



David van Buskirk

Sandra Ogg Rude Memorial Grant 2023

plus:

- A Study of Sumptuous Fabrics
- Spiritual Inspiration and Design
- *and more*

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Deadline for Article Submission Articles for the June issue should be submitted by April 30. Please send articles or questions to journal@complex-weavers.org.

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This is yet another late edition, but we're working hard to get back on track. Thank you for your patience.

Call for Tips & Tricks!

Curious weavers know good tricks for weaving, drafting, loom modifications, documentation and time savers — would you like to share yours? We'll make it easy to publish your ideas.

Contact your *Journal* Editor for more information:
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On the Cover



The Sandra Ogg Rude Memorial Grant supports the development and sharing of advanced weaving techniques. David van Buskirk, the inaugural grant recipient, unveils his explorations, *page 29*.

Shadow Weave—The Genesis

Rebecca Winter

In the beginning was the Profile.
And the loom was void.
And darkness was on the face of the deep.
Then she said, “Let there be Light,”
And the Contrast was good.

Next was the string, made of fiber.
And it became the firmament,
Of many kinds and Colors
Separated into Rainbows upon the Earth.
She saw them and called them good.

Next she created the Full Draft.
Blocks and Units became the Pattern.
And the Vision was filled with abundance
And she said, “How cool is that?!!”
And this fruit of her labor was good.

And she said, “Let there be order.”
And the warp was wound
According to the Full Draft.
The colors fell into each their rightful place.
And again she said, “How cool is that?!!”

Next the loom was dressed, reed and heddle.
She said, “Be fruitful, and multiply.”
Be the Full Draft Manifest.
The light and the dark combined.
And again she said, “This is very good.”

She saw everything created at the loom,
Warp and Weft interlaced with Color and Spirit,
Patterning and Beauty became the cloth.
It became the Shadow Weave,
And, behold, it was All very good.

Written by Rebecca Winter
January 30, 2023
An 11 day

*Poem delivered at Complex Weavers Seminars 2024,
in introduction to Rebecca's keynote address.*

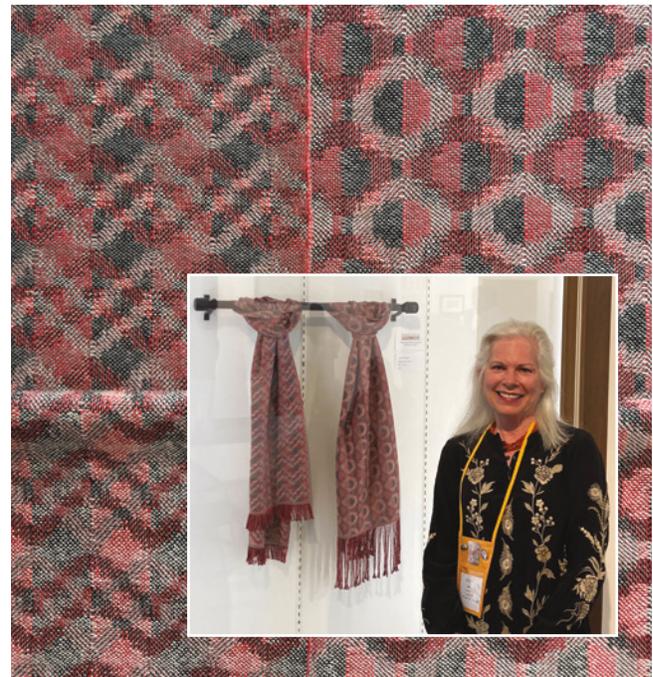
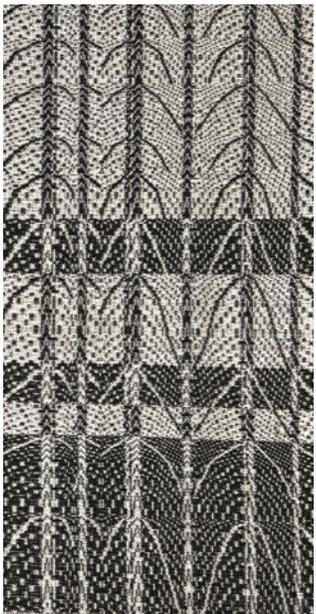
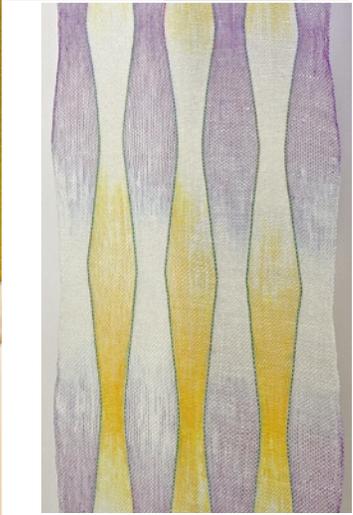
*Background image: detail of shadow weave wall hanging
woven by Rebecca Winter, featured in Complexity 2022*

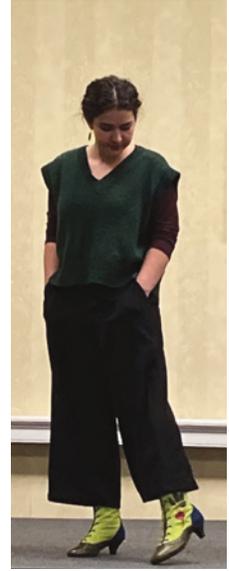
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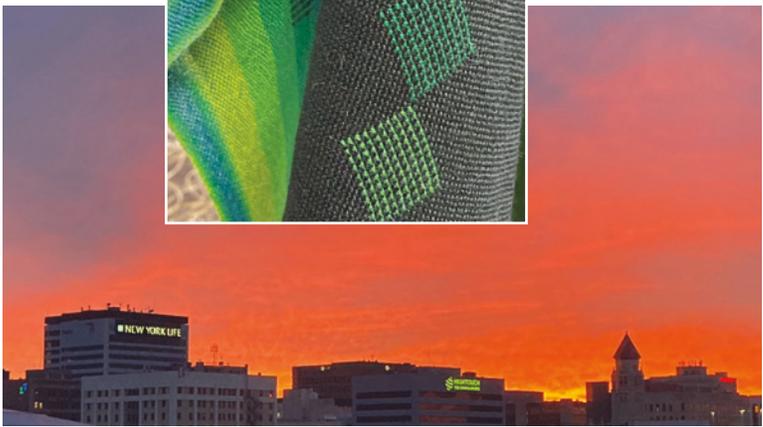
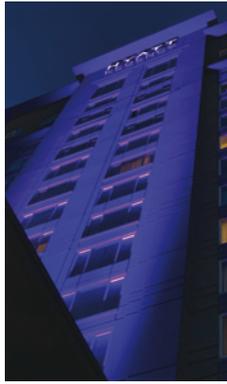
Complex Weavers Seminars 2024

A Pictorial Recap











*Complex Weavers Seminars
Join us in 2026!*



COMPLEXITY 2026:

Innovations in Weaving

Complex Weavers cordially invites you to submit your work for inclusion in *Complexity 2026*, our juried international members' exhibition. This biennial show focuses on works that employ complex or innovative design, techniques, and/or weave structures. Besides spotlighting a selection of our members' work, the exhibition helps us meet one of our not-for-profit organizational goals: reaching out to the non-weaving public and sharing information about weaving and the beauty achievable through woven design.

Complex weaving is defined by the cloth produced and the mind it took to create it, not by the equipment used.



Cally Booker, Complexity 2014



Wendy Morris, Complexity 2018



Jennifer Moore, Complexity 2020

How works are chosen for exhibit

Entries will be viewed anonymously by three jurors. Equally weighted judging criteria are:

- originality of design;
- effective use of complexity through design, technique, or weave structure;
- technical excellence;
- visual impact; and
- effective use of color palette.

Surface embellishments, construction, and finishing techniques must aesthetically enhance the work.

The jurors for *Complexity 2026* are Lynn Smetko, Laurie Carlson Steger, and Pauline Verbeek.

Eligible works

Entries must be handwoven, designed and executed by the entrant. Work must be original, executed without supervision or a kit, and completed after March 15, 2024. Works woven on looms with any number of shafts or Jacquard mechanism are eligible, as long as the shed is opened by the weaver, with or without electronic lift assist, and the shuttle is thrown manually or by weaver-manipulated fly shuttle. Non-loom interlacements, such as ply-split braiding, kumihimo, sprang, and tablet weaving, are welcome, as are works with modern or historic inspiration and interpretation. Tapestry weaving is not eligible.



Sandra Rude, Complexity 2018

Categories of work

Entries must be assigned to and adhere to the size and presentation requirements for one of the categories described in the following paragraphs. Judging (selection for inclusion in the exhibition) will be performed irrespective of categories.

- **Yardage** (raw edges must be folded under twice and hand hemmed)
 - *Width* 18 inches to 48 inches (46 cm to 122 cm)
 - *Length* 3 yards to 5 yards (2.75 m to 4.6 m)
- **2- and 3-dimensional work**
 - *2-D Maximum:* 48 inches wide x 108 inches long (122 cm x 275 cm)
 - *3-D Maximum:* 30 inches high x 30 inches wide x 30 inches deep (76 cm x 76 cm x 76 cm) (if your work exceeds these dimensions, please contact the exhibition Chair)
- **Apparel and accessories**
 - Apparel to fit on a standard mannequin and accessories to fall within 2- or 3-dimensional maximums
- **Home furnishings, including functional textiles**
 - Measurements to fall within 2- or 3-dimensional maximums

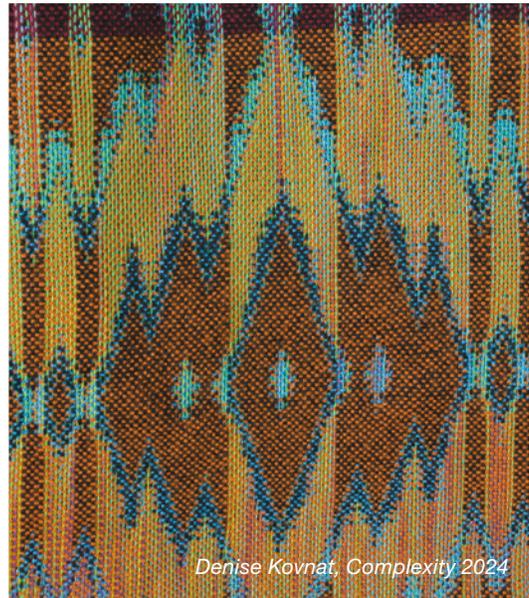
The full Prospectus is available for viewing and download on the Complex Weavers website: complex-weavers.org

Exhibit Calendar

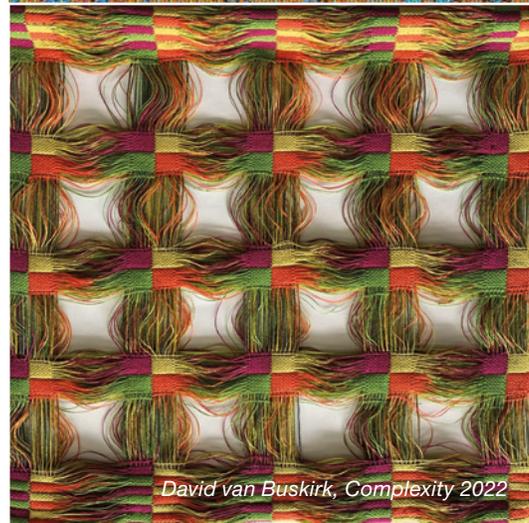
Online entry window — November 1, 2025–February 6, 2026
Jury review — February 12–March 20, 2026
Jury notifications made — March 30, 2026
Work arrives — May 11–22, 2026
Exhibit opens — May 29, 2026
CW Reception — June 11, 2026
Exhibit closes — August 16, 2026
Work packed & shipped — Week of August 16, 2026
Online Gallery — June 11, 2026–June 2028

Learn more about Seminars and *Complexity* at complex-weavers.org

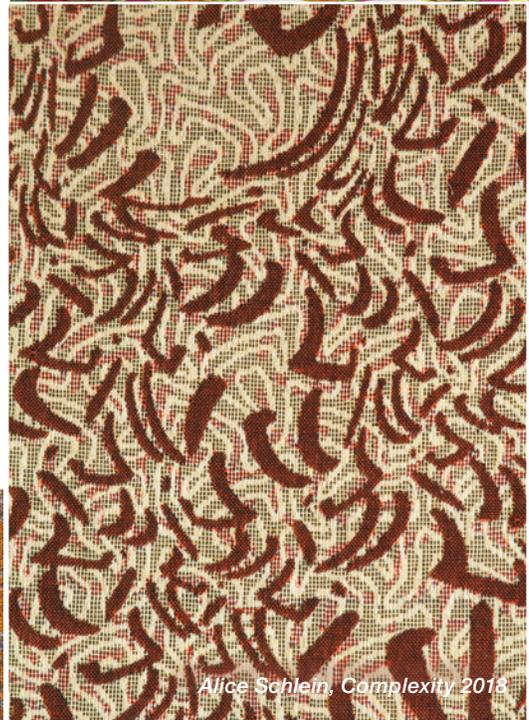
Complex Weavers is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to expanding the boundaries of handweaving, encouraging weavers to develop their own creative styles, and inspiring advancement through research, documentation, and the sharing of innovative ideas.



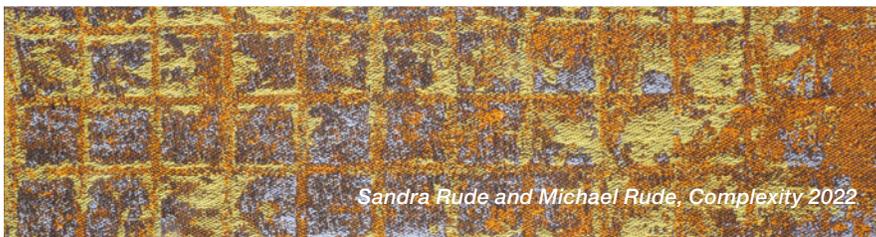
Denise Kovnat, Complexity 2024



David van Buskirk, Complexity 2022



Alice Schlein, Complexity 2018



Sandra Rude and Michael Rude, Complexity 2022

Hans von Tresckow: Toolmaker, Advisor and Quiet Contributor

Sara von Tresckow

Beneath our discussions and articles about design, blocks, color theory, structure and such lies an important treasure: the wealth of tools used by weavers to create lovely and complex fabrics.

My late husband, Hans, contributed much to that underlying wealth, in both tools and knowledge, especially here in *Complex Weavers*. A mechanical engineer who worked mostly for machine tool companies, he had an excellent eye for efficient and effective tools for producing a desired fabric, and a clear view of the best methods for using them. He worked quietly and did not put his name in the spotlight.

When I first began to weave, Hans took me to a fantastic textile museum¹ in Germany that netted not only associations with older equipment and textiles, but a personal connection that proved extremely valuable. Klaus Tidow, the curator at the time, eventually offered my small weaving group a meeting place in exchange for an exhibition of our work each year.

Over the years, Hans built many small tools for my personal use: an improved lazy kate, a warping mill that I still use, a scutching board/knife and flax hackle when we couldn't find any for sale (the brake, we found), and repairs and improvements to my spinning wheels. At a Sievers class he carved me a mangle board adorned with acanthus leaves.

After moving to Wisconsin, Hans used his engineering knowledge to help me put together a wonderfully functional studio — and he advised others. As he moved toward retirement, he began repairing spinning wheels and weaving equipment. After we founded *The Woolgatherers* in 2000, he started making three-legged spinning stools, which were very much in demand. He developed the popular Dutchmaster table looms based on a teaching loom that Erica de Ruiters showed us when she stayed at our home.

