the fabric of life

THE HARMONY WEAVERS GUILD

september 30, 2017
january 14, 2018

DELAWARE ART MUSEUM
2301 KENTMERE PARKWAY
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19806

meet the artist

OCTOBER 29, 2:00–4:00 PM

demonstrations & guided tours

OCTOBER 22
NOVEMBER 5, 12, 19
DECEMBER 9
JANUARY 7

wild rose damask runner

TONI AMMONS

While all handwoven textiles are appealing to me, I have a particular penchant for those of Scandinavian and Eastern European origin. I am drawn again and again to the design sense; the cotton, linen and wool fibers, and the colors of these pieces.

I wove this all-cotton floral runner on a Myrehed drawloom accessory mounted on a Glimåkra Ideal loom. Both are manufactured in Sweden. The drawloom, believed to have originated in China by the 6th to 7th century, is a tool for creating figured cloth. The ground weave of the runner is five-shaft satin damask.

Damask is a satin weave in which patterns are produced by opposing weft-face satin to warp-face satin. The two textures are identical except for the direction of emphasis, and the pattern is evident through a difference in light reflection rather than through any difference in color or texture. The surface texture is smooth, glossy, and desired for its high quality and elegance.

~Shuttlecraft Guild Handweaver's Bulletin, March 1956

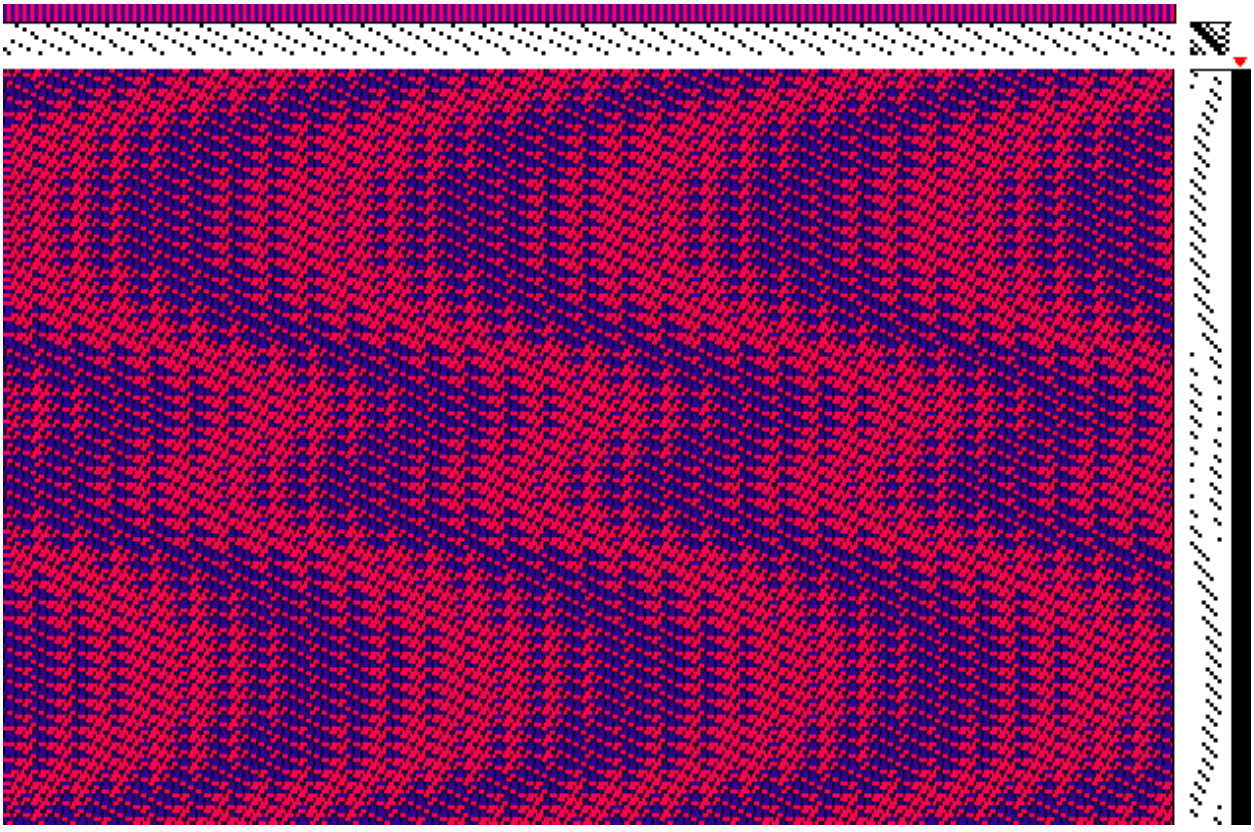
A drawloom is different from a standard loom because it has two harnesses, each with its own set of shafts and heddles. Each warp thread is threaded twice: once through a heddle in a weighted pattern unit at the back of the loom and then through a ground harness heddle at the front of the loom.

