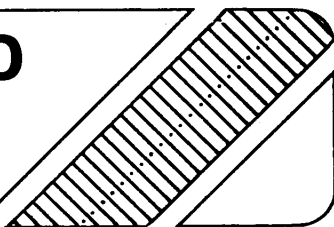


THE RIGID HEDDLE



LARGE PROJECTS by Cathy Ingebretsen

Here are some large projects that you might want to consider.

Hangings, 2 and 3 dimensional	sculpture	
Room dividers	curtains	rugs
bedspreads	blankets	afghans
clothing	floor pillows	loom bags
tablecloths	upholstery material	

Designing

For most large weavings, it is a good idea to go through some kind of designing process, to aid you in your decisions on: Which colors? Their placement? How much of which fibers? Which sett? What design? What structure? What size? How much shrinkage? . . .

Weaving a miniature piece will often let you see how your colors, fibers, and design are working. You can then readjust elements and solve many previously unconsidered problems. Designing is only an aid—it should not be looked at as a barrier to freedom. Use your designing as a means of growth, not a restriction. You may want to consider that:

It is easier to weave a large balanced, but not symmetric, piece because you don't have to be quite as exacting in your measurements and beating, and you have more freedom to change as the weaving progresses.

It is easier to have overall patterns or ones that don't necessitate matching to an adjoining section.

The weft in a 5 inch wide piece will beat in tighter than in a 20 inch wide piece. You should realize this if you are doing a sample or weaving various widths for a finished piece.

Always purchase more yarn than you're planning on using, so you can change your design and have enough yarn for adding fringe, tassels, etc.

Techniques

Your choice of techniques will often be determined by what you are weaving and the impression you would like it to have. Refer to past Rigid Heddle columns and other articles, magazines, books, classes, and friends. You might want to get out the March 1976 Minnesota Weaver and refer to the Frame Loominations column listing some of the "limitless possibilities."

Tips on Weaving

It is often faster to put on an interesting warp and weave primarily with one weft, than to put on a one yarn warp and weave with 10 different weft yarns and shuttles—especially if your edges are going to show.

Your beating may change depending on your mood. You may want to try to set aside large amounts of time so that your weaving will have large, consistently packed areas. You may need to avoid weaving on a piece if your mood changes drastically. Or, because many people unconsciously weave to the beat of any music that is playing, you may want to record some music to help regulate your mood and your beating.

It is often easier to weave yardage and cut it, than to repeat the weaving of shaped parts of larger pieces and figure the shrinkage. (Do consider the strength of the structure, though, because woven selvedge edges are stronger than a cut edge.)

It is often better to warp 2 or 3 20 inch looms and weave the similar sections consecutively.

Good craftsmanship applies to the back of the pieces as well as the front.

It is sturdier to weave your facings as part of the piece rather than sew other material on for facings.

Remember that the same care and detail should go into a large piece as you'd put into a small one. Don't cheat by packing too loosely or thinking size will make up for a poor design or bad craftsmanship.

Measuring

Pin a new cloth tape measurer to the beginning of your weaving and let it roll up with your weaving around the cloth beam. (Caution—cloth tape measurers do stretch out of shape in length. If the size is critical, make sure your tape is accurate.) Or pin or tie a measured "guide string" onto the beginning of your weaving and let it roll up with your weaving around the cloth beam. You could have small "guide knots" tied onto the strings at strategic places. (Avoid elasticized yarns for your guide string, cotton carpet warp works fine.) Or tie 8 inch long strands around the right hand warp thread at regular intervals (i.e. after every 7 inches of weaving). You can easily count them without unwinding the weaving.

Always measure with the warp out of tension.

When figuring the length of your warp, remember that you will be measuring with the warp out of tension, but you will be winding the warp under tension. Make sure to allow extra length for the elasticity of the yarn. (Many weavers figure on a 40 inch yard.)

Continued next month

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