A new focus for his skills came when a customer inquired about where one could purchase an ondulé (fan) reed. At the time there were no North American vendors offering them. Hans used the Internet and his personal engineering connections to find a talented German reedmaker — and the two of them started a partnership that delivered many a reed and became



Hans von Tresckow at work on a Dutchmaster table loom



Spinning stools at *The Woolgatherers*

more than a business relationship in the process. He was able to customize the reed design for several weavers, who use it to great effect.²

As he listened to weavers and read comments online

¹ Visit the museum's website at <https://www.tuchundtechnik.de>

² For more information on ondulé reeds, their variations and how they work, refer to *Complex Weavers Journal* issue 134, February 2024.

about autodenters not being satisfactory, Hans discovered that they are made in a range of sizes, and to be effective, the size must fit the reed denting. Using his many contacts, he found the European manufacturer (our reedmaker friend worked with that company to size them for handweavers), and we were subsequently able to offer them in six sizes. It was not uncommon for Hans to make connections between North American weavers and European traditions. The company making the autodenters also makes the German sley hooks that we sold for many years. Efficient and inexpensive, they were originally made for employees of textile mills.

At the same time that interest boomed in growing flax and processing linen from homegrown plots, the old-fashioned flax processing tools were becoming scarce. Hans sat down with his AutoCAD and designed a full set — ripple, brake, scutching board/knife, hackles and mangle board — based on tools we had gathered from antique dealers. He made his plans available to the weaving world, and to this day at least one set of plans goes out each week.

His engineering mind was always ready for a challenge. When my own interests turned toward Navajo weaving, I found a lovely illustration of a loom at Hubbell Trading Post³. I asked Sarah Natani, my first instructor, what she thought of it, and she said “The feet are too short;” so Hans sat down and designed a replica with longer feet. As with the plans for flax tools, he offered his loom plans to all weavers.

Over the years at conferences and other events, he discussed technical details with wheel and loom makers, and they sought out his advice. He worked with Öxabäck to create a special Ulla Cyrus loom with

³ The Hubbell Trading Post is a National Historic Site in Arizona. Visit <https://www.nps.gov/hutr/index.htm>



Vendor hall, behind the scenes

THREE warp beams. Recently he worked with Öxabäck to make a newly designed weighted shuttle (to get started, he convinced his dentist to x-ray a similar shuttle to determine the best weight placement).

Hans was generous to individual weavers as well. One weaver came to him with a thread-skipping problem, and without ever seeing her Jacquard loom, he diagnosed and was able to remotely ‘repair’ the fly rust problem that caused her loom to skip threads.

His attention to detail and understanding of the laws of physics were a significant help to me as a weaver — as well as to the many other spinners and weavers he met along the way. Hans died peacefully in June 2024, at the age of 83. He and his contributions will be widely missed.



Start of the big adventure, 1971



Oma and Opa, 50 years later



A Study of Sumptuous Fabrics

Deborah M. DeBernard

I am fortunate to be a recent graduate of the five-year Master Weavers program at Olds College. I say ‘fortunate,’ because the program is in the process of permanently shutting down. Though there are other weaving programs around, the closure of this particular one is a tremendous loss for those who love to explore and learn about weaving with an active cohort, in-person instruction and support for in-depth study.

The focus of the fifth and final year of the program is an independent study, for which I chose to explore sumptuous fabrics. At first I thought I would study the full topic of sumptuous fabric, all of it, without any filters. That meant studying these fabrics from every corner of the world throughout time. It quickly became apparent that I would need a lifetime to study such a broad topic.

To narrow the scope, I chose to study a specific sumptuous gown from the 18th century. This focused the geography and timeline, but still left me with plenty to discover.

But first things first! I needed to know what I meant by ‘sumptuous.’ I could have gone to the dictionary, but instead I chose to define this term myself. Sumptuous fabric, to me, is cloth that

- is costly to weave and sew,
- uses painstaking techniques somewhere in the process of its creation, and
- is exquisitely designed.

It is also important to note that for my study, I chose to use my current loom, without modification: a 12-shaft, 14-treadle countermarch loom.

After getting only limited response from several museums, I was delighted to hear from Colonial Williamsburg, where Neal Hurst, Curator of Textile and Historic Dress, said he was only too happy to help. I made an appointment to visit for a full week so that I would have time to examine the gown in detail. This immersive experience really helped me understand the historical context of this gown.

For those who are not familiar, Colonial Williamsburg is the largest US living history museum in the world. It sits on 300 acres and boasts 90 original buildings. Docents representing more than 20 trades give demonstrations and educate visitors about life and society in 18th-century Williamsburg, Virginia. The living museum covers the time period from 1700 to 1780, when Williamsburg was the political, cultural and educational center of the largest, most populous and most influential of the American colonies.

During my week-long visit, I spent considerable time

in the DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum (also in Williamsburg), directly examining my chosen gown and interviewing masters and journeymen: weavers, mantua makers, tailors, milliners, shoe makers, and breech makers. These people were incredibly generous with their time and insights. Most of them started as history majors from nearby William & Mary College.

18th Century Fashion

To set the stage, it is good to know a bit about the styles for women of status in the 18th century, starting with the two basic styles of gowns: ‘open’ and ‘closed’. An ‘open robe’ meant that the bodice was closed at the waist with an attached but open skirt. The front opening of the bodice was filled with a *stomacher* and the skirt opening was filled with a *petticoat*. A ‘closed robe’ meant that there was a single garment with bodice and skirt attached.

A *stomacher* was a triangular piece stiffened using a pasteboard of husks. Stomachers were highly decorated and attached using pins or laces. Some of them had a small pouch in the lining which held herbs to give the wearer a pleasant fragrance. A variety of stomachers could be used to change the look of a dress, effectively expanding one’s wardrobe.

Women sometimes wore multiple *petticoats*, layered one over the other to provide warmth—sometimes as many as five or six. Winter petticoats were often quilted with wool batts sandwiched between a silk face fabric and a linen lining. If a petticoat fabric were figured, the motif ran horizontally to add to the horizontal nature of the petticoat itself. The outermost (most visible) petticoat could be of the same fabric as the bodice or of a more lavish fabric.

Under the petticoat was a *hooped skirt*, a structure that held the full skirt away from the body, emphasizing the child-bearing qualities of the wearer. The hoops were originally cane but were later replaced by whale bone, as bones were stronger and lighter-weight. The hoops were encased in a linen skirt. Openings in the sides of the hooped skirts (as well as in the petticoats) allowed the wearer access to the pockets.

A *pocket* was a separate piece of clothing, worn under the hooped skirt. Single or double pockets were sewn onto a tape and tied around the waist. Even though unseen, these pockets were often beautifully embroidered or quilted.

Under the bodice, a woman wore *stays*. These finely detailed undergarments generally laced up the back, which meant that getting dressed required a lady’s

maid's assistance. The most sumptuous gowns had stays designed specifically for them, meaning that as styles changed and gowns were altered, new stays were needed.

Under the stays and hooped skirt was the *chemise* or linen shift. It served to protect the clothing from perspiration and body soil and to protect the wearer from any abrasions from the stays, hoops, petticoats or other uncomfortable clothing. A casing around the neck of the chemise allowed the wearer to adjust the neckline to fit various gowns. The chemise was also worn as sleeping wear; wealthy women would change into a fresh chemise in the morning and another for sleeping.

Shoes and stockings completed the ensemble, with right and left shoes being identical. Through several wearings, the shoes became clearly identifiable as right or left. These shoes often were made from silk that matched the gown. A woman might also have a pair of leather clogs that could be worn when outside to keep the wearer a few inches above the dirty or wet walking surface.

Fashion was an important way for people to communicate about their personal wealth and status. Sumptuous fabrics were very scarce, costing far more than the cost of labor used to turn fabrics into gowns, so fashion was seen as important to provide a good canvas to show off these fabrics. The wide, hooped skirts did just that. At their zenith in 18th-century fashion, skirts could be up to five meters wide, which meant that someone wearing them had to take special care in walking, sitting on a divan or passing through a doorway.

The Gown

The gown I chose to study was an 'open robe', dated circa 1730. It had been modified into a 'closed robe' circa 1750 (Figures 1a through 1c).



Figure 1a. The dress that I studied, in its box



Figure 1b. Bodice front



Figure 1c. Bodice back

Fabrics – Linen

The fabrics of this gown used yarns of only two fibers: linen and silk. Not all of the fabrics were sumptuous. On the inside of the bodice, a heavy linen lining provides an underlying structure for the brocaded face fabric (Figure 2). I was surprised by the coarseness of the sewing in the bodice but came to understand that this is intentional so that the garment could be refashioned as styles changed. Contrasting colored threads (see running stitch on right side of Figure 2) were used to make picking seams easier.



Figure 2. Heavy linen lining gives structure to the bodice

It is interesting to compare the quality of the woven linen lining to the quality of the woven linen chemise. The sleeve of the chemise (Figure 3) has crisp pleats ironed into it to reduce the bulk of the sleeve. These pressed pleats have survived since the 18th century. After repeated launderings, the chemise is incredibly soft. The stitching is exquisite and nearly invisible. It is the chemise that provides the best example in this gown for near-sumptuous linen.



Figure 3. Pleated chemise sleeve in fine linen

Fabrics – Silk

The silk fabrics used in the gown fall into two distinct categories: plain and figured.

The best example of plain silk comes from the lining of the round gown's skirt (added during its refashioning in 1750). This striking green lining is a fine example of sumptuous plain-woven silk (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Sumptuous plain-woven silk

The second category of silk fabric, figured, is used as the face fabric of both the bodice and the skirt. This figured fabric features both continuous and discontinuous sumptuous brocades.¹

In Figure 5, the threads of the discontinuous brocade are shown forming the polychrome flowers (Figure 5a). In this same piece, you can see the backside of the continuous brocade where the cream-colored weft and the dark green ground cloth form the remainder of the floral and geometric patterns (Figure 5b).



Figure 5a. Polychrome flowers formed by discontinuous brocade

¹ A brocade is a decorative supplementary weft woven over a ground cloth that is usually plain weave.



Figure 5b. Back side of figured fabric, showing continuous brocade with cream weft and dark green ground cloth

My Exploration – Linen

Starting with linen, I began with a foundational exploration of sett and fiber combinations. Though that was a good start, I really began to enjoy weaving linen when I got beyond the basics. The damask sample shown in Figure 6 set the stage for what came next, which was a satin combination (Figure 7).

The fabric in Figure 7 was the first of many samples that have a satin structure combined with a different structure to create some wonderful fabrics. This sample became the inspiration for my first final project (shown later in Figure 8). This overshirt and camisole top uses a 80/2 linen, 60/2 silk and 80/2 silk warp with a 80/2 linen weft, set at 50 EPI. I am really happy with this project and feel that the fabric rivals that of the 18th-century chemise. It is lovely... but not sumptuous. So I moved on to silk.

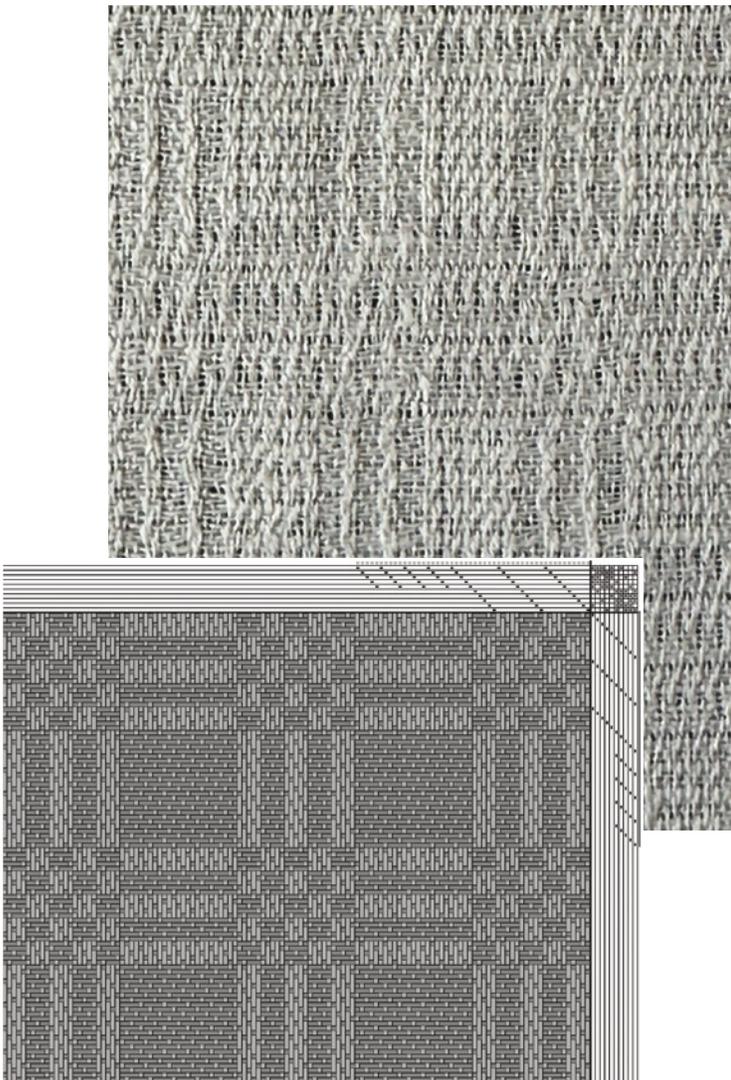


Figure 6. Damask (draft and fabric)

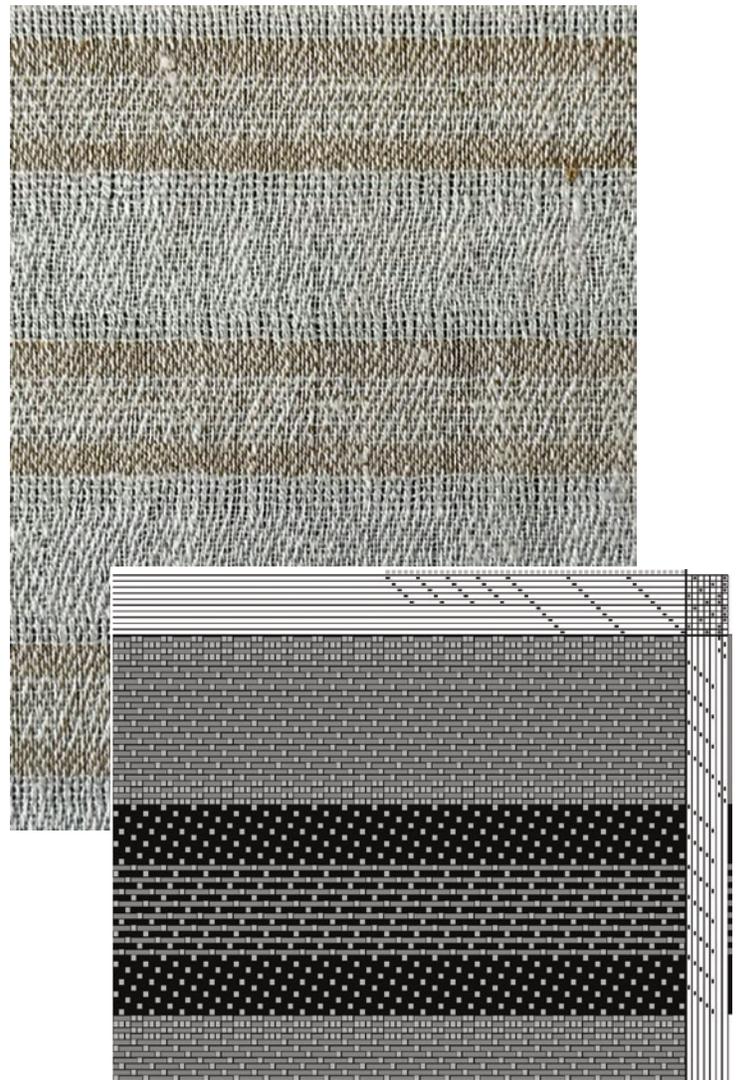


Figure 7. Satin combination (draft and fabric)



Figure 8a. My first final project, an overshirt and camisole top



Figure 8b. First final project, detail

My Exploration – Silk

Again, I started my silk exploration with lots of samples for sett and structure. I wove several versions of five-thread twills, but once again it was the damask that perked up my interest. The two-block damask (Figure 9) and the satin combination (Figure 10) samples are really lovely—but again, not sumptuous.

