners and a skirts woven by professional weavers. These weavers mass produced skirts for the purpose of dancing and singing festivals. These events are some of the largest amateur choral events in the world

### 2.1.2 Analyses

I have used a comparative and formal analysis; these methods were used to analyse pattern lines on old Muhu skirts. This includes analysis of pattern systems, colours and

material. I also compared Muhu skirts from different periods: old- traditional skirts, mass produced skirts from the 1960's and skirts which are made in the present day.

### 2.1.3 Design process

To have a well-rounded final result, I needed a proper process of design to follow within my practical work. According to Karl Aspelund there are seven stages of design inspiration, identification, contextualization, exploration, Definition/modelling, communication and production(Aspelund, 2010, p. XIV). These stages will be followed during my practical work.

Practical – The main part of my project consists of learning how to weave the pattern from the yellow Muhu skirts. I will weave three different trials as part of the learning process. The learning process includes experiments with patterns, colours and material. As the last part of my practical work I will use the techniques that I have learned and will weave two blankets which are inspired by the yellow Muhu skirts. The blankets will be made by using developed historical techniques. I have added my own ideas by implementing these traditional patterns into interior design

### 3. Historical background: From traditional to mass produced



*Fig. 5 Muhu traditional skirts from different time periods.*

There are no other traditional skirts in Estonia which have evolved as fast as the Muhu skirts did in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first traditional skirt of Muhu was black, but this changed rapidly after arrival of horizontal stripes from the Estonian mainland to Muhu Island. It did not take longer than two decades for the Orange (which was called “red” on the island) to be changed in to an even lighter yellow. The changes involved entire appearance of the skirt starting from the material which was used for weaving the background and the colours of the pattern stripes. The pattern stripes changed to be much diversity (Marks & Västriik, 2016, pp. 6-7).

One of the reasons for changes, in my opinion, was that Estonia as a country was changing. It is easy to see that the skirt had many different phases in the pre-establishment of the Republic of Estonia (1887-1918). “This era is characterized by spontaneous cultural activity” (Teras, 2015, p. 15). In 1925 began the intentional construction of cultural heritage, the creation of traditions and national identity and with that followed the decrease of the development of the Muhu skirt. It’s important to point out that the changes that took a place in mainland Estonia, reached the island of Muhu slightly later because of the isolation. After the occupation of Estonia in 1940 skirt got new breath following the Soviet fashion.

When Estonia regained its independence in 1991, the Muhu skirt became a obvious part of the traditional costumes that symbolize the creation of national unity. Even if today, the traditional skirt of Muhu is imprinted in the minds of people as being a major part of



Estonian tradition, though in my opinion the meaning of the skirt has changed through the times.

### **3.1 Traditional skirt from Muhu island**

At the beginning of the 19th century the skirt of Muhu was very tasteful and consistent. Only natural colours were used on the oldest skirt from Muhu. In my opinion these are the most beautiful Muhu skirts because of the colour combinations and the old ornaments that were embroidered on the hem of the skirt.

At the end of the 19th century fashion changed and skirts with vertical stripes came into fashion all over Estonia, including Muhu. Colours changed from black to orange. There is no clear answer as to why the colours changed so abruptly, but I think it might be caused by chemical dyes reaching the island.

At the beginning of the 20th century the new Finnish loom found its way to the Muhu island. This loom brought new possibilities which were tested on the skirts and patterns became much more versatile and colourful. Geometrical patterns that were influenced by Finno-Ugric culture, appeared on the skirt (Teras, 2015, p. 33). The background on the Muhu skirt changed from black to yellow. Together with the loom from Finland, the yellow skirts of Muhu were influenced by the Finnish fashion style.

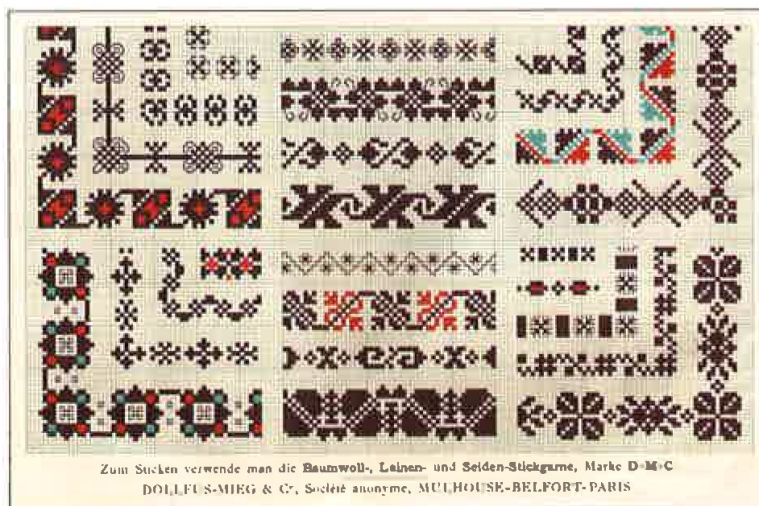
The yellow skirts are the most known skirt from the island of Muhu and from here forward, I will focus on specifically the yellow Muhu skirt.

The yellow Muhu skirt is characterised by eye catching colours and splashy, beautiful patterns – it is not possible to mistake the yellow Muhu skirts with any other traditional Estonian skirts.

Vanity and creativity and hard work are words which characterized the women of the island Muhu. These women perceived certain boundaries of taste and style when designing the skirts. Handicraft was big part of their life and knowledge of handicraft styles were passed on from generation to generation.

In my opinion the skirt that was woven by women in Muhu island was a piece of clothing that was in fashion at this time. That is another reason why the skirt evolved so fast. Muhu women competed with each other who could weave the most beautiful skirt. Every woman on the island wanted to be the one with the special skirt. That is also the reason why there is no two identical Muhu skirts to be found, until the start of mass production. All the skirts were different and had their own colour combinations in the patterns. One can describe the kind of person someone was, by observing the skirt.

The islanders received new creative ideas and new methods of creating with great pleasure. With the Estonian freedom also same the journalistic boom whence a variety of craft magazines began to appear (Teras, 2015, p. 12). Often there were different pattern papers in the magazines and these patterns were applied onto the skirt. On fig.7 is the pattern book which offered inspiration for Muhu women. The same thing happened with decorations that were brought to the island from the other countries. Muhu traditional skirts with horizontal stripes were richly decorated with different strings and spangles. This also proves that Muhu women were affected by urban fashion and wanted to practice in in their handicraft.



*Fig. 6 Example from pattern book that Muhu women used for finding inspiration for weaving the pattern lines.*

By observing the colours and decorations of the skirt, it is not hard to understand that the aesthetic value was very important to Muhu women. As craft however the skirts also

had a practical-useful aspect, the functionality of a skirt was just as important. Muhu women wore these skirts in their work and do their daily chores. Since skirts were used in everyday situations, woollen skirts were worn in the winter time and more practical ones in the summertime.

Starting in the 1920s the “signs” of industrialization and modernization reached the island. Muhu women started to wear the skirt together with other clothing from cities, such as high heeled lace boots, silk stockings and fashionable blouses. Many “national style” promoters saw this as a betrayal of trust of the crafts. On the island of Muhu this evolution happened after women from Muhu started to go to find work in continental Estonia.

*„Wearing their beautiful colourful costumes turned out to be rather inconvenient; the islanders could be spotted from afar, due to their attire, and this kind of attention among strangers could be rather disturbing for a person of more modest character. So they started to wear urban fashion when leaving the island but at home, skirt remained a part of everyday life”(Kabur et al., 2011, p. 15).*

Between the two world wars young people gave up wearing the traditional skirt daily, and the yellow skirt became part of festive garment. Estonia was under Russian occupation 1940 to 1991 and that also demotivated people wearing the skirt. Many in the older generation did not want to give up on the daily usage, and they kept wearing the skirt even after the second world war.

This meant the end of traditional yellow Muhu skirt. Knowing the emotional and historical value of the skirt today, it is unconceivable for me to hear that the skirt lost its value for people in Muhu at this time.

## **3.2 Nationalism**

I would like to explain The term “Nationalism”. Is generally used to describe two phenomena : “the attitude that the members of nation have when they care about their

national identity, and the actions that the members of a nation take when seeking to achieve self-determination”(Miscevic, 2014)

“Nationalism is of particular importance to the sense of identity traditionally invoked by museums” (Smith, 2006, p. 197)

Nationalism continuously strengthens and reproduces sense of national belonging. Folk costumes become a national symbol in Estonia like in many other countries. The traditional Muhu skirt is from the Muhu island, but since Muhu is an Estonian island, the tradition automatically belongs to the rest of Estonia as well. According to Thomas Hylland Eriksen, “a nation is not only reproduced through states social engineering and major upheavals, such as war, but also through every day practises” (Eriksen, 2010, p. 123).

### **3.3 Mass production**

Starting in 1966, the craft cooperative- Uku (1966-1994) who were members of the association of Handicraft Masters were weaving hundreds of meters yellow Muhu skirt fabric. Patterns on the fabric looked exactly the same on each and every skirt that was sewn. There are many of skirts found versatile skirts woven by professional weaver from Uku because there were many weavers in one station. One of the Uku stations was also close to Muhu and many professional weavers who were working there, came from Muhu. During the Soviet period, many Muhu patterns also received a new breath of life thanks to Uku. The reason why I would like to mention the mass produced yellow Muhu skirt is because these skirts were woven by professional weavers who were called the artists of Uku. By mass production I mean hand woven skirt fabric what looked the same. According to National Museum curator Reet Piiri, Uku weavers chose suitable artefacts from The Estonian Ethnographical Museum (Estonian National Museum today) and started mass production of a set of Muhu folk costumes. They also did not hesitate to change some of the elements. Like I mentioned before, skirts woven by Uku artists are also displayed in museums today. I made a conclusion after when I thought about the differences in between the skirts woven by Muhu women at home and professional Uku artist work. Both of the yellow Muhu skirts are called traditional today because of the

historical background. Uku stations were important at this time because they were the ones producing Estonian craft (Kabur et al., 2011; Marks & Västriku, 2016)

The weavers of Uku were professionals. Traditionally the skirts traditionally were not woven by professional weavers with the aim to be producing a myriad of similar looking fabric.

Since the uniqueness of every skirt was important to people from Muhu, the mass production was the reason why the importance of the skirt decline in Muhu island (Marks & Västriku, 2016, p. 7). Here I found a disagreement between Marks and Västriku's book and the book of Designs and Patterns from Muhu Island, where it says that the decline in the skirts importance started already 1940, whereas the mass production started 1966.

One example of mass production in the 1960's comes from the children's fashion. I found a picture about a children's folk dance group in Museums Public Portal. Children folk dance groups that were not from the island got their own Muhu traditional costumes, with skirt that had been mass-produced and that was very short. Traditionally the skirt had to be 5-10 cm above the knee. Aprons were added to the skirt, but were never allowed in Muhu before the women got confirmed. But at the time, this was the children's fashion



*Fig. 7 Childre's fashion in 60's. Photographer unknown*

Traditions cannot be mass-produced in the present – for the same reason that one cannot change one’s grandfather’s identity” (Rolf, 2012, p. 109). Tradition comes from the past. Hobsbawm would call it fake tradition

It is possible also to look at the new Muhu skirt as part of the folk costume revival in Estonia.

The meaning of the skirt today is very different from the past. Today we know the skirt mainly because of the singing and dancing festival. Muhu skirt is important festive garment and the origin of the skirt carrier is not on focus. Thus the main intention is on mass produced skirts.

The skirt of Muhu can never mean the same for Estonians who are not from Muhu, that it meant for people in Muhu. Also, we cannot experience them as the Muhu people did in their social context.

### **3.4 Summary of the historical chapter**

In this section I want to make conclusion of previous chapter and summarize received information. According to historical background, we can see that Muhu skirt's function has changed through the time. People generally either don't think or know how time has changed this tradition. How the Muhu skirts' tradition has been disrupted and resurrected to be used for other purposes. Despite changes, today the yellow skirts from Muhu are some of the most attractive traditional skirts in Estonia. As I discuss in chapter 5, it appears that today the skirt tradition has started to reach back to its roots according to the residents of Muhu's interest to weave again.

The traditional costume is not anymore today something that people wear on a daily basis. However, people have a desire to involve the traditional patterns into everyday life and the popularity of the patterns is ever-growing.

Among other things the patterns from traditional skirts are also used in interiors.

## 4. Traditional patterns in interiors

This chapter presents other designers work. The focus is on patterns from traditional skirts combined with interiors and textiles designed using traditional skirt patterns. Traditional patterns are used in renovated public places, home interiors etc. Some designers are working in-depth, developing patterns and using new solutions in their designs as self-directed new design. The project brief may come as a request from a client or it may be an improvement on an older design. The work of a designer is to identify the limits.

### 4.1 Designers working with traditions

Folk art goes hand in hand with traditions and tradition is often the core of a designer's work. In my opinion, designers always strive to do something new and innovative. However, it is important to understand that most of the time, a typical the goal is not to make something different, but to make something better. I think this is an important contrast, that quite often seems to be misunderstood. Traditions are ever present in the designing process because there are some details that work for every designer, and those details are the starting point for the new design.