evening sky & aspen

SUSAN BALASCIO

As an artist, I am greatly inspired by color. I gravitate toward organic colors and appreciate the subtle shifts of hue and value that can be seen in our natural world. I dye much of the yarn for my work with fiber reactive dyes, custom mixing the soft transitions of color directly on the warp threads. Each scarf is composed of two singularly dyed warps interleaved closely together, with a finer thread as weft. The parallel threading patterns serve well to accentuate the ebb and flow of colors in the warps.

These scarves were woven on a Schact Baby Wolf eight-shaft floor loom. The yarn used is 8/2 and 20/2 Tencel rayon yarn; one of the most sustainably produced fibers today. The weft in the green scarf is a fine heather wool.



Parallel Echo Weave

blue defected double weave shawl

SANDY BUCKWORTH

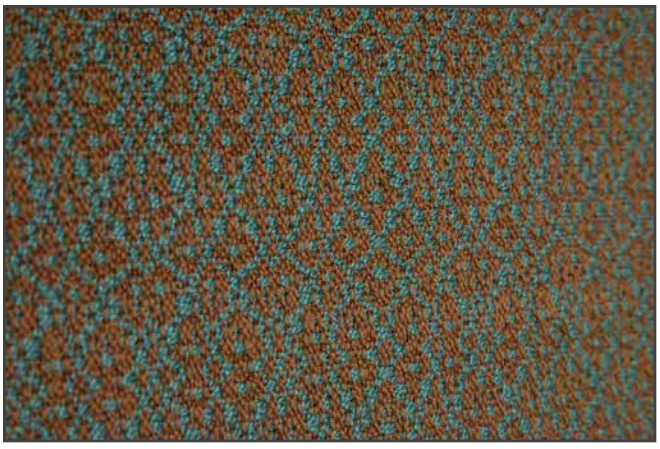
The shawl was designed on a computer and woven on a 16 harness Megado Louet loom with a computer dobby. It was woven with 8/2 tencel, a natural fiber made by dissolving wood pulp, which is then spun into yarn. Double Weave allows for a different pattern on the back and front of the piece.

live long and prosper table runner

GAIL CARON

This cotton table runner was inspired by a workshop with Barbara Walker titled "Signature Blocks". In the workshop, we learned Barbara's methods for name drafting, a technique in which the weaving design is derived from a name or phrase. The phrase that is hidden in this weave is "Live long and prosper". The weave structure is overshot.

I used cotton yarn in two sizes. A thinner taupe yarn was used as warp and ground weft, and the thicker dark teal yarn was the pattern weft. It was woven on a 4 shaft cherry Norwood workshop loom. A set of placemats was woven using a green pattern weft.



deflected double weave shawl

PERRY DREVO

The color inspiration for my piece came from the beautiful autumn colors sprouting from bushes among the lava rocks in the Santiam Pass in Oregon. This is one of the most beautiful drives and certainly my favorite at any time of year but autumn is special. The reds and golds stand out in bold contrast to the dark lava rock. The brilliance of the sun at this time of year made me think the glitter would be appropriate. I chose the deflected doubleweave structure in order to achieve the depth of the landscape

This was designed and woven on my 32 shaft computerized loom.

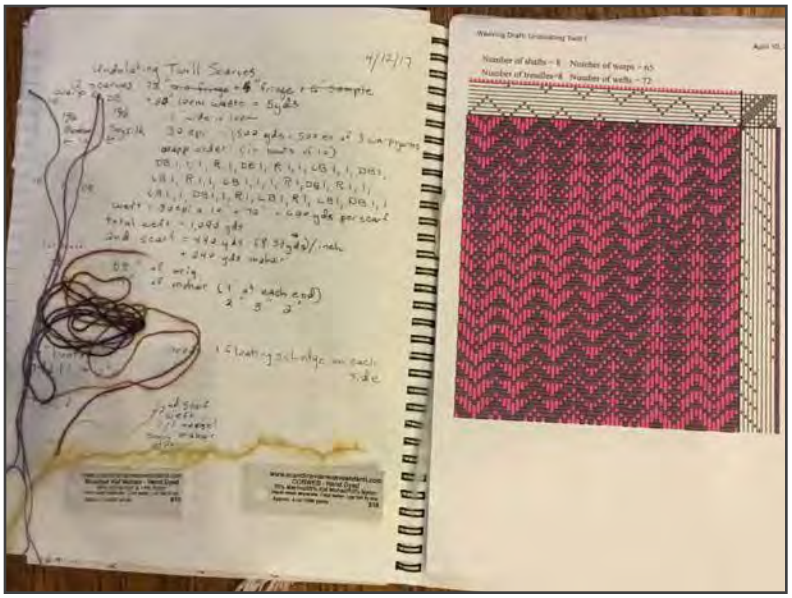
undulating twill blue and red undulating twill yellows