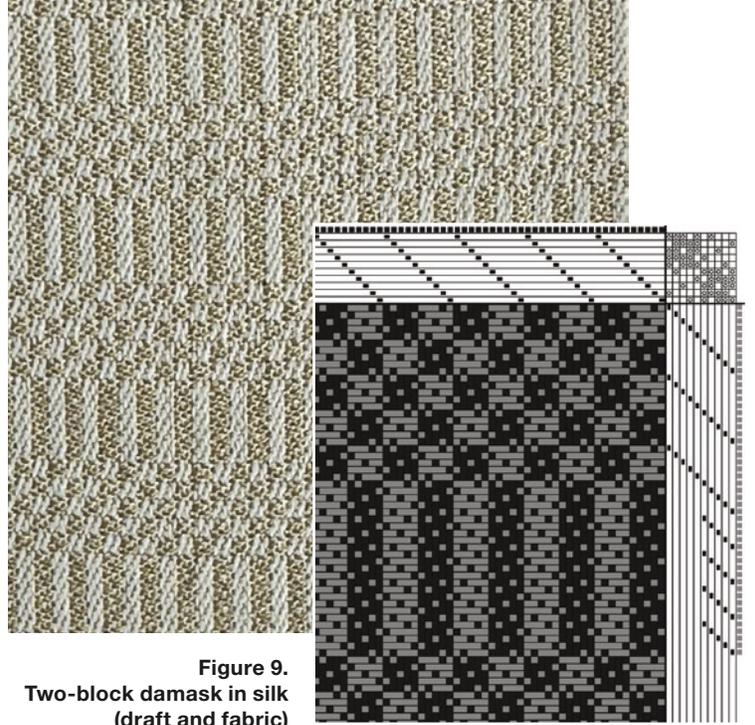


Figure 9.
Two-block damask in silk
(draft and fabric)

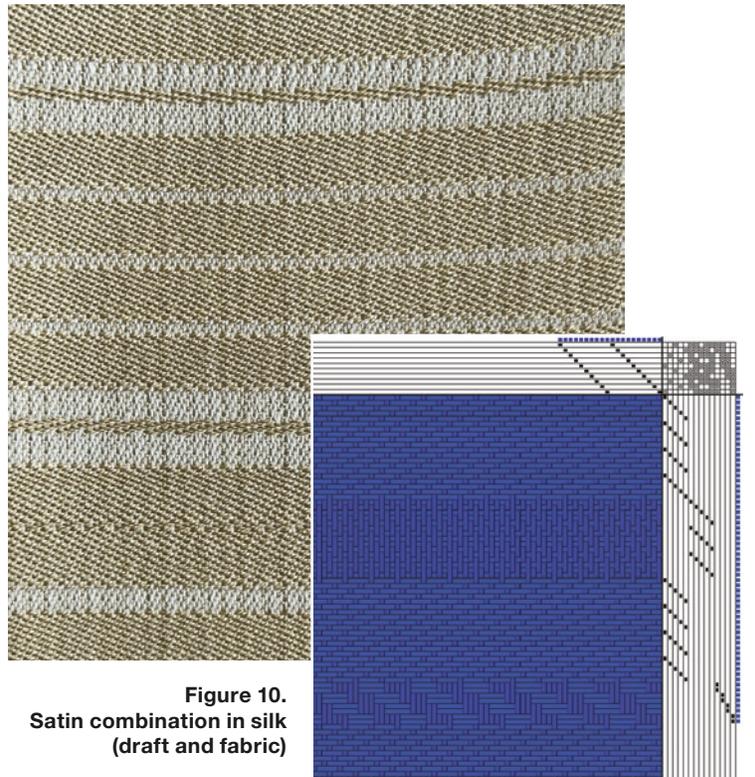


Figure 10.
Satin combination in silk
(draft and fabric)

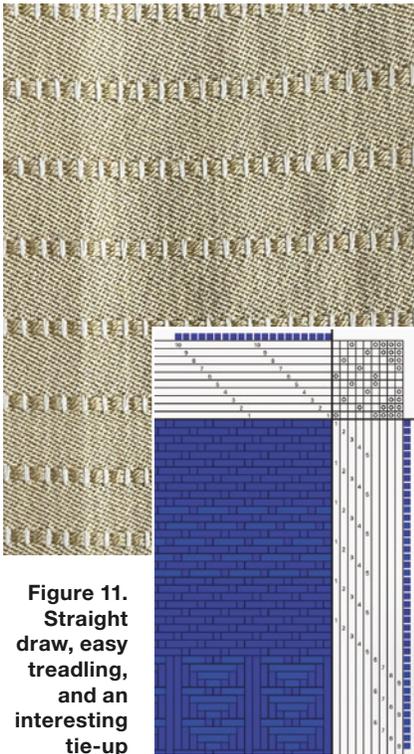


Figure 11.
Straight
draw, easy
treading,
and an
interesting
tie-up

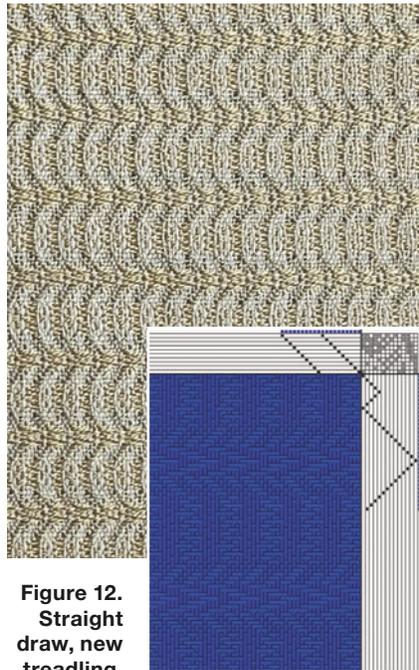


Figure 12.
Straight
draw, new
treading,
fresh
tie-up

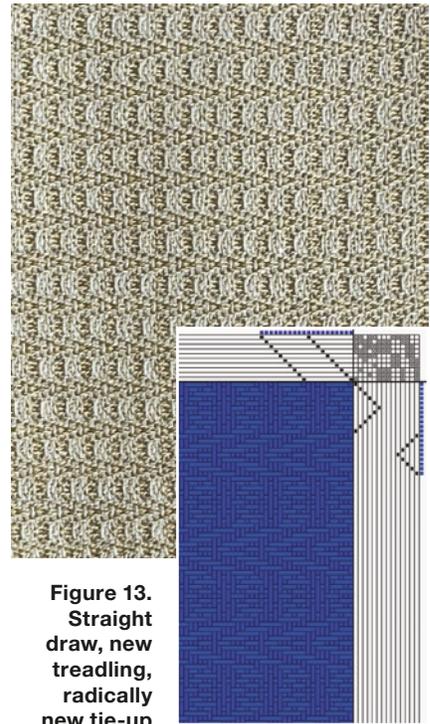


Figure 13.
Straight
draw, new
treading,
radically
new tie-up

I then began a new path, exploring designs of my own that are created in the tie-up (*Figure 11*). Each design uses a straight draw on either 10 or 12 shafts with straightforward treading. It is in the tie-up where the magic happens. And I discovered that it was hard to go wrong with the fine fibers (120/2 silk) I was using, as float length was almost irrelevant.

I started with a simple sketch on graph paper. I then translated that to the tie-up and away I wove. The warp

was an off-white 120/2 silk, and the weft was a light gold 120/2 silk. This simple degree of contrast was all that was needed to show the beautiful motion and textures (*Figures 12 and 13*).

That exploration brought me to my second final project (*Figures 14a and 14b*). The jacket has a satin combination face fabric, blue satin accent fabric around the collar and plain weave silk lining. All yarns were 120/2 silk. With just enough thread left over, I wove the camisole top. This time I used a combination satin/plain weave/lace structure. The lace structure brought a tiny tic of texture to the fabric. And finally I had woven fabric that was genuinely sumptuous.



Figure 14a. Second final project, jacket



Figure 14b. Second final project, camisole

My Exploration – Continuous Silk Brocade

After working with yarns in both fibers, my exploration of silk brocades came next. I started the samples by working with continuous brocades.²

My first attempt at a continuous brocade was unexpected. I was pleased to have woven such an interesting fabric; however, this first sample did not look much like a typical brocade fabric (Figure 15). This started me thinking about what was I imagining when I said the word ‘brocade’. My second sample (Figure 16) more closely resembled the image I held in my mind.

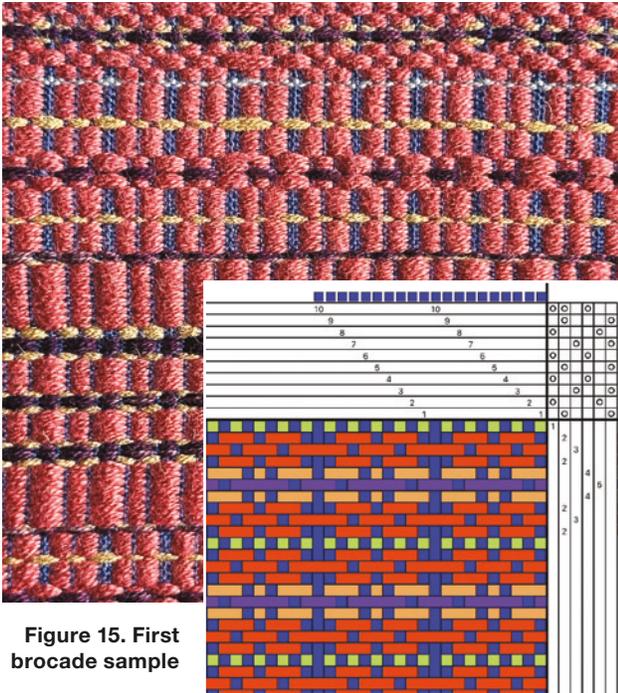


Figure 15. First brocade sample

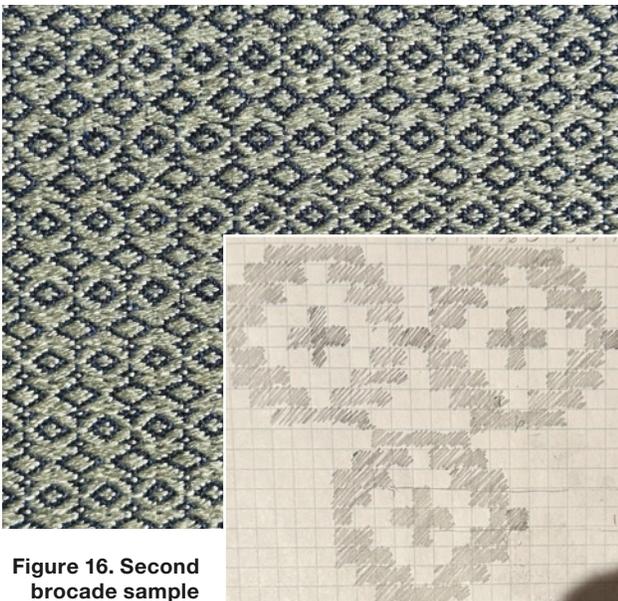


Figure 16. Second brocade sample

But I didn’t leave it there. I used my small sketches to design the tie-up and tried to see how crazy I could get with structure and still get a beautiful fabric. For example, I made a sketch of some strange spade, such as you might see on the back of a playing card; but in the fabric it translated into a very lovely repeat. The compression of the scale of the design turned it into something exquisite (Figure 17).

Another sketch shows a sinuous, medieval-looking motif, which became another wonderful surprise when it was woven (Figure 18).

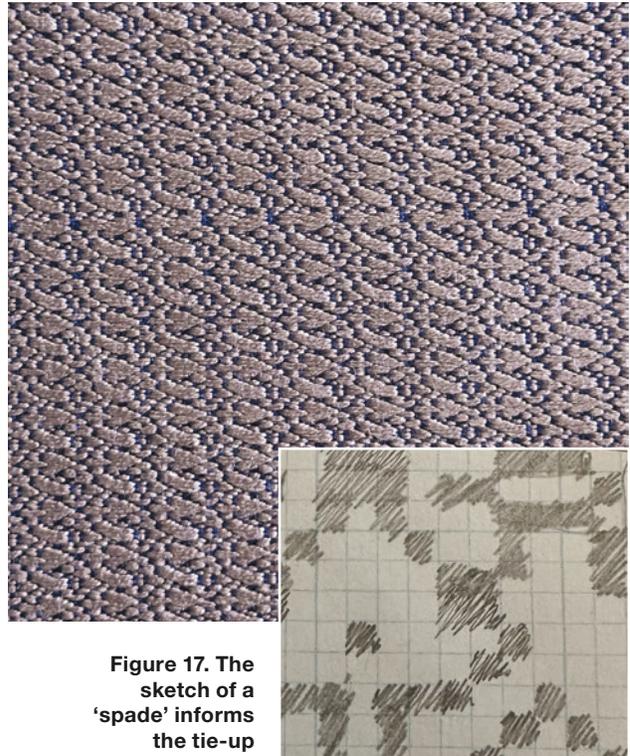


Figure 17. The sketch of a ‘spade’ informs the tie-up

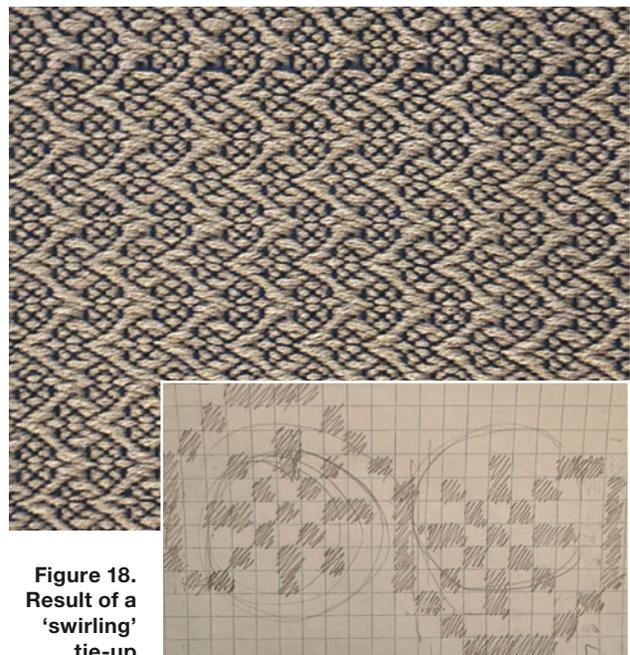


Figure 18. Result of a ‘swirling’ tie-up

² A continuous brocade features a supplementary weft in a single color running selvedge to selvedge

After treading the sample as planned, I began to play with other treading sequences. The elongated ovals of Figure 18 quickly evolved into stacked columns and other motifs (Figures 19 and 20).