The quote the Famous designer, Marcel Wanders, who design interior, architectural and also industrial projects today. He discusses the designer's use of tradition in their work:

*"As a designer of the new age I always look to connect with, and integrate the past into the present. Nothing grows old as fast as new. If we create objects that only represent their newness they will be considered old very fast. The inclusion of the past into the present on behalf of the future will remove boundaries and help designs withstand the passage time"(Harmati & Balazs, 2016, pp. 9-10)*

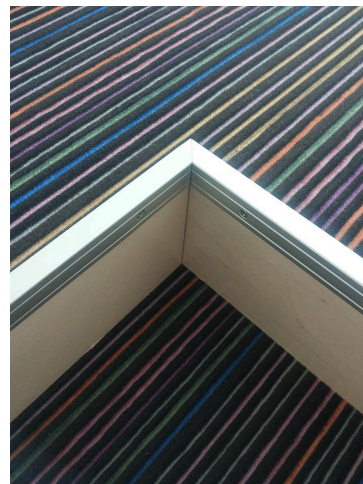
The quote "nothing grows old as fast as new" is tenable fact. Fashion changes very fast. This it is a difficult part of being a designer and trying to keeping up with the rapid changes.



## 4.2 Skirt pattern stripes from Hiiumaa in interiors

Young Estonian architect and interior designer Maarja Varkki whom I had contact with during this project, worked with a project designing interiors of a public school, on the second largest island in Estonia. The island is called Hiiumaa. The interior appearance is solved in a straightforward manner, using patterns and motifs what everyone in Hiiumaa recognize. At the same time these patterns and motifs are common enough that they allow others to experience the joy of recognition. The patterns from Hiiumaa traditional crafts are brought contemporized together with the modern facilities, like sofas.

Inspiration for the carpet and sofa fabric stripes come from traditional Hiiumaa skirts which is called "küüt". Sofa seats are covered with red fabric from the main colour in the traditional skirts and the sides of sofa patterns inspired by the traditional skirt. A traditional Hiiumaa mitten pattern is used as decoration for the interior walls.





*Figure 8 Elements from Hiiumaa traditional skirt used in school interior. Photographer Maria Vraki*

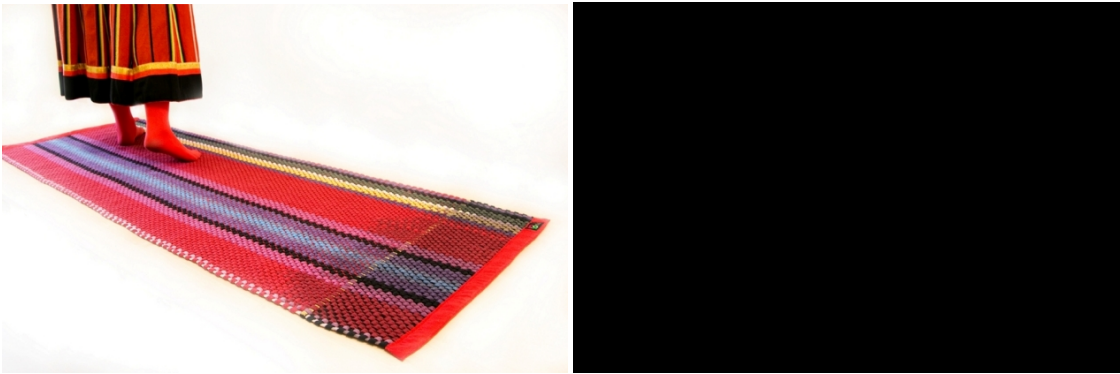
The colours and patterns of the traditional skirts and mittens are used in every room that has been renovated. Red, the main “küüt” colour, is added on the chairs in library. The ceramic plates in the bathrooms are also arranged in stripes like the traditional skirt from Hiiumaa, which was the most engaging solution in my opinion.

In interior designer’s perspective work with colourful stripes on the interior is very demanding, but intriguing at the same time. This project shows that, it is possible to find different solutions for combining colourful striped patterns with the rest of the interior. Horizontal or vertical stripes in a room make it visually larger. Allowing them to be used in both smaller and larger rooms. Objects covered with stripes become highly visible because the background of the rooms use only natural colours. Since this is a school the overall effect need to be calming. Interior textiles are solved very creatively in my opinion because the stripes are not directly copied straight from the skirt. All the same time, it is possible to recognize the traditional elements in the colours used in the details.

### **4.3 Hiiumaa skirt pattern used in carpet design**

Estonian textile designer Kadri Kuust, was an exchange student at the University College of Southeast Norway, campus Rauland and finished “cum laude” at the culture academy in Viljandi.

Her main work is with carpets. She has designed carpets inspired by Hiiumaa traditional skirt -“küüt”. It is possible to see that she has used only one part of the pattern, but all of the colours of found in the skirt are presented. I enjoy very much the contrast between the colour stripes and the background and that the stripes are move from darker to lighter.



*Figure 9 Carpet inspired by traditional skirt of Hiiumaa. First picture photograph Urmas Liis. Second picture photograph Helja Kaptein.*

#### **4.4 Blending traditional patterns**

The famous modern cuisine restaurant “Kaerajaan” in Tallinn was designed by respected Estonian interior designers Janno Roos and Andres Labi. The interior is simple and shows the characteristic features of traditional peasant architecture. The interior designers have used design elements from traditional motifs. The restaurant is trying to link the old and new Estonia which is possible to see also in the interior. Next to chairs what remains the old peasant furniture and tables and lighting in the room which have decorated with mittens and traditional belt motifs, as well as the textiles based on traditional skirts.

Observing this interior, I think it creates confusion because many different traditional crafts from different counties are combined into one room. Just as traditional costume specialist insists that parts from different traditional costumes should not be worn together, I think same rule should be established in interiors of public places.

The use of colours in the room stands in harmony and natural colours and materials stand out clearly.

Geometrical shapes are used through all of the rooms are a way of connecting the space.



*Fig. 10 Different traditional elements, including traditional skirt stripes, in restaurant interior. Photograph unknown.*

## 4.5 QR coded embroidery and the Muhu skirt

More innovative work can be found- Estonian fashion designer Kristi Kuusik's Muhu QR-coded embroidery as part of her PhD. She found inspiration from traditional craft items, like Muhu skirt and its visual similarity with a qr codes. QR code can reveal a lot of information very similarly to a folkloric garment, accessory or ornament. "QR coded traditions are a set of pillow embedded with embroidered folkloric QR codes that when scanned start link to video of fairy-tale" (Kuusk, 2012).

The main focus of this work was clearly creating the QR-code. This QR-code is placed with the textile and in addition to its function for scanning, it also gives the impression as a further developed patterns from the Muhu skirts. This is one clear example of designers

use the tradition for development of something new. It also indicates how is possible to recognize the Muhu skirt tradition only by observing the yellow background regardless of which patterns are added to it.



*Fig. 11* Qr- coded pillow case inspired bt yellow Muhu skirt. Photograph Arttu Karvonen

#### **4.6 Blankets inspired by traditional costumes**

The use of traditional clothing patterns for decorating interiors is not new in Norway. Norwegian Designer Andreas Engesvik created a collection of Bunad Blankets. The Bunad Blankets are based on the traditional folk dress in Norway and have at least four-hundred different versions from different geographic regions. Bunads are one of the most visible and known traditions in Norwegian cultural heritage. “The Bunad Blankets simplify and transfer bunad motifs and introduce this rich tradition into our daily environments and interiors” (Engesvik, 2012).

Bunad blanket’ is similar to my practical work . Compatibility between bunad and bunad blanket is in the colours since similar pattern covers entire blankets. As it is said, the Bunad Blankets simplify and transfer bunad motifs. Compare it with my work, I used the historical technique what was developed for weaving new patterns. I also used the repetitive composition of the Muhu skirt.



*Fig. 12 Andreas Engesvik design inspired by traditional costumes.*

## 5. Conversation with Margot Marks

I would like to dedicate an entire chapter to Margot Marks because her name has been recurring in my project many times. During my research Margot has been a key person in my work. I came into contact with her through Ave Matsin who is the Head of Department of Estonian Native Crafts and programme Director in Estonian Cultural Academy of Viljandi. I came into contact with Margot in October 2016. We agreed to meet in small city of Türi, located in the heart of Estonia.

### 5.1 Previous work

Margot is a professional weaver who has done research on the skirts of Muhu. She has investigated the historical weaving technique of the Muhu skirt in part, because there was nobody left in Estonia who remembered how the skirts were made. Last person who knew the weaving techniques died some years ago.

Marks studied at the traditional textile department in Culture Academy of Viljandi. She conducted a large research project about Muhu skirts making techniques by looking through many of the historical skirts which are found in Estonia. As a part of her practical work, she wove three Muhu skirts from different time periods- the black, the orange and the yellow. Skirts on the figure number 13 are woven by her. A large part of her research involves looking into the Muhu skirts in Estonian National Museum, Muhu Museum, Open Air Museum. She also went through private collections by going door to door on Muhu island and asking to see the old skirts that people had.

Marks is very glad because she gave the Muhu skirt weaving technique back to the people from Muhu and they have opportunity to weave the skirts again. However, there are still many questions in regards the techniques for weaving the skirts which have not found answers, perhaps the answers stay in the shadow of history.

After her research, 2016, Marks published a book together with her supervisor. The book is called "Fashionable Muhu skirts". With this book she offered the people from Muhu and others, a chance to weave the skirts again.



*Fig. 13 Muhu skirts from different periods woven by Margot Marks. Photographer Anu Pink.*

## **5.2 What I learned**

As part of my research I had a conversation with Marks. Marks does not come from the island, but it was not difficult to understand that during her work she has found a close connection with this culture.

Before the first meeting we had, I did not know much about muhu skirts weaving technique. Margot warned me about the difficulty of learning to weave a comprehensive muhu skirt pattern. During the conversation, I was introduced to the basics of how to weave the yellow Muhu skirt pattern, what materials to use and what colours she thought were best to use for weaving the pattern lines.

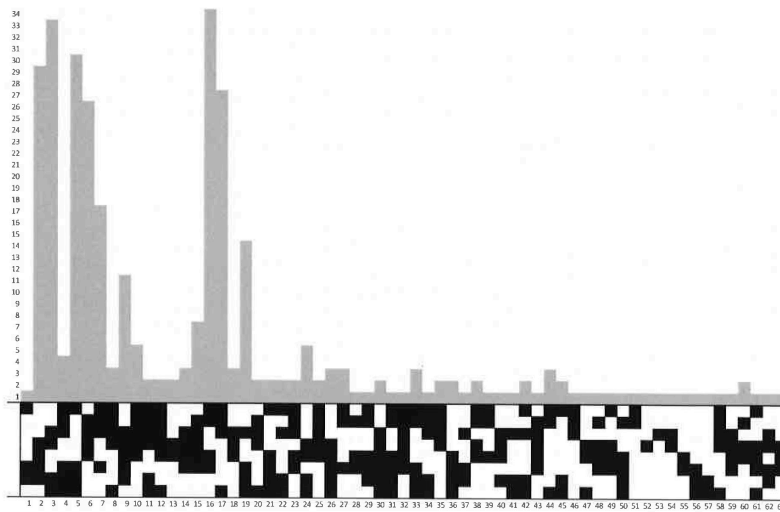
Most of the yellow Muhu skirts were woven by using eight to twelve shafts. Margot was researching 64 historical skirts and found out that 34 of them were woven by using eight shafts. Since it was important to find out which tie-ups were used most she decided to



write down all the tie-ups from 34 historical skirts. The result was 63 different pattern tie ups. Six of them were clearly used in 26-34 skirts. Below there is a table which is constructed by Margot for finding the most suitable tie-ups. It is possible to see that eight tie-ups were used more than other tie-ups. I will use those tie-ups as a starting point for my practical work.

The technique is from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when “finnish” loom reached to the island.

I also got a piece of textile from Margot from where I could see the density of the material but also have an example to see a particle of the patterns stripes and colours (Figure 15). That helped me a lot in the first stages of learning how to weave the main patterns from the Muhu skirt. Lines on the pictures are woven into the fabric for the pleats which historically were made after the skirt fabric was done. Margot found a new technique for pleating by weaving the pleating threads in the fabric by using a separate tie-up. That makes the work faster.



*Fig. 14 64 most used tie-ups which were used to weave eight shafted yellow Muhu skirt.*



*Fig. 15 Trial that I got from Margot Marks. Photograph Heidit Vares*



## **6. Analysis of traditional Muhu skirt patterns and structure**

This chapter presents a formal analysis of the yellow Muhu skirt pattern construction, including information about materials and colours. For weaving textiles inspired by the yellow Muhu skirt, it is important to understand how the pattern was constructed.

