

THESIS

WOVEN PLACES

Submitted by
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Department of Art

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of Master of Fine Art
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colorado
Spring 1989

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THESIS

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

April 4, 1989

WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR
SUPERVISION BY SHARLA FELL ACKLES ENTITLED WOVEN PLACES BE
ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF FINE ART.

Committee on Graduate Work

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Advisor

[REDACTED]

Department Head

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

WOVEN PLACES

My work is a reflection of the textile tradition and a reminder of "home". Weaving and needlework reconnect me with thoughts of family, the passing on of skills and knowledge, security and a belonging to a greater whole. These fiber processes are traditional "home crafts" in our culture. In my work, I have chosen to cherish those qualities of the past and to even accentuate them with my choices of fibers, traditional weaving techniques and imagery. The large rugs are woven of "mopping cotton". This fiber was chosen because of its connection to rag rugs woven in the New England area which are part of my past. The rugs are intended for the floor, to be used and worn out. In placing the rug on the floor, they form a connection to the foundation of the building they are in and with the earth. There is a connecting with the earth as protector, nurturer and sustainer. As the home is a symbol of personal protection and belonging, the earth is the home of humanity. In attempting to unite with the earth, there follows an awareness of the involvement of the earth with the moon and stars, day and night, the seasons and the cycles of time. Moon, stars and earth imagery is used to

symbolize the cycles of nature, and the interdependence of all of life. In the large rugs the woven structure is divided into seven sections as a reminder of the calendar and the marking of time. The purpose of the large rugs is to create a special place. They are not to be walked across, but rather they are intended to be entered into for physical rest and inward journey.

The journey to occur on the rugs is one of a search for symmetry and balance. The forms used in the rugs are basic and are chosen for their simplicity which allows them to symbolize complex and complete thoughts. I use the square and the cube in my work as symbols of the rational. They are rigid, calculated and constructed. The circle and sphere are dynamic and vital. They are fluid and emotional with no beginning and no end. When used together, I am working with the concept of the duality of life; of good and evil, light and dark, male and female. Combining the two creates a dialogue concerning balance. They are seen side by side, overlapped and intertwined and sometimes alone. The relationship and interconnectedness of the forms create harmony and conflict.

While the cotton rugs create a special place for inward journey and a physical place for balance and symmetry, the smaller tapestries are symbols of these concepts. Rather than providing a physical space, they provide imagery intended to create memories of a feeling, of a state of

mind. They are about home, not a literal home, but of a conceptual "home", a place of security and tradition. Like the cotton rugs they are a reflection of the poles of opposites, and speak of balancing, focusing and centering. The borders of repeated patterns give the tapestries structure and protection and are symbolic of the cycles of time. The influence for the tapestries, especially for the borders came from the Oriental rug tradition. Not only were the rugs of the Orient woven with elaborate bordering, but the weavers used imagery and color as symbols of what was important in their lives.

The embroidered work defines the rugs and tapestries. Moons, stars, windows, eyes, tea cups, circles and squares are sewn into the work to describe the weavings. The embroidery is often conveying a sense of focus and balance by drawing the eye and therefore the mind to a central position.

