

# HAND WOVEN

Finding the  
Right Loom

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## *Texture!*

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Grasscloth,  
and More

**PLUS**  
Snakeskin-  
patterned  
Scarf

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Weave a  
*Hula Hoop*  
*Rug* Page 58

MAY/JUNE 2015  
ISSUE 175

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# HANDWOVEN®

MAY/JUNE 2015, VOLUME XXXVIII, NUMBER 3

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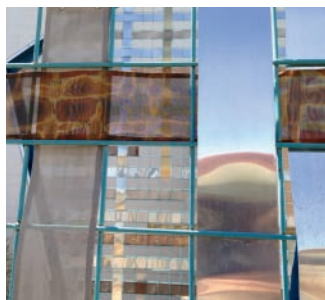
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ANNE ELIXHAUSER



# From the Editor

ANITA OSTERHAUG

Many of us have heard that there are two types of weavers: color/texture people and structure/pattern people. If you read Madelyn van der Hoogt's descriptions of their weaving habits, you might see yourself in one category or the other. But I had the pleasure of meeting with the Handweavers Guild of Boulder in April, and during that visit, it struck me that we are all texture people. At the show-and-tell portion of the guild meeting, the presenter said "What you can't see from your seats is the wonderful 'hand' of these pieces, so come up during the break and feel them." Later, at lunch, we talked about how many of us start with the look and feel of the yarn when we plan a project. After lunch, Elizabeth Shoeman, guild president, took me to see the very textural arches at the local performing arts center, woven by members in celebration of the guild's 50th anniversary. Whether the texture of a project or yarn is soft, smooth, crimpy, lofty, or bumpy, it figures into all of our weaving choices.



Close-up of woven metal strips in Luminisence, the arch woven by the Handweavers Guild of Boulder.  
PHOTO BY ANITA OSTERHAUG

This issue of *Handwoven* offers texture to delight the hand and eye. Dianne Toten presents parrot-bright "crimp cloth." Sarah Jackson's "fuzzy tote" and Patricia Morton's grasscloth journals will brighten your days. David Wismar evokes the smooth texture of a snakeskin with Tencel and twill, Yoko Arai intrigues us with the textural pleasures of *shifu* (Japanese paperweaving), and Elisabeth Hill brings liveliness to your kitchen with her Danish rosette towels.

Summer is upon us, so we also have weaving projects to do with kids or just for fun. And in case warm days have you daydreaming about new possibilities, Tom Knisely philosophizes on how to choose the perfect loom, and Marilyn Cowgill and Jill Graham relate their adventures in the Handweavers Guild of America Certificate of Excellence program.

## FUTURE THEMES

### September/October 2015 Handwoven for the Home: Everyday Heirlooms

From an elegant runner to a humble kitchen towel, every handwoven household textile is a treasure. In our 2015 Reader Challenge, we'll celebrate everyday heirlooms from the loom.

### November/December 2015 Two-Shuttle Weaves

Double your weaving fun with this issue devoted to two-shuttle weaves. From overshot to shadow weave and even deflected doubleweave, weaving with two shuttles opens up a world of new design possibilities. Learn tips and tricks for keeping track of your shuttles as you weave and how to keep your selvages neat and clean as you switch shuttles.

### January/February 2016 Celebrating Linen

Fall in love with flax! Crisp and classic, linen has been a favorite of weavers for millennia. In this issue, we'll explore the history of linen throughout the world, share projects woven from linen and linen blends, and get some tips from the experts on how to warp and weave linen without worry.

# HANDWOVEN®

VOLUME XXXVIII

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**AMANDA ROBINETTE** is a rag weaver who finds inspiration in waste textiles. When she's not weaving, she is blogging at [westernsakiori.com](http://westernsakiori.com) and teaching tai chi.

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**NANCY ARTHUR HOSKINS** of Eugene, Oregon, is an author, teacher, and artist with a special interest in weaving, embroidery, color theory, and researching Egyptian textiles.

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**SARA GOLDENBERG** of Boulder, Colorado, is an artist and teacher. She received her BFA from California College of the Arts and her MFA from Colorado State University.

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**YOKO ARAI** is a fiber artist specializing in weaving, spinning, dyeing, and felting for over 42 years. Raised and educated in Japan, her influences come from Japanese culture and traditional techniques.

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**MARILYNN COWGILL** has been weaving for 25 years and still finds more to learn. She loves weaving luxurious fabrics and using them to make garments.

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**JILL GRAHAM** is a master spinner with a specialty in spinning cashmere and cashmere/silk for lace knitting.

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**TOM KNISELEY** of East Berlin, Pennsylvania, teaches weaving at The Mannings Handweaving School. He was named 2011 Teacher of the Year by *Handwoven* and his textilian fans.

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**DIANNE TOTTEN** of Marietta, Georgia, continues her in-depth exploration of crimp cloth and finds the possibilities endless. She teaches her crimp technique and exhibits internationally.

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**SARAH H. JACKSON** tries to weave each day and feels blessed by her passion for weaving. When not weaving, she enjoys reading, knitting, and bike riding.

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**PATRICIA MORTON** lives in Virginia, finding weaving inspiration everywhere, from granite hills to hotel room wallpaper. She co-owns Treeditions, which produces gorgeous weaving tools.

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**BETH MULLINS** of Roanoke, Virginia, has been weaving since 1978. She enjoys weaving pieces that will be used in daily life and sells her work on Etsy at [www.frederickavenue.etsy.com](http://www.frederickavenue.etsy.com).

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**DAVID WISMAR** of Citrus Heights, California, is a retired computer instructor. He is an experienced weaver who is self-taught from books and videos.

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**ELISABETH HILL** of Conway, Massachusetts, is currently being led into the depths of dimity by her friend and fellow master weaver Ute Bargmann.

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**DEBORAH HEYMAN** of Irvine, California, is grateful to have landed in her future where there is time to enjoy creating with textiles in all their forms.

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**JODI YBARRA** has worked at Cotton Clouds for over 25 years. She is passionate about weaving with cotton and loves designing projects for fellow rigid-heddle weavers.

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**HALEY PIERSON-COX** is a Brooklyn-based craft writer. Specializing in fabric and fiber, she designs items that are both beautiful and made to be used.

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**SUSIE TAYLOR** has a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute and an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles. She is a Jacquard designer and recipient of the Certificate of Excellence, Level I in Handweaving.

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**ROBIN LYNDE** of Vacaville, California, is a sheep farmer and weaver. She has creatively joined these two passions in Meridian Jacobs, a full-service farm and fiber shop.

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# Letters



Sett Fiesta scarves.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBIN FRASIER

## INSPIRED BY HANDWOVEN

I wanted to let you know that I really enjoyed the Sett Fiesta Runner and Shawl project in your May/June 2014 issue. I had been looking for a weave structure that would give me the loosely woven style of scarf that is so popular now, and this draft was perfect.

The added fun of this project was the notion that I could let go of lining up weaving structure changes with color changes in the warp and weft. Besides making the project much less stressful, it turned out to be great for using up stash. I was able to combine fibers of roughly the same weights—I even combined yarns of different fiber content—and everything seemed to work.

Thanks so much for another great inspiration!

—Robin Frasier, via email

## IN PRAISE OF BOG JACKETS

I am sure many other readers who looked at the beautiful Broken Borders Jacket in the March/April 2015 issue had the same reaction I did: "What a nice bog jacket!" Even my nonweaver friend immediately recognized it as such. The author used a commercial pattern that requires cutting the fabric into several pieces, making ten seams, few or none on the selvedge. With a traditionally woven bog jacket, the same garment is made in two pieces

with just four seams, and the only cutting is the neckline/center yoke opening. To get the effect of stripes going in perpendicular directions, Ms. Coatney would indeed have had to weave with intermittent supplementary warps rather than wefts for the top/sleeves, but that doesn't affect the fact that this is a bog jacket.

I bring this to your attention because the bog jacket/shirt has been much maligned. Indeed, in a recent *Weaving Today* eNewsletter it was used as the epitome of bad style in a pitch for webinars on using handwoven cloth with commercial patterns. I have made many bog jackets and people love them. The bog shirt/jacket, as your article shows, can be a stunning garment. Many weavers do not sew well and are reluctant to cut fabric, so a well-designed bog jacket is a good garment for them.

Thanks for showing such a good example of a traditional weaverly garment, and I wanted to make sure readers understood that the bog jacket/shirt can be lovely indeed.

—Diane G. Crowder, via email

## ADORABLE DRAWDOWN

*Do you have an excellent weaving tip or trick that you want to share? An adorable photo of a child, grandchild, or pet at the loom? Or a fun weaving story you want to share? Please send it our way! Each issue, the sender of our favorite letter or photo will win a special weaving-related prize.*



Windsor Bixler, daughter of *Handwoven* contributor Sara Bixler and granddaughter of Tom Knisely, works on her own unique drawdown. PHOTO BY SARA BIXLER

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# What's Happening



Designed by Mark Adams, Flight of Angels, woven by M. and Mme. Paul Avignon, 1962. Wool and cotton. Denver Art Museum Neusteter Textile Collection: Gift of the E. Mark Adams and Beth Van Hoesen Adams Trust. Copyright Mark Adams

## TAPESTRY THROUGH THE AGES

From the exquisite silk works of ancient China to the room-insulating wool masterpieces of Medieval Europe and modern works of abstract art, tapestries have long captured the imagination of weavers around the world. The Denver Art Museum celebrates the long and varied history of this textile technique in the new exhibit Creative Crossroads: The Art of Tapestry. The exhibit features over twenty diverse examples of tapestry, including traditional wallhangings and rugs, as well as clothing, sculptural forms, and furniture covers.

The tapestries in Creative Crossroads span the globe and the centuries, with works from throughout Europe, China, Turkey, Peru, and the American Southwest, ranging from traditional tapestries to modern pieces. The exhibit runs from May 31, 2015 through March 6, 2016. More information on the exhibit and the Denver Art Museum can be found at [denverartmuseum.org](http://denverartmuseum.org).

## Don't Stop "BeWeaving": 7 Tips for Weaving with Arthritis

BY THE ARTHRITIS FOUNDATION

More than fifty million Americans live with arthritis, but few people understand the full impact of a disease that prevents people of all ages from enjoying hobbies and completing everyday tasks. Fortunately, new treatments and support are enabling people living with arthritis to say "yes" to more of the activities they love. May is National Arthritis Awareness month, so to raise awareness, the Arthritis Foundation has compiled a list of tips that can help people living with arthritis to say "yes" to weaving.

### 1. **First and foremost, don't put away your loom:**

Unless your doctor recommends otherwise, continue to weave. More than an enjoyable hobby, activities such as weaving may increase dexterity and prevent joints from becoming stiff.

### 2. **Get comfortable with your loom:**

The movements required with rigid-heddle looms can be particularly taxing for people with arthritis in their wrists, hands, or fingers. Likewise, operating the foot treadle of a floor loom may be uncomfortable for people with arthritis in other areas.

Use the loom that is most comfortable for your condition.

### 3. **Avoid finger-manipulation weaves:**

Projects that avoid finger manipulation weaves can reduce possible strain on arthritic hands and fingers, and are less likely to be interrupted during an arthritis flare.

**4. Set a timer:** To avoid straining joints or muscles due to prolonged, repetitive movements, set a timer to ensure you take appropriate breaks.

**5. Warm up:** Before sitting down to your loom, loosen stiff joints and



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muscles with light movements or the application of heat.

**6. Stretch:** Following a weaving session, take a moment to stretch any joints or muscles that may feel tight.

**7. Get a grip:** If possible, apply rubber grips or foam to commonly handled items, such as beater bars and shuttles. This prevents slipping and reduces exertion on the hands.

For more information and resources on living with arthritis, please visit the Arthritis Foundation website at [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org).

## Out and About

Are you looking for some fun fiber-related activities to attend? Check out this small selection from our online calendar. You can find additional information about conferences, festivals, classes, and more on [weavingtoday.com](http://weavingtoday.com).

**June 13–14.** The 25th Annual Estes Park Wool Market will be held at the fairgrounds in Estes Park, Colorado. Along with the usual demonstrations, vendors, and woolly animals to ogle, this year's market will also feature the free Woolly Wonder Fashion show. For more information on the market and premarket workshops, go to [www.colorado.gov/townofestespark/signatureevents](http://www.colorado.gov/townofestespark/signatureevents).

**June 18–20.** The Weavers Guild of Minnesota will host the 2015 Midwest Weavers Conference "Urban Fiber with a Minnesota Twist" at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. The event features exhibits, tours, and a fashion show, as well as a selection of preconference workshops and a market where visitors can purchase yarn and other fiber-related goodies. To learn more, visit [www.midwestweavers.org](http://www.midwestweavers.org).

**July 10–12.** The International Folk Art Market will be held at Museum Hill in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The market will feature handmade goods from over 150 artisans (including textiles) as well as international food and music. For more information on the market and how to buy tickets, visit [www.folkartalliance.org](http://www.folkartalliance.org).

Come to [weavingtoday.com](http://weavingtoday.com) to join our forums, sign up for your free *Weaving Today* eNewsletter, read Madelyn's answers to your questions, and get up-to-date weaving news and views and funky fiber facts. See you there!

## Call for Baby Wrap Designs

For centuries, people the world around have used handwoven baby wraps to carry children and leave their hands free to work in the fields, do household chores, and (of course) weave. While *Handwoven* has published a few projects for baby wraps over the years, after receiving many requests for more design options, we are putting together a new eBook of baby wrap drafts, sponsored by Yarn Barn of Kansas, Lunatic Fringe Yarns, and Halcyon Yarn. Not only that, we want to include your designs in this new eBook! From May 11 until July 1, the *Handwoven* team will be accepting submissions for baby wrap designs, and our favorites will be featured in the new eBook.

Worried about having enough time to weave a full-length baby wrap? Don't worry, you only need to weave 24 inches. The baby wrap eBook will contain designs and drafts with basic weaving information, not full projects, so we are only asking to see two 12-inch samples of each design you wish to submit.

All the handwoven sample cloths received will be judged on aesthetics as well as strength, practicality, and overall quality of the cloth. When designing your sample, ask yourself these questions: Will these yarns feel good against baby skin? Will my cloth be easy to wash? Can little toes or fingers get caught in the weaving?

After July 1, the editorial team of *Handwoven* will choose their favorite samples to publish in the eBook. Because this isn't a contest, our call for submissions is open to weavers around the world. For more information on how to submit your designs, the paperwork to send with submissions, and general guidelines, go to [weavingtoday.com](http://weavingtoday.com) or email [Handwoven@interweave.com](mailto:Handwoven@interweave.com) with the subject line Baby Wrap Challenge Information.

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# From Our Roving Reporters

## MEETING A MASTER WEAVER

When I walked into the Ohio Fair Trade Expo at John Carroll University in October, a few people were scattered among the dozen or so booths displaying wares, but I was on a mission: I was in search of the master Zapotecan weaver who hailed all the way from Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca, Mexico. I finally found him at the back of the room. I knew he was young, but standing there next to the loom, he looked like one of my daughter's college friends. I walked over to say hello, and introduced myself as a brand new weaver. He smiled, graciously allowed me to take some photos of his rugs, and told me to come back in an hour.

A couple of hours and a few workshop-related distractions later, I went back to the weaver. He had transformed his empty warp. He smiled up at me, and that shy young man transformed into a master artisan before the tool of his craft. His hands flew as the bamboo shuttles zipped between the warp threads, effortlessly creating a pattern that existed only in his head. He encouraged me to sit down and try, and patiently guided me as he told me where the color in his tapestry should change. He watched as I painstakingly threw a few picks, intent on doing no harm to the cloth he was creating. I was quick to hand the shuttle back, privileged to have been able to try his technique, and well aware that he was indeed a master. He was so genuine, so gently correcting, and so patient— and so very skilled. What an amazing encounter!

—Tammy Howell, *Cuyahoga Weavers Guild*



PHOTO BY TAMMY HOWELL

## REMINISCING ABOUT MARY MEIGS ATWATER IN MONTANA

On March 18, at the Montana Historical Society Museum in Helena Montana Mary Biehl, the great granddaughter of Mary Meigs Atwater, spoke to a crowd. She gave a lovely lecture entitled “Mary Meigs Atwater’s Shuttle-Craft Weaving Guild (1916–1946) and Black Beaver Fur Farms (1928–1932): The Successes and Failures of a Montana Businesswoman.” A small group of the weavers and spinners of the guild were able to attend what ended up being a wonderful retelling of the amazing life of a pioneering woman. Atwater resided in Butte and Basin, Montana, while pulling together her life’s work of weaving, which meant many guild members had known her personally. It was so lovely to listen to these members explain how they had taken lessons from her. So close did one member live to Atwater, that while she was taking lessons, she could leave one window open of her home and a window of Atwater’s home, and listen for her children to “stir from their naps.” We also learned how the ladies at that time would gather for guild meetings to enjoy their weavings and their “silver dollar teas,” which included homestead family silver settings and fine china cups. Let us know when you are coming out to “Big Sky Country;” we will hold a silver dollar tea complete with homestead silver and fine china cups. Remember ,the gate is open, the hearth is warm, and the fleeces and textiles are fine!

—Jannine C. Vogley-Turner,  
*Helena Weavers and Spinners*

Thanks to all of the *Handwoven Roving Reporters*. For more information on these stories and others, please visit [weavingtoday.com](http://weavingtoday.com).

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# Spotlight

## THREADS OF THE PAST

By Amanda Robinette

Nestled in the center of the tiny village of Clayton, New York, alongside the massive St. Lawrence River in the Thousand Islands region, lies a hidden treasure of American handweaving: the Thousand Islands Arts Center, home of the Handweaving Museum—a place many weavers might know but few have actually visited.



The Thousand Islands Art Center located in Clayton, New York.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TIAC

**T**he charms of the scenic Thousand Islands region alone are enough to lure visitors (and convince recalcitrant nonweaving partners to make the trip). Situated where Lake Ontario empties into the St. Lawrence River, the Thousand Islands—actually 1,864 islands—are sprinkled across 50 miles. Because the St. Lawrence River comprises the border between the United States and Canada, the islands are divided between the two countries.

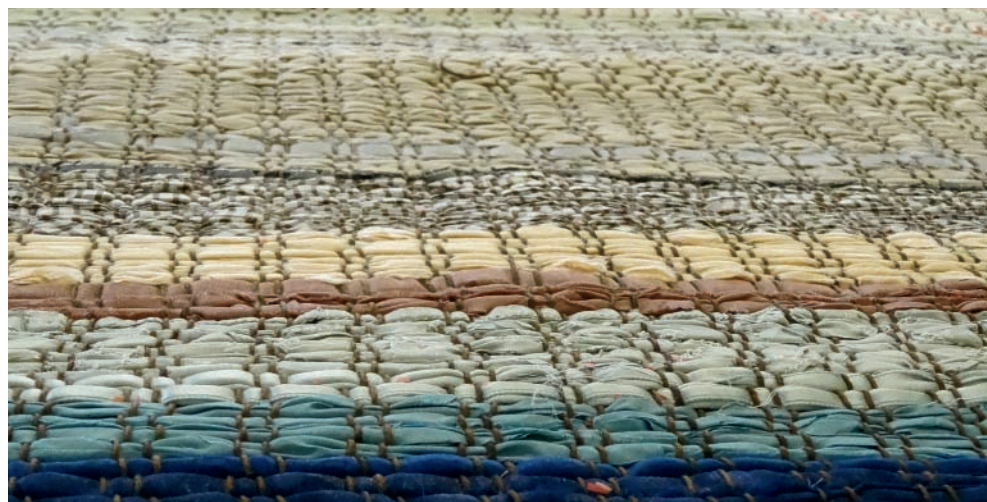
Known as the cultural center of the Thousand Islands, Clayton is home not only to the Thousand Islands Arts Center (TIAC), but also the Antique Boat Museum, which houses the largest collection of antique and classic boats in North America, and the Clayton Opera House, which offers live music and performances. The newly opened

1000 Islands Harbor Hotel provides deluxe accommodations, and Clayton Island Tours offers boat tours of nearby attractions. Weavers, though, come for the Handweaving Museum.