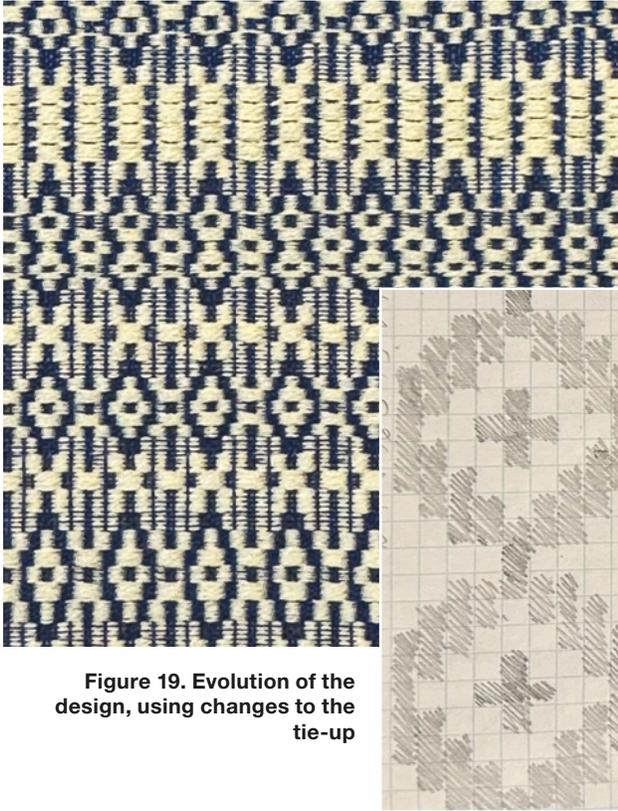


Figure 19. Evolution of the design, using changes to the tie-up

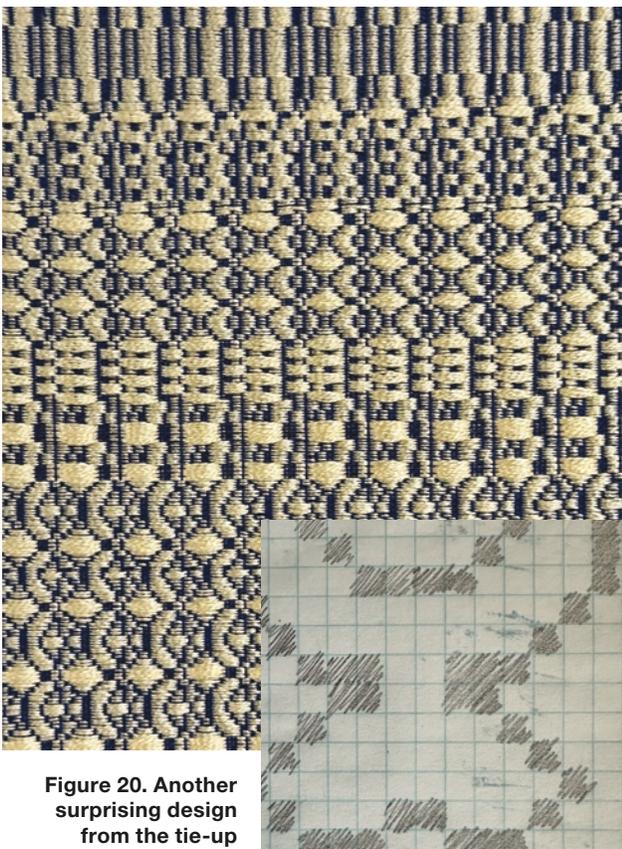


Figure 20. Another surprising design from the tie-up

My Exploration – Discontinuous Silk Brocade

And for the next step? It was time to tackle discontinuous brocades.³

After some initial failed attempts, I understood that it was not practical to manually pick up the very fine threads in my warp. I needed my treadles to play a starring role in manipulating the threads. And finally the light bulb went on!

First I had to decide where each of the colors would show in the design. Figure 21a is a sketch showing the color placements I chose for my first sample of discontinuous brocade, and the treadle assignments (and colors) are shown in Figure 21b. Almost all the treadles show two colors. The exceptions are treadle 3 (and its mirror, treadle 11), which are all pink, and treadle 7, which is all yellow. Treadles 1 and 13 are reserved for tabby. Note that the design is mirrored with treadle 7 being the mirroring point. This is important as it essentially doubled the capacity of my treadles.

If we follow just the first pick (treadle 2), you can see what I did. This treadle has pink on shafts 4 through 8 and yellow on shafts 1 and 11. Since my design was

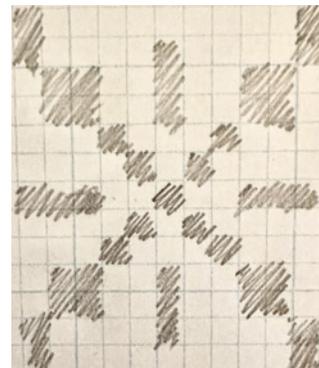


Figure 21a. Sketch of color placements in this sample

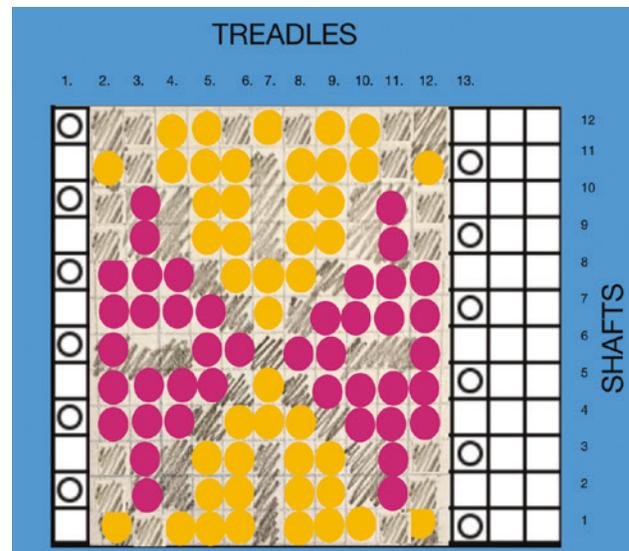


Figure 21b. Treadles, shafts and colors

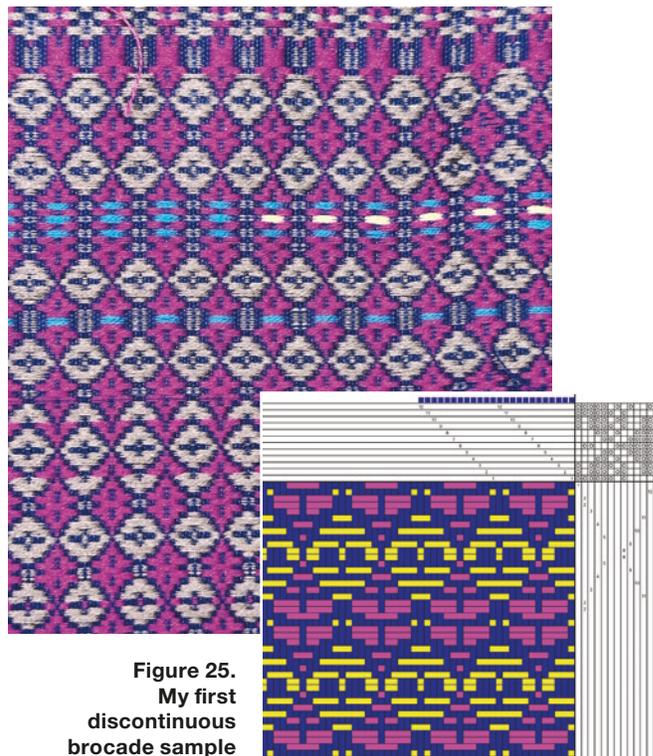
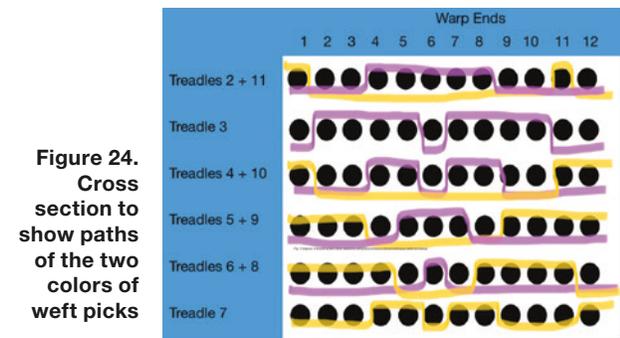
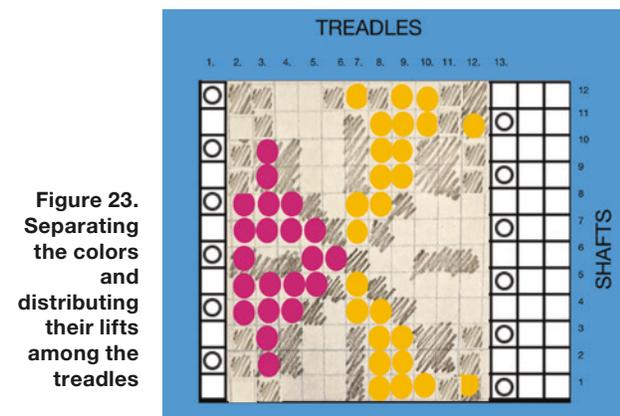
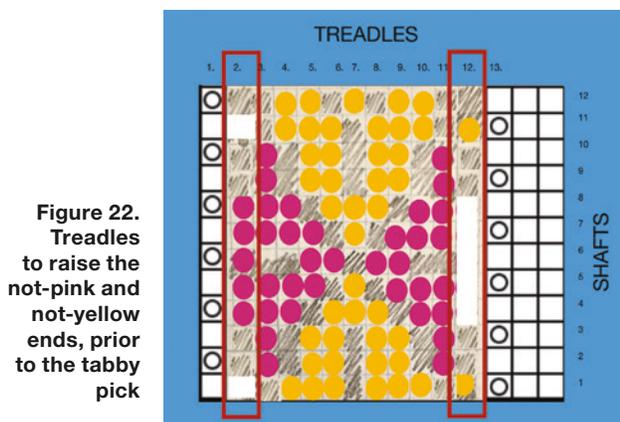
³ A discontinuous brocade is a decorative supplementary weft with a ground cloth, but the colors used in this supplementary weft do not run selvedge to selvedge.

mirrored, I decided to use treadles 2 and 12 to separate these colors.

When I stepped on treadle 2, I raised all the ends that were not pink so that pink would show across ends 4 through 8. Next I stepped on treadle 12 and raised all the ends that were not yellow so that yellow would show across ends 1 and 11. Lastly, I stepped on treadle 1 for a tabby pick (Figure 22). I repeated this process for each treadle to separate the colors (Figure 23).

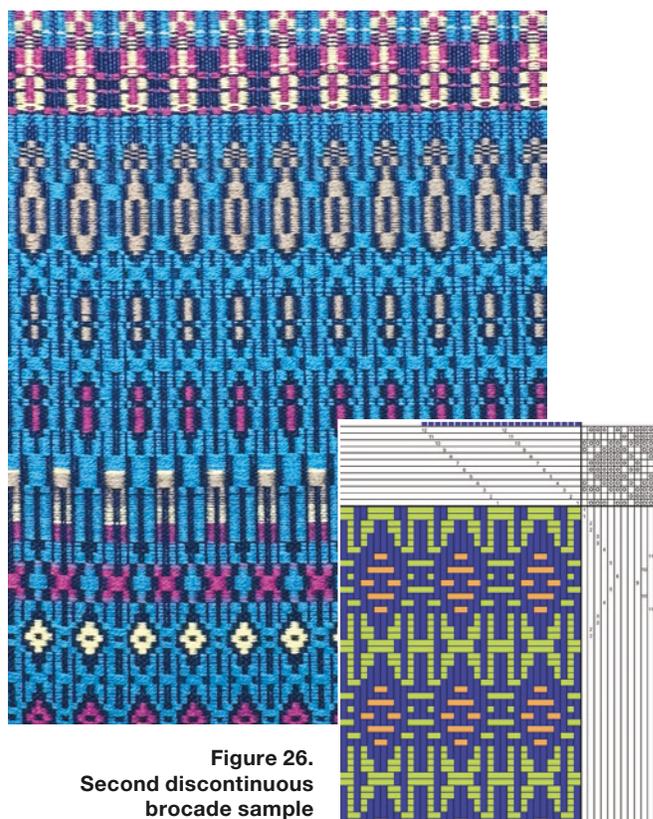
A cross section shows the resulting weft paths (Figure 24). Reading the first row, for example, you can see that the pink weft shows on the front across ends 4 through 8, at the same time that yellow is showing across ends 1 and 11. The tabby is not shown in this cross-section illustration.

With this new method, I wove my first discontinuous brocade sample (Figure 25). The very bottom of the sample shows treadling exactly as planned; but it was



clear that I needed to repeat the treadling sequence multiple times to get a clear definition of the motif. Further up the sample there is more treadling exploration and one small area experimenting with a clasped weft.

Figure 26 shows a sample using a different tie-up design. I also added a third colored supplementary



weft utilizing an idle treadle in the tie-up. The results can be seen at the very top of the sample where turquoise, yellow and fuchsia appear in the same pick. The dark blue throughout the sample is the ground cloth.

Figure 27 shows the sample that served as inspiration for my third final project. I particularly like the pattern section that appears just above the midline.

The fabrics (Figure 28) in my third final project feature both a discontinuous brocade (on the left) and a continuous brocade (on the right). The warp is a 60/2 silk, woven with a 60/2 (doubled) silk weft.