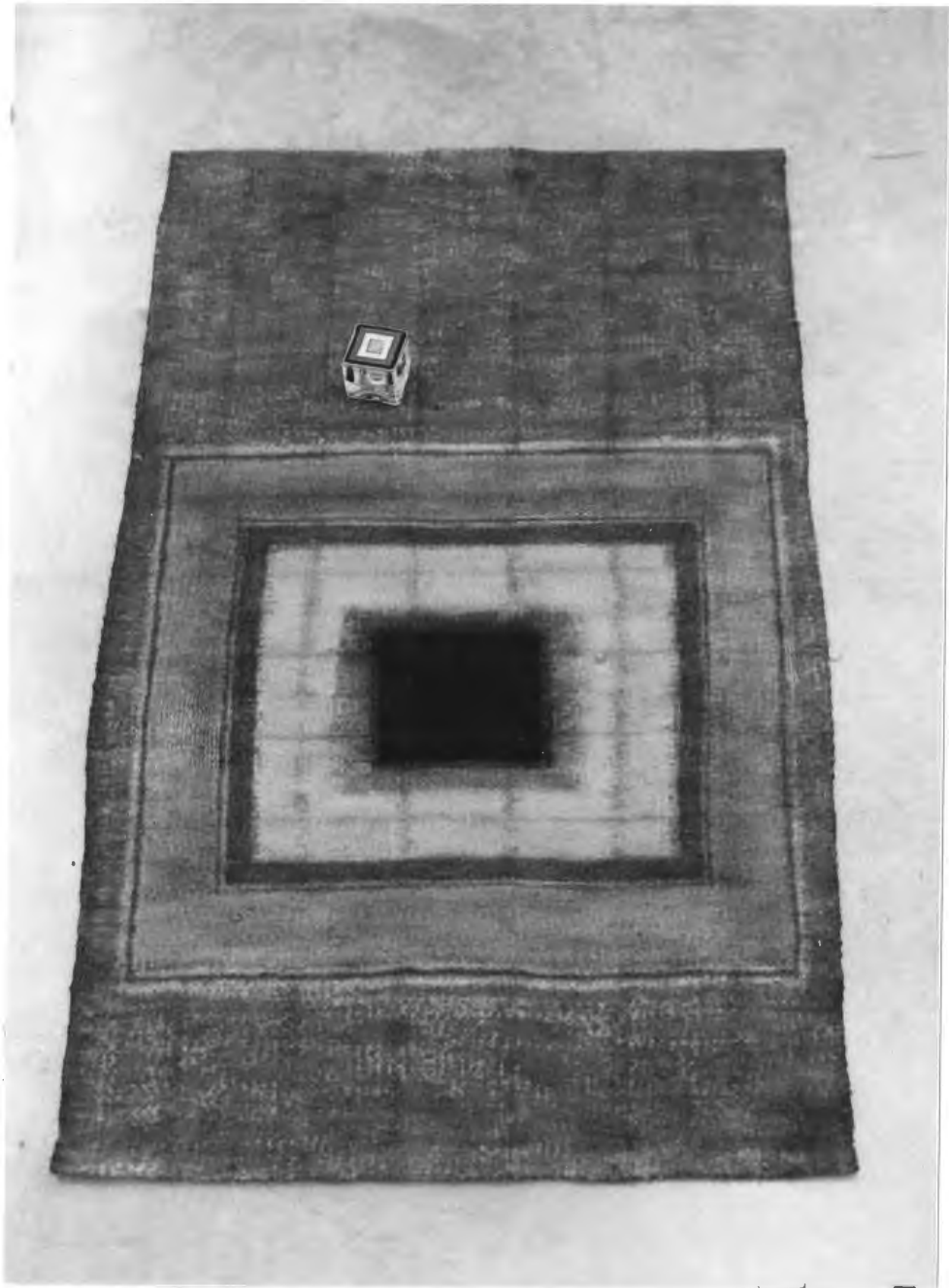
As a weaver I feel a connection with textile traditions. My work is an exploration of these traditions both in the techniques and imagery chosen. The rugs I weave are quiet and personal as are the processes I use. Both possess meditative qualities. While working the mind turns inward. The processes of weaving and embroidery, and the finished work evoke journeys involving the meshing and integrating of two or more separate elements into a complete

and cohesive whole. My work is a search for balance both formally and personally.