NANCY EVERHAM

My inspiration was my daughter who said that I needed to add mohair to one of the scarves. She was with me when we were at a fiber festival and helped pick out the colors and fibers.

The warp is the same for both scarves, strips of bamboo and soy silk, while the weft is quite different for both. For the first scarf, I used a hand dyed Merino wool, mohair and nylon blend - making me think of the ocean in winter - especially with the undulating twill pattern. The second scarf's weft alternates a pick of bright yellow tensel with a yellow mohair. This totally changed the look and feel of the second scarf - making me think of sunshine in the spring.

My old school notebook shows my calculations along with the weaving draft. The loom that was used was an 8-shaft Louet Jane loom, who has subsequently been named "Ada" after Lady Ada Lovelace, the gifted mathematician.



red and blue make purple

PAT FIELD

My neighbor was visiting me one day earlier this year, and I showed her the red-and- gold inkle band I had woven. She liked it, but she thought she'd like it better in a nice, rich purple instead of red.

I like a rich purple, too, but I didn't have any purple yarn. So I wondered if I could create the effect of purple with the blue and red yarns I did have. The fineness of the yarn keeps the colors very close. What you see on exhibit is the outcome. I have learned that I have to have the colors close in value and small in size for them to be visually combined by the eye, as with the red and blue.

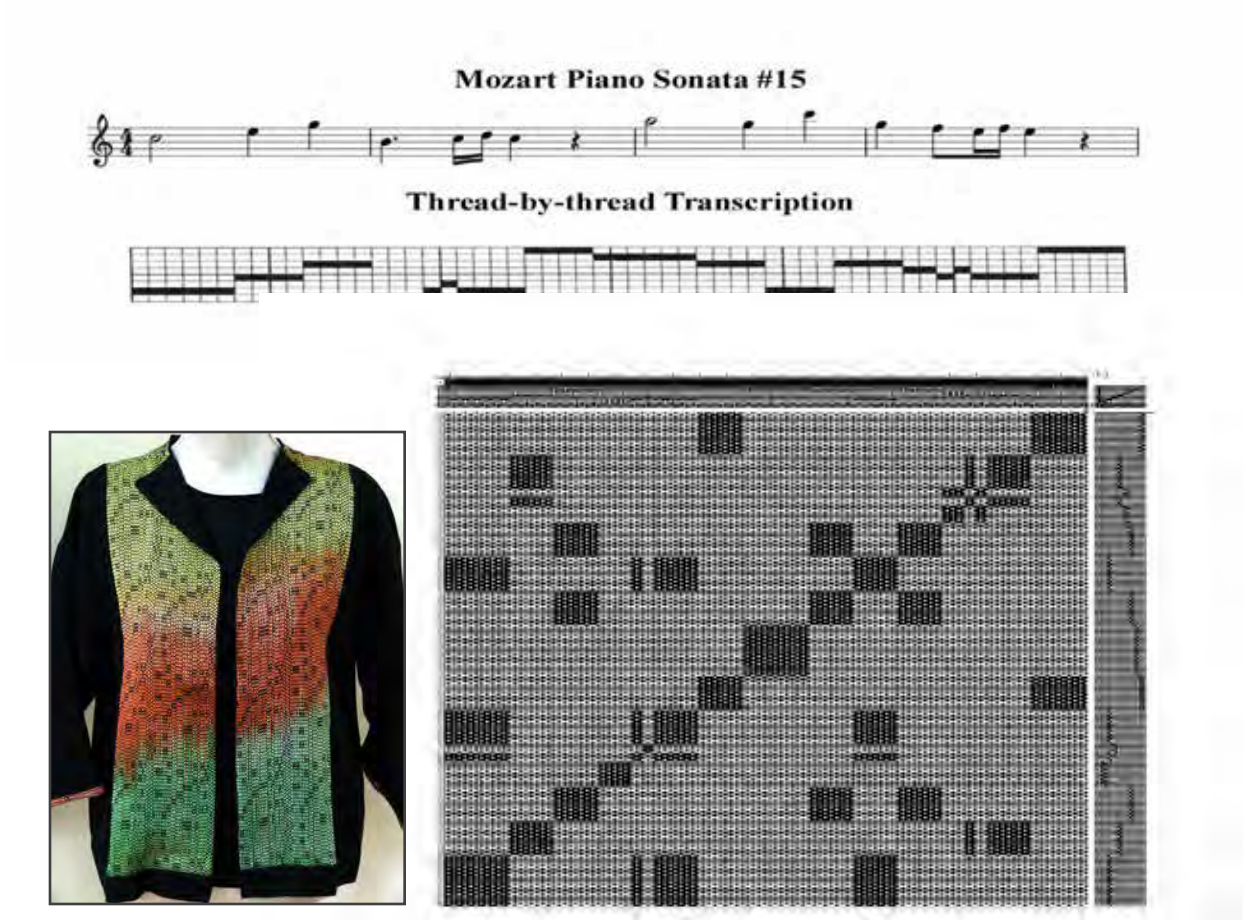
Other times, I think they are contrasting enough to show up well against each other, and it turns out that they are closer than I thought. The project in progress on the loom is an experiment with these three yarns, two of which are closer in value than I had anticipated. They almost vibrate against each other along the edges of the band, while at the center, the contrast is evident.I love to play with color!