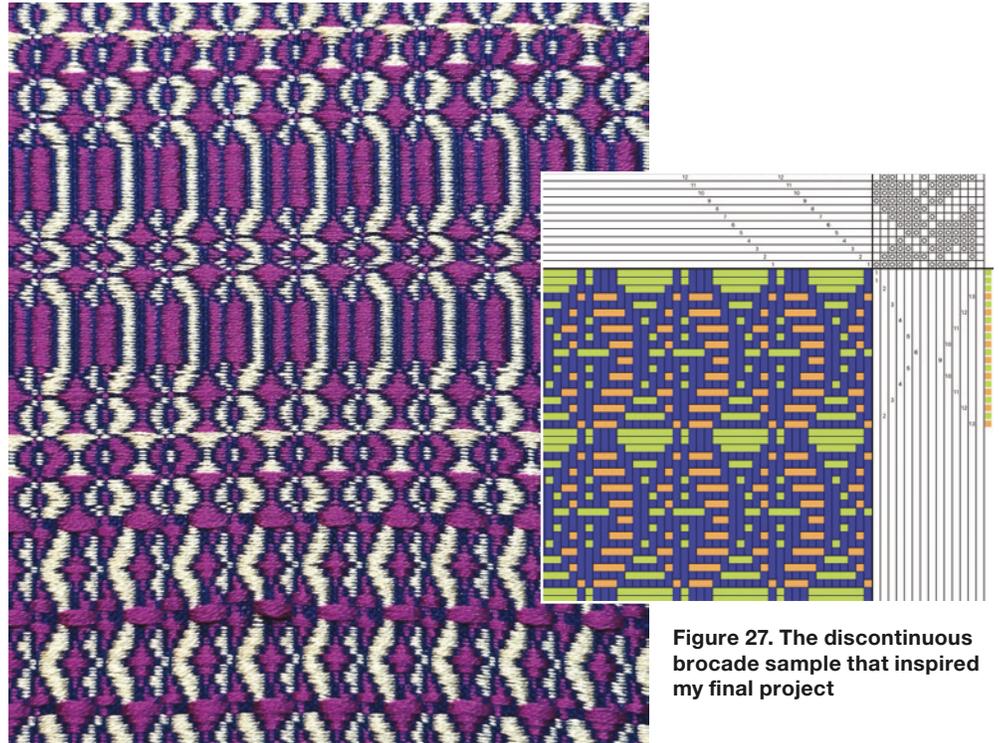


Figure 27. The discontinuous brocade sample that inspired my final project

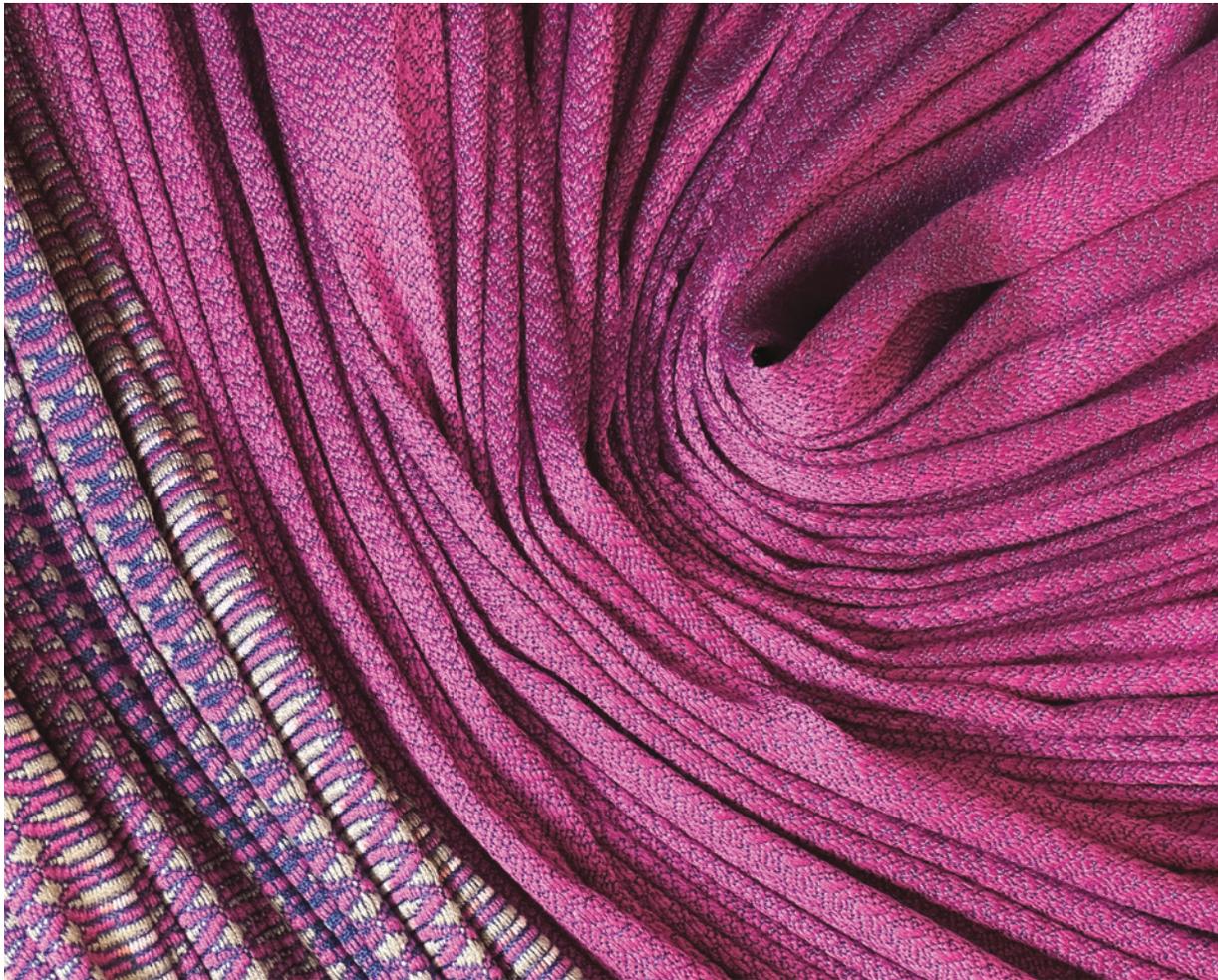


Figure 28. Fabrics for the third final project



Figure 29. Third final project: jacket and camisole, front and back

I used the fabrics to make a jacket and camisole top (*Figure 29*). The discontinuous brocade motif is consistent across the center front, but on the center back, I changed it up to draw the eye to this section of the jacket.

I was then driven to use some beautiful metallic threads I bought at ANWG from John Marshall but had not had the opportunity to weave. My fourth (and *final*) final project is a wrap woven on a 60/2 silk warp with a brocaded weft of very fine metallic threads (*Figure 30*).

I learned a tremendous amount in the final year of my Master Weavers Program. And I can now proudly tick the box on my to-do list that reads 'weave sumptuous fabric'.



Figure 30.
Wrap woven on 60/2
silk with fine metallic
brocade weft. Inset
shows fabric detail



MY SUMPTUOUS EXPLORATION:

- 78 samples
- 68 miles of yarn
- 422 hours of weaving/sewing
- 972 hours of research/writing
- 211,482 words / 373 pages
- 4 final projects
- Immeasurable bliss

Sum totals of my exploration of sumptuous fabrics

Resources

Olds College, in Alberta, Canada, offered a five-year Master Weaver Certificate for many years. Though the program is being phased out, it's continuing in a reduced form to allow students who have started the program to finish it. Currently, the first two years of the program are no longer being offered, and as they are prerequisites for the final three years of certification, the program is effectively closed to new students. You can, however, still read about it on the

Olds College website. Visit <https://www.oldscollege.ca/programs/continuing-education/fibre-arts/master-weaver-certificate.htm>

A few other Master Weaver programs are worth noting, one of which is still very much alive.

Yadkin Valley Fiber Center offers a five-year Master Weaving Certification Program that is similar in form to that of Olds College, and the Yadkin Valley program is still active, ongoing and open to students. The program is a combination of in-person work and self-study. To read more about the program or to register for it, visit <https://www.yadkinvalleyfibercenter.org/yvfc-master-weaving>

The Handweavers Guild of America's Certificate of Excellence (COE) in Weaving, a self-directed certification program, is officially on hold, according to the HGA, and will not provide mentoring or testing until further notice. The COE programs in spinning and dyeing are also on hold. The COE Handbooks are still available from the HGA for personal study, as long as supplies last. HGA may offer a revised, redesigned version of the programs in the future. For more information, visit <https://weavespindye.org/certificate-of-excellence/>



Complex Weavers Seminars

June 11, 12, 13, 14, 2026

Westin Westminster Hotel

Westminster, Colorado

- Corris Effect, Parts 2 and 3
- Transforming Drafts with Fiberworks
- Approaches to Complex Weaving
- Ancient Patterned Fabrics
- Polychrome Summer & Winter
- Design and Discovery in Crepe Weaves
- Bead Leno
- Finish and Exhibit that Piece!
- Drafting Innovations (Schultz System)
- Inflatable Cloth from a Velvet Power Loom
- Journey from Cone to Clothing
- Color and Technique in Diversified Plain Weave
- Four-strand Braided Bracelet
- Braided, Plaited, Turned and Corkscrew Twills
- Weaving Peaks and Troughs
- Color in Composition
- Chromatic Event Modules in Cloth
- Textile Production before 1800
- Hop, Skip and Jump to a TC2
- Dimensional Texture in Single Cloth
- From Block Double Weave to Infinity
- Weaving with Optical Fibers
- Prehistoric Textiles of the Americas
- Polychrome Samité
- All Tied Up — Multiple Ties
- Leno in Contemporary Textiles
- 3D Texture in Double Cloth
- Double Two-Tie Four-Colour Double Weave
- The Patola Loom of Patan, India
- Double Diagonal Twills

A Study of Sumptuous Fabrics

Post Script

Deborah M. DeBernard

After graduating from the Olds College Master Weavers Program in the spring of 2024, and weaving many, many brocade samples and projects, I found that I was still not finished with the subject of weaving sumptuous fabrics. It was great fun using the tie-up to create new structures and color combinations, so my exploration continued.

My husband Michael put in a request for a silk vest, and I was off to the races. I created two continuous brocade vests for him. The first vest uses one color of supplementary weft. The drawdown (*Figure 1*) shows the 'curly cue' design which is mirrored around shaft 12. The dark ground cloth plays a major design role, contrasting with the rich crimson (*Figure 2*).



Figure 1.
Draft for the first vest



Figure 2.
First vest:
dark ground
cloth,
continuous
brocade in
crimson

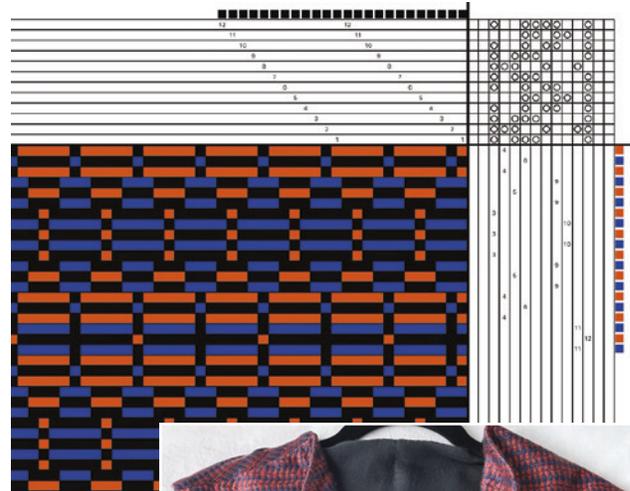


Figure 3.
Draft for the second vest

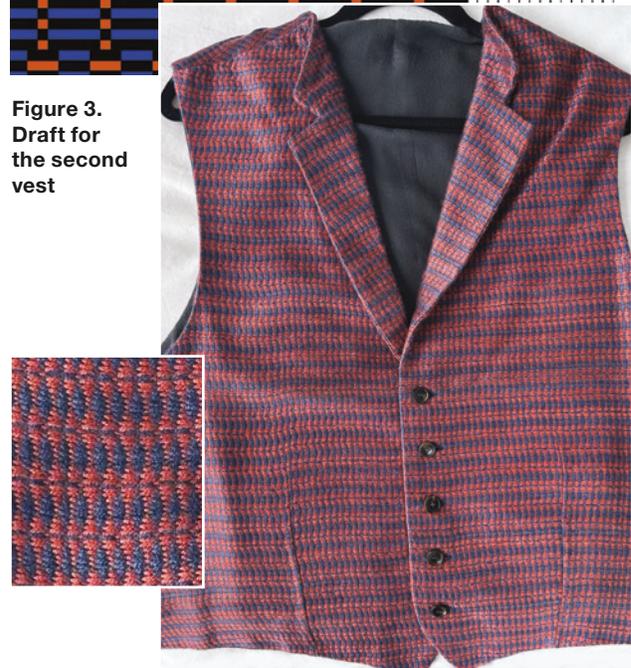


Figure 4. Second vest: ground cloth hidden, continuous brocade, two colors of supplementary weft

The second vest (*Figure 4*) uses two colors in the supplementary weft, and the ground cloth is nearly invisible. As you can see in the draft, this design does not have a mirroring point (*Figure 3*). This feature suggested limitations to my 14-treadle counter-march loom and the quantity of colors I could use within a design.

Recognizing that a liftplan would give me unlimited options for 'treadles', I moved the entire operation to my eight-shaft Ashford table loom, unlocking designs using more than two colors. The question then became:

I was really happy with my designs, but that did not answer the question of how many colors was too many. For me, six different weft threads became the ceiling for the quantity I could practically weave (how many shuttles does one own?) and still allow the threads on the back to lay smoothly (Figures 7 and 8); but that upper limit came with a caveat.

In order to weave efficiently, I needed a liftplan that accounted for the color changes. I developed a color-coded plan (Figure 9) that reads from left to right and top to bottom. For example, the first pick sequence involves the following lifts:

- Lift shafts 1, 2 and 3 while throwing ‘cayenne’, then
- Lift shafts 5, 6 and 7 while throwing ‘purple’, then
- Lift tabby 1 (not shown).

In the color scheme shown in Figure 6, though I used a total of six colors, only four colors are used in any single pick sequence. This happens four times in the fourth, sixth, tenth and twelfth pick sequences. This was my caveat: specifically that I could use four different colors (30/2 silk) plus a tabby (60/2 silk) in a single pick sequence before overloading the back of the cloth. Theoretically, I could use an unlimited number of colors in the cloth, as long as there were no more than four colors in a single pick sequence and I had enough shuttles to accommodate my design.

My exploration is still not finished as I am starting another cloth, in which I am experimenting with treadle play (Figures 10 and 11). For these new experiments, I

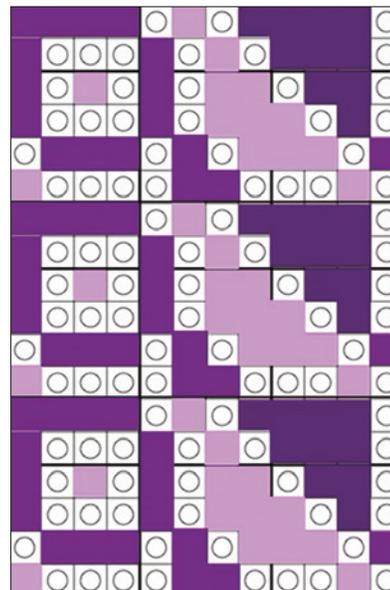


Figure 10. Color liftplan, original design exploring treadle play, continuous brocade in two colors

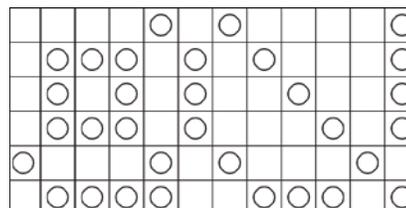


Figure 11. Tie-up, original design exploring treadle play

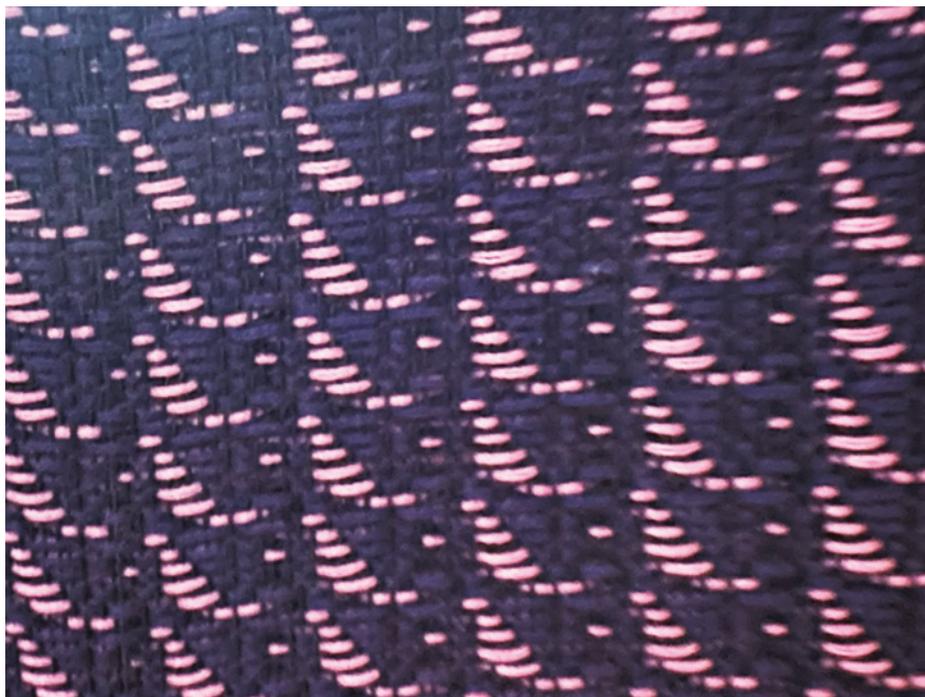


Figure 12. Resulting sample, original design exploring treadle play, continuous brocade in two colors plus tabby

am using some beautiful Mako cotton threads spun in Italy. The three samples shown here are on the same straight draw threading and use the same tie-up; but each has a different treadling. Figures 10, 11 and 12

show the original design. Figures 13 and 14 show two treadling variations, including one that looks like hearts holding hands when rotated.

There is always more to learn.