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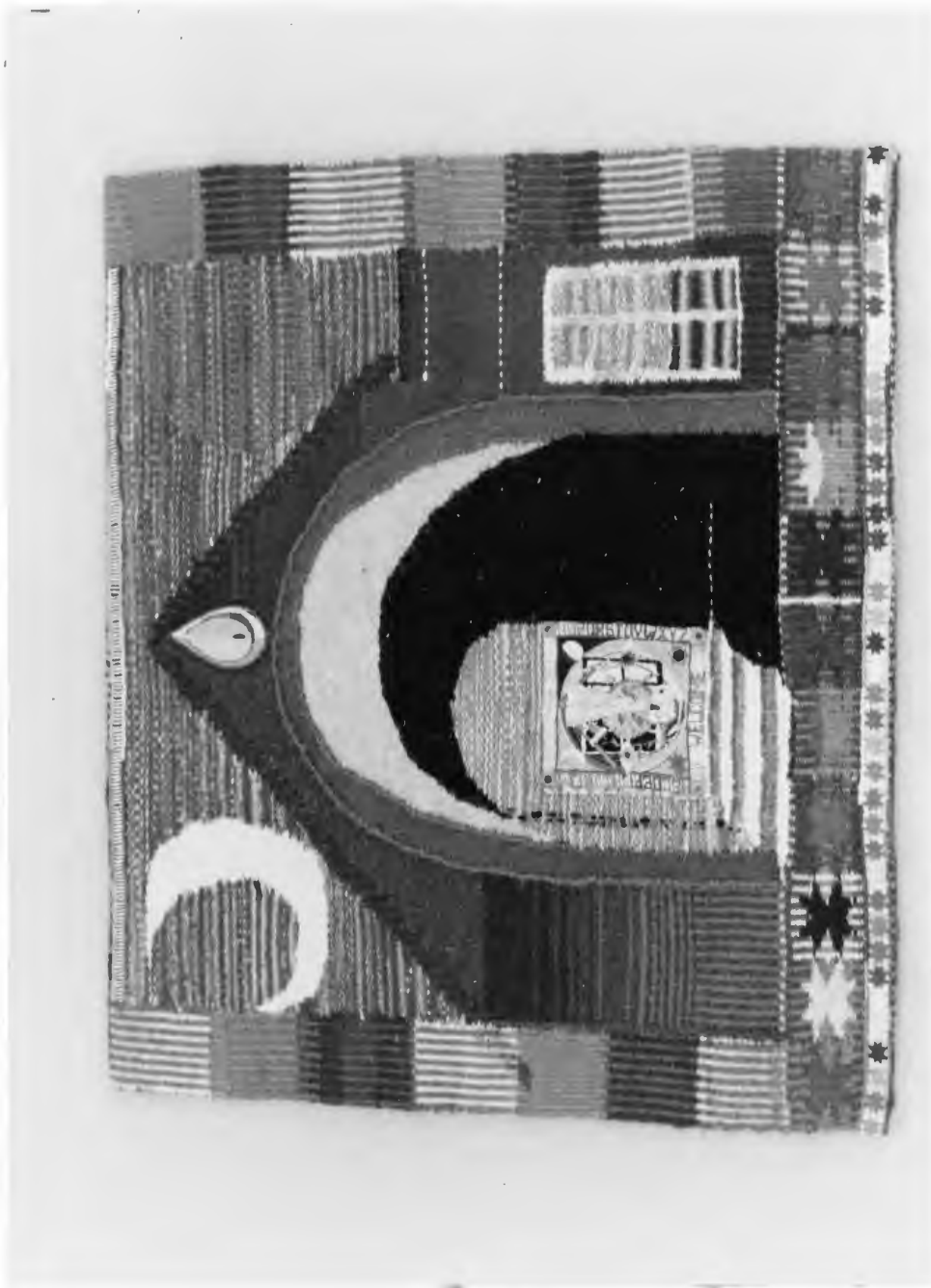
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Woven and dyed cotton rug with embroidered sphere.
79"x59".



