

# Blends Color Harmonies Into Fine Garment Fabrics

## Pola Stout Began Art in Vienna Which Has Put Her Name in Product of One American Mill

By VIRGINIA POPE

Mixing the colored yarns that go into the fabrics she weaves is like mixing a cake, says Pola Stout. She blends her fibres and works out her color harmonies, adding a little of this and a little of that, until the desired effect is achieved. For some years this designer, who has been spoken of as the young Rodier of America, has been testing her knowledge of color and yarns in her own business, which has supplied beautiful woollens to many of the big dress houses of New York.

Now Mrs. Stout's experience is to be put to a much broader use. The Botany Worsted Mills have engaged her to head a division within their organization, to be known as Pola Stout Fabrics. It is said that this is the first time that a woman has had so large an opportunity to design fabrics for garments in the woolen industry of America.

Although Mrs. Stout was trained to work with handlooms in the Kunstgewerbe Schule of Vienna, she likes to know that today her designs are being executed on power looms. She is mass-minded. She projects her imagination into the world of American women when she is evolving new fabrics, envisioning every type with which she is familiar. "I like to make American fabrics for American women," she says.

### Designs Created on Train

This creator of textiles asserts that she lives with her designs before they become actualities. Frequently they develop in her imagination as she travels back and forth on the train to her country home, perched on the top of a hill just outside of Brewster, N. Y. Then, in her large workroom which overlooks rolling green meadows and faraway hills, she puts her projects on paper. Frequently her two small daughters, Rebecca, aged two and a half years, and Barbara, just turned seven, watch her in silent awe.

Mrs. Stout's face lights with joy as she tells of taking various lengths of raw fabrics in her fingers to test them for quality and strength. When she has found the ingredients that will produce the desired texture they are spun into yarn. The soft woolen strands that will eventually be worked into glowing tweeds are laid in patterns and counted—so many up and down, so many across—as the designer develops the intricacies of new weaves.

Samples, called blankets, are made in long banner-like strips. The first part of the proceeding is done with yarns in their natural coloring; tests with dyes follow. Mrs. Stout likes to work out a range of colors which is so true that any two colors, even though they are at the opposite ends of the scale, can be put together harmoniously.

The designer's talent first manifested itself when, as a little girl, she smiled her way into the good graces of the dressmakers in her native town of Stryj, in Poland. Her winning manner persuaded them to give her the scraps that fell from their cutting tables. With them she dressed her dolls in a



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Mrs. Pola Stout.

somewhat cubistic manner, she relates. Then she would set them in the front windows of her home so that passers-by could admire their finery.

### Parents Opposed Art Career

Young Pola's parents refused to listen to her pleadings that she be permitted to take up art as a career. They wanted her to enter a learned profession and sent her to the University of Lemberg to study philosophy. The urge to follow her talent mastered her; in secret she planned to run away.

In Lemberg, after her classroom work was done, she sped to a milliner's, where she spent her spare hours making hats. When she had earned enough to pay her fare to Vienna, she took such few possessions as she could carry in her hands and left for the Austrian capital.

The day of her arrival she went to the Kunstgewerbe Schule and made arrangements to study under the famed Professor Joseph Hoffmann. In her eagerness, she had overlooked the necessity of having money to pay for room and lodging. For six weeks she slept on a park bench.

For four years she absorbed all she could of the teachings of the great art school, meanwhile getting plenty of practical training, for she was obliged to earn her living. During that period many of her textiles were accepted by the Wiener Werkstätte. Then, eager to try her strength, the young woman set forth to travel. She went to Paris where she found employment in the fabric houses that supply the couture. She moved on to Berlin and observed new schools of art. Finally, her venturesome spirit led her to America.

Her need for immediate money took her far afield, and she neglected fabric designing for millinery, making lampshades and finally interior decorating. All proved moneymakers, but they lacked the soul-satisfying qualities she sought. The old urge proved so strong, however, that at last she turned to the designing of handloomed fabrics and the cloths into which they were to be made. Then she began to have her designs carried out on power looms.

Mrs. Stout is the wife of Rex Stout, the author. While she is spinning yarns in one wing of their hill-top farmhouse, he is spinning his yarns about Nero Wolfe in another.