Figure 13. Sample: treadling variation, continuous brocade in two colors plus tabby



Figure 14. Sample: another treadling variation, continuous brocade in two colors plus tabby





Complex Weavers Seminars

June 11, 12, 13, 14, 2026

Westin Westminster Hotel

Westminster, Colorado

*Mark the calendar and gather your notebooks.
It's time to think about Seminars!*

We are gathering in Colorado for Seminars 2026, and it promises to be one of the best Seminars on record. In addition to the extraordinary selection of two-hour seminars (thirty of them!), we will have the CW conference events we love to anticipate:

- Special Evening Reception, *Complexity 2026*
- Informal Fashion Show
- The CW Marketplace
- Silent Auction
- Poster Sessions
- Exhibits

As always, at lunch and dinner times we'll share tables with other members, which gives us the chance to put names to faces, share ideas, discuss new passions, and make new friends. (To many, this is one of the most valuable facets of Seminars.)

On top of all this, we are honored and thrilled to announce a very special Keynote Speaker for Seminars 2026:

Madelyn van der Hoogt

So get ready, and we'll see you in Colorado!

Sandra Ogg Rude Memorial Grant 2023: Embracing Complexity at Praxis

David van Buskirk

A few years ago, Patrice George mentioned the Praxis Digital Weaving Lab and suggested I apply for a residency. I had not known of their studio and was immediately smitten with the idea of being able to weave on a TC2 Digital Loom. I applied for the Sandra Ogg Rude Memorial Grant in 2023, and my proposal was accepted.

My intent was to explore new complex weave structures that could be integrated into works woven on the TC2 loom. I wanted to create textured weaves that offered alternatives to the traditional gradated satins and twills frequently used to reproduce photos in TC2-woven pieces. The images I planned to explore at Praxis came from old photos, and I hoped to create weaves that replicated the grainy effect of old photos blown up to a larger scale.

Before starting the residency, I first explored translating all of the eight-shaft crepes in G.H. Oelsner's *Book of Weaves* (see Resources) into bi-pick weaves, with the crepe for the face pick and an eight-shaft satin for the back pick. I wove these crepe samples on my studio AVL. Early on, I could see that the crepe weaves were not going to yield good results for reproducing photos in Jacquard pieces. I love crepe weave textures, but they are all balanced weaves with equal emphasis on warp and weft. There was not enough variation between warp and weft effects to create clear images on a TC2 loom. I stubbornly stuck with the effort and did produce all 25 weaves from Oelsner's book in a two-pick construction.

Background work: the satins

I also created a group of irregular gradated satins using eight shafts on the AVL, which looked much more promising. To achieve the gradation, I experimented until I found an irregular 1/7 satin binding (*Figure 1a*).

In retrospect, the binding looks like an expanded crows-foot weave on eight shafts, but it was

created with blind trial and error, and it led in the direction I wanted. From this base, I kept adding one warp float above the ground binding point until I had seven gradations, from weft-face to warp-face. *Figure 1b* shows the sample woven in a single-pick construction.

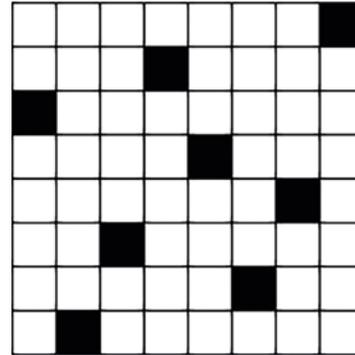


Figure 1a. Irregular 1/7 satin binding to create satin gradation

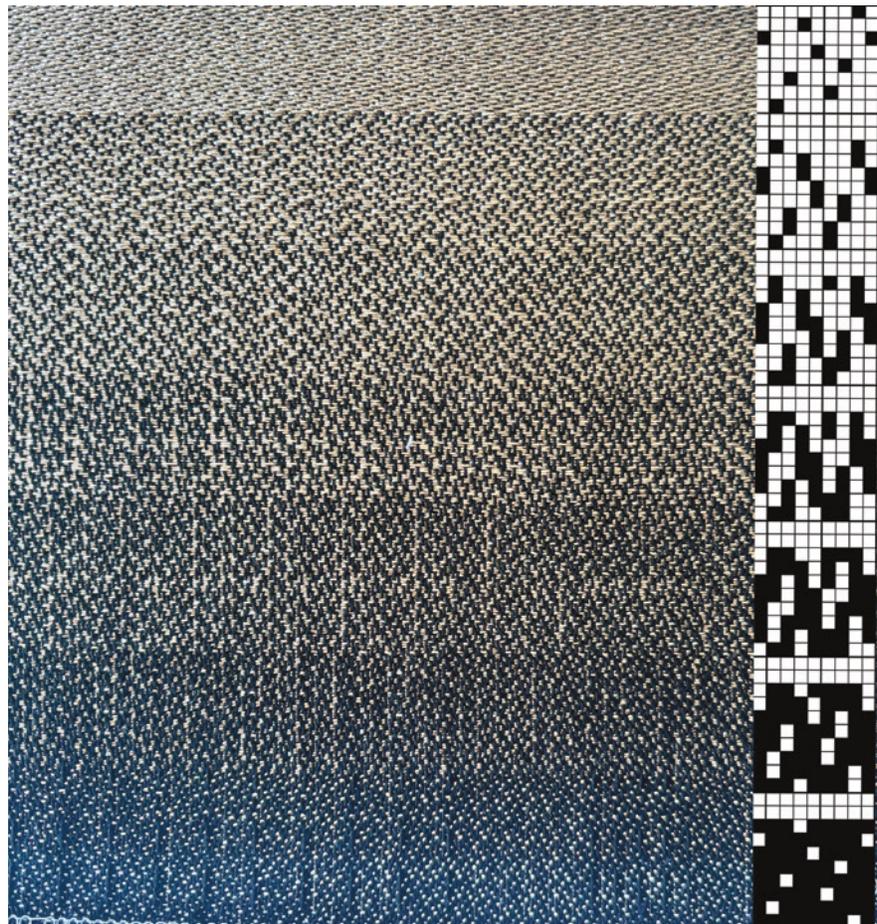


Figure 1b. Sample of satin gradation from weft-face to warp-face

Background work: undulating twills

I also did a great deal of experimentation with undulating twills. I thought these might be effective to translate the image used for Project 4, *Gash* (described later in

this article). Figure 2 shows the set of twill samples, and Figures 3 through 7 present the peg plans.



Figure 2. Woven samples of a variety of undulating twills

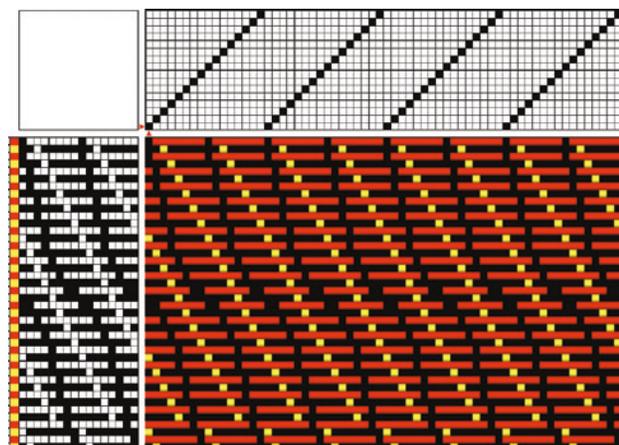


Figure 3. Peg plan, Undulating Twill 7/1, red dominant. Pick 1 on face, pick 2 on back

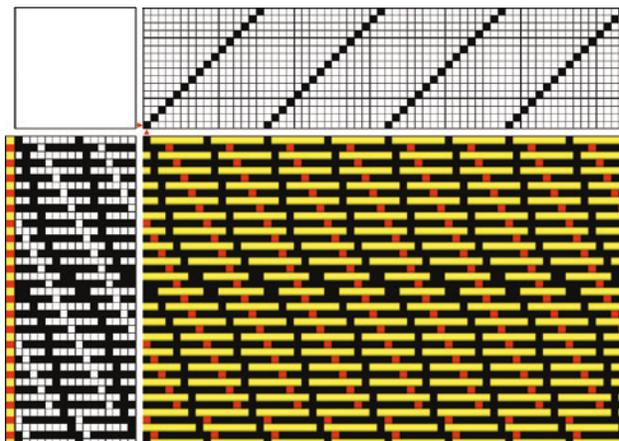


Figure 4. Peg plan, Undulating Twill 7/1, yellow dominant. Pick 2 on face, pick 1 on back

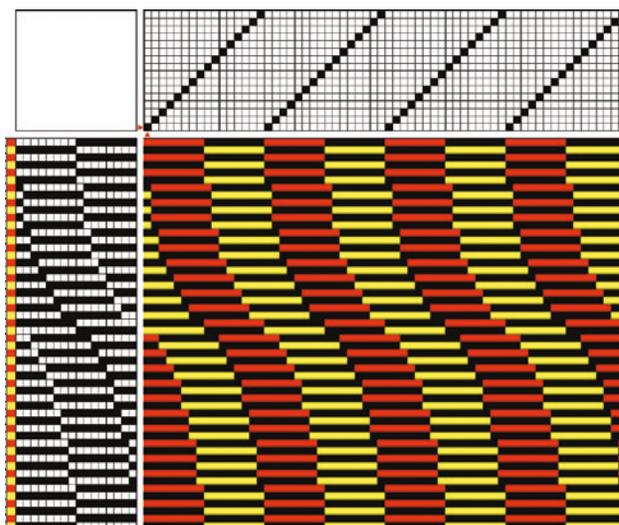


Figure 5. Peg plan, Undulating Twill 8/8. Picks 1 and 2 on face

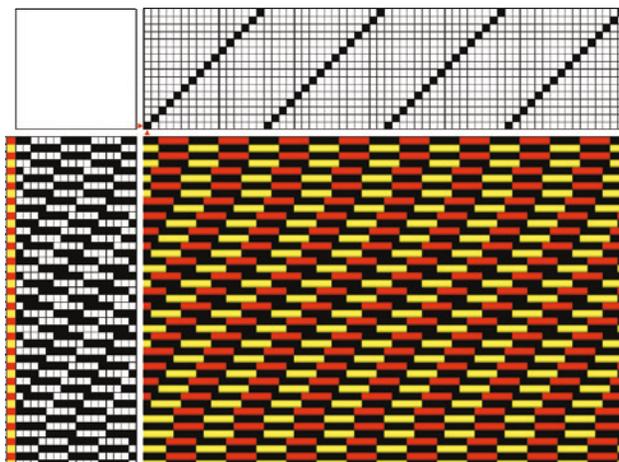


Figure 6. Peg plan, Undulating Twill 4/4. Picks 1 and 2 on face

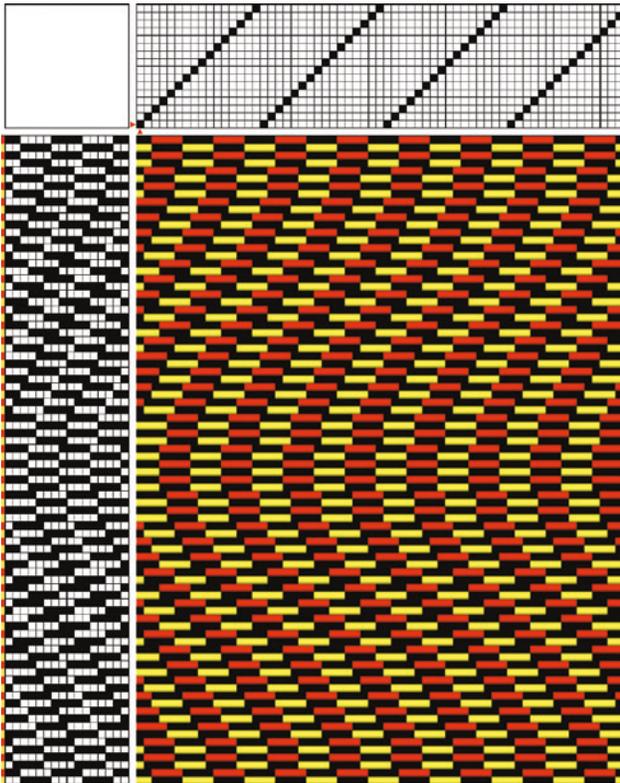


Figure 7. Peg plan, Undulating Twill 4/4, mirrored to create a nice contour. Picks 1 and 2 on face

The Work at Praxis

In total, I wove five individual pieces during my residency at Praxis:

- *Roxboro Landscape 1*
- *Roxboro Landscape 2*
- *Self-Portrait: the Evolution of a Dancy Boy*
- *Gash*
- *Moonscape*

My TC2 was set up at 1320 hooks/warp, 29 inches (73.6 cm) wide, and 45 epi.

Projects 1 and 2: the Roxboro Landscapes

Although the crepes I'd initially explored were not usable, I was successful in creating textured weaves on 16 shafts (using a six-shaft irregular satin ground as the base module). On my AVL I was able to create 'crepe-ish' textures that successfully transitioned from warp- to weft-faced weaves. These 'crepes' proved more successful than classic crepes, and I applied several of them to the first two projects at Praxis.

I love to paint and draw landscapes, so I decided to translate a charcoal drawing I did a while ago of a winter road. To achieve the winter textures of dried grasses, mottled snow and mud, I used two of the textured 'crepe' weaves. For the background, I used traditional eight-shaft gradated satins. I tried to apply all

Figure 8. *Roxboro Landscape 1*. Cotton, polyester, nylon. 52.5 x 28 inches





Figure 9. *Roxboro Landscape 2*. Cotton, polypropylene, silk, viscose. 27 x 22 inches

the textured weaves to create the image, but the result was diffuse and did not convey enough detail to bring out the landscape. The optimum was to place a mix of the new 'crepe' weaves in the foreground, applying the gradated satins for the background.

A classic tool of landscape painting is to put detail in the foreground and have the background be rendered softly without detail. The use of graphic 'crepes' in the foreground, and smooth satins to render distant woods in the background, effectively integrated the weaves into this principle of landscape painting (see *Figure 8*).

I had time to weave two versions of this image.

Roxboro Landscape 1 (*Figure 8*) was woven with the 1320 hooks (the warp) being the height of the piece and the 2000+ picks (the weft) being the length of the piece. *Roxboro Landscape 2* (*Figure 9*) is the exact same image, but with the 1320 hooks (warp) being the width of the piece and the 2000+ picks (weft) being the height.

You will notice how the difference between the aspect ratio of the epi and ppi of each piece created a radical variation between the two images. As I pursue opportunities to weave on TC2 looms in the future, I want to explore how to control the aspect ratio more effectively.

Project 3: *Self Portrait – The Evolution of a Dancy Boy*

This project was closest to my heart. In my art studio, I have always had a photographic portrait my father took of me as a 10-year-old, dancing on the back porch. It captures the creative, energetic boy that I was. This ‘dancy, skippy boy,’ however, found that this behavior became identified with sissies and led to a lot of difficulty and pain, as this essential part of me had no social capital in high school.

I luckily found my place in the burgeoning gay community, and in my 30s I found the island where they put guys like me. It’s called Manhattan, and there I found people who celebrated my creativity and sissy-ness, hiring me to create beautiful textiles and color them. I also found fabulous dance clubs where I could openly explore my love of dancing, performing and twirling gold lamé fabric above the dancing revelers.

This piece (*Figure 10*) celebrates that creative boy and the courage he had to find his tribe and flourish despite the challenges facing him.

The image was created by merging two photos: the one of me as a boy, and a photo I took of revelers at the GMHC Morning Party on Fire Island many summers

ago. I separated the two photos into three layers. To delineate each layer, I used a bi-pick construction. The layers were as follows:

- *Layer 1, foreground:* Young David dancing on the back porch (Silver Gimp, 185 yds/oz). Double layer, pick 1 on face, picks 2 and 3 on back.
- *Layer 2, foreground:* Dancers on the beach at Fire Island (10/2 Pearl Cotton). Double layer, pick 2 alternating with pick 3 on face (pick-and-pick), and pick 1 on back.
- *Layer 3: Blended image* combining backgrounds of both Back porch and Fire Island (10/2 Pearl Cotton and Silver Gimp). Single layer, weave sequence: silver gimp, cotton pick 1, silver gimp, cotton pick 2.