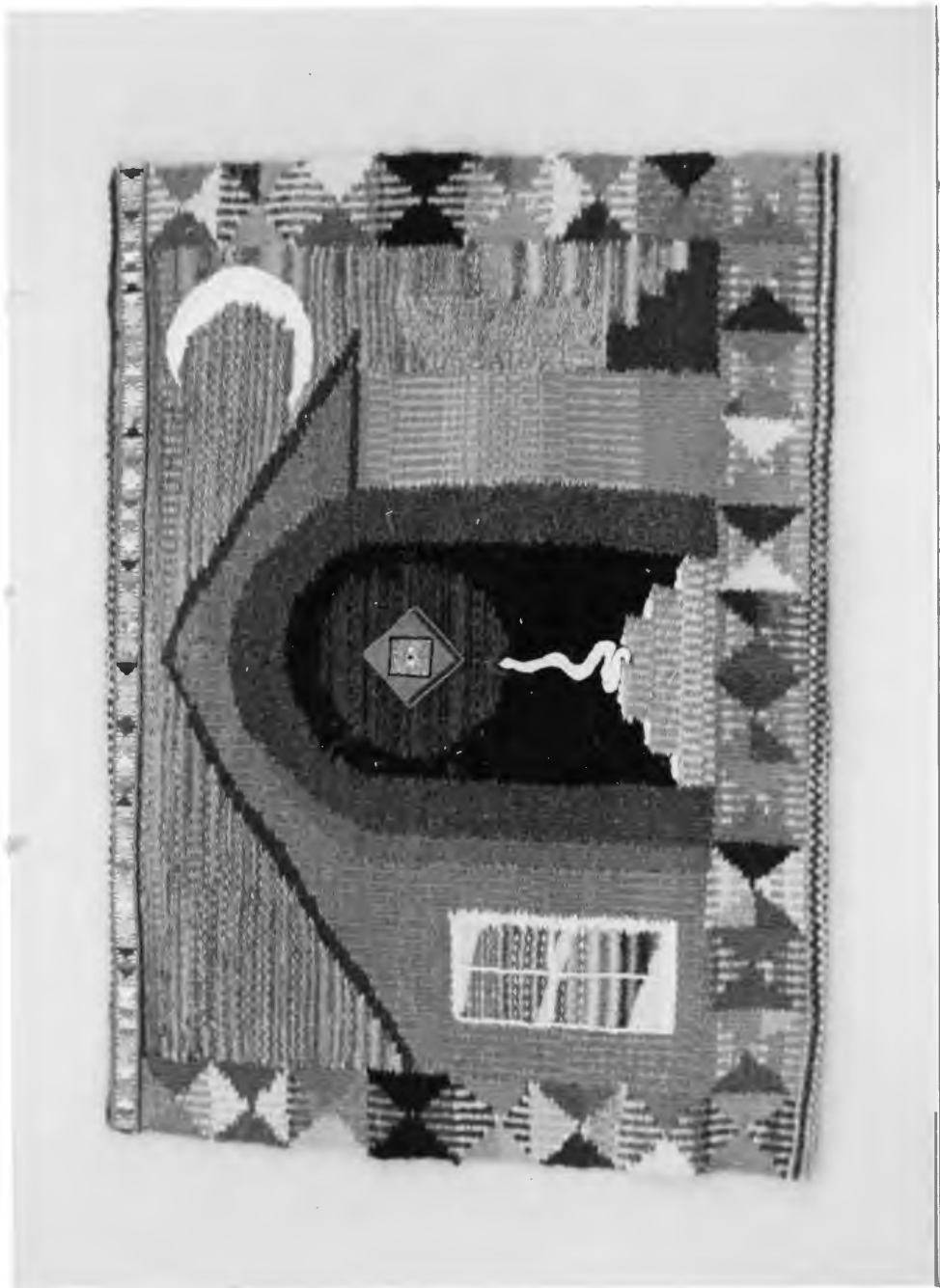
Mother Earth, Father Sky

33"x59"