The TIAC began its life in 1966 as the Thousand Islands Craft School. The first dean, Emily Post (*not* the etiquette maven), was a handweaver who ensured that the school had a strong weaving department at a time when there weren't many places in America to learn weaving. In 1970, Berta Frey (author of *Designing and Drafting for Handweavers*) donated her collection of books, handwoven textiles, and weaving equipment to the school, leading the way for a slew of donations from names that read like the dream team of American handweaving: Lucille Landis (*Twills and*

*Twill Derivatives*), Mary Meigs Atwater (*The Shuttle-Craft Book of American Hand-Weaving*), Mary Elizabeth Snyder, Klara Cherepov (*Diversified Plain Weave*), Marguerite Porter Davison, and others. The donated items in the museum collection range from handwritten notebooks and weaving journals with swatches to complete works such as “500 Treadlings” by Marjorie Ruth Ross, which includes both woven pieces and hundreds of notecards and other written material, drawdowns, and swatches detailing the threading and treadling of each section.

After a series of changes, the Thousand Islands Craft School eventually became the Thousand Islands Art Center. It occupies a two-story house containing a small



The Blake Rug, weaver unknown.

PHOTO BY AMANDA ROBINETTE



The weaving workshop at the TIAC.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TIAC

exhibit space with a rotating display from the handweaving collection and exhibits, as well as a large weaving studio, a pottery studio, and classroom space for other arts and crafts classes for both adults and children.

Though limited in scope to American handweaving, international items have inevitably crept into the TIAC's collection: weavers love to collect interesting textiles during their travels, and these items are included when a weaver donates his or her collection to the Center. Thus the collection includes pieces by Theo Moorman as well as an assortment of textiles—both ancient and contemporary—from Egypt, Russia, Peru, China, and more.

Curating the collection fell on the shoulders of one incredibly dedicated volunteer, Sonja Wahl, one of the founding members of the Craft School board. It is doubtful such a collection would exist today without her tireless efforts to recruit donors and organize other volunteers to catalog the collection and properly care for and store the handwoven items. Sonja is also responsible, along with Pat Hilts, for the inception of the Weaving History Conference hosted every spring by the TIAC, now in its twenty-first year.

Perhaps the only drawback for weavers visiting the TIAC is that the existing facilities don't have enough space to adequately display even a representative sample of the museum's handwoven collection, so most of it lives in storage. Weavers who travel to the area to visit the TIAC should "announce themselves," says Sonja. Then one of the volunteers can be made available to provide them access to the library and find items in the collection that they wish to see.

Planning a visit to browse the TIAC's collection recently became much easier. In 2009, the Center received a federal grant to digitize the collection as the first step toward creating a searchable online database. Much of the collection can now be accessed via their website ([www.tiartscenter.org](http://www.tiartscenter.org)), with the remainder slated to be added soon.

Leslie Rowland, the current executive director, recognizes the need for growth. She envisions both a return to the past, with more classes offered from the best instructors brought in from around the country, and a future with a new exhibit space that does justice to the size and scope of the collection and makes it more accessible to visitors.

In the meantime, weavers shouldn't hesitate to plan a visit. The staff and volunteers are enthusiastic and eager to show off this one-of-a-kind tribute to American handweaving. "There's nothing like it," says Sonja. "Come."



Though The Handweaving Museum is focused on American handweaving, pieces from international weavers, including this untitled weaving by Theor Moorman, have made their way into the collection.  
PHOTO BY AMANDA ROBINETTE

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The Art Center is open Monday through Friday, from 9am to 5pm

You can also connect with the center on social media at [www.facebook.com/pages/The-Thousand-Islands-Art-Center/146766692534](https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Thousand-Islands-Art-Center/146766692534)

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# Media Picks



## THE TREE OF LIVES: ADVENTURES BETWEEN WARP AND WEFT

Jean Pierre Larochette with Yael Lurie

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA: GENESIS PRESS. 2014, PAPERBACK, 368 PAGES, \$30.

The careers of the tapestry weaver, Jean Pierre Larochette, and his wife, the artist/designer, Yael Lurie, are interwoven in this dual memoir. He envisioned their story as “a tree with branches symbolizing the family, friends, places, and experiences that have shaped our lives.” Beyond a simple autobiography, this book is also a travel journal of the peripatetic couple, a love story, the history of the Aubusson tapestry tradition, and a how-to book on living lives dedicated to art.

Weaving words, Larochette and Lurie tell the story of a Spanish-speaking man from Patagonia, born to Swiss-French parents, and a Hebrew-speaking kibbutz-raised woman from Israel, born to Lithuanian parents, who had no common language when they met except love. Written in a learned style by the multilingual couple whose tapestries typically speak for them, the book is articulate and—at times—poetic.

The reader can follow them from country to country during turbulent times as they developed their style of collaborative work. Their chapters share parallel parts of their lives from their personal perspective. Historic photos illustrate how Larochette and Lurie developed their creative skills while growing up, joining together, and raising a family.

As Ann Ireland wrote in her contribution to the book, through their teaching Larochette and Lurie were “sprinkling the continent with a new generation of tapestry weavers.” Susan Martin Maffei considered them “the mother and father of tapestry weaving in the United States.”

While there are books in our textile libraries with technical details and directions, and books about the life and work of some well-known weavers, this book tells a distinctly personal story of two exceptional artists. There are countless helpful hints hidden within the story that one can carry to the loom, such as nurturing a dream-tapestry on paper; weaving samples to learn see how the interrelationship of warp, weft, and sett can correlate perfectly with the design; and having the patience to weave each pick, each pass, before the next.

Larochette has an ineffable link to the Aubusson tapestry tradition and ends the book with a “bow of gratitude to the weavers of the past and to the loom, that immemorial frame of the imagination.” *The Tree of Lives* is filled with inspiring and compelling tales of two lives woven together. Remembering their story will keep you company during those solitary hours at the loom.

— Nancy Arthur Hoskins



## MAYA THREADS: A WOVEN HISTORY OF CHIAPAS

Walter F. Morris, Jr., and Carol Karasik

LOVELAND, COLORADO: THRUMS. 2015, PAPERBACK, 214 PAGES, \$34.95.

*Maya Threads* is a joyous celebration of a living tradition. Author Walter Morris starts his narrative by quoting a historian who said that centuries of invasion, wars, plagues, and oppression should have wiped out all traces of the classic Maya culture of Chiapas and other parts of Central America. Yet not only have some ancient textiles survived the ravages of time, the techniques that created them and the sacred symbolism of the ancient cloth survive today among the descendants of the Maya, evolving through the centuries in joyous profusion.

Morris and coauthor Carol Karasik trace the evolution of textiles in Chiapas from their origins in classic Mayan times to the work of contemporary artisans. Lush photos by Janet Schwartz of textiles, ancient and modern, of community festivals, and of weavers at work tell the story as clearly as the words. In this gorgeous volume, you will learn about symbolism in Mayan culture and see the same symbol-rich brocaded fabric adorning ancient Mayan royalty and the saints paraded in today's community festivals. You will see gauzy inlaid fabrics evolve from sacred robes to *huipils* (the traditional blouse of Mayan women) to prom dresses. Morris and Karasik weave the stories of textile techniques—gauze weaving, brocade, running stitch, cross-stitch embroidery,

the amazing Chamulan wool tunics, and Zinacantec woolly robes (think black yeti pelts)—with the history of Chiapas. For example, when the Spanish conquerors forbade loincloths, the Mayan men eventually conceded to wearing pants but refused to part with their loincloths, wearing them as belts instead. (Morris relates a Mayan creation myth in which misused loincloths ended in two wicked brothers being turned into monkeys.)

For anyone who enjoys history, stunning folk costume, seeing artisans at work, and excellent storytelling, this book is a visual and intellectual feast.

— Anita Osterhaug

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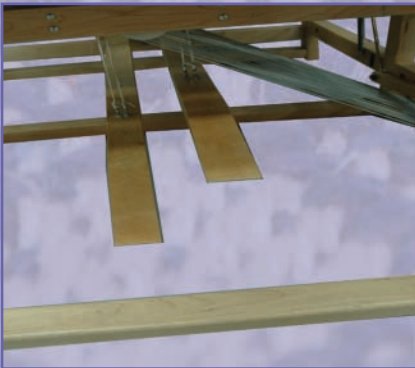


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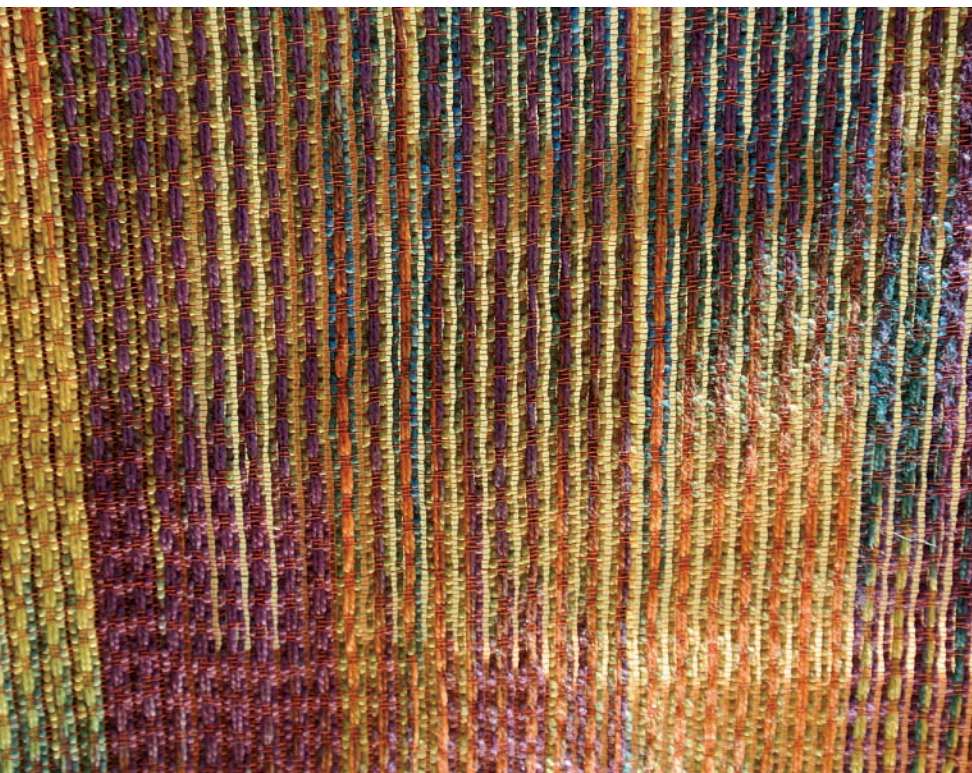
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Section of the curtain Sara is weaving for the Denver Art Museum.  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF SARA GOLDENBERG

# Texture IN WEAVING

SARA GOLDENBERG



Close-up of the cloth, showing the combination of dyed cotton thread and copper wire.

The tactile qualities and surface appearance of the fabrics I create are essential to the works I make. Whether it is a fine art piece or a garment, materials are often the impetus for my work. Designing, for me, always starts with a sample. With woven cloth, there is no other way to get a true sense of how the materials will behave. As I begin to explore different fibers through sampling, a relationship between materials develops, allowing forms and concepts to unfold.

I move freely between creating fine art pieces and designing functional garments. I find that the two practices inform one another and spark ideas and pairings that I otherwise would never have stumbled across.

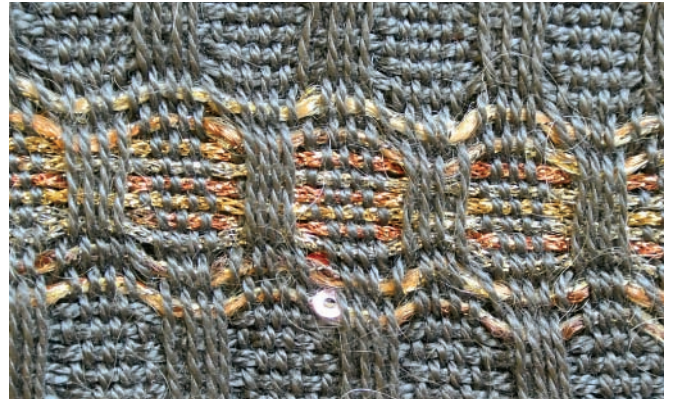
Anything that comes in large spools is a potential weaving material for me. For example, I am drawn to the combination of pearl cotton and copper wire. The combination of soft and hard materials allows my cloth to maintain rigidity and suppleness at the same time, and I am intrigued by the visual combination of the matte surface of cotton thread and the smooth, shiny surface of copper wire.

Currently, I am weaving a curtain for the Thread Studio in the Denver Art Museum, using hand-dyed pearl cotton for the warp and copper wire for the weft. I weave in a plain-weave structure, allowing color and texture to be the driving force of the piece. The colors I chose for the curtain were a reaction to the space: I was looking to find a balance that would blend and pop at the same time. Once the weaving is complete, I needle weave long warp tails back into the grid of the woven cloth to create pattern. In this case, the final pattern will loosely represent a combination of cityscape and mountain landscape, a combination Denver is so lucky to enjoy.

The copper wire creates a slick texture and a unique sheen that changes depending on where you stand in the room. The way the copper reflects light creates a sense of movement in the piece. Depending on how the fabric curves, from some angles the copper is barely visible, showcasing the cotton



Ribbon yarn woven with sportweight wool creates an attractive grid in the fabric.



Novelty yarn with sequins adds another layer of interest to this honeycomb fabric.

thread, and from other angles the whole surface glitters. On a functional level, the copper locks the cotton in place during the weaving process, allowing for a more open sett that allows the warp ends to be woven back into the ground cloth, creating a whole new layer of texture and interrupting the plain-weave grid.

When designing large-scale installation pieces, I think a great deal about how human beings interact with and negotiate space. Designing garments, I think about the same things but in a different way. Both design processes tap an element of architecture. With garments, I always think about the architecture of the body and how to create cloth that will drape well and showcase rich texture. My book coauthored with Jane Patrick, *Simple Woven Garments*, focuses on the creation of texture- and color-rich cloth, then transforms that cloth into beautiful, easy-to-sew garments.

When designing garments, I look to create texture through weave structure as well as through the surface of the yarn itself. I am often drawn to novelty yarns. They open up a whole new range of texture within the woven cloth I create. Often these yarns are thicker, so patterns with long floats can become tricky because they have more opportunity to catch and snag. Using fiber rich in texture adds a whole new look to plain weave. As with the pairing of the cotton and copper, I often couple yarns where one has an element of sheen and

the other a more matte surface.

Yarn coupling is a very important aspect of creating interesting fabrics. Working with yarns of different weights, sheens, and surface texture leads to eye-catching cloth. For example, when you combine a ribbon yarn with a sportweight wool, a very unusual grid emerges, and a fabric that interacts with light in a unique way. Depending on the yarns you pair, color-and-weave techniques can become just as powerful a tool in creating compelling texture as weave structure.

Mixing and matching weave structures within one piece can create a fun play of texture as well. When mixing weave structures, you can choose simpler yarn in a solid color palette. But I am also never afraid to experiment with some sparkle in my fabrics! I find that the addition of a sequined novelty yarn can give a garment the extra pop it needs without being overwhelming. Anything that changes the surface of the cloth helps create a more dynamic look.

Using unexpected fiber combinations is a large part of what makes designing

so much fun for me. Having entered the weaving world in a somewhat non-traditional way, I came to the table with no preconceived ideas about how to weave or what to weave with. I have a background in knitting, sewing, and sculpture, and I find that it is the blend of all these techniques that leads to unique, fun garments full of texture and depth. In my garment designs, I always look to add sculptural elements that complement the woven cloth, whether it be a chunky rolled hem, a ruffled edge, a ribbed knit waistband, or a unique collar trim. These additions create another layer of physical texture and depth.

With all of the fabric I design, I aim to incorporate multiple levels of visual interest encouraging people to come and take a closer look and discover how such a unique surface was created. Even just writing about my design process makes me want to head into the studio and start up on a new round of samples to see what projects will unfold next.



Sara Goldenberg is the coauthor, with Jane Patrick, of the new book *Simple Woven Garments*. This beautiful collection of wearable woven styles celebrates yarn and texture with fabric that can be woven on any loom, from rigid-heddle to floor looms, and made into flattering garments with a minimum of sewing and fitting. You can buy *Simple Woven Garments* at [bit.ly/simple-woven-garments](http://bit.ly/simple-woven-garments)



I have been a fiber artist specializing in weaving, spinning, dyeing, and felting for over forty-two years. Raised and educated in Japan, the influence on my works comes directly from the Japanese culture and environment, and from traditional techniques.

Many of my weaving projects are made using the kinds of overtwist yarns that have been used in Japan for centuries to make high-quality kimonos of silk, cotton, and hemp. The yarn is prized for creating distinctive crepe and pleat surfaces with soft, light, delicate textures. In my current projects, such as shawls, lamp shades, and placemats, I am using paper yarn and silk overtwist yarn to make fabric. The paper yarn is called *washi-ito* in Japan (*washi* means paper, and *ito* means yarn), and fabric made with this yarn is called *shifu*, which is considered an environmentally friendly material.

I first became interested in shifu thirteen years ago, when a friend gave me a pair of socks knitted with washi yarn. The socks are breathable, cool in summer and warm in winter, and have

# Shifu for the Earth and You

YOKO ARAI

moisture-wicking and antibacterial properties. They are also hypoallergenic, and hold up surprisingly well through many washings. I have those socks to this day!

## AN ILLUSTRIOUS HISTORY

Shifu cloth dates back at least as far as the Heian period (794–1185) in Japan, when it was used mainly for the robes of Buddhist monks. Later it was also used for samurai armor and summer *obis*,

the sashes worn over kimonos. By the Edo period (1603–1868), kimono fabric and *obis* were more commonly made with silk or linen warp and *washi-ito* made its appearance mainly as weft yarn. Shifu garments, however, were still popular with poorer people who did not have access to cotton or silk. By the Meiji era (1868–1912), cotton and synthetic yarns and fabric became widely available, and shifu waned in popularity. Fortunately, recent interest in natural materials has led to a revival of shifu weaving in shawls, garments, tapestries, and art objects.

## WEAVING WITH WASHI-ITO

According to Susan Byrd, in her book *A Song of Praise for Shifu*, the traditional washi paper used to make *washi-ito* is made from the inner bark fibers of wild and cultivated trees, most of it from the paper mulberry tree, hence the strength, lovely texture, and healthful qualities of the yarns. (See Resources.) Byrd relates that in the heyday of shifu weaving, different master craftspeople were responsible for each stage of the thread-making process, whereas today she estimates that there are fewer than twenty people in Japan producing shifu from start to finish. Her book has detailed information on making washi yarn, but you can also buy it from suppliers such as Habu Textiles ([habutextiles.com](http://habutextiles.com)), Websters

([yarnatwebsters.com](http://yarnatwebsters.com)), and Ito ([ito-yarn.com](http://ito-yarn.com)). I buy mine from a supplier in Japan; see Resources for contact information.

Washi yarn is strong enough to be used in warp, but because it is hard to obtain, most Japanese shifu weavers today use silk or cotton yarns for warp and reserve *washi-ito* for weft. I use both high-twist and medium-twist S-Z spun yarns in my shifu weaving. (The combina-



Left: The striped fabric after wet-finishing. Right: Yoko's niece in one of her aunt's shifu shawls. PHOTOS COURTESY OF YOKO ARAI



For these samples, Yoko used an overtwisted warp yarn dyed in purple, green, orange, pink, red, and gray-purple, and wove a balanced weave at 18 ends per inch. For the sample on the left, she took a sample of the original cloth on the right, used a binding dye technique called thread-resist rings (*ne-maki shibori*) and shell (*bai shibori*) and overdyed it with a blend of black, purple, and blue acid dyes.

tion of twist directions creates the overtwist in the yarns.) Overtwist yarn is very active, so it is difficult to warp with even tension. Make sure to pull the yarn hard and keep checking your tension as you wind and tie on. Fine thread used for shifu weaving in Japan is sett at 48 to 64 ends per inch, and Japanese shifu weavers will treat their silk or cotton warp with sizing. I typically weave my shifu cloth at a more open sett of 18 ends per inch, and I haven't found sizing necessary for my projects.

