
MASTER WEAVER

Z - HANDICRAFTS - FULFORD - QUEBEC - CANADA

January 1956

No.25

STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS & CRAFTSMEN.

We explained already our point of view (MW 24) where teachers of handweaving are concerned, and we shall return to this problem presently. But why do we bother with craftsmen who are not teachers?

The answer is that there are many craftsmen who after years of study and work would not mind to have some sign of recognition of their skill coming from a more or less objective source. The exhibitions are not always the answer, because each exhibition has a different standard for judging, and the jury is often biased by the local likes and dislikes, so that to get the first price in one place you have to send an article in blue overshoot, when another jury prefers copper on nylon in "texture". Thus one may collect easily several prizes in one locality, being completely ignored at the same time in another one.

Therefore an objective national jury, not influenced by personal prejudices would be an ideal answer to this problem. Instead of boasting that I got three first prizes in Smallpox Creek, I could show a diploma from the "Guild of North America's Weavers" stating that I am an advanced weaver, or if you prefer the traditional language - a "Journeyman", or an "Apprentice", or a "Junior Master", or whatever it is.

A Guild of American Weavers may be a dream of the future, but there is no reason why all existing Guilds could not accept the same standards for their members. And of course the same standards would go for the teachers as well. The latter would require an additional test of their ability to teach.

The idea is to become first a member of a guild, and then to send samples of one's weaving to a special committee, which will decide to what category the new member will belong.

Should the idea be adopted on a national scale, here are our suggestions as to the requirements for the different stages of the membership. One starts of course as a plain member of the guild. We may call him a "candidate". If he wants to become an Apprentice, he has to prove to the guild, that he can:

1. Weave a sample of plain tabby in any yarn, with good edges, even beating, and proper sett of warp to get a 50:50 fabric. Use different colours for warp and weft.

2. Make a sampler on plain threading (1234) and a standard tie-up with the following samples: tabby, 2:2 basket, RH twill, LH twill, wave (123432), stockinet (1232), dornick in weft (123412432143), brocken twill, any fancy twill (e.g.: 121314), mixed twill and tabby (e.g.: 1A2B4A3B). Yarn suitable for yardage of any kind. Samples at least 3" by 12".

3. Weave a sample of traditional overshot woven as drawn-in.

4. Weave a sample of inlay in any technique.

5. Describe step by step any method of warping.

6. Make a draw-down on graph paper of any traditional draft with at least 30 warp ends and 30 picks of weft.

Journeyman (advanced weaver):

1. Weave a sample in any simple weave (tabby, basket, brocken twill) using at least two different yarns both in warp and weft. Explain in a note the reason for your choice of yarns.

2. Weave an article in single linen in Bronson (spot, or Lace), Barley Corn, Swedish Lace, or M's-&-O's.

3. Weave at least 3 yds of wool in any weave.

4. Weave one article in warp-face effect in any weave.

5. Make a sampler in overshot with all traditional variations: as drawn in, two roses, three different borders for place mats in any treadling, italian overshot, one shuttle overshot (the same yarn for warp, pattern and binder).

6. Describe the following weaves: crackle, summer-and-winter, Bronson, M's-&-O's, Huckaback, Waffle. Give in each case complete data for one project (draft, draw-down, yarn to be used, sett of warp, finishing).

Junior Master.

1. Weave an article with a 3D effect, not in any traditional weave, which gives this effect. Use different counts of yarn, novelty yarns, or any other methods to obtain the irregularity of texture.

2. Weave an article in turned twill (6 to 10 frames).

3. Weave an article in double weave (8 frames).

4. Weave a sample of fine fabric in any yarn and any weave with at least 48 ends and 48 picks per inch.

5. Make a sample of tapestry (flat) or of a knotted pile rug with your own pattern.

6. Describe the following weaves: doup leno (gauze), corduroy, warp pile (velvet), crepe, dropped tabby. Give in each case complete data for one project.

7. Describe 5 different free techniques (inlay, lace, tapestry).

8. Make analysis of three samples (complete data).

Senior Master.

1. Make a sample from your own draft for effects in texture and colour. Explain steps taken in designing the sample.

2. Weave an article in satin or in true damask.

3. Make a rug not less than 30" by 45" in chenille, with a pattern of your own design.

4. Make samples (12 by 12") in any weave of the coarsest and finest yarns available: in cotton, wool, linen, silk, metal (or imitations), and synthetic yarns. E.g. one sample in cotton No.2/4, and one in No.30; linen No.1½, and No.50/2, etc. At least one sample must have 80 or more warp ends per inch.

5. Describe the following techniques: double harness, draw-loom, net weaves, lappet, tissue weaves - from the point of view of a hand-weaver.

6. Describe your own weaving technique, improvement of an old one, or adaptation of a power-weaving method to handweaving. Give the history of the method, detailed instructions and samples.

7. Analyse a sample of traditional multi-harness or draw-loom weaving. Complete data.

8. Write an essay on designing as applied to modern handweaving; give the historical background; explain the present trends (social, economical, and psychological factors).

Unless otherwise specified all samples must be at least 12 by 18 inches. The same sample may be used any number of times. For instance No.1 apprentice may be used again for No.3 journeyman, No.4 junior master, and No.4 senior master.

The candidate must start with the grade of an apprentice regardless of his professional standing, but he may send at the same time samples and papers covering several grades.

The above requirements are of course just suggestions open to discussion and criticism. But in our opinion they are the lowest possible. More free techniques, more texture weaves can be added, but we must always bear in mind that the tests should not take too much time (in weaving), and that they should not be too expensive. Therefore the samples do not need to be very large, and if more material for examination is included there should be a possibility of selecting it.

The jury. Once we have a dozen or so of Masters this problem will be easy to solve. Until then the jury must be elected by all the members of a Guild. It should never be nominated by the officers of the Guild. The decision of the jury is final, until we have a national or an international guild, to whom the candidate could appeal.

In our opinion the members of the jury, whenever possible, should be selected from the outside. The jurymen should judge the entries (which of course must be anonymous) independently from other members of the jury, i.e. he must not be aware of the previous marks the candidate has obtained. The number of the jurors should be three or more. The jurors in the future must have a higher degree than the candidate, but in the initial stages the vote of the members of a guild will be a sufficient proof of their competence.