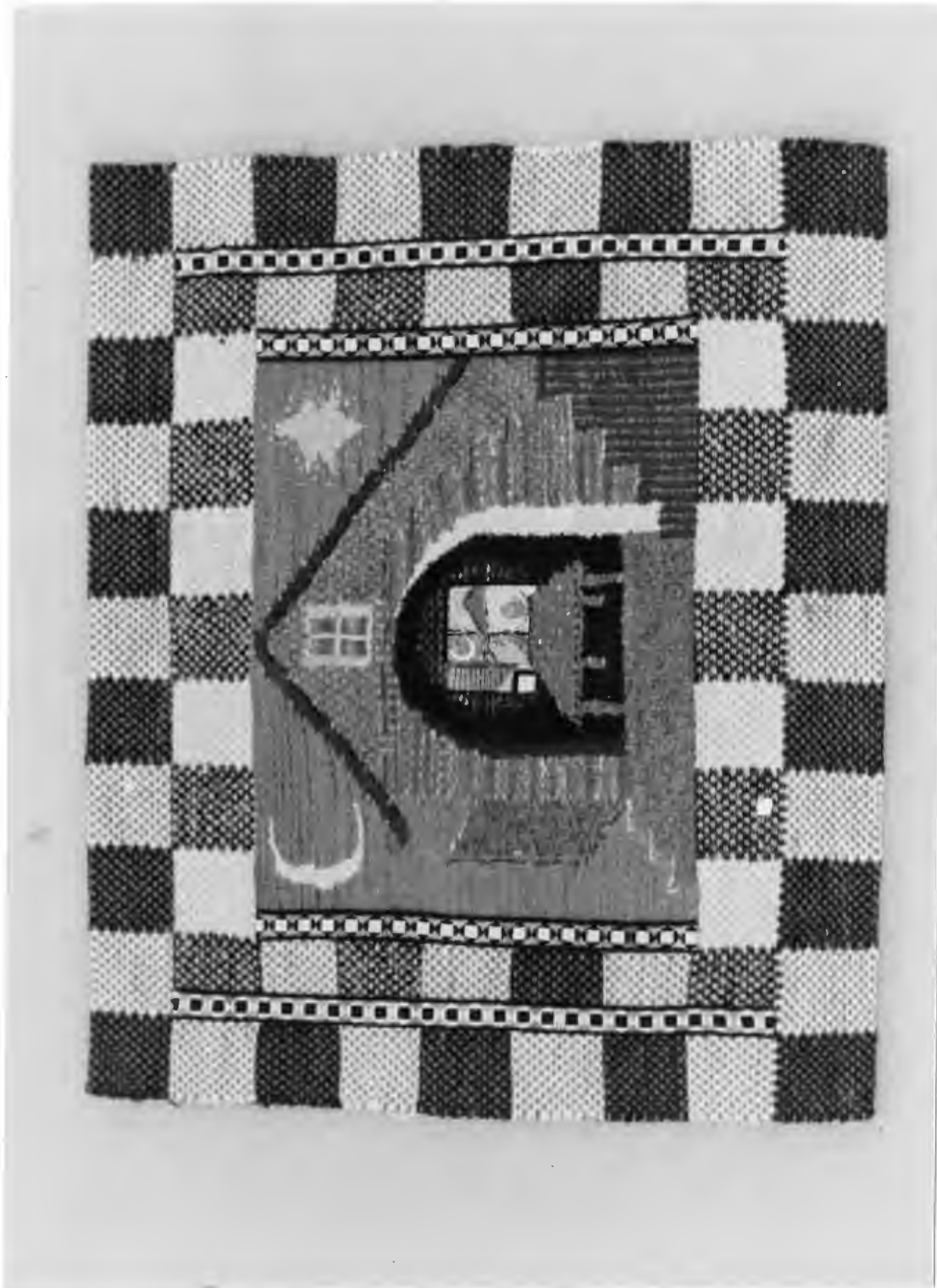
Memory

28"x23"



