Fine Threads Exploration Workshop

Dates: October 10-12, 2019 (Thursday 1-5, Friday & Saturday 9-5)
Place: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church
Contact: Sue Balascio susanclaire2000@gmail.com 302.383.3780
Fee: $100

Description

This workshop will allow you to sample over 30 different fine threads/yarns. There will be opportunities for cutting samples off the loom and wet finishing to see how the fibers react after washing. Since this is a time of exploration, there is no set curriculum, you are encouraged to explore the different yarns at your own pace. I will bring samples for inspiration and books with ideas. You are encouraged to bring any other resources that may be useful.

Supplies

I will provide:

- Instructions and tips for warping with fine threads (see Warping the Loom)
- Your own individual set of over 30 different fine threads on cardboard spools (approx. 175-300 yds. each)
- Hang tags and pre-printed labels to label your samples
- Sample tracking sheets to log the specifics of each sample
- Dowel rods for a Two-Stick heading when cutting off samples (see Weaving the Samples)
- Serger for finishing raw edges prior to washing
- Buckets and soap for washing samples
- Iron and ironing board
- Books and samples related to fine threads

Supplies to bring:

- Loom warped with fine thread (see Warping the Loom)
- At least two shuttles, extra bobbins, bobbin winder and scrap yarn for headers
- Scissors, pins, tape measure or ruler, sleying hook, etc.
- Note paper, pens/pencils
- Plastic bags and old towels for dealing with wet samples

Warping the Loom
You should come with a loom warped and ready to go. The warp should be between 6" and 10" wide and should be at least 4 yards long, longer (5-8 yds) if you intend to cut off and/or resley. Threading should accommodate plain weave.

The type and size of warp yarn is ultimately your choice, however, I recommend any of the following (see resource list at the end). The setts below are more open than normally recommended. These open setts allow the weft yarn room to move and act according to its nature.

Suggested warp yarn:
- 60/2 silk – sett: 36-48 epi
- 20/2 Tencel – sett: 32-40 epi
- Sewing thread – sett: 36-48 epi
- 2/80NM or 2/70 NM silk from Colourmart (see links in resources) sett: 36-48 epi

It is best to warp back to front. Warping front to back puts undue stress on the fibers as they go through the reed and heddles, and when using an open reed can cause tangles. The following are recommendations that I've gathered regarding warping with fine threads:

- Warp back to front.
- Wind a cross at each end – a threading cross (end-on-end) at one end and a raddle cross (grouped ends) at the other.
- Wind the warp so that the beginning and end of the yarn is at the threading cross end. This will allow you to slip a rod into the raddle cross end and lash it to the back beam apron rod.
- Beam the end of the warp with the raddle cross first. Beaming through the raddle cross minimized the stress the fibers would encounter if they were beamed through a threading cross. Once beamed, the threading cross will be in the correct position to thread the heddles.
- Double the ends at the selvedges for strength.
- If you have metal heddles, check for any sharp spots that might snag the fine yarn.
- Thread the heddles in a straight or point draw, using as many shafts as you can. This will spread the warp out lessening any bunching or sticking in the sheds. It is important to thread in a way that you can do plain weave. I recommend plain weave to start, but you may try other twill patterns using different tie-ups/lift plans.
- Use the densest reed you have in order to keep the ends from tangling and to create a smoother shed.
- Tie or lash onto the cloth beam in any method that you are comfortable with.
- Tension is one of the biggest problems with fine threads, so try to get the tension as even as possible. It may help to have someone help you warp the loom to keep even tension on the warp as you wind it onto the back beam.

In terms of color, you can use any color(s) you wish for the warp, but I tend to use neutrals like white, cream or grey in order to see more clearly what the weft threads are doing.

Weaving the Samples

You will be supplied with over 30 different fine yarns, including active/overtwist yarns (both S and Z twist), metallics, elastic yarns, various fibers and fiber combinations (silk, merino, linen, cotton, cashmere, steel, copper, linen paper, celluloide) and various weights. Each pirn (3.5" heavy duty paper straw) will contain approximately 175 - 300 yards of each yarn. These should fit on most shuttles, but can be wound onto regular bobbins if desired.

I recommend a samples of at least 4" in length in order to fully understand the weft yarns' characteristics.

The first sample should be plain weave. Pay close attention to beating the weft. Try various picks per inch to see what works best with your weft yarn/sett.

Before cutting off samples to wash, create a Two-Stick Heading as shown by Peggy Osterkamp (I will provide the dowels)
https://peggyosterkamp.com/2011/04/make-a-two-stick-heading/

A serger and soap will be provided so that you can periodically cut off samples and wash them to see how the yarns react after finishing.

After samples have been cut and washed, make sure to tag them right away in order to avoid confusion later! Trust me – they may all look the same after a few days!

Resources

- Colourmart - https://colourmart.com
    - 2/70NM Silk/Cotton - https://colourmart.com/yarns/view/2-70NM_cobweb_wt_silk_59@_-_cotton_KYOTO_MULTICOLOR_SALE!_s_yarn/0/0/0/in_stock.*.asc_hue.*.show_all
    - 2/80NM Silk - https://colourmart.com/yarns/view/2-80NM_fine_cobweb_silk_50g_cone_s_yarn/0/0/0/in_stock.*.asc_hue.*.show_all

- Peggy Osterkamp – Making a Two-Stick Heading - https://peggyosterkamp.com/2011/04/make-a-two-stick-heading/

- *Fine Threads and Warping* – Interweave - https://www.interweave.com/article/weaving/fine-threads-and-warping/

- *Weaving with Fine Threads*, Lillian Whipple – Weavezine - https://www.weavezine.com/content/weaving-fine-threads.html