The washi yarn is easy to weave with, but I recommend a gentle beat. The most important thing is to keep your beat even because the textured yarn will show inconsistencies. When you have to join a new weft thread, overlap the old and new ends carefully to avoid leaving a thick spot. Byrd mentions that there may be spots where the paper yarn has come slightly untwisted. You can fix

these by adding twist to that spot with your fingers.

On and off the loom, the woven fabric looks like nothing special, although you may notice that it has a delicate, almost-transparent character. The magic happens once cloth meets water. To wet-finish your cloth, just soak the cloth in warm water for about ten minutes. The paper yarn will expand in the water, closing up the weave and becoming very soft. The cloth will develop delicate ripples and a finer weave will have a beautiful drape perfect for a shawl or clothing.

## COLORED PAPER

Many weavers have asked me if you can dye washi yarn or shifu fabric, and the answer is yes. It washes and dyes beautifully. Susan Byrd says that washi yarn is known to take dyes better than cotton, producing rich colors similar to those achieved with silk, and I have

found this to be true. Japanese shifu makers favor natural dyes, but I have also had good results using commercial acid dyes. The active twist will relax and revive as you go through the extensive rinsing process after dyeing, but it will end up with the same lovely crepe or pleated surface.

As you look at some of my projects. I hope you, too, will be inspired to weave beautiful, earth-friendly shifu cloth.

## RESOURCES

Byrd, Susan J. *A Song of Praise for Shifu*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: The Legacy Press, 2013, pp. 9, 45, 73, 87, 99.

Yoko's washi yarn supplier: Matsuhisa Eisuke Kamiten, 1911-2 Mino City, Gifu Prefecture, Japan 501-3728  
[www.kumojyo.co.jp/pc/goods/kamiito/info@kumojyo.co.jp](http://www.kumojyo.co.jp/pc/goods/kamiito/info@kumojyo.co.jp)

# In Search of *Fiber Excellence*

BY MARILYNN COWGILL AND JILL GRAHAM

**F**or more than three decades, the Handweavers Guild of America (HGA) has offered a Certificate of Excellence program that aims to set standards and guidelines for evaluating individual skills in fiber arts, to encourage research and exploration, and to recognize technically qualified weavers, spinners, dyers, and basketmakers. The certificate reflects work that has been done by a craftsperson over a period of time: the Level I certification in spinning or weaving requires 40 samples, and the

Level II certification requires projects, samples, and finished goods. The candidate submits a finished portfolio to HGA for peer review and judging. If the candidate is judged to have completed the samples and work to the standards of the program, he or she is awarded a Certificate of Excellence (COE).

We talked to two people who have completed this work to get their perspective on the process: weaver Marilyn Cowgill and handspinner Jill Graham.

## MARILYNN COWGILL, WEAVER:

I started the COE because I wanted to be an expert weaver. I looked at different academic programs, but decided I already had enough graduate degrees and didn't need to do any more of them! This program is a practical, hands-on learning experience, which is what I wanted. I already knew how to jump through other people's hoops, so I knew I could do it.

I haven't yet passed Level I; perhaps by the time you read this article, I will have completed the judging. Of course, I would love to pass the first time, but if I don't, I know I'll still have more to learn the second time around!

I thought I would learn more about the structures of weaving by doing this work, and I certainly have, but I ended up learning most about myself and how I approach excellence. It didn't make sense to me to do work that was just "good enough" when I knew I could do better. I am a more careful weaver now, but a more patient one, too.

I have found this to be an intense journey and my motivation has been tested all along the way. It often took more time to learn a particular skill than I wanted to give—and my samples showed it! So I often had to start the samples over. Anyone starting on this journey should expect to be challenged in ways they didn't think possible. The COE process—like a lot of weaving—is an individual pursuit, and you need to be self-motivated and continue to move through the process. Sometimes, it takes some digging to get the information you need, and being a bulldog is a good thing!



Marilynn wove these overshot and weft-faced samplers as part of her COE program.

PHOTOS BY MARILYNN COWGILL

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Jill handspun the cashmere yarns to knit this Jared Flood design.  
PHOTO BY JILL GRAHAM

## JILL GRAHAM, SPINNER:

I had been thinking about the COE in Handspinning for years but had no time. When my children went to college, I took a look at my goals and realized that I longed to spin, dye, and knit, activities I had given up while raising my children. I am goal-oriented, self-motivated, and driven, and I wanted to be the best spinner I could be. We have all said we were going to learn a skill, only to put it off. I did the COE so that I had no excuses not to learn to spin cotton, flax, silk, wool, exotic fibers, man-made fibers, etc. I wanted to learn to spin woolen and worsted, thick and thin, laceweight and novelty yarn; I wanted to learn it all!

Committing to the COE announced to my family that I was serious. I did not pass the first time, and I realized I had a lot more to learn. I passed Level I in 2011, and in 2013, I went on to pass COE Level II, Master in Handspinning with a Specialty in “Spinning Cashmere and Cashmere Silk for Lace Knitting.” I will continue to explore and learn new spinning techniques and uses for my yarn.

The HGA provides guidelines to help you become a master craftsperson in a


fiber art on your own and in your own way. It is extremely time consuming and requires commitment and perseverance. But you can take as long as you need and set your own goals. In the end, you will learn what you want, although you may have to jump through some hoops that are not as meaningful to you.

It was extremely scary to think that after all my hard work I might not pass. But I learned that, when it comes down to it, passing is not the point. The COE was a step in a lifelong learning process.

I set out to become the best spinner I can be, and I appreciated the feedback in the areas in which I needed more understanding. And yes, it is hard work becoming the best we can be.

I found that the whole process was a journey of discovery. I learned a lot about my own limits, my family’s generosity, and my husband’s unending support. I am a Master Spinner, and I now know that is only a stepping-stone on a lifelong quest for excellence. It is fabulous to set out to achieve something and watch the universe conspire to help you get there. It was an intensely personal and spiritual journey for me.

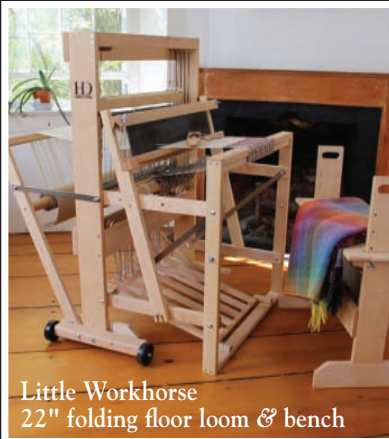
## EMBRACING THE UNKNOWN

When asked to give advice to others who may have considered the COE program and, perhaps, have been daunted at the thought, Marilyn explains: “I think we are only afraid of what we don’t know, and working in the COE gave me confidence that I was learning a lot, so I didn’t feel it was difficult. I often thought about the great history of the guild system and how they had apprenticeship so that the newer members could learn from older ones and become skilled craftsmen and women. I believe the COE enables us to become a part of that lineage.” 



Jill spun many types of yarn to earn her COE. PHOTO BY JILL GRAHAM

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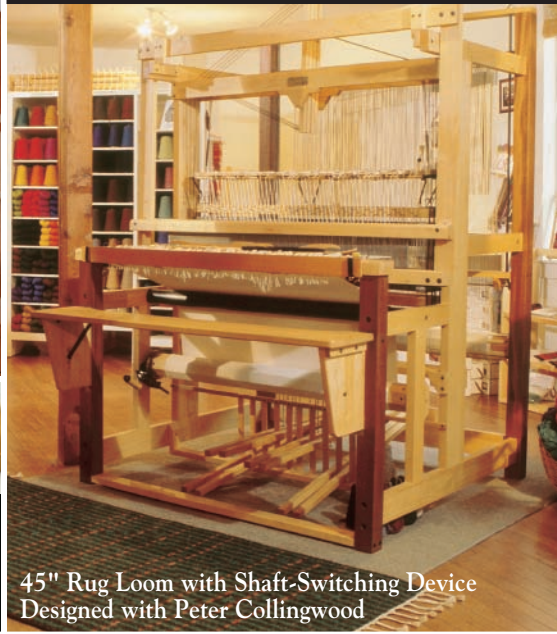
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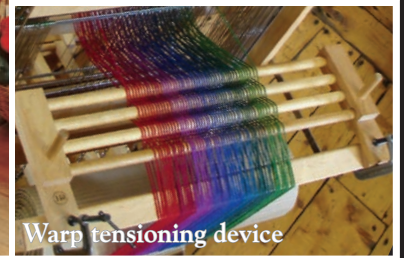
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# Notes FROM THE Fell

A Space of My Own and a Loom With a View.  
TOM KNISELY

**T**his past winter, my little spot in south central Pennsylvania seemed semi-cozy compared to the bitter cold and snow of New England, but those months of early nights and staring at four walls still made me dream of spring. January brought seed catalogs with pictures of fruits and vegetables so beautiful you can almost taste them.

One Saturday, I couldn't stand it any longer, so off to the garden center I went for a dose of mental health. My local center has a large garden pond full of koi. "The koi seem to get bigger each year," I remarked to a sales associate. "Oh yes, they will continue to grow, depending on their environment and the size of the pond they

live in," she said. On the way home, I thought about that, and I laughed because I have grown my collection of looms and equipment to fit my environment. I'm sure many of you reading this can relate.

I have several looms, and I can't imagine giving up a single one of my "precious babies," because I use them all. Some are warped for class samples. Some are designated for *Handwoven* articles. One is for exploring a new structure. The barn frame looms are part of my collection of antique looms. One large counter-march is so big I have it set up at a friend's house. (Now don't judge. Let thee who is without stash cast the first cone.) In my world, I feel I need

them all to weave and function as a teacher and writer. My looms make me happy, and I am grateful for the space to keep them. Like the koi, I have filled and overgrown my environment.

On a cold day last January, I traveled up to New York City to give a talk about rug weaving. I met some wonderful people and caught up with some old acquaintances. Even my nephew and his wife came to hear what Uncle Tom had to say about rug weaving. When I asked the group what looms they weave on at home, most told me table looms and rigid-heddle looms. If they want to weave rugs and larger projects, they rent time on looms at the art center or a private studio. This makes total sense,



Tom needs space for his big collection of big looms!  
PHOTO BY BONNIE BISSETT



Ria Koopmans's small but serene studio in New York City. PHOTO BY RIA KOOPMANS

since the average New York apartment is quite small.

I spent a wonderful evening with my hosts in the Bronx. Their apartment is a fabulous place filled with books and music and all the things that make them happy. There is an efficient and well-organized studio space right off the kitchen that is about the size of my walk-in closet at home. The studio was so neat and well thought out, it made me feel ashamed of my own sprawl. Everything had its place in this little studio, and it worked so efficiently.

“Everything has to be well calculated when you live in New York,” my hostess told me. When the studio door opens, a beautiful pressed-glass doorknob just misses the side frame of a Louet Jane table loom on its stand. The loom sits in front of a window that looks out onto a well-maintained courtyard with plants and wildlife. Beside the table loom is a rigid-heddle loom. The looms are warped and ready to weave on when the mood is right. There is a desk for planning and a wall of shelves filled with books and yarns. “I come here to


weave and the space suits me just fine,” my hostess told me. “I love to weave and I can be creative in this space.” This was an eye-opener for me—one of those times that stops you in your tracks and makes you think. It’s not the amount of space you have but what you do with it. I am so glad to have seen how a small but efficiently organized studio works. I will be more understanding and attentive in future when a student says he or she has only a small space for a loom. When helping choose a loom, I will consider their space more thoughtfully.

As the saying goes, “If I had a dollar for every time . . .” In beginning weaving classes, we always ask students what made them want to weave. For many, it’s a lifelong desire but they have had to put off their dream of weaving until they had the time or space. If I only had that dollar for every time someone said that they finally got that last child off to college and now they are now going turn junior’s room into a studio where they can lock themselves away and weave beautiful fabric.

By the end of the class, the students

have woven on several different looms and can say which they enjoyed and which they didn’t like. I do my best to help them make a wise decision when they purchase their first loom. I tell them about all the mistakes I made myself. I once bought a 60-inch counter-march loom with 16 shafts to weave coverlets. I used all 16 shafts but never wove anything wider than 30 inches. When thinking about purchasing a loom, ask yourself what you want to weave. Write down and make a list of at least a dozen projects that you want to weave first. Does the list include rugs? This will take a heavier loom. Do you like to weave complex patterns? This may take more shafts (but don’t underestimate what 4 shafts can do). I remember Madelyn van der Hoogt saying

that there are two types of weavers. One loves color and textured yarns and would be happy to weave plain weave for the rest of their lives. The other loves pattern and would be happy with just two cones of contrasting colors if they could weave every permutations possible on just one threading.

Then there is Tom who wants it all. If I could have only two looms, there would be one heavy and strong enough to weave rugs and the other could be smaller, with at least 8 shafts to satisfy my need for pattern. And then, where to put them? I will always somehow find the space. With all my friends now downsizing their homes, it makes me wonder what I will do someday when and if I have to downsize. When you pop in to say hello, you might be offered a folding chair to sit on. It’s not that I don’t love you and want you to stay, but your visit will be temporary and my looms, well, my looms are forever. 

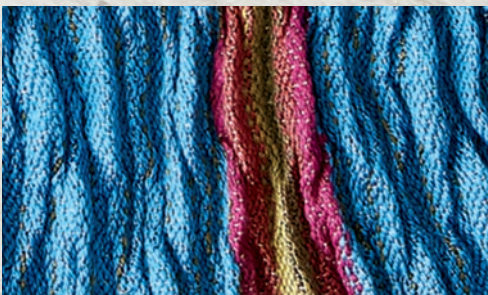


Want a loom workshop with Tom? Check out The Loom Owner’s Companion video at [www.bit.ly/loom-owners-companion-video](http://www.bit.ly/loom-owners-companion-video).



# touchable TEXTURE

From waves of color  
to waves of grass



## Parrot Plumage Crimped Scarf

DIANNE TOTTEN

**W**hat I call “crimp-cloth” is a form of woven shibori that uses heat-setting to create permanent texture in the cloth. From a hobby weaver and workshop junkie who wanted to try every weave structure out there, I have evolved into a crimp-cloth addict. All those years spent learning about weave structures has paid off, as they helped me understand how any structure can be crimped. Once you understand the process for making crimp-cloth, the possibilities are limited only by your creativity and imagination.

This scarf was inspired by the plumage of the green-winged macaw my grandson Max is holding in the photo. I chose an overshot threading because four blocks of pattern are available for crimping on four shafts. The ground cloth is plain weave. The floats on the top and bottom of the cloth and the halftone areas of the overshot structure provide what I call the “mountains,” “valleys,” and “pebble” areas of the crimped cloth that are reminiscent of the layered feathers on the parrot. The treadling for the pull threads I chose was inspired by the shape and rounded tip of parrot feathers. I used a traditional overshot treadling with pattern yarn and tabby (and no gathering threads) for the uncrimped ruffles at each end of the scarf. My treadling order carries out the feather design.



Dianne’s grandson Max with the parrot that inspired this scarf.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DIANNE TOTTEN

I knew that the crimp pattern would show up best in a solid-color area, and turquoise is a favorite color, so I made it the most prominent. Because I like how crimp “fractures” the color stripes, I decided to blend the remaining colors into each other in a narrow stripe pattern. Sometimes I pay attention to where the color lands on the threading draft for a certain look, but this time I designed the color order with no concern for its relationship to the threading order. I enjoy the surprises in color and texture this method offers.

After weaving, tightly pulling and tying all the pattern threads, steaming, and cooling, it is time to snip all those knots and open your surprise package. In my workshops, I refer to this activity as “Christmas morning.” For as many yards of crimp cloth as I have created, the excitement of this moment hasn’t diminished. Whether you follow my color and treadling orders, or create your own, have fun crimping!

**STRUCTURE**

Overshot.

**EQUIPMENT**

4-shaft loom, 18" weaving width; 10-dent reed; 2 shuttles; 3 bobbins.

**YARNS**

**Warp:** 8/2 Tencel (3,360 yd/lb; Yarn Barn of Kansas), Turquoise, 930 yd. 8/2 Tencel (Village Spinning and Weaving), Lemon Grass, 403 yd; Deep Sea Coral (used doubled), 210 yd; Olive, 168 yd. 2/30 spun silk (7,500 yd/lb; Halcyon Yarn Gemstone Silk), Dark Pink #103 (used doubled, 364 yd. **Ground weft:** Metal Verbena 100% polyester (1,000 yd/oz; Giovanna Imperia), Petrolio, 966 yd. **Pattern weft (for ruffles):** 8/2 Tencel (Village Spinning and Weaving), Grey Blue, 55 yd. **Gathering weft:** White upholstery thread or any smooth, strong thread, 152 yd.

**OTHER SUPPLIES**

Needle and sewing thread to match fabric; Fray Check (optional). Large pot with rack for steaming.

**WARP LENGTH**

540 ends 3½ yd long (Deep Sea Coral and Dark Pink are used doubled, 2 threads/working end; allows 5" for take-up, 35" for loom waste, and 8" for sampling).

**SETTS**

**Warp:** 30 epi (3/dent in a 10-dent reed). **Weft:** 24 ppi for plain-weave and gathered areas; 32 ppi (16 ppi pattern/16 ppi tabby) in overshot ruffles.

**DIMENSIONS**

Width in the reed: 18".

Woven length (measured under tension on the loom): 78".

Finished size after crimping and hemming: 6" × 76" (including ruffles).

**Get the Kit!**  
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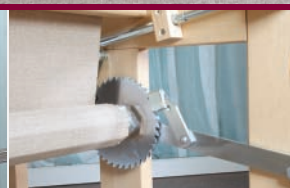
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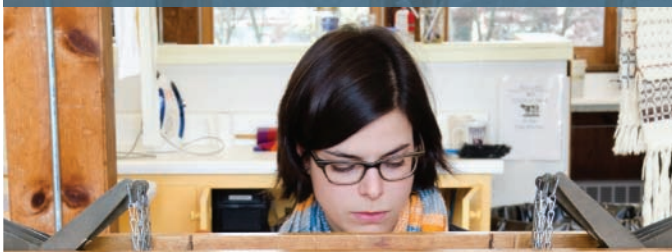


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Photo: Pattern C 38 - Cheerful Carriage

# Shaggy Travel Tote

SARAH H. JACKSON

**W**hen traveling by air, I carry a knitting project, a water bottle, my Kindle, essential medications and toiletries, a shawl or sweater, a notebook, and for a long flight, snacks and a travel pillow. To carry that many items, I need a sturdy, roomy tote that will easily tuck under the seat of the airplane and is comfortable to carry. My shaggy travel tote fits the bill and is large enough that I can fit my purse inside when I need to consolidate carry-ons. It is also a fun and colorful means of carrying class materials when I'm teaching.

I used a commercial sewing pattern modified slightly to fit my needs. It's a bit larger than the original, and I customized the interior and closure as follows: The inside has a zippered side pocket, a pocket specifically sized for my Kindle, a pocket for my boarding pass, and a sleeve that holds a water bottle. For added security, I chose a zipper closure instead of the magnetic snap called for in the pattern.



Zippered pouches PHOTO BY SARAH H. JACKSON

There are lots of tutorials and how-to information online with good instructions for adding whatever features you would like in your tote. It pays to give that some thought before you get started so you can plan the assembly of the lining with any extras you want to include.

I had extra warp, so I wove fabric for two coordinating zippered pouches. The zipper is inserted so that the bag can open wide, giving easy access to everything inside. Extra warp and weft amounts are given in the Project Notes box.