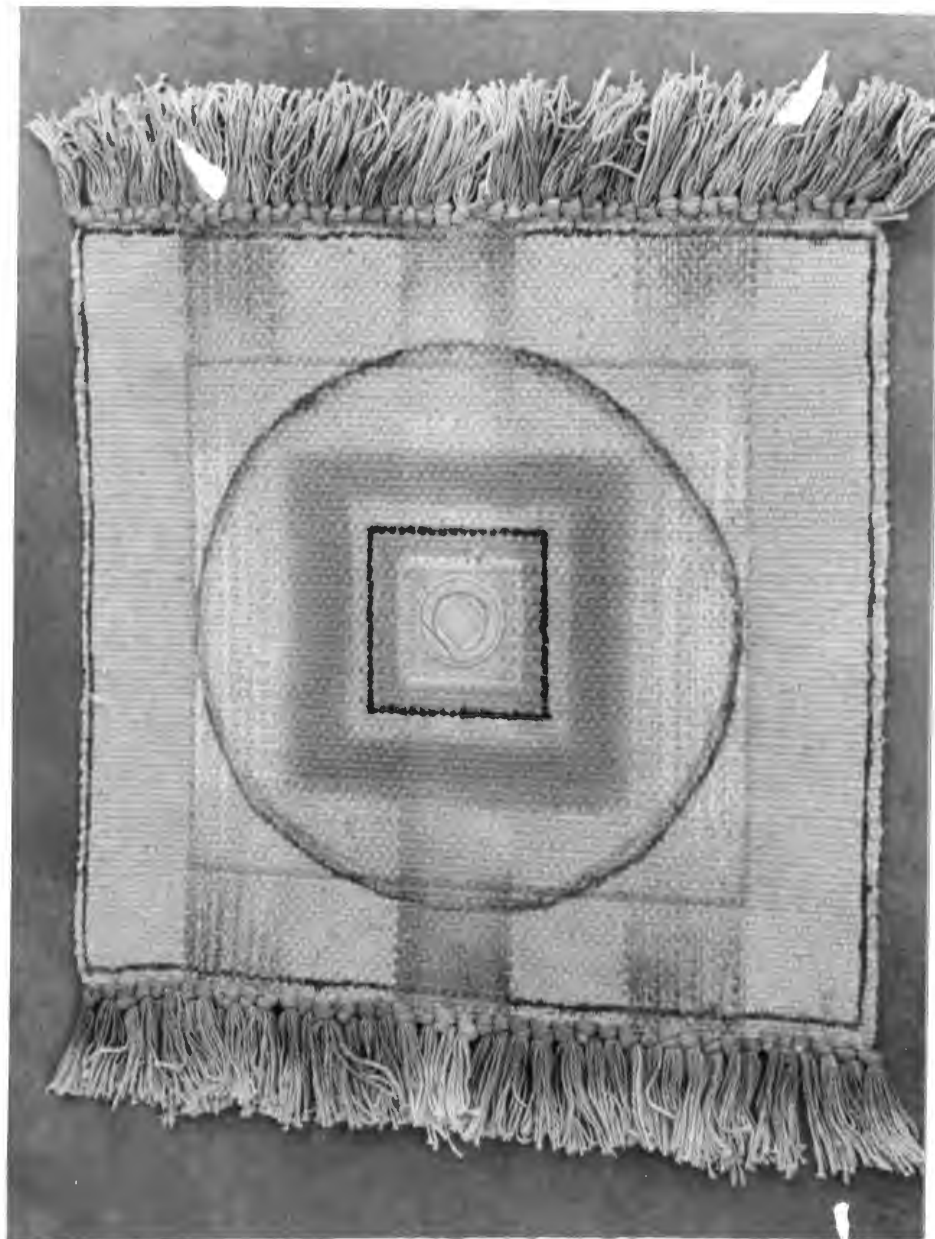
Untitled

26"x21"