I chose three artefacts from the Estonian Open Air Museum for analysing the pattern construction. In subchapter 6.2.2 I would like to present three distinct pattern stripes which are fragments of one artefact. I will also show the most common woven motifs in the pattern lines of the Muhu skirt (subchapter 6.3). I will use the information that I compiled from Margot Marks and compare it with the artefacts that I chose. I picked only two artefacts, because the patterns on the skirts often recurred. The differences are found in the colours and in some of the tie-ups. I use the fragments of the artefacts to present the patterns.

For colour analysis I included two more artefacts. I have analysed five authentic yellow Muhu skirt and show the most typical colour combinations.

I found this method of investigation suitable for my project because it is crucial to have a broad understanding of the patterns before I started to design items that are inspired by the yellow Muhu skirt.

All the artefacts are presented in the attachment 1, 2 and 3

The analysis also includes a comparison of three yellow Muhu skirts that were woven in different time periods spanning from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the 21<sup>th</sup> century.

I used two different methods:

“Formal analysis- the result of looking closely- is an analysis of the form the artist produces; that is, an analysis of the work of art, which is made up of such things as line, shape, colour, texture, mass, composition”(Barnet, 2008, p. 113).

Comparative analysis- “The-item-by-item analysis comparison of two of or more comparable alternatives, processes, products, qualifications, sets of data, systems, or the like”(“Comparative analysis,” 2017)

## 6.1 Traditional Muhu skirts through the ages

I would like to explain the specifications of the Muhu traditional skirts from different time periods. This simplified, explains the development of the traditional skirts of Muhu from black to yellow. The specification includes a comparison of colour, dye use, warp material and number of shafts that were used for weaving. Information about the background colours and pattern stripes originates from the books “Design and patterns from Muhu Island” and “Fashionable Skirts from Muhu”. The technical information concerning weaving originates from the research of Margot Marks.

*Table 1 Muhu skirts from different time periods*

<p>Skirt from Estonian National Museum collection (ERM)</p>	 <p><i>Fig.16</i></p>	 <p><i>Fig.17</i></p>	 <p><i>Fig.18</i></p>
<p><b>Museum object number</b></p>	<p>ERM A 253: 39</p>	<p>ERM A 561: 172</p>	<p>ERM A 852: 3</p>
<p><b>Period of time</b></p>	<p>First half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.</p>	<p>Second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.</p>	<p>First half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.</p>
<p><b>Background and pattern stripe colorus</b></p>	<p>-The black background, decorated with some simple embroidered motifs.</p>	<p>-The background orange, which was called “koldnepunane”</p>	<p>The Background had different shades starting from the original mustard yellow</p>

	-Stripe colours: Galium boreal red, brown-beige, pot green (dark) wh dark green, light blue.	– yellow-red in Muhu island. -Stripe colours: Muhu pink- called “kiperoosa” in Muhu island, blue, green, black.	and ending up with lemon yellow with a hint of green. -Pattern stripes: different shades green, different shades blue, cherry red, light red, light yellow, violet, Muhu pink, baby pink.
<b>Background Yarn dye</b>	Black: Natural black lamb yarn.	Orange: It is unknown what kind of dye it was. “Most likely the dye was produced from Brazilwood, with a Latin name Caesalpina echinata.	Yellow: “In the 1920’s the so- called mine yellow made history on Muhu Island- This was a yellowish crystal powder that could be obtained from floating mines. Muhu women got the idea for dyeing yarn with mine yellow after having seen their children stained with yellow. However, there is no reason to believe that all the skirts were dyed by using “mine yellow”
<b>Warp</b>	-Linen warp -Woollen weft	- Linen warp -Woollen weft	-Cotton warp - Woollen weft
<b>Reed and number of shafts</b>	-Weave reed number 50 -2 or 3 shafts	-Reed number 60 -2 to 4 shafts + pickup method.	-Reed number 60/65 -6, 8,10, 12 shafts and pickup method.

## 6.2 Composition and pattern system

The Muhu skirt patterns are designed following a certain system, so when weaving the pattern, it is important to adhere to these rules. Muhu skirts contain two alternating sorts of pattern repetitions (three each). Each pattern is symmetrical on both sides of its centre line of pattern repetitions (three each). Each pattern is symmetrical on both sides of its centre line

The space between the patterns is usually four centimetres, with a few exceptions where lines are woven closer to each other. The skirts have 4-6 patterns in one repetition. (Kabur et al., 2011, p. 260)

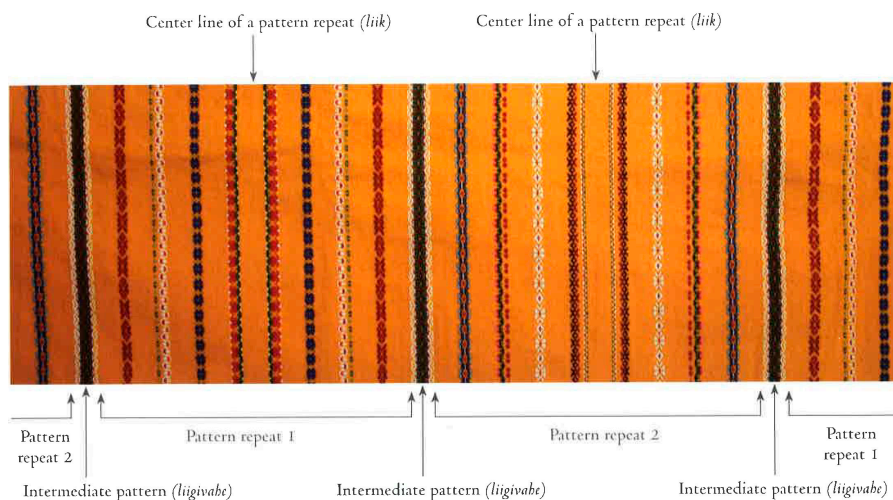


Fig. 19 Yellow Muhu skirt pattern repetition system. Photographer Anu Pink.

### 6.3 Tie-ups for weaving pattern stripes on Muhu skirt

In this subchapter I refer to Margot Marks research, from which the selection of tie-ups originates. All the tie-ups were picked out from the table which was conceived by Margot Marks and that have been presented in the chapter 5.2.

I constructed a chart which is presented below and that includes the eight most used Tie-ups that were used for designing patterns on the yellow Muhu skirt. This tie-ups selection will also be the starting point for my first trials.

Tabby was used for weaving background of the skirt.

On all the yellow skirts, regular angular threading is used. (Marks, 2015, p. 15)

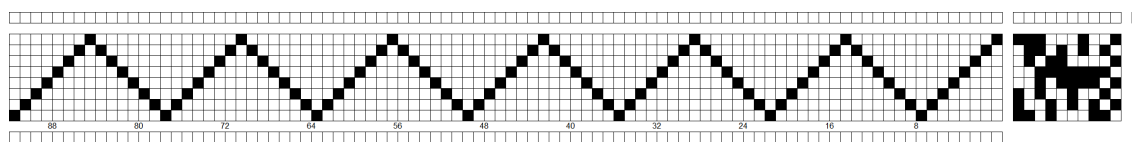





Fig 20. Chart of eight most used tie-ups for weaving pattern lines.

## 6.4 Pattern construction

While doing my research, I understood that there are three distinct pattern stripes that were often used. To make it intelligible and clearer, I made a table. I believe that it is important to show the construction and design of the borders and colours, which articulate the differences in the Muhu skirt patterns. Maybe practitioners in Muhu did not think about these differences, but merely went by intuition. I will be using this system when weaving my final work. Pictures in the table are fragments from authentic Muhu skirt from Estonian Open Air Museum, EVM E 95:8.

*Table 2 construction of the border and colours on yellow Muhu skirt*

Three distinct pattern stripe	Yellow Muhu skirt fragments
Asymmetrical border/asymmetrical colour	
Symmetrical border/asymmetrical colour	
Symmetrical border/symmetrical colour	

## 6.5 Patterns

The most appealing pattern lines are the intermediate patterns which are invariably the first and last pattern in the combination that is repeated on the skirt (chapter 6.2). The intermediate patterns serve as a border to separate pattern repetitions. The

intermediate patterns always have symmetrical colours and borders, ribbed with white cotton yarn.


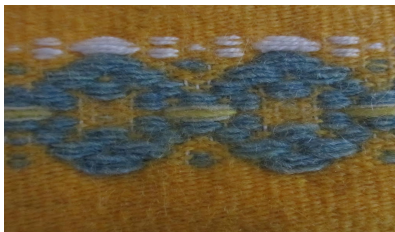
It is not known which rules women from Muhu were following while creating the pattern stripes, but it is known that certain common principles existed. There were patterns that fit the standards and not all the patterns constructed with certain tie-ups were suitable. It is possible to see that most of the pattern lines have a rather round and faceted form. Patterns are also connected with each other and often look like lace.

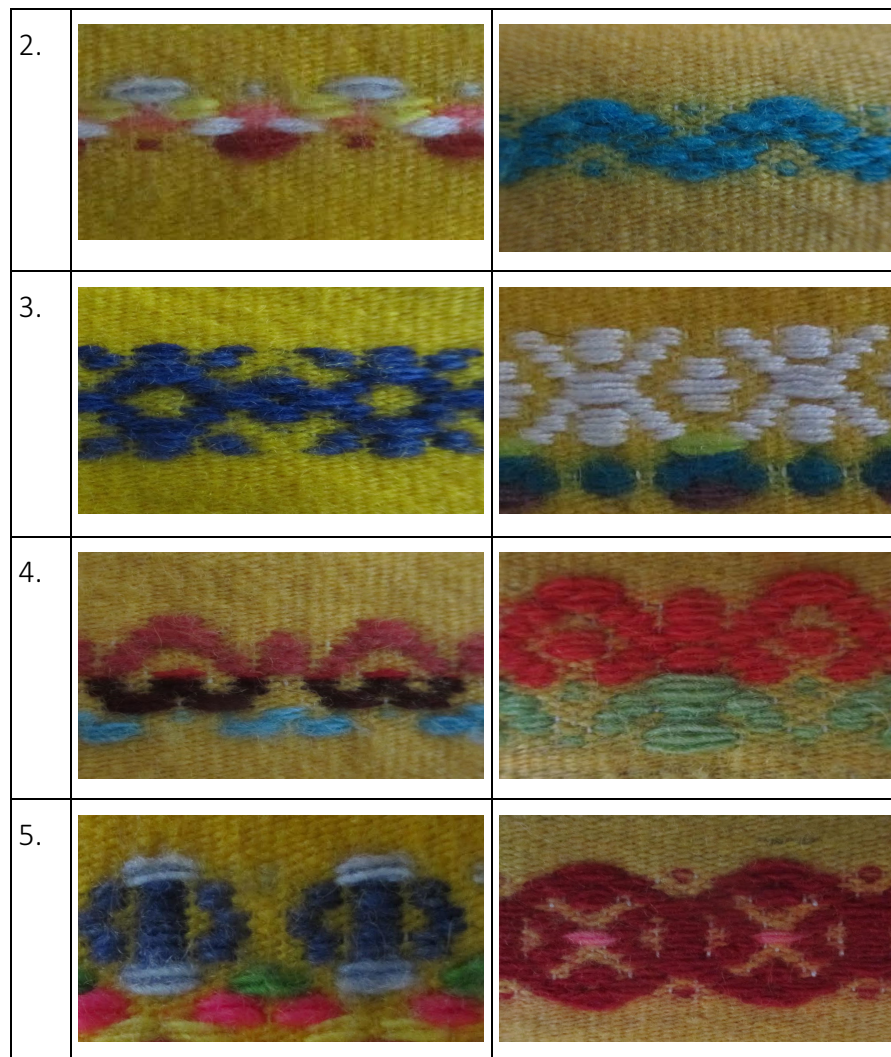
In my opinion women from Muhu often found inspiration for weaving from nature. Motifs in the pattern lines on the yellow skirt often took the form of different shapes from nature. There are certain pattern lines that recur through all the skirts. The patterns differ in the use of colour or with alternate tie-ups.

It is difficult to give a name for the patterns because it is unknown what the women from Muhu called the motifs which were woven in the pattern lines. During the interview with Margot Marks she named most used woven patterns according to what they reminded her of: simple cross, snake pattern, pomegranate/cherry, wheel pattern and broken heart. These were the names that she gave to the patterns. In the pictures below I would like to point out the motifs that were mentioned. I named the patterns after numbers.

The pictures below are fragments of motifs from two yellow Muhu skirts that I researched at the Open Air Museum in Tallinn. I took the pictures while I visited the antiquarian store. While researching the skirt patterns, I recognized the mentioned motifs in most of the skirts.

*Tabel 3 most used motifs on the yellow Muhu skirt*

	Yellow Muhu skirt (EVM E 201:1) fragments.	Yellow Muhu skirt (EVM E 270 :16) fragments.
1.		



## 6.6 Colour combinations

To begin with, I decided to take a closer look at the intermediate patterns. In my opinion the intermediate patterns give an overview of most of the colours which were used in the pattern lines.

