



LIGHT AND TRANQUIL

GERD LINDQVIST AND MARIE GUNNARSSON BRING THEIR FINE FEEL FOR BEAUTIFUL MATERIALS AND SENSE OF THE UNOBTRUSIVE INTO THEIR TEXTILE CREATIONS FOR HÄLSINGLAND CHURCHES.

A BEAUTIFUL DRAPE. Fine materials. Design that radiates a calm. Designing and creating a funeral pall is a significant commission for what can be a very painful occasion. Bidding farewell to one's nearest and dearest is something that should take place in quiet, without arresting symbols and disturbing elements, according to textile artist Marie Gunnarsson, who designed the pall for Skog Church. For her the design process always starts with the material. She had seen a fine, lustrous two-ply woollen yarn at Wålstedts Textilverkstad, spun many years ago by the legendary Lasse Wålstedt. Dyeing this yarn was inconceivable. The shimmer of the wool held its own. But when the yarn calculations were made, it turned out there would not be enough of this woollen yarn. So Wålstedts Textilverkstad spun some more yarn which was so close in quality to the older yarn that it cannot be detected in the cloth. The linen warp was dyed a shade of grey-green, which is part of the colour scheme in the church. Dyeing was carried out by the Hälsinge company Holma-Helsingland.

Gerd Lindqvist and Marie Gunnarsson worked closely together throughout the design process, which initially entailed many, many woven swatches.

– I like working directly with textile materials. Showing textiles in the form of sketches and images is difficult. It is easier to convey to the commissioner what is envisaged if they can feel the prospective quality, said Marie.

The commissioners in this case were very knowledgeable about textiles. When we met up in the church, Ingrid Östergård was also present. It was she who, amongst other things, wove the copy of the Skog Tapestry which can be seen in the church. She too has woven a funeral pall. Part of our conversation was about costing. Understanding how much time it takes to create a quality of this kind for a pall. How the work is that much more rewarding when the commissioners understand and truly appreciate the work involved. This is also a form of guarantee that the textiles will be cared for appropriately and used.

The weave is a dräll, 5 pedals and 10 shafts. The quality is relatively open and the slightly unevenly spun woollen yarn produces a lovely

effect in the weave. The funeral pall was woven as two lengths and sewn together up the middle. Marie printed a central border on raw silk. Stitched on top of this border pattern repeat was a fine translucent knitted length, through which the pattern is discernible. The effect is restful.

– The thinking behind my design was that the textile's function would be apparent and the textile would speak for itself.

Gerd then interpreted Marie's intentions. Sample weaving, more sample weaving, cutting off, washing. Until they were both satisfied.

Once the pall was done, it turned out that the corners on this relatively large cover spread out too far and risked getting trod on. The corners were then trimmed and rounded off into a lovely and functional shape. A long woollen band handwoven by Marie was then stitched to the whole of the lower edge.

– This is a superb method for making a fine edging. Woollen tape can be pressed pretty well into whatever shape you want and it creates a supple and beautiful finish.

Gerd and Marie have worked on a lot of commissions together. Gerd used to be the director of the Bollnäs Handicraft Association. She remembers the first time Marie came into the shop, over 20 years ago, after Marie's professor at Konstfack, Wanja Djanaieff, had tipped her about this potential contact. Many of the commissions they have carried out together are now in churches all around Hälsingland.

Marie had brought with her to Skog Church swatches for another more recent commission, for Rengsjö Church. This had been a big commission, in white wool and silk. Different techniques were tried out in the same weave. For the altar frontal, she had chosen doublecloth as a technique and for effect had padded certain sections of the doublecloth with fleece from Filtmakeriet, a regional textile company. Raking light can sometimes be problematic – everything shows up. Here, it rather created a fine effect.

As we left Skog Church, the evening sun sent its rays in towards the funeral pall. Golden light landed on the softly formed cover, shining onto the lustrous wool and the golden linen.

Page 26 Altar frontal for Rengsjö Church. The funeral pall in Skog Church came about through close collaboration between Gerd Lindqvist and textile artist Marie Gunnarsson, both living in Hälsingland.



Commissions in Hälsinge churches

Sanctuary rug, chasuble and stole for Bollnäs Church.

Chasuble and stole, lectern cloth, burse and corporal. Altar frontal for Rengsjö Church.

Funeral pall for Skog Church.

Chasuble and stole for Ovanåker Church.

Cope for Söderala Church.

All the textiles for Trönö Church, article in VÄV 3/09.