The application of each filling yarn to a layer in the image brought clarity to the composition and highlighted the separation of each layer effectively. Much detail from the original photographs was lost due to the 45 epi construction of the Jacquard piece. The warp lacked the density to get a strong shift in values from warp-dominant to weft-dominant weaves.

Figure 10. Self Portrait—The Evolution of a Dancy Boy.
Cotton, polyester. 32.5 x 27.75 inches



As mentioned earlier, in preparation for this residency I developed a series of irregular eight-shaft gradated satins on my studio AVL (*Figure 1b*). I wanted to capture the grainy quality of the photos used and thought these satins might be more effective than traditional gradated satins or twills. When I inserted the traditional structures into the peg plan, though, they were not effective in delineating faces or details of the imagery. The eight-shaft gradated satins proved the most effective to realize the imagery I chose.

Project 4: *Gash*

Of all my endeavors at Praxis, this was the most successful. The details of the original pastel were enhanced by the weave structures developed prior to my residency and their application in the woven panel.

Before the residency, I created a number of irregular twills in a bi-pick construction. As illustrated earlier (*Figures 2 through 7*), I created a classic undulating twill in a single-pick construction, then developed the



Figure 11a. *Gash*.
Original pastel



Figure 11b. *Gash*.
Cotton, wool.
37.25 x 26.75 inches

same weave in a bi-pick construction in which I could float either red on the face (burying the yellow) or the reverse. Then I created a pick-and-pick version with the undulation floating over eight ends on a single layer. It is strongly graphic. Then I tried to create a finer version of the red and yellow undulating twill, floating four ends on a single layer. From there, it was easy to create a wave pattern from the undulating 4x4 twill.

These weaves proved effective in translating the mark-making and gestural strokes of the original pastel painting (Figure 11a) into a woven panel (Figure 11b). The 4x4 wave pattern mimicked the fingerprints and smears in the pastel to an uncanny degree.

Project 5: *Moonscape*

My final project was an attempt to create a hologram-like fiber work. Inspired by a Dianne Totten workshop on ways of pleating wovens, I wondered if it would be possible to create woven images in which each side of a pleat was a different image that would be revealed as you moved past it and changed the angle from which you viewed the work.

I liked the idea but struggled to get a satisfying result (Figures 12a through 12c). Success in integrating the picks for both the pleat-gathering drawstrings and the image involved several failed trials. Eventually a solution was found; but after weaving a sample, the pleat drawstrings had to be sewn in manually.

I used to tell my weaving students at FIT (the Fashion Institute of Technology) that often the only way to get it right is to get it wrong first, and then to get it wrong again. I love to give that advice, but hate it when I must give it to myself.

The experiment of *Moonscape* succeeded in showing me there is much more to explore. I will be exploring more of this in my future practice, as it is an intriguing idea.

Resources

Oelsner, G.H. *A Handbook of Weaves*. Originally published in 1915 by The Macmillan Company. Available in print (used and new) from many sources. Available for download from the Digital Archive on Weaving, Textiles, Lace, and Related Topics, via handweaving.net

Digital Weaving Norway. Creators of the Thread Controller 2 (TC2) digital Jacquard loom. Visit digitalweaving.no

Praxis Digital Weaving Lab. Part of the non-profit Praxis Fiber Workshop in Cleveland, Ohio. Visit praxisfiberworkshop.org

FIT: Fashion Institute of Technology. A state university of New York, located in New York City. Visit www.fitnyc.edu



Figure 12a. *Moonscape*, left view



Figure 12b. *Moonscape*, center view



Figure 12c. *Moonscape*, right view



Complex Weavers Study Groups

Study groups are the heart of Complex Weavers. Self organized and financed, the Groups produce samples, newsletters or other materials for exchange among members. New groups are formed as demand arises.

What do you need in order to join a Study Group?

Membership in Complex Weavers and a desire to learn and share are the only prerequisites.

To learn more about any of the study groups briefly (*very* briefly!) described below, check the full presentation of that group on the Complex Weavers website.



Archaeological Textiles

Our focus is global textile history, from prehistory to approximately 1700 C.E. Our group has a primarily online presence with no sample exchange.

Bateman Weaves

Dr. William G. Bateman's notes on new weave structures and systems were edited and published by Virginia Harvey. Our group studies one monograph each year.

Beyond Plain Weave Garments

We are interested in the fabrics, but also in garment design information, technical problems and successes. We exchange samples and critiques twice each year.

Dimensional Texture

The Dimensional Texture study group has one common topic of study each year, enabling members to explore a single facet of dimensional structure in depth.

Double Weave

Our group welcomes weavers of all experience levels. Because double weaving is a slow process, we exchange all information digitally.

Drawloom Explorations

Our peer-sharing study group is focused on developing a deeper understanding of drawloom weaving. We share our personal experimentation in online discussions.

Early Weaving Books and Manuscripts

This study group is for all those interested in 16th to early 20th century weaving: manuscripts, published books, and textiles from Europe and North America.

Equipment Compendium (a.k.a., the Loom Geeks)

This group gathers information about looms (past, present and future), with an eye to repairs and equipment modifications to benefit complex weaving.

Fabric Design Challenges

Our group is a forum for weavers with an interest in non-structural aspects of fabric design.

Fine Threads

Our group objective is to encourage weaving with finer threads. Members set their own definitions of 'fine', and we help each other as we create our annual samples.

Inquisitive Drawloom Weavers

This group is intended for experienced weavers who have made the move from single-harness to drawloom weaving.

Kumihimo

Our group's focus is the study of braids and braid making. Using marudai, takadai, ayetakadai and disks, we have two sample exchanges annually.

Ondulé Textiles

This group concentrates on the use of a fan reed to create fabric with undulating warp threads. This is a slow weaving technique, so our exchanges are online.

Oscar Bériau Sampling Group

Members of this group weave assigned samples based on Oscar Bériau's books. Participants weave two samples each year. For publication.

Preserving Our Past

This group is designed to gather the names and as much biography as possible of our notable weaving predecessors, worldwide. Information from all is welcome.

Sample Exchange the Old-Fashioned Way

Our members weave samples based on our personal interests and exchange them once a year. All levels of weaving skill are welcome.

Sixteens

In our group, we exchange samples woven on 16 shafts. Each year we select a topic, and throughout the year share information and help each other with problems.

Structure

Our study group is designed for the intermediate weaver who wants to participate in a mentored discussion of weave structure. Self-paced study and discussion.

Tied Weaves and Beyond

This group, intended for intermediate and master-level weavers, supports learning about and exploring these versatile weave structures.

Twenty-four, More or Less

Our group embraces the challenges of design and weaving on many shafts and encourages new loom owners to use the full capacity of their looms.



Pyramid Magic

Sheila O'Hara

In 2006 I was invited to go to Cairo to help Michael and Sevinch Deman get their new AVL Jacq2G Jacquard handloom up and running. Sevinch and Company, with its 35 workers, hand produce passementerie: fancy tassels and trims.¹ My job was to analyze antique French Jacquard ribbons and create weave files for them to use on the new loom as the basis of a new product line. It was a great job, and between the work and what we experienced, it proved to be quite an amazing trip. Bill Fredriksson, my husband, was there with me.

On my first day off from working at Sevinch & Co., Bill and I travelled to the Pyramid Complex in Giza. While inside the Great Pyramid, the lights suddenly went out; but we continued on to the King's Chamber in the dark, using Bill's handy 'torch' to light our way. After all the other people had departed, we found ourselves alone in the chamber. We lay down on our backs on the stone floor in the center of the room and turned out the light. Bill heard an indescribable sound of the universe.² I closed my eyes and had a vision of a glowing wire-frame model of the Pyramid in a starry night sky. This was followed by a series of still images floating across my imaginary sky, portraying all the artisans from the past: the flax harvesters, the flax spinners, the weavers of linen cloth, the stone masons, the architects, and the papyrus makers! It was a moving vision, and a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Ten years later, while listening to an audio book of fictitious adventures set in Egypt at the time of Howard Carter (the early 1900s), I began vividly remembering our 2006 trip, especially that amazing day in Giza. I was inspired to capture my vision in a three-panel wall hanging, which would become *Pyramid Magic*.

Creating the weaving

For the background gradation I chose to blend weft colors from a turquoise/blue combination to a gold/orange combination (*Figure 1*). There are two 10/2 mercerized cotton yarns on each four-inch bobbin. I used a variety of three-shuttle weaves: twills, satins, wavy twills, pick-and-pick twills, and so on.

1 Visit their website at <http://passementerie.org>
In addition, read the article about this fascinating job on my own website: www.sheilaohara.com
Click the 'Articles' tab, then look for 'New World Technology Meets Old World Weaving In Cairo'

2 An excerpt of Bill's account of this experience appears at the end of this article.



Figure 1. The weft yarns for *Pyramid Magic*



Figure 2. The lower border, showing the French ribbon pattern and the stylized waters of the Nile

The weaving's top and bottom borders echoed the French ribbon pattern I had analyzed for Sevinch and Company, but instead of being woven in black and gold as it was at the factory, the borders now appear in weft-faced colors of turquoise, purple and orange with outlines in a warp-faced black (*Figure 2*).

At the edge of the stylized Nile River, I added flowering Papyrus plants swaying in the river's breezes (*Figures 3 and 4*).

The warp is 10/2 black mercerized cotton set at 30 epi (warp ends per inch), and it is 650 ends (21.6 inches)



Figure 3. Papyrus flowers on the loom



Figure 4. Papyrus flowers, detail

wide. The weft is inserted at 62 ppi (picks per inch) so with three shuttles in use, the front of the weaving shows 21 picks or rows per inch. Each panel contains 3081 picks, allowing a 51 inch tall design, plus hems woven in a half basket weave.

I wove the middle panel first. The three weft colors were purples, turquoises and yellows. Superimposed on the Great Pyramid, I added lines representing the interior tunnels, rooms and air passageways within the pyramid (*Figure 5*). To get those detail lines, I used the black warp to create a black warp-faced weave. However, it turns out that when you weave with 62 picks per inch, the wefts move into the warp-faced areas, making the black lines 'shrink.' I then had to hand-embroider all the black lines to make them stand out!

The areas highlighted in golden yellow show the path that we took from the outside, through a few passageways to the narrow Ascending Passageway (only 3.1 feet high by 3.4 feet wide and 129 feet long), then through the sloped Grand Gallery (28 feet high by 153 feet long by 6.8 feet wide), to the flat room of the King's Chamber (19 feet high by 34.4 feet long by 17.7 feet wide).

In the sky above the Pyramid appears the constellation, *Orion*. The three pyramids on the Giza Plateau are arranged in the same alignment and proportional size as the stars in Orion's belt in the constellation. Above the constellation, I have positioned the glowing wire frame model of the Great Pyramid of my vision, floating in the starry night sky.

For the side panels of the wall hanging, I started depicting the artisans of Ancient Egypt. I chose to portray each of them on what appears to be a curving sheet of papyrus paper. The irregular weave in the background simulates the layered papyrus plant fibers. Because there were LOTS of black lines on each of the side panels (and I had no desire to embroider those, too), I used a weft-faced black weave to make sure they would show up. As I was using triple-weft weaves, this limited me to two other weft colors for the sky, the papyrus pages and the artisans. The

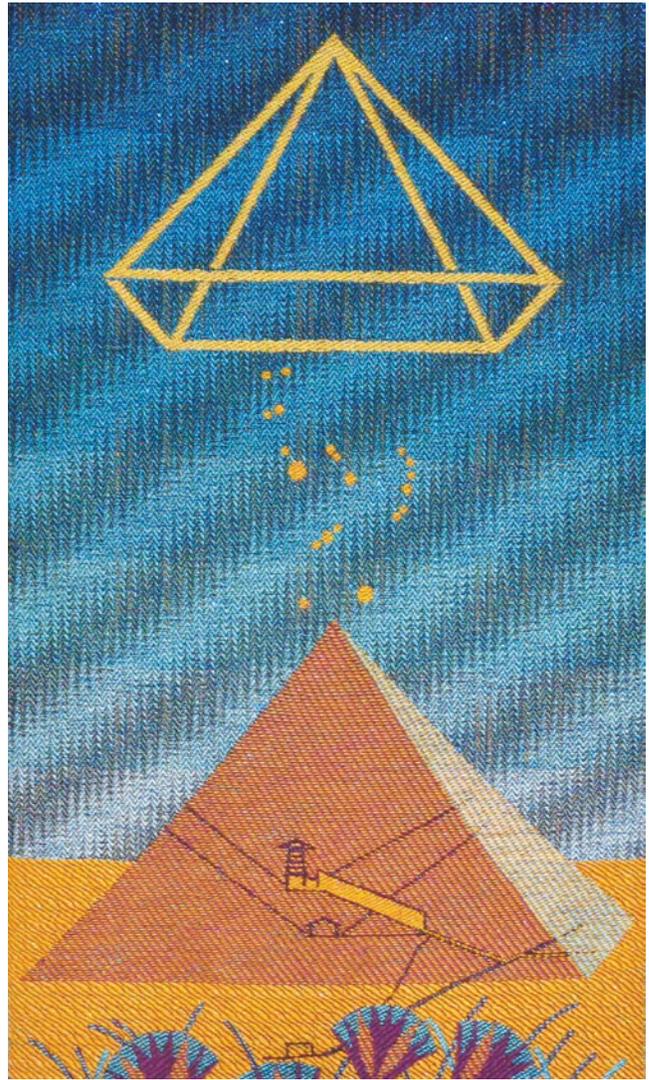


Figure 5. The pyramids of the central panel, with the constellation Orion in the sky between the Great Pyramid on the ground and the wire-frame pyramid of the vision floating in the night sky

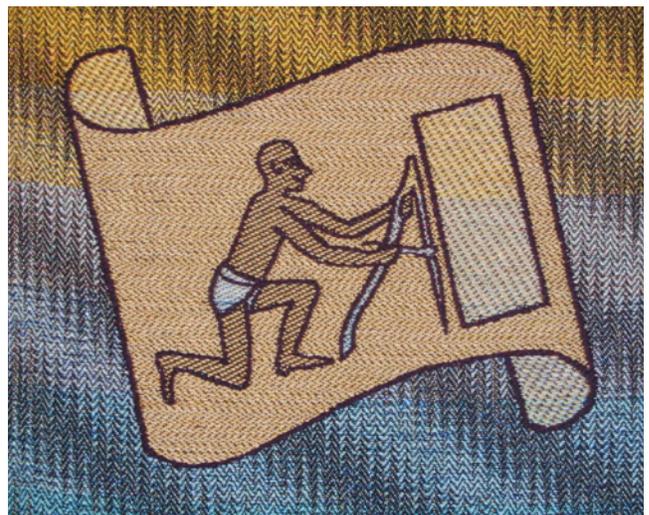


Figure 6. The architect, measuring a stone. This image is placed in the middle part of the side panel, where its colors work to advantage with the lighter background



Figure 7. The flax spinners, placed midway up the side panel to take advantage of the light background



Figure 8. The linen weavers, dressed in deep turquoise blue and placed on the darker background in the lower part of the side panel



Figure 9. The papyrus workers, dressed in deep turquoise blue and placed on the darker background

background was woven using Bonnie Inouye's advancing point twill in a triple-weft weave, shading from orange to turquoise. I then placed the artisans on top of a section of background where the color best suited their activity.

To create the artisans, I simplified line drawings from the tombs and picked a color from the background for their clothing, and for the plants and stones they worked with. I placed the figures where I thought the image and background color worked together best. For example, an architect usually wore white and worked with the white stone, so he was placed in the middle of the design to catch the lightest background colors of pale blues and pale yellows (Figure 6). His skin color became a 4/4 twill.