I noticed that the colour combinations varied often. In the intermediate pattern, it is difficult to bring out certain colour combinations. In three out of five cases bottom of the pattern was woven with light green. The remaining two were woven with cherry red or light blue. The biggest part of the intermediate patterns was woven often with a cherry red and yellow. on the edges of the main pattern it was common that Muhu pink and shiny white were added.

“Muhu pink and dark red were the most important colours on the pattern” (Marks & Västrik, 2016, p. 16). I found that green is also often applied. Shiny white cotton yarn was



always added to the intermediate pattern. In my opinion, Muhu pink and shiny white add more glow to the combination of green and red.

The pattern lines between the intermediate patterns were woven with different colours. It is difficult to make a distinction which colour combinations are used most. But I noticed often blue, green and green, red combinations. Shiny white cotton yarn and Muhu pink is added on different patterns on every skirt.



*Fig. 21 Glove woven by using Muhu pink yarn.*

Muhu pink, is a colour that needs a special mention. Muhu pink was used on most of the things what were woven, knitted, embroidered or crocheted in Muhu including each and every yellow Muhu skirt. The glove in the picture below is Muhu men's glove in which the cuff has been knitted from the top to the bottom.

The yarns that were used for weaving were dyed at home.

For weaving the samples, I bought yarn from Estonia that was specially dyed for weaving pattern strips for the Muhu skirt. I used it on trial number 2 (see next chapter)

There were certain colours, like black, grey and brown, that are not found in patterns on old skirts. Why many natural colours were excluded is uncertain, but I believe that to the Muhu women, natural colours are not shiny or fancy enough. It is unknown why Muhu women did not use black colour on the yellow skirt. In examples of skirts from periods before the yellow skirt, its possible to find black.

## 6.7 Yarn

In most cases, cotton yarn is used for the warp. There are few examples of skirts that are woven with linen yarn.

The patterns and tabby are woven with a single strand yarn. Shiny, white cotton yarn is woven either on the edges of the intermediate pattern or in the other pattern lines.



## 6.8 Analysis of skirts from different time periods

In this chapter, I have chosen skirts from three different periods to analyse. It is relevant to my project to understand how time has changed this tradition.

Skirts on figures 22 and 23 are different types of the same Muhu skirt. One was a traditional skirt from the Muhu island, the other was mass-produced by professional weavers. Both skirts are presented at the Estonian National Museum as traditional Muhu skirts. Browsing the internet library of museum object, the skirts do not seem to differ much. The skirt in the first picture was woven by nonprofessional 'home weavers' and it was made for personal use. Skirt on figure 23 was woven around 40 years later by professionals and it was mass-produced for use in singing and dancing festivals. Craftsmen and artists from Uku (a group of professional weavers) went to the National Museum to gather inspiration for their own skirts. According to the Estonian National Museum curator, Reet Piiri whom I had correspondence, the skirt patterns woven by the Uku craftsmen, often match the old skirts. The lower part (ai) of the skirt made by the Uku craftsmen has been, for unknown reasons, always blue. By observing the patterns and use of colour on these two skirts, it is possible to see that the combination of patterns and colours on the mass-produced skirt are more clearly shaped and designed. Comparing the skirts made by people from Muhu, with skirts made by the Uku craftsmen or those made by Margot Marks, the professional weavers new how to combine different shades of colour. Often patterns were combined with dark blue and light blue, dark red or bright red/pink. Patterns with different shade combinations looked more beautiful at first sight and after learning that they were woven by professionals, it made sense, as these patterns were much more intricate. Several patterns on the mass-produced skirt are imitations of the original Muhu skirts, its overall look is one of perfection, due to well-thought-out patterns and colour use. This skirt was woven by professional weavers in the 1960s.

The distinction between perfect and imperfect is also very relevant today. People are prone to expect perfection in everything they buy. This is a concept that describes a market structure controlled entirely by the market force. The third skirt is woven recently by Margot Marks.



*Fig.22 Yellow Muhu skirt fragment.*



*Fig.23 Yellow Muhu skirt fragment. Woven by professional weavers.*



*Fig. 24 Yellow Muhu skirt woven on present day. Photograph Heidit Vares*

## 7. Practical part

In this chapter I write about my own interpretation and method of designing patterns which are based on traditional patterns. The aim of my practical work is to weave two blankets. The blankets are decorative details for an interior, which were inspired by the yellow Muhu skirt. I also would like to explain the whole process in detail, of weaving two blankets which are inspired by the traditional skirt of Muhu. My aim is to describe the process in a straight forward way, so the readers without any experience in weaving could understand it.

My aim to give a new perspective for already existing technique and use tradition differently than it has been used before.

*“The term “decorative arts” is a traditional term for a rather unwieldy range of artistic disciplines concerned with the design and ornamentation of items, usually functional. Though today craft objects are not made to fill a necessary function, even though remains an important part their identity”(Corse, 2009, p. 18)*

I studied interior design in Estonia. This subject does not tend to focus on handicrafts. Instead, it requires a highly developed visual sense. However, I think it is important that an artist has the knowledge to work with their hands, as well as their minds. That was the main reason for me to learn this craft and introduce it to people with the same interests.

### 7.1 Process of learning

My aim is to make decorative details (blankets) which are inspired by the yellow Muhu skirt. This means that first I had to learn traditional techniques for weaving patterns from these skirts. After learning the traditional techniques, I decided to bring in new perspectives while experimenting with different types of materials. When weaving samples, for practical reason I decided to sew them together as pillow cases. The sides of these trials cannot be seen as finished products as they were part of the learning

process. I will call them trial 1, 2 and 3. The purpose for these samples was first to learn the technique, then to try to create different patterns that were used historical skirts. Since no traditional Muhu skirts are identical and variation and new ideas were common in the tradition, I had the opportunity to experiment with new patterns that would be basis of my final work.

The process of learning by working with these trials, was broken down into stages. Each of which contains its own set of goals.

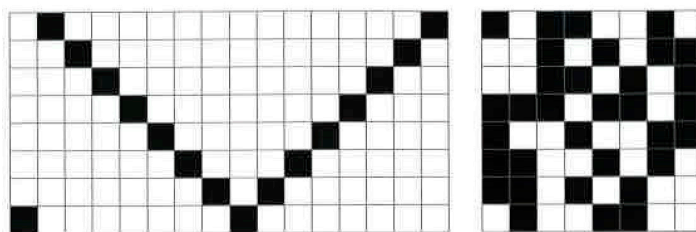
### 7.1.1 A unique chart and pick-up patterns

Before going on my first loaned research trip to Estonia and before finding the certain chart for weaving the patterns, I put up a sample weave because I found a laconic draft of chart for weaving Muhu skirt patterns in a book “Design and patterns from Muhu island”

On the chart above, there are eight shafts and tie-ups -two tie-ups for weaving tabby and six for the pattern. In the book, there was no references to where these charts origin from. Trying to recreate these pattern lines, I realized that none of them looked like the patterns on Muhu skirt. This chart was unique and presented pattern tie-ups not actually found on a typical Muhu skirt.

Further research showed that I am not only one who find it less than usable. According to Margot Marks, this is not a typical example of threading and tie-up.

Putting the tabby in the middle of the tie-up seems to have comfortable for woman from Muhu. As the tie-ups for tabby are not usually found in the middle. The tabby was woven everywhere in the between the patterns and as a background for the pattern stripes then it is also more comfortable to have tabby in the middle.



*Fig. 25 Unique chart for weaving pattern lines.*

Not to waste the loom which I set up for weaving, I decided to try the pick-up method. Many Muhu skirts have found which pattern lines are woven by using pick-up method. On figure 26 it is presented yellow skirt of Muhu which all the patterns are made with the pick-up method. A pick-up method that is only found in Muhu is used. I found information about this method, in written material about patterns on some of the Muhu skirts (Corse, 2009, p. 470). But exactly which technique Muhu women was using for pick up method is not known. The pattern series are symmetrical and vertical centreline are aligned with threads (Marks, 2015, p. 19).

Using the pick-up method, usually a loom with only two tie-ups, can be used. The reason why some yellow skirts were woven by using tie-up method, is that not all the women in the island learned to weave with the new “Finnish loom”. In my opinion the skirt fragment on the figure 26 is woven by somebody with a great experience. By using pick-up method the possibilities for weaving pattern lines are endless.

There are skirts found with a mixed technique- both pick-up and tie-ups are used. Since these were my first samples, I tried to pick-up patterns which I have seen most frequently on the yellow Muhu skirts. I quickly understood that this method is very time consuming,



*Fig. 26 Muhu yellow skirt fragment which pattern is woven by using pick-up method.*

*ERM A 651:16*



*Fig. 27 My first trial for picking Muhu pattern.*

### 7.1.2 Trial number 1

After finding the right chart and buying yarn for weaving, I put up a new loom for weaving. Information about the measurements of the practical works (types of yarn, dimensions etc.) can be found at the end of the thesis.

The aim of my first trial was to learn how to weave the pattern lines from the Muhu skirts and experiment with different colours.

#### *7.1.2.1 Pattern*

The eight tie-ups, which are described in chapter 6.3 were the starting point for constructing the patterns for weaving. With the help of a program called Weavepoint I experimented forming patterns from the Muhu skirts.

Pattern lines which I drafted are made by following the most used patterns on the skirts. It was important to find out the number of the wefts I have to weave in the shed, in order the right shaped pattern. I used two wefts at first but later understood that for some of the patterns, I should have used three wefts. This resulted in a strange shape in the pattern.

The system that I used for putting together different pattern lines, consist of one complete pattern repetition and on incomplete. This was intentional.

I also experimented with the space between the pattern lines. I tried to weave a half centimetre, two centimetres and two and a half centimetres space.

I wove a tabby into the patterns and as a bottom in the patterns.

Pattern is symmetrical and have one repetition. The figures nr28 is showing the first half of the symmetry





*Fig. 28 Pattern lines that are woven with eight most used tie-ups. “A” and “B” side of the trials.*

#### *7.1.2.2 Colours and material*

The background is woven using natural white yarn. I chose to do this to see what the patterns looked like without using such an intense colour as yellow. In my opinion, the pattern becomes invisible when using so intense colour in the background. I think the invisibility of the patterns, when using a yellow background is the reason why different producers who are making “ethnic” products, often replace the patterns with conventional stripes.

One of the pattern lines, on the side “A” I wove using only white cotton yarn. White cotton yarn, as mentioned before was always added on the edges of the intermediate patterns. The effect which it gave together with white natural white background was pleasing to the eye.

The colours that I used for weaving the intermediate patterns on “A” side of trial were: cherry red, green, pink and bright white which were according to my analyses the most

used intermediate pattern colours on Muhu skirt. The green colour that I used was too dark and in combination with red the background looks black.

According Johannes Itten a red and green colour filter held in front of an arc lamp, the two together will give a dark colour (Itten & Birren, 2003). Green and red are complimentary colours.

Intermediate pattern background on side "B" I wove with grey colour yarn. Grey was never used on the traditional yellow skirt of Muhu, but it gave a good result together with pink. I also added red and white cotton yarn on the edges.



*Fig. 29 Trial number 1. Yellow Muhu skirt pattern stripes. "A" side of the trial.*

*Photographer Heidit Vares*





*Fig. 30 Trial number 1. Yellow Muhu skirt patten stripes. "B" side of the trial.  
Photographer Heidit Vares*

### *7.1.2.3 Summary*

Replacing the yellow background with white, the result, in my opinion, becomes more suitable for variety of interiors. The yellow background makes it more complicated to fit into an interior. White however, can work well in many settings.

## **7.1.3 Trial number 2**

### *7.1.3.1 Pattern stripes*

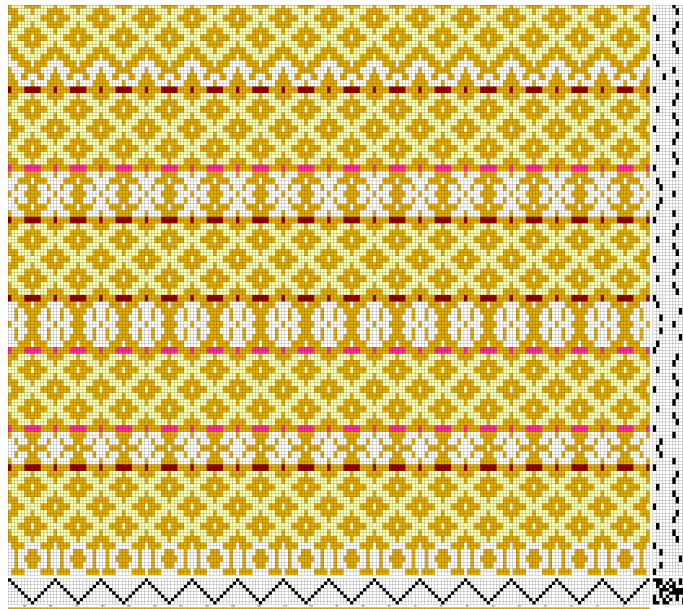
While weaving the trials, I understood that some patterns should be wove by using three wefts in shed. On "A" side of the trial, I wove pattern lines with three wefts in shed. I chose to weave patterns 1, 2 and 3 (chapter 6.5) but also constructed three other patterns by looking the pattern on the skirt. Using three wefts in shed to weave the pattern lines, I confirmed that the patterns have complete shape while weaving with three instead of two wefts in shed. In addition to the pattern lines I added geometrical pattern which I constructed in Weavepoint by using Yellow Muhu skirt tie- ups. I wove this pattern between the pattern lines on the skirt instead of leaving empty space. The effect it gave was like big intermediate pattern what consist of group of Muhu skirt patterns.