## RESOURCES

- Coles, Deby. "Adding a Zipper Pocket to a Bag or Purse." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1pQ19a8pMM>
- Wirkkala, Laura. "Part 1: Zipper Panel for Top of Tote Bag." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QaIESkqC3bI>
- Graham, Anna. "Open Wide Zippered Pouch: DIY Tutorial." <http://www.noodle-head.com/2012/06/open-wide-zippered-pouch-diy-tutorial.html>
- Selby, Margo. *Color and Texture in Weaving*. Loveland, Colorado: Interweave, 2011, p. 46.

### STRUCTURE

Plain weave with weft floats.

### EQUIPMENT

4-shaft loom, 29" weaving width; 12-dent reed; 1 shuttle with bobbin, 1 ski shuttle or rag shuttle.

### YARNS

**Warp:** 8/2 unmercerized cotton (3,360 yd/lb; WEBS), Burnt Sienna #7198 and Burgundy #3794, 392 yd each; 8/2 unmercerized cotton (3,360 yd/lb; UKI), Wine #62, 630 yd. **Weft:** 8/2 unmercerized cotton, (WEBS) Burnt Sienna #7198, Burgundy #3794, and (UKI) Wine #62, 45 yd each; (UKI) Dark Red #28, 1,045 yd.

### OTHER SUPPLIES

Butterick Pattern #5267, View A; 54" wide lining, 1 yd (includes enough to cover the board insert); Pellon lightweight fusible interfacing, charcoal, 2¼ yd; Pellon #987F fusible fleece, 45" wide, 1 yd; heavy cardboard, luan, or plastic corrugated board 4¾" x 14¾"; sewing thread, paper or pattern tissue 24 x 34"; Fray Check; Steam-A-Seam Lite Double Stick Fusible Web Tape ¼" wide; ¾" magnetic snap, Synthrapol (a textile detergent formulated to prevent color migration).

### WARP LENGTH

513 ends 2¾ yd long (includes 2 floating selvages; allows 2" for take-up, 27" for loom waste).

### SETTS

Warp: 18 epi (1-2/ dent in a 12-dent reed). Weft: 17 ppi.

### DIMENSIONS

**Width in the reed:** 28½". **Woven length (measured under tension on the loom):** 39–40" for body of the tote; 30" plain weave for straps. **Finished size after washing:** 24¼" x 32¾" (tote); 24¼" x 25" plain weave (strap fabric). **Tote size:** 13¾" x 21" x 5".

### ZIPPERED POUCHES (OPTIONAL)

#### YARNS

**Warp:** Add ¾ yd to warp length for 2 pouches: **Weft:** Add 377 yd Dark Red, plus 25 yd to each warp color in float picks.

#### OTHER SUPPLIES

Lining, add ¾ yd, 54" wide; ¾" wide grosgrain ribbon, 12"; two 14" zippers; use remnants of fusible interfacing and fusible fleece.

#### DIMENSIONS

**Width in the reed:** 28½" **Woven length (measured under tension on the loom):** 25". **Finished size after washing:** 24¼" x 21". **Finished size:** 2 pouches 11" x 8" x 3½".

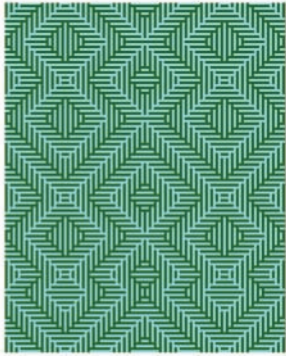


You can download sewing instructions for the travel tote and zippered pouches from [weavingtoday.com/](http://weavingtoday.com/) Free Resources/Projects.



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# A TOUCH OF SUMMER

## Grasscloth Journal Covers

PATRICIA MORTON

**F**orget the compost heap; turn your garden waste into textiles rich in natural beauty, with textures, colors, and scents not usually found in handwoven cloth. My interest in weaving with plants started in 2006, as I listened to Rita Buchanan lecture to the Weavers' Guild of Boston on creating "grasscloth" using leaves and stems for weft. I was so inspired that I grabbed some plants from our neighbor's garden and made an eyeglass case for our daughter, a botanist. I was hooked. An Indonesian plant-woven notebook gave rise to these covered journals.

From spring to fall, you can collect leaves and stems, clean and dry them, and tuck them away, where they will keep for years. When winter roars and you need a touch of summer, pull out your treasures, soften them, and weave. To preserve the woven fabric,

apply a light application of tung oil, then move on to the straightforward sewing.

This project shows two types of journal covers. The plain-weave journal covers, with their subtle log-cabin effect, can be woven on a rigid-heddle or 4-shaft loom. Four shafts are better for weaving the 2/2 twill version. Warping the loom for these journal covers takes no time: it's a sparse warp, and any fine cellulose yarn works. The nice thing about weaving grasscloth is that, for once, you need not worry about selvages: they will be cut off!

I plan to experiment next on an 8-shaft loom, combining the color effects of the log-cabin with the weft emphasis of the twill. Whenever I am out riding my bicycle, I will be scanning the neighbors' yards for new plants to try.

- 1 Prepare your leaf weft. Instructions for harvesting and drying leaves to be used for weft can be downloaded from [weavingtoday.com](http://weavingtoday.com).
- 2 Wind 96 ends, 3 yd long, following the color order in Figure 1. For ease in warping, wind holding one thread of each color for the section together, separated by your fingers, and making a thread-by-thread cross to keep the color order straight.

- 3 Wind plastic wrap around your front beam and cloth beam to protect your loom from the damp leaves.

- 4 Use your preferred method to warp the loom and thread following the draft in Figure 2. Sley 1 per dent in an 8-dent reed. Measure out 2 floating selvages, sley and weight over the back beam.

- 5 Four to eight hours before you plan to weave, assemble a quantity of leaves that you will be able to use in one or two weaving sessions and spread them on an old, well-dampened terry-cloth towel. Sprinkle water over the leaves and roll the towel to make a damp bundle. Wrap the bundle in a large plastic bag. Place the bundle in a warm area to soften the leaves. Unused softened leaves can be stored in the refrigerator for a few days.

- 6 Wind a bobbin of each of the weft colors.
- 7 Grasscloth requires a firm, flat base, so spread the warp with a firm, straight header using heavy scrap yarn. Begin the first

### STRUCTURE

Plain weave, twill.

### EQUIPMENT

4-shaft loom, 13" weaving width; 8-dent reed; 2 shuttles with bobbins; 1 stick shuttle.

### YARNS

**Warp:** 5/2 mercerized pearl cotton (2,100 yd/lb; Valley Yarns; WEBS), Madder Brown #7382, 96 yd; Posy Green #5877, 54 yd; 5/2 mercerized pearl cotton (2,100 yd/lb; UKI), Beige #43, 54 yd; 8/2 Tencel (3,360 yd/lb; Valley Yarns; WEBS), Fire Combo #4959-02a, 90 yd.  
**Weft:** 5/2 mercerized pearl cotton, Madder Brown #7382, 52 yd; 8/2 Tencel, Fire Combo #4959-02a, 105 yd; 85–225 leaves per journal.

### OTHER SUPPLIES

Lining fabric, 44" wide quilting fabric,  $\frac{3}{4}$  yd; binding fabric, Ultrasuede 47½" x 4½" strip cut on the crossgrain; 20" wide lightweight, fusible, nonwoven interfacing, 1½ yd; sewing machine needles for leather; Hope's Tung Oil; white glue; plastic wrap; rotary cutter and mat; 4 blank journals 8½" x 5½".

### WARP LENGTH

98 ends 3 yd long (includes 2 floating selvages; allows 7" for take-up, 30" for loom waste, and 11" for sampling).

### SETTS

**Warp:** 8 epi (1/dent in an 8-dent reed). **Weft:** Plain weave: 8–11 ppi; twill: 15–22 ppi. (Note that actual ppi is dependent on the thickness of the leaves you are using.)

### DIMENSIONS

**Width in the reed:** 12¼".

**Woven length (measured under tension on the loom):** 60" for 4 journal covers.

**Finished size:** Four journal covers 12¼" x 14¼" before trimming and sewing.



journal cover by weaving 1/2" using Madder Brown and a firm beat. This is a sparse warp so this 1/2" will be weft-faced. Continue to weave the body of the journal using the prepared leaves and following your choice of twill or plain-weave treadling in Figure 2. **Handling the leaves:** Keep the leaves in the plastic bag and pull out as needed. Insert the stiffer end of a leaf into the shed, passing it all the way through so that the end sticks out a bit at the opposite selvedge. Use a stick shuttle to push floppier leaves through the shed. Change the shed and beat firmly, to help lock the leaf in place. When a leaf ends in the middle of the shed, pull the tip down from below to anchor it and overlap the next leaf a bit, pulling its tip down through to the wrong side of the cloth. For longer leaves, bend them around the selvedge edge, crushing them a bit if necessary. Note that you will trim the selvages later, so don't worry too much about how they look.

**8** Weave the main body of the cover for 14". End by weaving 1/2" using Madder Brown. If you have to leave the weaving prior to finishing a journal cover, insert 2 shots of nylon cord to hold the leaves in place. If you need to leave the loom for an extended period of time, unroll the cloth from the loom to let the grasscloth dry and to protect your loom.

**9** Repeat steps 7–8 for the second journal cover. When the first cover starts to roll around the cloth beam, insert an old terry-cloth hand towel between the grasscloth and the cloth beam to cushion the grasscloth.



**10** To protect the grasscloth from excessive crushing on the cloth beam, before you weave the third and fourth covers, cut the first 2 journals off about 3/4" inches from the last pick of the second journal. Retie the warp to the apron rod. Do not cut the journal covers apart yet, as the grasscloth and cotton ends both ravel easily.

**11** Repeat the weaving steps for the last 2 journal covers.

**12** If possible, take the damp cloth straight from the loom to your sewing machine. Stitch two straight lines across the cotton areas: one close to the leaves, and the other 1/2" away.

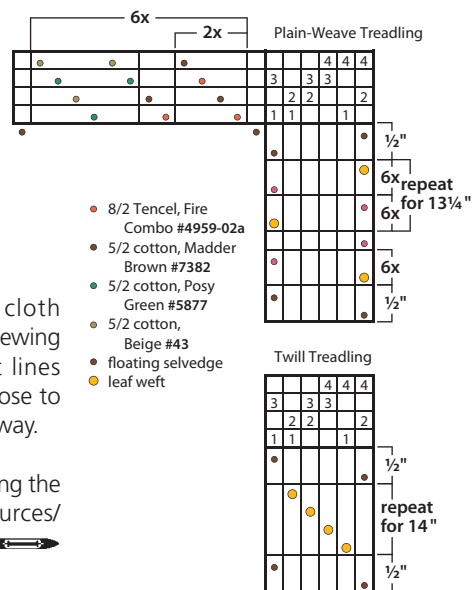
**13** To download directions for sewing the journal covers, visit [Free Resources/Projects](http://FreeResources/Projects) at [weavingtoday.com](http://weavingtoday.com).

### 1. Warp color order

	6x			
	-3x-5x-			
18	1			
18		1		
30			1	
30				1
96				

- 5/2 cotton, Beige #43
- 5/2 cotton, Posy Green #5877
- 8/2 Tencel, Fire Combo #4959-02a
- 5/2 cotton, Madder Brown #7382

### 2. 4-shaft draft



You can download instructions for weaving this project on a rigid-heddle loom at [weavingtoday.com](http://weavingtoday.com).



# Tropical Seas Scarf

BETH MULLINS

**H**ave you ever noticed the colors in a tropical sea? A friend's photographs from a recent sailing adventure through the Virgin Islands revealed magical colors—calming, soothing, even alluring. Inspiration was born. Where the water meets land, hues of green vegetation merge into magnificent sea blue. From the air, seaweed-covered underwater islands are visible. Scenes like this capture my imagination.

This scarf is my interpretation of a tropical sea in wearable fiber. After a lot of sampling, I decided to combine an interesting structure with added areas of interest that shrink in the wet-finishing process. The structure is a combination of

basketweave and herringbone twill, which I modified from a draft in Marguerite Davison's *A Handweaver's Pattern Book*. Seven shades of green and blue interlace to create the illusion of depth. Because they interlace more loosely, the basketweave areas allow the wool/silk yarn to shrink and felt during finishing. The texture resulting from the differential shrinkage creates lots of pleasing waves and swells and has me dreaming of a tropical vacation of my own.

## RESOURCES

Davison, Marguerite Porter. *A Handweaver's Pattern Book*. Swarthmore, Pennsylvania: M. P. Davison, 2002, p. 49.


**1** Wind 192 warp threads 4 yd long, using the color sequence shown in Figure 1. Measure 2 ends of Lemongrass Tencel for floating selvages and set them aside. Use your preferred method to warp the loom following the draft in Figure 2. Center for a weaving width of 8". Sley the reed 2/dent for a total of 24 epi. Sley the floating selvages in an empty dent on each side of the warp, and weight them over the back beam.

**2** Wind a bobbin with each weft color. Allowing 6" for fringe, begin the scarf by weaving 4 picks of Blue Ming on treadles 1 and 3. Hemstitch around groups of 4 warp threads (5 on each edge to include the floating selvage). Continue weaving the scarf following the treadling and weft color order in Figure 2. Hemstitch as you did at the beginning of the scarf.

**3** Remove the scarf from the loom. Prepare a twisted fringe (Tencel only) using 2 groups of 4 threads in each fringe. Knot each fringe to desired length. Do not twist the Zephyr wool/silk. Needleweave the Zephyr back into the scarf, being sure to catch the hemstitching,

for about 1". Trim the Zephyr close to the scarf.

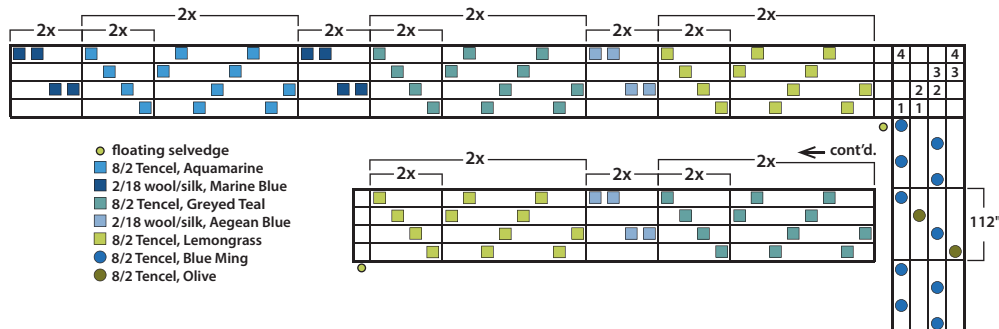
**4** Machine wash the scarf together with 2 old bath-size terry-cloth towels on a regular cycle and mild detergent in hot water. Machine dry the scarf with the towels on medium heat for 5 minutes. Remove the scarf and lay it flat to dry completely. (After this initial wet-finishing, the scarf can be handwashed and air dried.)

**5** If needed, remeasure and knot the fringe to the desired length. Trim the ends neatly. Press the outer ruffle of the scarf with a warm iron. Wear and enjoy! 

### 1. Warp color order

32	32	8/2 Tencel, Aquamarine
16	8 8	2/18 wool/silk, Marine Blue
64	32 32	8/2 Tencel, Greyed Teal
16	8 8	2/18 wool/silk, Aegean Blue
64	32 32	8/2 Tencel, Lemongrass
192 ends		

### 2. Draft



## STRUCTURE

Herringbone twill and 2/2 basketweave.

## EQUIPMENT

4-shaft loom, 9" weaving width; 12-dent reed; 2 shuttles with bobbins.

## YARNS

**Warp:** 8/2 Tencel (3,360 yd/lb; WEBS), Lemongrass, 264 yd; Greyed Teal, 256 yd; Aquamarine, 128 yd. 2/18 50% merino wool/50% silk (5,040 yd/lb, 1,160 yd/100 g skein; JaggerSpun Zephyr; WEBS), Aegean Blue and Marine Blue, 64 yd each. **Weft:** 8/2 Tencel, Blue Ming, 308 yd; Olive, 306 yd.

## WARP LENGTH

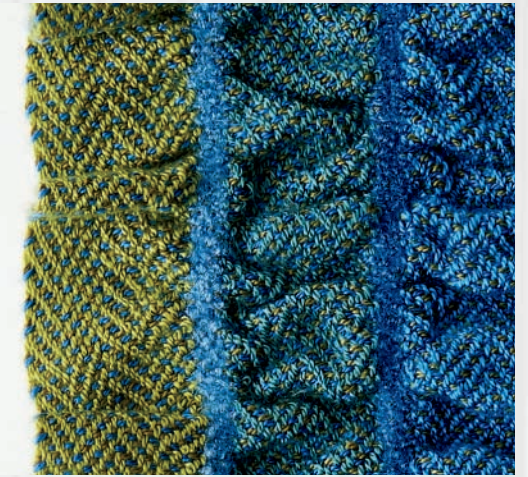
194 ends 4 yd long (includes 2 floating selvages; allows 5" for take-up, 27" for loom waste and fringe).

## SETTS

**Warp:** 24 epi (2/dent in a 12-dent reed). **Weft:** 23 ppi.

## DIMENSIONS

Width in the reed: 8 1/8". Woven length (measured under tension on the loom): 112". Finished size after washing: 6 1/2" x 66" plus 4" twisted fringe (Tencel only) at each end.



# TEXTURE

from

# PATTERN

Snakeskin in twill,  
honeycomb of  
yarn, waffles of  
cloth—threads  
imitate life.

## Snakeskin Scarf

DAVID WISMAR

A Snakeskin Accessory for Animal Lovers

One advantage of being a weaver is that you can create a scarf for every occasion. Sometimes it is just a plain scarf with a single color. Other times you may want something more intricate. On occasion, you may even want an exotic scarf, something resembling a leopard or a zebra hide, but none of us wants to sacrifice a real leopard or zebra for our fashion needs. So how about snakeskin? When I saw draft number 45548 on [www.handweaving.net](http://www.handweaving.net), I thought it would make a great exotic scarf. I could mimic snakeskin by keeping the width narrow and lengthening the motif with a light beat. And sure enough, the finished product is 6 inches wide and 70 inches long—a perfect snakeskin.

I chose Tencel yarn for this because it is shiny as silk and very soft. It can be gently washed by hand in hot water and thrown into a hot dryer: Heat actually brings out the sheen in Tencel. I chose a gold warp and black weft for the snakeskin pattern, but you could also use a dark brown weft. I've had so much fun with this draft that I even wove a scarf for a friend that resembled the skin of his pet tegu lizard. So have fun wearing this snake around your neck, and no worries—he won't bite!



A tegu lizard scarf (with lizard). PHOTO BY DAVID WISMAR

### RESOURCES

"New Draft #45548." <http://www.handweaving.net/draft-detail/45548/new-draft-handweaving-net-visitors-2004-2015>

#### STRUCTURE

Twill.

#### EQUIPMENT

8-shaft loom, 7" weaving width; 8-dent reed; 1 shuttle.

#### YARNS

Warp: 8/2 Tencel (3,360 yd/lb; Valley Yarns; WEBS), Gold, 528 yd.  
Weft: 8/2 Tencel, Black, 246 yd.

#### WARP LENGTH

162 ends 3¼ yd long (includes 2 floating selvages; allows 4" for

take-up, 39" for loom waste; loom waste includes fringe).

#### SETTS

Warp: 24 epi (2/dent in a 12-dent reed).

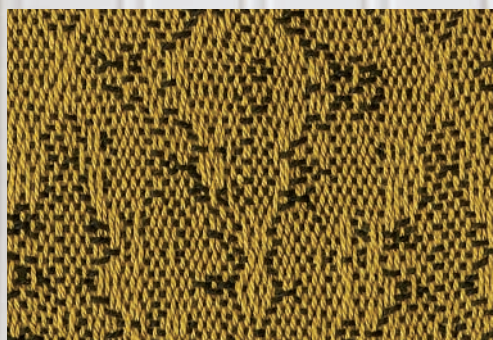
Weft: 16 ppi.

#### DIMENSIONS

Width in the reed: 6⅝".

Woven length (measured under tension on the loom): 74".

Finished size after washing: 5½" × 69½" plus 7" fringe at each end.

