

HANDWEAVING NEWS



Figure No.1

Handwoven Hats

The hats sketched for you in this issue of Handweaving News were designed and woven by Elsa Koskinen, one of the students in my class at Wayne University during this past spring. They are interesting for several reasons. They were definitely designed for the person who was to wear them, the millinery workmanship and finishing technique was excellent, and the handwoven material carried out the idea further by being adapted to the type of hat for which it was used.

In planning out a design for anything, the designer should know his tool, his material, and the techniques with which he carries out his ideas. You cannot create until you have ideas and imagination, but you must also have the mastery of the tool, materials, and the techniques. This will apply to any craft or hand skill, whether it be weaving, pottery, metalcraft, sewing, or millinery. The handweaving of these hats was very simple and easy to do, but the hats were smart because they were well designed, the style was suited to the type of material used, and the millinery technique was so excellent that it looked very professional.



Figure No.2

All of these hats can be woven on the Hearthside loom, and of course also on any other loom. The large hat at the top of this page was woven on a lemon yellow carpet warp. The weft was of the same material, except that a thread of No.20 yellow-green mercerized cotton was used with the carpet warp and natural color corn shucks were laid into the same shed in a hit and miss fashion. This is a rather new idea for millinery, but gave an interesting rough straw like material very well suited to the kind of hat. This hat was shaped over a large salad bowl to obtain its shape, and lined inside with pale yellow-green material. A pair of wooden sole sandals with the same woven material for the top, and strings of yellow corded carpet warp, were made to go with the hat.



Figure No.3

At Figure No.2 at the bottom of Page 1 is a black pill box type of hat created in the mandarin mood. This was woven on a black warp with a nubby rayon material for the weft. This was used double so as to give body to the fabric. This is called the "Career Girl" hat. All around the turned up brim are letters cut from white felt. These stenographic hieroglyphics mean, "Life's deepest joy springs from work". A rather unique idea for a hat, isn't it. But it shows ideas and imagination too.

The hat at Figure No.3 was woven on white carpet warp with double white weft of rough rayon material. It was made up on a special shape with the brim turned up on the front. The crown was coiled like a funnel and open at the top of the hat. Out of this opening came two shades of veiling, one pale grey and the other pale dark yellow green. Blended together these two colors toned into the grey facing on the inside of the hat. This was the first hat which Miss Koskinen tried out with her handwoven material. I might also say that oddly enough she was graduated from Wayne University with a degree in Business Administration, and is now working toward her Master's degree in Fine Arts.

At Figure No.4 below is the question mark shaped "Leap Year" or 1944 hat. This hat has no crown and is flat on top. It is held on the head with one of the small combs available now, and a pin on the end of the question mark in the back. It was woven of brownwool material on a carpet warp, and is plain tabby weaving throughout.

All of these hats together with several more were displayed at the Annual Art Exhibit of Wayne University at the Detroit Art Institute June 1 to 6th, and created considerable interest and comment, and I thought that Handweaving News subscribers would be also interested in having me describe them. Has anyone else tried making handwoven hats? There is a very large field for this kind of weaving it seems to me. And the possibilities are limitless.



The models on which the hats were displayed were also of unusual character. A simple egg shaped head form was made of clay. From this a plaster of paris mold was made in two parts. Then strips from the newspaper want ad section were cut about an inch wide, and pasted inside with decorator's paste, until the inside was about a quarter of an inch thick. Then this was dried out in a slow oven, and the mold removed, and the two halves stuck together to form the shape. The neck was formed on a large can, and when dry attached to the head form. Eye lashes and mouth were added cut from red felt. Asbestos and water made into a paste, may also be made into a head form in the same way, with hair curls cut out of bias strips of burlap. The head forms are easy to make and serve as good models on which to display hats.

Quite a number of people have asked me if I am having classes in weaving during the summer at Wayne University this year. I am not having any classes this summer, but will suggest that those of you who wish to do some extra work, subscribe for some of the special weaving lessons which I have written. Cost with loan of samples \$3.50.