The pattern system that I used is like pattern repetition of Muhu skirt but without intermediate patterns. Between the repetitions I was weaving three stripes to connect repetitions.

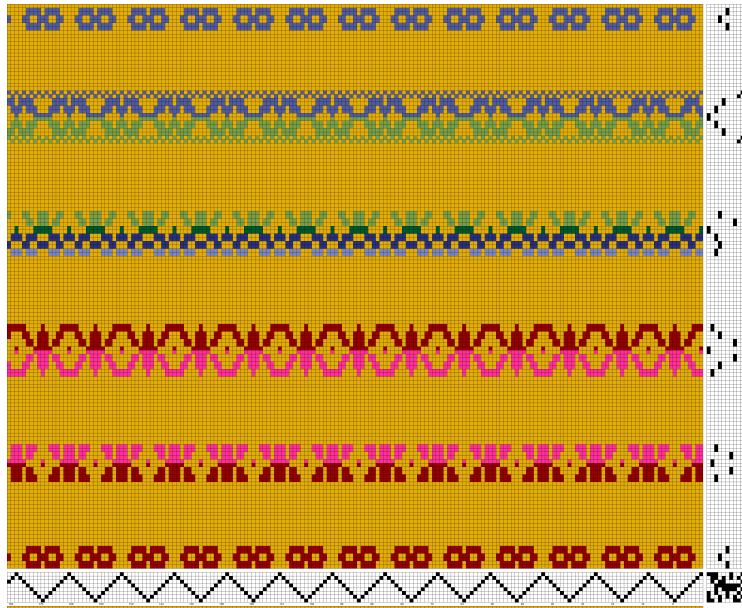
For the “B” side of the trial I decided to weave patterns 1, 3 and 4 (chapter 6.5). The goal was to have a different appearance than on “A” side, by varying the use of tie ups. I also added one pattern line which I constructed with the same- tie- ups. Though this, I managed to achieve the appearance of Muhu style pattern lines.

The tabby is woven between the pattern lines and as bottom in the patterns.

Pattern is symmetrical and have one repetition. The figure number 30 are showing the first half of the symmetry.



*Fig. 31 Muhu skirt pattern stripes woven with cotton yarn. "A" side*



*Fig. 32 Yellow Muhu skirt pattern lines. Composition without intermediate pattern. “B” side.*

#### *7.1.3.2 Colours and material*

The background of the “A” and “B” sides are woven with yellow woollen yarn which has been dyed in Estonia especially for weaving the yellow Muhu skirt. All of the other woollen yarns used on this trial except natural white woollen yarn and shiny white cotton yarn are also dyed in Estonia for weaving patterns of yellow Muhu skirt. While using yellow colour yarn for weaving background I was almost constantly anxious. Yellow is the brightest colour of the visible spectrum, and it is the most noticeable of all colours to the human eye. Yellow is a colour with two sides and it can affect people both positively and negatively.

I liked the effect while weaving with white cotton yarn on the woollen background while weaving trial number one. On the “A” side of the trial I decided to weave the pattern lines only with white cotton yarn. Patterns which I wove between the pattern lines are woven using a white natural white wool. In relation to the yellow background it gave a slightly grey impression. Between patterns I wove stripes with different colours which were traditionally used on Muhu skirt pattern lines.

On the “B” side I wove with combination of red and pink and green and blue. The goal was creating different shades in the patterns.



*Fig. 33 "A" and "B" side of the trial number 2. Photographer Heidit vares*

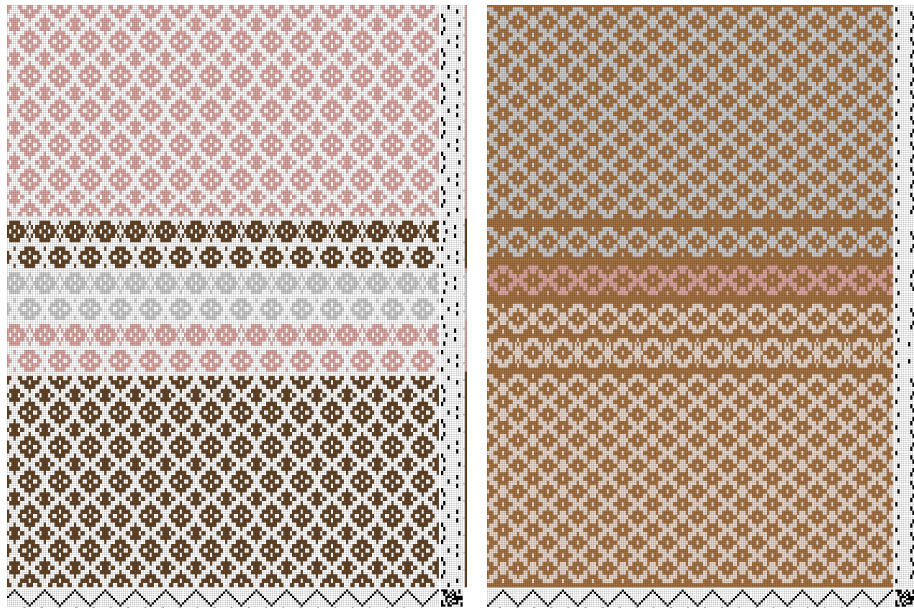
### *7.1.3.3 Summary*

After I finished both trials and the pieces were woven together into decorative pillow cases, I sent pictures to Margot marks to ask her opinion. The feedback I got from her was rather critical. She said that many of the patterns which I used on the pillow cases should not have been used on something other than the yellow skirt of Muhu. She mentioned specially the patterns number 1 and 4. Her critic came unexpectedly but after thinking about her research and her work helping to revive the tradition, her point of

view is understandable. She feels a strong emotional tie to the pattern lines on the skirt, which are perhaps stronger to her than to people who have not worked so closely with the tradition.

### 7.1.4 Trial number 3

#### 7.1.4.1 Pattern stripes



*Fig. 34 The patterns constructed with yellow Muhu skirt tie-ups. New pattern system used on “A” and “B” sides.*

Pattern on the third trial is constructed by using Muhu skirt pattern tie-ups but none of the patterns are taken directly from skirt.

Also the composition that I used on the side “A” is a repetition of the same patterns, but it is not symmetrical according to stripes that are woven in the middle. Pattern lines that I have woven in the middle are “cut out” from the main pattern.

Side” B” composition is built up with different patterns. The patterns repeat the same way as on the “A” side. Pattern lines in the middle are again “cut out” from the main composition. The patterns on both sides maintain the round form like on the yellow skirt. I used double weft for weaving the pattern.

I tried not to hit weave together too tight. I wanted to keep the pattern as clearly shaped as possible.

#### *7.1.4.2. Colours and material*

I liked the interaction between cotton and wool on the first trial, so I decided to weave white cotton yarn as a background this time. The composition on “A” side of the trial is a bit unequal, I learned that it is difficult to weave equal weft with cotton yarn.

For weaving the pattern lines, I used woollen- mohair yarn from Telespinn. That yarn is very soft in contact with skin and its dyed with natural colours which makes it environmentally friendly. I chose that yarn because of the fantastic colour choice that they have.

The pattern lines on a “A” side I wove with dark brown, “old” pink and silver/grey. After weaving I understood that the dark brown yarn that I chose to use had too much contrast with other colours.

Interaction between cotton background and woollen pattern was very good. Woollen yarn in combination with cotton makes cotton much more delicate. That combination in cloth industry is very problematic because of the demand of divergent detergents and temperature for washing. That combination is problematic, but in case of using the trial as a decorative element, it is not critical to think about the conditions for washing the textile.

On “B” side of the trail I used a worsted yarn for the background in order to find out how it will interact with the mohair. That combination interacted very good and the result was nice looking. For weaving the pattern, I used colours white, silver/grey and “old” pink yarn. The grey colour should have been darker in order to fit together with brown because the value of these two colours are too similar.





*Fig. 35 Trial which is woven by using yellow Muhu skirt tie-ups."A" and "B" sides.*

*Photographer Heidit Vares*

#### *7.1.4.2 Summary*

The main objective for trial number three was to gain the knowledge about the interaction of different materials for weaving. Also construct patterns that are woven with yellow Muhu skirt tie-ups but don't look like this.

After weaving trial number three I also realized increasingly, how relevant the practice is in order to get a result you expect.

*" What we can learn from reading is just for navigation, but the skills will come with practice."(Weihe, Falk, & Norsk, 2009, p. 35)*

## 7.2 Giving a new perspective to the technique

### 7.2.1 Design Process for weaving blankets

“The movement of an idea from one stage to the next involves an evolution. An obvious truth about designing is that it must involve development” (Aspelund, 2010, p. 6).

My final practical work will be two blankets. Creating a blanket is very intriguing to me as I am interested in design. Use the knowledge for making ready my own design is something which I have quietly wished for. Knowledge about weaving also gives me the possibility to make decorative details for the interior after the studies.

For weaving the blankets, first need to decide what characteristics you want to be connected with the form and material. A good and practical blanket for me must be big, soft and made from natural material. It must look good with the different interiors which means that pattern and colour have to be thought through. The colours need to harmonize with each other, yet still need to have the zest and character of a Muhu skirt. Also, it is important to make it as functional as possible. While being something to cuddle under when cold, it can be used as a decorative element for the sofa, bed or the wall. The end user of my design is a person who appreciates handmade objects, someone who understand the importance of natural material use and connection with traditions

According to Karl Aspelund the stages of the design process are: inspiration, identification, conceptualization, exploration/refinement, definition/modelling, communication and production.

I follow first five Karl Aspelund design stages. First stage of the process – inspiration is described in the first chapter of my thesis.

The second stage is conceptualization which according to my project means finding the constraints, in other words limits. I am writing about the constraints of my project in subchapter 6.2.2 and 7.2.3.

Next stage of the process is conceptualization. According to my project it means testing the patterns, colours etc. It is about practice but also thinking about the end users of my design. According to Aspelund ,during the conceptualization, “a concept takes flight and acquires a life of its own”(Aspelund, 2010, p. 73).



Fourth stage is exploration/ refinement. According to my project that means testing with more clear materials what got good results during the conceptualization stage. Solution is on focus in this stage of design. Drawing and sketching is also part of exploration/refinement stage.

The last stage is definition/ modelling state of design. That is a state when concept must become an object. That is also the last state that I follow because I weave my own design and don't need a communication with producers and production team.

### 7.2.2 The shaft draw system

I decided to use another loom for the final work. The loom that I use is called a shaft draw system. For weaving a typical Muhu skirt, eight shafts were used in most of the cases. I wanted to double the shafts, so I could weave a larger pattern. With a shaft draw system I had the possibility to weave bigger pattern elements, as I could use seventeen shafts for weaving. I left one shaft behind and used 16 shafts. I also needed to have more than ten tie-ups for weaving. As with a simple loom is possible to weave with ten tie-ups. I needed to have eight tie-ups for pattern and four tie ups for weaving twill and tabby.

I decided to double the eight tie-ups which I used for weaving the trials. I wanted to increase my possibilities for weaving patterns. In order to do that I added five more tie-ups by flipping the white and black squares in Weavepoint (what was white was now black, and black now white). Three tie ups were not possible to change, as they would stay the same whether they were inversed or "normal". Now I had 13 tie-ups in order to weave new patterns. Figure 31 is presenting the new tie-ups that I am going to use for weaving the blankets.

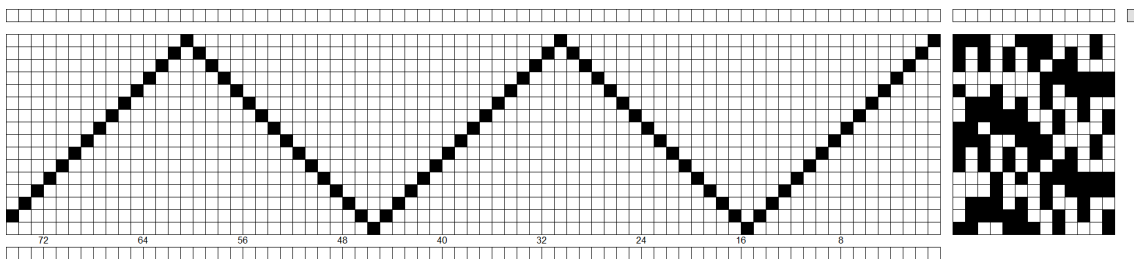
The pointed threading system was historically used for weaving the yellow Muhu skirt. I decided to keep the same threading system for my work. I added straight entering for weaving twill and tabby.