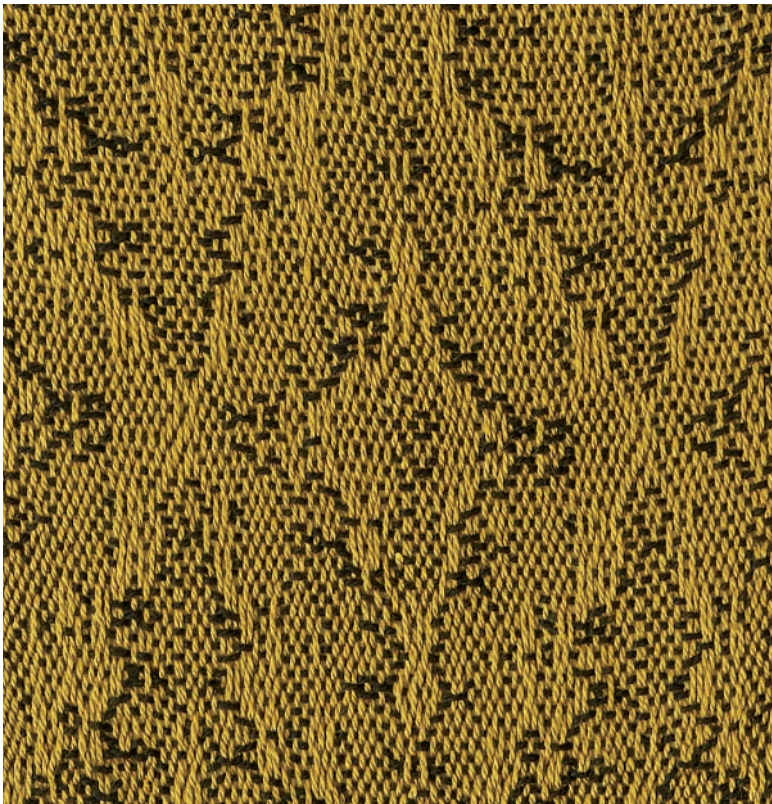
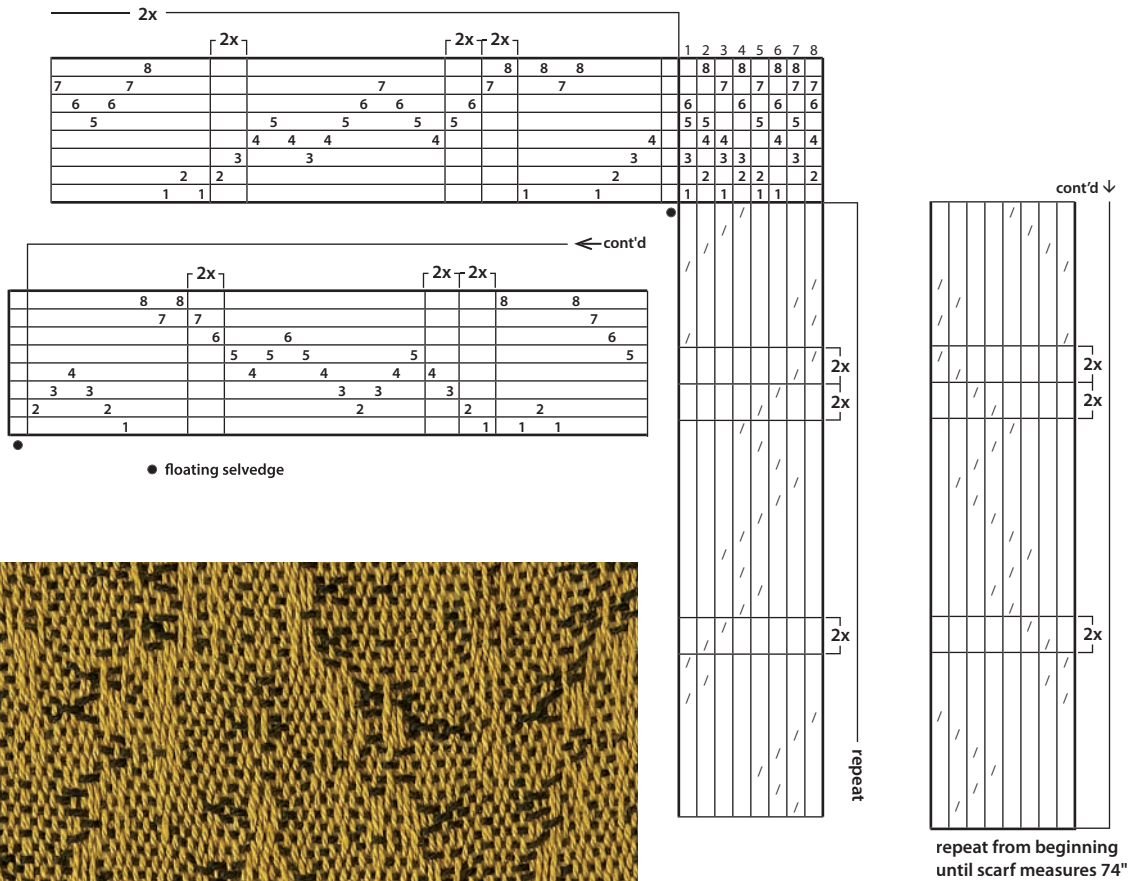





**Get the Kit!**

[bit.ly/snakeskin-scarf-kit-gold](http://bit.ly/snakeskin-scarf-kit-gold)

## 1. Draft



- 1 Wind 160 warp threads 3¼ yd long using Gold. Measure 2 floating selvages and set them aside. Use your preferred method to warp the loom, and thread following the draft in Figure 1. Sley 2 per dent in a 12-dent reed, centering for a weaving width of 6 2/3". Sley the floating selvages in an empty dent on each side of the warp and weight them over the back beam.
- 2 Wind a bobbin with Black.
- 3 Spread the warp with scrap yarn. Allowing 8" for fringe, weave the scarf following the draft in Figure 1. Beat lightly and measure frequently; aim for 16 ppi.
- 4 When you have woven 74", remove the fabric from the loom. Trim the fringe to 8" and make a twisted fringe using 15 threads for fringe bundles at the selvages, and 12 for the rest.
- 5 Handwash using mild detergent and hot water. Rinse. Do not wring. Roll the scarf in a towel to remove excess moisture, then dry in the dryer on hot for 30 minutes. Iron using a hot iron. 

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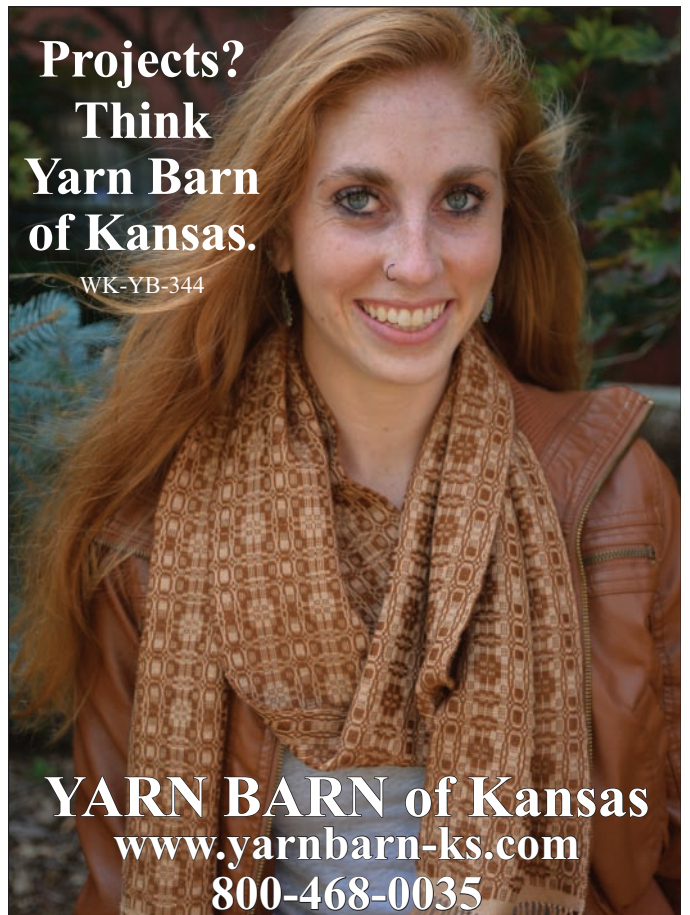
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# Danish Rosette Towels

ELISABETH HILL

A German exchange student in an American household dries dishes with a towel designed for a Swedish weaving class based on a Danish draft in Moroccan colors . . .

**T**hese towels came about as part of the development of a class on “moving thread” structures for the Vävstuga Swedish Weaving school. As I was researching and thinking about projects for a class called “Nordic Deflections,” I was perusing Vävstuga’s incredible library of Scandinavian and other weaving books and came across a fabulous draft in a book called *Danske bondevævninger: Hvergarmsstoffer ca. 1750–1850: analyser, materialer, mønstre og farver* (Danish edition) by Paulli Andersen. I couldn’t read a word of the book, but I could understand the elements of the draft and knew that the structure would be perfect for the Nordic Deflections class.

The next step was choosing colors and fibers. What a treat! I got to stand and make my selection in the “hall of colors” at Vävstuga where all the beautiful Swedish yarns are displayed in a rainbow of colors going from floor to ceiling. There are

cottolins, linens, long-staple cottons, and beautiful wools, all in subtle neutrals and saturated, vivid hues. I decided on a lively combination of chocolate, orange, and magenta cottolin.

Because I was designing for the looms at Vävstuga, I wanted to set the towels at 22 ends per inch in order to simulate the 9 ends per centimeter that we would use with the metric reeds at Vävstuga. The 2-2-2-2-2-1 sleying sequence is a little unorthodox and might leave reed marks in other structures, but because there is so much thread movement in this structure, it wasn’t a problem and gave me the pattern repeat and width I needed.

## RESOURCES

Andersen, Paulli. *Danske bondevævninger Hvergarmsstoffer ca. 1750–1850: analyser, materialer, mønstre og farver*. Borgen, Denmark: Trykt hos Narayana, 1981, p. 186.

**1** Wind 446 warp threads 3½ yd long, using the color sequence in Figure 1. Use your preferred method to warp the loom, and thread following the draft in Figure 2, centering for a weaving width of 20½", and sleying 2-2-2-2-2-1/dent in a 12-dent reed for a total of 22 epi. Sley the floating selvages in their own dents and weight them over the back beam.

**2** Wind a bobbin of each of the weft colors.

**3** Begin by weaving 32 picks of plain weave in the 16/2 cottolin for the hem. Weave the first towel, following the treadling shown in Figure 2. In order to achieve the wonderful little color-and-weave details in this towel, you will have to endure many color changes. You can choose to cut your weft at the color changes, carry along the

selvedge edge, or do a combination of the two. The author recommends carrying the passive colors along the selvages for the 2-pick color changes, but you may choose to cut and tuck when you change from the orange/magenta blocks to the brown blocks, or you can carry the passive colors along the selvedge edge, making sure to catch them with the active weft as you throw the shuttle. Continue weaving according to the draft until the towel measures 28½" then switch to the fine weft and weave 32 picks for the second hem.

**4** Weave in 2 picks of scrap yarn and begin weaving towel 2 according to the treadling in Figure 2, once again using the fine weft for the hems. Repeat for towel 3, following the treadling in Figure 2.

## STRUCTURE

Deflected doubleweave.

## EQUIPMENT

8-shaft loom, 21" weaving width; 12-dent reed; 3 shuttles; 4 bobbins.

## YARNS

**Warp:** 22/2 cottolin (60% cotton/40% linen, 3,200 yd/lb; Vav Stuga), Orange #2014, 404 yd; Magenta #2023, 404 yd; Chocolate #2045, 756 yd.

**Weft:** 22/2 cottolin, Orange #2014, 506 yd; Magenta #2023, 160 yd; Chocolate #2045, 670 yd; 16/2 cottolin (60% cotton/40% linen, 6,720 yd/lb; Brassard), Brun Chocolat #C8263, 120 yd.

## WARP LENGTH

446 ends 3½ yd long (includes 2 floating selvages; allows 9" for take-up, 27" for loom waste).

## SETTS

**Warp:** 22 epi (2-2-2-2-2-1/dent in a 12-dent reed).

**Weft:** 23 ppi; 26 ppi for plain-weave hems.

## DIMENSIONS

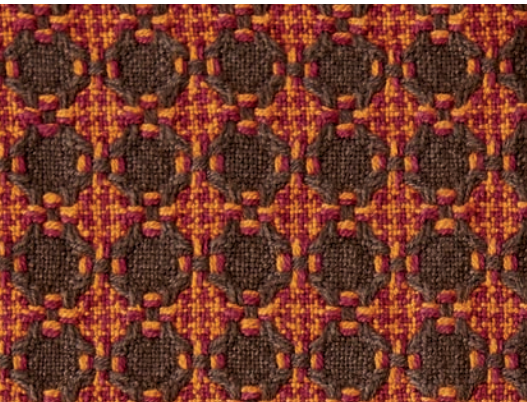
**Width in the reed:** 20½".  
**Woven length (measured under tension on the loom):** 90" (30" each towel).

**Finished size after washing and hemming:** 3 towels 17" × 24".



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[bit.ly/danish-rosette-towel-kit](http://bit.ly/danish-rosette-towel-kit)

**5** Remove fabric from the loom. Serge or machine stitch to secure raw ends. Machine wash on gentle cycle and hang until almost dry. (You will be able to machine wash and dry normally once the towels are hemmed). Cut the towels apart at the scrap yarn and turn the hems under and under again so that none of the plain weave is visible on the front of the towel. Press and handsew hems.

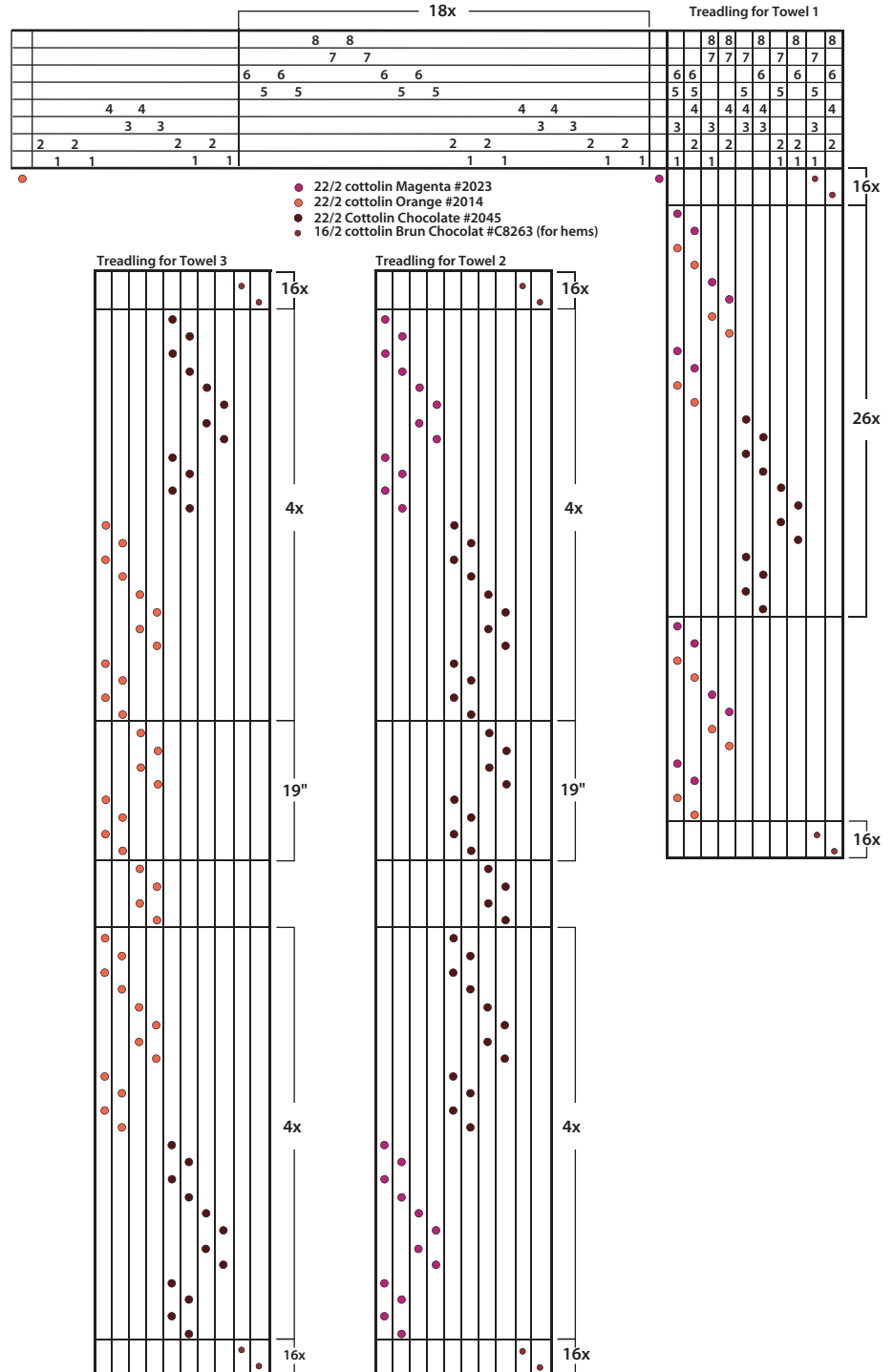


### 1. Warp color order

	18x						
216	12						■ 22/2 cottolin, Chocolate #2045
115	3	2	2	2	2	2	■ 22/2 cottolin, Orange #2014
115	2	2	2	2	2	2	■ 22/2 cottolin, Magenta #2023

446 ends (includes 2 floating selvages)

### 2. Draft



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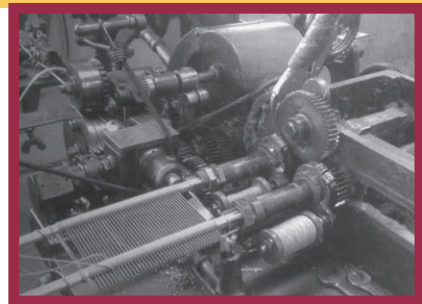
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# Honeycomb Beaded Pillows

DEBORAH HEYMAN

**M**y weaving study group has recently been studying honeycomb. I decided to make a project, so I started with the draft in Sharon Alderman's *Mastering Weave Structures* but changed it slightly. I deepened the look of the cells by creating a darker "shadow line" with taupe 8/2 cotton to contrast with the light color of the fabric. Then, I wove beads into the fabric to cast additional shadows. Their sheen against the matte background adds to the texture and depth. This project ended up having other contrasts as well: humble but elegant, fussy but free. The yarns used are basic and inexpensive but the shimmer of beads and the neutral colors look sophisticated. The beads are inserted by threading them onto a separate length of weft, slightly longer than the weaving width. The placement of the beads requires a bit of patience and care, but because the fabric will be sewn to make a pillow cover, the ends of the bead weft can be left hanging loose at the selvages, and the selvages themselves need not be perfect.

Honeycomb is not suitable for many uses because it creates long floats on the back of the fabric, but it is perfect for a

pillow cover. (I added an underlining to reinforce the fabric.) The woven area includes borders at the sides and top and bottom that don't have any beads so the seams of the pillow can be sewn without worrying about a bead going under the sewing machine foot. I did not wet-finish the fabric since I didn't want to have to try ironing fabric embedded with beads. The pillows are elegant but not easily washable, so enjoy them but put them out of harm's way when it's time to serve tea and biscuits.

## RESOURCES

Alderman, Sharon. *Mastering Weave Structures*. Loveland, Colorado: Interweave, 2004, p. 110.