mostly mozart jacket

DEBORAH LEWIS-IDEMA

This fabric was inspired by a question; could I develop a design that would capture the tone and feeling of a Mozart sonata? I envisioned a piece that would be light, bright and dancing – adjectives I associate with Mozart's music. The result was a fabric based on the first four measures of Mozart's Piano Sonata Number 15. First, I transcribed the musical notes into a threading "profile" and then I converted this profile into a specific weaving design in summer and winter. Finally, I chose the colors that, to me, are associated with Mozart - yellow, coral/peach and pale greens -- for the background. The notes, of course, were black . I hope that this design evokes the same sense of music for someone else as it does for me.

A Musical Passage Transcribed as a Threading Profile
Threading Profile Transposed to Summer and Winter Pattern



fran's moths

CAROL IRELAND

This throw rug was inspired by 1) a large pile of yarn scraps, brown and colored, left from a previous project; and 2) a Japanese weaving technique I'd recently learned about. Here is the whole story.

Shortly before she passed away, Harmony Weavers Guild member Fran DeStafeno gave me several bags of brown and white handspun wool yarn. She told me "I know you'll do something with this."

I could envision weaving with the beautiful rich brown yarn but puzzled over what to do with the white. So, whenever I had access to natural dye pots; indigo, madder, cochineal, golden rod, Queen Anne's Lace, annatto and others, I would dye a few skeins of the white yarn. Eventually I felt I had enough yarn to weave a couple of throw blankets.

As I started winding warp and weft for the blankets, I discovered that many of the skeins had moth damage. I knew moths had gotten to the yarn before I acquired it, (a couple of skeins were literally just crumbs!) but hadn't realized how extensive the damage was. I had enough undamaged yarn to complete the two blankets.

I looked at the piles of short pieces of yarn, several inches to several feet in length and anguished over throwing them out. I knew how lovingly they had been created: Fran had washed the wool fleece, carded the wool, and hand spun every inch of it. It seemed disrespectful to just throw it in the trash!

Enter zanshi, the Japanese technique to weaving with scraps of yarn. While the technique is normally used with fine yarns to make fabric for clothing, I thought, "Why not a rug?" After spending a few hours (in front of the television) tying many knots, I then wove the weft-faced plain-weave rug, keeping all the knots on one side. As a result, the rug is smooth on one side and knotted on the other.

freeing bobbins

CAROL IRELAND

The inspiration for this scarf came from two directions; 1) my frustration with never having an empty bobbin for use with a current weaving project, and 2) a desire to explore a Saori weaving technique of changing tension of some warp threads vs. others.

To explain further, I keep even the smallest amount of yarn generated from my weaving projects. This includes unused weft yarn left on bobbins (which are inserted into shuttles for weaving). After several years, all of my bobbins had scrap weft yarn on them. Every time I started a new project, I had to scrounge in my bobbin box for one that had the least amount of yarn on it, or make a bobbin, called a "pirn" out of rolled paper.

I finally took advantage of a few dreary, dark, winter days to inventory all my bobbins and separate them by yarn type (i.e. wool-like vs. cotton-like) and by color. There were enough cotton-like bobbins with a wonderful range of colors to create an interesting warp.