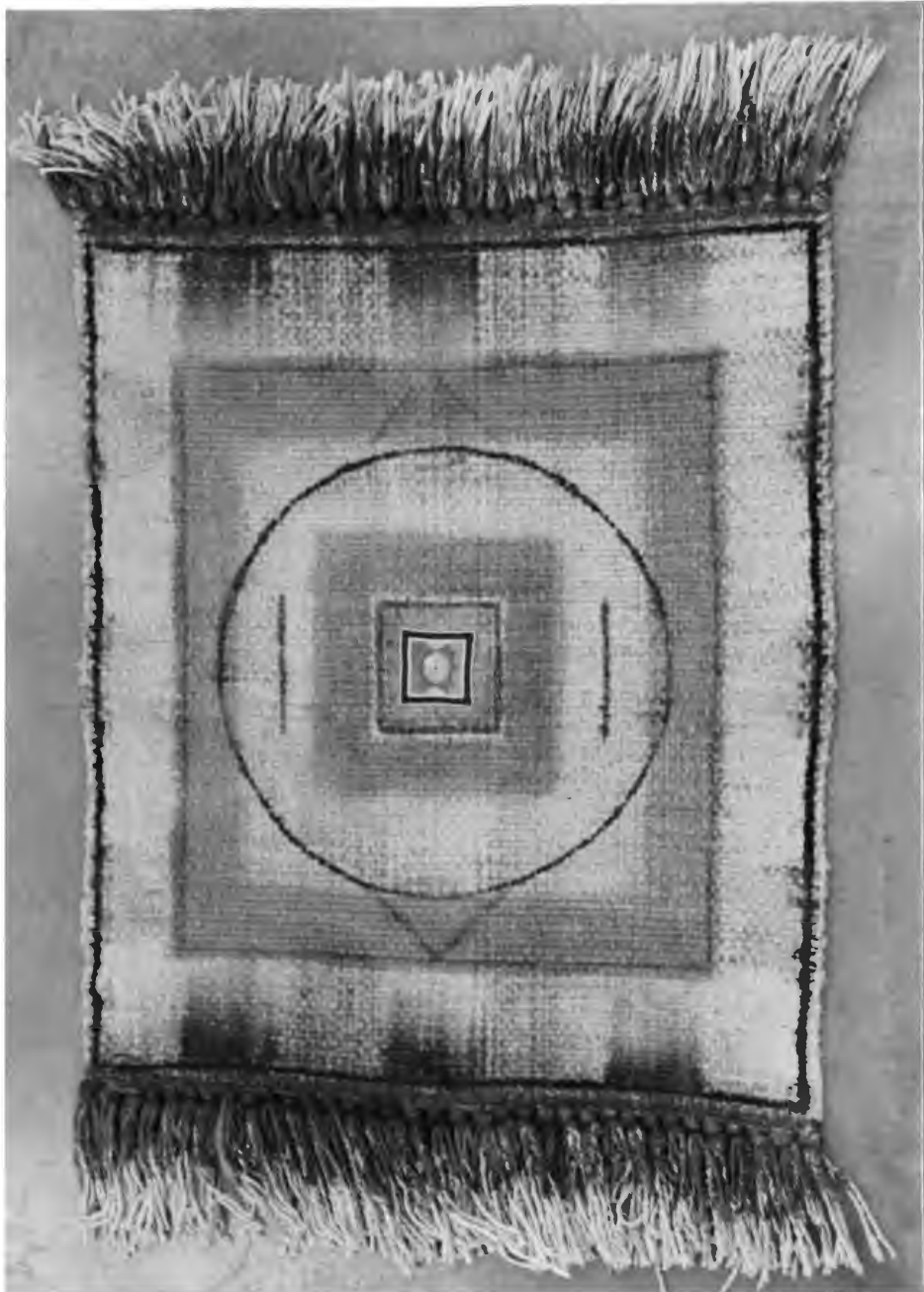
Rooms, stairs and floors

26"x23"