I wanted to change the tie-ups to find out if it is possible to construct patterns which still meet the traditional standards of the Muhu skirt pattern lines. I did not want to use

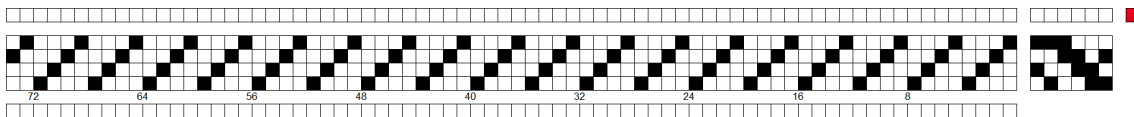
completely new tie-ups for constructing the pattern lines. Without the right tie-ups my work would lose the essential nature of the Muhu skirts.

I chose sixteen shafts for pattern elements and four separate shafts for the twill and tabby weave. Because I was using the shaft draw system, I needed to thread twice. I decided to experiment with both twill and tabby in order find out which one is better to weave with. I will use either twill or tabby for weaving between the patterns and as a bottom in the patterns.

When using the shaft draw system for weaving it is important to “drag” down threads that have been mapped as black squares in the program Weavepoint. If one was to do the opposite and drag down threads mapped “white” the pattern would show up on the wrong side of the weave.



*Fig. 36 Threading and tie-ups for weaving the blankets.*



*Fig. 37 Straight entering.*

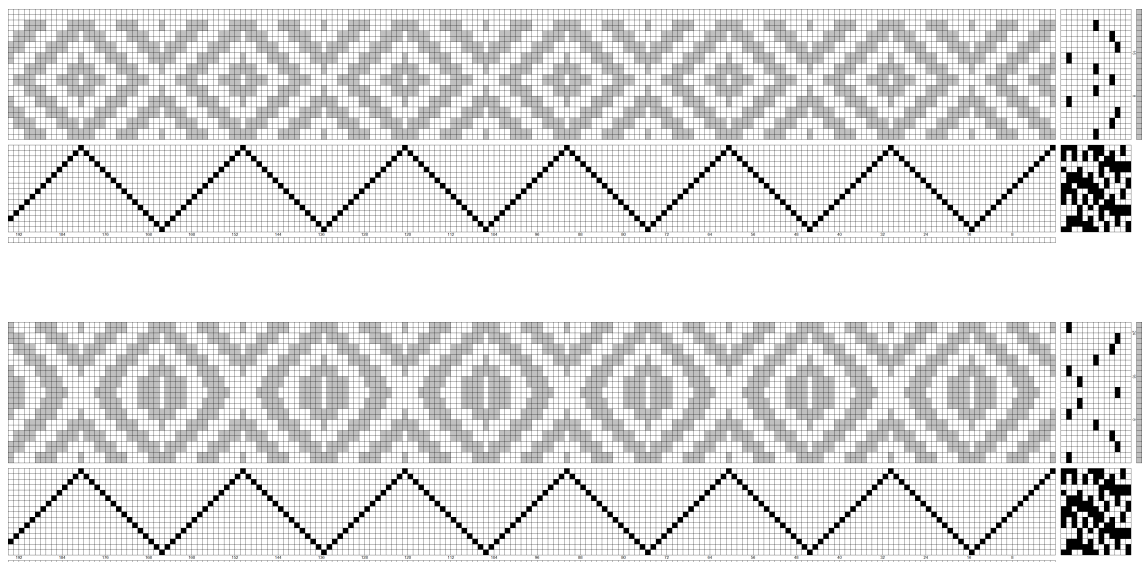
### 7.2.3 Constructing patterns and material choice for the warp

Before I put up test weave for new trials I had to decide which yarn I would use for the warp. After thinking about the characteristics of a good blanket I decided to use knitting yarn for the warp. The two- threads woollen yarn that I used is soft, airy and light. The airier the yarn, the more compact the result will be. For trials, I used bleached white yarn but decided to change it to unbleached yarn after trials because of the high contrast with other colours. The warp will also be visible because of the even weave. The bleached white yarn will be used in the pattern lines, for higher contrast. I found the unbleached yarn to be more suitable also because of its natural look.

In order to find out which yarn I will use for the patterns and as a background, I had to construct the patterns which I will use for weaving. After constructing different variations of the patterns, I chose to use two of them. Both patterns I chose were suitable for weaving different geometrical variations. I used two wefts in a shed two weave the pattern. The trials showed that weaving with a one weft in a shed the pattern will not be so visible as I expected.

Another reason for choosing these patterns was the indirect similarity with the Muhu skirt motifs number 1 and 3 (chapter 6.5) The two patterns which I designed look like a combination of these two motifs. I used these two patterns as the “main” patterns for both of the blankets which I wove. I am going to construct different repetitions with the main patterns which follow the “constraints” or limitations (see analysis section):

- Asymmetrical border/ asymmetrical colour
- Symmetrical border/ asymmetrical colour
- Symmetrical border/ symmetrical colour



*Fig. 38 The main patterns that were used for constructing different repetitions. The upper figure is for blanket number 1 and lower for blanket number 2*

#### 7.2.4 Colours and materials

I did many trials to find the right quality of yarn for weaving. The yarn that I chose to use for the warp was two threads woollen yarn, this meant I had to find a yarn with a similar aesthetic for weaving. In trying to find a yarn, I experimented with mohair yarn in several different thicknesses. In attachment number 9 is added trials I did with mohair yarn. I wanted to use mohair because of the characteristics it has, however when I completed the first trials, I was not satisfied with the hairy look it gave. I decided to try the same woollen yarn that I use for the warp. I got very good results and I decided to continue with the same woollen knitting yarn. All of the trials are possible to find in the test book and in attachment.

In all of the pattern trials, I wove with the same colours at first. I had not decided which colours I would use. I tried a combination of white, blue and brown to start with (see attachment 9). It is not hard to realise that different colours are forming the patterns on a yellow skirt of Muhu. That is also a reason why colour choice is important to my project. But in a combination with a thick yarn both, tie-ups and colours are equally important for constructing the patterns.

“Colour effects are in the eye of the beholder. It is possible to make a masterpiece with unknowing the right combinations of different colours. To avoid the unpleasant surprises it is important to look for the knowledge in colour world” (Itten & Birren, 2003, p. 7).

Choosing the right colours for the weaving patterns was very challenging. As I decided to use same type of yarn for the weft and the warp, I had to choose between the colour variations given by the yarn. It was difficult to know how the colour shades would change as I began to weave into the unbleached white warp colour.

First, I experimented with natural colours only. I chose to use different shades of grey. Grey was never used on the yellow Muhu and I wanted to try it. The results were very one-sided and I decided to leave that idea behind.

I needed to have a system that I could follow to find the right colours for my project. I decided to choose the colours according to the intermediate pattern colour combinations

(chapter 6.4). Green, red and white were the colours which were always found in the intermediate patterns. I decided not to use Muhu pink on the blanket. Green and red are complimentary colours and they highlight and complement each other. These colours were basis for my final works.

The yarn I decided to use had many shades of green to choose from. I wove together different shades of green and result was satisfying. The green colours that I chose to use have white as an undertone tone.

I was also inspired by nature in the search to find the right colours. Spring is coming and the natural world is about to wake up and.



*Fig 39. The yarn colours for the background and green shades for the patterns.  
Photograph Heidit Vares.*

### **7.3 Blanket number 1**

To prepare the shaft draw system for weaving the final works took 10 days. It was time-consuming because of the difficult construction of the loom. I had to  
Before I was ready to weave it was very important to make sure that there are no mistakes in putting up the loom because every small mistake effects the final result.



*Fig. 40 The shaft draw system that I prepared for weaving the blankets, photographer Heidit Vares*

### 7.3.1 Construction of the patterns and composition

The yellow Muhu skirt always had four to six different pattern lines for every pattern repetition in addition to intermediate patterns. The blanket that I wove had three different pattern lines and two repetitions. The pattern that wove was bigger than on the muhu skirt. The space between the patterns were bigger than on the Muhu skirt and the design followed the drawings that I made. I considered this when thinking about the size of the blanket, compared with the skirt.

I experimented with different measurements with a help of AutoCad to vary the space between the pattern lines. I decided to use nine, six and four centimetres for the spaces to make the composition more interesting. In figure 41 it is possible to see the experiments with different measurements in the space between pattern lines. The black colour on the above blanket design represents what will be white in the final product. This is to easily show contrast between the white background and pattern lines.

On a typical yellow Muhu skirt, four centimetres was used in most cases. In figure 42 is the final drawing that I made before I started to weave.





*Fig. 41 Different measurements between the pattern lines.*

I experimented with a twill and tabby. The Weave with a twill became much softer, which is important when designing a blanket. I will use twill between the patterns and as a bottom in the patterns.

The composition for the first blanket was constructed as two sequential pattern repetitions (See chapter 6.1). I drafted a drawing to see how the blanket is going to

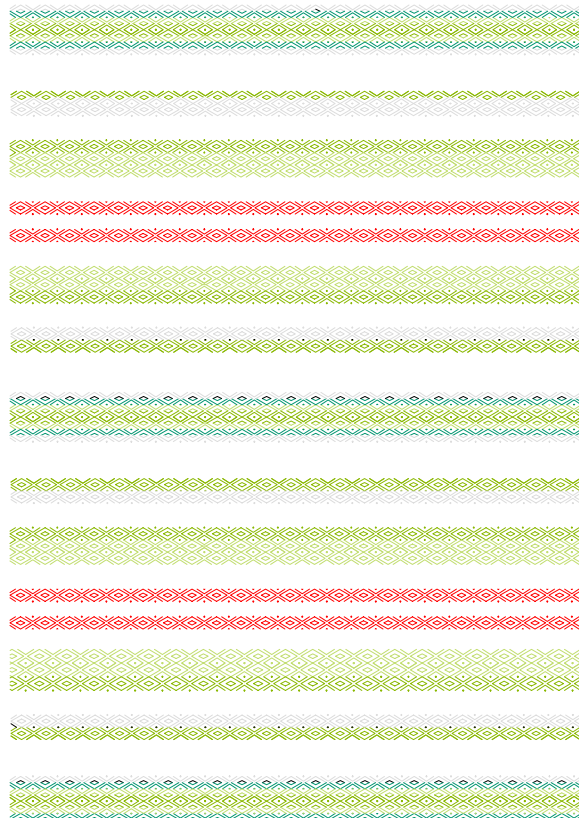
Working within the design constraints, I started to design the patterns that I will use alongside the main pattern.

On the figure 43 is the intermediate pattern, that consists of four repetitions of the main pattern lines. I used two different shades of green. The edges of the intermediate pattern are woven with shiny white yarn. Part of the pattern background is woven with yellow. Yellow is also woven between the intermediate pattern and the first pattern line. The intermediate pattern is woven in the middle of the blanket and at the end and the beginning of the repetitions. The symmetry forms two yellow lines in the middle of the composition.

Construction of the asymmetrical colour/asymmetrical pattern (figure 44) was made by adding an asymmetrical end to the main pattern. The grey colour on the drawing represents a shiny white colour on the blanket. The background of that pattern is woven with yellow.

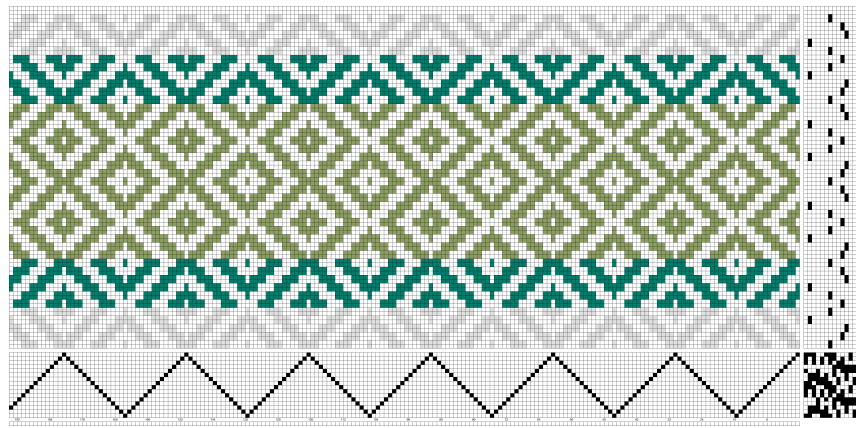
Weaving of the symmetrical border/ asymmetrical colour was completed with three main pattern line repetitions. In figure 45 I used two different shades of green for weaving. The smaller part of the pattern in the middle is woven with a shiny white, the background of this pattern is woven partly with yellow yarn.

For the “symmetrical pattern/ symmetrical border” I wove a main pattern line. I wove this pattern with a red yarn. On the colour scale, the red hue that I decided to use had a light value, after weaving the pattern, the hue seemed to be darker. In my opinion, the red colour fit nicely with the different greens that I used.