Normally, a well-warped loom has very even, and tight, tension across the warp threads. The Saori technique I used with this scarf required having some warp threads loose and other threads tight as I wove. I used free weights for the edge threads to maintain even tension throughout, so I would have solid selvages. The other threads were separated into five sections. Three of the sections were wound on one of the two back beams on my loom. The remaining, alternating, two sections were wound on a second back beam.

Using black chenille with a little sparkle as weft, I alternately loosened each of the back beams as I wove. The weave structure is plain weave.

The blocks where the colors "pop" in the scarf are where the warp threads were loose. The dark blocks are where the warp threads were tight.

scallop shawl

MAUREEN KAMERICK

Although I love Japanese textiles, the inspiration for this piece came from looking at several Japanese prints. It was the color palette in the prints which interested me. I loved the way the prints combine black with silvery grey and neutrals. In dyeing the 30/2 silk I used for this shawl, I dyed several skeins, each in a slightly different dye bath, looking for subtle color transitions. That was the trickiest and most enjoyable part of creating this work.

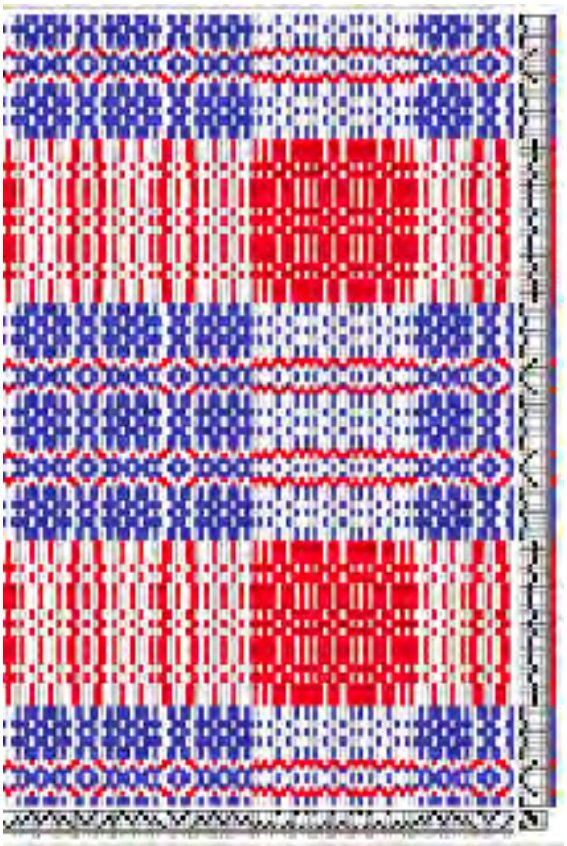
The shawl was woven on a 30" side, 24 harness AVL loom, with a mechanical dobby. Although I used a computerized lobby for several years, I returned to the mechanical lobby, and have enjoyed using it. The pattern here is a 16 harness point twill variation. The twill structure shows off the beauty of the silk yarn and, of course, gives a very soft drape to the shawl. The sample shows some of my experiments with the dyed skeins, looking for the right color combination.

wreath rose runner

STEFFENIE OLIVER KIRKPATRICK

The pattern for this runner, "Wreath Rose," was taken from "Josephine Estes' Miniature Patterns for Overshot and Handweaving," by the Weavers Guild of Boston. I was experimenting with two-color overshot woven on four shafts, and this pattern was ideal. One color is woven primarily on shafts 1 and 2, and the other on shafts 3 and 4, which grouping in this pattern also coincide with the two dominant pattern blocks, as seen in the draft. I wove three runners on the same warp, each with a different color combination. This one in rust and navy, as well as another in rose and soft green, and one Prussian blue and red, as shown in the photo.

The warp and tabby weft are 10/2 mercerized cotton, and the pattern weft is 5/2 mercerized cotton.