Amy's Creative Side. "Tutorial-Mitered Corners". [parkcitygirl.blogspot.com/2009/04/tutorial-mitered-corners.html](http://parkcitygirl.blogspot.com/2009/04/tutorial-mitered-corners.html)

The Crafty Quilter. "Adding a Flange to Your Quilt". [thecraftyquilter.com/2012/03/adding-a-flange-to-your-quilt/](http://thecraftyquilter.com/2012/03/adding-a-flange-to-your-quilt/)

Quilting Jane. "Finishing a Pillow with Buttonhole Closure". [www.quiltjane.com/2013/03/finishing-pillow-cushion-with-buttonhole.html](http://www.quiltjane.com/2013/03/finishing-pillow-cushion-with-buttonhole.html)

## STRUCTURE

Honeycomb.

## EQUIPMENT

4-shaft loom, 19" weaving width; 12-dent reed; 3 shuttles with bobbins.

## YARNS

**Warp:** 16/2 unmercerized cotton (6,720 yd/lb; Yarn Barn), Natural #100, 1,116 yd. **Weft:** 16/2 unmercerized cotton, Natural #100, 1,150 yd; 100% cotton, Lily Sugar'n Cream (120 yd/2.5 oz ball; Jo-Ann Fabrics), Ecrú, 120 yd; 8/2 cotton (3,360 yd/lb; UKI), Taupe #69, 120 yd. (Warp and weft amounts are given for 3 pillows. For each additional pillow, add  $\frac{2}{3}$  yd to the warp length and the following amounts of weft: 16/2 cotton, 384 yd; Sugar'n Cream, 40 yd; 8/2 cotton, 40 yd.)

## OTHER SUPPLIES

Seed beads, Opaque Lustre Mother of Pearl 421B size 6 (Thunderbird Supply Company, [thunderbirdsupply.com](http://thunderbirdsupply.com)), 2–3 tubes (about 182 beads per pillow); tweezers; 18" × 18" pillow forms; fabric for backing and borders; muslin for pillow underlining (optional);  $\frac{3}{4}$ " buttons for pillow closures (optional).

## WARP LENGTH

446 ends 2½ yd long (includes 2 floating selvages; allows 6" for take-up, 30" for loom waste).

## SETTS

**Warp:** 24 epi (2/dent in a 12-dent reed). **Weft:** 39–44 ppi.

## DIMENSIONS

**Width in the reed:** 18 $\frac{2}{3}$ ".

**Woven length (measured under tension on the loom):** 54" (approximately 18" for each pillow).

**Finished size:** 3 pillow tops, 17½" × 16" each.

**1** Wind 444 warp threads 2½ yd long. Measure 2 floating selvages and set them aside. Use your preferred method to warp the loom, and thread following the draft in Figure 1. Sley 2/dent for a total of 24 epi. Sley the floating selvages through the dents on each side of the warp and weight them over the back beam.

**2** Wind a bobbin of each of the three weft yarns. Spread the warp with scrap yarn. Following the treadling sequence in Figure 1, weave 1½" of plain weave with the 16/2 cotton, then a half-cell to begin the honeycomb pattern. Weave 2 rows of cells without beads.

**3** In the next row of cells, after weaving 8 picks of 16/2 cotton, you will weave the first row of beads. Thread 7 beads on a 20" length of 16/2 cotton. Insert the beads and thread into the next shed and position 1 bead in the middle of each of the center 7 cells. Tweezers may be helpful in placing the beads into the center of each cell. (Each cell is 24 ends, so the bead should be positioned 12 ends from the edge of the cell.) As you carefully beat them into place, gently push the beads up to the surface. The ends of the beaded pick can be left hanging at the edges of the cloth. Finish weaving the cells following the draft. For the next beaded row,





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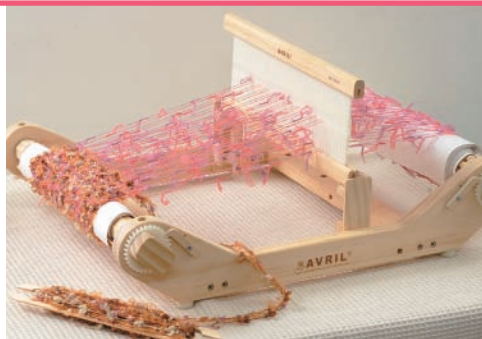
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# Playing with Blocks Waffle-Weave Towels

JODI YBARRA

GET INSPIRED COMBINING COLOR AND TEXTURE ON YOUR RIGID-HEDDLE LOOM.

**W**affle weave, with its strong absorbent qualities, is the ideal weave structure for kitchen towels, and can be woven on a rigid-heddle loom with just one pick-up stick. I have made an abundance of towels using solid and variegated yarns but wanted to try mixing color blocks with waffle weave for something new and

different. After sampling many color combinations, I chose three colors that were of similar value but with enough contrast to make the color-block squares show prominently throughout the towels. This project is an excellent way to explore color and texture on your rigid-heddle loom.

Happy weaving!

**1** Wind 256 doubled warp threads  $2\frac{1}{2}$  yd long using the color sequence indicated in the warp color order, Figure 1. Center for a weaving width of  $21\frac{1}{3}$ " and use your preferred method to warp the loom. If you direct warp, you will have 4 threads (2 working ends) in each slot or hole before moving 2 of them to an adjacent hole or slot.


**2** Wind 1 shuttle of each of the 3 weft colors.

**3** Spread your warp with scrap yarn. Begin by weaving  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " of plain weave in Mint

for the hem allowance, ending with a down-heddle pick.

**4** **Set up the waffle-weave pattern:** Keeping the heddle in the down position, working behind the heddle, and only working on the threads in the slots, use your pick-up stick to pick up 2 ends in the slots, and then skip 2, creating a 2-up, 2-down pattern across the warp. You will have a total of 64 working ends on top of your pick-up stick. Push the stick to the back of the loom.

**5** Follow the waffle-weave sequence in the inset, changing colors every 3" as indicated in the weft color order, Figure 2. When you have completed the last waffle-weave block of Mint, weave  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " of plain weave with Mint for the second hem allowance. Insert 2 picks of a contrasting thread, and weave the second towel as above following the weft color order in Figure 2.

**6** Sew across each end, then remove the towels from the loom. Machine zigzag or serge to prevent raveling, then cut apart between the lines of contrasting thread. Turn under  $\frac{1}{2}$ " along the raw edges, pressing the fold with steam. Bring the pressed edge up to meet the beginning of the waffle-weave pattern. Steam-press again before machine stitching with matching sewing thread. Machine wash in cold water with mild detergent and machine dry. 



## STRUCTURE

Waffle weave.

## EQUIPMENT

Rigid-heddle loom, 22" weaving width; 12-dent heddle; 3 shuttles, 1 pick-up stick.

## YARNS

**Warp:** 8/2 unmercerized cotton (3,360 yd/lb; UKI), Mint #3, 360 yd; Empire Blue #48, 360 yd; Duck #68, 560 yd.

**Weft:** 8/2 unmercerized cotton, Mint #3, 392 yd; Empire Blue #48, 236 yd; Duck #68, 158 yd.

## WARP LENGTH

256 working ends  $2\frac{1}{2}$  yd long (warp yarn is used doubled; allows 3" for take-up, 27" for loom waste).

## SETTS

**Warp:** 12 epi (1 doubled end/dent in a 12-dent heddle).

**Weft:** 20 ppi.

## DIMENSIONS

Width in the reed:  $21\frac{1}{3}$ ".  
Woven length (measured under tension on the loom): 60".

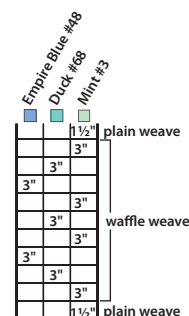
Finished size after washing and hemming: 2 towels  $16\frac{1}{2}$ " x 24" each.

### 1. Warp color order

72	36	36	Mint #3
72	36	36	Empire Blue #48
112	38	36	38 Duck #68

256 working ends (warp yarn is used doubled)

### 2. Weft color order



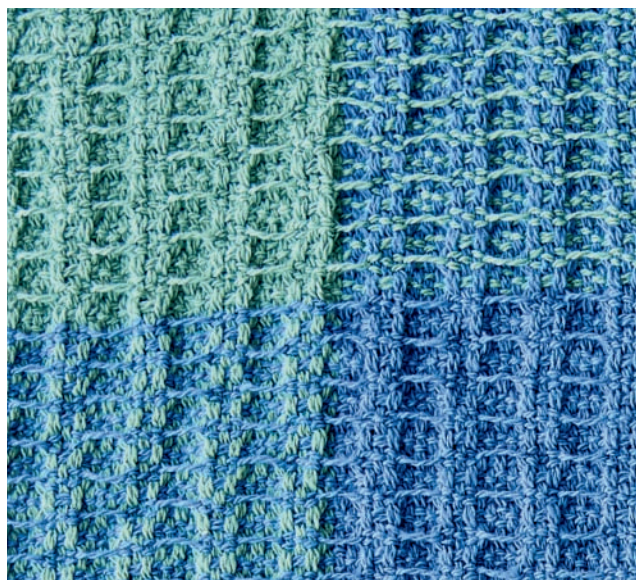


**TIP**

### Waffle-Weave Sequence

1. Heddle down.
2. Heddle up with pick-up stick brought forward.
3. Heddle down.
4. Heddle up.
5. Heddle in neutral position with pick-up stick brought forward and turned on edge.
6. Heddle up.

(The pick-up stick remains at the back of the loom except when moved forward for Steps 2 and 5 of the sequence.)



# Classic Capelet

JUDY PAGELS

It doesn't have to take a lot of tailoring to make a stylish piece. This charming capelet is basically a long length of fabric with one edge shaped to form a collar. To join the ends, the top corners of the fabric are overlapped and trimmed with a decorative button.

The loft of this fingering-weight alpaca/wool yarn combined with Brooks bouquet imparts a knitted appearance to this fabric. Once you get the hang of this technique,

it'll progress faster than you might expect. The bouquets are woven loosely for a textured look rather than pulled tightly for a lacy effect.

## RESOURCES

Patrick, Jane. *The Weaver's Idea Book*. Loveland, Colorado: Interweave, 2010, "Brooks bouquet," pp. 59–63.


## WEAVING

- 1 Warp your loom with a warp of 144 ends 2 yd long, using the warping method of your choice. (If you choose to increase the warp width, work in multiples of 8.)
- 2 Weave 5 rows of plain weave, then, following the instructions for making Brooks bouquet, work a row of bouquets using 4 warp ends per bundle but instead of pulling the bundles tight, leave the yarn lying across the surface to make a line. Weave 5 rows of plain weave and repeat. Repeat for 48" or until the end of the warp. (There is ample room in this warp length to weave a longer fabric for a larger size.)
- 3 Secure the ends of the fabric with overhand knots. Handwash gently in lukewarm water and lay flat to dry. Lightly steam-press on the wrong side before assembly.

## ASSEMBLY

- 1 Machine stitch the end of the fabric just above the first pick of a row of bouquets. To prevent the fabric from pulling, use a long machine stitch. Trim off waste. With the wrong side up, make a double rolled hem using the bouquets as a guide. Lightly press and pin. Using the project yarn, handsew the hem in between the bouquets to preserve the open spaces. Stitch up the sides of the hem for tidy edges.

- 2 Using a mirror or a friend, fold over the top edge for the collar. Drape the fabric across the shoulders to determine fit and mark the edge of the unfinished edge with a large pin along one of the bouquet rows.
- 3 Sew the second hem as you did for the first one.
- 4 **Make collar:** Place the fabric right side up on a flat surface. Mark the center along the top edge and using the bouquet sections as a guide, fold back 4 rows (2½" [6.5 cm]) and pin. Fold back 1 row (bouquet bundle) at either end of the top edge and pin. Then pin along this edge to form a curved neckline increasing the number of folded bouquets to the widest point. With the project yarn, secure the collar by starting at one end and hand-stitching between 2 rows of Brooks bouquet bundles, 1 row from the selvage edge.

- 5 **Add the closure:** On a flat surface with the front of the capelet facing you, fold the right side (left side facing you) over the left, about 2½" (6.5 cm) and secure with pins. Try on and adjust the closure overlap as needed. Line up the fold-over with the grain of the cloth. Secure around all edges with project yarn. Finish with a decorative button. 

## STRUCTURE

Brooks bouquet.

## EQUIPMENT

Rigid-heddle or shaft loom with 15" weaving width; 10-dent rigid heddle or reed; 1 shuttle; tapestry needle.

## YARNS

**Warp and weft:** Isager 2 fingering-weight yarn (50% alpaca/50% wool; 2,483 yd/lb; 273 yd/1.76 oz per skein) Blue Gray #47, 288 yd. **Weft:** Isager 2 fingering-weight yarn, Blue Gray #47, 150 yd. Two skeins are needed for warp and weft.

## OTHER SUPPLIES

1½" (3.8 cm) button.

## WARP LENGTH

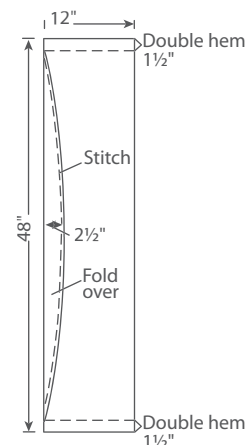
**144 ends** 2 yd long (includes take-up and 24" loom waste). If weaving on a shaft loom, allow 36" for loom waste and increase warp yarn yardage by a third.

## SETTS

**Warp:** 10 epi (1 end/dent in a 10-dent reed).  
**Weft:** about 7 ppi.

## DIMENSIONS

**Width in the reed:** 14½".  
Woven length (measured under tension on the loom): about 48".  
Finished size: 12" x 48".







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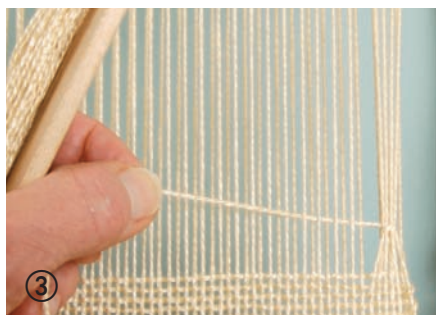
## MAKING BROOKS BOUQUET

- 1 Open the shed. Working right to left (or from the direction of your dominant hand), insert your shuttle into the shed as far as your bouquet is wide. Bring your shuttle to the surface. For this sample, each group is 4 raised warp threads (Figure 1).
- 2 Travel left to right over this same group (4 raised warp threads) and reinsert your shuttle into the shed right to left (the same direction you began). Travel through the shed for a total of 8 warp threads and bring the shuttle to the surface (Figure 2). For uniform bundles, try to keep tension on your working end.

You may find it helpful to pinch the previous knot with one hand as you bring the shuttle out of the shed for the next bundle, thus preventing the previous bouquet from loosening up.

- 3 In classic Brooks bouquet you would then pull tight to cinch up the bundle as shown here (Figure 3). For this project, leave the bundle loosely surrounded. Repeat Steps 1–3.

- 4 When you reach the other selvedge, change sheds and weave back to the other side (Figure 4).



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# For YOUNG WEAVERS

Fun weaving projects  
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## Hula Hoop Rug for Kids

HALEY PIERSON-COX

**K**ids love to help decorate play areas or bedrooms, and handwoven rugs in beloved colors are the perfect way to add a little handmade fun to their favorite spaces! Creative kids will definitely enjoy the process of weaving, and this easy-to-follow plain-weave structure partnered with a sturdy handmade hula hoop loom means that any mistakes can easily be fixed.

Lovely DIY T-shirt rugs woven on hula hoops are popping up all over the Internet right now, but I really wanted to try my hand at making a more permanent hula hoop loom that kids could use without having to worry about the warp threads slipping off of the hoop if they pull too hard or the project needs to be moved before they are done. (I like to think of this as making the loom a bit more little brother- or sister-proof.) So I added pegs to my hula hoop, making it resemble a more traditional round loom. Then I decided to make yarn out of old bed sheets instead of T-shirts to ensure that, unlike many T-shirt rugs, my rug would lie flat when it was finished.

Once I tweaked the design and weaving technique, I was pleasantly surprised at how sturdy a simple plastic loom could be and delighted by how well the hula hoop held its shape during weaving, even when I picked it up and moved it around.

This project is totally customizable, so feel free to play around with different weaving techniques and color combinations. Or, if you've got kids who can't sit still, you can also try using wider fabric strips to make the weaving go faster. This may be a kid-friendly project, but that shouldn't stop you from getting in on the fun, too. I can definitely see myself using this loom for my own future home décor designs!

### MAKING THE LOOM

- 1** With the hula hoop lying flat on the floor, use a permanent marker to make evenly-spaced marks around the circumference of the hula hoop. (For a hoop 112" in circumference, place a mark every 7".)
- 2** At each mark you made in step 1, drill a hole all the way through the hula hoop, taking care to go straight down through both layers of plastic.
- 3** Set a screw through each hole, leaving the screw head and about ½" of additional length protruding from the front side of the loom to create the peg. Secure each screw in place with a nut on both the top and the bottom of the hula hoop.



Pegs installed on the hula hoop. PHOTOS BY HALEY PIERSON-COX



### STRUCTURE

Plain weave and half-basketweave.

### EQUIPMENT

Hula hoop loom: 112" circumference, 35½" diameter hula hoop; 16 blunt-end machine screws, size 10–24 × 1½"; 32 machine screw nuts, size 10–24; drill with ⅝" bit; screwdriver; ruler or tape measure; permanent marker. Fabric scissors to cut strips.

### YARNS

Twin-size sheets (66" × 96") cut into 2"-wide strips along the straight grain. Each sheet will make 33 strips 96" long (about 88 yd total).

**Warp:** 8 fabric strips, each 2" wide and 74" long (16½ yd), yellow print.

**Weft:** 2" wide fabric strips cut from twin-size bed sheets: yellow print, 18 yd; orange, 24 yd; maroon red, 37 yd; gray, 77 yd.

### WARP LENGTH

16 ends (eight 74" long strips tied into a loop long enough to fit over 2 pegs across the diameter of the hula hoop loom).

### DIMENSIONS

**Woven diameter:** 27".

**Finished size:** 1 round rug 27" in diameter.



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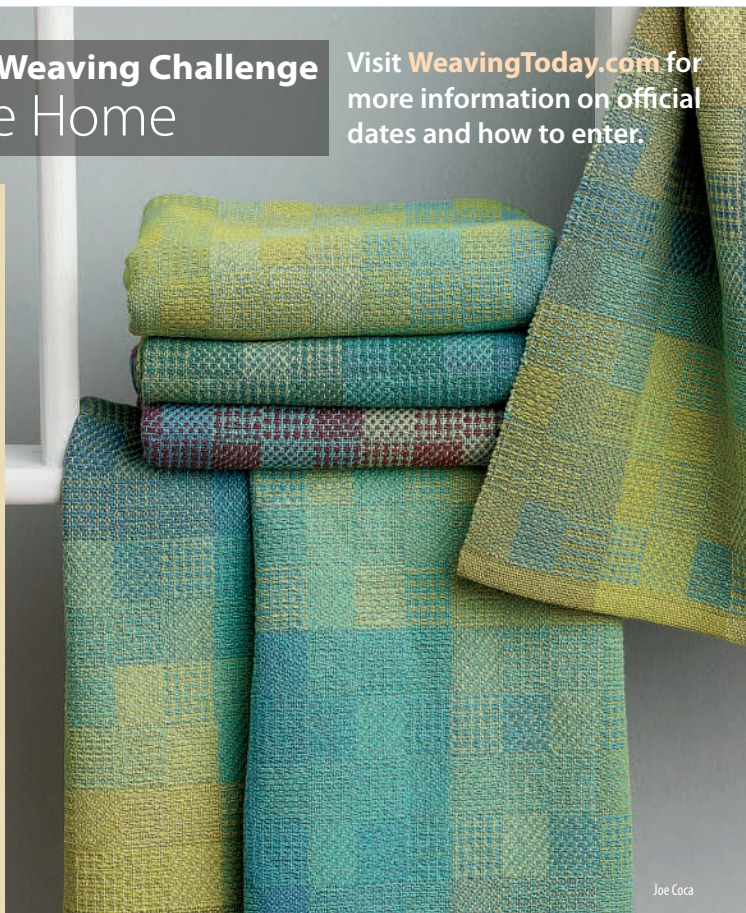


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Joe Coca

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*fw*

# Kid's Woven Necklace

JENNIFER LEE

Every summer, I invite twelve to fifteen kids, grades 2 through 5, to participate in an art camp in my backyard, a week of creativity and art-making. I like to incorporate a wide variety of art media, including some type of fiber art or weaving.