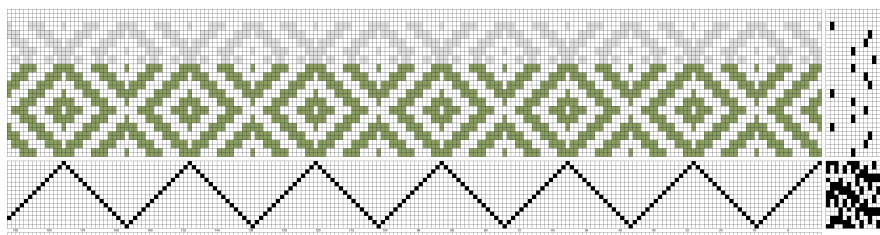


*Fig 42. The final drawing that I drafted. Composition with two pattern repetitions.*

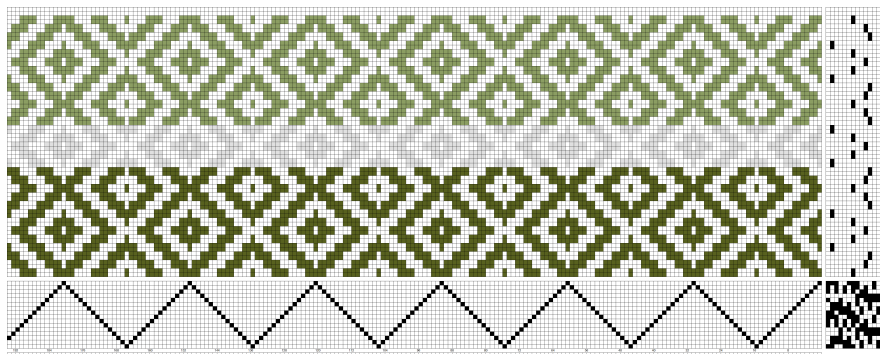




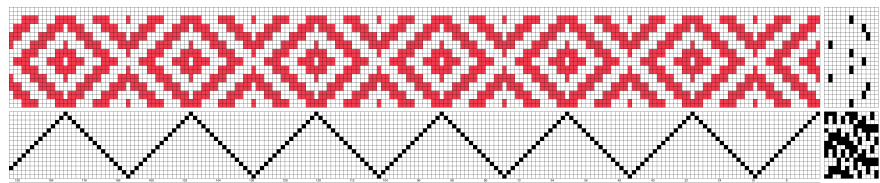
*Fig. 43 Intermediate pattern used on blanket number 1*



*Fig 44 Asymmetrical border/asymmetrical colour*



*Fig. 45 Symmetrical border/asymmetrical colour*



*Fig. 46 Symmetrical colour/symmetrical pattern*

### 7.3.2 Summary

The process of weaving was very exciting. I was not sure exactly how long it would take me to weave a blanket. I felt pressure because of the time limit. Nevertheless, I enjoyed the process until the end. After much preparation, it felt fantastic to finally come closer to the goal of weaving a blanket. In the beginning of the process, the biggest challenge for me was to weave even edges. It became very important for me to use the temple. Without using the temple, the result would have been uneven edges. The temple also helps to keep the weave from shrinking together. Another challenge was to weave the twill at exactly forty-five degrees. This seemed almost impossible at first point, but after I cut the blanket from the loom, the twill shrank together and it looked almost equal.

It is important to weave with the same pressure and keep the tape measure close at hand. I struggled to weave the same pattern repetitions so that they ended up looking the same. Every pattern in the composition (except the intermediate pattern) is repeated four times. People who have much experience in weaving, often struggle with finding the correct weave pressure. Often the pressure that is put on the weft, depends on fatigue level, mood, etc. I found that it was smart not to weave while being too tired, I sensed that the more tired I became, the harder I beat the weft in. ✓

I was concerned about the difference in structure because the pattern looked thicker than the twill. However, the result was almost even. Small differences between the thickness of the pattern and the twill did not make a difference to the final result.

Adding different shades of green into the pattern construction, gave the blanket a calm and refreshing feel. I was happy that I did not decide to add more yellow in the background. Even a small yellow stripe looks very intense when compared with the other colours that I wove. Yellow steals attention from the other colours. A touch of yellow still gives the premonition that the blanket is inspired by the yellow Muhu skirt.

It is hard to find common features between the skirt of Muhu and the blanket that I wove. This was one of the aims of my project. Different background and pattern lines do not directly state that Muhu skirt pattern construction is used in the blanket. The pattern

repetition from the skirt gives the viewer a hint that the design comes from the yellow Muhu skirt, but it takes the design out of context and puts it in a new place. While using the blanket in interiors, the possibility to recognise the skirt is very small. This brings change to an old design and helps the tradition live and breathe.



*Fig. 47. Blanket number one final result. Photographer Ingolf Endresen.*

## 7.4 Blanket number 2

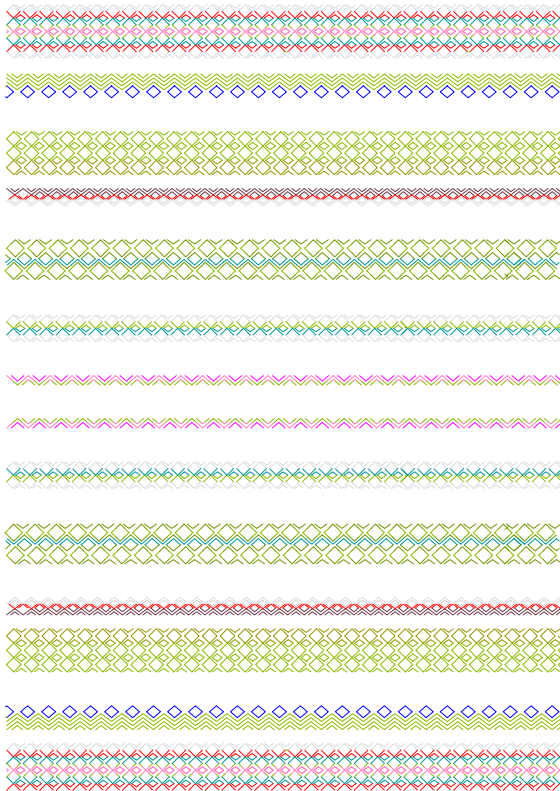
For the second blanket, I wanted to avoid the difference in thickness that was present in the first and decided not to weave the twill between the patterns. I wove twill only on the bottom of the weave. I wove the main pattern between the other pattern lines instead and used unbleached white yarn.

### 7.4.1 Construction of patterns and composition

The blanket that I wove had six pattern lines. I wove one repetition which gave me the opportunity to weave more pattern lines than on the first blanket. Six is also the maximum number of pattern lines found on the traditional yellow Muhu skirt. The aim was to use as many tie-ups for constructing the pattern lines as possible. I felt that the patterns that I constructed for the first blanket were too similar.

The space between the pattern line was woven repeating the main pattern in a natural

white colour. I wove either one or two main pattern repetitions and I tried to leave wider room between the patterns which had more colours in their construction. I made only one drawing- fig.48, this time to find out how much space I need between the pattern repetitions and I put my main emphasis into constructing these patterns. I already knew approximately after weaving the first blanket how wide the space should be.



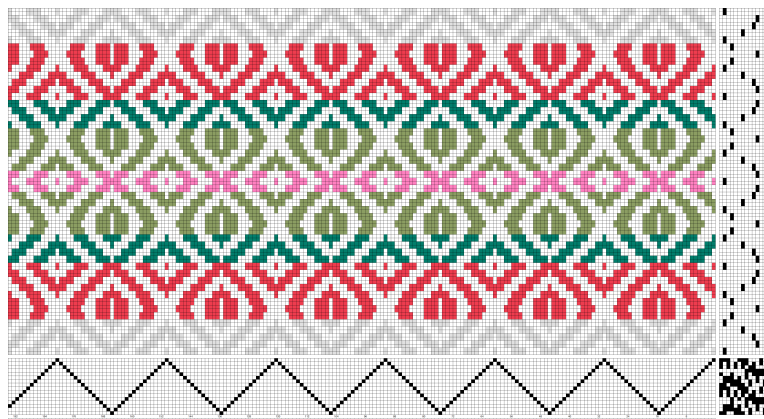
*Fig. 48 Composition drawing for blanket number*

The intermediate patterns were woven with four main pattern repetitions. I used two different shades of green and added the same colour of red that was woven on the first blanket. The edges of the

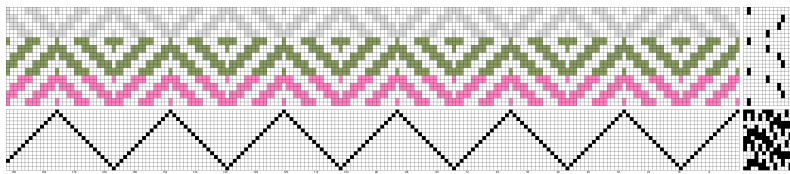
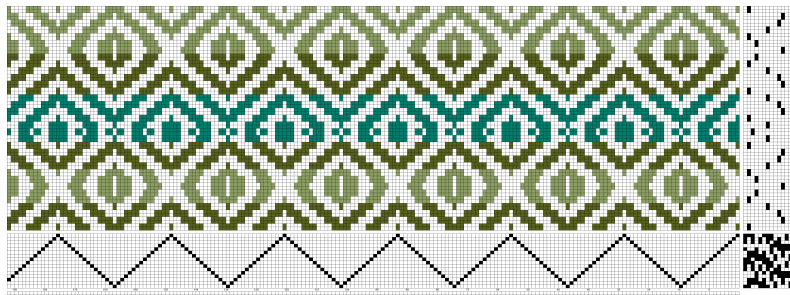
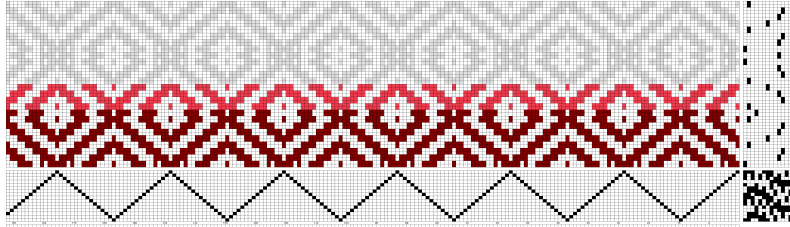
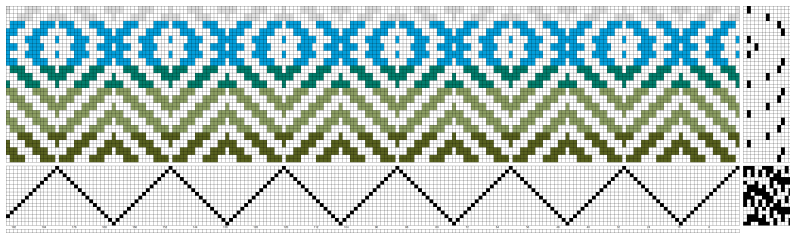
intermediate pattern on figure 49, I wove with bleached white yarn. As I wanted to use more colour I also added a pink line in the middle of the intermediate pattern. I did not use Muhu pink (see chapter 6.4) because that would have been an intense colour to have on my blanket. Instead of Muhu pink, I used a lighter pink which was also found on the yellow skirts.

I wove four different asymmetrical border/asymmetrical colour patterns this time. Three of the patterns have no symmetry unlike the main patterns. That meant that I did not use the main patterns for the construction of the asymmetrical patterns. One of these patterns has symmetrical edges but the middle part of the pattern is constructed using other tie-ups. In addition to the green hues, I added a light blue, cherry red and light pink. The colours that I added were picked according to those shades that were used also on Muhu skirt patterns. I used different colours to highlight the asymmetrical patterns, I used blue and combined it with different green colours. This became the pattern I liked the most. I think the use of non-geometrical patterns, combined with geometrical ones makes the overall look of the blanket diverse.

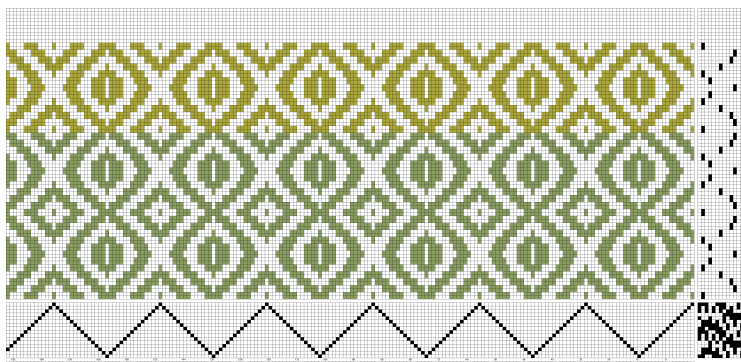
I wove three repetitions of the main pattern for symmetrical border/asymmetrical colour constraints. The figure 51 pattern lines were woven with two different shades of green. The background of that pattern was woven partly with yellow.