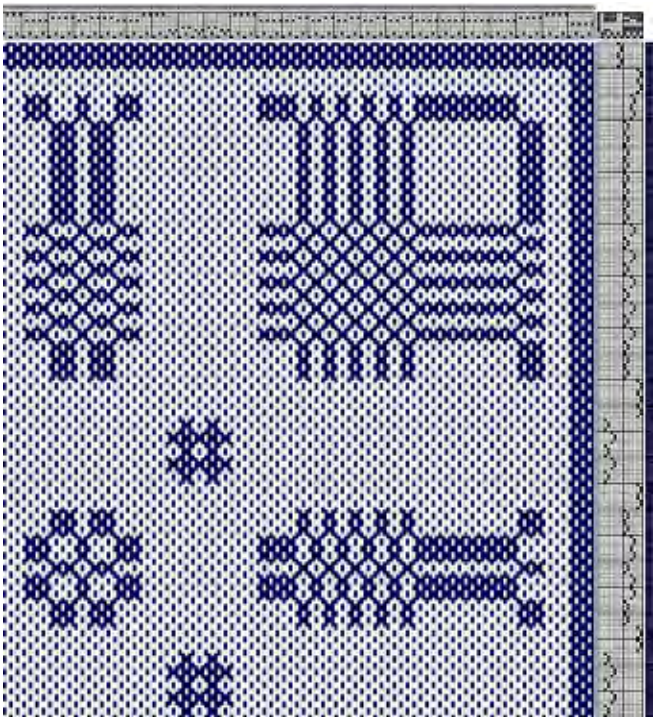


north country night runner

STEFFANIE OLIVER KIRKPATRICK

I love this piece! I was inspired by my daughter's book, "*North Country Night,*" by Daniel San Souci, with his beautiful illustrations of the animals afoot in a snowy forest at night. The weave structure is Summer & Winter, so called because the back face shows the colors reversed (as shown in the draft image). I developed this pattern myself from traditional S&W motifs. The piece shows majestic pines in a moonlit night, with stars above and snowflakes drifting down from the branches of the trees.

I wove it on my 12-shaft loom, using 8 shafts and 13 treadles. The warp and tabby weft are 10/2 mercerized cotton, and the pattern weft is 5/2 mercerized cotton.



waffle scarf

KAREN MASON

Our weaving guild had a workshop given by the people who own the company "Just Our Yarn". I wasn't able to take the workshop but did drive down to see what everyone was working on. At the same time I was given the opportunity to purchase yarn that was hand dyed. I bought three different sets of colors. The waffle weave that you see in this exhibit is an example on one of the two different colors I used from this group of yarns. After seeing how people in the workshop used multiple colored dyed yarns for both warp and weft, I was inspired to try using the hand dyed yarn in a handwoven scarf for myself. I've been so happy with the results that I've woven three other scarf's using the hand dyed yarn in both warp and weft (both directions on the loom). The loom that I used is my eight shaft floor loom. As you can see in the attached picture, I wove a second scarf using the same warp but tied up the treadles and wove a different pattern.

hang 'em high encíma y abajo

HARRIET MEMEGER

As a weaver, I have been highly involved in making small tapestries since studying in 2001 with the late James Koehler in Taos, New Mexico. I am drawn to vivid colors, geometric forms, landscapes, and architectural shapes. The work shown involves images arrived at from my personal views of the things I engage in the world around me. Much of my works are interpretation of photos taken on my travels. I make cartoons from the photos and then draw the images on the warped canvas in order to follow the design. The weaving is done using mostly wool and cotton yarn on a 36-inch floor loom.

Beginning in 2012, and every other year since, I have entered work in the Small Tapestry Exhibition of the American Tapestry Alliance.

linen and lace

SANDY MEYER

Linen and Lace was woven on a 4-harness Leclerc floor loom using 16/2 linen for the warp and 16/2 linen and a novelty boucle yarn for the weft. The panel is an exploration of transparency and lace weaves, incorporating plain weave with various lace weaves such as Brooks bouquet, Danish medallions, and leno. Much of the structure was hand-manipulated.

troíka I & II

GYNNIE MOODY

The vintage silk ribbons used in these pieces were hand dyed. The technique used to make the pieces is adapted from basket weaving. This triaxial weaving intertwines three elements at unique angles rather than two elements at 90 degrees. A simple loom is used made from a piece of foam core and T-pins. The color interactions and the three dimensional illusion are what interests me about this type of weaving.

Before mixing the dyes, I look at my notebook of favorite artwork for inspiration. I use chemical dyes in my outdoor laboratory and always wear gloves and a mask because of safety concerns.

The name was inspired by a trip to St. Petersburg, Russia. The name Troika came from the fact that there are

madder & weld scarf

JANE PORTER

Dyeing fabric and fibers is embedded in my DNA. My Armenian ancestors lived in Anatolia next to a mountain made of Alum. Alum, or aluminum sulfate, was mined in this mountain by the Persians for centuries and is an essential ingredient for a natural dye to adhere to fiber.

I like to dye outside in the summer. I put all my pots out on the driveway in our courtyard. Sometimes the temperature gets over 105 degrees, but that is good for dyeing. You need the heat for the alum mordant to adhere to the fabric and develop the color.