I developed this project for my students so they could wear their art around their neck all week and then hang it for display in our art show at the end of the camp. I like to recycle whenever possible, so cardboard was the ideal material to make a small loom. As this was a mixed-media art camp, we used

colored markers for drawing patterns, and beads to embellish the weaving.

All of the students' weavings were different, and they all were amazing. Any scraps of yarn, can be tied together to make a colorful necklace. It's easier for the kids to work with shorter lengths of yarn, so using 1-yard pieces creates fewer tangles and allows for more color variety.

I give specifics for this project, but there really aren't any ironclad rules. When it comes to kids and creativity, the sky is the limit!

- 1 Cut a piece of cardboard 3" x 5". Prepare the cardboard for weaving by cutting 4 slits in the top and bottom about ½" apart and ½" deep.
- 2 Wrap yarn lengthwise into the slits and around the cardboard front and back (Photo 1). Tie it securely and tightly in the back, end to end. If you use multiple colors of yarn, position the knots at the back (Photo 1a).
- 3 Cut a piece of yarn about 1 yd long to use as weft. Anchor it in a slit at the top edge, and then weave it under and over the warp yarn from side to side, using fingers or a tapestry needle. Continue weaving, adding different colors if desired, pushing the ends under the weaving or knotting them in the back. Be careful not to pull so tight that it distorts the cardboard. As you weave, push the completed portion toward the top to fill in gaps and straighten. Continue weaving until the warp is full (Photo 2).
- 4 Take the final end through a bottom edge slit and around to the back. Tuck and trim all yarn ends. (If you have a tapestry needle, you can thread the ends inside the weaving along the warp threads.)
- 5 With hole punch, punch a hole in the top center of the cardboard, and 5 holes at the bottom, placing 1 hole between each slit and 1 on each side of the slits.

- 6 Cut 5 pieces of yarn 12" long. Fold them in half, then slip the folded ends through the punched hole at the bottom of the cardboard and pull the cut ends through the loops (lark's head knot) to create fringe. Apply scotch tape to the ends of the fringe to create stiff ends for stringing beads (Photo 3).
- 7 Add beads to the fringe. Tie an overhand knot at the bottom of the beads to secure them, then trim off the scotch tape and any excess yarn.

## NECKLACE

- 1 Cut 1 piece of yarn 1 yd long. Make a lark's head knot through the top punched hole to attach it to the pendant.
- 2 Use scotch tape to stiffen the necklace ends, and thread with a few beads on each side of the pendant. Adjust the necklace length and tie the ends together with an overhand knot. Trim off the scotch tape.

## FINISHING

- 1 Cut the corners of the top of the cardboard to make the pendant look like a tag, and use colored markers to color a border pattern around the outside edge. Slip over your head and wear your woven necklace, showing off your creativity.



### STRUCTURE

Weft-faced plain weave.

### EQUIPMENT

3" x 5" cardboard pieces; tapestry needle (optional).

### YARNS

Worsted-weight yarn in an assortment of variegated and solid colors, 7 yd.

### OTHER SUPPLIES

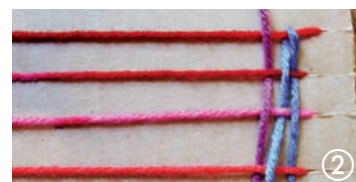
Scotch tape; assorted pony beads; colored markers; scissors; single-hole punch.

### DIMENSIONS

3" x 5" cardboard pendant with beaded fringe on one end, and a beaded yarn necklace.



Warping the cardboard loom (back)



Warping the cardboard loom (front)



Adding fringe and putting scotch tape on the yarn ends for stringing beads



PHOTO COURTESY OF JENNIFER LEE

## Weaving *Origami*

SUSIE TAYLOR

An accomplished weaver and origami enthusiast pushes the dimensional possibilities of cloth that can be produced on a loom.



**LEFT:** Discontinuous strips are woven with small cardboard shuttles. **RIGHT:** Folded origami shapes on the ground cloth. **BOTTOM:** Woven loops waiting to be folded into origami shapes. PHOTOS BY SUSIE TAYLOR

**Y**ou might think that weaving and origami are strange bedfellows, but they have more in common than one might think. Both rely heavily on concepts such as process, order, precision, and some basic mathematical principles. My first exposure to origami came from a Japanese visitor who stayed with my family during a cultural exchange program in 1972, when I was

five years old. He taught me to fold a simple “water bomb” shape that I never forgot, and its impact lay dormant within me until I was an adult.

As a young art student, I studied weaving and received my BFA and MFA in textiles. For the next eleven years, I worked as a Jacquard designer for several mills and design firms. Around 2009, I discovered tessellation

origami, a beautifully layered, geometric form of origami. I began creating small paper samples and wondered if it was possible to weave similar geometric compositions on my floor loom. I had experimented with dimensional techniques such as discontinuous pleats and open-ended, doublecloth pockets in my handweaving, but this would be something totally new. My first woven

samples were successful, if a bit rough, and I became obsessed with developing the form in ever more complex ways. I continue to combine weaving and origami to create new, one-of-a-kind woven forms.

While traditional origami folders are faced with the challenge of creating forms made from just a single sheet of paper, I am inspired to create my dimensional textiles from a single layer of cloth, without any cutting or sewing; only weaving and folding are used. My work originates on the loom where discontinuous pleats are engineered and constructed as the ground cloth is woven—everything starts as a single layer of handwoven cloth. When the fabric is taken off the loom, the discontinuous pleats become the folded origami shapes that seem to hover over the surface of the cloth. Linen yarn is an obvious choice to weave with, as its natural characteristics produce and hold folds nicely.

My technique is to wind separate and longer warp sections for the origami areas to account for the take-up. I refer to these separate origami sections as discontinuous pleats: discontinuous strips of cloth that are woven with small cardboard shuttles. Once I reach the desired length for each row, the tension is released, and the pleats are formed by pulling the discontinuous strips toward the front of the loom. The trick is to secure the pleats by slipping an aluminum flat rod through them and then securing that rod to the rod at the base of the apron so that I can put tension back onto the warp again to continue weaving. Each row of pleats requires an aluminum rod that gets tied onto the rod from the previous row. When the cloth comes off the loom, I remove all of the rods, and the weaving resembles a cloth with a field of loops springing from the surface. I lay the cloth flat and begin to fold the pleats into the geometric origami compositions. It is challenging to keep the tension correct, but with lots of trial and error, I have perfected my techniques using my double-back beam or by weighting sections of warp behind the loom.

As an accomplished weaver, I explore the limitations and push the boundaries of what can be produced on the loom. My work celebrates the joy of producing basic cloth that transforms into perplexing, dimensional compositions. I am drawn to complexity but strive for simplicity.

I am finding a growing number of artists/designers that are also incorporating origami into their work. I see origami influencing fashion, architecture, package and furniture design, etc. This ancient art form is also finding modern applications in aerospace engineering, biology, and military applications, just to name a few. I am thrilled that I was able to make the connection between origami and weaving for myself, and I hope you will be inspired to explore the dimensional possibilities in your own work. For more information about woven origami, visit my website and blog at [www.susietaylorart.com](http://www.susietaylorart.com) and [www.weavingorigami.com](http://www.weavingorigami.com).



Pearl, 2014, linen and silk, 24" × 36" × 1"

PHOTOS BY JAMES DEWRANCE.



Three Towers, 2014, linen and silk, 24" × 48" × 1".

# Traditions

## The Show Towel

A PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN TRADITION

TOM KNISELY



I love learning about people's traditions. For example, in Scandinavia, people eat pickled herring at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve to bring good luck for the new year. Who knew?

Here's a lovely Pennsylvania custom. In the early part of the 18th century, William Penn granted many acres of land to German immigrants fleeing their homeland because of religious persecution. We know their descen-

dants today as the Amish and Mennonites. Like any immigrant group, they brought along the traditions they knew, including the way they cooked (our beloved "Pennsylvania Dutch" food) and dressed, and the textiles that they wove.

One of these beloved Old World traditions was the "show towel," so called because it was made to be decorative only, *never* to be used to wipe your hands. In Europe, the show towel was hung on a special rack, placed in front as a curtain to hide the serviceable and soiled towels. Here in Pennsylvania, the rack was forgotten and the show towel was hung alone, usually proudly displayed on the door separating the kitchen from the parlor, on the parlor side. Its purpose was to show off a young girl's needlework skills, and it was cross-

stitched in folksy patterns using dyed linen or silk

threads on handwoven linen fabric. Many of these heirloom towels still exist today. Each is as unique as the young girl who made it, but there is a consistent symmetry to the designs. For instance, if a towel has a tree design in the center and a stylized bird to the left of the tree, there will also be a bird on the right, mirrored and facing the

other bird. Every other motif will also be balanced left to right. (Don't we do this in our weaving, too?)

These patterns were shared and collected in much the same way you and I might collect weaving drafts. The towels usually measure around 14 to 20 inches wide and 36 to 48 inches long. An antique show towel will also have a woven selvedge on one side and a rolled hem down the length of the other side because it was made from a wide fabric cut to size. Today, with our modern looms, we wouldn't think twice about putting on a towel warp that is only 20 inches wide, but the old barn or timber-frame looms would not work as happily on such narrow widths. So wide widths of linen, beautifully woven and beaten to square, would have been cut lengthwise and hemmed along the cut edge to create the background for the show towel. At the top and in the corners would be loops of thread or woven tape for hanging. At the bottom, there might also be a fringe or an elaborate panel of drawn-thread work.

The making of show towels was at its height from the 1820s until the latter part of the 19th century. It was a way for a young girl to express her creative talents without appearing to be too "worldly." Remember that these families lived by strict rules set by the church, and any outward display of frivolity was frowned upon. I think that the show towel was tolerated because it was a display of the needlework skills of a young woman, and this show of industry would have been important when looking for a husband—a sample of the talents she would bring to her future household.

Show towels were often made by girls between 12 and 18 years old. I think it is rare today to find a young girl interested in these types of skills. Oh, how times have changed, and I suppose I must change with them. But I will never stop looking back where I came from for inspiration as to where I am going. As Tevye said in *Fiddler on the Roof*, "Tradition!"

# Traditions: Show Towel

TOM KNISELY

**M**y weaving projects are often inspired by things I see around me. Do you remember the antique coverlet that I reinterpreted as a table runner? Now I wanted to weave a version of a Pennsylvania show towel that paid respect to the tradition, but I didn't want to learn to cross-stitch, so I decided to weave simple variations on a pattern. There would be a full repeat of the threading pattern at the bottom. Then I wanted to weave simple treadling variations to break up the long area in the middle. Toward the top, I would weave another pattern repeat but change it up a little from the bottom panel. This would be a true sampler, like the original show towels. The pattern is an adaptation of the pattern Cat Track and Snail Trail from Marguerite Davison's first pattern book. (In later editions, the pattern became Wandering Vine.) Since Cat Track and Snail Trail is a one-way directional pattern, I took the liberty of reversing the threading so it is mirrored and balanced.

Cat Track and Snail Trail is one of my favorite patterns, but I wanted to tweak it and make it my own. I think it works,

## STRUCTURE

Overshot.

## EQUIPMENT

4-shaft loom, 18" weaving width; 10-dent reed; 3 shuttles; 4 bobbins.

## YARNS

**Warp:** 8/2 unmercerized cotton (3,360 yd/lb; Maurice Brassard), Naturel, 878 yd. **Weft:** 8/2 cottolin (3,360 yd/lb; Maurice Brassard) Naturel, 318 yd; 16/2 unmercerized cotton (6,720 yd/lb; Maurice Brassard), Naturel, 134 yd; 5/2 mercerized pearl cotton (2,100 yd/lb; UKI) Lipstick #32, 28 yd; Quarry #147, 98 yd.

## WARP LENGTH

351 ends 2¼ yd long (includes 2 floating selvages; allows 3" for take-up, 30" for loom waste; loom waste includes fringe on one end).

## SETTS

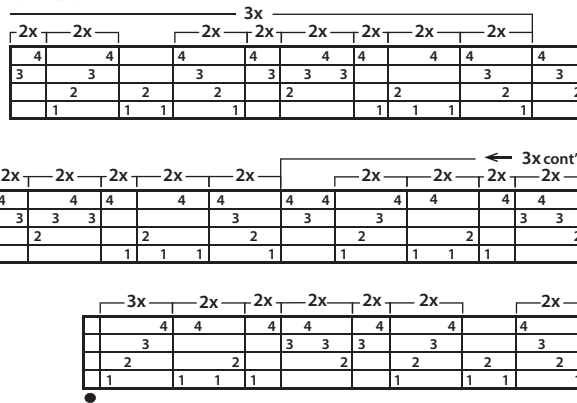
**Warp:** 20 epi (2/dent in a 10-dent reed). **Weft:** 18 ppi in plain-weave areas, 32 epi (16 pattern, 16 tabby) in overshot areas.

## DIMENSIONS

**Width in the reed:** 17<sup>7</sup>/<sub>10</sub>". **Woven length (measured under tension on the loom):** 48". **Finished size after washing:** 15" x 39" plus 2½" fringe at one end.



## 1. Draft



don't you? Follow my path or choose a pattern you like and weave your own version of a show towel. It will look wonderful on your wall. And why not cross-stitch your name and date in a corner as was done on the old towels. Enjoy making your own new tradition.

## RESOURCES

Davison, Marguerite P. "Wandering Vine." *A Handweaver's Pattern Book*. Swathmore, Pennsylvania: Mp P. Davison, 1944, p. 166.

**1** Wind 349 warp threads  $2\frac{1}{4}$  yd long. Using your preferred method of warping your loom, and thread following the draft in Figure 1. Sley 2/dent in a 10-dent reed, centering for a width of  $17\frac{1}{2}$ ". Measure 2 floating selvages and sley them through the reed on either side of the warp. Weight them over the back beam.

**2** Spread the warp with waste yarn, allowing at least 4" of unwoven warp for fringe at the bottom of the towel. Before taking your first shot of plain weave, insert a heavy, slippery cord in the alternate plain-weave shed. The cord will create a gap between the towel and the waste yarn that will be used during hemstitching.

**3** Leave a weft tail of about 2 yd, and starting the shuttle from the side of your dominant hand, weave  $\frac{1}{2}$ " of plain weave using the 8/2 cottolin. Thread a tapestry needle with the weft tail. Gently pull out a few inches of the slippery cord, and use the gap the cord leaves as a guideline for hemstitching in bundles of 4 with the weft tail. Continue to hemstitch across the edge, pulling out only a few inches of cord at a time.

**4** Weave an additional  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " of plain weave with the cottolin. The towel is woven from the bottom to the top. Begin the first overshot portion of the towel following the treading plan and draft in Figure 1. Use the 16/2 cotton as tabby weft, and the 5/2 pearl cotton colors for pattern

- floating selvage
- / 8/2 cottolin, Naturel
- ⓪ tabby weft, 16/2 cotton, Naturel
- ① pattern weft, 5/2 pearl cotton, Quarry #147
- ② pattern weft, 5/2 pearl cotton, Lipstick #32

### Treading Plan:

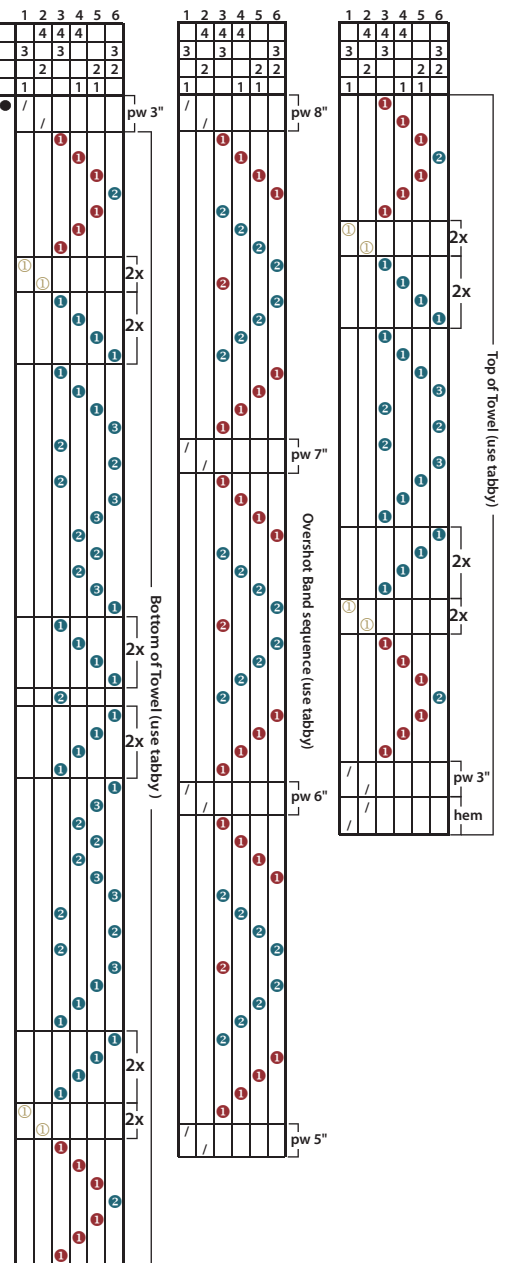
**Bottom of Towel:**  
1) 3" plain weave  
2) 1 repeat of "Bottom of Towel"

**Body of Towel:**  
1) 8" plain weave  
2) 1 repeat of "Overshot Band"  
3) 7" plain weave  
4) 1 repeat of "Overshot Band"  
5) 6" plain weave  
6) 1 repeat of "Overshot Band"  
7) 5" plain weave

**Top of Towel:**  
1) 1 repeat of "Top of Towel"  
2) 3" plain weave  
3) 1" plain-weave hem. (The hem starts in the same shed as the last pick of the preceding 3" of plain weave.)

weft. When you have completed the treading sequence, weave 1" of plain weave with 8/2 cottolin for the hem allowance. Weave a few shots of waste yarn to prevent the weft from raveling, and remove the towel from the loom. The double shot between the plain-weave area and hem allowance is the hem line. Prepare the hem by pressing under  $\frac{1}{2}$ ", and then turning under another  $\frac{1}{2}$ " to the hemline. Press and hem by hand. The old show towels often had woven tape folded and sewn to the two top corners to act as a means to hang the towel. You can add twisted cord in the corners for hanging loops.

**5** Wet-finish your towel by handwashing it in warm water with gentle soap. Rinse and hang until damp dry. Use a pressing cloth and a hot iron to press the towel. Straighten the fringe and trim to  $2\frac{1}{2}$ ". You are now ready to hang your show towel in a prominent place to show off your weaving skills. Enjoy!



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# A Question of Fulling

By Robin Lynde

Imperial Yarn Company produces yarn from wool grown in Oregon and nearby states. Having previously used two of their yarns for woven blankets, I wanted to do a controlled comparison of how the worsted and woolen yarns performed with different finishing treatments. I planned to weave two sets of identical samples in broken twill and finish them with light fulling, moderate fulling, or felting. The comparisons of samples became more complicated—and interesting—than I had originally anticipated. In addition, using natural as one of my colors added a variable that I didn't anticipate.



PHOTO BY ANITA OSTERHAUG

## Erin

**THE YARN:** Imperial Yarn Company Erin, 3-ply worsted in 4 ounce skeins of 225 yards. Based on previous experience, I sett the sample warp at 8 ends per inch (epi). My samples were 12" wide but drew in to about 9.5" during them weaving. I wove three 10" long samples in broken twill at 8 ppi. If I had determined the sett by measuring wraps per inch (wpi), I would have chosen a sett of 6 epi, so I decided to weave another sample, spreading the warp to 16".