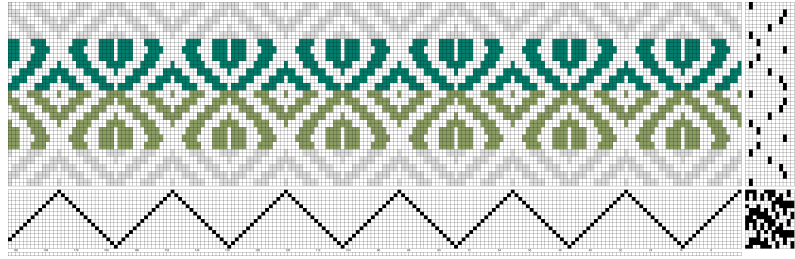
*Fig.49 Intermediate pattern woven on blanket number 2*



*Fig. 50 Asymmetrical border/ asymmetrical colour constraint for blanket number 2*



*Fig. 51 Symmetrical border/ asymmetrical colour constraints for blanket number 2*



*Fig. 52 Symmetrical border/ symmetrical colour constraints for blanket number 2*

#### 7.4.2 Summary

To make the second blanket, I wove the main patterns in the warp colour, in between the coloured pattern lines. The weft was much tighter and the blanket started to shrink together from the edges. It was very important to use the temple to prevent the work from being ruined. The structure of the second blanket turned out more equal than on the first. I made the right decision to weave the main pattern in the space between the coloured pattern lines.

I was concerned about the contrast between the pattern and background colour as they had different colour values. If I had used a green warp, there result would have been less contrast in the final product.

I felt more confident when weaving the second blanket, as I knew how to handle some of the difficulties in the weaving process. When weaving the pattern that was designed with a system and technique that I have researched and developed, I felt more courageous and tried adding colours and constructing different pattern lines. Weaving the second blanket I used nine tie-ups in the construction. Four of the tie-ups were not used. The four which were not used proved to be useless, because they did not fit into any of the combinations. Still, there are many possibilities to construct different patterns lines by using the tie-ups that were used.

The second blanket was more comparable with the yellow Muhu skirt because of the different and vibrant shades of colours. The use of only one constructed pattern repetition and sufficient space between the coloured lines, is reminiscent of the yellow



Muhu skirt. Still, as the main focus of the blanket was the patterns, and the background was woven with natural and neutral colour, the chance for recognition is slight.



*Fig. 53 Blanket number 2 final result.. Photographer Ingolf Endresen*

## **7.5 Summary – both blankets**

When I had completed both of the blankets, I compared the two together. The background and uniformity in the use of green and the constraints of constructing the patterns (asymmetry and symmetry in borders and colours) are the common threads of the two blankets. In spite of the different colours and pattern lines, the blankets look very similar. If you were to look at the yellow Muhu skirts and then to the blankets, you would see similarities, but also great differences. On every skirt, the colour and pattern combinations were different but still they look very similar to each other. What the reason for this is, is very hard to say. In my opinion it can be the combination of colour



use within the pattern, the same background colour as well as in the symmetrical way of constructing the pattern repetitions.

My aim was to weave two blankets which were inspired by the yellow Muhu skirt. It was important to me that the recognition possibility with the traditional skirt was slight. I took inspiration from the way of constructing pattern repetitions found on the Muhu skirts and, as a starting point, I used the traditional yellow Muhu skirt tie-ups to begin the weaving process. The traditional tie ups worked well, but I changed and experimented by doubling the number of ties ups and reversing the colours (black became white, white became black). I used only eight of the historically most used tie ups (doubled). According to Margot Marks, all together there were 63 tie-ups, in the skirt woven with 8 shafts, which were used for weaving the yellow Muhu skirt (See Chapter 5.2). In this project, it was important for me to try something new within a traditional technique. It was important for me to construct new looking patterns and I think I succeeded in this. The old, traditional Muhu skirt now has a new expression as an interior textile. The tradition was used differently that it has been used before. The possibilities are endless. I would like to continue with practicing this work in the future.

## 8. Conclusion

The goal of my master thesis project is to give a new perspective to the traditional Estonian weaving technique. My project tells about of a time, when Muhu women dedicated their life's to a handcraft and started to weave the traditional skirts. The project also tells about the reasons why this tradition died. Further on into this project, I tell about the time when professional weavers started to make the traditional Muhu skirt to be shown off at large dancing and singing festivals in mainland Estonia.

In the practical part of my master project, I wanted to analyse the traditional skirt from Muhu. I visited several museums and Muhu island. I had a conversation with Margot Marks, an enthusiastic woman who goes down in history for helping the Muhu people to restore the traditional technique for weaving the Muhu skirts. I admire her work and I am so thankful that she gave me the opportunity through finding the tie- ups, to learn the technique and weave something that is inspired by yellow skirt of Muhu.

The overall experience and research gave me the knowledge to answer my main questions. Main questions were: What is the yellow Muhu skirt? How can you use an old tradition differently than it was used before? What happens when we look at an old technique with a new perspective? How can we preserve the principles of an old tradition? One of the most difficult question to answer was the rhetorical one: What is the yellow Muhu skirt? I can only answer this question by using my point of view. The Muhu skirt for me, as it's revealed in my work, is something with very variable character and with the wish to change. I think the yellow Muhu skirt, just like the Muhu skirts from other periods are the "face" of the Muhu women. Women from the Muhu Island were interested changes. Like it was said, everything new that showed up into the island whether it be, dyes, patterns etc. were right away seen on the skirt. In my opinion the Muhu skirt was changeable by nature, unpredictable.

I think the yellow skirt of Muhu brings up different emotions. This was seen in Margot Marks reaction to my work. After seeing the Muhu skirt motifs on something other than on the Muhu skirt, she felt that the tradition had been used in the wrong way.

In regards to emotions, the striped pattern on Muhu skirt does not leave any resident of Estonia indifferent. This is seen in the interest of different objects that are covered with a pattern influenced by the Muhu skirt.

As my project was mainly practical, the other questions that were asked found an answer through the practical work. The practical part of this project was very time consuming and challenging, especially for me who's main field is not weaving. Finding a new goal for a traditional technique or in other words; using the tradition differently than it has been used before, is good way for a designer to challenge herself to make something new that has a character and a story to tell.

From an interior designer's point of view, working with traditions and traditional patterns has been something which has made me think differently. I have been focused mainly on work with traditional patterns and techniques because of my two years Masters studies. I find working with traditions very engaging and have found that it offers many of opportunities to put my knowledge into the action. To practice this knowledge offers more opportunities for the future for collaborating with other craftsmen who are focused on making decorative object for an interior.

It was a very interesting experience for me to look into type of weaving used to make the yellow Muhu skirt from the perspective of interior design. After this experience I consider myself as a part of a small group of people who can weave using the traditional technique that has sunk into history. My aim was to learn to work with a tradition without imitating it but to show the traditional technique from another perspective. I wanted to design something new without copying the style that came directly from the traditional skirt. I wanted to use the tradition differently than it has been used before and to preserve the principles that go hand in hand with tradition.

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# Attachment 1

Yellow Muhu skirts that I used for the analysis



Estonian Open Air Museum, EVM E 95:8



Estonian Open Air Museum, EVM 201:1

## Attachment 2

Yellow Muhu skirts that I used in analysis



Estonian Open Air Museum, EVM 270:16



Estonian Open Air Museum, EVM E 99:5

## Attachment 3



Estonian National Museum, ERM A 554:60

# Attachment 4

Pick-up method weaving pattern

11 mai 2017

## VARP

Färdig längd: 1,00 m  
Krympning: 5%  
Vävlängd: 1,05 m  
Provvävning: 0 cm  
Invävning: 7%  
Tillägg: 0 cm  
Framknytning och efsingar: 80 cm  
Varplängd: 1,93 m

Varptrådar/cm: 4  
Antal varptrådar: 360

Total garnlängd: 695,47 m

m/kg: 4500,00  
Antal kg: 0,15  
kr/kg: 0  
Kostnad varp: kr 0,00

## INSLAG

Färdig bredd: 77,00 cm  
Krympning: 8%  
Vävbredd: 83,70 cm  
Invävning: 7%  
Skedbredd: 90,00 cm

Inslag/cm:  
Antal inslag: 0  
Totalt antal inslag: 0

Total garnlängd: 0 m

m/kg: 0  
Antal kg:  
kr/kg: 0  
Kostnad inslag: kr 0,00

Total kostnad:

# Attachment 5

Trial number 1, 2, 3 weaving pattern

11 mai 2017

## VARP

Färdig längd: 5,00 m  
Krympning: 5%  
Vävlängd: 5,26 m  
Provvävning: 0 cm  
Invävning: 7%  
Tillägg: 0 cm  
Framknytning och efsingar: 80 cm  
Varplängd: 6,46 m

Varptrådar/cm: 6  
Antal varptrådar: 390

Total garnlängd: 2519,13 m

m/kg: 4500,00  
Antal kg: 0,56  
kr/kg: 0  
Kostnad varp: kr 0,00

Total kostnad:

## INSLAG

Färdig bredd: 55,61 cm  
Krympning: 8%  
Vävbredd: 60,45 cm  
Invävning: 7%  
Skedbredd: 65,00 cm

Inslag/cm:  
Antal inslag: 0  
Totalt antal inslag: 0

Total garnlängd: 0 m

m/kg: 0  
Antal kg:  
kr/kg: 0  
Kostnad inslag: kr 0,00



# Attachment 6

Blanket trials weaving pattern.

11 mai 2017

## VARP

Färdig längd: 5,00 m  
Krympning: 5%  
Vävlängd: 5,26 m  
Provvävning: 0 cm  
Invävning: 7%  
Tillägg: 0 cm  
Framknytning och efsingar: 80 cm  
Varplängd: 6,46 m

Varpträdar/cm: 6  
Antal varpträdar: 390

Total garnlängd: 2519,13 m

m/kg: 3150,00  
Antal kg: 0,80  
kr/kg: 0  
Kostnad varp: kr 0,00

## INSLAG

Färdig bredd: 55,61 cm  
Krympning: 8%  
Vävbredd: 60,45 cm  
Invävning: 7%  
Skedbredd: 65,00 cm

Inslag/cm:  
Antal inslag: 0  
Totalt antal inslag: 0

Total garnlängd: 0 m

m/kg: 0  
Antal kg:  
kr/kg: 0  
Kostnad inslag: kr 0,00

Total kostnad:



# Attachment 7

Blanket number 1 and blanket number 2 weaving pattern.

11 mai 2017

## VARP

Färdig längd: 4,60 m  
Krympning: 8%  
Vävlängd: 5,00 m  
Provvävning: 50 cm  
Invävning: 7%  
Tillägg: 0 cm  
Framknytning och efsingar: 80 cm  
Varplängd: 6,71 m

Varptrådar/cm: 5  
Antal varptrådar: 724

Total garnlängd: 4860,92 m

m/kg: 3150,00  
Antal kg: 1,54  
kr/kg: 0  
Kostnad varp: kr 0,00

## INSLAG

Färdig bredd: 126,56 cm  
Krympning: 8%  
Vävbredd: 137,56 cm  
Invävning: 5%  
Skedbredd: 144,80 cm

Inslag/cm:  
Antal inslag: 0  
Totalt antal inslag: 0

Total garnlängd: 0 m

m/kg: 0  
Antal kg:  
kr/kg: 0  
Kostnad inslag: kr 0,00

Total kostnad:

# Attachment 8

The yarn that I used for weft:

## **Pick-up method:**

- Dark red and dark green solid colour woollen yarn (8/1) from Aase lõng –Estonia

## **Trials:**

### **Trial number 1**

- Aade lõng- Dark red, dark green, dark pink, light grey solid colour woollen yarn (8/1) Estonia
- Mercerized white cottot yarn (12/3)

### **Trial number 2**

- Natural white solid woollen yarn (8/1) Aade lõng . Estonia. Resto of the woollen yarn (8/1) yarn was dyed by Margot Marks for weaving yellow Muhu skirt. The woollen yarn that she dyed is New Zealand yarn from Latvia.
- Mercerized white cotton yarn
- Alv Kamgarn (14/2)

### **Trial number 3**

- Telespinn , Firvel- Lys grå, Dyp rosa, Natur, Jord

## **Blanket trials**

- Mohair: Dream Line- Air DL180, Drops- Kid Silk 10, Telespinn- Mari Lys Grå Bordeaux
- Ask Hifa2 (6,3/2)- Bleket hvit, Limegrønn, Olivengrønn, Blågrønn, Lys gul, Mellomblå, Mørk roserød, Dyp rosa, Lys blå, Melert brun, Melert mørk grå, Lys grå, Koks grå

## **Blanket number 1:**

- Ask- Hifa 2 (6,3/2) Bleket hvit, Limegrønn, Olivengrønn, Blågrønn, Lys gul
- Seljord Ullgarn- Colour numbers 44 and 38

## **Blanket number 2:**

- Ask- Hifa 2 (6,3/2) – Bleket hvit, Limegrønn, Olivengrønn, Blågrønn, Lys gul, Mellomblå, Mørk roserød, Lys rosa
- Seljord Ullgarn – Colour numbers 44 and 38

# Attachment 9

Blanket trials



*Trials woven with mohair yarn.*



*Pattern trials and colour trials*