The flax spinners were also placed in the middle of the weaving to harmonize with the lighter background colors. They are dressed in pale blues and pale yellows (Figure 7).

The linen weavers near the bottom of the weaving were



Figure 10. The flax harvesters, dressed in golden orange, are placed in the sunny upper section of the panel where they harmonize with the golden background tones



Figure 11. The stone masons, also dressed in golden orange and placed in the upper part of the panel



Figure 12. Pyramid Magic. Three-part Jacquard wall hanging measuring 51 inches high and 64 inches wide. Hand woven in three panels, each measuring +/- 51 inches high and 20 inches wide, cotton, 2016

dressed in deep turquoise blue, to harmonize with the darker background colors in the lower part of the panel (Figure 8). The papyrus makers, also near the bottom of the weaving, were dressed (barely!) in deep turquoise blue as well (Figure 9).

The flax harvesters near the top of the weaving were dressed in golden orange (Figure 10).

The stone masons at the top of the weaving also were dressed in golden orange (Figure 11). The stone became a mix of off-white and golden-orange in a pick-and-pick weave.

The combined effect of these elements comes close to a full expression of what I envisioned in the darkness deep inside the Great Pyramid (Figure 12).

The weaving presented in this article is featured

(with drafts) in *Eight Shafts – Beyond the Beginning*, the Complex Weavers’ 40th anniversary book, available for purchase from the Complex Weavers website.

An earlier version of this article was prepared for the Complex Weavers Jacquard Study Group in May, 2017.

For a glimpse into some of my other design adventures, visit my website: www.sheilaohara.com

The next two pages present an edited excerpt from Bill’s Journal, written while we were in Egypt in 2006. It describes our visit to the King’s Chamber from a different viewpoint. We shared the extraordinary experience, but experienced it differently. For both of us, it was profoundly moving.

Communion

Bill Fredriksson

There is a theory that as your life slips away, you experience a review of all the events, relationships, trials, joys, the whole panoply of sights, sounds, smells, and tastes which have woven the fabric of your existence. Wiser men than I have said that at this moment, when we all stand at the brink of eternity, it becomes clear that nothing has happened by accident, that there was some great cosmic direction in it all. This is not to imply that we are bound by chains of fate, but rather that we are all travelers on a road of our own choosing, defined by us before our birth, when we occupied the realm of pure spirit seeking incarnation in this beautiful world.

There are no accidents, only opportunities. But we must first step through the door that is opened before us. The infinite is calling us to communion.

As Sheila and I sat against the cold stone wall of the King's Chamber, our feet stretched before us, the India-ink blackness all around, we both realized that we had, quite by kismet, stepped through an archway into an ancient spiritual temple — not just a burial chamber, but a timeless portal for the hopes and dreams of everlasting life from an entire people. The ceremonial mummification, the larding of the tomb with gold and bread, boats and wine, were actions meant to ease the transition of the ruler into the afterlife. The ruler, once arrived there, with eyes wide open, would help lift the burden of the poor farmers who spent so much of their blood and treasure building these magnificent structures. This chamber was the ultimate communion: a ruler and his people, life and afterlife, rich and poor, sun and moon.

I whispered to Sheila that I wanted to lie in the center of the floor, facing upwards, and feel the mythic power of the pyramid. We both inched along the floor, without benefit of light, toward the middle of the great stone room, and lay facing up toward the 40-ton blocks of red granite that formed the tomb's ceiling. Sheila tried to take my hand as we lay there but I declined. I wanted us to each experience this personally. I wanted to feel no touch other than that of the hardness on my back and the very slight air moving across my brow. I folded my arms over my chest, an ancient gesture of humility, and lay in the stillness.

I would like to tell you I felt something profound, but that would be an exaggeration. At first, as I lay there in the dark, eyes wide open, I felt a deep and heavy stillness. Then, slowly, almost imperceptibly, it was as though the blackness began to generate a resonance. I can't describe it as anything other than the sound of the breath of the earth itself. It was extremely low, almost inaudible, but it was there. Perhaps it was all the chants of 'aum' that have been uttered by mystics throughout the millennia, trapped in the earth's memory, now being delivered to my core through this titanic recording device. Perhaps it was Gaia's heart, beating so slowly that each pulse spans centuries.

I can't tell you what it was. But it was oceans deep and utterly calming.

Later Sheila told me that she had quite a different experience. Unlike me, she closed her eyes. She said that almost immediately she saw great shafts of light in her mind's-eye periphery, forming the four outside edges of the Great Pyramid itself, converging at the nexus point at the top, not unlike a glowing wire-frame model in a night sky. She also said that shortly thereafter she began to see a still-image diorama of sorts passing by, with images of Egyptian flax spinners and papyrus paper makers using plants grown by the Nile; weavers, linen flowing from their looms; stone cutters and builders in action; architects at their drawing tables; a whole pastiche of images, a still-frame movie of a civilization long gone but certainly at this moment not forgotten.

We had lain there for about five minutes, floating in this netherworld, when we began to hear voices from the entrance shaft. I sat up and slid my way back toward the wall in the same direction that I had come. Sheila stood and turned back toward the wall, calling out to me in the darkness to find her way. Needless to say we had become quite disoriented, and she needed my hand to find the wall. She sat down next to me and we waited for our first house-guests, now fancying ourselves as Amenhotep IV and Queen Nefertiti receiving guests in our secret chamber.

We began to see the gleam of torchlight on the walls, announcing our guests. We expected it to be the Pyramid guards, now alerted that the lights had gone out, grudgingly doing their duty to clear out all the tourists. Finally, the first two arrived, followed by another two. They were not guards, but couples in their 30s or early 40s, fit and attractive, at least one of them speaking English. Then another fellow arrived, thin but strongly built and active, with long, curly flaxen hair in the shape of a pyramid.

Then another man came in. I didn't see him as much at first as hear him. He sounded like he was struggling to complete the climb, huffing, puffing and wheezing like an old Egyptian train. He appeared to be a large chubby American, with light, probably grayish hair and a strange, almost Pharaonic beard. He stood in the middle of the width of the chamber, but near the entrance, attempting to catch his breath.

We still had not turned on our torch, but the others were busy shining their lights on the walls and investigating the suddenly brightened room. Soon, though, the two couples were sitting as we were, backs against the walls, one at the same long wall where we sat, the other across from us. Then, as if by silent agreement, they turned out their lights as well and we all found ourselves absorbed in the Pyramid chamber's deep silent night.

I don't know who started it first, whether it was me or the couple next to us, but it seemed as though we all started

together. A sound appeared in the middle of the room. It was the universal sound of 'aum.' Some of us were chanting it low, some higher, but the individual sounds blended into a beautiful reverberant chord hanging in space. It was the effect that one composer of modern symphonic music described as 'sculpting the air with blocks of sound'. We were forming a three-dimensional object in the middle of the room with our voices. The chants seemed not to come from us, but through us, as if we were allowing the Pyramid to speak, telling us of its history of joy and grief, pain and promise. Sheila said that she heard her TM mantra, long unused and almost forgotten, forming in her mind. Perhaps our calls to meditation in this spiritual place had triggered an internal answer, the mantra of personal peace and contentment.

After several minutes of this deeply felt communication, we all stopped and sat in the enveloping silence. Then something wondrous happened. The large man who had been breathing hard a few minutes earlier began to sing. He had the most unbelievable voice I have ever heard, a deep operatic baritone/bass voice. It boomed along the walls, up and down the entrance chamber, into the heart of the earth itself. It united ground and sky. It called from within and without us. He was singing phrases, progressions and melodies the likes of which I have never heard. His diction was impeccable. You could hear every vowel and consonant as if it came from inside your own head. The language sounded like ancient Egyptian. I could make out the words RA, AKEN, AMUN and others. But what he sang was beyond language and tone. It was so beautifully expressive and moving that Sheila told me later that her eyes immediately flooded with tears. It was Christmas and Easter, high mass in Notre Dame with full choir, it was the call to prayer in the Grand Mosque at Mecca, a song at the Wailing Wall. But it was more ancient, more primal, a connection to our ancient wisdom. It was the communion of time, space, and culture. It was the dreamtime.

I can't tell you how long he sang. But near the end, another voice appeared. I believe it may have been the pyramid-haired fellow. It was a Gregorian chant of sorts and it was high, clear, and beautiful. Then we all started chanting again, until our deep meditation was interrupted by a blue light clearly coming up the passageway. Soon, the largest of the Egyptian gate keepers



Bill Fredriksson and Sheila O'Hara in Egypt, 2006

appeared. His first words upon entering the tomb were something to the effect of "Amerikans, Out." The message was clear. Our private pyramid party was over.

As the portly guard was breathing hard from his trek through near darkness, the large man begged him to allow him to sing one more chant. The guard protested but the Pyramid Pavarotti told him he would sing something Islamic. He then sang one more chant, this time with a decidedly Middle Eastern feel, sounding more like it issued from a minaret rather than the bowels of the great pyramid.

When he finished, Sheila and I sensed we should leave. We both stood, made knowing gestures to our fellow tomb priests and priestesses, thanked the guard, and turned toward the doorway.

We made our way quickly down the vaulted passageway by torchlight in stunned silence. First the tunnel with the high vaulted ceiling, next the small tunnel that required Cirque de Soleil contortions, and finally the twisted narrow cave. We stopped at the downward tunnel to the Queen's chamber and Sheila spun me around and held me. We were both sweating from the heat and spiritual fire, simultaneously awestruck and becalmed, as if we had just ridden a small boat through a cosmic hurricane and come out the other side into a beautiful clear dawn.

As we left the cave mouth, we handed our entrance ticket to the guards to retrieve our camera. The guards said nothing, but their faces wore an expression that was different from their look when we entered. It was softer, more knowing, more compassionate. They knew we were not the same as when we had gone in, and they seemed to be silently thanking us for our prayers. In a way, we had become more Egyptian. We were almost friends, no longer strangers in this strange land.

I could barely walk as I descended the short stone stairway. We sat for a bit to get our bearings, an almost futile exercise after the events we had just experienced. We both tried to find words to express what we were

feeling but we gave up after the fourth or fifth "Wow!"

In the end, all we can ask as travelers on this journey is that we open our eyes to beauty when it manifests, that we never lose our sense of awe and wonder at God's perfect unfolding creation, and that we open our ears to that sweetest hymn, the song of prayer in our hearts. It is the universal call to communion.





Complex Weavers Friendship Fund

This is a small notice about an important fund.

The Complex Weavers Friendship Fund is for members new or old who for some reason can't manage the annual CW dues. If you or someone you know needs this assistance, contact a Board member or your Area Liaison (you'll find a list of Liaisons on the Complex Weavers website). All aspects of the Friendship Fund are handled with the utmost discretion.

To contribute to the Friendship Fund, click the 'Donate' link on the CW website, or contact a Board member or your Area Liaison.

Molly McLaughlin, Complexity 2018



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A Brief Note About Donations

As you may know, Complex Weavers is a totally volunteer organization with low membership dues and no paid employees.

In addition to providing member benefits, Complex Weavers has a public mission to share information and encourage curiosity about weaving. We do this in many ways, from exhibitions (such as *Complexity*) to awards to publications to conservation.

All these efforts cost money.

You can help by donating to Complex Weavers. If you wish, you can donate to a specific fund:

- *Complexity*
- Manuscript Recovery Fund
- Friendship Fund
- Memorial Fund for Special Projects

For more information on the funds or how to contribute to them, visit the Complex Weavers website and follow the 'Donate' link at the top.

www.complex-weavers.org



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Inside every Complex Weaver is a story and a wealth of knowledge. Sharing these with other like-minded weavers is at the heart of *Complex Weavers Journal* — unlike other publications, we do not solicit articles from outside our organization. Whether you are writing as an individual or as part of a Study Group, *Complex Weavers Journal* welcomes your articles.

Submitting an article is easy: just send an email to the *CWJ* Editor, and the Editing Team (all volunteers) will help bring your ideas into print.

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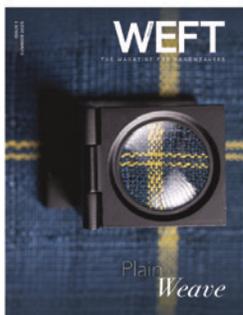
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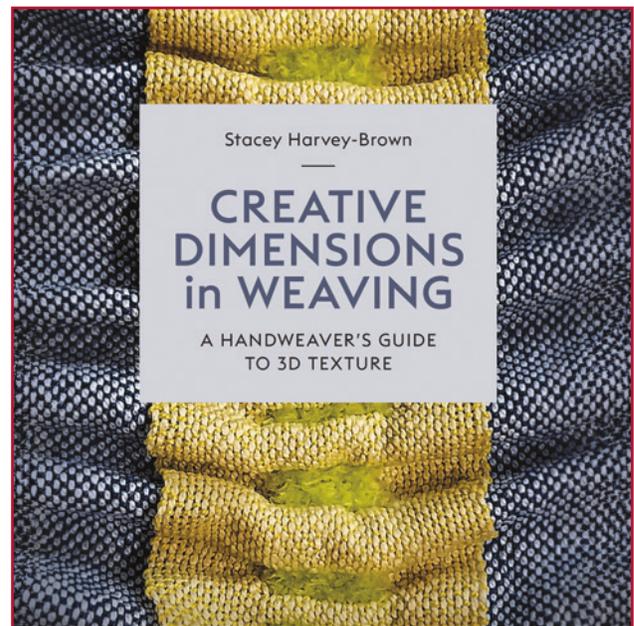


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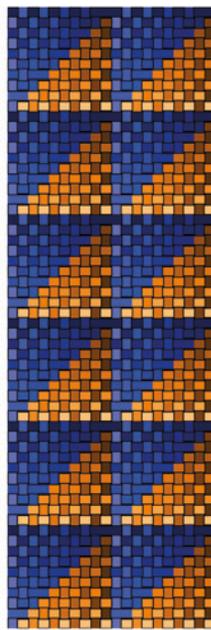
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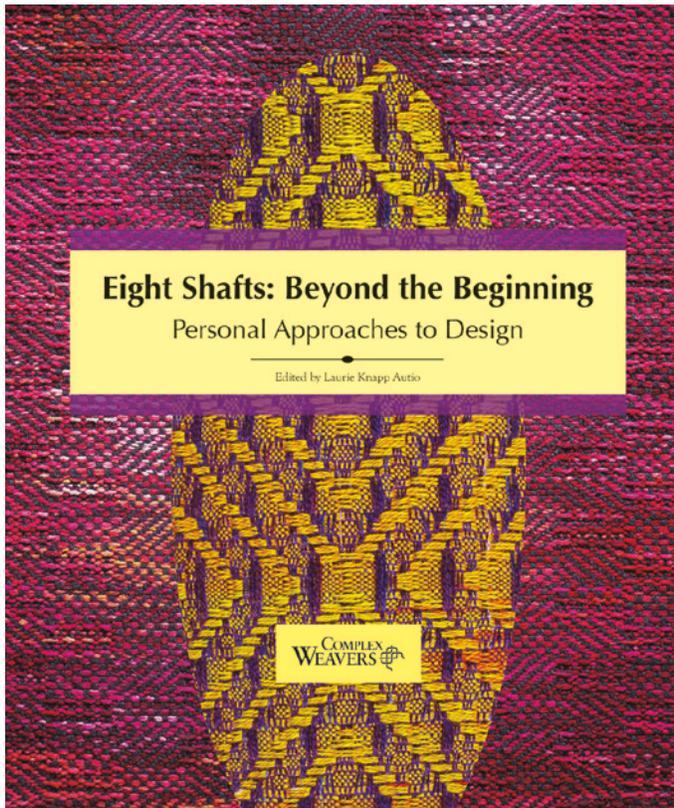
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