First the dye must be extracted from the roots. The roots contain Alizarin, the compound that makes the orange and red hues. It takes three years for the madder plant to build up enough Alizarin in the roots to make a dye. I soaked the roots in a pot in my solar studio for three days.

The second step is to mordant the fabric in Alum.The silk scarf with woven cotton dots was soaked in Alum for 2 days outside in my studio.

The third step is to dye the fabric.You can either strain the madder root from the dye, or leave the roots in the pot. I chose to leave the roots so that I could have interesting marks on the silk fabric. After the scarf has been dyeing for three days in the sun, I hang it on the line. When it is dry, I wash it twice on gentle cycle and iron it.

My goal is to make beautiful, interesting colors that are complimentary to skin tones. I enjoy mixing different dyes to create unique hues. The mystery and surprise from the magic is what continues to excite me.

exploring iridescence

LUCY ROSEN

I created "Exploring Iridescence" on an eight harness Schacht Mighty Wolf loom. I used tencel yarn in both the warp and weft. Tencel is a natural fiber made by dissolving wood pulp which is then spun into yarn. I hand painted the yarn using synthetic dyes and then heated the yarn in a microwave to set the dye.

I became interested in dyeing in the 1980's when I took a dyeing class from Sally Vinroot, author of The New Dyer. After taking a class from Bobbi Irwin, author of Weaving Iridescence: Color Play for the Handweaver, I became interested in how to use color to achieve iridescence in my weaving. Recently I was inspired to use warp painting when I took a class from Su Butler, which focused on the importance of color theory in painted warps. My inspiration for my scarves and shawls comes from the interplay of color in nature, which I try to mimic in my weaving.

two birds with greenish eyes

LINDA SHINN

Warp is 16/3 linen set at 10 ends per inch. Threaded 1,2,3,4

Weft is 6/1 Faro wool, used singly for the ground weave and tripled for the pattern. The wool weft completely covers the warp and is worked from the wrong side. A mirror can be held to check the right side of the work.

Techniques used in the sampler are:

Halvkrabba - A treadled laid-in technique with a plain weave ground.

Krabba - A laid-in technique picked on a closed shed with a plain weave ground. Rolakan - A double interlock tapestry technique.

Munkabalte (Monk's Belt) - A laid-in technique woven with half-heddle shafts

Dukagang - Laid-in technique using a half-heddle shaft to create floats over two warp ends.

And a final Halvkrabba section. What the weaver sees while working on the loom.

stained glass stole

WENDY SHIPMAN

Color is the main inspiration for this piece and most of my work. The stole is woven in plain weave with occasional doubled threads. I assembled colors that I liked, bought a color or two to fill in holes, and created complex stripes. It was suggested that we have elements of interest both from a distance and up close. This concept helped me focus my ideas. I had made Right Angled Stoles for a long time with a seam. I got the idea I could do it all with folding an uncut piece of striped fabric and let the folds create a complex design. It could also be titled "Origami Stole".

azaleas at gibraltar gardens

KAREN SCHUELER

Azaleas at Gibraltar Gardens developed from a combination of silk painting with embroidery.

Traditional silk painting uses acid dyes that are very transparent allowing lively and bright colors such as used on the azalea blooms. However, sometimes the artist would like to have matte colors on the silk for certain areas, such as on the statue that I have painted in this view of Gibraltar Garden in the spring. Natural earth pigments are perfect for this effect.

I had read about Japanese silk painters using ground oyster shells or carbon black on kimonos to get white or black marks on top of painted silk, and I thought I would give this a try with natural earth pigments such as titanium white, earth green, and earth blue, yellow ochre, and red oxide. The trick is to use soy bean juice as the medium to moisten the dry powder. This juice is made by soaking dried soy beans in water, and then blending the results into a solution that is added to the dry pigments. After the silk is painted with the pigments, it is steamed to set the colors. I was very pleased how well this worked for me. The stone statue seems solid behind the gaudy flowers, and there is the contrast of matte and shiny fabric in the same painting.

Heat-set fabric paints were applied in a few areas.

To complete my painting, I did free motion machining to stitch the azalea petals, and hand stitching for general outlining and flower centers, using silk threads.

rue and peony leaves

KAREN SCHUELER

Rue and Peony Leaves is a collage of Japanese paper, and dyed and painted fabrics, mostly silks, on dyed silk knit. This is from a series I am working on based on color conjunctions found in the fall garden. The contrast of the blue-green rue leaves with the multicolored peony leaves was unforgettable, both in shape and color.