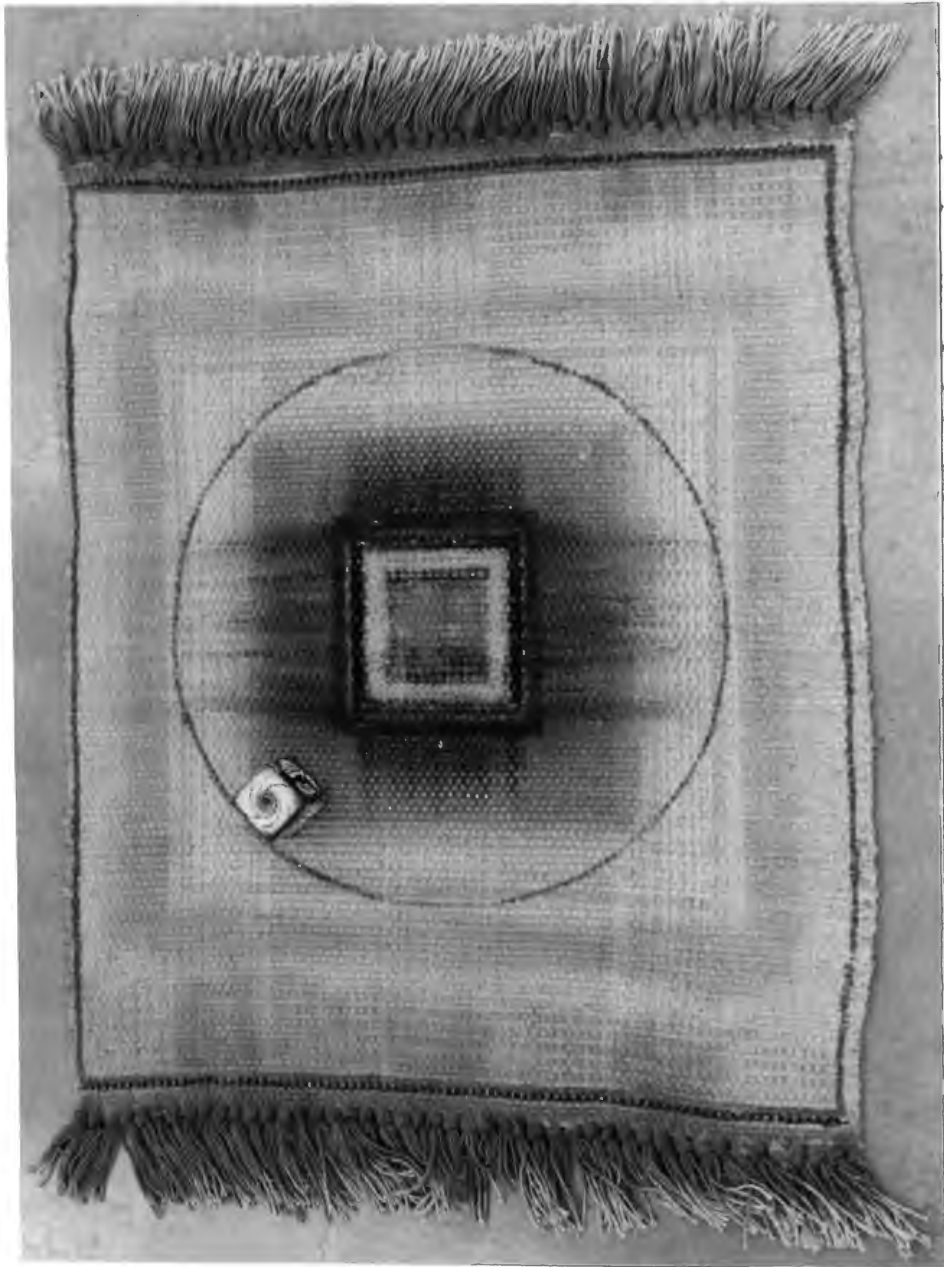
Untitled

45"x38"



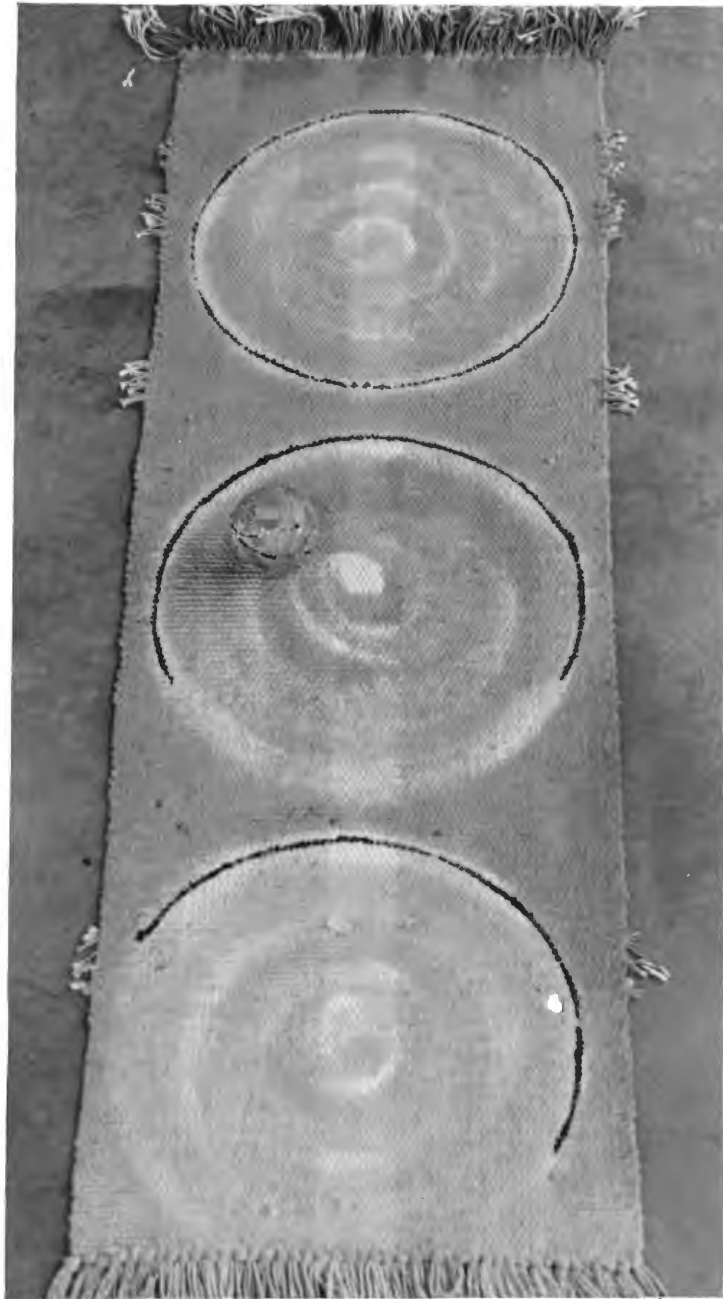
Left - Right - Wrong

48"x34"



Dichotomy

48"x35"



Earth Rug

79"x59"