### Broken Twill

Samples 1, 2, and 3, performed as expected. The moderately fullled piece (2) is denser than the lightly fullled one (1) and the felted sample (3) is quite dense and firm. The yarn definition in 1 is crisp, somewhat fuzzy in 2, and much fuzzier in 3. There is little change in size between 1 and 2 but a significant shrinkage in 3. Sample 2 is my choice for a throw while

3 would make a great jacket or firm blanket or pillow. An additional observation is that the dyed yarn behaved differently than the natural yarn in the finishing process, which caused the samples to skew and made reporting the measurements more cumbersome. The measurements below are for the dyed yarns.

**Sett:** 8.

**Dimensions:** *Width on the loom:* 12"; *width off the loom:* 9.5"; *width after wet-finishing:* 9.5", 9", 8.25"; *draw-in and shrinkage:* . *Woven length:* 10"; *length after wet-finishing:* 8.25", 8", 7"; *take-up and shrinkage:* 18%, 20%, 30%.



**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:** Sample 1 is lightly fullled Erin sett at 8 epi, Sample 2 is moderately fullled Erin sett at 8 epi, and Sample 3 is felted Erin sett at 8 epi.

# Columbia

**THE YARN:** Imperial Yarn Company Columbia, 2-ply mulespun and 2-ply woolen spun, 4-ounce skeins of 220 yards. I wove my first samples 12" wide at 8 epi. This seemed too dense to weave a balanced plain weave or twill (although the finished pieces are very nice) so I resleyed to 6 epi for my three test samples.

## Broken Twill

I was surprised that the woolen-spun samples did not full or felt as readily as the worsted samples. Samples 5 and 6 are very similar in size and appearance. The felted sample, 6, shows more fulling in that the yarn definition is fuzzier and

the fabric is denser, although it doesn't have nearly the felted appearance and feel of the worsted sample 3.

**Sett:** 8.

**Dimensions:** *Width on the loom:* 16"; *width off the loom:* 12.25"; *width after*

*wet-finishing:* 11.6", 11.5", 11.25";

*draw-in and shrinkage:* 5%, 6%, 8%.

*Woven length:* 13"; *length after wet-finishing:* 9.9", 9.9", 9.25"; *take-up and shrinkage:* 24%, 24%, 29%.



**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:** Sample 4 is lightly fulled Columbia sett at 8 epi, Sample 5 is moderately fulled Columbia sett at 8 epi, and Sample 6 is felted Columbia sett at 8 epi.

## Observations and final thoughts

The comments above refer to my observations about how each yarn performs with different amounts of finishing. I also wanted to compare the worsted- and woolen-spun yarns. This is complicated somewhat by my choice of setts. I chose 8 epi as the appropriate sett for Erin (worsted) and 6 epi for Columbia (woolen). After seeing the finished samples, I think 8 epi would have worked for both, and this is an important point in itself. In fact, any of the 12 samples would work just fine for one project or another—some are more appropriate for a medium-

weight throw and some for a sturdy jacket.

I observed in the Erin yarn that the draw-in, take-up and shrinkage were more significant in natural than in the dyed yarn and this difference was more pronounced in the felted sample. This makes sense because the natural has not had the same treatment as the dyed yarns. Jeanne Carver, owner of Imperial Yarn Company, told me that in commercial production, "natural" yarns are always dyed "natural" to avoid this effect. I did not observe that difference in the Columbia but found out later that I was comparing

apples and oranges. When I asked Jeanne about some labeling differences in the two Columbia yarns (that I hadn't noticed before I wove the samples) she said that they had changed mills. Both yarns are woolen spun but the old mulespun yarns are plied Z and the new woolen-spun yarns are plied S. Worth another sample?

Both the Erin and Columbia yarns come in a nice range of colors and are easy to weave. You can't go wrong using these yarns at either sett for weaving a soft, cozy blanket or throw. For a sturdy more robust fabric, I prefer broken

twill at 8 epi. For a fabric with more drape, I'd choose 6 epi but I'd full the Columbia a little more than shown here. I think they'd also make beautiful scarves or shawls using a lacier weave structure.

When weaving with wool yarns, one can expect significant draw-in, take-up, and shrinkage, but there are a lot of variables to consider in addition to degree of fulling, including weave structure and individual technique. I recommend weaving samples before investing in a major project, or you might end up with a throw-sized sample!

## PROJECT DIRECTORY

DESIGNER/WEAVER	PROJECT	PAGES	WEAVE STRUCTURE	SHAFTS	LEVEL
Heyman, Deborah	Honeycomb Beaded Pillows	48–50	Honeycomb	4	I, A
Hill, Elisabeth	Danish Rosette Towels	44–46	Deflected doubleweave	8	I, A
Jackson, Sarah H.	Shaggy Travel tote	32–34	Plain weave with weft floats	4	AB, I, A
Knisely, Tom	Show Towel	67–68	Overshot	4	AB, I, A
Lee, Jennifer	Kid's Woven Necklace	62–63	Weft-faced plain weave	n/a	All levels
Morton, Patricia	Grassland Journal Covers	36–37	Plain weave, twill	4	AB, I, A
Mullins, Beth	Tropical Seas Scarf	38–39	Herringbone Twill and 2/2 basketweave	4	AB, I, A
Pagels, Judy	Classic Capelet	54–56	Brooks bouquet	RH, 2	All levels
Pierson-Cox, Haley	Hula Hoop Rug for Kids	58–60	Plain weave and half-basketweave	n/a	All levels
Totten, Dianne	Parrot Plumage Crimped Scarf	28–30	Overshot crimp cloth	4	I, A
Wismar, David	Snakeskin Scarf	40–42	Twill	8	AB, I, A
Ybarra, Jodi	Playing with Blocks Waffle-Weave Towels	52–53	Waffle Weave	RH	All levels

RH = rigid-heddle loom. Levels indicate weaving skills, not sewing skills.

AB = Advanced beginner (some experience reading a draft, warping, and weaving); I = Intermediate; A = Advanced. "All levels" includes very new weavers.

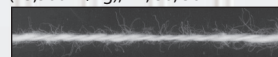
## YARNS

This chart gives yards per pound, meters per kilogram, and a range of setts (from wide as for lace weaves, medium as for plain weave, and close as for twills; no setts are given for yarns not suitable to use as warp). For a com-

plete directory of yarns used in *Handwoven*, see the Master Yarn Charts under Resources at [weavingtoday.com](http://weavingtoday.com). Suppliers for yarns used in this issue are listed at right. Wholesale suppliers are noted with an \*.



16/2 pearl cotton; 6,720 yd/lb (13,560 m/kg); 24, 30, 36



8/2 unmercerized cotton; 3,360 yd/lb (6,775 m/kg); 16, 20, 24



5/2 cotton; 2,100 yd/lb (4,238 m/kg); 12, 16, 18



4/4 cotton; 800 yd/lb (1,615 m/kg); 4, 6, 8



18/2 wool/silk; 5,040 yd/lb (10,170 m/kg); 20, 24, 30



50% alpaca/50% wool; 2,483 yd/lb (4,813 m/kg); 12, 16, 20



30/2 silk; 7,500 yd/lb (15,134 m/kg); 24, 32, 40



22/2 cottolin (50% cotton, 50% linen or 60% cotton, 40% linen); 3,170–3,300 yd/lb (6,390 m/kg); 15, 20, 24



8/2 Tencel; 3,360 yd/lb (6,780 m/kg); 16, 20, 24

## SUPPLIERS

Cotton Clouds, 5176 S. 14th Ave., Saford, AZ 85546, (800) 322-7888, [www.cottonclouds.com](http://www.cottonclouds.com) (Totten 28–30, Ybarra, available as a kit, 52–53).

Georgia Yarn Company, 4991 Penfield Road, Union Point, GA 30669, (706) 453-7603, [http://www.handweaver.us/georgia\\_yarn\\_company.htm](http://www.handweaver.us/georgia_yarn_company.htm), [whpenfield@hotmail.com](mailto:whpenfield@hotmail.com) (Morton 36–37).

Giovanna Imperia Designs, (832) 455-4269, [www.gioannaimperia.com](http://www.gioannaimperia.com), [gioannaimperia@mac.com](mailto:gioannaimperia@mac.com) (Totten 28–30).

Halcyon Yarn, 12 School St., Bath, ME 04530, (800) 341-0282, [www.halcyonyarn.com](http://www.halcyonyarn.com) (Heyman 48–50).

Imperial Yarn, 92462 Hinton Rd., Maplin, OR 97037, (541) 395-2507, [www.imperialyarn.com](http://www.imperialyarn.com), [contact@imperialyarn.com](mailto:contact@imperialyarn.com) (Lynde 70–71).

JoAnne Fabric and Craft Stores, (888) 739-4120, Fax: (330) 463-6760, [www.joann.com](http://www.joann.com) (Heyman 48–50).

Jimmy Beans Wool, 1312 Capital Blvd. #103, Reno, NV 89502, (775) 827-9276, (877) 529-5648, [www.jimmybeanswool.com](http://www.jimmybeanswool.com), [support@jimmybeanswool.com](mailto:support@jimmybeanswool.com) (Pagels 54–56).

The Mannings, 1132 Green Ridge Rd., PO Box 687, East Berlin, PA 17316, (717) 624-2223, (800) 233-7166, [www.the-mannings.com](http://www.the-mannings.com) (Knisely 67–68).

UKI Supreme Corporation, PO Box 848, Hickory, NC 28603, (888) 604-6975 (Jackson 32–34).

Vävstuga Swedish Weaving and Folk Arts, 16 Water St., Shelburne Falls, MA 01370-1119, (413) 625-8241, [www.vavstuga.com](http://www.vavstuga.com) (Hill 44–46).

Webs, 75 Service Center Rd., Northampton, MA 01060, (800) 367-9327, [www.yarn.com](http://www.yarn.com) (Jackson 32–34, Mullins 38–39, Wismar 40–42).

Yarn Barn of Kansas, 930 Massachusetts, Lawrence, KS 66044, (785) 842-4333, (800) 468-0035, [www.yarnbarn-ks.com](http://www.yarnbarn-ks.com) (Heyman 48–50, Totten 28–30).



## READING DRAFTS

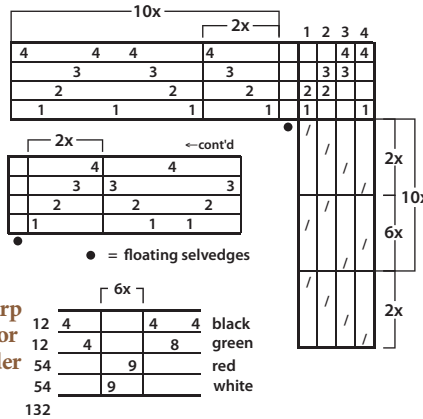
Some drafts for weaving are very, very long if they are written out thread by thread. To save space, wherever any section of the threading or treadling is repeated, a bracket is placed above it with the number of times to do that section.

For example, in the threading draft shown here, there are two levels of brackets, one marked 2x and one marked 10x. To thread: Start at the right side and thread (after the floating selvedge) 1-2-3-4. Since the 2x is directly above these threads, you will thread that two times. Then continue, 1-2-3-4-1-4-3-2-1-4. You are now at the end of the 10x bracket, so you'll do everything under that bracket (including the 2x section) ten times. When the threading continues to another row, you also read that row from

right to left.

Repeats in the treadling and in the warp color order are treated in the same way. Note

### Draft



that the color order chart looks like a threading draft but indicates the order in which to wind warp colors (4 black, 8 green, 4 black, then 9 red and 9 white six times, 4 green, 4 black).

## WARPING NOTES

To save magazine space for projects and articles, project instructions do not include specific warping steps. If the materials used in a project will work equally well with any warping method, instructions will say to use your preferred warping method. For yarns that are especially fragile, sticky, or overtwisted, warping back to front is usually recommended. Instructions for both methods are available at [weavingtoday.com](http://weavingtoday.com) (click on Resources).

## FINISHING TECHNIQUES

### TWISTING (OR PLYING) THE FRINGE

Divide the number of threads for each fringe into two groups. Twist each group clockwise until it kinks. Bring both groups together and allow them to twist around each other counterclockwise (or twist in that direction). Secure the ends with an overhand knot. (Use the same method to make a plied cord by attaching one end to a stationary object.)



back to the starting point, encircling the same group of ends. Pass the needle under the same group, bringing it out through the weaving two (or more) weft threads below the fell. Repeat for each group of ends across the fell. Needle weave the tail into the selvedge and trim.

### DOUBLE (ITALIAN) HEMSTITCHING

Weave several picks of plain weave (or the basic structure of the piece), ending with the shuttle on the right side if you are right-handed, the left side if you are left-handed. Measure a length of weft four times the warp width, cut, and thread this tail into a blunt tapestry needle.

Take the needle under a selected group of warp threads above the fell and bring the needle back to encircle the ends. Next, pass the needle under the same ends but come up two or more weft rows down from the fell. Then bring the needle back around the same group of ends below the fell. Repeat, encircling the next group of ends.

### LADDER AND ZIGZAG HEMSTITCHING

For ladder hemstitching, work a row of simple hemstitching. Insert a spacer of heavy yarn or yarn bundle. Leaving a tail three times the warp width, weave four picks of plain weave. Thread the tail in a needle and hemstitch over two rows above the spacer, encircling the same groups of ends as for the first row.

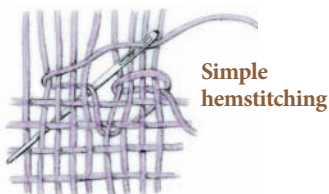
For zigzag hemstitching, encircle groups of ends in the second row starting at the midpoint of the ends encircled in the previous row to offset the two rows of stitches.

*Hemstitching tip: To hemstitch the first end of a piece, weave a header, weave four or five picks of plain weave (or of the basic weave structure used in the piece), and hemstitch over the top two or three weft rows. Weave the piece and then hemstitch the other end over the last two or three weft rows. Remove the fabric from the loom and discard the header and weft threads placed below the first hemstitching.*

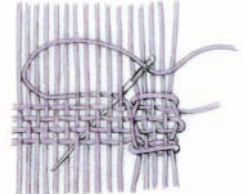
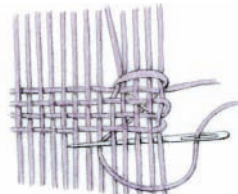
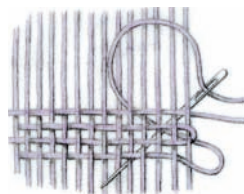
### SIMPLE HEMSTITCHING

Weave several picks of plain weave (or the basic structure of the piece), ending with the shuttle on the right side if you are right-handed, left side if you are left-handed. Measure a length of weft three times the warp width and cut, leaving the measured length as a tail. Thread the tail into a blunt tapestry needle.

Take the needle under a selected group of ends above the fell and bring it up and



Double hemstitching



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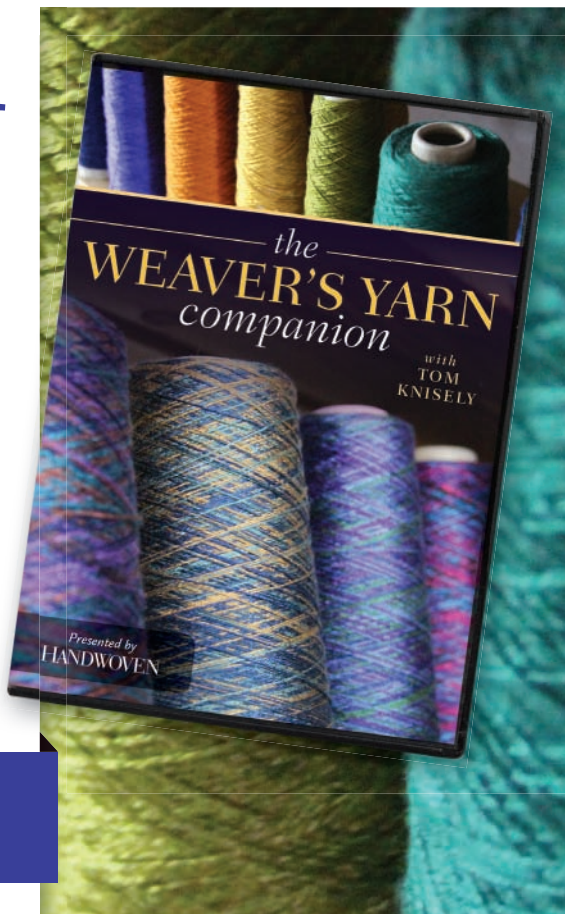
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## Teaching the Process of Cloth

ANNE ELIXHAUSER

**D**uring the 2013–2014 school year, twenty-five students in Ashton, Maryland turned into weavers. The 4th through 6th graders attend the Mater Amoris Montessori School. Each year, every class makes a quilt that is auctioned in the spring to help support the school, but this year, instead, the Upper Junior class made their own cloth.

### LEARNING THE WAY

The class started by carding fleece using both hand cards and a drum carder, then made CD drop spindles, and learned to spin using commercial roving as well as their own rolags and batts. They were making bumpy, beautiful novelty yarn right away, and some progressed to making even, thin yarn the very same day.

Near the holidays, the students took a detour to make holiday ornaments of colored roving needlefelted inside cookie cutter shapes. The children in the first needlefelting group decided to put bandages all over their fingers and march back to their classroom to show the others what happens when you don't listen to instructions. The rest of the students and teachers were horrified until the kids ripped off the bandages, making everyone laugh.

Finally, the class learned to weave on a 4-shaft loom dressed with an 8-inch warp. To give the kids a clear sense of how weaving works, the loom was threaded in a straight draw with a direct tie-up, and the treadles were numbered. A sampler and chart hung next to the loom showed seven structures: plain weave, 1/3 twill, 2/2 twill, basketweave, point twill, diagonal rib, and satinette crepe weave, so the kids could choose treadlings for their samples. They chose weft from a range of commercial and handspun yarns, mixing yarns and structures to suit their own tastes. They learned to chant “in over, out under” to weave



The Upper Junior class shows their stripes! PHOTO BY MICHELLE BELFIE

the floating selvages. Each child's sample was separated from the next with a header of toilet paper, the source of more than a few giggles.

### WEAVING FOR REAL

After learning the whole process from raw fleece to cloth, the kids started their class project. First, each child received a 6-yard warp segment of 7 to 14 ends of commercial wool yarn. They dyed their segments with Kool-Aid in their chosen combination of colors. By some miracle, the colors worked together perfectly. Some mixed a lot of colors and got great shades of plummy brown. Others used large blocks of color, and some alternated two or three colors and got wonderful color transitions.

A parent volunteer warped the loom using the kids' dyed warp bundles with two ends of black wool between each dyed segment and a solid stripe of dyed yarn on each edge. (We made the borders extra wide so that we could hem



loom  
large, wooden  
clanking, creaking, groaning  
shuttle, shed-yarn thread  
morphing, forming, weaving  
colorful, beautiful  
fabric

—Luke Yeatman, age 11



The students each dyed one stripe of the warp.

PHOTO BY MICHELLE BELFIE

Students showing off their class sampler.

PHOTO BY ANNE ELIXHAUSER

them in case of very irregular selvages.) Each stripe was threaded in a different 4-shaft structure tied to 3 treadles to make an easy treadling sequence (1-2-3, 1-2-3). Our main concerns were the selvages and the beat—with all the children weaving, could they keep the beat even? Could they make the selvages neat?

Each child took his or her turn weaving 2 to 4 inches of cloth with the black wool yarn as weft. The weaving width was almost 24 inches, so they learned to throw the shuttle and catch it on the other side. Only occasionally did it fly across the room. The young weavers paid careful attention to avoid draw-in at the selvages and to maintain an even beat. Sometimes they unwove to correct a loopy selvage.

Within three days, these students wove a 72-inch piece of cloth. Their second piece was completed in less than two days, with minimal instruction and few reminders to “use both hands to beat” or “watch your selvage.” And the selvages were lovely—no need at all to hem them. In a very short time, our young learners had become confident weavers and produced cloth that was both good and beautiful.

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