The leaf and flower shapes are cut from different weights of fabric, including sheers, and fused onto the background. The cut outs were securely attached to the silk jersey with free-motion machine work. Several areas have intensive hand stitching with silk threads to add a unifying color in the background or to create shadows or additional leaves out of negative areas. Many of the silk threads are overdyed which introduces different colors within the stitching. Colorfast pencil was used on some of the paper shapes to tone the color.

I liked letting the simple blocks of straight stitch break away at the edges of the shadows to relieve what could have been a too solid area. Bars of machine satin stitch float in the air around the peonies suggesting stems of other plants nearby.

I frequently combine fabrics I dye and paint with stitching in collages and appliquéd pictures.

díamond ín the rough and crossroads

SONNIE SPERATI

Structure: Samitum

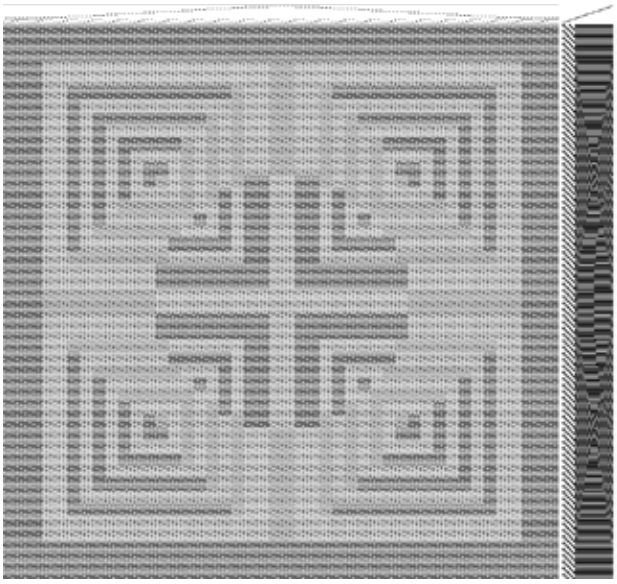
Loom: 32 shaft Louet Megado with computer interface

Fiber: 2/60 silk for warp sleyed 24 ends per inch; 2/12 silk for weft

Fabrics woven in silk using the Samitum structure were found in Egypt in the 3rd Century C.E. Samitum continued to be popular into the Middle Ages to create beautiful textiles in diverse cultures such as Islamic Spain, Italy, India, and the Ottoman Empire.

Samitum is a weft-faced twill with three tie-down threads. Each of the blocks are comprised of six threads; therefore, the name – it is a Latin derivation of the Greek word, "hexamitos" for six threads. The five thread floats are closely packed in order to cover the warp threads.

This is the drawdown, showing the threading and treadling sequences



My loom

About 2 years ago, I had studied how to develop in Samitum, a weaving draft from a design I had created. At the time, I had decided that I probably would never actually weave a piece. It seemed to be complicated and I do not usually weave pieces to be framed. But when the opportunity came to enter a piece into the Delaware Art Museum show, I wanted to challenge myself with a project that was outside my comfort zone. And so, these pieces were born.

the fabric of life

GLOSSARY

warp, weft | The threads that make up a woven fabric. Weft threads are woven over- and-under the lengthwise warp yarns held tight on the loom.

natural fibers | are produced by plants and animals, such as wool, silk, cotton, linen, and fibers made from bamboo and soy.

synthetic fibers | are man-made, non-natural fibers, such as polyester, acrylic, and nylon.

tencel fiber | a processed fiber similar to rayon but made from wood pulp (cellulose). This is one of the most environmentally friendly fibers.

mercerized cotton | a process applied to cotton fiber that makes it more lustrous, stronger, and easier to dye.

handspun | fibers that has been twisted by hand to create a yarn.

plain weave | a basic style of weaving in which the weft (horizontal) thread alternates over and under the warp (vertical) threads.

tapestry weave | only the weft (horizontal) threads show; the warp (vertical) threads are hidden behind the tightly-packed weft.

twill | a type of woven fabric with a characteristic diagonal pattern, created with an offset between rows of weft.

damask | a reversible woven fabric with a pattern visible on both sides.

collage | an assemblage of different materials.

doubleweave | The weaving of two layers of cloth on the loom at the same time, one above the other. These layers may be completely independent of each other, or connected on one or both selvedges.

natural dyes | Colors derived from plant sources. Selvedges - The outside edge of a textile.

triaxial | The interlacing of three layers, one vertical and two others at 60% angles.

weave | The interlacing of threads, yarns, strips, fibrous materials to form a fabric.